

happened in the past hasn't worked. What's happened in the last couple of years has a chance of working. And the people whose lives are most affected prefer peace to war and prefer progress to violence.

And I would say again, if you look at the substantive differences here, yes, there's the de-commissioning issue that has to be addressed and has to be resolved. Senator Mitchell did a very good job, I thought, of dealing with that whole issue. But if you look at the other—the sort of governance questions, the questions about how the people in Northern Ireland will live, how do you assure that everybody will be treated with dignity, that everybody will be treated fairly, that everybody will have their say, those issues, it seems to me, can be resolved.

There is nothing to be lost here by taking a leap of faith. You know, everybody can always go back to behaving in the terrible way they once behaved. I mean, you know, there's nothing—that's true, by the way, of every human being in the world. Every time somebody decides to try to make a change in his or her life, one of the things you always know is, if the change fails, you can always go back to doing what you were doing. If it's ultimately unsatisfying, if it leads to a dead end, what is to be lost in trying? Nothing, nothing.

That's the argument I make. It's in everyone's self-interest to go forward. It is in no one's self-interest to keep their foot on the brakes of this process.

Q. At what level, Mr. President, is your administration in contact with Sinn Fein or the IRA?

The President. I think the only thing that's appropriate for me to say to you, sir, is that we have worked hard over this entire process to maintain what we thought was an appropriate level of communication with the parties involved. And that's all I think I should say about it.

Q. Do you feel that the administration's allowing Gerry Adams to enter this country at this time has been beneficial for the peace process?

The President. Yes. If I didn't think so, I wouldn't have done it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:47 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Finola Bruton, wife of Prime Minister Bruton; former Senator George J. Mitchell, Special Assistant to the President for Northern Ireland; Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom; and Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams.

Remarks at a Saint Patrick's Day Reception

March 15, 1996

The President. Thank you very much. And welcome to the White House. Happy Saint Patrick's Day. To the Taoiseach and Mrs. Bruton and all of our friends from Ireland and my fellow Americans, we are delighted to have you here with us again. To our friends from Northern Ireland, party leaders John Hume, David Trimble, John Alderdice; the Lord Mayor of Londonderry, John Kerr; thank you for traveling all this way to be part of this celebration.

To Senator Mitchell and Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith, and to all the Irish-Americans here who have played a special role in strengthening the bonds between our peoples, let me say to you a very special thank you and urge you to redouble your efforts in the days and months ahead.

I want to say a special word of appreciation, too, to the Irish-American members of our administration, our Secretary of Education Richard Riley; the Director of the Peace Corps, Mark Gearan. And General McCaffrey is here; I take it he's elevating his Irish roots today, our new drug czar. And since our trip to Ireland, the Secretary of Commerce, Ron Brown, has asked for honorary designation—[laughter]—leaving himself open to all sorts of unusual historical analogies. [Laughter]

I want to say to all of you it's no secret that Hillary and I love this time of year. This day got off to a very promising start; the Taoiseach gave me a bowl of shamrocks. It had two benefits. First of all, this being an election year, I need all the shamrocks I can get. [Laugh-

ter] And secondly, this is the one day of the year when I am more green than the Vice President. [Laughter]

When Hillary and I came home from Ireland, I told her that I didn't know whether I would ever have 2 such days like that again in this lifetime, but if I didn't, I couldn't imagine two better ones anyway. I will never forget the waving sea of Irish and American flags at College Green in Dublin, never forget the relatives I met at the pub in Dublin. [Laughter] I've gotten used to meeting unexpected relatives in this job, and—[laughter]—it was nice to meet some I was genuinely glad to see.

We can't wait to return President Robinson's hospitality when she comes to Washington in June. And we think that today we ought to take just a moment once again to celebrate the ties that bind us together. In countless ways, Irish-Americans have helped to form the core of the American identity, proving that our diversity is our strength and reminding us that becoming an American does not mean forgetting your roots. Now all Americans of Irish heritage have a great responsibility, for in the land of our ancestors, the future is at a crossroads and each of us must do our part to safeguard the promise of peace.

Over the last year, all of us who care about peace in Northern Ireland have shared some dramatic highs and lows. For us here in America, it has been an emotional roller coaster. For us here in Washington, it has as well. And I would be remiss if I didn't say a special word of thanks to the bipartisan congressional delegation of Irish-Americans who have supported the efforts of this administration to forward the cause of peace in Ireland. Many of them went with the First Lady and me to Ireland, where we shared the crowds in Belfast and Derry, the courage of young Catherine Hamill and David Sterrit as they joined hands to tell the world what peace meant to them. And we were all saddened and outraged by the bombs in London that killed innocent people and threatened the peace on which so many hopes are riding.

