



EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH ALBERT REYNOLDS

September 27, 2005
Dublin, Ireland

Participants

University of Virginia

James S. Young, chair
Stephen Knott

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Albert Reynolds: I only went into politics here in '77.

James S. Young: You had a relationship with Edward Kennedy before that?

Reynolds: The main relationship with Ted I remember is the one where I went to—I was appointed a Minister of the government in 1979. I only went into politics in 1977. I was given the job of developing communications in Ireland with the outside world because we depend on the outside world for 80 percent of our exports. We had the worst telecommunications in the world, so when I was appointed in late '79 I decided to take the whole family on holidays to—what do you call it, where they live?

Stephen Knott: Hyannis Port.

Young: Hyannis Port, yes.

Reynolds: All of us went to the holidays at Hyannis Port. We met his mother and them all; we visited the whole compound and everything; and we got to know them pretty well. As far as I recall at the time, he had a girl from Longford here. Well, we lived in Longford and we represented Longford. He had a girl for years from Longford, and his mother had an Irish nurse, as well, from Ballymahon, so when we went down to see her, we found we knew some of the staff. [*laughs*] We represented them, so we got well looked after. Then I went down to the [Democratic National] Convention.

Knott: In New York.

Reynolds: I always recall that famous speech he made at the Convention in 1980. Then I asked him to try and contact the big telecommunication company in America, AT&T [American Telephone & Telegraph], if he could set up a meeting for me with them. There were some former Irish on the directors or something. He set it up and I spent half a day with them; I had lunch with the board and everything.

I didn't know anything about telecommunications. I thought, *This is one of the best in the world, so I'll talk to them.* They gave me great insight into digital communications and telecommunications. I said, "You have a company that works, a technology that works. I don't. I have a great appreciation of the American position in technology and the world. If I had one that worked, I wouldn't be over here asking about replacing it." They said, "We're already doing the research on it anyway, and we have a small research area. When that's over, we'll fill you in on what we think." I said, "Every day, every week that passes, Ireland is getting worse," because we didn't have even have the—I don't know whether you know anything about telecommunications and the technology, but basically they had the in-between. I was down here at this, the old one. They had moved ahead with this and very successfully, the electronics. Then the next one to be developed in the world was digital, but there were very few countries that had it.

France had videotext around Paris, more diabolical, and the Japanese had one, but it was untested. The French one could work all right, but then when you came to the larger areas, to the larger communications centers, you needed bigger technology with bigger capacity. The Swedes had—Ericsson is from Sweden. They were very close to finishing the development of one, so I ended up contracting 40 percent to France and 40 percent to Ericsson and having 20 percent competition between the two. It would be years later before AT&T was going to move toward digital, if they were satisfied that that was the way they were tracking. So I was the first in

Europe to go to digital, fully. Without the connections from Kennedy to get into the bloody place, I don't know what we would have ended up with. Probably the British were so far behind America that it wasn't worth looking at.

Young: Why was he the one you called?

Reynolds: I knew well that he always had the interests of Ireland at heart, and we had met him in his home territory up there. He was always very approachable for anyone here, always. We knew well that he would do anything he could, really. For him going to AT&T, I got a better introduction than me trying to get in the back door. [*laughs*]

Young: Sure, sure.

Reynolds: I know that's why.

Young: But he wasn't involved in Irish political affairs at that time?

Reynolds: Not really. But he always was available to Ireland, if he wanted to help them at anything, so that's why. No other reason that I can tell you. But this country has really gone ahead. We were the first digital over here, then we started to get all the foreign companies in. We get the largest amount of American investment, and have done for years. What's going to Europe comes here, because they can communicate with the world over here. From the very start, we give our young people the education on the technology side. From the way Ireland has come forward in communications and investment all over, it's lucky I met him, and lucky we knew him.

Young: It's remarkable. And the economic development here is remarkable, too.

Reynolds: I meant to get it, but sometime when you are over there, you might get me a copy of that speech he gave in 1980, sure. That's one of the best speeches I've ever heard. I've heard a lot since and I don't think any of them beat it.

Young: This was when he said, “The dream shall never die”?

Reynolds: Yes. That was a lovely, lovely speech. Anyway, let’s get down to business.

Young: All right. Well, this *is* part of the interview. So far as we know, it was in 1992, when you became the Prime Minister, that you entered into the picture of what was called the Irish Question. Is that true, or were you involved before you became Prime Minister in a significant way?

Reynolds: I was involved, but it wouldn’t be well known about me being involved. I’ll give you the political reasons why. From the time the Troubles started in ’69, or shortly after, the Prime Minister of the day spoke for Northern Ireland in Irish political terms. In other words, the Minister for Foreign Affairs looked after foreign affairs, but the Taoiseach—Because you would have members of the party going off on different tangents, it was more or less accepted by every government from the time the Troubles started in 1969 that the Taoiseach would be the main spokesman and have the responsibility for the North. That’s why you wouldn’t be reading speeches of mine or anyone else’s in relation to the North. One of the first things I did in relation to the North was open communications between the two parts of Ireland.

On transport, I initiated a transport linkage from Derry to Dublin and back. I subsidized it to get it off and running. I also introduced changes in the telecommunications to improve the North when I was improving the South at the same time.

Young: You were Minister?

Reynolds: I was Minister for Communications. That’s when I went to America first on the holidays and turned it into business. The third thing that I did, which became known because there were questions asked and I asked [Gerard] Collins about it, was that when Cardinal [Tomás] O’Fiaich became Cardinal, head of the Catholic Church in Ireland, he wrote to me. He

said the best thing I could do to improve communications and understanding between the two parts of Ireland, North and South, was to extend the capacity of RTÉ, our national television, so that the people in North Ireland would be able to get it right up to Northern Donegal and to Derry and west of the band, as they call it up there. He said that's as good a contribution as he could think of.

I spoke to the chairman, Mr. [P. J.] Moriarty, at RTÉ. Because I wasn't a technology man, I said, "What does this involve?" He said, "I'll ask the technicians." He was an ordinary German, so he got the technicians. He came back to me and said, "It'll take a booster station or a booster"—whatever you want to call it, somebody who's more technical than me will tell you, a "booster station,"—"on the mountains in County Liouth," which was close to the border. That would drive acceptance of RTÉ right up to way beyond north of Belfast. We got right up there with that. On the other side, just outside of Letterkenny, we were able to beam it in from Letterkenny.

Young: The booster would not be in Northern Ireland?

Reynolds: No, this side of the border, but the strength of it was quite substantial. They had earlier put a booster on BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation] and the UTV [Ulster Television], both at Enniskillen and at Strabane to beam it down south, so I didn't complain about that. [The Reverend Ian] Paisley was the first man to raise it in the House of Commons. I just stood my ground and kept my head down and said nothing. Eventually, when the thing hit a higher point for discussion, I just responded to the Taoiseach's office when they came on to me. I said, "Okay, if they want to inspect the strength of mine, I want to inspect the strength of theirs." That finished that. *[laughs]* But no, it was badly needed to try and get some understanding.

In business, I knew the north of Ireland. I was in the entertainment business and I was in the pet food business, manufacturing cat and dog food. I had as strong a right-wing Unionist distributing my stuff in Northern Ireland as you could find anywhere. He was Bill Craig's right-hand man, election agent. Billy Craig went out of politics and it was him now that stood up against all of the marches of 1969, where John Hume's party came through and formed it against all the injustices that had been done, but this guy and I got on very well. "Don't send my product up on the CIÉ [Córas Iompair Éireann]," which is the national transport truck people, "because everyone will know." You don't do it that way and you don't put on the label "Manufactured in the Republic of Ireland." You put on the label "Manufactured in Ireland."

I understood the thinking before I ever went into politics. I understood the background. That was one of my few early initiatives into it. Earlier than that, I used to promote international artists and international bands because we had built 12 or 13 ballrooms around the country. I used to do promotions in Northern Ireland, in places like the Ulster Hall in Belfast, which is the heart of Unionism. But I never was going to make this religious. The religion never worried me and it didn't worry the people I was dealing with up there. If they were making money, they were happy. I had a good insight into the thinking behind this.

Knott: Commercial exchanges were a good way to break the barriers?

Reynolds: Oh, yes. I could go up there and do business with them and talk about it. I remember asking some of them down to something and I thought, *Geez, they might be afraid*. Genuinely, up there they thought everybody down here had a revolver in their hip pocket, that they're all in the IRA [Irish Republican Army]. That was their view, that everybody was in the IRA. They were never down much to see us. They weren't getting television from down here, so that was sort of the way I approached it. That's the way I came at it first, because I knew them so well.

Plus, you wouldn't read that in the records, because what you'd be doing for the North—As I said, the Taoiseach spoke about everything, so you wouldn't find that in there. That's why most people were really surprised, when I became Taoiseach, that the first—

Just after I was appointed leader in my party, which automatically puts you in as Prime Minister, Taoiseach, in my very first press conference, they didn't take me seriously, either, because I said the two objectives for my term as Taoiseach, however long or short that may be, were (1) to bring peace to Ireland, and (2) to reduce the immigration and the high unemployment that were surfacing. In other words, develop the economy. I just gave them a background to my thinking. I said the reason I was putting peace in Ireland on the top of the list was that this had a genuine contribution to make to Ireland and Irish people.

For years, from 1969, all the world was seeing was bombs, bullets, shooting, you name it, one after another. That's all that the outside world—Here were we in the center, trying to develop an economy where tourism was important. Who is going on holidays if you see trouble in the place every day in the week? Who is going to invest in a country that hasn't a solid political position? I said that's why I want peace in Ireland. Whatever it takes, that's where I'm going. That's the direction. If I get that, whenever I get it, it'll inject a lot more investment into the country. That investment will create the jobs and will take down your emigration and your unemployment.

We were spending an awful lot of money in the years before that on education, turning into a good educational system. When the technology world appeared to be growing a little bit, technology appeared to be taking a certain direction, we were first in. We built up—We couldn't get the control of university education. That was more academically oriented here, with the standards. We didn't see any fast way of trying to change them around, to try to get them

interested in doing technology, so we left them at what they were, which was very good. We built another educational structure, side by side with them, to do the technology and get into the technology area so that we'd have it very attractive for investment coming in. If we could get the solid political foundation to lead their investment, that's where I was coming from. That was my thinking of where I was going. Everyone would say, "That fellow is mad. Peace in Ireland? In the name of God, where does he think he's coming from? Peace?"

I'm telling you, there was no support, literally none, because they said it wasn't possible. Others had tried for the last two weeks, three weeks, whatever. That's where I started and I kept at it and—

Knott: Could you tell us what you did to begin the process of peacemaking?

Reynolds: Yes. Have you interviewed John Hume?

Knott: Not yet. We're interviewing him the day after tomorrow.

Young: No, we moved the date.

Reynolds: Oh, sorry, I thought you were interviewing him before. Did you do Garret FitzGerald yet?

Young: Tomorrow.

Reynolds: Oh, tomorrow. Okay. If you want to go back and clarify anything. You'll find from John that John was closer to Ted Kennedy and to the four—whatever you call them.

Young: The "Four Horsemen" [Edward Kennedy, Hugh Carey, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill].

