



## EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

### **Interviewer's Briefing Materials** **Trina Vargo Interview, 11/07/2008**

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#### **Miller Center Documents<sup>1</sup>**

- Trina Vargo Timeline
- Trina Vargo Fact Sheet.

#### **Secondary Source Materials**

- Trina Vargo bio, <http://www.us-irelandalliance.org>.
- John Farrell, "Bridge to Irish: '94 US opening to Adams a tale of deliberations and high drama," *The Boston Globe*, 02/10/1995.
- Conor O'Clery, *Daring Diplomacy: Clinton's Secret Search for Peace in Ireland* (Boulder CO: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1997) pp. 65-68.
- Joe Carroll, "Kennedy Aid to set up Irish Lobby in US," *The Irish Times*, 02/25/1998.
- Trina Y. Vargo, "A Look at...The Irish, Here and There; For Irish Americans, Peace Means Change," *The Washington Post*, 07/19/1998.
- Trina Y. Vargo, "Clinton's Legacy is US Support for both NI Traditions," *The Irish Times*, 12/09/2000.

#### **Oral History Interviews**

- Edward M. Kennedy interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 03/20/2006.
- Albert Reynolds interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 09/27/2005.
- Jean Kennedy Smith interview, Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 06/28-29/2005.

#### **Other**

- Milton Gwirtzman, "The Adams Visa," undated.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

- Trina Vargo memo to EMK, "Background for your oral history project: Northern Ireland Peace Process Notes," 03/09/2006, pp. 1-25.
- Trina Vargo memo to EMK, "Meeting with Irish Americans," 09/20/1993.
- Trina Vargo memo to EMK, "Recap of Three Meetings on Ireland," 09/28/1993.
- Trina Vargo memo to EMK, "Northern Ireland Update," 12/01/1993.
- Trina Vargo memo to EMK, "Update on Ireland," 12/02/1993.
- Trina Vargo memo to EMK, "Visa for Gerry Adams," 12/07/1993.
- Trina Vargo memo to EMK and Vicki, "Your Ireland Itinerary," 12/22/1993.
- Trina Vargo memo to EMK, "Questions for John Hume," 01/10/1994.
- Trina Vargo memo to EMK, "Adams Visa Update," 01/14/1994.
- Trina Vargo memo to EMK, "Talking Points for Foley," 01/14/1994.
- Unauthored, "Talking Points for Pat Griffen on Gerry Adams," 01/26/1994.
- Trina Vargo memo to EMK, "Dodd's Staffer Read on the White House Meeting," 01/26/1994.
- Unauthored, "Talking Points for Tony Lake," 01/27/1994.
- Trina Vargo memo to EMK, "Gerry Adams Appearance in New York," 01/27/1994.
- Trina Vargo memo to EMK, "Gerry Adams," 01/27/1994.
- Trina Vargo memo to EMK, "Gerry Adams Update," 01/28/1994.
- Trina Vargo memo to EMK, "Gerry Adams and Ireland Update," 02/04/1994.

