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American Irish Newsletter - April 1995

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

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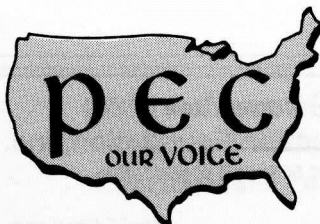


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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 20, Number 4

April 1995

Clinton Meets Adams!

(See Page 3)

We Owe Clinton A Debt Of Gratitude!

Turn To Action Request #1 On Page 6

PEC Network Stops Thatcher

On March 6 Boston College announced that former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher will not receive its prestigious Ignatius Medal. That statement brought to an end an outrage that reawakened the spirit of American support for Irish freedom, the kind of spirit we have not seen since the Hunger Strikes of 1981. Responsible for this magnificent success was the PEC network.

Can you imagine, Irish founded, Jesuit-run Boston College honoring Margaret Thatcher on the anniversary of the death of Bobby Sands -- as the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of Ireland's Great Hunger is underway?

It was the PEC, America's oldest grassroots network supporting Ireland's reunification, that initiated and organized this successful nationwide campaign. We thank member **Ann Murphy** of Quincy, Massachusetts for alerting us to this outrage.

We also thank the *Irish Echo*, *Irish Voice*, *Irish People*, *Irish Eyes*, *Boston Irish Reporter*, *Irish Edition*, *Radio Free Erin* and *The Adrian Flannelly Show* for their quick dissemination of the news. PEC also acknowledges the letters and phone calls generated by the AOH, FOIF, IAUC and INA. And three cheers to all the BC alumni and ordinary people, Irish and non-Irish alike, who got involved.

An important turning point in the campaign were the letters and phone calls generated by PEC members in response to our March newsletter R&D, *Boston College To Honor Margaret Thatcher*, (mailed on February 22). The sudden surge in communications from across the US and abroad generated by PEC members made clear to BC that this protest would not go away, which BC expected. Another important element that alerted those who do not monitor the Irish American media, was the coverage provided by New York's *Daily News* and Massachusetts' *Boston Globe*. The protest swept right across the United States. **The Irish hunger strikers did not die in vain!**

Perhaps the most significant success of the protest is that it has reawakened the spirit of Irish freedom in many Americans, Irish and non-Irish alike, who drifted away after the hunger strike.

And that "reawakening" could not have come at a better time. PEC network will need the help of as many people as possible to assure that our government keeps the peace process moving in the right direction -- to keep pressure on the British government to make sure the peace process moves ahead and that it concludes with a permanent peace decided by the people of Ireland.

There isn't anything we can't achieve when we work together -- the PEC way!

Newsbits by Kathy Regan

An Ulster Unionist delegation expressed concerns about the cross border aspects of the White House investment conference on Ireland when they met national security advisor Anthony Lake. "We are concerned that the wide boys around Dublin will be putting out their greedy paws to grasp whatever they can," the Rev. Martin Smyth, MP for South Belfast said after the meeting in the White House. Mr. Smyth added, "We got an assurance as far as the government and executive here were concerned, they wanted it as an investment conference to stimulate the economy in Northern Ireland. (*Irish Times* 2/22/95)

Residents along the Fermanagh-Monaghan border claimed last night that a 10 man army patrol was intercepted in County Monaghan. It claimed that the soldiers were in full combat gear, carrying weapons and radio equipment. Monaghan Sinn Fein councillor Caoimhghn O Caolain said he was in touch with the office of the Taoiseach to have the incursion raised with the British authorities. Eire police said an incident was reported before 3 pm. (*Newsletter* 2/22/95)

Labour Northern Ireland spokes-
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OUR VIEW

With the recent publication of the Framework Document and the continuing success of the Irish Republican Army and Loyalist ceasefires, the peace process has reached a crucial stage. To protect the peace it is necessary that all party talks begin immediately.

When the IRA called its ceasefire on August 31, the British government promised a bold and imaginative response. We have yet to see this response. As we go to press, the British government still refuses to meet with Sinn Fein at the all important ministerial level. The British government is still dragging their heels, placing immovable obstacles (ie. the surrendering of IRA weaponry and arms which was not part of the Joint Declaration) on the road to peace.

There is only one way to find a solution to a conflict. That is to negotiate. Let's put an end to British government foot dragging, an end to unreasonable pre-conditions and lets get to the table and begin all party talks.

