

“The Power of a Presidential Visit”

Interviewee: Gerry Adams

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Project: William J. Clinton Presidential History

President William J. Clinton traveled to Northern Ireland in 1995 in support of the peace process seeking to end almost 30 years of violence. Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams describes the significance of Clinton’s visit for moving the process forward at a critical time for Northern Ireland.

Gerry Adams: When President Clinton came, it was at a time when the Brits weren’t engaging, and at that time I realized the strength and the power of a Presidential visit, because of course the White House were bringing, in a very focused way, all of their muscle to bear on Downing Street. Things weren’t going well, and if my memory serves me right, just on the eve of that visit there was a commitment from Downing Street to start peace talks within a few months.

President Clinton was seen like the cavalry coming in, and there started, I think, a love affair between him and Ireland, because what had been an intellectual embrace—dealing with the politics of it and all the rest of it—now became emotional. When he came, people were genuinely glad to see him.

End of excerpt.

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URL: <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/gerry-adams-oral-history-0>