## TRINA VARGO TIMELINE

*Prepared by Dustin Cable and Bryan Craig*

*Miller Center, University of Virginia, 10/15/2008*

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- 1985** Trina Vargo graduates from the University of Pittsburgh with degrees in political science and history. She later goes on to get a M.A. in political science at McGill University.
- May* Senator Edward Kennedy (EMK), House Speaker Thomas “Tip” O’Neill (D-MA), and National Security Adviser William Clark convince President Ronald Reagan to push Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher on Ireland.
- November* The Anglo-Irish Agreement is signed, giving the Republic of Ireland an official role in Northern Ireland. (Adam Clymer, *Edward M. Kennedy: A Biography*, New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1999, pp. 384)
- December* EMK announces in a televised statement that he will not run for president in 1988. He acknowledges the following day at a news conference that his decision may mean that he will never again run for president.
- 1986**
- November* The Democrats regain control of the Senate in the mid-term elections. The Iran-Contra scandal breaks in the media.
- 1987** Vargo joins EMK’s staff as a foreign policy adviser.
- 1988**
- Winter-Summer* John Hume, a member of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Fein, begin a series of groundbreaking face-to-face talks. (Eamon Mallie and David McKittrick, *The Fight For Peace: The Secret Story Behind the Irish Peace Process*, London: Heinemann, 1996, pp. 74-85; James Loughlin, *The Ulster Question Since 1945 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, pp. 144)
- Fall* In response to Irish Republican Army (IRA) violence, Thatcher bans Sinn Fein and Adams from radio and television airwaves. When Adams speaks, his words are now read by an actor, or appear as sub-titles. (Mallie and McKittrick, pp. 95)
- 1989**
- Fall* The Berlin Wall comes down, as communism begins to fall in Eastern Europe.

## 1990

*November* In an effort to promote an IRA ceasefire, Hume prompts Peter Brooke, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, to publicly announce that Britain has “no selfish strategic or economic interest” in Northern Ireland. (Loughlin, pp. 146)

## 1991

*January* The Senate votes 52 to 47 to authorize President George Bush to wage war to force Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. EMK votes against the resolution. Operation Desert Storm begins on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Kuwait is liberated by the end of February.

*February* On the 7<sup>th</sup>, the IRA fires mortars at Downing Street during a meeting of the Cabinet with Prime Minister John Major. (Mallie and McKittrick, pp. 113)

*Spring* William Kennedy Smith is charged with sexual battery in Palm Beach, Florida.

*October* Hume and Adams agree upon the first draft of a document calling for the initiation of a peace process and which later becomes their Joint Declaration of 1993. (Loughlin, pp. 147)

The Senate holds confirmation hearings for Clarence Thomas.

EMK gives a speech at the Kennedy School at Harvard University in which he acknowledges that he has made mistakes in the conduct of his private life.

## 1992

*April* During the New York primary, Democratic candidate Bill Clinton attends an Irish forum and promises that, if elected, he will send a peace envoy to Ireland, support a visa for Adams, and endorse the MacBride Principles on fair employment. (Clymer, pp. 520; Conor O’Clery, *Daring Diplomacy*, Colorado: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1997, pp. 15-16)

*July* EMK marries Vicki Reggie in McLean, Virginia.

*September* In a meeting with Clinton, Niall O’Dowd, a prominent Irish-American journalist who founded the *Irish American* magazine and the *Irish Voice*, raises the issue of granting a visa to Adams. (Mallie and McKittrick, pp. 279-280)

*October* In a letter to Bruce Morrison, co-chairman for Irish Americans for Clinton/Gore, Clinton goes farther than any other presidential candidate in promising U.S. involvement in Northern Ireland. Nancy Soderberg, a former EMK aid and later to become the third ranking official on the National Security Council, drafts the letter, which reaffirms the pledge to appoint a peace envoy and to support the MacBride Principles. Angered by the letter, the British Conservative Party Office

interferes in the American campaign in an effort to discredit Clinton. (O'Clery, pp. 29-32)

*November* Clinton is elected president, as the Democrats win the House, Senate and White House. EMK reportedly urges president-elect Clinton to nominate his sister, Jean Kennedy Smith (JKS), as Ambassador to Ireland. She is confirmed in June. (Clymer, pp. 521; O'Clery, pp. 43-45)

## 1993

*March* Taoiseach Albert Reynolds meets with Clinton to dissuade him from appointing the peace envoy. Reynolds divulges that he has been secretly conducting negotiations with Major and Sinn Fein leader Martin McGuinness, and that he is concerned that the envoy would disrupt the progress being made and sour relations with Britain. Despite Clinton's desire to fulfill his promise, Reynolds persuades him to temporarily shelf the envoy initiative. (O'Clery, pp. 46-48)

