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COMMENTS: 1) Good Morning America Transcript
2) G.A. remarks from this am
3) Happy St. Patrick's Day!

ABC "GOOD MORNING AMERICA" INTERVIEW WITH:
JOHN BRUTON, IRISH PRIME MINISTER
JEAN KENNEDY SMITH, U.S. AMBASSADOR TO IRELAND
Executive Department/Agency
TV Programs
(REUTER TRANSCRIPTS 03/17/95; 186 Lines)
Item Key: 811

NANCY SNYDERMAN: This St. Patrick's Day is one full of hope that the peace process may finally bring an end to the violence in Northern Ireland. A cease-fire has been holding there now for six months.

A key player in the peace process is the Irish Prime Minister John Bruton, who is here on the traditional St. Patrick's Day visit Irish leaders make to the United States. He joins us this morning from Washington.

Also joining us, the American ambassador to Ireland, Jean Kennedy Smith. She received an award this week from "Irish-American" magazine as the Irish-American of the year.

I should start off by saying congratulations, Madame Ambassador. Good to have both of you with us.

Mr. Prime Minister, let me start with you. What has been your realistic expectation during this week's visit?

PRIME MINISTER BRUTON: I think the U.S. administration has played a crucial role in bringing peace to Ireland and I think it's going to move the process a bit further now. There are a number of issues that remain to be settled, like getting rid of the arms that are no longer necessary for us (still in store?) and also getting more prisoners released and getting reforms of the police and getting the people in Northern Ireland talking to one another. I think the U.S. administration can be very helpful on all three -- all four issues.

MS. SNYDERMAN: You'll be meeting with President Clinton later this morning. In addition to those items, are there any other issues on your agenda that you're going to be discussing with him?

PRIME MINISTER BRUTON: Principally those issues, and also I think I'll say a few words to him about the importance of supporting the United Nations peacekeeping worldwide.

MS. SNYDERMAN: Madame Ambassador, there has been tremendous pressure from the British government, particularly John Major, saying

we should not have embraced the visit this week from Gerry Adams, the leader of Sinn Fein, the political arm of the IRA, and yet, if I understand correctly, you have encouraged President Clinton to extend his hand forward, literally and figuratively, this week.

Why have you encouraged the administration and how does that come into play with everything else?

AMB. SMITH: Well, first I think President Clinton makes his own decisions, and I think he's studied this very carefully and I think he's very satisfied that there's been a cease-fire for seven months, and he feels that his role and the role of the United States is to encourage peace, so he felt that it was perfectly appropriate for Mr. Adams to come over and raise funds, because he can raise funds in Great Britain, as we know, so he felt this would encourage the peace process, encourage Mr. Adams in his role as -- in the peace process, so I think that -- I'm sure that this will mend, that there have been differences before with Great Britain on other matters, but I think that this is a temporary -- I'm sure a very temporary problem, so I think this -- I'm sure it will mend very quickly. We have a very long and historic relationship, so I think that will continue. I'm sure of it.

MS. SNYDERMAN: With that said, what do you see as the role of the United States in this peace process?

AMB. SMITH: I think the president has always felt that his role is to encourage the peace, to look for a negotiated settlement, not to get into the various difficult negotiations, but to just be there to support and to encourage both governments.

MS. SNYDERMAN: Mr. Prime Minister, you have talked in the past about redefining Ireland as a necessity to advance this peace process to the next step. What do you mean by that?

PRIME MINISTER BRUTON: Well, basically you have two communities in Northern Ireland, one community that believes that they're British. Another community believes that they're Irish, and yet they have to share the same peace of land, and we've got to find a new way of looking at the issue that puts aside, really, the issue of flags or who owns the land and say, "How can the people live together?" regardless of who they owe their ultimate loyalty to, and that's what the document that John Major, the British prime minister, and myself have put together is about -- finding a way in which two different nationalities can share the same piece of land. And if we can get it right in Northern Ireland, we may well provide a model for all sorts of similar problems in other parts of Central and Eastern Europe.