During the PEC's recent visit to Ireland, north and south, a view expressed by some was that elements in the Unionist political parties and the British government were lamenting the success of the ceasefires. With the cessation of violence Unionist politicians can no longer blame their intransigence on IRA violence. Unfortunately some have expressed the view that these same leaders would prefer a return to violence instead of being forced to deal with the complex political realities of the situation. If these elements are not dealt with the results would be catastrophic.

Now that the long awaited Framework Document has been published, the next phase must commence. The people of Northern Ireland, nationalist and unionist, demand and deserve that their representatives sit down and negotiate a just and lasting solution to the conflict.

Political Education Committee (PEC)

American Ireland Education Foundation, Inc.

A non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization

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Offensive Situations

British Lies In American Schools

by Chris Tumulty, Pennsylvania

On the Channel One program, "The Classroom Channel," of February 22, 1995 there was a 90 second clip about Northern Ireland. The statement was made that, "Religion is behind the conflict in Northern Ireland." This is a blatant lie. This view did not come from any interview with a person on the street. It is a fabrication of British propaganda.

The Classroom Channel delivers commercial-free programming, free of charge, to secondary schools across the US reaching about 8 million young American students.

The use of news media to promulgate a British lie is irresponsible reporting and an abuse of our free speech right. The British government has squelched free speech in the north, but uses our right here to spread its lies. This must be stopped.

Most abhorrent is the fact that this rubbish is being fed to our unsuspecting students. They have no opportunity to learn the truth. Channel One owes 8 million American students an apology and the truth.

Please write to: Mr. Harry McQuillan, President, K-3 Communications, 717 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10022, or call: 212 745-0100.

Dear Sir:

On February 22 a Channel One news program described the conflict in Northern Ireland as being based on religion. This is untrue. The conflict in Northern Ireland is a political one that has nothing to do with religion. As a news service that plays a crucial role in the education of school students, you have a responsibility to report the truth, not myths and propaganda. Please correct these inaccuracies in further reporting on Northern Ireland.

Sincerely,

Send Offensive Situations to: Paul Newman,
9 Deltic Road, New City, NY 10956

During the week of February 23-28, 1995, the PEC travelled to Ireland, north and south, as observers at the Sinn Fein Ard Fhies to determine reaction to the Framework Document (FD) and Sinn Fein's plans for the peace process, and for meetings with political, economic and community leaders from both communities in the north. Through these meetings we were able to gather the general state of affairs in the north in regards to the FD, peace process, the economic perspective and the general prospects for the future.

PEC Visits The North

by Sean Kane, *PEC Director of Operations*

On February 23 the PEC met with Rev. Des Wilson and members of the Springhill Community Center. According to Rev. Wilson, "little has changed in nationalist areas since the ceasefire. Harassment by the security forces has not ceased, the British policy of discrimination and economic deprivation against nationalists has not changed." Rev. Wilson and the people in the Springhill area are very weary of the FD and the fact that the British government seems bent on upholding the unionist veto. "Until the British government realizes that their illegal occupation of our country is the problem and announce their intention to leave, there will not be real peace in Ireland," said Wilson.

PEC also met with members of the West Belfast Economic Forum, the Falls Community Council and the Faile na Phobail. All three organizations are community based in relation to economic and cultural development in nationalist areas. As of the moment the economic outlook for nationalist areas in the north is bleak. Official unemployment figures are put at around 50%. According to the West Belfast Economic Forum, the number is closer to 80%. According to Ruth Taillon, there is a need for serious investment in enterprises that will produce steady and long term employment. For too long this area has endured systematic discrimination and economic deprivation. That has to change. They called for future investment in the north to be focused on the most deprived areas and proportional to need. Ruth Taillon states, "There are a lot of talented and skilled people in these areas. Investment in these areas is not a case of charity, but a definite opportunity for mutual benefit for both business

interests and the community."

PEC met with the Centre for Research and Development (CRD), their main focus at this time is the need for the reformation of policing in the north. They called for the disbandment of the RUC and the setting up of a community based policing system that would be acceptable to all people in the north. They also stressed the need for the release of all political prisoners, if the peace process is to succeed.