*April* Adams applies for a U.S. visa and is subsequently denied. (O'Clery, pp. 69-70)

On the 10<sup>th</sup>, the Hume-Adams talks become public. Adams and Hume issue a joint statement on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, calling for the initiation of a peace process. The talks are met with controversy and hostility, particularly from unionists. (*The New York Times*, 05/18/1993; *BBC News Online*, 08/30/2000; "Hume-Adams Statements," Sinn Fein Homepage, 2005, [http://sinnfein.ie/peace/hume\\_adams](http://sinnfein.ie/peace/hume_adams))

*July* Brendan Scannell of the Irish Embassy arranges a meeting with O'Dowd and Vargo. O'Dowd states afterwards, "I told Trina I would tell her everything that was happening and she said she would pass the information on to Nancy [Soderberg]." (O'Clery, pp. 66)

*September* In an effort to gain the support of Irish-American businessmen, the IRA orders a ten-day ceasefire when the Irish-American group visits Ireland. The group includes journalist O'Dowd, Bill Flynn, Chuck Feeny, and is led by former Congressmen Bruce Morrison (D-CT). They meet with Adams and intimate that political and economic support may be forthcoming if the republicans announce a ceasefire. (Mallie and McKittrick, pp. 280; O'Clery, pp. 62-68)

On the 24<sup>th</sup>, EMK meets with the O'Dowd, Flynn, and Morrison delegation to discuss their recent trip and the possibility of a peace envoy. Shortly afterward, EMK meets with Hume.

On the 25<sup>th</sup>, Hume and Adams release a second statement reporting progress in their discussion and plan to forward a position report to Dublin. Major dismisses the proposal. (Loughlin, pp. 150-151; Sinn Fein Homepage)

JKS travels to Belfast, upsetting U.S. diplomats in London who worry she is interfering in the conflict in Northern Ireland, an area traditionally under the jurisdiction of the U.S. embassy to the U.K. (*The Irish Times*, 09/16/1993; *The New York Times*, 07/29/1994)

*October* During a visit to Washington, Hume and Soderberg discuss the progress of the peace process. (*The Irish Times*, 10/04/1993)

On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, ten people die in an IRA bombing of a store on Shankill Road in Belfast, diminishing the likelihood that the Hume-Adams initiative will progress. Adams provokes further opposition by carrying the coffin of a Shankill bomber. (Loughlin, pp. 151; Mallie and McKittrick, pp. 282; O'Clery, pp. 70)

*November* Clinton refuses Adams' first application for a visa to the U.S. In a letter to New York Mayor David Dinkins, an advocate for Adams, Clinton explains: "Credible evidence exists that Adams remains involved at the highest level in devising IRA strategy. Moreover, despite his recent talks with John Hume, Adams still has not publicly renounced terrorism." (Mallie and McKittrick, pp. 282; O'Clery, pp. 70-71)

It becomes public that the British government has been involved in secret talks with Sinn Fein. This contradicts Major's public reassurances that his government will not negotiate with the Irish Republican Party, and angers Reynolds, who now pushes Major towards a joint British-Irish initiative. (Loughlin, pp. 153)

*December* Major and Reynolds issue the Downing Street Declaration, which promises self-determination for Northern Ireland and announces that their governments will negotiate with any group that renounces violence. The Downing Street Declaration is borne out of the British and Irish governments' hopes that the IRA will declare a ceasefire and adopt a diplomatic strategy. Sinn Fein responds by asking for clarification of the declaration—which Major refuses—leading to deadlock. (Clymer, p. 536; Loughlin, pp. 154-155)

O'Dowd pushes for the approval of a visa for Adams and views it as a needed step towards a ceasefire.