MS. SNYDERMAN: What do you want from Gerry Adams?

PRIME MINISTER BRUTON: I want him to get the IRA to get rid of their guns, to get rid of their explosives, to put them out of commission completely. As long as those guns are lying around, the Unionist community in Northern Ireland, who were at the receiving end of a lot of IRA violence in the past, won't feel secure, and people who are not secure will never be generous, and everybody needs to be generous, so we need to get the arms out of commission so that everybody can come towards one another and really show that they're willing to compromise.

MS. SNYDERMAN: So many people have been so hopeful and so encouraged that the cease-fire has lasted this long. I think a lot of naysayers thought this day in itself wouldn't have arrived.

Realistically, what is the next step? You talked about getting the arms out of the IRA's hands, but what realistically is the next step to try to heal these wounds that have lasted generations?

PRIME MINISTER BRUTON: Four steps should be taken now — one, the arms should be got out of commission by the IRA and also by the loyalist organizations. Two, the Unionist parties must start talking to the other parties about the future. They haven't been doing that. Also, I think the British government has got to make a move on release of prisoners and on the question of policing. We need a system of policing in Northern Ireland that everybody can fully accept. That isn't the case now.

So we need to see sort of progress on each of those four fronts, but I think it's very important that the IRA in particular show leadership by getting rid of the arms.

MS. SNYDERMAN: Prime Minister Bruton, Madame Ambassador, thank you so much for being with us and happy St. Patrick's Day.

PRIME MINISTER BRUTON: Thank you.

AMB. SMITH: Thank you.

REMARKS AT NATIONAL PRESS CLUB'S MORNING NEWSMAKER BY
GERRY ADAMS, PRESIDENT OF SINN FEIN; THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB
WASHINGTON, DC; 9:00 A.M. EST; FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 1995

Other Items of Interest

(REUTER TRANSCRIPTS 03/17/95; 626 Lines)

Item Key: 816

MR. ADAMS: Can I first of all apologize on the -- for the lack of punctuality by the Sinn Fein delegation, and can I wish you all a very happy and holy and sober St. Patrick's Day?

The -- this St. Patrick's Day comes, I think, the first time in 25 years -- and some indeed would say the first time in 75 years -- where we have the possibility, the hope, the best hope for a lasting peace in our own country and between Ireland and Britain, and when John Hume and I issued our first statement at the beginning of this process, we stressed that the process threatened no one, and that we were seeking the agreement of all sections of our people.

Your president, the president of the United States, has played a very positive part in this process. I want to commend him and to commend those senators and Congress members who have helped to focus and who have struggled and worked for justice and peace back in my country.

St. Patrick's Day is a special occasion for Irish people, perhaps celebrated more here in the U.S.A. than back home, but it's important to stress that Irishness is not confined or excluded to any one section of our people. It is a shared reality of what we all are. It's the common history of the island and of the people of the island of Ireland in all our diversity, and it's the sum total of the many traditions. Irish Republicans -- and Sinn Fein is an Irish Republican party -- believe in the unity of Protestants, Catholics, and dissenters. An Ireland without all of its people, without the involvement and inclusion, without the participation of our Northern Protestant brothers and sisters would not be complete. They have as much right to the island of Ireland as the rest of us.

Sinn Fein wants to see an end to divisions in Ireland. We want to see an end to the involvement of the British government in our affairs. We want to see an end to conflict, to injustice, and to inequality. There's a wide expectation -- and Sinn Fein shares it -- of the need and for the need of a negotiated political settlement which would be the foundation from which and upon which a functioning democracy which would reflect the diversity of all of our people can grow and flourish.

And the peace process has brought all of us a good way along the road towards a peace settlement, yet we have still not got peace, but I am confident that when the British government engages fully in the process, when the Unionists participate, when we move to all-party talks led by both governments, we will have created a dynamic which will make change inevitable and irreversible.