PEC also met with Mrs. Brige Kelly, the mother of Casement Accused member Sean Kelly. From her we received a first hand account of the progress of the case as well as the history. We were not pleased with what we were to be told. Right now the case is in limbo. Sir Patrick Mayhew has refused to grant an appeal to date. Crucial pieces of evidence which could clear these three men has been withheld from the defense. Reminiscent of the Guilford Four and the Birmingham Six, these innocent men are being made scapegoats or as Mrs. Kelly wisely put it, "they are serving as a punishment on the nationalist community of West Belfast." Unfortunately this case seems to be no closer to an end since the day these men entered the Kesh. Justice seems to be a long ways away.

Our trip to Ireland was a very productive one. We were able to get a first hand account of the political and economic outlook for the area with this new phase of peace. As a result of our meetings with both communities (see related R&D, *PEC Continues Unionist Outreach*), we now have a deeper understanding of the present situation in the north, the hopes for the future and the role the PEC can play to develop it.

Clinton Meets Adams

On Thursday, March 17 President Bill Clinton met with Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams, the first US President ever to meet with a leader of Sinn Fein. The President also lifted the ban on fund-raising by Gerry Adams. The President's courageous actions were taken against the strong opposition of the British government and Secretary of State Warren Christopher who sides with the British government.

Unlike his predecessors, the President has displayed guts in his dealings with the British. We can't say the same for flip-flop Speaker Newt Gingrich. First he was going to meet Adams, but when told by the Brits not to, he decided not to meet him. But when Clinton said yes to Adams, Gingrich again reversed his decision. What kind of leadership is this? Three cheers for Clinton, the man of the hour.

Britons Support Irish Unity

A Gallup poll published in Britain's *Daily Telegraph* found that 58% of British citizens would welcome a united Ireland if that was the final result of peace negotiations. Only 21% opposed a united Ireland. A recent poll in the Irish Republic found that 83% of the population prefer a united Ireland solution. Britain, which includes the colony of Northern Ireland, has a total population of 60 million. Yet, according to the Framework Document, the minority Unionist population of 900,000 have the built in right to veto a united Ireland even if that is the desired solution of the vast majority of the citizens of Ireland and Britain. Where is democracy?

The Gallup poll also showed over two-thirds of British citizens declaring that Unionist politicians would not be justified in refusing to take part in negotiations based on the Framework Document.

Newsbits *con't from page 1*

woman [Dr.] Mo Mowlam is to visit IRA prisoners being held in an English jail following fears about their health. The Redcar MP confirmed that she will visit republican inmates at Bellmarsh prison near Woolwich after their families complained that they were in a terrible state. They saw the men last Friday for the first time in six months. A spokeswoman for Dr. Mowlam said, "Mo has spoken to the governor of the prison about the difficulties the families had in visiting before. . . She feels it is an issue which is also important for Irish people living in Britain." Dr. Mowlam may also raise the issue of expense incurred by the prisoners relatives on flights and accommodation following the canceled visits. (*Irish Press* 3/7/95)

On March 3, 1995, the remainder of the Ballymurphy Seven, Hugh McLaughlin, Michael Beck and Tony Garland were acquitted before Lord Justice Kerr in Belfast High Court. In a fitting testament to this enormous miscarriage of justice, in acquitting these young men, Justice Kerr stated, "while I must find you not guilty in this matter, I seriously doubt your innocence." This glaring injustice of the legal system in Northern Ireland will not be fully rectified until just compensation is arranged for the torture and suffering the families and the young men have had to experience. (*PEC-AIN* 3/3/95)

Britain is in the international dock today over the SAS killing of unarmed IRA members in Gibraltar. Niall Farrell, whose sister Mairead was one of the shot trio said that he hoped the European Court of Human Rights would find the government guilty of murder. Mairead Farrell, Sean Savage and Daniel McCann died in Gibraltar on March 6, 1988. They were killed in an SAS ambush during which 27 bullets were fired within seconds. If the court finds against Britain it will become the first European State to be found guilty of breaching the right to life convention. Farrell described the SAS action as "a clear shoot to kill operation" and said: "Even though Dan and Mairead had their hands raised in surrender, as verified by three independent witnesses they were nevertheless shot to death." (*Irish News* 2/20/95)

On February 22, 1995, the British and Irish governments issued the long awaited Framework Document outlining their jointly agreed ideas for a new relationship relating to Northern Ireland. After reviewing the document, we feel it can provide a real basis for progress in resolving the dispute in Northern Ireland. It is not a blueprint for a united Ireland, at least not in the near future, despite the alarms raised by the extreme loyalists. But it can fairly be said the Document would be a basis for reconciliation among the parties.