Reynolds: The Four Horsemen.

Young: Teddy was one of them, wasn't he? And Pat Moynihan. Hugh Carey.

Reynolds: Hugh Carey.

Knott: Tip O'Neill.

Young: And Tip O'Neill.

Reynolds: Tip O'Neill, yes. Okay. That was the way John went, because he would've been working from the SDLP [Social Democratic and Labour Party] point of view. He was the first to unify—He can tell you himself. He was the first man to break the ice, shall we say, with Gerry Adams, the leader of Sinn Féin. He started talking to him and, of course, he got scorched, for want of a better word, by the media down here.

John had been talking to Adams and them before I came on the scene. John had visited my predecessor. They were talking about putting a proposal together, that the two governments might look at making a declaration as to the possibility of a way forward. But my predecessor had never—He agreed, I think, to meet some members of Sinn Féin, but then it was canceled and something happened and it never came up. But he did send a delegation from his party to meet Gerry Adams in 1988, I think it was, but there was never a second meeting. This Father Alec Reid, who was very close to Sinn Féin and the IRA in the North, used to try and bring people together. He was the one, I think, who brought John Hume and Gerry Adams together, that sort of thing.

I was Minister of Finance for three years before I became Taoiseach. You know yourself, if you control the finance, you can get a lot of things done. *[laughs]* Back to the picture I was trying to paint for you there about encouraging investment: I knew the old industries, the old smokestack industries, were of no interest. Their day was over. It was more coming into the new world. I wanted to prepare the country here for the new world, for technology and education and all of that, and invest our money there. The tier of technology or technological education was

very successful. In fact, some years later I gave them university status when there had been acknowledgment.

They're very good, because people looking for investment here wanted to know where to go—go to Europe or come here. We have an advantage, of course; we speak the English language. It's the language of the business world. If you go with an investment to Germany, you need to speak German; if you go to Spain, you need to speak Spanish; and if you go to France, you have to speak French. We were the first stop for American investment coming to Europe anyway, so there were a lot of reasons why we were successful.

A lot of them had Irish people managing at different management levels, so we made out our strategy as to who we were going for and the type of industry we were going for, but the trouble in the North was a minus factor in a big way. You were asking American people to come over here to set up and invest their money and this is going on up the road; not a good sales point, I can tell you. That's where I was coming from. I was coming from a financial and investment and technological viewpoint. That was my make up. I understood it up there.

I tried to talk to businesspeople up there even when I was in Finance and in other Ministries about what they were missing. They're stuck with the property tax rates of Britain, about 20 percent higher than here. I don't have to say any more. Unless there's a damn good reason why you want to go up there, you wouldn't. You'd come down the road a bit and get yourself a 12½ percent property tax and good workers and all of that. I used to say, "Are you mad?"

I negotiated, myself, over 8 billion of nonrefundable investment to do the infrastructure in Ireland, to bring it up to date—nothing to service it, and nothing to repay it. In a small economy like this, it gives you the foundation for going for the "Celtic Tiger," because when you

pour that in, it gives you a great start. That's the sort of thing—I've always believed that until we—Their people were always better off than we were, even with the higher tax rates, because they were living under those 60—I'd say about 63 percent of it came direct from the Exchequer in London. They hadn't great control over what they could do up there, very little, in fact, for that matter. It was more or less the Exchequer in London supplying the military, the money, the teachers, all of that, the doctors, everything. That's where the money came from. It didn't come from taxation, but they still had to pay the British rates of taxation.

There are many reasons why they couldn't get off the ground. I kept saying, "Look what we're doing." I knew as soon as we would get our economy higher than theirs it would be a different argument. People began to see that having the British economy looking after them was okay up to these days, because ours was going way ahead of theirs, the best performer in Europe for the last ten years. That's when that argument began to be noticed a bit more. I knew that would make a big contribution eventually, not just immediately, but once our economy would climb higher. If you go up and see the road infrastructure, which we used to be envious of driving north—I went years ago, during the last business or whatever, and we'd be always really envious of them, the infrastructure that they had. Gee, if you go up now—

I gave a speech at Derry only six months ago or less and gave a similar one in Belfast for some group of young leadership or something over from Washington last September. They asked me to open it and be their main speaker for young people. Those two or three weeks later they were meeting in Leeds Castle, the Irish and British governments, so I took the opportunity of saying here is the solution as I see it, set it out, because there's leadership. I said leadership was badly lacking up there. I couldn't understand how they wouldn't see that they were far better off with some arrangement with us.

I didn't say "united Ireland," because whatever kind of a coming together would certainly benefit them would benefit us as well, but not to the same extent it would them. *[laughs]* I said that Paisley should take his team into a devout government and I pushed out a few ideas for him.

First of all, he should take them in, and Sinn Féin, because that's what the people voted for up there. Whether you like it not, they were the two main parties. I said to them that, in my view, they should cooperate with the South and put forward a social and economic development plan for the North to be assisted by Europe. They would be undoubtedly be helped by the United States, which they've always said they would do if we got our act together and got the thing to start. Paisley has been the man who led them for 40 years. He was the man who could deliver all this and that. As politicians, we'd all like our name in the history books, but there would never be a better inscription on a headstone than that for him, the man who made it all possible. I said all the different bits then for economic development, like the 12½ percent corporate tax, like we have here.

Just for an example, British Agricultural Ministers go to Europe to represent Northern Ireland. But agriculture in the British economy only represents about 3½ percent, 4 percent, of the entire economy. Agriculture in Northern Ireland represents between 55 percent and 60 percent. Can anyone seriously suggest that the British Minister for Agriculture over there is getting the best deal for these people up here when it only makes a 3½ percent difference in the economy over there and 55 to 60 here? Look at how well we've done out of agriculture, because we fight our own cause. I'm not asking them to fight your causes up here, but at least you should have one of your own doing it. Take your government and set it up. You don't have to agree on everything. They don't have to get into bed with each other or anything like that.

Knott: Right.

Reynolds: Do a business deal. That has been my approach, too, all along. That's why unionists would have respect for where I'm coming from, because they're not waving the flag over their heads or thumbing their noses every day I'd see them. It's business propositions I'd be talking to them about.

Young: You didn't have a history with the political movements here?

Reynolds: No.

Young: You didn't have a history of that?

Reynolds: No, I didn't.

Young: You become Prime Minister and now you have this background and this is where you're coming from?

Reynolds: That's right.

Young: And very soon, you're engaged in talks—

Reynolds: The first week.

Young: Yes. Now, did you initiate that? You did? With John Major?

Reynolds: Yes. John Major and I became very friendly at a European level.

Young: I see. You already knew him.

Reynolds: I already knew him, yes. He happened to sit down at lunch beside me. You could sit where you liked. He said, "You're one of the seniors around here." Finance Ministers change in Europe very often; I was three years as Finance Minister. He sat down and said, "Tell me about this place." I said, "John, not meaning any insult or anything, you asked what's the score and I'll tell you the score in one sentence. It's—" There were 12 members of the European Union at that time. I said, "John, it's 11-1 on every issue."

Britain was on the outside on every issue. Every issue that came up in my time that mattered, Maggie Thatcher had them going that way and the rest of Europe went this way. I said, "John, that's the way it is. Whatever view you take." He said, "Geez, is it as bad as that?" I said, "Yes, it is, John. I'm telling you straight. Not misleading you." He said, "Will Ireland ever support us?" "Sure," I said, "wait until we see what's on the agenda and I'm sure we'll work out something if we can, anything that's politically possible as far as I'm concerned. I don't have any hang-ups. I'll give you all the help I can. I'm sure some of them see Britain's biggest enemy in Europe would be Ireland."

He said, "I see you coming in a bit. That will defrost the whole situation." We became very friendly and I helped him on a few issues that were useful. We got a trust built up between us. He saw that I wasn't playing the Irish flag against him. I was prepared to look at it from a wider angle. When I became Prime Minister, he was one of the first Prime Ministers from abroad to ring me. "I suppose," he said, "you're going to want to come to see me about your Euro situation over there." I said, "Well, sure, when? You pick it. You tell me what evening to come over, have dinner, and we'll go through it." That was the kind of arrangement and the kind of situation I had with John.

Young: Were you at the same time talking with Martin McGuinness?

Reynolds: No. I'll tell you how I dealt with that. They didn't get an easy run, either.

Young: No, I know. But what did you and John Major want to get out of these talks, or what did *you* want to get out of them?

Reynolds: I brought the Secretary of Government with me. Nobody, only the two of us, and he had his secretary there, the four of us. After dinner we went in, sat down. John said to them, "Put away the notebooks, put away the pens. That's not the type of meeting we're having here. We

are two friends.” Then he said, “Tell me about Ireland.” That’s as much as he knew about it, nothing. “Tell me about Ireland.” We had our Presidency in 1990 here and his wife got sick.

I had the finance meeting with the Finance Ministers and he was Finance Minister—He was Exchequer while I was Finance Minister here. I was chairing it in the west of Ireland, in Ashford Castle, and John—This was the time when there was an international debate: Is Britain going to join the European currency or are they not going to join? It had to come up.

I brought it forward, in fact. I had it during our Presidency and the words “join the EMS [European Monetary System].” That was it. We actually were so close that it was going to make difficulties for us, in relation toward—I had a long chat with him a few times about it. He said, “I can’t say Maggie Thatcher will agree to going in on the EMS, but eventually, one day.” Major wasn’t anti-Europe, no matter what outside impressions were, but he couldn’t afford to be saying it very loudly. Maggie there ran the show and that was it. *[laughs]* We had a good opportunity down in Ashford Castle.

Just to give you one example to see how the trust relationship was built up, I said to John, “How are you going to play this?” because we had one meeting for about two and a half hours with all the Ministers of Finance, no officials, just sitting there to discuss where we were going. John said to me, “Push out the vote on us joining the EMS a bit to give me a chance. I’m not going to push it myself; maybe you’ll push it and you’ll go for the chair so you can direct this any way you want. Because I’ll always be able to say that when asked—” So I did and he more or less left it very easy to turn this down. As far as he was concerned, he was a supporter. Britain was going to join or he was going to try and bring England into it.

However it got out, I didn’t say it, but somebody did. The world media were all there because there was a story out that Britain was going to join the EMS. They came looking for me

and they came looking for John. They didn't get me that quickly because I had other business to do, but they got him. He said, "If that impression was given, then I have to point the finger at the German because it wasn't me," [*laughs*] so I let him.

He rang the paper and sent this fellow around looking for me to tell me what he was saying to them. "I'd appreciate any cover you can give me." I said, "Okay, John, I'll not hang you out to dry." He said, "I'm doing an interview in the morning with Irish television." I said, "This is the best-chaired meeting that ever was held in Europe," so we developed a great relationship, a trusting relationship, and it stood us later on. But, as I said, the meeting with Major was in the first couple of days, when I went over. That's how it started. We went through and he said, "Tell me about Europe."

"John, I'll give it to you short and sweet and brief as I can," I said. "The British government of the day—the 1920 [Government of Ireland] Act, Section 74—created a border in Ireland that started all the trouble. We know the good commitments you gave, and your explanatory memorandum. If you carry out your promises and commitments in that document, all you have to do is get out a memorandum in Ireland for the 1920 Act that created the problem in Ireland. It's been a problem since. John, that's where we start."