And there needs to be change. There needs to be fundamental constitutional and political change. There needs to be an end to the undemocratic system which exists in the North and movement towards the implementation of democratic rights which include national rights. There needs to be a total demilitarization of the situation. Everyone concerned, to achieve lasting peace, must apply themselves to shaping the conditions to create these necessary changes.

And in our view these can only be accomplished by dialogue, through inclusive discussions and negotiations involving all parties with an electoral mandate. Everyone must be at the table and every issue must be on the table. All parties must be accorded equality of treatment back in Ireland in the same way as we have been accorded equality of treatment here in the USA. The British government must uphold, not undermine, the democratic rights of all sections of the electorate.

And everyone has an influence over the present situation. The collective application of that influence can transform the political climate and put an end to the failures of the past. The end of the British ban from ministerial contact with our party is an absolutely necessary development if we are to move into talks.

There has been some focus in recent days on the issue of decommissioning of weapons.

Let me spell out Sinn Fein's attitude on this issue. Sinn Fein is a political party not an army. Unlike the British government, we have no authority or control over arms. Neither do we accept any preconditions on our entry into dialogue. Members of our party, including elected representatives, including men, women and the children of our members, have been killed in an attempt to undermine our electoral mandate. And I am totally committed, as I am sure you would expect me to, to upholding the rights of all those who vote for Sinn Fein.

At the same time, we wish to make use of whatever influence we have in all matters and in a positive way and with the aim of advancing the peace process. This is why we argue and will continue to argue, and this is why we will negotiate for the decommissioning,

of discrimination, and of repressive legislation. That is why we argue for the release of all prisoners, Loyalist and Republican, that is why we argue for the creation of a proper policing service and the disbandment of the RUC. Demilitarization requires movement on these matters and on the decommissioning of all the weapons. We want to see the permanent removal of British weapons, Unionist weapons, Loyalist weapons, of the licensed weapons in the hands of both the RUC and the Unionist section of our people and, of course, the permanent removal of all the Republican weapons.

There can be no single-issue agenda. We need to move forward making advances on all threads of the peace process. Since I came here, and in the course of conversations with various journalists, I have indicated that the leader of our delegation, Mark (?) McGuinness, who is concerned with the bilateral meetings with the British officials back at home, I have informed journalists that we have been in contact with these British officials as part of our ongoing dialogue and in an effort to move the dialogue on. We wish to engage in substantive, serious and comprehensive discussions with British ministers on all relevant issues. A serious and substantive exploration of these issues and a constructive discussion of them can only be accomplished in dialogue with British ministers; in other words, can only be established in dialogue with policymakers.

I am pleased, therefore, to announce that we have moved toward a discussion of the agendas for meetings between Sinn Fein and British ministers. These meetings will take place sooner rather than later, and this is my firm conviction.

So it's important as we move into the future, as we move into this new phase of the peace process, that we aim to make this moment in our history the future, that we aim to see a future which sets behind all of the divisions, all of the failures, all the conflict of the present and the past, and so that from this St. Patrick's Day on, this can be the first St. Patrick's Day of a new era of peace and freedom and justice in Ireland, between the people of Ireland and between the people of Ireland and the people of Britain.

Sinea (sp). Thank you.

MODERATOR: I'm sure Mr. Adams will be happy to take some questions.

Q This movement to discussing -- on negotiations with the British, have you made some sort of concession on the issue of demilitarization?

MR. ADAMS: Well, our position has been, as I've said, transparent. We have always been anxious and concerned to discuss all matters. It is we who said everything must be on the table and everyone must be at the table, and the sooner we get into discussing all of these matters, then the more quickly progress can be made.

Q So you haven't actually given any particular concession.

MR. ADAMS: I don't think we're in the business of doing anything other than making peace, and I don't see this in terms of giving or taking concessions. People have rights, and the people of Ireland have the right to live in peace in a demilitarized Ireland. I think it's a mistake if one sees this as a competition of you give, I take, one up for me, one down for you. That isn't what happened in South Africa. That isn't what has happened in other conflicts which have been successfully resolved.

