

sioning is, obviously, critical to the completion of the process. And we here in the United States have reached out not only to Sinn Fein, but also to the Unionists. The Prime Minister has pointed that out. The Vice President and my National Security Adviser have, on more than one occasion, tried to establish contacts to make sure we were reaching out to everyone in Northern Ireland.

And the important thing to me is that we keep pushing this process and keep it going in the right direction. And I have every confidence that that will occur.

Wolf [Wolf Blitzer, Cable News Network].

Russia

Q. Mr. President, President Yeltsin announced that he's willing to eliminate military hardware from his V-E parade on May 9th in order to encourage you to join others in Moscow to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. Is that enough to encourage you to go to Moscow, and will you include a trip to Ireland after that? [Laughter]

The President. Well, I appreciate what President Yeltsin said today. And I expect to be making a decision about that whole set of issues very shortly. And when I do, I'll announce it.

Q. Mr. President, Is Chechnya the stumbling block?

Peace Process in Northern Ireland

Q. Mr. President, What pressures can the U.S. administration bring on Sinn Fein, particularly in regards to the decommissioning of arms? And was there a quid pro quo in that area for your granting a visa to Gerry Adams to fundraise in the United States?

The President. Well, certainly, his prompt statement about the willingness of Sinn Fein to discuss arms decommissioning had an influence on my decision. I think it's important that the United States take some steps along the way, as the Prime Minister has said, to keep this process going. When others take appropriate steps, I think it makes it a lot easier for us to do the same thing.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his re-

marks, he referred to Gerry Adams, leader of the Sinn Fein.

Memorandum on Federal Employees Affected by California Floods

March 17, 1995

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Excused Absence for Employees Affected by Widespread Flooding in California

I am deeply concerned about the devastating losses caused by widespread flooding in California and the impact on the well-being and livelihood of our fellow Americans who have been affected by this disaster. Many parts of the Federal Government have been mobilized to respond to this disaster.

As part of this effort, I request heads of executive departments and agencies who have Federal civilian employees in the areas designated as disaster areas because of the flooding to use their discretion to excuse from duty, without charge to leave or loss of pay, any such employee who is faced with a personal emergency because of the flooding and who can be spared from his or her usual responsibilities. This policy should also be applied to any employee who is needed for emergency law enforcement, relief, or clean-up efforts authorized by Federal, State, or local officials having jurisdiction.

William J. Clinton

Remarks Honoring the 1994 National Hockey League Champion New York Rangers

March 17, 1995

Good afternoon. Please be seated.

I'm delighted to see all of you here, and welcome to the White House and to the Rose Garden. You come on the first day that the trees are blooming, so you're bringing us all wonderful weather.

It's an honor for me to host the New York Rangers here, including the Commissioner of the National Hockey League, Gary Bettman, the President and General Man-