EMK and Vicki Kennedy travel to Ireland to visit with JKS. They discuss the possibility of issuing a visa for Adams to travel to the United States. While EMK is initially hesitant to support this initiative, meetings with author Tim Pat Coogan and Reynolds help to persuade him that this is a wise course of action. Reynolds explains to EMK that the idea behind extending a visa to Adams is to demonstrate to him and the IRA that they could advance their cause without violence. In order to move the Irish Republicans toward peace, Reynolds tells EMK that "he's [Adams is] our best hope." (Clymer, pp. 536-537; Thomas Maier, *The Kennedys: America's Emerald Kings*, New York: Basic Books, 2003, pp. 572-579)

## 1994

### *January*

The republican movement communicate to Clinton that they are prepared to moderate their positions through the O'Dowd-Vargo-Soderberg link. (Mallie and McKittrick, pp. 284)

On the 2<sup>nd</sup>, EMK leaves Ireland still undecided about what to do about the Adams visa. Shortly thereafter, EMK speaks to Hume at Tip O'Neill's funeral, and Hume convinces EMK that granting Adams the visa is the right course of action. EMK begins to rally support for Adams. (Clymer, pp. 536)

Adams is once again invited into the U.S. by O'Dowd for a conference in New York City and applies for another visa on the 14<sup>th</sup>. EMK sends a letter to Clinton in support of granting the visa, which is eventually signed by 50 members of Congress, arguing, "It is important for the United States to facilitate the emerging dialogue as an alternative to violence." EMK and Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) meet with Sandy Berger, Deputy National Security Counsel Advisor, and Chief of Staff Thomas "Mac" McLarty. House Speaker Thomas Foley (D-WA) comes out opposing the visa. (Clymer, pp. 536-537)

On the 25<sup>th</sup>, Soderberg tells Vargo that the White House is leaning against the visa and recommends that EMK and his office begin calling to build support. Vargo and some staff make a series of phone calls to the White House and to Senator Pat Moynihan's (D-NY) staff. On the same day, Clinton calls EMK and EMK uses the moment to urge him to give Adams the visa.

On the 26<sup>th</sup>, Soderberg tells Vargo that a visa will only be granted if Adams renounces violence. Vargo views this as setting Adams up for denial and contacts O'Dowd who agrees that Adams will never renounce violence for a U.S. visa. O'Dowd and Adams speak to one another about the White House's terms, and O'Dowd tells Vargo that Adams finds the proposition that he "must" renounce violence laughable.

Through the evening and the next couple of days, Vargo continues to talk with Adams through O'Dowd to get Adams to agree to some language that is acceptable to both parties. Adams agrees to state he would not advocate violence, and he has moved Sinn Fein toward the peace process.

On the 27<sup>th</sup>, three practice grenades without explosives are found in San Diego, allegedly planted by the Southern California IRA. Clinton decides that if Adams denounces the attempted violence in California, he will be granted a visa. (Mallie and McKittrick, pp. 285)

On the 29<sup>th</sup>, Soderberg informs Vargo of bombing threats in San Diego by the IRA. Vargo believes that the IRA was not involved, but Soderberg is adamant

that Adams denounce the incident in San Diego and condemn attacks on innocent civilians. O'Dowd then tells Vargo that Adams will agree to Soderberg's terms.

On the 30<sup>th</sup>, despite the opposition of the State Department and the British government, Clinton grants Adams a forty-eight hour visa and is not allowed to leave the New York City area. Critics denounce Clinton's decision as an attempt to gain the support of EMK and Moynihan for his health care initiative. Clinton, however, explains his actions to *The Irish Times*: "It was one of those points where there had to be some tangible evidence that there could be a reward for the renunciation of violence and beginning to walk toward peace." (Clymer, pp. 537; O'Clery, pp. 94-95; *The Washington Post*, 08/31/1995; *The Irish Times*, 03/09/1996)

Adams visits New York City on the 31<sup>st</sup> and meets Vargo and O'Dowd. Vargo states afterwards that Adams seemed likeable, humorous, and sincere about ending violence. EMK does not meet with Adams since there is no ceasefire.

