EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewer’s Briefing Materials
Bertie Ahern Interview, 11/08/2010

Robert A. Martin, Research Director

Miller Center Documents¹
• Bertie Ahern Timeline.
• Bertie Ahern Fact Sheet.
• EMK Key Events in Northern Ireland.
• Northern Ireland Key Events.
• EMK Abbreviated Northern Ireland Timeline.
• Key Actors in Northern Ireland Peace Process.

Secondary Source Materials
• Adam Clymer interview with Edward M. Kennedy, 06/02/1997, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, pp. 1-5.

¹ These are original documents created by Miller Center researchers for the Edward M. Kennedy Oral History Project. Please acknowledge credit for any use of these materials.
Oral History Interviews

- Edward M. Kennedy interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 03/20/2006.
- Edward M. Kennedy interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 05/30/2007.

Other

**BERTIE AHERN TIMELINE**

*Prepared by Bryan Craig
Miller Center, University of Virginia, 05/06/2010*

1951  

1977  

1979-1991  
Ahern serves on Dublin’s city council. (http://bertieahernoffice.org)

1986-1987  
Ahern serves as Lord Mayor of Dublin. (http://bertieahernoffice.org)

1987-1991  
Ahern serves as Minister for Labour. (http://bertieahernoffice.org)

1991-1994  
Ahern serves as Minister for Finance. (http://bertieahernoffice.org)

1994  

*January*  
At Tip O’Neill’s funeral, John Hume, leader of Northern Ireland’s Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), convinces Edward M. Kennedy (EMK) to support Gerry Adams’ visa application. Adams is the leader of Sinn Féin.

Irish republicans communicate to President Bill Clinton that they are prepared to moderate their positions through the O’Dowd-Vargo-Soderberg link. O’Dowd is a prominent Irish-American journalist with ties in Northern Ireland, Trina Vargo is EMK’s foreign affairs adviser, and Nancy Soderberg is a former EMK staffer now working in the Clinton White House.

The U.S. Ambassador to Ireland, Jean Kennedy Smith (JKS), recommends that Clinton grant Adams a visa. EMK also lobbies hard in favor of the visa. The Clinton Administration grants the visa after Adams agrees to denounce a recent terrorist threat in San Diego.

*August*  
EMK and JKS lobby Clinton to issue a visa to IRA activist Joe Cahill, paving the way for the IRA ceasefire.

*September*  
EMK and Vicki meet Adams at the Boston airport.

*November*  
On the 17th, Ahern is elected Fianna Fáil’s party leader, taking over from Albert Reynolds. Ahern states the peace process is his first priority. (Ahern, p. 157; Whelan and Masterson, p. 135)
December  Ahern has a number of meetings with Sinn Féin to assure them of his commitment to the peace process. Reynolds’ government collapses and he is replaced by John Bruton.  (Ahern, pp. 174-175; James Loughlin, The Ulster Question Since 1945 2nd Edition, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 162)

1995

January  Ahern visits Northern Ireland to meet with Unionist leaders.  (Whelan and Masterson, p. 150)

February  The British and Irish governments publish the Frameworks for the Future documents, which present guidelines for creating a government in Northern Ireland acceptable to all parties. Ahern supports the document and calls on the British to stop claiming Northern Ireland as British territory. (Whelan and Masterson, p. 151; Loughlin, p. 162; Roger Mac Ginty and John Darby, Guns and Government: The Management of the Northern Ireland Peace Process, New York: Palgrave, 2002, pp. 30-31)

March  Hardening the British position, Secretary of State Sir Patrick Mayhew announces that arms decommissioning is an official prerequisite for Sinn Féin’s inclusion in negotiations.  This demand, along with two others, is made in Washington, D.C., and becomes known as the Washington Three.  (Loughlin, p. 163; Mac Ginty and Darby, p. 31)

Winter  EMK and Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) send a letter to Clinton arguing Adams should be allowed to raise funds in U.S. Clinton agrees.

November  EMK meets with Adams, who warns of impending deadlock in the peace process. The British and Irish governments announce a new approach designed to break the current deadlock. Under this formula, an independent decommissioning body, led by former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, pursues options for disarming the paramilitaries and simultaneously holding multi-party discussions.  (Loughlin, pp.165-166; Mac Ginty and Darby, p. 31)

Clinton visits Northern Ireland with Kathleen Kennedy Townsend. While in Dublin Clinton stays at JKS’s residence.

1996

January  The International Body releases the Mitchell Report on the 24th which recommends that arms decommissioning and talks begin concurrently.  To enter talks, the parties must adhere to certain principles, such as supporting democratic and peaceful means to resolve political issues, disarming and verification, and renouncing the use of force to influence negotiations. These would be called the Mitchell principles.  Prime Minister John Major rejects the report, which draws
criticism from Ahern. (Ahern, p. 177; Whelan and Masterson, pp. 187-188; Loughlin, p. 166; Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 31-32)

**February**
The IRA ceasefire collapses after a bomb is set off in London. Ahern meets with British Labour Leader Tony Blair for the first time and they begin a series of meetings about Northern Ireland. Ahern states “...that Tony was someone I could really do business with.” (Ahern, pp. 178-179)

**March**
EMK refuses to meet with Adams after the ceasefire collapses.

**April**
EMK meets with loyalists and commends them for not retaliating against the IRA bombing.

**June**
After the elections to select representatives, all-party talks chaired by Mitchell begin in Northern Ireland. Sinn Féin is excluded from the talks until the ceasefire is restored. (Loughlin, pp. 168-169; Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 33-34)

Ahern meets with Adams to encourage a new IRA ceasefire. Abandoning decommissioning as a precondition for talks, Ahern explains to him that Sinn Féin can enter the talks once a ceasefire is announced. (Whelan and Masterson, p. 190)

**July**
The annual Unionist Orange Order parade in Dumcree leads to rioting, widespread civil disorder, and sectarian attacks. As a result, the Social Democrat and Labour Party (SDLP) leaves the talks and a serious disagreement occurs between the British and Irish governments. (Loughlin, pp. 169-170; Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 35-36)