Q Put another way, then, what exactly happened between the two sides to get to this point where you've now agreed (to the agenda?)?

MR. ADAMS: Well, I don't think that's a matter for necessary publication. I think what's important is that we have moved to a point where we're actually discussing the agendas for meetings between our people and British ministers.

Q What is it you now agree on or understand about each other that you didn't before?

MR. ADAMS: Well, we have always understood -- we have always understood the need to discuss all matters as soon as the British introduced ministers into the dialogue. We always refused to accept any preconditions being set upon our voters.

Q Has there been an indication then that -- (inaudible)?

MR. ADAMS: Well, we are actually discussing agendas for meetings at which ministers will attend.

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. ADAMS: Well, I mean, I can only repeat what I've said. We are discussing agendas for meetings between and us and ministers.

Q But who are you discussing that with? Are you discussing that with yourselves or are you discussing that with British authorities? It isn't clear to me that you're -- having said earlier

that you're not taking any preconditions at all, which the British are insisting on, are you discussing these agendas with the British -- are you discussing with the British or among yourselves or with the United States government?

MR. ADAMS: Well, we're actually going to discuss them with the government of Mongolia, Peter. Who do you think we were discussing them with?

(Laughter, cross talk.)

Q It's not clear from your statements, as your statements are so very frequently unclear, as you must be very well aware.

MR. ADAMS: Okay. Well let me --

Q This is not a clear statement. You do not say with whom you're discussing these agendas.

MR. ADAMS: Please, Peter. I know people here may have some patience with you, and I will attempt to treat you with the patience which you deserve.

Q Some clarity would be --

MR. ADAMS: Thank you.

Now, I will read this again for the benefit of Peter. Had I read it in the language of my own country, you may have had an excuse, but I read it in the language of your country.

Over the last few days, I have indicated that the leader of our delegation in the bilateral meetings with British officials, Martin McGuinness, has been in contact with them -- "them" being British officials. As part of our ongoing dialogue and in an effort to move this dialogue on. We wish to engage in serious, substantive and comprehensive discussion with British ministers on all relevant issues.

I'll skip the next because it isn't pertinent to your question.

I am pleased therefore to announce that we have moved -- that is, we and the British officials -- to a discussion of the agendas for meetings between Sinn Fein and British ministers. These meetings will take place sooner rather than later. That is my firm expectation.

Q But Sir Patrick Mayhew says that before these would happen

you have to give up -- either give up some of your arms or make a gesture saying you are prepared to do this.

MR. ADAMS: Well, I mean, I don't want to be speaking for Sir Patrick Mayhew. I have spelled out for you the situation as it is. I'm sure everyone else understands what I have said.

Q Mr. Adams, the International Fund for Ireland is scheduled to spend \$30 million to develop projects this year in Ireland -- (inaudible). Does Sinn Fein have any say at all in how this money will be spent?

MR. ADAMS: Well, we have in fact had a number of discussions with -- indeed, yesterday I had a very good discussion with Senator George Mitchell, who is heading up the economic program of President Clinton in Ireland.

And we have made a number of submissions on how any investments should be from the bottom up, should be for areas of greatest need, those which have been most affected by deprivation and discrimination. We also welcome the focus from the USA, which is for the six counties and the border counties. The all-Ireland nature of that is very, very welcome.

Q Have you recommended specific projects?

MR. ADAMS: No, we have not. We think that that's a matter indeed for those who are involved in creative efforts on the ground, particularly in the deprived areas, and we have encouraged the democratization of this process, that is, to get the fullest participation by those who are the real experts in this situation.

Q Are you satisfied with the IFI as an instrument for American aid? Would you like to see something (different)?

MR. ADAMS: Well, we think there has been some improvement in the situation since first it was conceived. There can be still progress made, but that's part of the ongoing dialogue.