It must be recognized that any hope for progress on the complicated political matters in the Northern Ireland dispute requires compromise by both sides. And that is what this document does. It is a balanced set of compromises, requiring agreement on all aspects of the proposals, (and these are only proposals, not a final deal). Everything will depend on the next stage, the discussion among the parties at interest.

HOPEFUL FRAMEWORK

by A.R. Doyle, *Vice President*

What are the key elements of the Framework Document? We see it as the following:

(1) "Constitutional issues" - some good, some not so good, from our perspective. These include rejection of the "all Ireland" approval process (a separate Northern Ireland approval is called for); British commitment to accept a united Ireland if ever "a majority" (more than 50%) in Northern Ireland want it; legal safeguards for respect of both traditions either within Northern Ireland or in a future united Ireland; the Irish Government to propose changes to the Irish Constitution (presumably only after an agreement on the Framework principles) "to reflect the principles of consent in Northern Ireland." This formulation does not require Ireland to completely abandon its claims to British laws such as the Government of Ireland Act to encompass the new understandings. (Britain has no written Constitution)

(2) "Institutional Proposals," of three "strands":

(a) "Structures in Northern Ireland," on which there is no detail at all, but which presumably is intended to be some form of devolved government, "to be negotiated" by the Northern Ireland parties. This is a tall order, but one which can be accomplished if good will exists. If it doesn't, then nothing will come of any of this.

(b) "North/South Institutions," apparently the main problem for the Loyalist leadership, but maybe not for

their people. Put simply, this part calls for some type of all-Ireland institution to involve official representatives from both the North and the Republic to deal with whatever they can agree might be useful to handle jointly. It is suggested by the governments that a broad range of items might be included (ie., more than just tourism) including some European Community matters and many others. Again, a lot of good will is needed to accomplish this.

(c) "East-West Structures," meaning relations between Britain and the Republic. Significant here is that the "Intergovernmental Conference" between the Governments will be continued, but it will not be able to deal with matters within the devolved assembly of the province of the new Northern Ireland (as the PEC long ago pointed out as a danger in the Anglo-Irish Agreement).

In conclusion, the Framework Document sets forth excellent ideas for a resolution of the present impasse and leaves hope for even better solutions in the future. We understand that the governments agree that any final agreement must deal with all "strands" of the proposals, and this is essential. For example the Loyalists cannot exclude the "North/South" portions entirely. We now must hope that the good will mentioned above will be forthcoming from both sides. Let the discussions begin.

On February 25 and 26, 1995, Sinn Fein held its annual Ard Fheis (party conference) at the historic Mansion House in Dublin. In attendance for the American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC) were President John Finucane, Director of Operations Sean Kane, PEC Ireland correspondent Sandy Carlson and PEC Massachusetts representative Jim Browne. The general theme of the conference was British presence as the root of the conflict, the need for the immediate move to all-party talks and the Unionists to join in the search for a lasting peace.

SINN FEIN'S ARD FHEIS: "CREATE PEACE: UNITE IRELAND"

by Sandy Carlson, reporting from Ireland

Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams congratulated Sinn Fein, the IRA, and activists among the Irish diaspora for "dramatically advancing the Irish peace process in the past twelve months." He also cited nationalist achievements as the "ending of republican isolation, the building of a broad nationalist consensus throughout Ireland, the heightening of national consciousness, the winning of international allies and the gradual exposure of British policy and unionist intransigence as the root of the Anglo-Irish problem.

The theme of the Ard Fheis emphasized that the sovereign, united Ireland republicans will not seek to exclude unionists and stressed the need for a peaceful, just and united society in Ireland that must include all sections of the Irish people. They also stressed that the peace process is founded on inclusiveness -- of bringing together people of different opinions with the purpose of finding agreement.

Sinn Fein called for "equality of treatment" in employment, Irish culture and identity, treatment of elected representatives and voters, education in both English and Irish, and in policing. Sinn Fein also demanded that both governments and all political parties treat Sinn Fein as an equal.

Mr. Adams described the Framework Document as "neither a solution nor a settlement," but a discussion document, the publication of which indicated the governments' recognition that partition has failed." He also said the governments should "move the situation speedily forward into inclusive dialogue. This inclusive dialogue must include discussions of constitutional and political change, demilitarization and democratic rights.

