

May 16 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1997

The strengthened safeguards system adopted by the IAEA will give international nuclear inspectors greater information and access to nuclear and related facilities worldwide. By accepting a new legally binding protocol, states will assume new safeguards obligations that will make all their nuclear activities more transparent—including by allowing inspections at all suspicious sites, not just at declared sites.

I urge all nations to adopt as soon as possible appropriate protocols to their own safeguard agreements or to make other legally binding arrangements that will put this new system of safeguards in place. And I call on all nations that have not already signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to do so without delay.

Reducing the threat of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction is one of our highest obligations. Since I took office, we have made the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty permanent, dramatically cut existing nuclear arsenals under the START treaties, and ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention that will outlaw poison gas forever. I look forward to working with the Senate as we seek ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and as we seek congressional approval of this protocol and other arms control measures. Together, we must continue our efforts to provide the American people with real and lasting security.

Statement on the Northern Ireland Peace Process Initiative by Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom

May 16, 1997

I welcome Prime Minister Blair's statement today on Northern Ireland as a balanced and constructive step toward restoring momentum to the peace process. His words offer hope and reassurance to the people of both of Northern Ireland's traditions.

The Prime Minister has made clear that this British Government, like its predecessor, wants to see inclusive talks, but it will invite Sinn Fein to the negotiating table only on the basis

of an unequivocal cease-fire. And he has taken the initiative in offering to meet with Sinn Fein, at the official level, to assess whether inclusive talks are possible on that basis. I urge Sinn Fein to take up this offer, and I pray it will bring about an end to the violence for good. Now is the time to open a new chapter in the history of this tragic conflict and achieve through dialog and negotiation the lasting settlement the people of Northern Ireland want and deserve.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine and an Exchange With Reporters

May 16, 1997

President Clinton. Let me say, I'm delighted to have President Kuchma back at the White House. He and the Vice President have worked hard today. They've made a lot of progress on economic issues and on security issues, and I'm quite encouraged by the report I have received and quite hopeful about our future partnership with Ukraine and Ukraine's role in a united, democratic Europe.

NATO

Q. President Kuchma, are you interested in having Ukraine join NATO as a formal member?

President Kuchma. First of all, I understand the situation nowadays in Europe, and I'm well aware of the configuration of political forces. And I understand that Ukrainian application to NATO would not be timely, though Ukraine has proclaimed its aim to integrate with European and transatlantic structures.