**1997**

**March**
On the 13th, Ahern meets with EMK, Dodd, Rep. Joe Kennedy (D-RI), and Under Secretary of State Peter Tarnoff about Northern Ireland during Ahern’s trip to Washington. (*The Irish Times*, 03/13/1997)

On the 15th, EMK calls on the IRA to restore its ceasefire, and Major and Blair to bring Sinn Féin into peace negotiations when they resume in June. Ahern calls on Bruton to support this idea. Ahern also meets with Sinn Féin throughout the spring to get the ceasefire restored. (Whelan and Masterson, p. 166; *The Irish Times*, 03/15/1997)

**May**
The British Labour party wins a majority in Westminster and Blair becomes the Prime Minister. The new government abandons the prerequisite of decommissioning, works to bring Sinn Féin into talks, and sets May 1998 as a deadline for concluding negotiations. (Loughlin, p. 172; Mac Ginty and Darby, p. 36)
Ahern visits Belfast for two days to meet with members of the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP) and the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP). He states if elected, he would support constitutional changes relating to Northern Ireland as being Irish territory. (Whelan and Masterson, p. 185)

**June**

On the 6th, Ahern is elected Taoiseach in a coalition with the Progressive Democrats. One of Ahern’s campaign promises is to create a new peace process for Northern Ireland. *(The Irish Times, 04/21/1997, 04/28/1997; http://bertieahernoffice.org)*


**July**

On the 12th, Adams tells Ahern the IRA will be more likely to reinstate a ceasefire if it gets assurances that the British support constitutional change for shared power. (Adams, p. 287)

On the 15th, Ahern speaks to Clinton over the phone about Northern Ireland. They discuss how to move the talks forward and both reportedly support inclusion of Sinn Féin following an IRA ceasefire. (Whelan and Masterson, p. 195)


On the 25th, a joint statement from Ahern, Adams, and Hume emphasizes the commitment of the three leaders to lasting peace and the principles set out in the New Ireland Forum and the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation. (http://www.sinnfein.org/)

EMK publicly thanks Adams, Blair, and Ahern for helping to bring a new IRA ceasefire. *(Belfast Telegraph, 07/28/1997)*

**September**

Sinn Féin agrees to the Mitchell principles and enters the peace talks. (Clymer, p. 594)


**December**

Mitchell presides over one last session before the Christmas break. It is not successful as all sides argue about the symbolism of future meetings taking place in London and Dublin, and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) refuses to talk to Sinn

On the 8th, Ahern visits the peace talks and a West Belfast school. (Adams, p. 312)

On the 15th, EMK meets with Ahern in Boston. (*The Irish Times*, 12/13/1997)

After Christmas, a republican paramilitary group assassinates a leader of the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF), a unionist paramilitary, setting off a spiral of violence which results in ten deaths. (Mac Ginty and Darby, p. 39)

**1998**

*Jan.-Feb.* The new round of peace talks begin on January 12th. The biggest hurdle for the next two months is the issue of violence leading to the temporary expulsion of Sinn Féin and the UDP from the talks due to the breech of the Mitchell principles. (Mitchell, pp. 134-142)

*January* EMK visits Northern Ireland at a time in which the negotiations have stalled and violence is rising. EMK addresses an audience at the University of Ulster in which he makes a concerted effort to reach out to Irish Protestants. EMK next travels to Belfast and speaks with David Trimble, the UUP leader, and Ahern. (Clymer, pp. 594-595; *The Irish Times*, 01/08/1998)

*February* On the 24th, Ahern and Adams meet. Although out of the talks, Adams tells Ahern that the government needs to bolster confidence in the talks and Adams assures Ahern that he will keep talking with various peace officials. (Adams, p. 326)

*March* During a trip to the U.S., Ahern meets with EMK and asks for his help to push talks forward. (Ahern, p. 218)

On the 25th, Mitchell announces a schedule of March 30th to April 9th for a final agreement. (Mitchell, pp. 143-145)

*April* Ahern and Blair meet during the first week in April for final deliberations, where they discuss the development of councils between Ireland and Northern Ireland. (Mitchell, pp. 152-180; Eamonn O’Kane, *Britain, Ireland and Northern Ireland since 1980*, New York: Routledge, 2007, pp. 153-154)

On the 4th, Ahern’s mother dies amidst the negotiations. (Ahern, p. 219)

On the 10th, the landmark Good Friday Agreement is signed, which establishes a new government in Northern Ireland based on the principle of self-determination. To reach this point, Mitchell, Clinton, Blair, and Ahern intervene repeatedly in the
negotiations, especially on the issues of prison release and decommissioning. EMK calls Ahern to congratulate him on the agreement. (Ahern, pp. 222-228; Clymer, p. 595; Mitchell, pp. 143-183; Mac Ginty and Darby, p. 40; The Irish Times, 04/11/1998; The New York Times, 06/26/1998)

On the 30th, the IRA refuses to disarm as stipulated by the Good Friday Agreement. (The New York Times, 05/01/1998)

**May**

On the 22nd, the Good Friday Agreement is voted on in a referendum. 71% of Northern Ireland’s voters support the agreement with unionists evenly split and 94% of voters within the Republic of Ireland favor of the agreement. (Loughlin, p. 194; Mac Ginty and Darby, p. 44)

**June**

Elections for the new Northern Ireland Assembly are held with the UUP and SDLP winning the largest and second largest number of seats, respectively. (Loughlin, p. 196; Mac Ginty and Darby, p. 44)

**July**

The Northern Ireland Assembly holds its inaugural meeting and elects Trimble as First Minister. (Loughlin, p. 195; Mac Ginty and Darby, p. 44)

**August**

A republican splinter group, the Real IRA, plants a bomb in Omagh, killing twenty-nine people. Sinn Féin condemns the bombing and for the first time denounces the actions of other republicans. (Mac Ginty and Darby, p. 45)

**September**

Clinton makes his second trip to Ireland and Northern Ireland and again stays at JKS’s residence. While in Ireland, Clinton also meets Ahern. (The Irish Times, 09/04/1998)

On the 4th, Ahern announces a new scholarship program for U.S. scholars to study in Ireland called the “Mitchell Scholarship.” It will be administered by the U.S.-Ireland Alliance headed by EMK’s former foreign policy adviser, Trina Vargo. (The Irish Times, 09/05/1998)