- March* There are a series of IRA mortar attacks at Heathrow airport that fail to explode. The incident hurts Adams' U.S. image. (Mallie and McKittrick, pp. 287-289)
- Summer* To convince the IRA to announce a cease fire, a number of Irish American businessmen, including O'Dowd, pressure Sinn Finn and promise future assistance if they obtain a truce. (Clymer, pp. 548)
- August* The IRA agrees to a ceasefire, but under the condition that the U.S. grants a visa to Joe Cahill, an IRA activist and convicted terrorist. The IRA leadership believes that only Cahill has the standing to persuade hard-line supporters that this is the right course of action. While vacationing in France, JKS is contacted by Reynolds who apprises her of the situation. JKS then returns to Dublin, and repeatedly calls the president, urging him to grant the visa. She also convinces EMK to lobby the president. Before making a decision, Clinton once again contacts Reynolds who assures the President that this will result in a "complete cessation" of violence. Clinton agrees to authorize Cahill's entry and the ceasefire is announced within hours. (Clymer, pp. 548; O'Clery, pp. 155-157; *The Washington Post*, 08/31/1995; *The Irish Times*, 03/09/1996)
- September* On the 19<sup>th</sup>, Clinton approves the visa applications of Adams and two other Sinn Fein members. (O'Clery, pp. 167)
- Hume meets with Soderberg, National Security Adviser Tony Lake, EMK, Foley, and Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Peter Tarnoff to brief them on the IRA ceasefire. (*The Irish Times*, 09/20/1994)
- When Adams arrives in Boston, EMK and Vicki greet him at the airport. This event is interpreted as a signal that Adams is now acceptable to moderates Irish-Americans. While in Washington, Adams spends a night as a guest at Hickory



Hill, the home of Ethel Kennedy. Traveling around the country, Adams is treated as a celebrity; however, he is not permitted to visit the White House or to have contact with high-ranking officials. EMK lobbies for Adams, having a reportedly “angry” phone call with Lake. The White House eventually caves into the pressure; Vice President Al Gore calls Adams and informs him that the ban on American officials having contact with Sinn Fein has been rescinded. (O’Clery, pp. 168-175)

*October* A joint loyalist paramilitary command announces a ceasefire on the 13<sup>th</sup>. (O’Clery, pp. 153)

*November* The GOP wins control of both the House and Senate in the “Republican Revolution.” EMK loses his chairmanship of the Labor Committee.

EMK narrowly defeats Mitt Romney to win reelection to the U.S. Senate.

*December* On the 6<sup>th</sup>, Adams makes another trip to the U.S., and this time is allowed to visit the White House and to meet with Lake. Adams is still banned from fundraising in the U.S., but EMK and Dodd push the White House, arguing that now that he has accepted peace, Adams should receive the same treatment as other Irish politicians. On this issue, however, Clinton promises Britain not to allow fundraising. (O’Clery, pp. 190-192; *The New York Times*, 12/07/1994)

Reynolds’ government collapses and he is replaced by John Bruton. (Loughlin, pp. 162)

Clinton appoints former Senate majority leader George Mitchell (D-ME) as special economic envoy to Northern Ireland. (O’Clery, pp. 212)

## **1995**

*January* Rose Kennedy dies.

*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. (Loughlin, pp. 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 Fein’s inclusion in negotiations. As the statement, which includes two other demands, is made in Washington, it becomes known as the Washington Three. (Loughlin, pp. 163; Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 31)

