

## Remarks to Employees at Gateway, Inc., in Santry, Ireland September 4, 1998

Thank you for the wonderful welcome, the waving flag, the terrific shirts. I want one of those shirts before I leave. At least shirts have not become virtual; you can actually have one of them. [Laughter]

I want to say to the *Taoiseach* how very grateful I am for his leadership and friendship. But I must say that I was somewhat ambivalent when we were up here giving our virtual signatures. Do you have any idea how much time I spend every day signing my name? I'm going to feel utterly useless if I can't do that anymore. [Laughter] By the time you become the leader of a country, someone else makes all the decisions; you just sign your name. [Laughter] You may find you can get away with virtual Presidents, virtual Prime Ministers, virtual everything. Just stick a little card in and get the predictable response.

I want to congratulate Baltimore Technologies on making this possible, as well. And Ted Waitt, let me thank you for the tour of this wonderful facility. As an American, I have to do one little chauvinist thing. I asked Ted—I saw the Gateway—do you see the Gateway boxes over there and the Gateway logo, and I got a Gateway golf bag before I came in, and it was black and white like this. So I said, "Where did this logo come from?" And he said, "It's spots on a cow." He said, "We started in South Dakota and Iowa and people said, 'How can there be a computer company in the farmland of America?'" And now there is one in the farmland of America that happens to be in Ireland. [Laughter]

But it's a wonderful story that shows the point I want to make later, which is that there is no monopoly on brain power anywhere. There have always been intelligent people everywhere, in the most underinvested and poorest parts of the world. Today, on the streets of the poorest neighborhoods in the most crowded country in the world—which is probably India—in the cities, there are brilliant people who need a chance.

And technology, if we handle it right, will be one of the great liberating and equalizing forces in all of human history, because it proves that, unlike previous economic waves, you could

be on a small farm in Iowa or South Dakota or you could be in a country like Ireland, long underinvested in by outsiders, and all of a sudden open the whole world up. And you can prove that people you can find on any street corner can master the skills of tomorrow. So this is a very happy day.

I want to thank the other officials from the Irish Government, Minister Harney and Minister O'Rourke and others. I thank my great Commerce Secretary, Bill Daley, for being here, and Jim Lyons, who heads my economic initiatives for Ireland, and Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith, who has done a magnificent job for us and will soon be going home after having played a major role in getting the peace process started, and we thank her.

I thank you all personally for the warm reception you gave George Mitchell, because you have no idea how much grief he gave me for giving him this job. [Laughter] You all voted for the agreement now, and everything is basically going in the right direction, but it was like pulling fingernails for 3 years; everybody arguing over every word, every phrase, every semicolon, you know? In the middle of that, George Mitchell was not all that happy that I had asked him to undertake this duty.

But when you stood up and you clapped for him today, for the first time since I named him, he looked at me and said, "Thank you." So thank you again. You made my day.

I'd also like to thank your former Prime Minister and *Taoiseach*, John Bruton, who's here and who also worked with us on the peace process. Thank you, John, for coming; it's delightful to see you. And I would like for you to know that there are a dozen Members of the United States Congress here, from both parties, showing that we have reached across our own divide to support peace and prosperity in Ireland. And I thank all the Members of Congress, and I'd like to ask them to stand up, just so you'll see how many there are here. Thank you very much.

I know that none of the Irish here will be surprised when I tell you that a recent poll of American intellectuals decided that the best English language novel of the 20th century was a book set in Dublin, written by an Irishman,

in Trieste and Zurich, and first published in New York and Paris, a metaphor of the world in which we now live. James Joyce's "Ulysses" was the product of many cultures, but it remains a deeply Irish work.

Some of you will remember that, near the beginning of the book, Joyce wrote, "History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake." Much of Irish history, of course, is rich and warm and wonderful, but we all know it has its nightmarish aspects. They are the ones from which Ireland is now awakening, thanks to those who work for peace and thanks to those who bring prosperity.

Much of Ireland's new history, of course, will be shaped by the Good Friday peace agreement. You all, from your response to Senator Mitchell, are knowledgeable of it and proud of it, and I thank you for voting for it in such overwhelming numbers in the Republic.

I think it's important that you know it's a step forward not only for Irish people but for all people divided, everywhere, who are seeking new ways to think about old problems, who want to believe that they don't forever have to be at the throats of those with whom they share a certain land just because they are of a different faith or race or ethnic group or tribe. The leaders and the people of Ireland and Northern Ireland, therefore, are helping the world to awaken from history's nightmares.

Today, Ireland is quite an expansive place, with a positive outlook on the world. The 1990's have changed this country in profound and positive ways. Not too long ago, Ireland was a poor country by European standards, inward-looking, sometimes insular.

Today, as much as any country in Europe, Ireland is connected, in countless ways, to the rest of the world, as Ted showed me when we moved from desk to desk to desk downstairs with the people who were talking to France and the people who were talking to Germany and the people who were talking to Scandinavia and on and on and on.