For the first time, Adams and Trimble meet face-to-face, but refrain from shaking hands. Their meeting indicates a shift in the structure of the peace process; the British and Irish governments are to be less involved with the burden of solving the decommissioning issue among the parties themselves, especially the UUP and Sinn Féin. The UUP maintains that Sinn Féin should not join the government until decommissioning has begun, while Sinn Féin claims that their electoral victory is sufficient for their entry into the government. (Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 45-46)

**1999**

**March**

The tenth deadline for devolving power to the Stormont Executive passes without breaking the impasse in negotiations. One of the most divisive issues remains
decommissioning, as the IRA refuses to comply and the UUP will not form a “government before guns.” (Loughlin, p. 202; Mac Ginty and Darby, p. 48)

The 7th annual American Ireland Fund dinner is a tribute to EMK and his efforts to achieve peace in Northern Ireland. The party is, however, somber as violence threatens the Good Friday Agreement. During Ahern’s visit to the U.S., he attends the dinner and meets with EMK, Dodd, and other members of the Friends of Ireland on Capitol Hill. (The Washington Post, 03/17/1999; The Irish Times, 03/17/1999)

April

After three telephone calls from Clinton, the multi-party talks agree on the Hillsborough Declaration, a plan consisting of a series of steps culminating in the creation of the Stormont Executive. Sinn Féin rejects the plan because it requires decommissioning prior to their inclusion in the government. (Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 48-49)

July

John Kennedy, Jr., his wife Carolyn, and her sister Lauren Bessette die in a plane crash. Ahern described the incident as “yet another tragedy which has befallen the Kennedy family.” (The Mirror, 07/21/1999)

September

In a desperate attempt to salvage the stalled peace process, Mitchell is recalled to Northern Ireland in order to review the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. (Loughlin, pp. 203-204; Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 49-50)

November

The Mitchell review states that the UUP should concede to the formation of a power sharing executive in return for the IRA sending a representative to the Independent International Decommissioning Council led by John de Chastelain. The agreement stipulates that if the IRA does not decommission, and if devolution fails to take place, the institutions will be suspended. On the 27th, the UUP passes the Mitchell plan. (Loughlin, p. 205; Mac Ginty and Darby, p. 51)

December

Devolution takes place on the 2nd. Trimble is again First Minister, but still refuses to take part in cabinet meetings with Sinn Féin. In addition, the North-South and British-Irish Councils are also created, the Irish Republic removes articles 2 and 3 of its constitution (which assert claims to Northern Ireland), and the IRA appoints an interlocutor to the Chastelain Commission. (Loughlin, p. 206)

2000

February

Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Mandelson suspends the Stormont Executive in response to the Chastelain commission report that the IRA has not set a date to begin decommissioning. Direct rule by Britain is reinstituted. (Loughlin, p. 206; Mac Ginty and Darby, p. 52)

March

A serious challenge is mounted by hardliners to Trimble’s leadership of the UUP. (Loughlin, p. 210; Mac Ginty and Darby, p. 52)
On the 17th, Ahern attends a gala dinner honoring Clinton. Both men urge Northern Ireland politicians to keep working for peace. EMK and Adams are in attendance.  (The Mirror, 03/18/2000)

May
On the 7th, the IRA releases a statement promising to “completely and verifiably” place their arms beyond use. This breakthrough impels the UUP to reenter the Executive and results in another devolution of power. Clinton, EMK, and Ahern make public statements welcoming the UUP back. (Loughlin, p. 211; Mac Ginty and Darby, p. 52; The Irish Times, 05/29/2000)

June
The IRA allows the third party inspectors to look over their arms dumps. They verify that the weapons cannot be used without detection. (Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 52-53)

October
Seeking to help the challenged Trimble, Mandelson asks nationalists to accept less than full implementation of the Patten report on policing reforms. Mandelson contends that nationalists received 95% of what they asked for, and that EMK supports compromise on this issue.  (The Irish Times, 10/06/2000)

December
Clinton makes his last visit as President to Northern Ireland in an effort to end the deadlock.  (The Irish Times, 12/09/2000)

2001

February
EMK signs a letter urging President George W. Bush to remain involved in Northern Ireland.  (The Irish Times, 02/24/2001)

March
Ahern goes to the U.S. for a two-day visit. On the 15th, he visits Bush with Trimble, Trimble’s deputy Seamus Mallon, and Hume at the annual Speaker's lunch on Capitol Hill. Later that day, Ahern meets with EMK in a separate meeting. On the 16th, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell meets with Adams. After that, Adams meets with EMK, Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY), and other congressional leaders.  (The Irish Times, 03/15/2001; The Scotsman, 03/16/2001)

June
EMK meets with Adams.

For the first time, Sinn Féin and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) earn more votes than the SDLP and UUP.  (Loughlin, pp. 217-218)

July
Trimble resigns as First Minister to protest the IRA’s intransigence towards decommissioning.  (Loughlin, p. 216; Mac Ginty and Darby, p. 54)

EMK downplays reports that he opposes the appointment of the U.S. Ambassador to Ireland Richard Egan.  (The Irish Times, 07/19/2001)
October The IRA announces that it has completed a significant act of decommissioning, which is verified by Chastelain. After meeting with Dodd and McGuinness, EMK hails the IRA decision as “a new day of liberation for all the people of Northern Ireland.” (Loughlin, p. 221; The Irish Times, 10/24/2001)

November Hume retires as leader of the SDLP. (The Irish Times, 09/18/2001)

2002

March Ahern visits the U.S. for the St. Patrick’s Day festivities and meets with Bush at the White House. He announces the Edward Kennedy Chair in Health Policy and Management at Trinity College in Dublin. He calls EMK “a true friend of Ireland in difficult as well as good times.” (The Irish Times, 03/14/2002)

April Chastelain announces that the IRA has completed a second act of decommissioning. (The New York Times, 04/09/2002)

June Ahern is reelected as Taoiseach with the Progressive Democrats. (http://bertieahernoffice.org)

September EMK and Rep. Jim Walsh (R-NY) host the congressional reception for delegates to the U.S.-Ireland Business Summit. (The Irish Times, 09/05/2002)