Q If I can ask you just one more follow-on, sentiment and emotion aside, it's pretty hard to argue a case for Ireland as being economically or strategically significant to the United States, yet the American taxpayers are asked to shoulder a 50 percent increase in aid for the island of Ireland (this year?), an unprecedented increase, to spend 30 million of their dollars at a time they're also asked to cut school lunch programs, welfare payments to needy Americans. Is there a case that you can make to an American taxpayer

for why we should be giving money to Ireland?

MR. ADAMS: Well, I have never belonged to the school of begging bowl politics. I've never had a sense of coming here seeking charity or going anywhere else on that basis. What I have always argued for is proper investment and investment on the basis of proper union regulations and antidiscrimination legislation. I would be reluctant to be involved in any domestic issue here. I would be as much concerned about the welfare of people here as in my own country. At the same time, one does appreciate the fact that there are 44 million Irish Americans who have a concern for Ireland, and I think it's the -- it's a small amount that has been put into Ireland in comparison with other foreign policy concerns of the U.S. administration.

Q So is there a case other than the sentimental case to be made? I don't hear you making it.

MR. ADAMS: Well, there is a case, because Ireland indeed provides a door straight into the European Union. Ireland has a long affinity with the USA. There are in corporate America a very large amount of Irish-Americans who have ties which makes the development of industrial or other infrastructures much easier.

Q But from an American viewpoint, wouldn't you agree that the president is sort of sticking his neck out for you?

MR. ADAMS: Well, I think the president has been right on this issue. And I think that there's nothing succeeds like success. And I'm not an expert in the detail of your politics, but on this issue -- contrary to the spin which is sometimes put on the man -- he has shown a core conviction. He has shown (assuredness?) and a commitment to this issue. He has made critical judgment when advised otherwise, and I think he has been right to so. And what he has done, indeed, has been evenhanded and has been seen to help and to enhance the peace process.

Q Should he stick his neck out for the Unionist point of view as well?

MR. ADAMS: I would argue at all times for evenhandedness. The Unionists were invited here today. They didn't come. We cannot -- as I pointed out in my speech -- have an Ireland which is worthy of our people unless it has the full participation of all sections of our people. So, I certainly would want to see equality. As a victim of marginalization, I don't believe in it. I think everyone must be included.

Q Mr. Adams, do you have any comment on -- (inaudible) -- the two bombs that -- (inaudible) -- yesterday?

MR. ADAMS: I thought it was only one, but I was asked on my way and I was told there was some other development this morning. I think it's obviously an element of British dirty tricks. The consolation is that no one was hurt. And I think it's a distraction from the process, and it's totally unhelpful to it.

Q Do you have the insurance -- the assurance that the IRA was not involved?

MR. ADAMS: Well, I don't, but I'm quite certain and sure that the IRA was not involved. It's unlikely that the IRA would maintain for the last half a year, a cessation was only one breach, and then on the day which I meet President Clinton that the IRA would see some military or political purpose in placing a dud bomb. It's patently an operation which didn't involve Republicans, and whose purpose was to divert the peace process.

And I think all of us who are committed to the peace process must defy those who are engaged in that operation and move the peace process on.

Q Mr. Adams, until the developments of the past year -- certainly a year ago -- it would have been unthinkable for you to be escorted with honor into the presence of the president of the United States to shake his hand and other honors which you have been accorded during your visit. You would have been, in effect, a political pariah here to many, while you would have also had supporters here. While you must be heartened by the change, how does it make you feel? Is it somewhat strange to see this transformation in the view of you in the past few months?

MR. ADAMS: Well, it is gratifying, of course, to be received as I have been received. And I'm not on an ego trip, so it's important from the point of view of those who I represent.

We have had for two decades here censorship through visa denial. We have had direct censorship. Peter may seem a wee bit eccentric here, but I mean, he's the run-of-the-mill journalist back at home, and we have to deal with that type of misinformation, disinformation, on an ongoing basis. So I have some understanding of how the British media works and how it projects people like myself and others as in some way political lepers, or as in some way demonized elements to life in Ireland.

So my certain conviction has always been that once we break through the paper wall of disinformation and censorship, then the people here will form their own opinion. And it's a matter of their choice and of your choice and everyone else's, once you have received the information to make a judgment on the basis of the case put.

