

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

Remarks With Prime Minister Micheál Martin of Ireland at a St. Patrick's Day Reception

March 12, 2025

President Trump. Well, thank you very much. This a great honor. Great people. A lot of Irish friends, right there. A lot of very, very good Irish friends.

But thank you all for being here. Even though it's still a few days away, I want to be the first to wish each and every one of you a very happy St. Patrick's Day. It's a big day.

And as a lifelong New Yorker, nobody knows the Irish better than me. *[Laughter]* I know too much about the Irish.

So let me begin by saying I really do—I love the Irish. I've had great, great friends over the years, and I love the Irish. Special people.

And I've been to Ireland many times. I have a lot of property in Ireland, actually—*[laughter]*—and it does very well, so I like it. If it didn't do well, I wouldn't like it. *[Laughter]*

But I'm always struck by the awesome beauty of the Emerald Isle and the strength and warmth and grit and grace of the Irish people. Very few people can compare.

Today, we're delighted to welcome Taoiseach Micheál Martin—a very special man doing incredibly well, and very popular—and his beautiful wife Mary. And I want to thank you both for being here. The first official visit to the White House. So thank you very much for being here with us. Thank you. Thank you.

I also want to extend a special welcome to Ireland's Ambassador to the United States, Geraldine Byrne—and you—where are you, Geraldine? There you are. Geraldine Byrne Nason.

And you're going to be working with this gentleman right here. He's a very great golfer, one of the best golfers that you'll ever see. *[Laughter]* He'll be playing golf all day long with—he'll take clients out to play golf, but he's won many, many club championships. And, Ed Walsh, congratulations,

U.S. Ambassador to Ireland-designate Edward Walsh. Thank you.

President Trump. Great. Great. Going to be great.

We're grateful also be joined—to be joined by the members—and many members—of our Cabinet. Proud Irish Americans Sean Duffy and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. Where's Robert F. and Sean? Hi, Bobby.

I knew that—let's see. Duffy we knew. And Kennedy we knew. Some of you, I wasn't as sure. Pam Bondi. I don't know, are you Irish? *[Laughter]* Where—are you Irish? With that name, I can't—haven't figured that out. She's doing a hell of a job, I'll tell you that, Attorney General Pam Bondi.

Secretary of Energy—*[applause]*—Secretary of Energy, Chris Wright. Now, you're doing a good job. Do you see the oil is going down? It's going down. Sixty-five dollars a barrel today.

Audience member. Yeah!

President Trump. You're doing better than I even thought, because everything else is going to be coming down with it. All those expensive goods that you had to suffer with for 4 years are all coming down. Energy leads the way.

Thank you. Good job you're doing with our friend Wright.

HUD Secretary Scott Turner. You're not Irish, Scott. *[Laughter]* Where's Scott? Give me a break, Scott. You know, I want to be politically correct and not mention it, but I'm going to say. How much Irish do you have in you, Sean [Scott; White House correction]? I don't know. *[Laughter]* He said, "Zero." That's right.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Doug Collins. Doug. Thank you, Doug. You're Irish.

EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin. He's one of the most important—he's going to get those approvals. A nuclear power plant will take less than 2 weeks to get approved. Right, Lee? *[Laughter]* Huh? It used to take 15 years. We're going to do it in a couple of weeks.

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer. Where are you, Jamieson? Jamieson Greer. Thank you, Jamieson.

And I also—there's a very special man here that I've been watching a long time, one of the greatest dancers ever in the world. Michael Flatley is around here someplace.

There's nobody like this guy. Great, Michael. I've watched him—Radio City. I've watched you a lot, Michael. Those feet, the way they moved. I don't know how the hell you do it. *[Laughter]* Can you still dance like that, or has Father Time caught up? *[Laughter]* You know, Father Time, he's never lost. You know that, right?

Irish dancer and choreographer Michael Flatley. I'll take lessons from you, sir.

President Trump. But you're doing—you're doing great. You look fantastic.

Also with us are Representatives John McGuire—John. Hi, John. Good. Bill Huizenga. Bill, thank you. Ronny Jackson. "Doc Ronny," as I call him, even though he's a Congressman. Special guy. John Joyce. John. Thank you, John. David Joyce. David, thank you. And Guy Reschenthaler. *[Laughter]*

You know, that Reschenthaler—he's—that's actually the way you pronounce it, you know? Nobody else gets it right. I got it right, but it's—*[laughter]*—it's a hell of a name. But despite that, he's very successful at what he does, which is politics. And he's a great guy. Thank you, Guy.

