

Mar. 16 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

[At this point, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman, team owner Thomas Hicks, and team captain Derian Hatcher made brief remarks. Mr. Hatcher presented a Stars jersey to the President.]

The President. You may have noticed today that I had this tie on. We had the annual Speaker's Saint Patrick's Day lunch today a day early up on Capitol Hill, so maybe I should just wear this tomorrow. [Laughter] This is great.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mr. Bettman's daughter Brittany; Dallas Stars general manager Robert Gainey, players Ed Belfour, Joe Nieuwendyk, and Brett Hull, and head coach Ken Hitchcock; and Buffalo Sabres goalie Dominik Hasek.

Videotaped Remarks to the Carnegie Endowment's Annual Nonproliferation Conference March 16, 2000

I am grateful for the opportunity to address the Carnegie Endowment's Annual Nonproliferation Conference. I thank you for coming together again to focus on the crucial task of curbing the spread of weapons of mass destruction. All of you know how serious this challenge is, from North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, to ongoing risks that sensitive materials and technologies will spread from the former Soviet Union, including to Iran, to the imperative of bringing China into global nonproliferation regimes, to the continuing need for vigilance against Saddam Hussein.

Stemming this tide has been a critical priority for me for 7 years now, and it will be for this year, as well. In a few days, I'll travel to South Asia. There are those in the region who hope we will simply accept its nuclear status quo and move on. I will not do that. India and Pakistan have legitimate security concerns. But I will make clear our view that a nuclear future is a dangerous future for them and for the world. And I'll stress that narrowing our differences on nonproliferation is important to moving toward a broader relationship.

I know there are some who have never seen an arms control agreement they like, because rules can be violated, because perfect verification is impossible, because we can't always count on others to keep their word. Still, I believe we must work to broaden and strengthen verifiable arms agreements. The alternative is a world with no rules, no verification, and no trust at all.

It would be foolish to rely on treaties alone to protect our security. But it would also be foolish to throw away the tools that sound treaties do offer: a more predictable security environment, monitoring inspections, the ability to shine a light on threatening behavior and mobilize the entire world against it. So this year we will work to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention. We'll increase momentum for universal adherence to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. And as to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, I am determined that last year's unfortunate Senate vote will not be America's last word.

With the leadership of General Shalikashvili, we will work hard this year to build bipartisan support for ratification. I will continue to call on other nations to forgo testing and join the treaty. We must not lose the chance to end nuclear testing forever. We must also take the next essential step, a treaty to cut off production of fissile material.

I know this conference will assess the potential impact of our program directed at emerging missile threats, such as from North Korea, Iran, and Iraq. I've stressed that a U.S. decision on a limited missile defense will take into account not only the threat, feasibility, and cost but also the overall impact on our security and arms control.

The ABM Treaty remains important to our security. Today, dealing with dangerous new missile threats is also vital to global security. So we will continue to work with Russia on

how to amend the treaty to permit limited defenses while keeping its central protections, and we'll continue to seek a START III treaty that will cut our strategic arsenals to 20 percent of their cold war levels.

Let me conclude by wishing you a productive meeting. I value your advice. I count on your dedication, and I thank you for all you're doing to build a safer world.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped at approximately 11:50 a.m. on March 10 in Room 459 in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 16. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at an American Ireland Fund Dinner

March 16, 2000

President Glucksman, Mr. Aikins, Senator Mitchell, members of the administration and Congress who are here, and our distinguished Ambassadors of the United States to Ireland and Ireland to the United States. To all the leaders of the parties from Northern Ireland who are here; Secretary Mandelson; and in his absence, from his video, I would also say I very much appreciate what Tony Blair said earlier. And most of all, to you, Taoiseach, I thank you. I thank you for the award, and I thank the American Ireland Fund for all it has done for peace and progress in Ireland.

And I want to say that this is about the most beautiful piece of Irish crystal I've ever seen. It also bears, as my wife said, a remarkable resemblance to a golf ball. [Laughter] And it is only for that reason, and because he does not play, that I do not feel constrained to let it reside for half a year with George Mitchell—[laughter]—to whom we are all profoundly indebted.

You know, basically, I don't believe that Presidents should get awards. The job itself is reward enough. But I'm honored and pleased to have this one, because, for me, the work for peace that I have done and our administration—Hillary, through the Vital Voices networks—it's been a labor of love at all hours of the day and night and through many months of frustration, through all of the efforts I've made just to understand, sometimes, the fights which seem to me to be inexplicable.

So much has been accomplished in the last 2 years especially, but really over the last almost 8 years. At the moment, we wish that the institutions were up, not down; we wish that every-

body was in agreement, not feeling frustrated; but we must never forget that the ceasefires now are measured in years, not weeks, that people now shop in their downtowns without fear of bombs going off, that the gradual return to normal life was again reflected today in the announcement of the British Government that further troops will be redeployed for duty outside Northern Ireland, leaving no army battalion resident in Belfast for the first time in 31 years.

More than 300 prisoners from both sides have been released. Human rights and equality commissions have been formed. Police reform is underway, and we are looking forward to the reform of the criminal justice system. A peace dividend has begun to take hold in Northern Ireland's economy: more people employed there than ever before, unemployment the lowest in 20 years. tourists up by 11 percent last year alone, American visitors doubling in the last decade, rising investment in trade, an economy becoming as modern as that of her Irish and British counterparts.

I am very proud of the role the United States has played in this economic rebirth as well. The International Fund for Ireland, to which we are the largest donor, has leveraged a billion and a half dollars of direct investment, helping to create over 30,000 jobs. The Walsh visa program will bring thousands of young Irish men and women to the United States for education and training, especially in high-tech areas. Our new microlending program, *Aspire*, is inspiring small business and entrepreneurs at a rapid rate.

And as the Taoiseach said, a year ago at this time, the people of Northern Ireland did not