October Devolution is suspended again over the lack of progress on decommissioning and the IRA spy ring found in Stormontgate. The suspension would last until 2007. (O’Kane, pp. 171-172)

December Adams visits the U.S. in order to meet with EMK, Rep. Peter King (R-NY), and Bush’s special envoy to Ireland Richard Haass. After the meetings, Adams announces that the talks with the British and Irish governments have not made any progress, and that “if progress is to be made, the British government will have to come forward with a comprehensive, time-framed programme for implementing outstanding aspects of the Good Friday agreement.” (The Irish Times, 12/07/2002, 12/12/2002)

2003

March In Washington, Ahern and Trimble meet at the Mayflower Hotel to discuss the stalled peace process. Ahern also meets with EMK and Dodd. EMK later praises Ahern as “…an indispensable figure in the march towards peace,” and comments that “We are very hopeful that we are coming to a closure in the coming days.” (The Irish Times, 03/14/2003)

May EMK criticizes the postponing of Northern Ireland elections by the unionists.

November EMK meets with the Northern Ireland Secretary Paul Murphy.
2004

*February*  An all-party review of the Good Friday Agreement begins.  *(The Irish Times, 02/04/2004)*

*March*  Ahern visits the U.S. and meets with Bush and EMK.  *(The Irish Times, 03/18/2004)*

*September*  Blair and Ahern host a three-day summit which is held at Leeds Castle, but the parties reach no agreement.  *(The Irish Times, 09/20/2004)*

*Nov.-Dec.*  Talks between the DUP and Sinn Féin continue through the British and Irish governments.  Eventually the two governments put forward their own blueprint for the parties to consider.  Bush calls DUP leader Ian Paisley and pressures him to accept power sharing.  Adams recommends that Sinn Féin accept the proposal; they stall, however, when the DUP demands photographic evidence of IRA decommissioning.  *(The New York Times, 11/27/2004; The Irish Times, 12/07/2004, 12/15/2004)*

2005

*February*  EMK announces his continued support for Sinn Féin’s inclusion in the peace process.

EMK commemorates Hume’s retirement from parliament.

Ireland’s Foreign Minister and Bertie’s brother, Dermot Ahern, goes to the U.S. for a week visiting with U.N. officials and Bush's special envoy on Northern Ireland, Dr Mitchell Reiss. He also meets with EMK, Senators John McCain (R-AZ), Hillary Clinton, and other congressional officials.  Ahern’s government supports the EMK-McCain immigration reform plan, since it would create a temporary work status for illegal Irish immigrants.  *(The Irish Times, 02/07/2005, 10/07/2005)*

*March*  The Bush Administration bans Adams from the annual White House lunch on St. Patrick’s Day and the speaker’s lunch on Capitol Hill.  EMK refuses to meet with Adams, citing ongoing IRA criminal activity; Senate passes EMK’s resolution condemning IRA violence.  *(The Irish Times, 03/12/2005, 03/14/2005, 03/19/2005)*

Ahern visits the U.S. and meets with Bush and EMK.  *(The Irish Times, 03/17/2005)*

*May*  EMK and McCain introduce their comprehensive immigration bill in the Senate.  *(The Boston Globe, 05/13/2005)*
June  EMK tables a Senate resolution calling for IRA to disarm and the DUP to commit to power sharing.

July  McGuinness requests a meeting with EMK during a trip to Washington, D.C. The IRA later announces it will disarm.

A second immigration bill is introduced by Senators Jon Kyl (R-AZ) and John Cornyn (R-TX), which is a more conservative version of the EMK-McCain bill. The bill would allow foreign nationals to work in the U.S. for up to two years before returning to their home countries and would require illegal immigrants already here to return home before applying to that program. (*The Houston Chronicle*, 07/20/2005)

September  IRA disarmament is confirmed by an independent commission. EMK hails this “dramatic and historic step” as a “new dawn in the peace process.” (*The Irish Times*, 09/27/2005)

October  Dermot Ahern provides public support for the EMK-McCain immigration reform bill. He states, “Its provisions, if enacted, would enable undocumented people, including the undocumented Irish, to participate fully in the life of their adopted home free from fear and uncertainty.” (*The Irish Times*, 10/07/2005)

The LVF announces that it will decommission its weapons arsenal in response to the IRA’s decision to disarm. (*Press Association*, 10/31/2005)


December  The House passes a more conservative immigration bill than the EMK-McCain bill.

2006

March  In a statement issued on the eve of St. Patrick’s Day, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), EMK, and other members of the Friends of Ireland Executive Committee reiterate the importance the Good Friday Agreement to the peace process and call for justice in the case of Robert McCartney, who was killed last year. EMK meets with the McCartney’s mother and promises to raise the issue of pursuing his murderers with Adams while the latter is in Washington for St. Patrick’s Day festivities. (*Capitol Hill Press Releases*, 03/16/07; *The Sun*, 03/17/2007)

Ahern visits the U.S. to meet with Bush and makes immigration reform a top priority as Ahern urges the Senate to pass the EMK-McCain bill. He also visits

**May**  
The Senate passes the EMK-Mc McCain immigration bill, but it stalls over the “amnesty” issue.

**October**  
Following a three-day summit in St. Andrews, Scotland, the British and Irish governments unveil the St. Andrews Agreement on the 13th. The agreement establishes a timetable for the reinstitution of a power-sharing government at Stormont by March 2007.  *(The Irish Times, 10/14/2006)*

**November**  
The Northern Ireland Assembly fails to meet a November 24th deadline to constitute a power-sharing executive. The session collapses as a result of Ian Paisley’s refusal to serve as head of a future government before Sinn Féin accepts the authority of the Northern Ireland police force, a key stipulation of the St. Andrews Agreement. A bomb threat at the Stormont Parliamentary Building sends members of the Assembly scattering minutes following Paisley’s announcement.  *(Associated Press Worldstream, 11/24/2006)*

**2007**

**January**  
Sinn Féin declares its support for the Police Service of Northern Ireland, removing a significant obstacle to the progression of the peace process. Following his party’s vote, Adams states, “This shows that the war is over. And if the war is over, we have to build the peace.”  *(Financial Times, 01/30/2007)*

