

Welcome to the Faroe Islands

By Jóannes Eidesgaard
Prime Minister

Distinguished guests,

It is a great honour for me to welcome the most prominent visitor ever in the Faroe Islands, the former President of the United States of America Mr Bill Clinton, accompanied by the former chairman of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission Mr Hans Blix from Sweden.

Former President, when you accepted an invitation to pay a visit to the Faroe Islands you made the perfect choice. In fact you decided to visit a people with whom you have something valuable in common – namely the Irish origin.

A visit to the Faroe Islands is a visit to the islands of peace. From the very beginning the Faroe Islands were inhabited by Irish monks finding the islands the most suitable place for prayer and peaceful living. They were succeeded by vikings, but later excavations from the Viking Age show no signs of weapons and during the World War II the Faroe Islands were occupied by allied troops from Great Britain. As far as we know there has been no war in this very place you are



Jóannes Eidesgaard, Prime Minister

visiting.

Our ancestors, the Irish people, are known for their qualities. They are tough, they have a strong culture and they are determined. Qualities that you have exploited and which have proved your worth as a President.

You have succeeded in your efforts to create a dialogue and seek peace, and now we have the honour to experience your strong personality and image.

We hope that you will experience these qualities in the Faroe Islands, too. On this

stepping stone between Sweden and America you will find a micro nation that is older and younger than the United States. In this modern globalized micro society you will find the oldest parliament in the world deriving from the Viking Age, you will

find a strong culture based on our own language and long traditions and highly educated, flexible, and multi tasked people and companies. Here you will find safe surroundings with clean waters and fresh seafood directly from the sea. This stepping stone in the Atlantic Ocean is an oasis for stressed, modern urban people.

You have managed to create an image of power, endurance and dialogue. We sincerely hope this positive image you have built up will be continued in American politics and we would welcome your wife as a successor of this image.

Distinguished guests,

You two have managed to meet the challenge of a globalized world. We highly respect your efforts for dialogue and peace and the professional way you have been coping with it.

By visiting the Faroe Islands you create a bridge of peace ranging from Sweden via the Faroe Islands to the United States. You made the right choice to visit us, you gave a promise and to our satisfaction - you kept it.

Very welcome!

Welcome, Mr Clinton and Mr Blix



By Heðin Mortensen,
mayor of Tórshavn

It is truly a massive occasion our capital and country are being presented with, now the former President of the United States, Mr Bill Clinton together with the former United Nations weapons inspector, Mr Hans Blix are paying the Faroe Islands a visit.

It is great honour for me to invite two such prominent and distinguished guests welcome to

Tórshavn. For us it is a great honour that these two gentlemen have agreed to visit and I sincerely want to thank all those involved in making this exceptional visit possible.

These are two huge names, which we over the years have become acquainted with through the international media, and no doubt many will find it quite hard to believe we are actually having this visit in our country.

I cannot refrain from thinking back to October in 1986, when the then United States President, Mr Ronald Reagan and the Russian head of state, Mr Mikhail Gorbachev held a high level meeting in Reykjavik. This was a visit, which projected Iceland firmly on to the map of the international world.

It is still a fact that when people mention the town of Reykjavik, people say this was the town, which was at the centre off, and created the framework for one of the most important meetings ever held regarding the dismantling of the nuclear weapons race. Photos of the two men and the environment in Reykjavik were broadcast around the world.

We of course aspire to the same ambition, which is that when two such dignitaries visit

our country this will assist in the promotion of the Faroes on to the world map, There are several indicators, which suggest that many eyes around the world are focused upon the Faroes and this visit.

We have seen and heard that the international media are dispatching their people to the Faroes to cover this event, so the focus is upon the Faroes and the Faroese environment. Everybody wishes to express good old Faroese hospitality, so all guests, high and low, are made most welcome.

As mentioned these are two world famous men who are visiting. Mr Bill Clinton was President in the United States, elected for two periods, spanning from 1993 to 2001. With his forty six years of age, he is the third youngest President ever to hold this office. He represented from the very beginning a generation shift in the corridors of power in the world's largest superpower.

In the international history books, Mr Clinton has firmly written his name through his endeavours to reach a peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians and between the warring parties in Northern Ireland. Among other notable

international achievements is the so-called Dayton-agreement, which ended the civil conflict in Bosnia.

At home in the United States, Mr Clinton profiled himself as a President who among other aspects tried to balance the country's economy. He also endeavoured to improve and develop the nation's educational system and address the national social imbalance. Simultaneously he tried to tighten domestic controls on the sale of weapons.

Our other distinguished guest is the former Swedish Foreign Minister and Ambassador, Mr Hans Blix, who may be best known for his role as the United Nations weapons inspector in Iraq, where he lead the inspection team looking for weapons of mass destruction, which many maintained the country possessed.

Subsequent investigations proved that Iraq did not harbour such weaponry, but this did not please those who wanted an investigation result in line with their personal convictions. Therefore Mr Blix was in the firing line far and wide and personal attacks on him were ferocious at times.

The aftermath of events however has proved his case. He

was fully entitled to his stance and this in itself must be a resurrection after the persecution he experienced. If the advice of Mr Blix had been adhered to from the very beginning, the war in Iraq may have been avoided, which it has to be said is a large sorrowful event.

As Mr Clinton and Mr Blix have been invited to the Faroes to talk, there can be no doubt that they will have very many interesting aspects to present. They are two larger than life individuals who are famed for speaking their mind and for their very highly informed views.

We are looking forward to meeting them and listening to what they have to say. It is a great honour for us that they have set the time aside to stop in our country. We wish to receive them as the true dignitaries they are. Hopefully their visit will be gratifying for both them and us.

Welcome to the Faroes and Tórshavn, Mr Clinton and Mr Blix