Q And, if I may follow, some of the stories pointing out this change make note of -- it is said that you were at one time an IRA field commander actually involved in leading military operations. One of the stories in today's Wall Street Journal, for example, says you have never offered solid refutation of that. Would you care to use this forum to --

MR. ADAMS: Yes, I'm quite satisfied to repeat my consistent denial of involvement with the IRA.

Q You have never been involved --

MR. ADAMS: No.

Q -- in military activities --

MR. ADAMS: No.

Q -- in Northern Ireland?

MR. ADAMS: No. And no.

Okay? Any other questions?

Q Yes. There's a word around town that your meetings with some of the American -- (inaudible) -- on the honest broker role -- (inaudible) -- decommissioning of arms.

MR. ADAMS: Never come up.

Q (Off mike) -- comment?

MR. ADAMS: Never come up.

Q This is a fundraising venture for you. How has the fundraising gone, and how much have you raised to date?

MR. ADAMS: Well, it isn't a fundraising venture. As you may know, the fundraising ban was only lifted, in fact, two or three days before I came. So even preparations for fundraising have been quite limited. The main purpose of the visit was to set up our mission here

in Washington, and we have done that. We opened our office a few days ago. The fundraising detail I think you can get from someone who is conversant with it, and I think some of the papers indeed have carried a current – (inaudible word). (I've just ?) lost track, but on a number of fundraisers and the amounts collected have been have been in the public press. I'm sure someone – Ken Stanton (sp), who is our consultant in this matter, could probably give you the detail of that.

Q Mr. Adams, you said earlier you had done –

MR. ADAMS: Could I please have someone else?

Q – you had no authority or control over arms. Can you explain just what exactly you're doing here if you have no authority or control over arms, you have a 2 percent support in the Irish Republic, and 9.7 percent support in the six counties in Northern Ireland? What is it that you have to offer if you have no control over arms and if you've never been commander of Belfast (brigade ?) of the IRA? What can you offer to either the (American ?) administration or the British government that they want?

MR. ADAMS: Peter, I'm here because the president of the United States invited me to come. (Laughter.)

Q Why did he invite you?

MR. ADAMS: Sorry, Can I just have a question from her?

Q Haven't the British already decommissioned some arms? They sent several of their troops home?

MR. ADAMS: Well, I welcomed what was indeed a belated and quite small but welcome temporary removal of 400 troops. Can I illustrate, if I may, the military map of just a small part of my country. This is the occupied six counties of the Northern one -- gets some sense of how heavily it has been militarized by the British, and I welcome any move to demilitarize that.

Q You said it's a temporary removal, and the point is that the British army is there – (off mike) – situations.

MR. ADAMS: Well, we can live quite happily with the British army back in its own country where it belongs.

Q Mr. Adams, the United States despite the kind words is following (opinions and?) a policy that's at least 20 years old, prosecuting and deporting Irish in this country who collaborate with

the IRA. The deportation hearing scheduled in three weeks for Gabriel McGoffey (sp) a fellow West Belfaster whose IRA arms purchases are 12 years old -- and also he's finished his time -- five years. Do Sinn Fein and yourself have a view on this policy and if so have you expressed it -- (off mike.)

MR. ADAMS: Well, we have made representations for a number of people. Obviously anyone who breaks the law in this country has to go through the due processes. At the same time there should be no victimization of anyone including the likes of Gabriel McGoffey (sp) who has I think -- has domiciled here for a very long time. And indeed, I believe is married to an American citizen and has at least one child here.

So, the fact of the situation is that we're in a new era. We're on the threshold of great changes and I would like to think that those Irish people who have come here for refuge or because they couldn't live in Ireland would be able to live here, in some peace and without any undue harassment.

Q And this would apply also to IRA operatives -- (off mike.)

MR. ADAMS: I'm speaking (separately?) of Mr. McGoffey. Okay, anything else? Thank you very much.

Very happy St. Patrick's day.