**March**  
The DUP wins a plurality in the National Assembly elections and Sinn Féin receives the second most votes. Provided he concedes to share power with Sinn Féin, Paisley will become First Minister of the new government while McGuinness is expected to become Deputy First Minister.  *(Chicago Tribune, 03/06/2007; Reuters News, 03/09/2007)*

Ahern visits the U.S. He visits with Bush, Pelosi, EMK, and Hillary Clinton. He also speaks at the Council on Foreign Relations. In his meeting with Ahern, EMK tells him he is committed to immigration reform despite the failed EMK-Mc McCain bill.  *(The Irish Times, 02/22/2007, 03/16/2007)*

**May**  
Ahern is reelected as Taoiseach and enters a coalition government with the Green Party and Progressive Democrats.  *(http://bertieahernoffice.org)*

EMK travels to Stormont as part of a special Presidential delegation to witness the opening of the new, power-sharing government.  *(Ahern, p. 312; The Boston Globe, 05/09/2007)*

**June**  
Facing bipartisan opposition, the EMK-Kyl-Bush Administration-backed immigration compromise collapses when the Senate is unable to break a filibuster

October

Dermot Ahern visits the U.S. and meets with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, EMK, and the congressional Friends of Ireland. On the 3rd, Ahern reportedly proposes a new, reciprocal immigration deal to Rice that could link an amnesty for undocumented Irish immigrants now in the U.S. (The Irish Times, 10/04/2007)

2008

April

Ahern announces his retirement. EMK responds that Ahern was “a steady and effective leader of the Irish people.” (The Irish Times, 04/03/2008)

On the 30th, Ahern addresses a joint session of Congress. (The Irish Times, 05/01/2008)

May

Ahern visits the JFK Library on the 2nd to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Good Friday Accords, where he announces a $2 million gift from the people of Ireland to the Kennedy Library Foundation in memory of JFK. In his remarks, Ahern praises both EMK, “[who] walked with us on the path to peace and reconciliation,” and Mitchell “a genuine hero of the peace process.” (Transcript of Speech by the Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern T.D., John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Boston, 05/02/2008)

On the 6th, Ahern retires as Taoiseach. (http://www.fiannafail.ie)

EMK is diagnosed with a brain tumor.

2009

March

EMK is awarded an honorary knighthood for his work in the Northern Ireland peace process. (The Irish Times, 03/05/2009)

August

EMK dies at his home in Hyannis Port. Ahern writes, “In Senator Edward Kennedy, Ireland has lost a great friend and America has lost a great leader.” (http://www.fiannafail.ie)
**Bertie Ahern Fact Sheet**
*Prepared by Bryan Craig*
*Miller Center, University of Virginia, 05/06/2010*

**Positions:**
- 1977-2008: Member of Fianna Fáil Party to the Dail (Parliament).
- 1979-1991: Member of Dublin city council.
- 1997-2008: Taoiseach.

**Topics:**
- Northern Ireland peace process.
- 2005-2006: Immigration reform. Ahern’s government supported the Kennedy-McCain immigration reform bill that could give citizenship to undocumented Irish immigrants.
Edward M. Kennedy Key Events
Prepared by Rob Martin and Stacie L. Pettyjohn, Miller Center, 09/17/05

'71 Kennedy/Ribicoff resolution criticizes Britain and calls for Irish unification.

'72 EMK meets John Hume in Germany; Hume helps moderate EMK’s positions.

'77 Four Horsemen (EMK, O’Neill, Carey and Moynihan) release St. Patrick’s Day statement renouncing violence and calling for Americans to stop funding IRA.

Carter issues important statement promising U.S. aid to all parties in N. Ireland to support a peacefully negotiated democratic settlement.

'80 Four Horsemen force Taoiseach Haughey to rescind Donlon transfer to UN.

'81 EMK helps form Friends of Ireland in Congress.

'85 Thatcher-Fitzgerald sign Anglo-Irish Agreement giving Irish govt. a say in N. Ireland; (EMK had pressed Reagan to pressure Thatcher to moderate her position.)

'93 JKS becomes U.S. Ambassador to Ireland.

Major-Reynolds sign Downing Street Declaration promising self-determination in N. Ireland and willingness to negotiate with any group renouncing violence (ie. Sinn Fein.)

'94 EMK visits Ireland; JKS, Reynolds push for Adams visa; EMK meets with Hume back in U.S.; Hume convinces EMK to support the visa; Clinton agrees.

JKS, Reynolds, EMK push for Cahill visa, paving way for IRA cease-fire.

'95 EMK/JKS get Clinton to overturn ban preventing Adams from raising funds in U.S.

Clinton visits Ireland and N. Ireland; stays with JKS.

'96 EMK works to reinstate the collapsed IRA cease-fire.

'98 EMK meets Trimble in Belfast; meets Ahern in D.C.; discusses stalled peace process.

Good Friday Agreement is signed; talks chaired by George Mitchell.

Clinton makes second visit to Ireland; stays with JKS, who resigns after visit.

'05 EMK refuses to meet with Adams after renewal of IRA violence; EMK sponsors bills denouncing IRA violence, calling for IRA to disarm & DUP to commit to powersharing.

IRA announces it will disarm and to outside verification.
NORTHERN IRELAND KEY EVENTS
Prepared by Rob Martin, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 09/17/05

‘21-72 N. Ireland governed by simple majority rule; Unionists control govt, treat Catholics poorly.

’72 London introduces direct rule in N. Ireland amidst escalating violence.

’73 Sunningdale Agreement attempts to end direct rule by providing power-sharing executive in N. Ireland and establishing links with Rep. of Ireland (ROI), but Unionist strike brings down government in 1974; direct rule is reintroduced.

’85 Anglo-Irish Agreement (Thatcher/Fitzgerald) gives ROI a formal voice in N. Ireland.

’88 Hume and Adams begin secret face-to-face talks; London initiates secret talks with IRA and with Sinn Fein in 1990 and ’92.

‘91/92 Brooks/Mayhew talks involving four main parties in N. Ireland break down.

’93 Hume and Adams issue joint statement calling for initiation of peace process.

