

Statement on Sunshine Week

March 16, 2010

As Sunshine Week begins, I want to applaud everyone who has worked to increase transparency in Government and recommit my administration to be the most open and transparent ever, an effort that will strengthen our democracy and ensure the public's trust in their Government.

We came to Washington to change the way business was done, and part of that was making ourselves accountable to the American people by opening up our Government. We've put our

White House visitor records on the Internet for the first time in history, opened up more Government information than ever before on data.gov, recovery.gov, and USAspending.gov, and issued an Executive order fighting unnecessary secrecy, to name a few.

We are proud of these accomplishments, but our work is not done. We will continue to work toward an unmatched level of transparency, participation, and accountability across the entire administration.

Statement on the National Broadband Plan

March 16, 2010

America today is on the verge of a broadband-driven Internet era that will unleash innovation, create new jobs and industries, provide consumers with new powerful sources of information, enhance American safety and security, and connect communities in ways that strengthen our democracy. Just as past generations of Americans met the great infrastructure challenges of the day, such as building the transcontinental railroad and the interstate highways, so too must we harness the potential of the Internet. Expanding broadband across the Nation will build a foundation of sustained economic growth and the widely shared prosperity we all seek.

I commend Chairman Julius Genachowski, the Commissioners, and the FCC staff for their hard work in developing the National Broadband Plan.

My administration will build upon our efforts over the past year to make America's nationwide broadband infrastructure the world's most powerful platform for economic growth and prosperity, including improving access to mobile broadband, maximizing technology innovation, and supporting a nationwide, interoperable public safety wireless broadband network.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Federal Government's Interagency Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communications

March 16, 2010

Dear _____:

Pursuant to section 1055 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110-417), I am providing a report on my Administration's comprehensive interagency strategy for public

diplomacy and strategic communication of the Federal Government.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 17.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Brian Cowen of Ireland and an Exchange With Reporters

March 17, 2010

President Obama. Good morning, everybody. First of all, I just want to congratulate this soundperson right here for having the green earmuffs. [Laughter] Now, I haven't seen that before. Happy St. Patrick's Day, everybody.

Before I talk a little bit about the strong and enduring bond between the American and Irish people, I just want to thank Congress for passing this morning the "HIRE Act." It is the first of what I hope will be a series of jobs packages that help to continue to put people back to work all across America.

This bill will provide tax cuts to small businesses that are willing to begin hiring right now, putting people back to work. It's also going to provide significant tax breaks to businesses for investing in their business, and so, hopefully, at a time when we're starting to see an upswing in economic growth, that will help sustain it. And the bill also will continue to improve our ability to finance infrastructure projects all across the country.

I also want to say to the Republicans who voted for this bill that I appreciate their willingness to work with Democrats in a bipartisan fashion to get America moving again. And as I said, I hope that on a series of future steps that we take to help small businesses get financing, to help improve our infrastructure around the country, to put people back to work, that we're going to see more progress on that front.

I want to thank the Taoiseach for coming here today. Last year, we had the opportunity to get to know each other and had a wonderful time during St. Patrick's Day. Thirty-six million Americans claim Irish ancestry—I'm sure more do on St. Patrick's Day. And it's a testament, I think, to how close our two countries are that America has been shaped culturally, politically, economically by the incredible contributions of Irish Americans. Those bonds endure. And in our meeting we reaffirmed how important it is for us to continue a strong partnership across a whole host of issues.

I thanked Taoiseach for the assistance that they've provided on critical international issues.

We use the facilities in Ireland for transit for our military troops to Afghanistan. The Irish police are providing training in Afghanistan. As Taoiseach indicated, the Irish Government punches above its weight on a whole host of critical issues. We're going to be working together to enhance food security around the world. Even in these difficult times, it's important for us to make sure that we're tackling big issues like world hunger.

I congratulated the Taoiseach and his Government for the extraordinary work that they engaged in, working with Gordon Brown and the British Government, as well as Secretary Hillary Clinton, in reaffirming the progress that's been made in Northern Ireland and to get a ratification of continued devolution. It's a sign of his leadership, and we want to be as supportive as possible in advancing the Northern Ireland peace process.

We also discussed the economy. And on both sides of the Atlantic we are seeing stabilization of the economy, but obviously we want more than just stabilization. There are a lot of people out there that are still hurting, still out of work. And so we will continue to coordinate in international fora as well as bilaterally to see how we can spur investment and private sector growth on both sides of the Atlantic.

So I just wanted to say how grateful we are for the friendship and the partnership between the United States Government and the Irish Government. We wish you and everybody who's here a happy St. Patrick's Day and are looking forward to the reception that we'll have in the White House later this evening.

Prime Minister Cowen. Thank you very much, Mr. President. And we are—I and my delegation—delighted to be able to join you here in the White House this morning on this wonderful St. Patrick's Day morning. And I think the Sun shining outside and the light coming in, I think, typifies the excellent relationship that Ireland enjoys with the United States, not only now but, as you say, over many generations. And that contribution to America by Ire-