

United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young; Julian Bond, chair, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; South African Ambassador to the U.S. Sheila Sisulu; Gov. Don Siegelman of Alabama; Mayor Joe T. Smitherman

of Selma; Ethel Kennedy, widow of Senator Robert F. Kennedy; and 1965 voting rights march participants Hosea Williams, Amelia Boynton Robinson, Marie Foster, Lillie Brown, Earnest Doyle, and Rev. J.D. Hunter.

Statement on Legislation To Award the Congressional Gold Medal to John Cardinal O'Connor

March 5, 2000

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian honor bestowed by the U.S. Congress. Today I am proud to sign legislation ratifying the decision of the Congress to present this award—the first Gold Medal of the new millennium—to His Eminence John Cardinal O'Connor.

For more than 50 years, Cardinal O'Connor has served the Catholic Church and our Nation with constancy and commitment. From his early days performing parish work in his native Philadelphia, to his long service as a military chaplain in places like Korea and Vietnam, to his 16 years leading the Archdiocese of New York, Cardinal O'Connor's journey of faith has been America's blessing.

Whether it was the soldier on the battlefield or the patient battling AIDS, Cardinal O'Connor

has ministered with a gentle spirit and a loving heart. Through it all, he has stood strong as an advocate for the poor, a champion for workers, and an inspiration for millions. He has worked tirelessly to bridge divides between those of different backgrounds and faiths, reminding us that the most important thing we share is our common humanity.

Cardinal O'Connor has always had the courage to speak his mind and act on the firmness of his convictions. In recent months, we have seen his courage on display once more in the face of illness. Today, as our Nation salutes Cardinal O'Connor, we thank him for dedicating his life to lifting the lives of others.

NOTE: H.R. 3557, approved March 5, was assigned Public Law No. 106-175.

Statement on the Sale of F-16 Aircraft to the United Arab Emirates

March 5, 2000

I welcome the news that the negotiation for the sale of F-16 aircraft to the United Arab Emirates has been successfully concluded and that the agreement has been signed. Completion of this sale is another significant step in the strategic relationship between the United States and the United Arab Emirates and reflects the importance we attach to strengthen the defen-

sive capability of one of our most important friends in the Gulf. This sale is also important for the viability of our defense industrial base and will benefit American workers. I want to personally thank President bin Zayid for his commitment to making this aircraft sale a reality.