"Good God!" he said. "I tell you, a lot of that legislation was—I haven't heard anything about it for years. I thought it was all gone or wasn't there at all." That's where the starting point was, so we discussed this and the possibilities. He said, "The arms and the mortars and killing and all of that, we'll have to get them. We'll have to get the ammunition and all that." I said, "John, you're starting at the wrong end. The philosophy and mindset of the IRA is this: They don't trust any British government. John, no one trusts you any more than anybody else, or any less either, but they don't and they won't. If you start looking for their guns to be handed in, you

won't get them. We'll get nowhere. We'll be like everybody else. If you want to do it, I understand their mindset. I understand their philosophy. I know where they're coming from." He said, "How would you know?" I said, "I happen to have been around."

I said, "I'll give you one example. I made a speech the day I was going over to the meeting. Some of the media asked me what I was going to discuss with John Major. I said, 'I've already pinpointed the Government of Ireland Act of 1920, Section 74. That's where we start.'" and they didn't ask me any more. That's all right. That's where the starting point is. From Martin McGuinness, the first response to that was "If the Government of Ireland Act, Section 74, is off the table for discussion, I'll be at the table." That was the first indication and I hadn't known him personally at that time.

Knott: McGuinness said this to you?

Reynolds: No, he said it publicly.

Knott: He said it publicly?

Young: Publicly, yes.

Reynolds: That was his response to my statement before I went to London. At this stage, I didn't know that Father Alec Reid and Martin Mansergh—I didn't know because although Mr. [Charles] Haughey did ask me, when he was handing over the power, "Do you have your mind made up as to who you're bringing in as your advisor?" I said, "I'm going to keep Martin Mansergh. As far as I'm concerned, he's a member of the Protestant faith, and fine." I knew him as being in government, because he was in foreign affairs for a long time, then he was an advisor to my predecessor, so I had a lot of dealings with him. I knew he was trustworthy and a good guy. I had a certain amount of input into whatever John Hume and Charlie Haughey were talking about, so I said, "That's grand; I don't have to train a new fellow. Take the new with the old and

away we go.” But I hadn’t settled it down with him; he was working on his own, so I didn’t know.

I didn’t know that they had met Gerry Adams for one meeting back in ’88, but McGuinness, for the first time at that stage, just after I came in, the whole focus—I began to say, “Where does this fellow think he’s going?” because that sort of argument and all of that going back in history and all that had never been brought up. It was all about the bombs and the bullets and the people being killed. Nobody had taken a different view, so government policy for 40 years before I came in, in 1992—Government policy from 1969, and maybe even the area program of IRA violence in the early ’60s, was all about killing. It was not looking for a political approach or political solution at all. And Maggie Thatcher—the world knew about Maggie. If you couldn’t agree with her, you couldn’t agree with her and there was no progress to be made. *[laughs]* Her way or no way, so that was that. That’s where it started and that’s the basis for it. I came back then after that and I was going—That was about mid-February, I’d say. Or it was the first meeting of ’92?

Young: Ninety-two.

Reynolds: Sometime around mid-February, maybe a bit later into February. I was going to the United States for St. Patrick’s Day on the 17th of March. What was in existence when I went to England was—There were meetings under some conference that used to take place every so often. James Molyneaux was the leader of the Unionist Party at the time. Paisley was Paisley all the time, from the time he came in. They used to—People down here used to meet them under the old Anglo-Irish Agreement or something, which used to provide that forum. I’d be talking to Major on the phone and would say, “Where’re we going from here?”

At that stage, the unionists were very uptight about the whole situation down here because when Garret FitzGerald—I'm not blaming him politically, but—brought through the Anglo-Irish Agreement, he excluded the unionists altogether. He didn't exclude them deliberately, but they wouldn't participate and he went ahead without them. That's the type of exclusion they were getting, and they wouldn't attend. They wouldn't talk to anybody. Nothing. That was a cover for their meetings. There's some sort of arrangement, anyway. As far as I was concerned, the unionists were excluded, so I wanted to include them.

They said, "Well, this thing was set up under the Anglo-Irish Agreement. We have never supported that agreement and we're not going to do it." I said, "I'll tell you what we'll do," and rang Major and said, "Hey, John, we've got the thing started if the two of us agree to suspend whatever this arrangement was, suspend it and we'll meet just straightforwardly. We won't meet under this umbrella at all because the unionists had a hang-up about it." He said, "Okay. What the hell. Leave it there. We'll talk about it." We did that for about five or six months. I did it for six months, but I stopped after that because the unionists would begin to claim that the whole thing was dead. I didn't want to kill anything that was there at that stage, so I said no and we broke on that.

Before it was announced that we broke on it, they came on to Major, the unionists, and said, "We have no position paper. We have no position paper after six months." It looked very bad for us and John rang me. "Will you have another meeting?" I said, "Sure, no problem. Have another meeting and give these fellows the opportunity to put a position paper on the table." That's the kind of thing I was doing, not making a big deal of it and accommodating them when I could.

On the other hand, Martin Mansergh was—John Hume came down to see me a day or two, maybe a few days, after I got—He said that he'd been talking to Martin Mansergh about drafting a proposal for the British government, that the two governments could make a declaration. "But," he said, "I can't take it any farther. There's no point in even having a document unless you take it up directly with the British government. There's no point in us going anywhere else," I said, "Sure, John, yes, I'll take it up." He said, "You're friendly with Major?" I said, "Yes, I am. And he listens to me, too. He mightn't agree with me, but he listens." John said, "Right, go ahead." He also said that this rolled out of his talks with Gerry Adams, that maybe this was a way to go forward. I think John had hinted to me. I had never said it in public or anything, but John tried to open the door himself to deal directly with Major.

Young: Yes.

Reynolds: But I could see it. He wasn't going to get anywhere. In fact, he had put so much into it, like with setting up the Four Horsemen and getting support in America and all of that, but when you come down to brass tacks, Prime Minister to Prime Minister—John Major couldn't deal.

Young: Yes.

Reynolds: And *he* couldn't deal with Major. To me he said, "John is very hard to get through to. I can't deal with a number one, because I'm hanging on in Cabinet with some very strong right-wing Ministers that are unionists over the years. I was just getting nowhere. I can't get John to see that." We kept going and I kept them informed and we kept meeting. I said, "Don't worry about it, it's not a big issue anyway." If he started to deal, he told me himself, with John directly, which he couldn't do anyway, even if he found a way of doing it, he said, "The next thing John would want Adams in the middle of it. I tell you, I'd be out the door very fast out of this

Cabinet.” [laughs] He said it wouldn’t run, so he said no. He said, “Anything I do and anything I agree has to be between the two governments. It can’t be any other way. There’s no security in it for me if it’s any other way. I can’t let it out beyond you.”

He agreed to do it totally after that man to man. That’s it. We didn’t even use the Northern Ireland Secretary. The Northern Ireland Secretary had a difference in policy from John Major, strangely enough. Major said it to me, too. He said he wanted to go and handle it first, with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. I said, “John, failure. That’s why it failed and failed and failed and there’s no point in going forward if that’s going to be your policy.” So John said, “It’s not easy, but I’ll have to take it on myself.” I said, “Yes, great. You and I will handle that issue and let the Foreign Secretary and the Foreign Minister over here do all the in-between stuff, not the big stuff. We’ll decide the big stuff.”

Young: Right.

Reynolds: “And,” I said, “the big stuff is the guns.” We kept telling them—We kept reminding them. Anyway, we went on. We brought forward the document. John Hume presented this document from them. It was all agreed and, shall we say, there was no art. [laughs] No, and it wouldn’t run, no chance of it running. I said that to them.

I said, “You must be joking. I know British government. You’re not even trying to disguise it; you couldn’t.” Everything stopped for six months. I kept going with Major, but everything stopped. The communications to the Sinn Féin and the IRA were through Martin Mansergh. He used to meet McGuinness. I knew they were meeting. I said, “No, I’m not meeting him at any stage until a permanent ceasefire. That’s it. However long it takes, I’ll continue talking to Major and we’ll continue moving forward in our own way, but if that’s their position as in that document, John, it’s not going forward for me.”

Six months later, he came back and said, “Okay, you present *your* document.” I said, “I didn’t finish a document.” He said, “ But if you want me to take—If *that’s* their—” “It’s not to be changed,” I said. “Why would I present a document? I’m talking to Major. We know where we’re going. At least we think we know where we’re going. John has agreed that I’ll handle the decommissioning of arms myself and everything else will be done between the Foreign Minister and the Secretary of State.” So it continued, and we got into—Martin represented me, went to meet them at different stages. They’d do a paragraph and they’d do this and fight about another paragraph for three days before you’d get another one done and all of this.

I heard Father Alec Reid say on radio, “John presented this document that preceded the Downing Street Declaration that would have stopped their guns in 24 hours.” I said, “What the hell is this?” [*laughs*] Then I realized it was the first document that John and Sinn Féin had put together, but John thought he’d be able to work directly—

Knott: Right.

Reynolds: There wasn’t a hope in hell that—Okay, if the unionists did everything and the British government did everything, of course Sinn Féin and the IRA would stop in 24 hours if they got everything that was in this document.

Young: Yes.

Reynolds: Of course, they would. What a distortion and unreal. There was no recognition of the Unionist community, and they are a majority. So I said, “Look, lads, forget it.”

Knott: Right.

Reynolds: They came back anyway and eventually we got an agreement. Oh, it was hard—Hard-fought with Major, every word. He had to get it through his own crowd as well.

Young: This was—You’re looking at the December Declaration?

Reynolds: The December Declaration. It took about 18 months to get it. Well, there were six months of that wasted anyway, where there was nothing happening, or very little. We eventually got it down. It was signed on the 15th of December 1993. I got the Protestant archbishop in Armagh, showed him what I had agreed with Sinn Féin, and asked him to read it. I wouldn't give him the document, but I said, "You can read it three times if you like, or six times, but I want you to give me the three or four paragraphs of balance into it." He agreed.

There was another guy who was with the Methodist church. I forget his name now. I asked him—I had found him out and had met him over a period. He was the nearest thing to a representative for the Loyalists. He was a Sinn Féin roadman. He always met the UDA [Ulster Defence Association] and UVF [Ulster Volunteer Force], you name them, all the different groups. He was always at their meetings and everything, so I asked him, "Will you present me with a couple of paragraphs that will represent their concerns and where they see the thing going in the future and everything like this? Leave out the constitutional issue. Just leave it out. Deal with everything else, but leave out the constitutional issue for the moment." So he did.

He brought me back six paragraphs in the Downing Street Declaration and the other man brought me back some. I hadn't to change a single word in the six paragraphs that came in from the Sinn Féin road, and all the top men of the UDA, UVF, all of them. Not a word. I brought it all to Major and showed him. I said, "That was drafted in the Sinn Féin road, John." "I don't believe you." I turned to him and said, "Now, there's not that much wrong with it, is there? John, I'm asking you one question and that is, I don't propose to change a single word, not one. There's a few you'd like to change really, but as far as I'm concerned I can live without them." I had to be seen to be fair and square all around, so I left the six paragraphs in unchanged. When it

came out, they couldn't believe it. Couldn't believe that I would accept the six paragraphs that they had put in with no big changes.