- Winter*      EMK and Dodd send letter to Clinton arguing Adams should be allowed to raise funds in U.S. JKS also phones the President and a number of congressmen pleading for Adams. Clinton opts to invite Adams to lunch and to remove the ban on fundraising, precipitating a serious rift between the president and Major. (O'Clery, pp. 192-201)
- November*      EMK meets with Adams, who warns of impending deadlock in peace process. (Loughlin, pp.165-166; Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 31)
- British Prime Minister John Major and Irish Taoiseach John Bruton announce on the 28<sup>th</sup> the creation of an international advisory panel to examine the process of decommissioning paramilitary arms in Northern Ireland, and set a date in February 1996 to open all-party peace negotiations. George Mitchell is selected to head the commission. (*The Washington Post*, 11/29/1995)
- Clinton visits Dublin, Ireland, where he stays with JKS. Clinton calls EMK and tells him, "Now I know how President Kennedy felt." (O'Clery, pp. 241) During his stay Clinton visits Northern Ireland with Kathleen Kennedy Townsend. (Maier, pp. 584-585; *The Boston Globe*, 12/02/1995)
- 1996**
- January*      The International Body on Arms Decommissioning releases the Mitchell Report on the 24<sup>th</sup> which recommends that arms decommissioning and talks begin concurrently. Major rejects the report and calls for elections to a forum for Northern Ireland instead of simultaneous negotiations and decommissioning. (Loughlin, pp. 166; Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 31-32)
- March*      JKS is reprimanded by the State Department for retaliating against two subordinates who disagreed with her recommendation to grant a visa to Adams. An investigation also claims that JKS had encouraged diplomats to grant more visas so Ireland could qualify for a program to allow visitors to travel to the U. S. without a visa. A spokesman for Clinton announces there are no plans to dismiss JKS. (*The New York Times*, 03/08/1996)
- EMK refuses to meet with Adams after IRA ceasefire collapses and the IRA sets off a bomb in London. (David Sharrock and Mark Devenport, *Man of War, Man of Peace*, London: Macmillan, 1997, pp. 404)
- April*      EMK meets with loyalists and commends them for not retaliating to IRA bombing. (Clymer, pp. 577)
- June*      EMK attends a state dinner at the White House for Irish Americans to honor the Irish President and UN Secretary General candidate Mary Robinson. (*The Washington Post*, 06/14/1996)

## 1997

- Winter* Lake and Soderberg do not remain in the NSC for Clinton's second term. The new NSC adviser is Sandy Berger and his second in command, who will deal most directly with Northern Ireland, is another former EMK aide, Jim Steinberg. (*The Irish Times*, 02/03/1997)
- March* In a speech EMK urges the British government to establish a date for Sinn Fein to enter into negotiations if there is an IRA ceasefire. (Gerry Adams, *An Irish Voice: the Quest for Peace*, Niwot Colorado: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1997, pp. 237-238)
- During a visit to the U.S., Hume discusses with Clinton the possibility of obtaining another IRA ceasefire. Hume is also the keynote speaker at *Irish America* magazine's Person of the Year awards, which is being given to EMK. During his acceptance speech, EMK reaffirms America's commitment to the peace process and argues that the British government should abandon preconditions to including Sinn Fein in return for an unconditional ceasefire. EMK denounces decommissioning as a "phoney issue" because there is nothing stopping the paramilitaries from quickly rearming. (*The Irish Times*, 03/08/1997, 03/19/1997)
- May* The British Labour party wins a majority in Westminster and Tony Blair becomes the Prime Minister. The new government abandons the prerequisite of decommissioning, works to bring Sinn Fein into talks, and sets May 1998 as a deadline for concluding negotiations. (Loughlin, pp. 172; Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 36)
- June* Fianna Fail leader Bertie Ahern becomes Taoiseach. (Loughlin, pp. 172)
- July* The IRA reinstitutes the ceasefire. (Clymer, pp. 594)
- September* Sinn Fein agrees to the Mitchell principles and enters the peace talks. (Clymer, pp. 594; Loughlin, pp. 180; Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 38)
- Adams and Martin McGuinness, a Sinn Fein member, travel to the U.S. for a fundraising event as well as to meet with Berger, Secretary of Commerce William Daley, EMK, Dodd, and New York Mayor Rudolph Guiliani. (*The Irish Times*, 08/30/1997, 09/01/1997, 01/04/1998)
- December* 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, pp. 39)

