

something greater than themselves. Ours is a compassionate nation; ours is a loving nation. And we understand the role of government is not to crowd out our faith-based and community-based institutions but to welcome them in the providing of care and love and compassion for our fellow citizens who hurt.

We believe in ushering in the responsibility era, when our citizens understand they are responsible for the decisions they make in life. If you are a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart. If you're a corporate citizen, you're responsible for being a—for putting something back into our culture, and you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders.

If you're a citizen who wants to help change America one heart and one soul at a time, you're responsible for mentoring a child, for feeding the hungry, for providing shelter to the homeless. The great

strength of America is the compassion of America. And I look forward to continue to call people to service, to rally that strength so that every single citizen of our country realizes the great promise and the great hope of the blessed land we call home.

It's an honor to be here. I'm proud to be your President. I'm proud to be working with these Members of the United States Congress. I want to thank you for keeping them in power in Washington. The Nation is better off with Denny Hastert as the Speaker and these leaders running the Congress.

God bless, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:12 p.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Patricia McKeon, wife of Representative Howard P. "Buck" McKeon; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

## Remarks at a Saint Patrick's Day Shamrock Presentation Ceremony With Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland March 17, 2006

*President Bush.* Taoiseach, thank you very much. Welcome back.

*Prime Minister Ahern.* Thank you.

*President Bush.* Laura and I are delighted to welcome you here to the White House. I'm proud to accept the bowl of shamrocks as a symbol of our friendship.

The friendship between Ireland and the United States has deep roots. Few people fought as hard for American independence as the sons of Erin. At the end of the Revolutionary War, Lord Mountjoy told the House of Commons that, "We've lost America through the Irish." The Irish played a key role in Washington's army. And in the two centuries since, the ties between Ireland and America have only strengthened.

The ties between Ireland and America are reflected in this great house. This house was designed by an Irish architect, and he used as his model the grandest building he knew, Leinster House in Ireland. The affinities between the two buildings are more than just architectural; the White House, built by James Hoban, has been home to every American President since John Q. Adams' father, John. The Dublin building that inspired him now serves as a free parliament in a free and independent Ireland.

The ties between Ireland and America are also reflected in our people. Ireland has one of the fastest growing economies in Europe, and its growth is attracting immigrants. For more than a century, that

was a different story. Millions of Irish came to our shores because of war and poverty and famine. Often they arrived with nothing but the faith of their fathers and a willingness to work. These men and women who built our cities were also the soldiers who defended our freedom in every one of our wars. They're the priests and they're the nuns who built a system of parochial schools that provided a decent education for millions of poor immigrants. And they're now doing the same thing for a new generation of African Americans and Latino Americans in our inner cities.

Like Saint Patrick, the Irish in America began their life in their new land as exiles, but came to love it as home. Finally, the ties between Ireland and America are reflected in our common commitment to bring the blessings of liberty to every man and woman and child on this Earth.

In the 20th century, Ireland won its independence and raised up a democracy that offered its people a just and better life. In the 21st century, Ireland is now helping other nations who share the same aspirations for peace and prosperity by fighting hunger and the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa, by supporting relief efforts

for victims of the tsunami in Asia, and by helping the Afghan people rebuild their lives and their country. Ireland is independent when it comes to foreign policy, but Ireland is not neutral when it comes to the global challenges like hunger and disease and human rights.

*Taoiseach*, you're making a big contribution to our world, and we appreciate it. The United States appreciates all of Ireland's efforts for peace and freedom. Americans are grateful to our Irish friends, and we are proud of our Irish heritage.

The Census Bureau tells us there are more than 34 million Americans that claim Irish ancestry. On Saint Patrick's Day, I suspect that number jumps a little bit. [Laughter] On this special day, we honor the saint who brought the gospel of peace to the Green Isle, and we count ourselves blessed by the warm friendship between his adopted land and our own.

Thanks for coming. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:31 a.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.

## The President's Radio Address March 18, 2006

Good morning. In recent weeks, Americans have seen horrific images from Iraq: the bombing of a great house of worship in Samarra, sectarian reprisals between Sunnis and Shi'as, and car bombings and kidnappings. Amid continued reports about the tense situation in parts of that country, it may seem difficult at times to understand how we can say that progress is being made. But the reaction to the recent violence by Iraq's leaders is a clear sign of Iraq's commitment to democracy.

I'm encouraged to see that Iraqi political leaders are making good progress toward forming a unity government, despite the recent violence. Our Ambassador to Iraq, Zal Khalilzad, reports that the violence has created a new sense of urgency among these leaders to form a national unity government as quickly as possible. I urge them to continue their work to put aside their differences, to reach out across political, religious, and sectarian lines, and to form