We have come together to this beautiful White House this evening for the annual shamrock ceremony—a living symbol of the long and unique friendship between Americans and the Irish, and we're always going to have that friendship.

Just like we have a great friendship, we'll always have that very special friendship.

This wonderful tradition dates back to 1952 when the first Irish Ambassador to the United States sent President Truman a box of shamrocks as a gesture of good will.

You hear that, Walsh? *[Laughter]* The first—you're not the first. You're—I don't know what you are. What number are you? Do you have any idea?

Ambassador-designate Walsh. No.

President Trump. You're—it's been a long time, right? Let's see, I could figure it out pretty easily.

The bond between our nations as the—old America itself, and it is as old as our country.

So many Irish volunteers risked their lives in the American Revolution. And George Washington described Ireland as, quote, "the friend of my country in my country's most friendless day," meaning Ireland stuck with us when we were not doing so well, when it was looking pretty bad.

Irish heritage gave us the boldness of Andrew Jackson—I didn't know Andrew Jackson was Irish—the brilliance of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Henry Ford, and Walt Disney and the leadership of the late, great President Ronald Reagan.

It was men and women of Irish descent who built the hallowed halls of Notre Dame University—Notre Dame is great; what a great place—the legend of the Boston Red Sox, and the Golden Arches of McDonald's. That's right.

Today, 1 in every 10 Americans trace their roots back to the old country. We were discussing—we have 5 million people living in Ireland, but we have 35 million people living here—right?—of Irish descent. That's a pretty interesting statistic.

I was looking at all these great dancers over here. You are very beautiful. Are you all great dancers? Is that right? Look at that.

Young, great dancers. Wow. That's great. Did you perform for the group before?

Participants. Yes.

President Trump. Because I heard somebody was doing, really, a fantastic—they said, "These people are fantastic." I didn't get to see you.

Participants. Aww.

President Trump. Do you want to do it again?

Participants. Yes! *[Laughter]*

President Trump. All right. Well, we might have them do it again.

I heard you did a fantastic job. Thank you.

As we celebrate Irish American Heritage Month, we're grateful to be joined by hundreds of these proud patriots right here today. And I know them—from personal experience that many of the people that we have here, they're just fierce. They have fierce Irish flame, we call it. You never give up. You never ever give up.

Oh, I even see Don. Hello, Don. You're Irish—you are definitely Irish, Don McGahn. *[Laughter]* You are definitely an Irishman. There's no question about that.

But you never give up. We will never give up ever—right?—for the young ones, ever, because you never know what's going to happen, you know? It's just a little—a little bit more effort, and you get there.

Look at what happened to me. *[Laughter]* A lot of people said this was not a possibility. They said that was going to be a tough race, and we won in a landslide. And let's keep it that way, right? And we're having a great time bringing our country back and bringing it back at a level that people had no idea was going to take place this rapidly, this quickly.

And a lot of our great people that are Secretaries and the people working in the administration are here, and they're doing a fantastic job. So I want to thank all of you.

Five blocks east of where we are today, that spirit once helped save the very heart of the city's Irish American community. You all know about it. During the War of 1812, British forces rampaged through the streets of Washington, burning every building in their path. Every single building was being burned down. Almost everyone fled, but not Father William Matthews of St. Patrick's Church, which was built to serve the Irish workers who came to build the Capitol and the White House.

They were building the White House, and they formed a great bond. And they were doing the—pretty important buildings, the White House and the Capitol. I would say that's about as good as gets.

As the fire spread, the priest and the group of his parishioners said that: "We're just going to have to barricade ourselves in. We're going to have to do something, because it's really bad. It's really dangerous in here."

And inside the church, they climbed to the roof, armed with only buckets of water. That's the only thing they had. And the other thing they had was faith in God. They had a big faith in God. They said, "God will never do this to us."

Risking their lives, they defended the church. And more than two centuries later, St. Patrick's still stands as a beautiful testament to their incredible resolve and bravery and the patron saint of the Emerald Isle. And that's what it is: St. Patrick.

So we have St. Patrick's Day, and we remember their courage, and we honor the bravery of countless Irish Americans who have kept our country safe, strong, prosperous, and free.

And a—I made a little talk with my friend right behind me before at the Capitol. And they gave me one statistic that they don't have here. I thought it was an amazing statistic. Fifty percent of the people that won the congressional Medal of Honor were Irish. Can you imagine?

