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President Bush. Laura and I are delighted to welcome you here to the White House. I'm proud to accept the bowl of shamrocks as a symbol of our friendship.

The friendship between Ireland and the United States has deep roots. Few people fought as hard for American independence as the sons of Erin. At the end of the Revolutionary War, Lord Mountjoy told the House of Commons that, "We've lost America through the Irish." The Irish played a key role in Washington's army. And in the two centuries since, the ties between Ireland and America have only strengthened.

The ties between Ireland and America are reflected in this great house. This house was designed by an Irish architect, and he used as his model the grandest building he knew, Leinster House in Ireland. The affinities between the two buildings are more than just architectural; the White House, built by James Hoban, has been home to every American President since John Q. Adams' father, John. The Dublin building that inspired him now serves as a free parliament in a free and independent Ireland.

The ties between Ireland and America are also reflected in our people. Ireland has one of the fastest growing economies in Europe, and its growth is attracting immigrants. For more than a century, that was a different story. Millions of Irish came to our shores because of war and poverty and famine. Often they arrived with nothing but the faith of their fathers and a willingness to work. These men and women who built our cities were also the soldiers who defended our freedom in every one of our wars. They're the priests and they're the nuns who built a system of parochial schools that provided a decent education for millions of poor immigrants. And they're now doing the same thing for a new generation of African Americans and Latino Americans in our inner cities.

Like Saint Patrick, the Irish in America began their life in their new land as exiles, but came to love it as home. Finally, the ties between Ireland and America are reflected in our common commitment to bring the blessings of liberty to every man and woman and child on this Earth.

In the 20th century, Ireland won its independence and raised up a democracy that offered its people a just and better life. In the 21st century, Ireland is now helping other nations who share the same aspirations for peace and prosperity by fighting hunger and the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa, by supporting relief efforts for victims of the tsunami in Asia, and by helping the Afghan people rebuild their lives and their country. Ireland is independent when it comes to foreign policy, but Ireland is not neutral when it comes to the global challenges like hunger and disease and human rights.

Taoiseach, you're making a big contribution to our world, and we appreciate it. The United States appreciates all of Ireland's efforts for peace and freedom. Americans are grateful to our Irish friends, and we are proud of our Irish heritage.

The Census Bureau tells us there are more than 34 million Americans that claim Irish ancestry. On Saint Patrick's Day, I suspect that number jumps a little bit. [*Laughter*] On this special day, we honor the saint who brought the gospel of peace to the Green Isle, and we count ourselves blessed by the warm friendship between his adopted land and our own.

Thanks for coming. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:31 a.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.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

March 11

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, at the Capital Hilton Hotel, the President and Mrs. Bush attended the Gridiron Club dinner.

March 13

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Old Indian Treaty Room at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, the President participated in a photo opportunity with the Intel Science Talent Search finalists.

In the afternoon, the President received diplomatic credentials from newly appointed Ambassadors to the United States.

The President announced his intention to nominate Kenneth L. Wainstein to be an Assistant Attorney General and upon appointment to designate him as Assistant Attorney General for National Security.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jonann E. Chiles to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation.

The President announced his intention to nominate J.C.A. Stagg to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation (Academic).

The President announced his intention to appoint John Cornyn and Edward M. Kennedy as members of the Board of Trustees of the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation.

March 14

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Rochester, NY, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Father Joseph Champlin.

In the afternoon, in a hangar at the Greater Rochester International Airport, the President met with family members of soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Later, he returned to Washington, DC. Then, in the Roosevelt Room, he met with members of organizations involved in educating and enrolling seniors in Medicare prescription drug benefit plans.

March 15

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld. He then met with Republican congressional leaders to discuss legislative priorities.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Silver Spring, MD. Later, he returned to Washington, DC. He then met with Republican Members of Congress to discuss legislative priorities.

The President announced his intention to nominate Andrew C. von Eschenbach to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs at the Department of Health and Human Services.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mark C. Minton to be Ambassador to Mongolia.

The President announced his intention to nominate John A. Rizzo to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The President announced his intention to designate Thomas E. McNamara as Program Manager of the Information Sharing Environment.

March 16

In the morning, the President met with Members of Congress who had recently visited the Darfur region of Sudan. Later, he had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, at the U.S. Capitol, the President attended a St. Patrick's Day luncheon. Later, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a photo opportunity with recipients of the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia to the White House on March 21.

The President declared a major disaster in Missouri and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornados, and flooding during the period of March 11–13.

March 17

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland. Then, he and Prime Minister Ahern met with community leaders from Northern Ireland and attended a St. Patrick's Day reception.

In the afternoon, the President participated in a briefing on avian influenza. Later, he and Mrs. Bush traveled to Camp David, MD.

The White House announced that the President will host NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the White House on March 20.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael D. Kirby to be Ambassador to Moldova.

The President announced his intention to appoint Floyd E. Bloom and Nicholas Eberstadt as members of the President's Council on Bioethics.

The President announced his intention to appoint Raymond Jardine, Jr., Samuel Metters, and William Gregory Rothman as members of the National Veterans Business Development Corporation.

The President announced his intention to designate Thomas E. Harvey as Acting Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Congressional Affairs).

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted March 13

Jonann E. Chiles,
of Arkansas, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2008, vice Robert J. Dieter, resigned.

Robert D. McCallum, Jr.,
of Georgia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Australia.

J. C. A. Stagg,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation for a term expiring November 17, 2011, vice Jay Phillip Greene, term expired.

Kenneth L. Wainstein,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Attorney General (new position).

Submitted March 15

Mark C. Minton,
of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Mongolia.

John A. Rizzo,
of the District of Columbia, to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency, vice Scott W. Muller, resigned.

Warren W. Tichenor,
of Texas, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, with the rank of Ambassador, vice Kevin E. Moley.

Andrew von Eschenbach,
of Texas, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services, vice Lester M. Crawford, resigned.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released March 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 449

Fact sheet: Strategy for Victory: Defeating the Terrorists and Training Iraqi Security Forces

Released March 14

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Mark B. McClellan