The Protestant archbishop was a good politician. He knew all about the draft and I knew he would. No objections to that. It was published on the 15th of December 1993. James Molyneaux, leader of the unionists, Ulster Unionist Party, within a week or two accepted it with not so much change. Gerry Adams, even though I wasn't dealing with him directly or anything—I was dealing through Martin Mansergh or whomever they sent to the meetings from various places—they came and asked for clarification.

Young: Yes.

Reynolds: We did the clarification. I remember [William J.] Clinton was in office at this stage. I got Martin to get from them in the clarification what they really wanted clarified, what language they would accept. I realized that the principle of consent was embodied in the Downing Street Declaration. They had never subscribed to the principle of consent because they had never accepted the Government of Ireland Act, never accepted it. Accepting that publicly would sort of signal that they were giving in, so they couldn't do that. We found language that they could accept and it was very—you could say it was in and you could say it wasn't in, depending on the way you were going.

Knott: Yes.

Reynolds: I'm just breaking here for a minute. I met Clinton in—I was in Chicago and was going somewhere. Clinton's office rang to say he was in Indianapolis on a Sunday morning doing something.

Young: That was in 1993, wasn't it? March?

Reynolds: March '93. The Downing Street Declaration—

Young: This was you? Our calendar shows that you saw Clinton in March of '93.

Reynolds: Oh, yes. I saw him there for the first time.

Young: You asked him to shelve the appointment of a Peace Envoy—

Reynolds: Oh, yes.

Young: Because you were engaged in private consultation with John Major.

Reynolds: Well, there was that, plus there were local elections coming off in Ulster. There was no way a Unionist would be seen talking to anybody from America or anywhere else during an election campaign. That's why that was postponed. Clinton didn't appreciate it until I told him straight to his face. The very first meeting we had in March of '93, he produced this Peace Envoy and George Mitchell was who he had in mind.

Young: Yes.

Reynolds: I said no. Of course, George was—I knew George through Ted Kennedy. That was it. Whether Kennedy was involved in getting George to do the job or not, I don't know. Anyway, they appointed his sister, Ted's sister. Ted was there on that day as well, the four of us show there, so that's when those photographs were taken, the day she was appointed and Ted was there. They were all going to send over this Peace Envoy. A big deal, you know. I said, "Geez, it'll fall flat on its face. You don't want that. Forget it. Leave it there." He said, "What am I going to tell the leaders?" I'm sure Ted was one of them that he told he would send a Peace Envoy. I said, "You can tell any of them I'll take the rap, because it will fail and you don't want failure. I don't want to start something that I know in my heart and soul will be a failure and will kill it. Leave it alone. I'll come back and tell you what will make the difference, whether you do it or whether you don't." He said, "I can't get reelected without the Irish, without that support

from the Irish vote. [Ronald] Reagan stole them from the Democrats. We never got them back. I got them back this time, and they'll be gone again. Are you getting the commitment?"

Young: This is Clinton speaking?

Reynolds: Yes, this is Clinton speaking, yes, to me. And I'm saying no. I said, "Oh, no, no, I won't take it." He said, "I was always told that an Irish Prime Minister would only be too delighted to get one up on the British Prime Minister. That's the way politics works in Ireland." I said, "It's changing, as far as I'm concerned. I'm a very close friend with that guy in London. I'm not over here to get one up on him." He said, "But he knows, through—He knows that this was going to happen." I didn't care what he knew or what he didn't know, because I had told him before I had come here. He had told me that the likelihood was that when I went to Washington this offer would be made. He said, "It doesn't suit me. I don't think it suits you, either, but that's up to you." I said, "John, I won't be taking it." "Fair enough," he said.

There was another way of building up the trust, the confidence. I told Clinton, "No, leave it there. I'll come back to you with something that'll be worthwhile and we'll get you a result."

Young: He agreed to shelve it for the time being?

Reynolds: Yes.

Young: What did Ted Kennedy think about the Peace Envoy? Did he want it, too?

Reynolds: They were all supporting—it was after the election. They were all supporting it and Clinton was only in the door. It seemed it was getting nowhere for so long that they thought it was a good idea, except that it didn't—it wouldn't run in the circumstances in which he was offering it.

Young: Right.

Reynolds: I could be wrong about it, but I'd be surprised if he, talking about the Irish leaders of the U.S. American vote, if Kennedy wasn't one of them. He never said he was, but I'd be amazed if he wasn't, because in other instances I had in dealing with Clinton, I knew Kennedy was very close, very close, with some of the things that he discussed with me afterward. He told me at different times that he discussed it with Clinton and Ted in reverse said the same thing himself. Chris Dodd seemed to be the link between what Clinton called Irish America. He'd mention both of them in sort of the one breath. Well, that's for somebody else to comment on.

I met him in Indianapolis on the wettest morning. Jesus, the rain came down in buckets. He had no coat. He had no umbrella. I had no coat. I had no bloody umbrella, because it was sunshine, by Jesus, the days when we were on our way to Indianapolis. He was doing something in memory of Robert Kennedy, so we went down to the sacristy. I said, "How are you going to get over?"

I used to keep him informed through Ted's lassie—the lassie Ted trained and had for years in his office—?

Knott: Nancy Soderberg?

Reynolds: That's right.

Young: Nancy Soderberg, right.

Reynolds: Nancy was in his office at that stage, so she was well trained and showed up with an umbrella. [*laughs*]

Young: And Trina Vargo.

Reynolds: Well, Trina was more junior.

Young: Yes, but she was *then* in Kennedy's office.

Reynolds: She was. Did she replace Nancy?

Young: She replaced Nancy.

Reynolds: That's right.

Young: Yes. Then there was Niall O'Dowd, wasn't there? Was he involved at all, do you know?

Reynolds: He was. He's a newspaperman.

Young: Yes, I know.

Reynolds: I don't have to tell you. He didn't write everything that he was involved in. He'd blow it through the roof if it worked. If it didn't work, he'd never mention it again. He was a newspaperman.

Young: Okay.

Reynolds: Well, they nearly messed it up. The same night that I told them, and that the American group was going over, a couple of the trade unionists came into my office. They were going north, in the summer of '94. They were going north to meet Gerry Adams. I still wasn't meeting Adams, and I told them I wouldn't meet them. I told them every time they asked, "It'll be yes when I get a permanent ceasefire. If I don't get a permanent ceasefire, I will never meet you. As simple as that. Make up your own minds." I really had to be tough, but these fellows were trying to do a deal with them. I think it was six months. I heard that they were trying to do a deal: O'Dowd's crowd, Billy Flynn, those fellows, and the union leaders, but they were hoping to get it at six months. They told me, admitted it in my own office.

I said, "Who gave you any authority to be negotiating for me with your six months? There's no way. If you come back with six months from Belfast to me, I'm not taking it. You'd better know. And you can tell Gerry Adams from me that if he put six months on the table, he can it take off again, because you may accept it from them, but I won't." They thinned off and set out. I never saw a meeting start and finish so quickly. My Foreign Minister, Dick Spring, he

would have taken six months, but I was playing a game with those fellows. I wasn't changing one iota.

In fact, I wrote them before I went on holidays in the end of July. Martin Mansergh delivered it, telling them if there was no permanent ceasefire by the time I came back off holidays, I was pulling down the shutter on the whole venture. That included visas for Sinn Féin back into the States because Gerry Adams had gotten a visa. [Joseph] Cahill, who was the commander in chief of the IRA for all those years, had gotten a visa. Clinton broke every rule in the book. Everybody told them not to give Adams a visa. Even Nancy Soderberg rang me up and said Ted was against it, at the start.

Young: At the start?

Reynolds: Yes, he was, because John Hume and Ted had apparently—I don't know the details of it, but when I asked his sister—

Young: Jean [Kennedy Smith].

Reynolds: Jean, yes, I said, "Jean, you're a lot closer to Ted than I am. When you get a ceasefire, you get a visa. That's my honest opinion." The government policy from Ireland as far as foreign affairs and foreign affairs, shall we call it, in Washington, were all of the one view: that government policy that had been there for 35 years hadn't changed and there was no reason to be giving to Sinn Féin. It was against that that I started to look for it. That's why I said, "Jean—"

She came back off holidays down in the south of France or somewhere, and got him to—I'll tell you what she said, "John Hume and Ted have spoken about this and John Hume doesn't agree with it. Ted will agree with John, no matter what you think. You know their relationship—I'm telling you the truth." I said, "That's fair enough. I don't have any problem with that. But if I

don't change government policy and if there is no visa for Adams, there'll be no ceasefire."

That's it. I narrowed it down to that, because I had given them—

I had taken away Section 31 of the broadcast at night, where they couldn't go on radio or television. I had told them I would review the prisoners who were in jail for being members of the IRA. I'd asked John Major to do the same and to do the same on radio and television over there, which he did. He did both and froze them.

I had about four or five things included that I agreed with them, but it was all on the basis of a ceasefire coming up. I proved my trustworthiness by delivering it in advance. I trusted them to deliver. This was the one to get over, this one, though. I didn't realize because, you see, I wasn't doing this at public meetings, either. It wasn't my policy. It wasn't that I wouldn't, but the trouble was you couldn't keep it tight.

Young: Right.

Reynolds: You couldn't. If I once had leaked anything, their trust would be gone, no question about it.

Young: Sure.

Reynolds: That's why I discussed with nobody in the Parliament, only Martin Mansergh and me. The Civil Service didn't know it. No one whatsoever, because I said to myself if there's one leak that gets out, this'll blow. IRA and Sinn Féin will walk away. I said for that reason it's never going to come before the cameras. It's never going to come before the government. I'll take the risk. If it goes wrong, I go. That's the way it had to be and the only way you'd get it through because—15 Ministers, 15 Secretaries, 15 this, 15 that, the next thing you'd have about 200 people who would know. Someone would leak it to the bloody media and there you'd go.

Young: Did Jean have to be persuaded to your position very much or did she understand?

Reynolds: No, no. Jean was coming with me, because she was closer to us. I kept her probably better informed than some of the Ministers because I knew she was key—from her to Ted to Clinton. Even though I got on very well with Clinton, I knew well he wasn't going to run with us, the boys being on the side, so I had to be with her, but I took a chance on—

I got the Ambassador in Washington. I rang him. I knew him well and he didn't ask for a government decision, lucky enough. I said, "Dermot [Gallagher], I'm changing the government decision. Long ago, where the policy was that Sinn Féin was not supposed to travel, we didn't give any support whatsoever to them. Didn't get my visa, but I'm changing that, Dermot. I believe I need a visa for Adams at least. I'm asking the President myself. No reflection on you or anything like that. I'm dealing with the President myself, but I just wanted to tell you, let you know, so if you hear any talk you needn't fuss about it and be outraged." *[laughs]* He said he'd be at home, he trusted me. He said, "Okay, that's your business. Off you go."