And I want to check on that. Because that sounds to me—it's—no, it's a stat. I want to—Pam, would you please have that investigated? *[Laughter]* Because how—how is that possible? Seriously. How is that possible?

I was very surprised to see that, Mary. Would you agree that that's possible? With the Irish, anything—

Mary Martin, wife of Prime Minister Martin. Of course it's possible! *[Laughter]*

President Trump. With the Irish—no, think of it, the congressional Medal of Honor is the—the highest award you can get in this country. And 50 percent—well, they also have the Presidential Medal of Freedom. But I will say, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, it's much easier to—I mean—*[laughter]*—you know, you get it for achievement in something, but you don't have to take many, many bullets.

Although there has been one bullet that was—*[laughter]*—there's been one bullet that was not too good. *[Laughter]* I'm the only one—the Presidential—that got that.

But think of that. Fifty percent of the people that received the congressional Medal of Honor had Irish heritage and were involved in some form with the Irish. And that's pretty good. That's a pretty big statement.

In closing, I want to remember one more Irish American patriot our Nation lost this week. In 1979, Anthony R. Dolan—some of you know that name; a lot of the people that work in the White House know it very well—became the youngest ever Pulitzer Prize winner for his reporting on government corruption in Stamford, Connecticut.

In 1981, he became the chief speechwriter to President Reagan, whom he served for 8 years—that's a long time; that's the full time—8 years—coining the phrase "evil empire." That was his word. That's a very famous—people aren't here. The "evil empire" was a very profound statement.

Tony served as a White House Adviser throughout my first term and, most recently, was a Special Assistant to President on the—on Domestic Policy on the Domestic Policy Council.

He passed away early Monday morning, and his family is devastated, to be honest. They're devastated. A couple of the family members are here, but they're devastated. He was a great person—great, brilliant writer. And so he will be very greatly missed.

And Tony is looking down on us right now, and he was so proud of what he did and his heritage. He was so proud of his heritage.

So I want to thank him and his family for the incredible job they did.

Once again, let me wish everyone a very happy St. Patrick's Day.

And with that, I would like to ask Taoiseach Martin to say a few words. He's a very, very special man in Ireland, as you probably know. He's a very popular guy, which is not easy in Ireland. [*Laughter*] And it's an honor to have both Mary and Micheál here with us, because we really—we've gotten to know each other very well, and they're great people.

Thank you very much, everybody.

Prime Minister Martin. President Trump, distinguished guests. It is a singular honor to represent the people of Ireland as we gather to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. The time-honored tradition of the Shamrock Bowl ceremony is an important moment to reflect upon the relationship between our two countries.

Mr. President, as you said on an earlier St. Patrick's Day, and I quote, "Through trial and triumph, ups and downs, thick and thin, the extraordinary Irish people have stood by America's side, and America will always stand by theirs."

Our peoples have stood side by side for a long time, and next year, the United States marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Of the 56 signatories of that historic document, three were born on the island of Ireland, and many others were of Irish descent.

Since then, Irish America has been at the heart of shaping this great nation. The ideals of liberty, democracy, and equality of opportunity forged in this country did much to inspire Irish independence. Our histories are interconnected because our people are interconnected.

Today, as the President has said, more than 30 million people claim Irish ancestry in the United States. Those who came to America seeking refuge from poverty and hunger at home worked hard. They helped build the railroads that connected this country and the skylines that defined it. Others served their communities and their adopted home as firefighters, teachers, nurses, doctors, policemen, and soldiers.

Irish people can now be found in almost every industry and community across the United States. Mr. President, Irish Americans have lived the American dream. I saw that for myself earlier this week in the great State of Texas, where I met Governor Greg Abbott, attended South by Southwest, and learned about exciting economic opportunities that abound in the Lone Star State.

I met with Texan-based companies using Ireland as a gateway into the European market, as well as the Irish companies investing in and buying from Texas.

All across the United States, men and women go to work every morning in Irish-owned companies. These companies play a key role in the U.S. economy, operating in every sector, in every State.

Some of your great American manufacturing companies count Irish buyers as their top client, with order books worth many billions of dollars supporting the jobs of thousands of fantastic American workers.

Ireland is now in the top 10 as a source of foreign direct investment in the United States. Not bad for a small island. Ireland likes to trade with United States and the United States likes to do business with Ireland because we are strong and reliable partners.

