

of this strategy, we will propose new regulations to require scientific approaches, such as systematic testing for *Listeria* at food-processing plants, not just random checks. This and other measures will allow us to cut in half the number of *Listeria*-related illnesses over the next 5 years and save well over 1,000 lives.

Today I call on the food industry to work with us as we develop our new *Listeria* strategy. And I call on Congress to help us strengthen food safety across the board. Just this week, unfortunately, the Congress took a major step backward by refusing to fully fund our food safety initiative. In fact, they've now voted to block funding for our new efforts to protect millions of American families from the dangers of *salmonella* poisoning in eggs. We should be doing more, not less, to ensure the safety of our food.

If we work together, we can make real gains this year. We can increase the number of inspections of domestic and imported foods. We can expand the FDA's authority to turn away imported food that does not meet our high safe-

ty standards. And at long last, we can give the Department of Agriculture the authority to recall bad food and impose civil penalties for repeat violations. After all, the Department has the right to penalize a circus to protect animals from harm; it's about time we gave them the tools they need to protect human beings from harm, too.

Ensuring the safety of our food and the health of our people are among the most important parts of our citizens' basic contract with their Government. For the sake of millions of Americans, especially the most vulnerable among us, it's an obligation we simply must work together to uphold.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:47 p.m. on May 5 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 6. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 5 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

## Remarks on the Northern Ireland Peace Process and an Exchange With Reporters

May 6, 2000

*The President.* I would just like to make a brief statement about the acceptance by the IRA of the proposals by Prime Ministers Blair and Ahern. This is a very good day for the people of Northern Ireland. It is a truly historic step. For the first time, the IRA is clearly committed to decommissioning and a process to get there. I applaud that. I want to thank the Prime Ministers and Gerry Adams and everyone else who was involved in this. But this is a very good day.

Q. Do you think it will stick?

*The President.* Well, I do. Of course, the Unionists still have to formally accept it, but this idea of storing the weapons and having the storage site monitored, I think, is a way for both of them to achieve their previously stated objectives, both sides. So it's a very, very good day.

Q. Weren't we at this point once before, sir?

*The President.* No, we never got this far on the details of the implementation. We always knew, I think, that the sequencing of decommissioning and the full implementation of the accords by both sides and by the British Government would be a problem. And that's really what this last year-plus has been about. For all of us who've worked on it, this is a very happy.

But I really appreciate the work done by Prime Minister Blair and Prime Minister Ahern and the fact that the IRA has accepted it, and the Sinn Féin has obviously had a role in that. So this is a big step. And they've reached out to the Unionists now. Of course, I hope it will be fully accepted by all parties, and we can get the Government back up and go on.

*Opposition to Enrique Moreno Nomination*

Q. Why do you think the two Texas Senators—did they reject your nominee because he's Hispanic, Mexican-American?

*The President.* There are only two conceivable alternatives, I think. That or they just don't want to confirm any judges unless they're rightwing ideologists. I mean, this man had unbelievable academic credentials. He was endorsed by every conceivable professional association. He was consistent with the judges I've appointed for over 7 years now, highly qualified and clearly in the mainstream of the American judiciary.

But you know, they like judges that are more results oriented, and it may be that they just want to use this opportunity to try to seize control of the judiciary again. For them, it's all too often a political arm of the Government. But to do this to a Hispanic judge from Texas, who has made himself into an excellent lawyer and a superbly qualified person is just unconscionable. I mean, it's unbelievable.

If their committee didn't find this man qualified, I'd certainly be interested in knowing what the criteria of their committee is.

Q. But you're not charging that two U.S. Senators are prejudiced against Hispanics, are you?

*The President.* No, I'm saying that—you have to ask them, and people can draw their own conclusions. They may or may not be. But since he's clearly well-qualified and everybody virtually in the world with an opinion has endorsed

him, if it's not that, it's that they want somebody who's more politically malleable.

As I said, all you have to do is look at the way so many of their judges perform. They're highly results oriented when they appoint judges. I just try to appoint people I thought would be fair and interpret the law and be balanced and represent this country. So it might be politics and ideology. But it's a terrible, terrible day for the Hispanic community and for the idea of fairness in the judiciary.

Q. What's this going to do—[inaudible]—election, Mr. President?

*The President.* I don't know. I don't have a comment on that. I'd rather—to me this is—I made this appointment; this man was qualified on the merits, superbly qualified. And he's from a State with a huge Hispanic population and a big caseload, and he deserved a hearing, and he deserved to be confirmed. I think it's just disgraceful.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 12:15 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, prior to his departure for Fayetteville, AR. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland; Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams; and Enrique Moreno, nominee for U.S. Court of Appeals Judge for the Fifth Circuit. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Statement on Opposition to the Nomination of Enrique Moreno

May 6, 2000

Senators Gramm and Hutchison announced yesterday that they opposed the confirmation of Enrique Moreno, my nominee for a Texas vacancy on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Their claim that he lacks the necessary experience to serve on the fifth circuit is unconscionable. The American Bar Association, which has rated judicial nominees for Republican and Democratic Presidents since the Eisenhower administration, unanimously gave Moreno their highest rating. The son of Mexican-American immigrants and a graduate of Harvard Law School, Moreno was rated one of

the top three trial attorneys in El Paso by State judges.

In rejecting Moreno's candidacy, the Texas Senators have ignored the strong endorsement of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic National Bar Association, and local law enforcement officials. This is not the first time that the Texas Senators have rejected an exceptional Hispanic candidate for this seat, which has been vacant for more than 3 years. Jorge Rangel was forced to withdraw after the Texas Senators refused to allow action on his nomination. By blocking qualified judicial