## 1998

- 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. In his message, EMK concludes that the “two communities in Northern Ireland must reach out and do what must be done—and join hands across the centuries and chasms of killing and pain.” EMK next travels to Belfast and speaks with David Trimble, the Ulster Unionists Party (UUP) leader. (Clymer, pp. 594-295)
- March* While visiting Washington, Taoiseach Ahern meets with EMK in order to urge him “to assist us in going that extra mile to try to find a conclusion to what we have been doing.” (*The Irish Times*, 03/17/1998)
- JKS announces that she will leave her post as ambassador to Ireland over the summer. On a trip to Washington, she informs Clinton of her decision. (*The Boston Herald*, 03/16/1998)
- April* The Good Friday Agreement is reached by parties in Northern Ireland to create a power-sharing government and establish new relationships between Belfast, Dublin and London. Clinton, Blair and Ahern intervene repeatedly during the negotiations, which are mediated by Mitchell, to help reach the agreement. (Clymer, pp. 595; Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 40; *The New York Times*, 06/26/1998)
- On the 30<sup>th</sup>, the IRA refuses to disarm as stipulated by the Good Friday Agreement. (*The New York Times*, 05/01/1998)
- May* Vargo leaves her job as EMK’s foreign policy adviser. She creates the U.S.-Ireland Alliance, a non-profit organization to promote Irish interests in the U.S. According to *The Irish Times*, the idea for the organization is EMK’s as he sees such a group filling a gap. He sits on the Honorary Board. (*The Irish Times*, 02/25/1998, 06/20/1998; U.S.-Ireland Alliance, <http://www.us-irelandalliance.org>)
- 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. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, JKS ends her ambassadorship and leaves Ireland. (*The Irish Times*, 09/04/1998; <http://usembassy.state.gov/ireland/former.html>)

## 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, pp. 202; Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 48)

The 7<sup>th</sup> 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. (*The Washington Post*, 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 Stormont Executive. Sinn Fein rejects the plan because it requires decommissioning prior to their inclusion in the government. (Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 48-49)
- 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—his proposal to save the peace process—is released. Mitchell advises that the UUP 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 or devolution fails to take place, the institutions will be suspended. On the 27<sup>th</sup>, the Ulster Unionist Council—the governing body of the UUP—passes the Mitchell plan. (Loughlin, pp. 205; Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 51)
- December* Devolution takes place on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Trimble is again First Minister, but still refuses to take part in cabinet meetings with Sinn Fein. 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, pp. 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, pp. 206; Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 52)
- March* A serious challenge is mounted by hardliners to Trimble's leadership of the UUP. (Loughlin, pp. 210; Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 52)
- May* On the 7<sup>th</sup>, 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 devolution of power. (Loughlin, pp. 211; Mac Ginty and Darby, pp. 52)

- 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)
- November* George W. Bush defeats Al Gore in a contested presidential election. The Democrats pick up seats in the Senate to force a 50-50 split.
- 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 is among the thirty-six members of Congress that sign a letter urging President George W. Bush to remain involved in the Northern Ireland peace process. (*The Irish Times*, 02/24/2001)
- As a part of her work with the U.S.-Ireland Alliance, Vargo establishes the George J. Mitchell Scholarship program for American students to study in Ireland, and is now considered to be one of the top six most prestigious scholarships college students can receive. (*The Irish Times*, 02/27/2007)
- June* Adams visits Congress amidst fears that Trimble is going to resign as first minister. During this trip, Adams meets with EMK, Dodd, and Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY). (*The Irish Times*, 06/22/2001)

## **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 Paul 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 Democratic Unionist Party (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*, 09/27/2005)

## **2006**

- March*           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 Adams while the latter is in Washington for St. Patrick’s Day festivities. (*Capitol Hill Press Releases*, 03/16/2007; *The Sun*, 03/17/2007)
- 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*, 06/14/2006)
- November*      The Democrats regain control of the House and Senate. EMK regains chairmanship of the HELP Committee.