But Jean went back to Ted and Ted said government policy had to change. She then came back to me. I said, "That's okay. Tell him to check in with the Ambassador in Washington," because I knew the man would give the right answer. "Tell him to check in with Washington and with the Irish Ambassador there." The very minute he got that okayed, he was fully in behind it and so was Hume. Sinn brought Hume in behind it, I'd say, because, in this sense, the Sinn Féin were beginning to be noticed and were going to be attractive to the SDLP. I'm not saying that he read it that way. I don't know, but I could understand him beginning to get a bit—I'm pretty sure now he didn't think that we'd get a visa, thinking that it was the easiest way for the American system to say, "Well, he's excluded and that's it."

But Clinton traveled the distance. You know what he said with Ted and the boys that were whatever the kitchen cabinet was with him, because he told me himself before he gave it. He said, “Everyone in the Department of State is against it.”

Young: The State Department was—

Reynolds: Everybody. He said Justice Department, State Department—

Young: Everybody was against it.

Reynolds: Everybody. But once he knew that he had the support of Ted and whoever, he was prepared to take the decision, take his political risk. I said to him on the phone, “Don’t get him a fortnight. Give him three or four days. Don’t let him outside of New York. No collections of money.”

Young: No fundraising?

Reynolds: No money. No fundraising. No nothing. I said, “Confine him.” All I wanted was to get him in there and show that we were so well regarded in America that they gave us a visa for Adams, where the British government was up in arms. My mindset on that and my thinking on that was this: If I can show the IRA that we can win the argument against them in America, in American government, it will make them sit up and take notice. I was trying to prove that there was an alternative to violence; that they had been at for 25 years and all these people—I don’t know, was it 3,500 dead and 40,000 or 50,000 injured? And what did they deliver?

Here after 12 months they delivered nothing. There was no reason to believe we wouldn’t be successful with the British government again, so internationally we had won the argument. That’s why it was so important. It did have that effect on the IRA Council, because we were able to show it and deliver and, of course, then it came to the question of the ceasefire itself. I told you about that, so they had to wake up.

There wasn't a word from them for a month, the whole month of August, until right at the end, when I had drawn the line in the sand. There wasn't a word out of them. In fact, they were to do something about it at a convention in Letterkenny in July and they didn't pull off the agenda.

Young: Then it became a question of Joe Cahill, didn't it?

Reynolds: That was the big one. The ultimate test. Here's a fellow—

Young: First Adams.

Reynolds: First Adams, now Cahill. And Cahill's record—It was I don't know how many soldiers or British soldiers and police getting shot over there, but he couldn't enforce—By geez, they really tried the system with that fellow. And Nancy Soderberg got dragged in. Poor old Jean was on holidays, so Jean had to come back for that, too. Nancy said, "I know there's Irish in me." I said, "What percentage?" "Twenty-five." I said, "Make it 75 for this issue." [laughs] So I ring Nancy, "Where is he [Clinton]?" He was on his holidays, in whatever you call it, up near Ted.

Knott: Martha's Vineyard?

Reynolds: Martha's Vineyard. He was on his holidays. I said, "Nancy, do me a favor. Bring him up the file yourself. Don't send it through anybody. Just drive up yourself or fly up or whatever, but bring the file with you. Don't give it to anybody else." "Everybody has refused it," she said. "They said no. They've all recommended no. You have no chance with this." I said, "Nancy, bring it up. For Christ's sake, have Jean work on it. We'll win this one, if I can just get it into his mind that he has a ceasefire waiting for him." She said, "Sure. Fire it up." I said, "But before he signs the file, one way or the other, ask him to ring me." He rang me at 3:00 o'clock in the morning or something.

“Look,” he said, “you’re looking for the impossible.” I said, “I had hoped to convince you. I don’t think I’m looking for the impossible. What’s a ceasefire worth? I am talking about a permanent ceasefire. What’s it worth to you, for a start, politically now? Let’s talk politics. Politically, if it makes the difference—As you said yourself, if it makes the difference between electing you or not electing you, is it worth it or isn’t it?” He said, “How do I know? I could give you one for Adams. He came over. Do we get this?” I said, “Not at all. I get criticized everywhere. All the criticism will just disappear if you pull it off.” He said, “My experience tells me that if there was going to be a ceasefire soon, the statement to announce it is already put together by those guys.” I said, “Yes.”

He said, “Do you know, is it put together?” “I do,” I said. “How do you know?” “I have a copy in my pocket.” [*laughs*] He said, “Read out the paragraph that matters,” and I said, “I can’t.” “What do you mean, you can’t?” I said, “All I can do is tell you it’s there. I gave them my word, and this has all been trust the whole way through. I never broke it. This priest has been doing the thing up and down, and I have to send the priest, Father Alec Reid, back to Belfast,” because I lived in Dublin down in the other part, not where I’m living today. “I have to send him back to Belfast. I’ll get him,” I said, “within an hour, because he stays in the monastery up here when he’s done. I’ll send him back to Belfast, and he’ll be back in about six or seven hours. Ring me again in six or seven hours.” He said, “All right, I’m going to bed.” I said, “Fair enough, I’ll stay up.” I did the job. After that, he rang me in the morning and they came back down and said, “Yes, you’re free to do what you would with the statement, in relation to the President.” I said, “Fair enough.”

I read the paragraph out to him and he said, “Send them down.” I was talking to Ted in between a number of times, and Jean. Jean would tell me what to write: “Ted on this, no,” and,

“Make sure you keep them—” I said, “Yes, he’ll probably be with Clinton anyway over the weekend in Martha’s Vineyard. He’s not far away,” so we managed it and off they come. “Send them down to the Embassy in the morning at 9:00 o’clock,” he said, “and he’ll be fixed up.”

You know what they did? Stupidly—Their man had a very bad heart at the time, could have gone like that [snaps], so they sent a guy with him, a councilor, a Sinn Féin councilor. He’d been turned back from New York on the previous Wednesday by the immigration people. No one—I didn’t know. Geez, Clinton was back on again. “For Christ’s sake, who’s that fellow they picked to go with him?” I said I didn’t know anything about it. I didn’t. I wouldn’t have sent him as the last man if I’d known he was sent back three or four days earlier from New York by the immigration—I have no ties in with the immigration system. I can’t tell them to do something. I said, “What are we going to do?” “Well,” he said, “we’ll find a way.” It’s one of the areas where you can’t interfere. You’re not supposed to, but he managed it anyway and off he went. [laughs]

What you have to understand, there was a split in the IRA in 1970 and Cahill went with Adams and McGuinness and those guys. The other half of the IRA was Rory Brady, a fellow from my own town, who went as the leader of the whatever they were, the breakaway at the time. They lost all their areas, their area commanders in the States, all the different clubs they had all over the States with Irish support and sending them money and all that. These fellows broke away and called it the Provisional IRA. Brady kept all of the support in America.

The reason that Cahill had to be gotten was that there wasn’t anybody else capable of holding on to them once it had come out. Cahill had to be in the States a day or two ahead so that he could contact them all and tell them what was happening, that the ceasefire was coming. That was the mindset that you had to understand. I explained it to President Clinton, I said, “This ain’t the Northern method, but the Northern themselves.” So, sorry about beating around the bush.

Young: No, no, that's great. Steve—

Knott: Well, I was wondering if you could just characterize—

Reynolds: Yes, go on. Ask some of the questions you wanted to ask.

Knott: Characterize your—You've talked a little about Jean Kennedy Smith and your relationship with her. Is there anything else you could add to that to give us a broader view of your relationship with her and what you saw?

Young: It made a real difference when she became Ambassador?

Reynolds: Oh, yes.

Young: That's one of the things we—

Reynolds: Oh, yes. Oh, no question about it.

Knott: Really?

Reynolds: In the White House that day, Ted was there and she was there and what have you. We went in for a chat, just the two of us, the President and myself, then Ted and Jean came in later. He told me that he thought the choice of her would make a big difference, in his view. I knew from the way he was talking that Ted had a big say in it, that it was important to get the whole thing right, get the package right. He thought, I suppose, that if George Mitchell were coming over as Peace Envoy that he had a very strong package for me. He said, "I'm sure, as an Irish Prime Minister, all you want is to go back and be able to say, 'We beat the Brits.'" [*laughs*] He said, "You know, I'd have a reason to be a bit sore with them." I said I was. "You came over to Ireland for a weekend as a student and it didn't raise up so good." [*laughs*]

But, no, she was well known because she had come here a number of times, visited here a lot. She was well known—she *and* Ted were well known—much better known to Irish people everywhere, more so than Robert.

Young: Yes.

Reynolds: The minute she came here, he used to start visiting.

Young: He and Vicki visited in December of '93.

Reynolds: Yes, in my apartment. That's right, Christmastime, yes. And their son Patrick came here. I think he joined us coming from Rome if I remember correctly. Yes, that's right.

Young: Was that the first time you had met Vicki? They weren't very long married.

Knott: That's right.

Reynolds: That must be the first time. I'm thinking a hotel in Boston, maybe not that time. She and my wife became great friends. She's lovely. A lovely, lovely girl.

Young: Yes, she is.

Reynolds: Was it after that or before it? I think we attended something in Virginia, at the place in Virginia that they have. And I met her up in Boston as well.

Knott: The Senator had a home in McLean as well at that time.

Young: It was in McLean, Virginia, perhaps. Well, they've now moved. This is one reason we do an oral history. People don't keep diaries.

Reynolds: Some of them do.

Young: Yes, keep diaries for a purpose.

Reynolds: That's right. I think they fill them in after.

Knott: Have you stayed in contact with Senator Kennedy or with Jean over the years since you've left the—

Reynolds: Yes. Since I left as Prime Minister, I've kept in touch with Ted. If I wanted to tell him about something or say something to him or get a bit of help, I have all his numbers, everything. No problem in contacting Ted. He didn't believe the IRA would stop permanently. I don't know

what he would say to you, but he genuinely didn't. There's no question that he didn't. Maybe he had different experiences with them, with John Hume, I don't know. But he certainly did not expect that they would—that there'd be a permanent ceasefire. He didn't. He didn't seem to think they could be trusted, and I know he probably had damn good reasons for it, because—

Knott: Probably his view has changed a little bit, but I agree with you. I think he was not enamored of the idea of dealing with terrorists.

Reynolds: No.

Young: And there have been some bad experiences in the United States.

Reynolds: Oh, terrible, terrible—

Young: And I think he—

Reynolds: I don't think he trusted them. You're right, maybe because they were terrorists and they were all in the one "club" as far as he was concerned. Over here, until 9/11 [September 11, 2001] happened, they wouldn't be classified as terrorists. It's a bit historical, you know, because they all fight against Britain. That's basically the way it was looked at over here; not by everybody, but by and large. I could well imagine that would be his view too—a bunch of terrorists.

Young: From the States, it doesn't look quite like it looks—

Reynolds: Over here. Not at all. I go over and back often enough to know. I was over there last week.

Knott: Oh, you were?

Reynolds: Yes.

Young: But I think it affects Americans' perception of the IRA very much.

Reynolds: Yes.

Young: They equate it with guns and politics and not inadmissible—

Reynolds: Surely.

Young: —in politics. “You can’t ever join up with anybody like that.”

