

Remarks Following a Meeting with Prime Minister Enda Kenny of Ireland in Dublin, Ireland May 23, 2011

Prime Minister Kenny. If everybody can hear. Obviously, this is the first occasion in world history, I think, there is two bilaterals with an American President in the space of 67 minutes. But I want to welcome President Obama and the First Lady Michelle to Dublin on their way through to a state visit in England and further activities.

I can say that the Irish people have been waiting for this visit. Their excitement is palpable. And I trust that the President and his wife and party will enjoy their visit to Moneygall, home of his triple-great-grandfather Falmouth Kearney, when he goes down there today.

I'd like to say, on this occasion here we've discussed a range of issues. I've explained to the President the seriousness with which Ireland and its new Government, led by myself and the presence here of the *Oireachtas*, are dealing with the issues that affect our country: the banks, the unemployment situation, and our seriousness of intent in dealing with our budget deficit. Also, in conjunction with the conditions of the IMF-EU bailout, dealing with what we're doing there, and expressed appreciation for the general support of America in forums in that regard.

We have discussed the question of the Northern Ireland Assembly, the new assembly, our relationship with that assembly in relation to the British Government. We have discussed the implications and the consequences of the Queen's visit here, following on the President's invitation, and the enormous impact that that made together with the visit of the British Prime Minister during the course of that state visit.

We discussed the question of the President's speech in immigration, which he made in El Paso, and the fact that the administration are continuing to work on that.

We discussed the relationship between Ireland and the States, the continuing importance of that. And I reiterated the no-change policy in respect of the use of Shannon in respect of

American aircraft serving the U.N. resolutions passing through.

And we discussed a range of other issues relative to the country here and the fact that courage is necessary for leaders who take risks in the interests of solving the problems of their people and their countries.

I reiterated our appreciation and heartfelt thanks to the American President for his visit here. And like all politicians, we have some unfinished business, and that is that the next time he comes back, he's going to bring his golf clubs. [Laughter]

Thank you. Mr. President.

President Obama. Thank you so much.

Well, first of all, let me just say how extraordinarily grateful I am to Taoiseach, to the President of Ireland for their extraordinary hospitality to myself and Michelle. It is heartwarming to be here. And people even arranged for the sun to come out shortly after I arrived.

The friendship and the bond between the United States and Ireland could not be stronger. Obviously, it is not just a matter of strategic interest, it's not just a matter of foreign policy. For the United States, Ireland carries a blood link with us. And for the millions of Irish Americans, this continues to symbolize the homeland and the extraordinary traditions of an extraordinary people.

The Taoiseach and I have already had occasion to meet in Washington. It's wonderful to be able to discuss with him again some of the important issues that he is working on. We're glad to see that progress is being made in stabilizing the economic situation here. I know it's a hard road, but it's one that the Irish people are more than up to the task in achieving.

What I emphasized is that we want to continue to strengthen the bonds of trade and commerce between our two countries and that we are rooting for Ireland's success and we'll do everything that we can to be helpful on the path to recovery.

We also wanted to express our extraordinary appreciation to Ireland for all the work that it does internationally. I mentioned that Ireland punches above its weight. It's a small country, but the work it does on a range of issues—in peacekeeping, to the trainers in Afghanistan, to this work we're doing together on food security, to its strong voice on human rights—all that makes an enormous difference around the world. And the extraordinary relationship that we have with Ireland is also reflected in the work that it does in the EU, and so we're grateful for that.

Finally, I wanted to just express to the Irish people, and I'll have occasion to make some lengthier remarks later, how inspired we have been by the progress that's been made in Northern Ireland, because it speaks to the possibilities of peace and people in longstanding struggles being able to reimagine their relationships. To see Her Majesty the Queen of England come here and to see the mutual warmth and healing that, I think, took place as a consequence of that visit, to know that the former Taoiseach FitzGerald was able to witness the Queen coming here, that sends a signal not just in England, not just here in Ireland, but around the world. It sends what Bobby Kennedy once called "a ripple of hope" that may manifest itself in a whole range of ways.

And so to all those who have been working tirelessly to bring about peace in Northern Ireland, to those who've been willing to take those risks, we are grateful to them. To your administration, which I know is carrying on that legacy and continues to invest in it, we appreciate it.

Remarks at Trinity College Dublin in Dublin May 23, 2011

The President. Thank you! Hello, Dublin! Hello, Ireland! My name is Barack Obama—[*ap- pause*—of the Moneygall Obamas. And I've come home to find the apostrophe that we lost somewhere along the way. [*Laughter*]

We are proud of the part that America played in helping to get both sides to talk and to provide a space for that conversation to take place, and we want you to know that we will continue to be there as that moves forward. And we're confident that it, in fact, will.

So I am extraordinarily grateful to be here. To the Irish people, thank you for the wonderful welcome you're providing my wife and myself.

Q. When you come back to Washington, Mr. President, will you—

Prime Minister Kenny. Professor Padraic Whyte in Trinity College, he's the professor of children's literature, approached me some time ago. In 1922, Padraic Colum was commissioned by the Hawaiian legislature to track down myths and legends of Hawaii and write them as children's stories. He produced three volumes of children's stories, which I have presented and have the honor of a first edition, not to the President, not to the First Lady, but to his children Malia and Sasha, stories of their daddy's birthplace. And I hope they enjoy it.

President Obama. Well, this is an extraordinary gift, and it just confirms that if you need somebody to do some good writing, you hire an Irishman. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. at Farmleigh House. In his remarks, he referred to President Mary P. McAleese of Ireland; Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom; and former Prime Minister Garret FitzGerald of Ireland, who died on May 19. Prime Minister Kenny referred to Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Audience member. I've got it here!

The President. Now—is that where it is? [*Laughter*]

Some wise Irish man or woman once said that broken Irish is better than clever English.