

We have with us here, in the Oval Office, Attorney General Spitzer of New York, Attorney General Blumenthal of Connecticut, Mayor Penelas of Miami. And Mayor Bill Campbell of Atlanta was here; he just walked out. So we're all here. But why don't we—everybody else who is on the phone say something about it, who you are.

[At this point, the teleconference participants introduced themselves.]

The President. We're delighted to have you on the phone call. And I want to say on behalf of not only the White House but Attorney General Reno and Deputy Attorney General Holder, Secretary Summers and Deputy Secretary Eizenstat, and Secretary Cuomo, we very much appreciate what you've done, and we congratulate you. I think that this agreement will fundamentally change the way the gun industry does business, and all of you will have the satisfaction of knowing that your leadership and involvement have helped to make all American communities safer. We couldn't be here without you, and I thank you.

Now, we've got to build on what we've accomplished today and continue to reduce gun violence. The long roster of leaders with us here today is proof that the whole Nation supports what we're doing, and we just need you to go out there and keep working with responsible members of the gun industry to keep this momentum going. And I hope we can get some other manufacturers to join us.

I wonder if anybody who is here wants to say anything and anybody on the phone would like to say anything now.

[The participants made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you very much. If I could just echo two of the points that were made. First of all, I agree with the last point Mayor Penelas made. This proves, this agreement, that nobody was in it for the money. Everybody said all along, the States, the municipalities, and the Federal Government, nobody wanted any money damages; we just wanted a change in the way America lives to make it a safer place.

The second thing I'd like to say—to echo what Mayor Archer and Attorney General Spitzer said—is Smith & Wesson stuck their neck out here, and I think that all of us, including the Federal Government, in our procurement policies, if we really are serious about making America safer, ought to send a clear signal that we appreciate what they did. I think that that will accelerate the day in which the other manufacturers will follow suit.

I thank you all very much. This is a happy day, and I'm glad to talk to you all. And thanks for joining the phone call, and thanks for agreeing with the settlement.

Thank you all. Goodbye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:37 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Alexander Penelas of Metro-Dade, FL; Mayor Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, MI; Eliot Spitzer, New York attorney general; and Richard Blumenthal, Connecticut attorney general. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the participating city officials.

Remarks at a Saint Patrick's Day Ceremony With Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland

March 17, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you, *Taoiseach*, for your words and your leadership, for the shamrocks and the beautiful Irish crystal. Upstairs in our Residence, there is so much Irish crystal now that sometimes I have guests from other countries that ask me if I've ever been anywhere but Ireland. [Laughter] But I will treasure this always.

I don't suppose the saints in Heaven spend time boasting about their earthly achievements, but if they do, I imagine the other saints can bear no more bragging from Saint Patrick, for no nation has ever lived up more fully to the virtues of its patron saint than has Ireland. Saint Patrick has been described as one of the great saints of the downtrodden and the excluded.

And the legendary, large-hearted Irish people are famous for reaching out to the world's less fortunate.

Whenever the troubled places of the Earth have called out for help, the Irish have answered the call, always among the first in economic assistance, disaster relief, peacekeeping. Indeed, in the past four decades, there has never been a day, not a single day, that Irish troops have not stood watch for peace on some distant shore. All of you have paid a price for this. Like all of Ireland, I was saddened by the recent deaths of four young Irish soldiers serving with the United Nations in Lebanon.

As Ireland has committed itself to the cause of peace around the world, it is right that the world, and especially the United States, should commit ourselves to the cause of peace in Ireland.

I repeat today the promise I made in Dublin 4 years ago: America will be with you as you walk the road to peace. We are conscious that Ireland, along with the other parties to the Good Friday accord, made fundamental and principled compromises in the effort to secure a lasting peace. That agreement remains the very best hope we have ever had for achieving peace, and I still believe it will succeed.

And the model of the Good Friday accord represents not just hope for Northern Ireland but hope for so many stricken areas all across the Earth now suffering from sectarian violence. As extraordinary as Ireland's record is in exporting peace and peacekeepers to troubled areas

of the Earth, nothing will compare to the gift Ireland gives the world if you can make your own peace permanent and meet the urgent need of the world for proof that a path to peace can be found.

In the sixth year of Saint Patrick's enslavement, he was awakened by a mysterious voice that said: "Your hungers are rewarded. You are going home. Look, your ship is ready." His fateful response to depart immediately and seek his destiny set in motion his vocation to study, to learn, and then return to Ireland to bring faith and peace. By the persuasive force of the spirit, he began to change the warring traditions of the Irish tribes. But his accomplishments, great as they are, remain, after all these centuries, incomplete.

And so I say to you, *Taoiseach*, your ship is ready. In the smiling eyes of the Irish child, you have all the cause you will ever need to intensify the search for peace. I hope all the leaders and people of Ireland will follow your lead. I hope all those in Northern Ireland, especially, will heed this call. We must fulfill the pastoral mission of Saint Patrick. Nothing is more fitting on this Saint Patrick's Day.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 4:15 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Ahern.

Message on the Observance of Saint Patrick's Day, 2000 *March 17, 2000*

Warm greetings to everyone observing Saint Patrick's Day.

It is most fitting that the feast day of the Patron Saint of Ireland should be held on the threshold of spring, the season of promise, for the Irish have always been a people of promise. With warm hearts and a deep spirituality, they embraced the promise of salvation that Saint Patrick brought to their beautiful island 16 centuries ago and preserved their faith through the tumult and chaos of the Dark Ages.

In the 19th century, suffering from famine and oppression in their own land, millions of Irish men and women recognized the promise of freedom and opportunity in America. Often enduring great hardship, they journeyed west to begin a new life in a new land. With strength and humor, courage and determination, they made America's promise a reality for themselves and their children and enriched our history and heritage with their achievements. In business, labor, education, the arts, public life, and so