

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

much more, Irish Americans have made lasting contributions to the life of our nation.

Today Irish Americans and the people of their ancestral homeland share a strong commitment to the promise of peace. In the spring of 1998, the people of Ireland and Northern Ireland sought to fulfill that promise when they voted overwhelmingly in support of the Good Friday Accord. America remains committed to the Irish

people as they continue working to forge a brighter future, for, while the road ahead is long, the promise of peace is still within reach and its rewards are great.

As Irish Americans gather once again to honor Saint Patrick and to reaffirm their pride in their Irish heritage, Hillary and I extend warmest wishes to all for a wonderful celebration.

BILL CLINTON

Statement on Signing the Open-market Reorganization for the Betterment of International Telecommunications Act

March 17, 2000

Today I have signed into law S. 376, the "Open-market Reorganization for the Betterment of International Telecommunications Act." S. 376 amends the Communications Satellite Act of 1962 to establish a statutory framework for the privatization of the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (INTELSAT) and the International Mobile Satellite Organization (Inmarsat).

In partnership with the Congress, my Administration has worked aggressively over the last 6 years to promote the pro-competitive privatization of these intergovernmental satellite organizations. As a result of our efforts and changing commercial conditions, in 1995, Inmarsat spun off new business activities into a private United Kingdom (U.K.) corporation, ICO Global Communications Ltd., and, in 1999, Inmarsat privatized its remaining business activities as a U.K. corporation. In 1998, INTELSAT spun off five satellites into a private Netherlands corporation, New Skies Satellites, N.V. And last October, INTELSAT's 143 member governments agreed to fully privatize by early 2001.

My Administration's goal is to ensure that a privatized INTELSAT will compete fairly and fully with other international telecommunications companies, thus benefiting consumers through greater innovation, lower prices, and more service options. Fair competition requires a level playing field; INTELSAT must not retain advantages that result from its former intergovernmental status or that are unavailable to other satellite competitors, including any preferential access to orbital slots or foreign markets. But neither should INTELSAT (or the already

privatized Inmarsat and New Skies) have to face barriers to the U.S. market erected by competitors who want to limit competition here. Full competition means that INTELSAT should be privatized in a way that allows it to provide the full range of telecommunications services, including value-added services to end users, as well as wholesale satellite capacity to communications providers (its current role). That means allowing INTELSAT to compete robustly against all other service providers in this rapidly growing industry.

My Administration intends to pursue INTELSAT's privatization in a manner that is compatible with this Nation's international obligations and with our interests in a competitive global international telecommunications environment. Accordingly, the United States will continue to engage the other 142 member countries of INTELSAT in cooperative multilateral negotiations to achieve these goals.

Several provisions of S. 376 could interfere with the President's constitutional authority to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs by directing or burdening the President's negotiations with foreign governments and international organizations. Specifically, new sections 621 and 661 of the Communications Satellite Act of 1962 purport to direct the executive branch on how to proceed in foreign negotiations, and new sections 625(c), 644(b), and 647 purport to require the executive branch to take particular positions in international organizations. The President's constitutional authority over foreign affairs necessarily entails discretion over these matters, and