Mr. President, let's do even more and better together. In the past, Irish laborers came to help build the new republic, the beacon on the hill. They even built this beautiful White House. They built the roads and the railroads that made this mighty union possible.

Today, Irish companies are building the infrastructure connecting the United States in the 21st century.

Throughout our great shared history, Ireland has played a role in bringing America closer. In doing so, we've been proud to help this—make this country great.

Mr. President, American companies continue to invest in Ireland, where our access to the European market, talented workforce, and consistent and stable business environment makes us one of the best places in the world to do business.

And just like our peoples and cultures, our economies are deeply interconnected. Investment in Ireland helps American companies sell their products across the world.

Our island is home to a people with an outward perspective, generations of whom have looked to the United States for opportunity and inspiration. We've built prosperity through free and fair trade with partners all over the world and particularly here in these United States.

Let us continue to build on that foundation, bringing ever growing prosperity to both our great peoples. Let us continue to work together to make sure that we maintain that mutually beneficial two-way economic relationship that has allowed innovation and creativity and prosperity to thrive.

Mr. President on St. Patrick's Day in 1981, in this house, President Ronald Reagan spoke of a "just and peaceful solution" to the conflict in Northern Ireland, and that was the start of an extraordinary journey.

Seventeen years later, after enormous effort and commitment and dialog and disagreement and sheer perseverance, we signed a Good Friday Agreement. We signed a just and lasting peace into being. And the United States of America was at the very center of that magical moment of hope and inspiration.

Successive Presidents, Republican and Democrat, cared enough to put in the late nights, the persuading, the cajoling, the negotiating, the encouraging, the influencing.

And, Mr. President, 3,720 people were killed in that conflict, and close to 50,000 people were injured. In per-capita terms, that's many millions of Americans. And just imagine that for a moment, in terms of the scale of what happened.

It was the support of the United States of America that was essential in bringing that to an end. One of the greatest achievements of American foreign policy, with heartfelt commitment from both sides of the aisle. The story of peace in Ireland is one that we wrote together. We know building peace is a difficult and painstaking task, but when the mighty United States of America puts its shoulder to the wheel, there is no mountain it cannot move.

Mr. President, I welcome the unrelenting focus and energy you have brought to the search for peace in Ukraine and in the Middle East since your first days in office.

In my view, there is nothing more noble, President, than the pursuit of peace. And this is what you are doing.

Ireland is ready to work with you and our international partners to end conflict, and especially to bring just, lasting, and sustainable peace to the people of Ukraine and the people of the Middle East. Conflict and war hurt the most vulnerable. Too many children, in particular, have died in Gaza, in Israel, in Sudan, and too many children have been abducted in Ukraine.

Let us together never cease to strive for peace, prosperity, and opportunity for all the world's children. That would be an extraordinary achievement for the transatlantic relationship and an extraordinary legacy for the ages.

Mr. President, County Clare is one of the most beautiful places on this Earth, and Doonbeg is one of its finest jewels. *[Laughter]*

One of Ireland's finest poets—and we've had a few, as you know—wrote of the beauty of "County Clare, along the Flaggy Shore, in September or October, when the wind and the light are working off each other." And Heaney wrote of how Ireland can "catch the heart off guard and blow it open." I have been to that part of Clare, and I know that that is true.

Mr. President, I hope that we can welcome you to Ireland soon to catch your own heart off guard. You know better than anyone the beauty of Doonbeg, a place that would take anyone's breath away.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh. Beannachtaí na Féile Pádraig oraibh go léir.

Thank you very much indeed, and Happy St. Patrick's Day to you all. Thank you.

A time-honored tradition. I'm going to present a bowl of shamrock to President Trump.

[At this point, Prime Minister Martin presented the Shamrock Bowl to President Trump.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:47 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former White House Counsel Donald F. McGahn II. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on March 14.

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Names: Bondi, Pamela J.; Collins, Douglas A.; Dolan, Anthony R.; Duffy, Sean P.; Flatley, Michael; Greer, Jamieson L.; Huizenga, William P.; Jackson, Ronny L.; Joyce, David P.; Joyce, John P.; Kennedy, Robert F., Jr.; Martin, Mary; Martin, Micheál; McGahn, Donald F., II; McGuire, John; Nason, Geraldine Byrne; Reschenthaler, Guy L.; Turner, E. Scott; Walsh, Edward; Wright, Christopher A.; Zeldin, Lee M.

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