Downing Street Agreement (Major/Reynolds) affirms self-determination in N. Ireland and willingness to negotiate with any group renouncing violence (i.e. Sinn Fein can enter talks if IRA agree to ceasefire.)

’94 Adams and Cahill visas help clear way for IRA ceasefire in August.

’95 London issues precondition for Sinn Fein formal entry into talks: IRA must first disarm.

’96 Mitchell Report recommends disarming and talks begin concurrently; is rejected by IRA.

IRA cease-fire collapses; talks with Sinn Fein halted by unwillingness to disarm.

’97 Newly elected Labour government drops IRA precondition; Sinn Fein accepts Mitchell Principles; IRA ceasefire is restored; Sinn Fein enters talks.

‘98 Good Friday Agreement establishes new govt. in N. Ireland based on self-determination (they’ll remain in U.K. until they vote otherwise); calls for elections; GFA is ratified in referendums in Ireland and N. Ireland; agreement later bogs down over IRA disarming.

’99 Mitchell helps overcome impasses on IRA disarming, set up of police force, but questions on these issues continue to stall peace process over next several years as violence renews.

’05 IRA announces it will disarm and to verification.
EMK Abbreviated Ireland Timeline
Prepared by Rob Martin and Stacie L. Pettyjohn
Miller Center, University of Virginia, 06/19/2007

1964
May
Senator Edward M. Kennedy (EMK) retraces the steps of President Kennedy’s visit to Ireland eleven months earlier.

1969
March
EMK meets with Irish civil rights activists in U.S.
June
Prime Minister James Chichester-Clark of Northern Ireland condemns EMK’s interference in Irish issues after EMK makes comments supporting civil rights in Northern Ireland.

1971
August
EMK meets with Representative Hugh Carey (D-NY) to discuss Carey’s recent trip to Belfast.
September
EMK visits Britain, where a woman asks EMK why he has spoken about the shootings at Kent State but has remained silent on British policy in Northern Ireland, especially internment.
October
On the 20th, EMK makes his first speech on Northern Ireland to the Senate. The London Daily Express subsequently publishes a cartoon which is critical of EMK.

EMK, Carey, and Senator Abe Ribicoff (D-CT) draft Kennedy/Ribicoff resolution which advocates temporary direct rule by Britain, but is very critical of the British treatment of Catholics. It calls for the withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland and ultimately unification of the island.

1972
February
EMK criticizes the British investigation into Bloody Sunday.

November
EMK first meets John Hume while traveling in Germany to discuss Ireland.

1973
September
Influenced by Hume, EMK writes an article for Foreign Policy in which he moderates his early statements, now calling for power sharing, as well as denouncing violence.
1974    JKS travels to Northern Ireland and stays with Hume.

1976

Fall   The Kennedys host Hume while he visits U.S.

1977

March  On St. Patrick’s Day, Four Horsemen (EMK, O’Neil, Carey and Moynihan) release a joint statement (drafted in large part by Hume) encouraging a peaceful resolution to the conflict and to discourage Americans from aiding IRA.

August Under pressure from EMK, Carter releases a statement offering aide to Northern Ireland should they reach a peaceful, negotiated power-sharing settlement.

1978

March  Four Horsemen release their annual statement.

1980

July   EMK helps to block the new Irish Prime Minister’s (Haughey) attempt to transfer Sean Donlon, the ambassador to the U.S., to the United Nations. Donlon is an ally of EMK and, after Reagan’s election, Bill Clark in the White House.

1981

February Carey Parker meets with Dodd, Foley and Hume and decide to create a group in Congress to counter IRA aid in U.S.; Friends of Ireland is formed the next month.

June   EMK encourages Reagan to discuss treatment of prisoners in Northern Ireland with Thatcher.

1983

March  Friends of Ireland issue a “United Ireland” resolution advocating peaceful means.

October Friends of Ireland propose Reagan appoint a special envoy to Northern Ireland; Reagan rejects the proposal.

1984

March  EMK attends St. Patrick’s Day lunch at White House with Taoiseach Fitzgerald.

December Friends of Ireland push Reagan to pressure Thatcher on Ireland.
1985

May  EMK, O’Neill and Clark convince Reagan to push Thatcher on Ireland.

November  Anglo-Irish Agreement is signed, giving Republic of Ireland an official role in Northern Ireland.

1986

Winter  EMK meets with Don Regan to discuss details of Northern Ireland aid bill.

1992

November  EMK advocates JKS’s appointment as Ambassador to Ireland. She is nominated the following March.

1993

December  Major and Reynolds issue the Downing Street Declaration, which promises self-determination for Northern Ireland and announces they will negotiate with any group that renounces violence.

EMK and Vicki travel to Ireland; JKS and Reynolds argue EMK should push Clinton to grant Adams visa.

1994

January  At O’Neill’s funeral, Hume convinces EMK to support Adams visa.

Republicans communicate to Clinton that they are prepared to moderate their positions through the O’Dowd-Vargo-Soderberg link.

JKS recommends that Clinton grant Adams visa. Clinton agrees.

August  EMK and JKS lobby Clinton to grant the Cahill visa, paving the way for the IRA ceasefire.

September  EMK and Vicki meet Adams in Boston at airport.

1995

Winter  EMK and Dodd send letter to Clinton arguing Adams should be allowed to raise funds in U.S. Clinton agrees.

November  EMK meets with Adams, who warns of impending deadlock in peace process.
Clinton visits Northern Ireland with Kathleen Kennedy Townsend; Clinton stays with JKS in Dublin.

1996

March EMK refuses to meet with Adams after IRA ceasefire collapses and sets off bomb in London.

April EMK meets with loyalists and commends them for not retaliating to IRA bombing.

1997

December EMK meets with Ahern in Boston; IRA had reinstituted the ceasefire in July and Sinn Fein agreed to the Mitchell Principles and entered talks in September.

1998

January EMK meets with David Trimble in Belfast to discuss the stalled peace talks.

March Ahern meets with EMK and asks for his help to push talks forward.

April The landmark Good Friday Agreement is reached, which establishes a new government in Northern Ireland based on the principle of self-determination.

May Trina Vargo leaves EMK’s office.

September Clinton makes his second trip to Ireland and Northern Ireland; stays with JKS, who had agreed to stay on specifically until Clinton’s visit. She leaves this month.

