Clinton leads elite at secret Irish summit

Paul Colgan

The biggest and most secretive gathering of important international figures ever seen in Dublin has been held in the capital for the benefit of 175 students.

For three days 50 world leaders, scientists, distinguished businesswomen and showbusiness personalities have been corralled in the Four Seasons hotel at a glittering International Achievement Summit.

The heavily policed event was organized by the American Academy of Achievement for the group of outstanding graduates from 60 countries in the disciplines of law, medicine, genetics, the sciences, engineering, economics, finance, journalism, international relations and diplomacy.

The students were told "to conduct themselves in a manner befitting their participation as future leaders and preparing themselves" — and warned not to smoke or talk to journalists.

The distinguished guests have also been busy clapping each other on the back.

Last night "Golden Plate awards of recognition" were presented at a dinner to recipients including Enya, former US president Bill Clinton, Daniel Kaczin, the chairman of the provisional government in Afghanistan, and Chuck Berry, the rock 'n' roller.

Catherine Reynolds, the host chairman, said yesterday it was the first time the event had been held in Europe.

She noted that this year's theme was "peace and freedom".

As a member of the academy's awards council, Ahern found himself in world-beating company. Other members are Bill Gates, the Microsoft founder; Sir Edmund Hillary, one of the first two men to climb Mount Everest; former US president Jimmy Carter; Elie Wiesel, the former Israeli prime minister; George Lucas, the Star Wars producer; and Edna O'Brien, the novelist.

The conference is to be held at the Ritz-Carlton in London, with delegates and guests to be flown in by a private jet.

The students have been put through a gruelling series of events, including a tour of the White House and a visit to the Vatican.

The summit was held at the Four Seasons hotel in Ballsbridge which was the scene of last night's dinner to the students.

The conference was organized by the American Academy of Achievement and is being attended by 175 students from 60 countries in the disciplines of law, medicine, genetics, the sciences, engineering, economics, finance, journalism, international relations and diplomacy.

The students were told to conduct themselves in a manner befitting their participation as future leaders and preparing themselves. They were warned not to smoke or talk to journalists.

The distinguished guests have also been busy clapping each other on the back. Last night "Golden Plate awards of recognition" were presented at a dinner to recipients including Enya, former US president Bill Clinton, Daniel Kaczin, the chairman of the provisional government in Afghanistan, and Chuck Berry, the rock 'n' roller.

Catherine Reynolds, the host chairman, said yesterday it was the first time the event had been held in Europe.

She noted that this year's theme was "peace and freedom".

As a member of the academy's awards council, Ahern found himself in world-beating company. Other members are Bill Gates, the Microsoft founder; Sir Edmund Hillary, one of the first two men to climb Mount Everest; former US president Jimmy Carter; Elie Wiesel, the former Israeli prime minister; George Lucas, the Star Wars producer; and Edna O'Brien, the novelist.