

Exchange With Reporters March 16, 1997

Recovery From Knee Surgery

Q. How are you feeling, sir?

Q. Good morning, Mr. President. How are you feeling, sir?

The President. I feel fine today. I was a little sore yesterday, you know, the first day after the operation when the pain started to wear off—I mean, the painkiller, you know, the anesthesia. But I feel fine today, and I've done 2 days of therapy, learned to use my crutches.

Hillary wanted me to come home before she left for Africa. She and Chelsea wanted me well settled, so that's what I'm doing.

Q. Is that going to be difficult for you to use crutches for the next few months?

The President. I just want to do it well. It will be an interesting experience. I just want to be careful and not make any mistakes and do it well. But I think I'll be perfectly mobile and perfectly fine.

I also want to say that the medical team I had at the Bethesda Naval Medical Center did a magnificent job. They really were wonderful, and I feel very fortunate. And the American people should know that that military medical center is a very good place, not just for the President but for everybody who is treated there.

President's Planned Travel

Q. Did they have to twist your arm to get you to delay the trip to Helsinki for a day?

The First Lady. No twisting of arms—or any other limb. [Laughter]

The President. No, because I can go back to Copenhagen and do that probably when we do the NATO meeting.

Recovery From Knee Surgery

Q. Sir, does it hurt every time you move?

The President. No.

Q. It doesn't?

The President. No. You just have to learn to use a few different muscles. But it's quite interesting. I mean, it will be a learning experience. It's like going back to school and learning some new things.

Q. Do you think this will get you any sympathy votes in Congress for any of your bills? [Laughter]

The President. I don't know, but if it does, I'll take them any way I can get them. [Laughter] I'd be very grateful if it did.

Q. Glad to have him home, Mrs. Clinton?

The First Lady. Yes, I'm very glad to have him home.

The President. Goodbye.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:46 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, following the President's return from the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD, where he underwent knee surgery on March 14. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on the Murder of John Slane in Northern Ireland March 17, 1997

I am deeply saddened by the murder last Friday of John Slane in Belfast. Our sympathy goes out to Mr. Slane's family and friends. This horrific killing deserves universal condemnation. I hope the British authorities will quickly identify who is responsible.

As I have said so many times, nothing worth having in Northern Ireland can be achieved by killing and maiming, terror and threats. The

people of Northern Ireland deserve a future of peace and prosperity unmarred by brutality and fear in their daily lives. I urge the people of both communities to make known in every way they can their repudiation of violence by any group, for any reason. I will continue to stand with those who stand for peace, today as we commemorate the saint who brought the message of peace to Ireland, and every day.