2001

February EMK signs letter urging Bush to remain involved in Northern Ireland.

June EMK meets with Adams.

2003

March EMK meets with Ahern in Washington, D.C. Ahern also meets with Trimble.

May EMK criticizes the postponing of Northern Ireland elections by the unionists.

November EMK meets with the Northern Ireland Secretary Murphy.
2005

February  EMK announces his continued support for Sinn Fein’s inclusion in peace process. EMK commemorates Hume’s retirement from parliament.

March  EMK refuses to meet with Adams, citing ongoing IRA criminal activity; Senate passes EMK’s resolution condemning IRA violence.

June  EMK tables a Senate resolution calling for IRA to disarm and the DUP to commit to power sharing.

July  McGuinness requests a meeting with EMK during trip to D.C. IRA later announces it will disarm.

September  IRA disarmament is confirmed by an independent commission. EMK hails this “dramatic and historic step” as a “new dawn in the peace process.” (The Irish Times, 09/27/05).

2006

March  In a statement issued on the eve of St. Patrick’s Day, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), EMK, and other members of the Friends of Ireland Executive Committee reiterate the importance to the peace process of the Good Friday Agreement and call for justice in the case of Robert McCartney. EMK meets with the McCartney’s mother and promises to raise the issue of pursuing his murderers with Gerry Adams while the latter is in Washington for St. Patrick’s Day festivities. (Capitol Hill Press Releases, 03/16/07; The Sun, 03/17/07)

June  EMK issues a public statement upon the death of former Taoiseach Charles J. Haughey (1925-2006), describing him as “a profile in courage for his time.” (The Irish Times, 06/14/06)

2007

May  EMK travels to Stormont as part of a special Presidential delegation to witness the opening of the new, power-sharing government. At the May 9th inauguration ceremony, he is seated in the spectator’s gallery next to Paisley’s wife, Baroness Eileen Paisley. (States News Service, 05/04/07; US Fed News, 05/08/07; The Boston Globe, 05/09/07)

On the 17th, EMK, Christopher Dodd (D-CT), and Susan Collins (R-ME) introduce a Senate resolution commending the creation of the new government. (US Fed News, 05/17/07)
Ad Hoc Committee on Irish Affairs
Irish-American group founded by U.S. Rep. Mario Biaggi in 1977 to pressure Congress to hold open hearings on N. Ireland and to grant visas to Irish republicans. They’ve been criticized by the Irish Government and moderates who claim that it supports violence.

Adams, Gerry
Leader of Sinn Fein for the last eighteen years; was reportedly a regional leader for the IRA in the 1970s, though he denies this accusation.

Ahern, Bertie
Becomes Irish prime minister in 1997; member of Fianna Fail; active in lead-up to Good Friday Agreement.

American Committee for Ulster Justice (ACUJ)
Irish-American republican group whose membership includes U.S. Rep. Hugh Carey (D-NY) who later becomes a member of the Four Horseman.

The American Congress for Irish Freedom (ACIF)
Irish-American group which sponsors lectures in the U.S. by leading civil rights activists such as Austin Currie and Gerry Fitt, who later founds the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and meets with American leaders, including EMK and Hubert Humphrey.

Americans for a New Irish Agenda (ANIA)
Irish-American group founded in 1991 and led by Niall O’Dowd. ANIA attempted to initiate a peace process in Northern Ireland by bringing Sinn Fein into talks. ANIA also sought to involve the U.S. in the conflict in Northern Ireland by lobbying for a visa for Gerry Adams and for a peace envoy.

Ancient Order of the Hibernians (AOH)
Irish-American group founded in 1836 - AOH is one of the oldest Irish American groups. It organizes the St. Patrick’s Day parade in NY and is Catholic and often accused of supporting the IRA.

Atkins, Humphrey
British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland under Thatcher.

Brooke, Peter
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who publicly announces that Britain has “no selfish strategic or economic interest” in Northern Ireland; initiates the Brooke/Mayhew talks with four main parties in N. Ireland in 91/92. (Mayhew is Brooke’s successor).
Cahill, Joe
An IRA activist and convicted terrorist for whom Reynolds, EMK and JKS convince Clinton to grant a visa to win IRA hardliner support for a ceasefire in 1994.

Carey, Hugh
Governor of NY and member of the Four Horsemen.

Chichester-Clark, James
Irish Prime Minister in early 1970s who criticizes EMK for interfering in N. Ireland.

Clark, William
Reagan National Security Advisor who was friends with Irish official Sean Donlon, who encouraged Reagan to help moderate Thatcher’s position on the Irish conflict.

Coogan, Tim Pat
Irish historian who works with Albert Reynolds to convince EMK to support the Adams visa while EMK is visiting Ireland.

Cosgrave, Liam
Irish Prime Minister in the early 1970s who helps to create the Council of Ireland in 1973 which creates links between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)
The most hard-line loyalist party in N. Ireland - it was founded and continues to be led by Reverend Ian Paisley. Although initially involved in the Good Friday negotiations, the DUP withdrew once Sinn Fein joined, and continues to oppose the agreement. In 2003, the DUP became the largest unionist party in Northern Ireland.

Donlon, Sean
Donlon served as Irish Ambassador to the U.S. from 1978-1981 and later as the head of the Irish Foreign Affairs Department while Fitzgerald is prime minister in the 1980s. Donlon has a close relationship with William Clark and worked with EMK and the Four Horsemen to get Reagan to pressure Thatcher to moderate her position, culminating in the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Faulkner, Brian
Prime Minister of Northern Ireland in early 1970s who institutes a policy of internment with the consent of the British government of Edward Heath.

Friends of Ireland
Group of Irish-American Congressmen that originated as the Four Horsemen—Senator Kennedy, Moynihan, Rep. O’Neill and former NY Governor Carey. Associated with constitutional nationalism—especially John Hume. Irish Ambassador Sean Donlon was also a close ally and instrumental in founding this group. The group makes annual St. Patrick’s Day statements commenting on the situation in Northern Ireland and in support of moderate groups and the Republic of Ireland.
Haughey, Charles
Irish prime minister at various times from the late 1970s through early 1990s; member of Fianna Fail party, like Albert Reynolds; Reynolds takes over as prime minister in 1992 after a scandal forces Haughey to leave office; Haughey attempts to take a more hard-line approach towards N. Ireland upon first coming to power under the advisement of Biaggi and Father Sean McManus; at times at odds with moderates like Sean Donlon, Four Horseman.