Reynolds: Clinton was about the first to say that, stepped up and said, “the club,” if you want to call it that. [Jimmy] Carter’s man was on to me here at one stretch to see if he would come over and take on the mantle. His man rang, I can’t think of his name, but he came over to see me after. He stayed a couple of days here, but the timing was wrong for them to do it. Whatever was happening at the time, this wouldn’t have helped, if you know what I mean, just letters. This had to be quiet at the time. There was always a right close call as to when to do something or when not to do it. I was talking to Jimmy Carter once, and I said, “There may be a time, but not now.” Whatever was happening at the time, he didn’t come.

That’s why there was a huge appreciation over here for Ted to do something. It doesn’t matter what he’d ever do afterward. He’d be forgiven the following morning in Ireland, you know what I mean? Incredible, because I think there was a real appreciation that he put his name on the line and his job on the line and everything for what he did to try and get peace in Ireland. They’ll never take it away from him.

Knott: Right.

Reynolds: Never. No matter what can be said about it anywhere else in the world, they couldn’t take it away from him. What do you call them? Ted and those men [the Four Horsemen] are seen as the closest fellows over here that—There may well be plenty of others, but they’re not known as that here. That’s what I did, you see, but Ted was always very close to them. There were other things, I’m sure, but Ted was helping out the Ambassador when she was here, but she was very

successful. No question about it. I'd say Ted had that, too, in a big way. But I was going to tell you something else about Ted—

Knott: Well, I had asked—

Reynolds: Oh, yes. A phone call. He said, "I'll never say no to you again. I told you, no matter what you said to me, you wouldn't convince me that the IRA would lay down their arms and stop." So I said, "Okay, I have another job for you."

I was very friendly with [Pervez] Musharraf in Pakistan when he was head of the army, through a business friend of mine. When he took over the place, he rang me up and asked if I would go. I was out of office at the time as Prime Minister and he asked me if I'd go. He had no clue how to manage an economy and what to do about this or what to do about that, and he had no clue how to get his message out to the rest of the world that things were going to be different in Pakistan. Clinton was still President on one of the trips I was out when there was an arrangement.

There was a foreign visit arranged to go to India and Bangladesh. As you know, Pakistan is in the middle. Musharraf wasn't known then, wasn't that important. Pakistan was—Rightly or wrongly, I don't know, and probably rightly, India was the preferred "friend" in the Far East. I said to Musharraf, "This is understandable. Look at the size of the economy that will be in India shortly. You want to pick who to do business with and have a preferred customer? You'd take India anytime. Forget that you are Pakistan and they're India and that you don't agree and all sorts of stuff." He said, "Yes, but this is the final insult. This is not going to help America now. I can't understand where the President is coming from. Would you go down and talk to the American Ambassador? Don't say you have spoken to me about it at all, but go down and talk to him. Ask him what he thinks of it, privately, man to man. I'm sure he'll say, 'I don't know,' but

let him say whatever he likes. I'd just like for you to discuss it with him and see what he thinks, because I think it's going to be bad for relations, and relations are poor enough with Pakistan," which they were at the time.

I spoke to the Ambassador and said, "Purely between ourselves, what do you think? As I think it's seen here—But you are here all the time, I'm only here to visit the President." He said, "Yes, I think it's bad. But there's no point in *me* saying that. I sent that back to the people who made the decision to send him to Bangladesh and India. It will cause us to look bad over there, that's it. The thing about it is that India buys all their arms off Russia. No matter what the boys say about it beyond Washington, everything they can possibly buy that Russia has, they buy it. By Jesus, I tell you that the job at home is to build up the trade." [*laughs*] I said, "Fair enough. So in other words, you'd be recommending, that he visit here even though it's only a few weeks away?" He said, "My honest opinion is that I would. Do you mind me asking you why you're asking me?"

"Because," I said, "I know the President well and if I thought he was doing the wrong thing, I'd let him know and let him make up own decision anyway." The whole thing was arranged just by the two countries. I spoke to Clinton about it on the phone. He gave me his direct number; I never had to go through anybody. We got very friendly. I said to him, "Here you are. Here are the facts. I'm not asking what you're going to do. Do whatever you want to do, but in my judgment—Confidentially, I spoke to the Ambassador." He said, "What do you know about this fellow Musharraf?" I said, "I tell you, he'll be a close friend of yours, if you want him. If you can't have him *and* India, fair enough. I can recognize why the choice would be made, but politics is politics."

Musharraf had said to me, “This route has been left too clear for the Chinese. China is coming right up through Southeast Asia with influence. It seems so foreign that the Americans are going north to India and farther. People in Pakistan hope. I don’t want to deal with the Red Army, but I have no option.”

To make a long story short, I said to Clinton, “Your decision, but they see it as an insult. You make up your mind.” So he went. I said, “All you have to do is put down for two hours, three hours, spend a few hours.” [*laughs*] He reversed the decision for all the rest of them. I rang him on the day after 9/11.

Knott: Oh, you did?

Reynolds: “So,” I said, “wasn’t your visit Pakistan worthwhile?” Because I had told the Ambassador here, Musharraf rang me on the morning after. There’s a lot more involved in that—

But what I’m saying about Ted Kennedy is this: He wanted to get talking to India. Now, we have a very good relationship with India. I wouldn’t say it to the Indians—and I knew some of them—I wouldn’t say it to them about being friendly with Musharraf, going out and back and advising him. I wouldn’t say it to them. I wouldn’t hide it from them. I said to Musharraf, “I would find some way of getting some meeting between yourself and the Indians.” He said, “Fair enough. I’d be delighted. I can’t develop the economy,” because I was helping him with the direction for the triennial of the economy. “I can’t deliver on an economy for the people of Pakistan,” he said, “and if I can’t, this Islam crowd will become more and more forceful, because I will seem to have failed. Forty percent of my budget is spent on the military, 40 percent.”

I said, “What about your nuclear?” He said, “We’ll deal with that on a different day, you and me together, nobody else.” I said, “All right.” He said, “I can’t put 40 percent, gone, on one item, the military. I’ll never get the economy going if I can’t get somewhere. I need help with

India, agreeing on nuclear, whatever.” I said, “Leave the nuclear aside for the moment and we’ll see—We’ll test it out.”

I inquired in India about whose name out of the States would have the most influence, not talking about the President, not at that level. From three different inquiries came back if you want somebody to do something in America, to recommend something to them, the name of Kennedy was carried, Ted Kennedy. So I went to Ted. I said, “I have a job for you.” “Geez,” he said, “where do you get these ideas? That hasn’t a hope in hell.” I said, “Everyone *else* says it hasn’t a hope in hell. *You’re* saying it hasn’t a hope in hell? I’m told you’re the only man that can do it.”

He said, “I never would have thought that, but my research, that’s what it shows.” I said, “Now, Ted, what do you want me to do? I’ll get the man in Pakistan to attend a meeting, if you can get them to issue the invitation.” He said, “Nobody will believe that.” I said, “That’s fair enough.” He opened the door with his “Why would you say that? Nobody will believe it.” But then he said, “I remember having this type of a conversation with you before. I didn’t believe that the IRA would do it either, but I was proved wrong.”

“Well, I’ll tell you now,” I said to Ted, “if you agree to do it, I’ll guarantee you this, that there’ll be an acceptance from Pakistan within 12 hours of the invitation going out.” He said, “You’re serious?” I said, “Within 12 hours, and if there’s not an acceptance in 12 hours, Ted, you’ll hear no more from me. You’ll hear no more about it.” He said, “Well, we’ll try it, but I don’t believe it will work.” He came back again with the same argument that he’d been told: Pakistan agrees to nothing and will do nothing. I said, “Ted, that’s right, but I know the man now. I’ve had a number of visits with him. I advised him on a few things. He took the advice and his economy is beginning to show a bit of shape. [*laughs*] Come back to me again.”

I said, "Ted, what is there to lose? If they say no, they say no. So what the hell? Who the hell's got to know? If it does work, you could be starting off something that can take the nuclear out of dangerous places, never mind anything else. Isn't that worth trying?" He said, "Get rid of the nuclear—?" I said, "I'm not saying you get rid of it in India, I don't know, but you have a better chance than I have. I know what I can deliver from that side." So he said, "All right. Send it out anyway." I said, "If you haven't an acceptance within 12 hours, I'm a Dutchman." And he did. They said, "You go to New Delhi for the meeting," forcing them to India. "Your man said he was prepared to go to India." I think it was New Delhi, and off he went. Ted said, "By Jesus, I'll never say anything again." The next thing—The meeting was the 12th of July. You know what happened in September—9/11.

Young: Yes.

Reynolds: When did [George W.] Bush come out and say that he wanted all the friends to get together to fight the international terrorism? Was it the day after? Was it a week later? Did he say something—? Well, whenever he did, anyway, Musharraf rang me back and said, "Deliver the message. I'll be first to join up for the countries to support antiterrorism." I told the Ambassador here the day after 9/11. I don't think he believed me, because he never delivered the message. [laughs] I was inside signing the register. I didn't know him. He was only here a couple of days, two days, I think. I didn't know him personally. Some of the staff must have told him; he invited me in for a cup of coffee. Before I left him, I said to him, "I have friends out in the Far East, Middle East and Far East, and you can tell Washington, with certainty, that the first man to join with them against al-Qaeda will be your man in Pakistan. He says he wants it."

"I don't know," he said. "It's a very mixed community out there." "Yes," I said, "plenty of all sorts. I'm talking about the boss man." I don't think he believed me at all. But Kennedy,

I'm telling you, nobody else would have done it, because nobody would believe you. They were so at loggerheads.

Young: He's a very effective person in the way he goes about—

Reynolds: That's right. I love his style.

Young: The way he thinks and goes about things.

Reynolds: That's it.

Young: He assesses the lay of the land, gets people to find out things for him.

Reynolds: Oh, yes. I know. He did his own research.

Young: Oh, yes.

Reynolds: All over the place.

Young: I think we've about come to the end of our time. I'd like to ask you if you'd mind if we turned on the camera.

Reynolds: No, go ahead.

Young: Maybe you can tell us something you already told us during the interview on camera.

Reynolds: I'll tell you whatever you want.

Young: Well, I thought it was very interesting, your account with Gerry Adams and Joe Cahill when you—

Reynolds: Oh, yes.

Young: Jean and Ted and you and Clinton.

Reynolds: Yes.

Young: I think if you could tell that story for the camera in the same way you told it before.

Reynolds: You can never tell the same story twice in the same way.

Young: Well, give it a new twist.

Reynolds: I'll give it try.

Young: This is very interesting because you had the condition in place, it seems to me, ceasefire—

Reynolds: Oh, yes.

Young: Nothing without a ceasefire.

Reynolds: Nothing.

Young: If you hadn't been there with that condition firm, I think nothing else would have happened.

Reynolds: No, nothing.

Young: But I also think nothing else would have happened unless Ted Kennedy and Jean Kennedy [Smith] and the network were also working—

Reynolds: But the whole network was there: Nancy Soderberg in here and Jean over here and Ted over there.

Young: Well, if you could just tell that story, I think it would be interesting.