"There is a need for fundamental constitutional and political change if we are to bring this phase of the peace process to a democratic conclusion. Sinn Fein's objective is to bring about an

inclusive and negotiated end to British jurisdiction in Ireland. We seek to replace it with a new and agreed Irish jurisdiction," said Adams. He acknowledged that unionists saw Ireland's political future differently and that inclusive dialogue without preconditions or a predetermined outcome were essential.

The conference also focused on the removal of all guns from the conflict. This included the decommissioning of British soldiers and tearing down of their military installations in Ireland; ending repressive legislation that allows for house raids, arrests, harassment, and the opening of all border roads. The process will require the disbanding of the RUC, the release of all Irish political prisoners, and the removal of all the guns--British, Loyalist, unionist and republican, from Irish politics. Calling the IRA ceasefire, a measure taken by a confident, united and unbroken army, Sinn Fein said that their initiative must not be squandered and that republicans should build upon this important decision.

In a touching gesture, Mr. Adams said that republicans must "address honestly and openly the hurt we have caused. I have publicly acknowledged the hurt which republicans have inflicted on others. I do so again today. For a healing process to work, everyone must do this, republicans and unionists and loyalist and, especially, the British government."

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The conference stressed the great new possibilities opened up and the importance of political openness and cooperation. "The struggle has not ended. We are in another phase -- a new phase of struggle which needs new thinking and tactics," said Adams.

PEC National President John Finucane stated, "Sinn Fein is committed to the peace process. It has entered a new phase, that of politics and public relations. President Clinton's meeting with Mr. Adams has given Sinn Fein well-deserved credibility world-wide. Sinn Fein, Ireland's only political party totally committed to a united Ireland, will need all the help it can get in the US."

New Video On Ireland's Great Hunger

Grosse Ile produced by Radharc Prod.

Hundreds of thousands of Irish emigrated to North America during the Great Hunger to escape this man-made starvation. Grosse Ile became the final port of call for many of these immigrant ships after they were turned away from American ports. Many thousands are buried here.

This video takes you on a pilgrimage with descendants of the survivors back to the hallowed ground of Grosse Ile. Its landscape still bears the scars of those tragic years...30 minutes.

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Help Make The English-Irish Peace Process Work!

For information contact:
PEC-American Ireland Education Foundation, 54 South Liberty Drive, Suite 401, Stony Point, NY 10980 or call 800 777-6807.

Published by the PEC-AIEF April 1995

PEC Continues Unionist Outreach Program

by Sean Kane, *Director of Operations*

As part of our ongoing Outreach program started by President John Finucane in 1989, the American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC) again met with representatives of the north's Unionist community during a recent visit to Northern Ireland. As we move towards a new Ireland, it is of the utmost importance that we develop an understanding of all sides in the conflict.

On February 27, 1995, the PEC met with Mr. Sammy Douglas, Mr. John McQuillan and Mr. Morris Kinkead. These men are grassroots Protestant leaders with close ties to the Loyalist paramilitaries [the Ulster Defense Association (UDA) and the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF)]. Our meeting was very productive and enlightening, and we left with high hopes for the future and the peace process.

During the meeting, the Loyalists outlined the economic outlook for the Protestant areas of Belfast, expressed their views on the Framework Document, the peace process and their heritage, and hopes for the future.

By attending this meeting and later on a tour of Protestant East Belfast, we received a first-hand account of the levels of economic desperation. The men pointed out that working class Protestants have a similar level of suffering under British rule as their Catholic brethren. Official unemployment levels are estimated to be 40 percent. According to Mr. Douglas, who conducted a door-to-door survey five years ago, the actual rate is closer to 70 percent among Protestant males. Protestant East Belfast was once the industrial hub of Ireland. After WWII, Harland and Wolf employed more than 40,000 workers. Today the once mighty shipyard employs a mere 1,800. The textile and linen industry has collapsed. The general economic outlook is dire. Like the Catholic communities in West Belfast, there is a need for investment in the infrastructure in communities such as East Belfast in order to provide a cure to the chronic unemployment and poverty that currently prevails.

When one asks a unionist questions of a political nature, one

expects to hear the old slogans, "No Surrender! Sell out! Not an inch!" This is no longer the case among this new breed of Loyalist representatives. When I asked them their views on the Framework Document, their answers were very refreshing. While they do not like many aspects of the Document, do not accept the document as a solution feeling it would lead to a united Ireland, they expressed the need for all-party talks to commence immediately. They showed a genuine desire to sit down and negotiate a settlement.