Irish National Caucus (INC)
The group was founded in 1973 in order to lobby Washington for Irish-republicans. In 1975 Father Sean McManus takes over the organization. The group was criticized for supporting violent republican groups in N. Ireland and is associated with Rep. Biaggi.

Irish Northern Aid Committee (NORAID)
An organization committed to raising money in the U.S. to support the families of incarcerated IRA activists. Moderates, such as Hume and EMK, denounce NORAID as a fundraiser for the IRA.

Lillis, Michael
An official at the Republic of Ireland’s embassy in Washington, D.C. in the 1970s and 80s who works with moderates like Donlon & Fitzgerald who favor consensus approach.

Loyalists
Mainly Protestants in N. Ireland who are also somewhat confusingly called unionists because of their desire to remain a part of the union with the United Kingdom (which is not to be confused with the nationalists who seek to unify the entire Irish island.)

Lynch, Jack
Irish Prime Minister in the late 1970s.

MacBride Principles
Set of principles advocating fair employment and an end to economic discrimination in northern Ireland against Catholics.

McManus, Sean
Reverend and Chairman of the Irish National Caucus, an Irish-American group created to lobby Congress. The group is criticized for supporting violent republican groups in Northern Ireland and is also associated with Representative Mario Biaggi.

McGuinness, Martin
Currently a representative for Sinn Fein in the suspended Northern Ireland Assembly. McGuinness joined the Provisional IRA after the Troubles broke out and has been imprisoned twice for terrorist related activity. Once the IRA chief of Staff, McGuinness later became increasingly involved in Sinn Fein and served as their chief negotiator.
during the negotiations for the Good Friday Accord. Before the suspension of the Stormont Executive, McGuinness was a part of the cabinet as the minister of education.

**Mitchell, George**  
Clinton’s special economic envoy to Northern Ireland; later heads independent decommissioning body and goes on to play key role in the Good Friday Agreement.

**Moynihan, Daniel Patrick**  
U.S. Senator (D-NY) and member of the Four Horsemen.

**Nationalists**  
Those in N. Ireland that seek Irish independence and to unify the island or the entire Irish nation, by peaceful or violent means.

**New Ireland Forum**  
Group created by the leaders of Fine Gael, Labour, Fianna Fail, and the SDLP to explore how peace can be reached democratically in Northern Ireland and what strategies exist to achieve this goal; active in the lead-up to the 1985 Anglo-Irish agreement.

**Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA)**  
N. Irish group calling for an end to discrimination against Catholics and Nationalists; one of first groups EMK supports early on in his involvement.

**O’Dowd, Niall**  
Prominent Irish-American journalist, leader of ANIA who encourages EMK and Clinton to support the Adams visa; while meeting with Adams in Ireland, O’Dowd communicates with White House through the Trina Vargo-Nancy Soderberg connection.

**O’Neill, Tip**  
Speaker of the House (D-MA) and member of the Four Horsemen.

**Paisley, Ian**  
Loyalist leader of the DUP and leads the Protestants who reject the Good Friday Agreement. Paisley is known for being an extremely effective obstructionist who does not have many constructive ideas. He has played this role for many decades and led the recent denouncements of Trimble, the Good Friday Agreement, Sinn Fein and the IRA. Paisley refuses to accept the IRA’s July statement that they are fully disarming and continues to foster acrimony between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland.

**Provisional IRA**  
Republican party which broke away from the IRA in 1970 in response to the beginning of the troubles in N. Ireland. Unlike the original IRA, the provisionals remained committed to violent struggle against the British and the Loyalists. Until recently (July), the IRA had refused to rid itself of what is believed to be a very extensive arsenal.

**Real IRA**  

An extremist splinter group that split with the provisional IRA in 1997.

**Republicans**

Republicans are a sub-group of nationalists in N. Ireland that employ a strategy of armed struggle to expel the British (who are seen as colonial oppressors) in order to unify the entire Irish nation.

**Robinson, Mary**

Irish President in the 1990s in lead up to Good Friday.

**Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC)**

The Northern Ireland police force comprised almost entirely of Protestants. It was often the target of the IRA and policing continues to be a divisive and unsettled issue.

**Sands, Bobby**

IRA prisoner who leads a hunger strike in 1981.

**Sinn Fein (Provisional)**

A republican party associated with the Provisional IRA; was excluded from any negotiations until the mid 1990s. Sinn Fein became active after the hunger strikes made it apparent that the party could make gains politically, leading to the armalite and the ballot box strategy (pursuing the armed struggle while also using nonviolent political tactics).

**Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP)**

Nationalist party in N. Ireland founded by Gerry Fitt in 1970 and since led by John Hume until 2001; advocates non-violent means to achieve unity– has been largest nationalist party in N. Ireland for most of its existence.

**Soderberg, Nancy**

Clinton NSC foreign policy advisor and former EMK staffer who helps to create an important backdoor link to Clinton through Trina Vargo in EMK’s office.

**Steinberg, Jim**

Former EMK staffer who joins Clinton’s NSC with Berger after Lake and Soderberg leave; Steinberg works heavily on Northern Ireland.

**Trimble, David**

Loyalist leader of the UUP from 1995-2005. Initially believed to be a hard-line protestant because of his involvement in the Dungree Orange Order Parade, Trimble negotiates and signs Good Friday Agreement. This settlement, however, is not accepted by half of his party, and Trimble’s position as head of the UUP was constantly threatened by hard-liners.

**Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)**
The loyalist party in N. Ireland in power from 1921-1972 until British direct rule was imposed; led by Trimble from 1995-05; was the largest unionist party until 2003 when it was overtaken by the DUP following dissatisfaction with the Good Friday Agreement.

Ulster Workers Council (UWC)
Loyalist league of unions, politicians, and paramilitaries in N. Ireland which organized a strike in 1974 to bring down the power sharing executive created by Sunningdale.