Extent

1 folder, approximately 23 pages

Summary

This collection contains materials mentioning the phrase “back channel” in relation to the Republic of Ireland and/or Northern Ireland. Back channel diplomacy, also called Track II diplomacy, is a term used to describe informal or unofficial communication related to conflict resolution between countries, outside of official inter-government diplomacy and negotiation. This collection contains an NSC email containing drafts and reference materials for President Clinton’s public remarks during his trip to Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in September 1998.

Scope and Content Note

The materials in FOIA 2024-0096-F are a selective body of documents responsive to the topic of the FOIA. Researchers should consult the archivist about related material. Back channel diplomacy, also called Track II diplomacy, is a term used to describe informal or unofficial communication related to conflict resolution between countries, outside of official intergovernment diplomacy and negotiation. This collection contains an NSC email containing drafts and reference materials for President Clinton’s public remarks during his trip to Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in September 1998.

Biographical Note

The Northern Ireland peace process sought an end to thirty years of political violence. “The Troubles,” as this period is called, began on October 5, 1968, with a civil rights march in Londonderry and ended on April 10, 1998, with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. The conflict centered around the constitutional status of

Northern Ireland. The Protestant majority that defined itself as British wanted to remain a part of the United Kingdom (unionists) and the Catholic minority that considered itself Irish wanted a unified Ireland apart from the United Kingdom (republicans). Another key issue in the conflict was discrimination against Catholics by the Protestant majority. More than 3,500 people were killed during the conflict. By the 1990s, having been plagued by generations of civil strife and political unrest, unionists and republicans in Northern Ireland became more aware that their goals could never be achieved through violence. It was with this backdrop in place that President Clinton served as a catalyst for the peace process. The Good Friday Agreement (less commonly known as the Belfast Agreement) was made up of two inter-related documents, both signed on 10 April 1998. One of the documents was a multi-party agreement signed by most of Northern Ireland's political parties, and the other document was an international agreement between the British and Irish governments.

Record Type

Textual

System of Arrangement

Records that are responsive to this FOIA request were found in these collection areas—Clinton Presidential Records: NSC Cable, Email, and Records Management Systems.

Access

This collection is open to all researchers. Access to Clinton Presidential Records is governed by the Presidential Records Act (PRA) (44 U.S.C. Chapter 22, as amended) and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552, as amended) and therefore records may be restricted in whole or in part in accordance with legal exemptions.

Copyright

Documents in this collection that were prepared by officials of the United States government as part of their official duties are in the public domain. Researchers are advised to consult the copyright law of the United States (17 U.S.C. Chapter 1) which governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Provenance

Official records of William Jefferson Clinton’s presidency are housed at the Clinton Presidential Library and administered by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) under the provisions of the Presidential Records Act (PRA).

Subject Headings

Northern Ireland
Diplomacy

Processed by

Staff Archivist, 2025. Previously restricted materials are added as they are released.

Last Modified Date

2025-02-11

Container List

The following is a list of documents and folders processed in response to FOIA 2024-0096-F:
Box 1
Clinton Presidential Records: NSC Cable, Email, and Records Management System
NSC Email

Exchange-Non-Record (Mar 97-Jan 01) [OA/ID 630000]
[Back channel and Ireland…]
[08/11/1998]