Loyalists at the grassroots level disagree with their Unionist political

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leadership (ie., Paisley, Molyneaux). They also expressed the wish to find common ground with their Catholic brethren. "In the past if you questioned authority, questioned the effects of British policy on the working class or tried to establish cross community initiatives, you were seen as playing into the hands of the IRA or even being disloyal," said Douglas. This is how the Protestant working class was kept loyal and impoverished - a classic example of playing the orange card.

At the end of the meeting, we felt a new spirit in the air - one of respect, compromise and radical change. It seems that members of both communities are coming to the realization that they have more in common with each other than they have with people in Britain or the Republic. There seems to be a genuine change in attitudes and hope for a lasting peace and solution in the future.

FREE Brian Pearson

County Tyrone native Brian Pearson has become the latest victim in the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service's ongoing campaign of persecution against supporters of Irish freedom. Pearson, who is married to an American citizen and has a three year old American daughter, was informed by the INS on January 30, 1995 that he will be deported from the United States.

The reason behind the INS targeting of Pearson, according to the US government, is that he served time in prison for criminal offenses in Northern Ireland. Pearson was convicted in 1976 by a Diplock Court for political related offenses. **He was accorded political prisoners status** and served twelve years in Long Kesh.

After his release in 1988 he came to the United States. On the visa waiver there was a question of being convicted of any criminal offenses. As he was sentenced for political offenses, not criminal ones, he answered no.

Since his arrival in 1988, Pearson has been gainfully employed as a carpenter. In 1990, he married the former Doris Collins. On May 12, 1991 a daughter Siobhan was born to the Pearson's. Ever since his arrival Pearson has been a model citizen and family man.

Brian Pearson filed an application for permanent residency as the spouse of an American citizen. The INS found him to be excludable from the United States because of his past conviction. Now at the behest of the British government, our government is trying to deport him. Your help is needed to prevent this travesty of justice. **For information write: Brian Pearson Defense Fund, Rockland Irish Cultural Center, 284 Convent Road, Blauvelt, NY 10913 or call (914) 623-6416.**

For information on how you can help advance the Irish Peace Process call the American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC) at 800 777-6807.

James M. Lyons
United States Observer
International Fund For Ireland

Dear Mr. Finucane,

Your February 1995 American Irish Newsletter was again topical and informative. However, I must take serious issue with any suggestion that President Bill Clinton has in any way diminished his commitment for peace and prosperity in Ireland or "backed down on his campaign promises." In fact, the President's balanced commitment to Ireland -- the strongest of any president in at least the last 25 years -- has not only remained steadfast but has produced substantial and tangible results.

Almost immediately after taking office two years ago, President Clinton became the only American president to request an appropriation from Congress (\$20 million) to support the International Fund for Ireland. Since its inception, the Fund has been dedicated to the twin goals of economic development and reconciliation between the two traditions in the north of Ireland. To date, the Fund has been responsible for the creation of over 20,000 jobs and has invested over \$250 million in some 2,800 projects in Northern Ireland and the six border counties of the Republic. In 1994, President Clinton again requested a \$20 million appropriation for the Fund. In the aftermath of the announced cessation of violence by both sides last fall, the President requested Congress to increase this appropriation by 50 percent for each of the next two years to \$30 million for fiscal years 1996 and 1997. Assuming Congress agrees, the President's leadership in his first four years of office will have resulted in \$100 million of aid to Ireland, which is an unprecedented commitment to Ireland on the part of any administration.

While providing substantial economic support, the President has also courageously supported the peace process. His own personal interest and commitment to peace in Ireland has been complimented by the substantial efforts of other senior members of his Administration, especially Vice President Al Gore, who has personally devoted countless hours and energy to a campaign of quiet but effective diplomacy involving Sinn Féin and the Unionist community. The work of the President and the Vice President has been supported and implemented by the tireless efforts of other senior officials of the Administration including Ambassadors Jean Kennedy Smith and William Crowe, Consul General (Northern Ireland) Val Martinez, and senior White House officials such as Tony Lake, National Security Advisor; Nancy Soderberg, Staff Director, NSC; and Jack Quinn, Chief of Staff to Vice President Gore. The combination of these efforts has been welcomed and applauded by both the Irish and British governments and has clearly contributed to the peace process.

You will recall that President Clinton, over much objection and criticism, directed the issuance of a visa to Gerry Adams because he believed it was the right thing to do and would promote the cause of peace in Ireland. On both scores, he has been proven to be correct. The peace process in Ireland has the continued and unswerving commitment of his Admin-

istration and no other administration or party can point to more tangible results.