Reynolds: When I was Minister for Industry, Trade and Commerce in 1987–88, I had both the Iraqis and the Iranians together for the Seven-Year War, the Nine-Year War, whatever the hell it was. We trained a lot of nurses and medics for—We took over the training hospital in Baghdad.

We ran that for years as a subsidiary of Aer Lingus. They're lovely people, really nice people.

Young: It's a real tragedy.

Reynolds: People talk about Muslims as if they're all the same. They're not all the same at all. When you visit the different countries, you see it. They all come here from time to time, and we do business with them all. We always did.

Young: Sounds like you've got the best of both worlds.

Reynolds: We have. Genuine.

Young: That's right. Well, I thought we might wind this up.

Reynolds: Sure. Go ahead.

Young: This is the 27th of September 2005 and we from the University of Virginia managed to arrive here just the day before yesterday to find that we were here at a historic moment, when the decommissioning report was remade, the next-to-last report was made, announcing the verification of the decommissioning of the IRA weapons.

Earlier in this interview, we were talking about a critical event that made this possible. There were a number of them, but the one that I'd like to ask you to talk about a little bit more is the granting of the visa to Gerry Adams and then Joe Cahill; about your role in that and Ted Kennedy's role and Jean's and President Clinton's roles, because you were all key players. I think you held the very key position in this. I'd like you to tell the story of that as you told it to us earlier.

Reynolds: What period, what length? Where do you want me to start?

Knott: Perhaps your meeting with President Clinton in March of '93. Would that be a good place to start, where you talked him out of the Envoy?

Reynolds: Yes, it could be. Yes, sure, if that's where—

Young: And then there came up later that year, the question of the—

Knott: Of the visa.

Young: The visas and how that became necessary to obtain the ceasefire and then Joe Cahill.

Reynolds: Okay.

Young: Start with the Peace Envoy. Let's talk about that, your talking President Clinton out of that because there was another way, and how this would interfere, just in your own words.

Reynolds: Oh, sure, okay. Here goes, huh?

Young: Here goes.

Reynolds: I went to visit President Clinton in the White House on the 17th of March of 1993. He had been just about, what, five or six weeks in as President. I knew that during the election campaign I had it reported back to me that the Irish Question—trying to put some things together that might bring peace to Ireland—that he had given a commitment to do that. I had no doubt that the leaders of Irish America had got that commitment out of him. I'd been told that both in Boston and elsewhere, in Connecticut and many other places. Everywhere he went, there were—

Ted Kennedy was the leader of it, as far as I could figure out. Something had to be done for Ireland. I came in against this background and went to the White House on the 17th of March to present the traditional shamrocks to the President. He asked to see me beforehand, before we would get into the ceremony and all, so that could we just talk about Ireland. He told about the commitment he had given, then laid out his views as to what he and Irish America felt could be done and should be done to help to bring peace about in Ireland.

I explained to him that, when he told me about sending a Peace Envoy to Ireland, I'd heard about it from John Major, the British Prime Minister, before that. He said "I'm sure you'll be delighted to hear that announcement today. I have another announcement to make today, too, that I'm appointing Jean Kennedy Smith as an Ambassador to Ireland." I said, "I'm delighted to hear that." He said, "We'll be meeting Ted Kennedy, Senator Ted Kennedy, and the new Ambassador, after you present the shamrock. We can make all those announcements, but I want to make a special announcement about a Peace Envoy in Ireland. I want to send a Peace Envoy to Ireland at the request of the leaders of Irish America." I said, "I don't think it's a good idea. And I'd like to try and convince you not to send that Peace Envoy."

He said, “But I’m led to believe by Irish America—I know very little about Ireland, but I’m led to believe that an Irish Prime Minister going back from the White House on St. Patrick’s Day would like nothing better than to be able to announce that the President of the United States is sending a Peace Envoy to Ireland.” I said, “Yes, I can see what the thinking is behind this. The thinking is right, but the timing is wrong, because there’s an election coming up in May. I don’t see your Envoy making any progress. The last thing that *you* want and the last thing *I* want is failure, so I would ask you to put it on the shelf. Don’t do it. Just put it on the shelf. If it’s the right thing to do, I’ll come back very quickly and tell you that. I don’t think it is, but if I don’t want to go that route, I’ll give you a different proposition that will certainly succeed.”

Then we got into talking about—He didn’t say yes or no. He just took it in, thought about it, I presume, then he began discussing the Kennedy family and everything. He just couldn’t say enough about them. They’re in the hearts and minds of all Irish people, no matter whether they’re in Ireland, Australia, or over here especially. You know that Ted Kennedy has been more than a good friend to Ireland. We know that from the political—John Hume has done a lot of work over the years. I presume between himself and Ted, they established the Four Horsemen to look after the interests of Ireland, because John had started trying to do something about all of the mortars in Ireland and all the killing and all the people who were being injured. The whole thing was very bad, very bad for the north of Ireland, very bad for the Republic as well. I explained all that to President Clinton.

I told him that Jean Kennedy Smith would be an ideal bridge between America and Ireland, ideal. Anything she might be lacking in experience, I said, will be supplied by her brother Ted, because he’s as well known over in Ireland as he is anywhere else. He’s known for all the support from the Kennedys over the years. I said, “I look forward to working with the new

Ambassador, and I'll be delighted to work with Senator Kennedy as well, so welcome to the family for the whole lot."

He came back to it then before he made his announcements, and I said, "I hear what you're saying in relation to the Peace Envoy." I seem to recall that the name of Senator George Mitchell appeared, so whether George was in his mind at that time—I have a feeling it probably was. I have a feeling that Senator Ted Kennedy had voiced a view on that, had been asked, and thought he was the right man for it and that we had a great team put together. I was delighted with it because I wanted to get into this.

I had made it my political objective from the day I became leader of my party, and subsequently into the office of the Taoiseach, that I was going to have a real serious go at trying to bring peace to Ireland. I reckoned it was holding back the development of the whole country. I wanted to get the best people possible to help me, and I couldn't have had a better family than the Kennedy family, especially one of them an Ambassador in Ireland. As far as I was concerned, Ted Kennedy was a permanent Ambassador across in the United States. We started off and agreed with President Clinton that I would come back to him when I had different thoughts about how we could go forward from there, but bearing in mind the commitments he had given and that as far as I was concerned I was going to see his commitments developed. We worked on from there in relation to Jean coming over and she made her initial speech. What surprised me about her was that she was very nervous. I couldn't believe that you get a Kennedy person up to make a speech and she was nervous, and told me she was nervous. I couldn't believe it, but we became very good friends. She was able to find her way into the hearts and the minds of the Irish people.

In relation to the question of doing something from President Clinton's point of view, indeed from the leaders of America, of which Senator Ted would be the foremost, the right foremost leader of them I'm sure at that time, I had formed my opinion about the north of Ireland. First I would, from my point of view and the Irish government's point of view, have to change the present situation in relation to Washington and Ireland. The policy pursued by successive governments of different types had not worked. They just had failed and there were more and more people who were killed in the future. The week before I won the election in the party for leader, and having just become the Prime Minister, was one of the worst murders—in a pub with people drinking, up in the north of Ireland. I genuinely felt it would be a failure of leadership not to take on the biggest single issue that was going to face me as Prime Minister. I was going to employ everything I could think of and everybody that I could think could make a contribution, because there was no bigger—

I put the development of the economy second to it because I thought one would complement the other. I thought that educating people here, the best of the young people and them all having to go abroad, it was being affected by the violence in Northern Ireland. All the messages that were coming out of Ireland around the whole world were funeral after funeral, producing an image of Ireland that would destroy tourism, destroy the development of tourism, destroy investment coming in—because, unless you have political stability you're not going to get investment. People look for that before they start. To even be doing as well as we were showed me the capacity we had if we could get everything right. "Everything right" to me was number one, peace, and number two, the development of the economy. I knew if got peace, I'd get the other. I knew well, so I had to put everything into place to try to get peace.

I put together a team after my visit to President Clinton on the Sunday in March, having spoken with Senator Ted Kennedy and his sister after her being appointed. We all agreed that we would give it our best shot, every one of us, including the President, including Senator Kennedy, his sister and everything else, and that we'd all work closely together. I suppose we had some advantage in that I had a good trusting relationship with John Major, the then Prime Minister in London. I was able to work that access over here and they were able to consider the things that I was putting forward that I felt would have a big impact on how the future of the violence in Ireland was going to take, what the roots were, and how we could change them.

I came to the conclusion that the only way to try to change the whole direction of it was to be able to show the IRA and Sinn Féin that they had been involved in all sorts of actions that resulted in deaths and destruction and destroying the economy up there, everything you could think of, for 25 years. I set out to give them an alternative, an alternative to examine, that would deliver a lot better for everybody concerned on the other end of Ireland if they could stop the violence. I set out to get a permanent peace.

I remember one of the phrases that I used when people were saying, "Well, it's just a waste of time," or "This has been tried before." The route I intended to follow had never been tried before. It was a high risk. There was no question about it, because to change the government's decision as to how we approached the United States was a huge decision to have to make, a huge decision. It was a bigger decision even still for Irish America, led by President Clinton and Senator Kennedy and others, in that we were asking them to acknowledge these people like Gerry Adams, like Joe Cahill, and allow them a visit, having been denying it to them for 20 to 25 years probably. I knew it was a high-risk policy for them. They knew it. I knew it was a high-risk policy for me. I knew it.

I didn't have very much support in Ireland because they didn't think that it was a very good policy to follow, hoping to get a permanent end to the violence. What would make it possible for me was to be able to demonstrate, not alone in Ireland, but internationally, that Ireland was looking to go in a different direction. To lead the country forward in that direction, I'd need the help of a number of people, and none more important than the President of the United States and, indeed, Irish American leaders. I knew that Ted Kennedy would be one of the foremost there.

I never met in person with the IRA or Sinn Féin. I worked through an intermediary. I let them know that there were conditions attached. The conditions were that I was working toward a permanent ceasefire, *permanent* ceasefire. I would not speak to them personally until I got a permanent ceasefire announced by them and on the same day by myself. So we worked along.

First, I gave them—we signed a document, the two governments, British and Irish, the Downing Street Declaration, which to me was a charter for peace in Ireland. It set out the conditions. It set out and recognized the positions on both sides in Northern Ireland and it set out the route that I believed could lead to a permanent peace. I recognized both sides, both communities in the North, number one. Number two, that I would not and the Irish government would not be, insofar as my party and government were concerned, we would not be pursuing a united Ireland except through the voice of the people and through the Consent Principle. Once that was accepted, although not very formally accepted by the Republican movement, I knew I was on the right course.

They didn't reject us. They presented one themselves to me, but I didn't accept it. I couldn't accept it. They eventually accepted the one, more or less, that had been presented by John Major and myself, and consequently it was on the route. But before that happened, they had

some conditions. First of all, they wanted a visa for Gerry Adams—a huge hurdle to have to cross, no question about it, a huge hurdle.

