

*June 24 / Administration of George Bush, 1991*

*Note: The exchange began at 11:08 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.*

## Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on the President's Meeting With Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

*June 24, 1991*

President Bush met today with Mrs. Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). They discussed refugee issues worldwide, with special emphasis on the Horn of Africa and the situation in Iraq. They agreed on the importance of a rapid and comprehensive response to humanitarian emergencies. The President underscored the strong and continuing U.S. support for UNHCR and wished Mrs. Ogata well in her new position as High Commissioner.

The United States will contribute imme-

diately an additional \$5 million in refugee program funds to meet the emergency needs of refugees and displaced persons in the Horn of Africa. This brings total U.S. support for refugee assistance activities in the Horn of Africa for fiscal year 1991 to \$51.3 million, including recent provision of \$18 million in Food for Peace food and 3.6 million Meals Ready to Eat (MRE's) valued at \$15.3 million.

The United States is prepared to provide additional assistance as may be required.

## Remarks Congratulating the National Hockey League Champion Pittsburgh Penguins

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Well, please be seated. And standing next to me is a Pennsylvanian of note, our Attorney General. And he and I are very excited and somewhat—I am, at least—apologetic for keeping this group of athletes waiting. I don't want to get them up in arms like I've seen them from time to time out on the ice. *[Laughter]* But it's not exactly hockey weather, either; I'll admit that. But let me salute Pennsylvania's two Senators that are with us today, Senator Specter, Senator Wofford; of course, Rick Santorum, your Congressman from out there; and Bob Walker, another great Pennsylvanian. So, welcome all.

I'm delighted that we're here to honor the Penguins, the National Hockey League's champions that brought such excitement to this country. This is a special moment, I'm sure, for the city of Pittsburgh, as it is for all of us here in the Rose Garden.

The Penguins have brought home the city's first-ever Stanley Cup—brought the Cup back to the U.S. for the first time since 1983. Somehow, I have the feeling that's even—special even if you're a Rose Garden veteran like Eddie DeBartolo over here, who comes regularly with his football team. *[Laughter]* But four Super Bowls with the 49ers, and now he's starting down this Stanley Cup collection road. We welcome you, sir.

The Penguins take their place alongside the Pirates and the Steelers in the hearts of Pittsburghers. And in the "City of Champions," a new ice age has begun.

Back when the season started, I don't mean to downgrade you guys, but I don't think anyone of all our sports sages and scribes were predicting that you'd end up right here. But sure enough—well, one of the reasons last year, some very good

games, but you finished fifth—watched the playoffs on TV. The Penguins began this year without their mainstay, Mario Lemieux, and he was then out—as we all know who follow this sport—with a serious back injury. Without his top scorer, Coach Johnson built a strategy around the defense. Mark Recchi and Kevin Stevens stepped right in to supply the scoring, and goalie Tom Barrasso took his motto from Harry Truman: “The puck stops here.” [Laughter]

And, yes, as we all know, Mario made it back. Just so he wouldn’t feel left out, his teammates let him skate away with the Stanley Cup MVP—you talk about a comeback.

But your success took team effort. A large share of the credit does go to Craig Patrick, the general manager who took a gamble in March when the Penguins were 12 points out of first place. Craig engineered a six-player trade that brought Ron Francis, Ulf Samuelson, Grant Jennings to the team. And I think, most sports observers would concede it was in there that things started turning around. The Penguins went 9, 3, and 2 in their last 14 games—came from behind and clinched the title.

You beat the injuries. You beat the odds. And, clearly, you beat your opponents all the way to the Stanley Cup.

So, your hard work, your drive, your determination made this a season to remember. But while you’re here, let me just commend you for another special achievement off the ice—for a team spirit that just doesn’t win games, but saves lives.

I mentioned Tom Barrasso a moment ago. Two years ago, Tom and his wife Megan got the news that every parent dreads—they learned their daughter was stricken with cancer. And this brave little girl is only

4, and already she’s pulled through surgery and chemo and a bone marrow transplant. And Ashley, I’m just so pleased you could come here to the Rose Garden today. She’s sweet. You play your cards right and I’ll invite you in to say hello to Millie, our dog, too. [Laughter]

Now, the Barrassos have overcome their pain to reach out to other children battling illness. They’ve begun a foundation to combat childhood cancer. Every member of the Penguins team—the family, if you will—has joined in this effort.

I can tell you nothing hits harder than to see a kid up against this kind of a problem. And so I would say to you, you are, in addition to being fantastic skaters—tough hockey players—you are what we like to refer to as Points of Light, each of you in your own way, and we’re very grateful for the example that sets for our country.

So, you’re champions on the ice and off the ice. And welcome to all of you. We’re just delighted you’re here on this beautiful day.

Thanks for coming.

*Note: The President spoke at 11:42 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his opening remarks, he referred to Attorney General Dick Thornburgh; Senators Arlen Specter and Harris Wofford; Representatives Richard John Santorum and Robert S. Walker; Edward DeBartolo, owner of the Pittsburgh Penguins and the San Francisco 49ers football team; Bob Johnson and Craig Patrick, Penguins coach and general manager; team members Mario Lemieux, Mark Recchi, Kevin Stevens, Tom Barrasso, Ron Francis, Ulf Samuelson, and Grant Jennings; and Mr. Barrasso’s wife, Megan, and daughter, Ashley.*