In December of last year, President Clinton asked Commerce Secretary Ron Brown to lead a high-level trade delegation of U.S. chief executive officers and senior government officials, including Senator Chris Dodd and former New York Governor Hugh Carey, to the Belfast investment conference hosted by Prime Minister John Major. The conference gave Secretary Brown the opportunity to reaffirm the President's commitment and announce a number of U.S. programs targeted to assist small business, women and long-term unemployed in the north of Ireland.

Finally, the President recently appointed the distinguished former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell as Special Advisor to the President and Secretary of State for Ireland. Senator Mitchell's charge is to ensure continued constructive support of the United States for the peace process and the economic development essential to a lasting and permanent peace. Senator Mitchell has undertaken this task with his full energy and commitment which will culminate in the Presidential Conference on Trade and Investment for Ireland to be held May 24-26 of this year in Washington, D.C. This unprecedented event is expected to generate substantial interest and investment opportunities for both Irish and U.S. companies and businesses.

In short, the record of this Administration with regard to Ireland knows no equal and should be supported and encouraged by Irish Americans of all faiths, Democratic or Republican. Hopefully, your readers will encourage Congress to continue to support the President's leadership toward lasting peace and permanent prosperity in Ireland.

Sincerely,
James M. Lyons

PEC Response: President Bill Clinton's St. Patrick's Day meeting with Gerry Adams has done much to reassure us that he is still heading in the right direction. His decision has been well received by many ordinary American Irish, not just organizations like the PEC. We hope that the President will soon grant amnesty to Irish political prisoners in the US and those facing deportation procedures.

We concur with Mr. Lyons: President Bill Clinton has done much more for peace in Ireland than any of his predecessors. He is the only president to do anything substantial in our view and we are grateful. While we commend the efforts of the senior Administration members cited above by Mr. Lyons, we still have grave concerns about other elements within the Clinton Administration, namely the State Department, Justice Department and FBI. These elements of the Administration have hindered and are hindering the peace process by their blindly pro-British positions. If these elements are to have their way, the ramifications for the peace process will be grave.

Action Requests

Write the letters below (or call), preferably in your own words, or as is. Be courteous. Have friends, organizations, business associates, etc., do the same.

1. Honorable Bill Clinton
The President
White House
Washington, DC 20500
Ph# 202 456-1111

Message: Thank you for your courageous decision to meet with Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein and to grant him permission to raise funds.

2&3. Write to both:
Hon. Robert Dole
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Newt Gingrich
Speaker of the House
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Request: Please take a public and impartial position on the Irish peace process. American involvement has played a central role in the advancement of peace in Ireland. Your unequivocal support for the President's Irish policy is critical to finding a permanent solution.

PEC Prevents MacBride Disaster

On February 14, 1995 the PEC learned that newly elected Gov. George Pataki planned to repeal New York's tough contract compliance MacBride Principles legislation. The story appeared in the *Times Union* of Albany, New York. According to the *Times Union* the move was contained in the governor's budget proposals but it was not given much attention, it was buried. Gov. Pataki quietly proposed eliminating the MacBride Principles. The governor's office "feared" that the Principles somehow contravene the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, (GATT).

The PEC immediately put out a press release to the media and commenced a letter-writing and phone call campaign to Gov. Pataki's office. On February 15 the governor's office contacted the PEC advising that he has reversed his decision and will not repeal MacBride. "As a member of the state Senate and Assembly, I wholeheartedly endorsed the MacBride Principles, and as governor I will continue my commitment to upholding the provisions of this fair employment act. In this regard, I have instructed that the MacBride Principles provisions be reinstated," the governor said.

On learning of the governor's reversal the PEC put out a press release which stated in part, "We are pleased that Governor George Pataki did the right thing and did it quickly. When we initiated the campaign to prevent the repeal of New York's MacBride Principles legislation, we were prepared for a long drawn out battle..."

We are especially thankful to member Ann Carroll for bringing this matter to PEC's attention thereby enabling us to prevent a problem before it began.

Please Send Your Donation!

If you have not already received our request for financial support, you will receive it shortly. Your donation is desperately needed. As you well know the PEC does excellent work. The latest PEC successes: stopped the Boston College honor to Thatcher and saved New York's MacBride Principles contract compliance legislation.

Please send whatever you can afford. Keep the PEC operating!

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