

the spirit of public service. When the roll-call—when the roll was called of the policemen and firemen and emergency workers who died on September the 11th, it included many names like Donnelly and Duffy and Kelly and Sullivan.

Tens of millions of Americans trace their lineage to Ireland, and so many came here in times of grief for a country they left behind. Today, we are glad to see a strong and free and rising Ireland with so much to offer its people and the entire world. The ties of family and values are adding ties of diplomacy and trade, with commerce between our nations quadrupling in just the last 7 years.

September the 11th has reinforced these bonds of friendship. Ireland is a valued member of the international coalition against terrorism. Ireland has allowed American military planes to use its airports and has helped to rebuild Afghanistan. We appreciate your help in a just and vital cause.

America stands with you in another cause, bringing security and stability to the people of Northern Ireland. We've seen great progress since we gathered here a year ago. Many challenges lie ahead, but I am so optimistic that by working together we can meet these challenges and help create a lasting peace.

This morning we remember a good man who spread a gospel of peace. The greatest of Irish names, Saint Patrick, was brought to Ireland a slave and died there a saint. His courage and kindness helped to shape a great and noble culture. Americans are proud of our Irish influence, and we're grateful to our Irish friends.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:23 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Celia Larkin, who accompanied Prime Minister Ahern.

## Remarks at a Reception for Saint Patrick's Day March 13, 2002

Thank you very much. A hundred thousand welcomes to you all. I probably am not going to try to say that in Gaelic. [Laughter] But I have learned how to pronounce *Taoiseach*. [Laughter] Welcome back to the White House. It's good to be able to welcome a friend into your home. The *Taoiseach* is a friend.

I want to thank John Reid, the Secretary of State of Northern Ireland, for being here. John, how are you? He's on his honeymoon. [Laughter] Sorry to disrupt your honeymoon, but it's for a noble cause. [Laughter] David Trimble, the honorable David Trimble, First Minister of Northern Ireland—David, thank you for coming. Honorable Mark Durkan, appreciate you being here. I want to thank all the other

leaders from Northern Ireland. I want to thank the ambassadors who are here. Members of Congress, always a pleasure to welcome you to the White House.

I want to thank you all for joining us in celebrating the memory of Saint Patrick. His generosity and love of liberty shaped Ireland. Through generations of immigrants, those values have helped shape America, and we are a better country for it.

Today we also celebrate our common bonds and common purpose. From America's earliest days, our Nation has profited from the contributions of the men and women of Ireland. In fact, over two centuries ago, it was an Irish boy born in County Wexford, John Barry, who made

vital contributions to America's independence and is recognized as one of the founders of the Department of Navy.

Today, Ireland is supporting the coalition against terrorism, and we're proud of your support. You've frozen the assets of terrorists. You're helping respond to terror by leading the Security Council of the United Nations.

For tens of millions of Americans, our ties with Ireland are family ties, and this number includes some very distinguished Americans. We're honored today to have with us Irish American firefighters who served our Nation so heroically on September the 11th. They represent the best of the United States when they displayed enormous strength and determination in the face of overwhelming tragedy. And I want to thank you all for coming. And I want to tell you what I told you before: We remember your colleagues. We will not forget your colleagues who gave their lives trying to save the lives of others. Welcome to the White House.

The people of Northern Ireland know the threat of terror. They know the value of peace. America is encouraged with the great strides that have been made in implementing the Good Friday Agreement. We see progress in the daily business of the Northern Ireland Assembly, in the new class of police recruits drawn from all communities in Northern Ireland, in the first

act of decommissioning taken last fall, and in the North/South Ministerial Council, which is promoting cooperation across the border in agriculture and transportation and other areas.

The good citizens of Northern Ireland and the leaders here today have demonstrated a fierce determination: The next generation must not grow up amid The Troubles. For all communities in Northern Ireland, there's only one future, and it must be a future of peace. Peacemaking can be hard work, like planting in hard soil, and as the Irish proverb tells us, "You'll never plow a field by turning it over in your mind."

Important work remains, and the United States stands ready to do its part. As we gather here today to celebrate an old friendship and new hopes, let me open this reception with a blessing: May the Irish hills caress you; may her lakes and rivers bless you; may the luck of the Irish enfold you; may the blessings of Saint Patrick behold you.

God bless Ireland, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:14 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland; and Deputy First Minister Mark Durkan, Northern Ireland Assembly.

## The President's News Conference

*March 13, 2002*

*The President.* Good afternoon. Tomorrow the Senate Judiciary Committee will vote on the nomination of Charles Pickering to serve on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Judge Pickering is a respected and well-qualified nominee who was unanimously confirmed 12 years ago to the district

bench. His nomination deserves a full vote, a vote in a full Senate. I strongly urge his confirmation.

While tomorrow's vote is about one man, a much larger principle is also at stake. Under our Constitution, the President has the right and responsibility to nominate qualified judges, and the legislative branch