## **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 9<sup>th</sup> inauguration ceremony, he is seated in the spectator’s gallery next to Paisley’s wife, Baroness Eileen Paisley. (*States News Service*, 05/04/2007; *US Fed News*, 05/08/2007; *The Boston Globe*, 05/09/2007)
- On the 17<sup>th</sup>, EMK, Dodd, and Susan Collins (R-ME) introduce a Senate resolution commending the creation of the new government. (*US Fed News*, 05/17/2007)
- November*      Vargo argues in an article in *The Irish Times* that Irish illegals should not be given special treatment in the immigration issue. Her arguments have come under severe attack from O’Dowd who states that Vargo does not really know the plight of Irish illegals in the U.S. (*The Irish Times*, 11/20/2007)

## TRINA VARGO FACT SHEET (1987-1998)

*Prepared by Rob Martin*

*Miller Center, University of Virginia, 10/14/2008*

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### *Key Positions:*

- 1987-1998: foreign policy advisor to EMK on his Senate office staff
- 1998–present: President of the U.S.– Ireland Alliance (EMK sits on Honorary Board)

### *Important issues and events:*

- 1988: Hume and Adams begin secret talks on Irish conflict, which lead to their joint declaration of '93 calling for initiation of peace process after secret talks are uncovered.
- 1992: Clinton promises in campaign to send peace envoy to Ireland, support MacBride Principles on fair employment, and issue Adams visa if elected; Clinton holds off after election at request of London/Dublin, who are holding own secret talks with Sinn Fein.
- 1993: Clinton appoints EMK's sister, Jean Kennedy Smith, as ambassador to Ireland.
- 1993: Major and Reynolds issue Downing Street Declaration announcing it will negotiate with any group renouncing violence and promising self-determination for N. Ireland.
- 1993/94: EMK travels to Ireland where JKS and Reynolds urge EMK to support the Adams visa; Hume later urges EMK to support visa at O'Neill's funeral; EMK urges Clinton to grant visa; Clinton agrees to 48 hr visa after republicans signal through O'Dowd-Vargo-Soderberg link that they will moderate their positions if visa is granted.
- 1994: Clinton grants visa to IRA activist Joe Cahill in exchange for IRA ceasefire.
- 1994: EMK meets Adams at Logan Airport in Boston; Adams later visits White House.
- 1995: EMK and Dodd ask Clinton to let Adams raise money in U.S.; Adams meets with EMK later in year to warn of impending deadlock in peace process.
- 1995: Clinton travels to Ireland where he stays with JKS; visits Northern Ireland.
- 1995/96: Mitchell heads arms decommissioning commission; to break the impasse, the report recommends that disarming and talks begin concurrently.
- 1996: IRA ceasefire collapses; EMK refuses to meet with Adams; works to reinstitute ceasefire; meets with loyalists and commends them for not retaliating to violence.
- 1996: Clinton wins reelection; Lake and Soderberg leave National Security Council; former EMK aide Jim Steinberg begins handling Irish conflict for Clinton White House.
- 1997: IRA accepts the Mitchell Principles, reinstitutes ceasefire, and enters peace talks.
- 1998: Vargo travels to Ireland and N. Ireland with EMK, who speaks in Ulster and Belfast about stalled peace talks and escalating violence, and meets with David Trimble.
- 1998: Good Friday Agreement reached by parties in N. Ireland to establish new govt. and new relationships with Dublin/London; implementation stalls over IRA refusal to disarm.



- 1998: Vargo leaves EMK's staff to create the U.S.-Ireland Alliance to promote Irish interests in U.S.; the non-profit is reportedly EMK's idea, who sits on Honorary Board.
- 1998: Clinton makes second trip to Ireland and N. Ireland; JKS agrees to stay on as ambassador until Clinton's visit.