I knew I needed all of—Most of that I could gather in the United States, especially the key people, President Clinton and one of his personal assistants, Nancy Soderberg, who came out of Ted Kennedy's office, who had been there for a long time. There were none of them that I had working for me over there who were strangers to the Irish Question. They all knew exactly—Trina Vargo, who took over from Nancy Soderberg—All coming from the right, shall we say, the Kennedy team, because they all knew exactly what the story was about. Then we had to—I had to convince the President and I asked them to convince him, all of them.

First, I had to enlist Jean for her to get her brother, Senator Ted, involved. She advised me that government policy would have to change, that Senator Ted would be very committed to what the policy was and had been continuing it, as far as he was concerned. Until the Irish government would release him from that commitment, he wouldn't move, and understandably so. One of his best friends, John Hume, would be of the same view, and the SDLP as a party was not committed behind the idea.

Young: The policy you're referring to is the policy against admitting on visas, against admitting people who had engaged in violence.

Reynolds: Violence, yes.

Young: Violent matters, so that was what had to change?

Reynolds: That had to change.

Young: Yes.

Reynolds: Right. It was absolutely vital to success being achieved at some stage in the future.

The policy that had to change was—It was an existing policy for I don't know many years—that

nobody would be admitted into the United States who was involved in violence. Gerry Adams was seen as the leader of Sinn Féin, IRA, you name it. I won't get into the arguments for or against whichever one, but anyway, that's where it was coming from. To get a visa, that took all the political ingenuity of Senator Ted Kennedy, his sister here as Ambassador, the staff that Nancy Soderberg could influence, the staff that Trina Vargo could influence, and anywhere we could get any more help. I knew that I could leave that job to them. I didn't have to get involved. They were going to deliver it, in my view, if it was to be delivered. So it was that President Clinton finally granted a visa to Gerry Adams, but for a very short period, which I didn't mind. It broke through the impossible at that stage. Later on, it came on to Joe Cahill.

We had arrived at the stage. President Clinton felt a bit let down that he didn't get a result quicker, but I said the mindset of those people is that they move very slowly. They want to be certain of their next move before they'll even consider putting it to anybody else. That's the sort of mindset, very slow; they had the old tradition behind them. They had a mindset of views that were unchangeable because they went back so far in history. That's why it was so vital to get the first decision. But the second decision for a visa was even more difficult, and you'll understand why.

Joe Cahill, a former commander in chief of the IRA with many—I forget how many times he was convicted of shooting policemen or at the British Army or whatever. It looked totally impossible. I had gotten to the stage with them that I had said if this wasn't deliverable, we'd have to stop, because we wouldn't be able to take the mainstream IRA with us to stop the violence. We weren't going to take the risk that was taken by the IRA when they split in 1970 and lost their American support for a long, long time. They were not taking that risk again, so we couldn't impress a new order. But more importantly, "This is it. You get this—"

I'd given them a list of things to show that I was prepared to change the direction for them, to try to have a different understanding as to where we were going, but I didn't make much headway in the North in July 1994. I had to lay down the law to them that if they didn't give me what I wanted, the permanent ceasefire, that I would close down the project after the holidays were over at the end of August. Their response to me was "Visa for Joe Cahill, you'll have the permanent ceasefire." So we had to get all the team working again—

Young: Now, Joe Cahill, he was the leader of the IRA. He was a hardliner, wasn't he?

Reynolds: Yes. He was softening a bit, but he was a hardliner.

Young: So it was not only Gerry Adams, but this man had to bring along the hardliners with him. Otherwise, there would be that split you just referred to?

Reynolds: The split.

Young: Which they weren't willing to do?

Reynolds: They weren't prepared to do it. Or he wouldn't get anywhere.

Young: Right.

Reynolds: They were bringing their people along using, say, Gerry Adams to do a certain division and Martin McGuinness to do another division, Joe Cahill overall. To avoid the split in the United States, support groups all over the place, only Cahill would be believed that they were going to make that big change. Nobody else would be believed, if somebody else went over. That's why it was so important. Jean Kennedy Smith, the Ambassador, had to come back off her holidays in the south of France. I rang her a number of times, so I suppose she hadn't gotten much of holiday, and she said she'd better go home. We worked from Dublin. She said, "What about Ted?" and I said, "Lord, Jean, can you not change him?" Then she came back and told me

I'd have to change the policy and to release him from that. I knew it was all riding on this. We either got a visa for Cahill or we had no peace process. Simple as that.

So it was that I spoke to the President on the phone. I spoke to Trina Vargo. I spoke to everyone, so did Jean Kennedy Smith. Eventually we lined them all up and the President was on his holidays. Nancy Soderberg confirmed to me that she would deliver the file personally and not put it through anybody, bring it up and ask him to phone me before he signed it. I knew when he came on that everybody had their work done, although he was still a bit reluctant, but not nearly as reluctant as he was the first I asked him for one. I can assure you this was a much more difficult decision. It was then that he made the suggestion—He was surprised that I didn't have a statement or looked for a statement in advance, a few days in advance, because an organization like that would have to have it going around, the wording to be agreed on by all sorts of people. When I told him I had it in my inside pocket, he said, "Yes, that's fine." Then he began to realize we were for real. I read it out after getting clearance from—through the priest who was doing—**Young:** Father Reid.

Reynolds: Father Alec Reid, who was doing the in-betweens himself and Dr. Martin Mansergh, both of them. When I read it out to him, he said, "Fine. I'll tell the Ambassador, or you tell her, that he's going to be at the Embassy in the morning, nine o'clock." That's it.

He said, "If you don't get your—I have no fallback position." I said, "I know I'm going to get it." So, he rang me—He was the first. He was first and Ted Kennedy was next, on the phone [*snaps*] just after 11:00 o'clock Irish time on the following Wednesday. We all owe them over there a huge debt of gratitude because we now have—You're here on the day when the guns have been all put out of use, which most Irish people thought would never happen. Even [General] John de Chastelain, when he came in, said he understood where I was coming from,

because it's part of the military frame of mind never to hand over your arms. He said, "I know why you're putting it down the list. A lot of things have to be done beforehand."

Most people were trying to get me to approach it—to destroy the guns first, but when I got the opportunity to explain it personally to them, they began to see it. So did the President and Ted Kennedy and all of them who worked for it. They could see what the plot was and where we were coming from and we moved it along. I have to say it was a proud day yesterday to hear the announcement.

Young: I will bet it was. It was an *Irish* accomplishment.

Reynolds: That's right. We're not the easiest people to deal with.

Young: No. [*laughs*] No, you're not. Did you call Ted Kennedy?

Reynolds: Oh, yes.

Young: On the day?

Reynolds: Oh, yes. They were calling me. He didn't get a chance. I mean, John Major was only third in the row. I had two or three calls out of America before I even got to my nearest neighbor. He was really thrilled and delighted to have played such an important role. It came back to my first challenge that I put to the people in the north end: "Who's afraid of peace?" It's very difficult to answer, because who can be afraid of peace? Nobody. It's great.

Young: Your sticking to the ceasefire was an absolutely essential element and you had to persuade the rest of the world—

Reynolds: That's right, because everyone thought it should have been the other way around.

Young: Yes.

Reynolds: The rules of the game would say, anywhere internationally, stop the guns first. Do away with the guns first, but, you see, one of the—The deep-rooted fears that existed in the

society in Northern Ireland, unless you were there and knew them and could understand where they were coming from—There was no IRA existing when the trouble broke out in 1969. None. They didn't exist. They existed because the Nationalists in the Republican community were being attacked and the pogrom went off in the Clonard monastery and other places. Little old people living, and indeed children, in small, small houses were all blown out of it, by the Loyalists. It was out of pure necessity that the IRA was re-formed. They all rushed into it to try to protect their own people, because the British government wasn't protecting them. The police weren't protecting them, and the Irish government wasn't, because the Irish government didn't want to get involved in that kind of situation.

They thought the British would have sent in the Army earlier. That's why it was fear that gave rise to the IRA again. Funny enough, when I went to test the communities on the other side, it was fear of the IRA when they were formed that led to the Loyalists' military growth as well. Consequently, it was a difficult one to break, because that was deep-rooted in both communities. That's why I went to the Loyalists first, because I reckoned if they gave me even a conditional peace treaty, even a *conditional* one, that I'd get the others. I would be able to get the others because I could answer the questions.

“Oh, well, who's going to defend us? Nobody.” I said, “Well, if I get the others to go first, will you go?” Then I went back. I reversed it and I said to the Loyalists, “If I get the IRA?” “The IRA will never go, never ever.” That's what they genuinely believed. They didn't believe I'd get a permanent ceasefire out of them. But the plan worked.

Young: It certainly did.

Reynolds: But in fairness, I think there were some in Sinn Féin who weren't that far away from them. I dealt a lot with Martin McGuinness, and Martin could see where I was going. Martin said

very early on, I may have mentioned to you, if the 1920 Government of Ireland Act, Section 74, was on the table, he would be at the table. I knew that was coming from—There was a lot of thought about this. I said if I could deliver the table, I could be reasonably sure of getting this man to it.

But it was a tremendous team effort from everybody who was part of it, a tremendous team effort. It's great to see it's working. Yes, it is. I have no doubt, given a little time, there's no other future except to go forward.

Young: You have a good deal of confidence that now it will—

Reynolds: Yes. Because they never thought that it would happen.

Young: Yes.

Reynolds: First of all, they didn't believe that the permanent thing—Then I kept talking about decommissioning. “No. Last, not first; last, not first; last not—” I'd been preaching for years. I wasn't moving off that, either. I never supported anybody who was looking for the guns to be destroyed at that stage, because I knew it wouldn't happen. I would have lost the trust that I had built up in both communities if I had. I left office in the last days of '94. I kept involved behind the scenes, but I never bothered publicizing any of it, because you can work far better and be more effective behind the scenes.

Knott: Sure.

Reynolds: And anyway, you'd be crossing over into government, so—

Young: This is a story, a lesson, for this kind of world that's very unusual. We hope it will be recorded in full so that people can learn from it. “Learn from your past or you're doomed to repeat it.”

Reynolds: Sure. Oh yes, absolutely. I remember President Clinton said that to me many years afterward. He said, “If this finishes the way you’re thinking it’s going to finish, it’s great.”

Young: Quite a story. It’s quite a story.

Reynolds: I was over at the Peace Conference last weekend. We were at a reception afterward, just talking, when Gerry Adams appeared. He said, “Where’s the photographer? Let’s get a photograph of the three—” I said, “Oh yes, it took longer than I thought, but it’s working.” “Gerry,” he said to him, “I never told you that this man didn’t *ask* me for a visa for you. He just *told* me to give you one. Imagine. Imagine a request like that. That wasn’t even a request. It was an order.” It was an investment, well worth it. Did he get the second election? Did you win? What more do you want? [*laughs*]

Young: This has been a very enlightening day for us and we’re very appreciative of the amount of time you gave to us. It’s a great project, we think.

Knott: Thank you so much.

Reynolds: It would have been awful if it was a number of years’ work for nothing, if it didn’t go right.

Knott: Right.

Reynolds: No, no, this is very important. There’s a lot more that can be said about it, but it’s not to be said just yet.

Young: I’m sure of that. That’s always true.

Reynolds: Maybe someday in the future we’ll say more.

Knott: It’s nice of you to have us in your home as well.

Young: Yes, it was. Very nice.