Now, more than ever, we have to support the people of Northern Ireland who have made already and clearly the choice for peace, for dialog over division, and for hope over fear. The enemies of peace have fallen back on the bullet and the bomb, but we must go forward.

Over the last 3 years I have made an honest effort to listen to all sides of this story, and

I have come to the conclusion that in Northern Ireland, as I have seen in the Middle East and Bosnia, in so many places around the world, the deepest divide is not between those with opposing backgrounds or faiths or even opposing views. Instead it is between those who are willing to find a way to reconcile their differences in peace and those who still wish to clench their fists, those who look to the future and those who are trapped in the past.

Will we teach our children to define themselves in terms of what they are for or what they are against? Will we teach them to define themselves in terms of what they can become or the limits that have been put on them by their shared pasts, to be proud of who they are or to look down on those who are different from them? These are the decisions that face people all over the world, and they face the people of Northern Ireland.

I know and you know, everyone who saw the faces and heard the shouts of the people in the Shankill and the Falls knows that the people of Northern Ireland have chosen peace. And America must support them until they find that peace. And so, on behalf of the United States, that is the commitment I make again today to the Taoiseach and the people of Northern Ireland and to the Prime Minister and the British Government.

The February 28th announcement by the Irish and the British Governments is truly a milestone achievement, and we strongly support setting a firm date for all-party talks. Violence has no place. The cease-fire must be restored. That is the only way these talks can be inclusive, the only way they can be all-party talks.

We Americans who proudly call ourselves Irish must speak with one voice on this issue. We must stand with those who long for lasting peace. We must stand with those who have broken with the past and who are working for a better future for their children. And so on this Saint Patrick's Day, I ask Irish-Americans of all traditions to remember the spirit of the saint whose faith triumphed over violence and suspicion and to join me in a moment of silence and rededication for the peace in Northern Ireland.

[At this point, a moment of silence was observed.]

Thank you very much. Happy Saint Patrick's Day. God bless you all, and please welcome the Prime Minister.

[At this point, Prime Minister Bruton made remarks.]

The President. Before we go down to the receiving line, I want to say something to you. Our piper, Mr. Blair, and his wife prepared the song that we marched down the stairs to. It's called "Ireland at Peace." And they did it, in a way, fulfilling the responsibility that each

American has, of Irish heritage, to support that. I thought it was a remarkable thing that he and his wife did. It was a lovely melody. You heard it when we came down the stairs. And I'd like for you to give him a hand. [Applause]

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:10 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Mary Robinson of Ireland and piper Richard Blair.

Statement on Signing the Tenth Continuing Resolution

March 15, 1996

Today, I have signed into law H.J. Res. 163, the Tenth Continuing Resolution for fiscal 1996.

H.J. Res. 163 provides for a temporary extension of appropriations—March 16th through March 22nd—for activities funded in four of the five appropriations bills that have not been enacted into law. The District of Columbia receives no new Federal funds, but retains authority to use local funds.

It is regrettable that I must sign yet another continuing resolution. However, Congress still has not passed five of this year's thirteen appropriations bills in acceptable form, so this measure is necessary to prevent a third government shutdown.

We are now nearly halfway through the fiscal year. Continuing uncertainty over funding levels and authorities has impaired the ability of our Federal agencies and State and local governments to provide critical services to the public.

I urge Congress to meet its responsibilities by sending me legislation for the remaining fiscal 1996 appropriations bills in an acceptable form. I have made it clear to the Congress what changes need to be made to make them acceptable.

The purpose of those changes is to ensure, as we work to balance the budget and control discretionary spending, that we protect our nation's investments in education, the environment, law enforcement, and technology.

Unfortunately, while the Senate has made improvements, the current House and Senate versions of an omnibus appropriations bill for the remainder of the year still do not protect these national priorities. Moreover, they contain harmful and unacceptable legislative riders affecting the environment and other issues.

We have a responsibility to the American people to act together to resolve our differences. I am committed to doing so. I urge the Congress to act quickly to enact acceptable appropriations legislation for the remainder of the fiscal year.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 15, 1996.

NOTE: H.J. Res. 163, approved March 15, was assigned Public Law No. 104-116.