

to waste. Today I want you to know that I am still committed to that principle.

I stand with you in the struggle for equality for all Americans, including gay men and lesbians. In this great country, founded on the principle that all people are created equal, we must learn to put aside what divides us and focus on what we share. We all want the chance to excel in our work. We all want to be safe in our communities. We all want the support and acceptance of our friends and families.

Last November, the American people sent a message to make Government more accountable to all its citizens, regardless of race, class, gender, disability, or sexual orientation. I am proud of the strides we are making in that direction.

The Pentagon has stopped asking recruits about their sexual orientation, and I have asked the Secretary of Defense to determine how to implement an Executive order lifting the ban on gays and lesbians in the military by July 15.

My 1994 budget increases funding for AIDS research, and my economic plan will fully fund the Ryan White Act. Soon I will announce a new AIDS coordinator to implement the recommendations of the AIDS Commission reports.

I met 9 days ago with leaders of the gay and lesbian community in the Oval Office at the White House. I am told that this meeting marks the first time in history that the President of the United States has held such a meeting. In addition, members of my staff have been and will continue to be in regular communication with the gay and lesbian community.

I still believe every American who works hard and plays by the rules ought to be a part of the national community. Let us work together to make this vision real.

Thank you.

NOTE: Representative Nancy Pelosi read the statement to march participants assembled on The Mall.

## Remarks to the Champion University of Arkansas Track Team

*April 26, 1993*

Thank you very much. Please be seated. As all of you know, as an ardent sports fan I have happily followed the practice of previous Presidents in welcoming to the White House various national championship teams in college and professional athletics. But this is a special honor for me today to welcome to the White House an historic team, the NCAA indoor track champions for the 10th year in a row, the Razorbacks from my home State and home university, the University of Arkansas.

I also want to extend a special welcome to my friend, who this year became the most successful coach in the history of intercollegiate athletics, John McDonnell. I'm sorry it's raining here today. I wanted the team to have a chance to try out the new jogging track on the South Lawn. *[Laughter]*

I also want to say that this team has done some amazing things. I would like to just say that it's really worth contemplating how it happened and what it means for the efforts they made and the kinds of things that ought to be done in intercollegiate athletics and at the

athletic events and teams of younger people, too. This is the first time that any team in any sport has ever won 10 national titles in a row. The Razorbacks, under coach McDonnell, have now won 18 national championships in cross-country and indoor and outdoor track, which makes him the winningest coach in history.

Just think of it, though, John: If you had come here last year they might have called you the failed coach from a small southern State. *[Laughter]* Before the coach came to the University of Arkansas we really had no history of track success there; football got all the attention. He left his native County Mayo in the west of Ireland and made his way to Arkansas, and he's been bringing our track teams the Irish luck ever since.

I am told now that every one of our school's indoor and outdoor track records is held by one of John's recruits. Over the last three decades, since he came to the university in the seventies, he's coached 10 Olympians in 4 games, including Mike Conley who won the gold in the triple jump last year in Barcelona. He's fostered 19

individual national champions in 39 different events.

I actually think that I might hire him to become my training coach. [Laughter] I read in *Runner's World* that I didn't have enough stamina, and they told me that I should run up the steps of the Capitol. And so, I've started running up the steps of the Capitol every morning, which is exhausting to the Secret Service but as yet is having no effect on the United States Congress. [Laughter] I thought about this all, and I've decided that I should instead prepare for a marathon and leave track and field to the University of Arkansas.

I want to say, too, that this team has twice won the triple crown, the combined championships in indoor, outdoor, and cross-country. And they're trying for a third triple crown at the NCAA outdoor competition in New Orleans in June, and I want to wish them well.

Again, I want to say that I am especially proud to welcome this team here, because I know something about the coach and his values and the way these things have been done over the years. You don't win this many times over this many years unless you're concerned about the character and well-being of your athletes,

as well as just about whether you win one particular meet or another. And so I want to say to all of you, it's a great source of pride and pleasure for me to present to the United States this track team and this fine coach.

Coach, come up here and say a word.

[At this point, the President was presented with a gift.]

John, I have something I want to give you in honor of your historic achievement. I want to give you this Presidential commendation for doing something no one ever did before, one for you and one for the team.

I also want to point out that in your honor the First Lady made a rare appearance at one of my press conferences wearing Irish green.

At the end of the press conference, I'm going to shake hands with the team and take some pictures and say hello to all of you from home, but I do have to make a brief announcement about the election in Russia and then perhaps answer a couple of questions.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:10 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

## Remarks on the Election in Russia and an Exchange With Reporters

April 26, 1993

*The President.* Not very long ago, perhaps about, oh, an hour ago now, I had a conversation with President Yeltsin. I called to congratulate him on his outstanding victory in the election and to reassure him that the United States continues to support him as the elected leader of Russia and continues to look forward to our partnership in working to reduce the threat of nuclear weapons, to increase trade and commerce, and to promote democracy. This is a very, very good day, not only for the people of Russia but for the people of the United States and all the people of the world.

I will say again I know that there have been times in the last 3 months when many Americans, troubled with their own economic difficulties, have asked why their President would be so involved in trying to support the process of democracy in Russia. And I want to say again

why that is so. They are a huge country with vast natural resources, with enormous opportunities for Americans to create jobs and to earn income and to reap the benefits of trade. They still have thousands of nuclear weapons which we must proceed to reduce and to dismantle so that the world will be a safer place and so that we will no longer have to spend our investment dollars, that we need so desperately to rebuild our own economy, on maintaining a state of extreme readiness and large numbers of warheads positioned against Russia. And they are a great country that can be a symbol of democracy in a very troubled part of the world if democracy can stay alive there. They can prove that you can make three dramatic changes at once as they try to move from a Communist system to a democracy, from a controlled economy to a market economy, and to a nation state