This country has strong trade relations with Britain and the United States, with countries of the European Union and beyond. And Ireland, as we see here at this place, is fast becoming a technological capital of Europe. Innovative information companies are literally transforming the way the Irish interact and communicate with other countries. That is clear here, perhaps clearer here than anywhere else, at Gateway,

a company speaking many languages and most of all the language of the future. Gateway and other companies, like Intel and Dell and Digital, are strengthening Ireland's historic links to the United States and reaching out beyond.

I think it is very interesting, and I was not aware of this before I prepared for this trip, that Dublin is literally becoming a major telecommunications center for all of Europe. More and more Europeans do business on more and more telephones, and more and more of their calls are routed through here. You connect people and businesses in every combination: a German housewife, a French computer company, a Czech businessman, a Swedish investor, people all around Europe learning to do business on the Internet.

At the hub of this virtual commerce is Ireland, a natural gateway for the future also of such commerce between Europe and the United States. In the 21st century, after years and years and years of being disadvantaged because of what was most important to the production of wealth, Ireland will have its day in the Sun because the most important thing in the 21st century is the capacity of people to imagine, to innovate, to create, to exchange ideas and information. By those standards, this is a very wealthy nation indeed.

Your growth has been phenomenal: last year, 7.7 percent; prices rising at only 1½ percent; unemployment at a 20-year low. Ireland is second only to the United States in exporting software. This year the Irish Government may post a surplus of \$1.7 billion. The Celtic tiger is roaring, and you should be very proud of it.

It has been speculated, half seriously, that there are more foreigners here than at any time since the Vikings pillaged Ireland in the 9th century. [Laughter] I guess I ought to warn you—you know, whenever a delegation of Congressmen comes to Ireland they all claim to be Irish—and in a certain way they all are—but one of the Members of the delegation here, Congressman Hoyer, who has been a great friend of the peace process, is in fact of Viking heritage, descent. [Laughter] And he said—stand up, Steny. Now, all the rest of us come here and pander to you and tell you we love Ireland because there is so much Irish blood running in our veins. He comes here and says he loves Ireland because there is so much of his blood running in your veins. [Laughter]

Let me get back to what I was saying about the Internet because your position vis-a-vis telecommunication can be seen through that. When I came here just 3 years ago—had one of the great days of my life; there was so much hope about the peace process then—only 3 million people worldwide were connected to the Internet, 3 years ago. Today, there are over 120 million people, a 40-fold increase in 3 years. In the next decade sometime, it will be over a billion. Already, if you travel, you can see the impact of this in Russia or in China or other far-flung places around the globe.

I had an incredible experience in one of these Internet cafes in Shanghai, where I met with young high school students in China working the Internet. Even if they didn't have computers at home, they could come to the cafe, buy a cup of coffee, rent a little time, and access the Internet. This is going to change dramatically the way we work and live. It is going to democratize opportunity in the world in a way that has never been the case in all of human history. And if we are wise and decent about it, we can not only generate more wealth, we can reduce future wars and conflicts.

The agreement that we signed today does some important things. It commits us to reduce unnecessary regulatory barriers, to refrain from imposing customs duties, to keep taxes to a minimum, to create a stable and predictable environment for doing business electronically. It helps us, in other words, to create an architecture for one of the most important areas of business activity in the century ahead.

There are already 470 companies in Ireland that are American, and many of them are in the information sector. The number is growing quickly. So I say to you that I think this agreement we have signed today and the way we have signed it will not only be helpful in and of themselves but will stand for what I hope will be the future direction of your economy and America's, the future direction of our relationship, and will open a massive amount of opportunity to ordinary people who never would have had it before.

A strong modern economy thrives on education, innovation, respect for the interests of

workers and customers, and a respect for the Earth's environment. An enlightened population is our best investment in a good future. Prosperity reinforces peace as well. The Irish have long championed prosperity, peace, and human decency, and for all that, I am very grateful.

I would like to just say, because I can't leave Ireland without acknowledging this, that there are few nations that have contributed more than Ireland, even in times which were difficult for this country, to the cause of peace and human rights around the world. You have given us now Mary Robinson to serve internationally in that cause. But since peacekeeping began for the United Nations 40 years ago, 75 Irish soldiers have given their lives. Today, we work shoulder-to-shoulder in Bosnia and the Middle East. But I think you should know that, as nearly as I can determine, in the 40 years in which the world has been working together on peacekeeping, the only country in the world which has never taken a single, solitary day off from the cause of world peace to the United Nations peacekeeping operations is Ireland. And I thank you.

In 1914, on the verge of the First World War, which would change Europe and Ireland forever, William Butler Yeats wrote his famous line, "In dreams begins responsibility." Ireland has moved from nightmares to dreams. Ireland has assumed great responsibility. As a result, you are moving toward permanent peace, remarkable prosperity, unparalleled influence, and a brighter tomorrow for your children. May the nightmares stay gone, the dreams stay bright, and the responsibilities wear easily on your shoulder, because the future is yours.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:12 p.m. on the factory floor. In his remarks, he referred to Ted Waitt, chief executive officer, Gateway, Inc.; Deputy Prime Minister Mary Harney and Minister for Public Enterprise Mary O'Rourke of Ireland; former Senator George J. Mitchell, independent chairman of the multiparty talks in Northern Ireland; and U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland.