This morning I also signed two other measures to cut the size of Government and improve its operations. One bill reorganizes the Department of Agriculture. It closes or combines 1,200 unnecessary offices, reduces the number of divisions in the Agriculture Department by a third, and reduces employment by over 7,500. The Secretary of Agriculture and all those who worked on this deserve a lot of credit for this important step forward.

The other bill requires the Government to publish a complete financial statement every single year for every executive branch agency. Believe it or not, complete consolidated financial statements weren't required before this.

Finally, I'd like some help from you and others to get another change or two along this line. Congress has just passed two spending bills that protect several agencies from the personnel cuts that have to be made in order for us to meet the reinventing Government target of 270,000 and to fund the crime bill. So today I'm asking that Congress get rid of these restrictions on our ability to cut back big Government. This is a matter of principle. No agency anywhere should be exempt from doing its job as efficiently as possible.

The American people deserve a Government that works. For most Americans, good Government means a timely Social Security check or better police protection or a tax burden that doesn't suffocate them. Democracy means little to them if it can't meet these basic needs except with a Government that costs too much or is too big or too slow or too unresponsive. We can, we must do better, and we are doing better. It's a part of bringing America back, restoring economic growth, making a serious assault on crime, making Government work for ordinary people again, having a Government that does more with less.

I'd like to close on this note. More than 30 years ago, President Kennedy addressed the members of the Radio TV News Directors Association. About that time, he said this about the press: "Even though we never like it and even though we wish they didn't write it and even though we disapprove of it, there isn't any doubt at all that we could not do the job in a free society without a very, very active press." The fundamental truth is that for all the profound changes that have taken place in world affairs, technology, and markets, his words are still as accurate as they were on the day he said them.

Every day, the national dialog that helps to sustain our freedoms is begun by you. Every day I have the opportunity to discuss the work we're doing directly with the people we're doing it for because of you. We share fundamental ideals for a free and open society where all can reach their God-given potential and pursue the American dream.

I wish you the best of luck this week and in the months ahead. These are exciting and challenging times, and I think we should enjoy them together. Yes, there are problems, but nothing, nothing we cannot face if we roll up our sleeves, pull together, and look to the future.

Now, Marcy, I'll turn it back to you with a warm thank-you to all of you for the opportunity to speak with you today. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:37 p.m. by satellite from Room 459 of the Old Executive Office Building to the Radio Television News Directors Association and the National Association of Broadcasters NAB Radio Show, meeting in Los Angeles, CA. In his remarks, he referred to Marcy Burdick, chair, Radio Television News Directors Association.

Statement on Signing the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994

October 13, 1994

I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 995, the "Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994."

Today there are members of the National Guard and Reserve, including Coast Guard Reservists, on active duty supporting operational missions. As their Commander in Chief, it is

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timely for me to sign a bill that will clarify and strengthen their right to return to the civilian positions they held before going on active duty without any loss of seniority, status, or pay.

The "Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994" revises, improves, and clarifies the existing veterans reemployment rights statute, which was first enacted in 1940. Since that time, a confusing and cumbersome patchwork of statutory amendments and judicial constructions have made the law difficult for employers to understand.

Among other changes, H.R. 995 extends coverage for the first time to the Coast Guard and Public Health Service Reserve components. It also entitles service members to continued health insurance coverage under their employer's plan for up to 18 months of military leave and makes explicit the rights of reemployed service members under their pension plans.

My Administration is committed to enforcing the reemployment rights of service members. This Act is key to the achievement of that goal.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 13, 1994.

NOTE: H.R. 995, approved October 13, was assigned Public Law No. 103–353.

Statement on the Cease-Fire in Northern Ireland
October 13, 1994

I welcome today's announcement by the Combined Loyalist Military Command in Northern Ireland declaring an end to its campaign of violence. The cease-fire announcement by the IRA on August 31 and today's announcement by Loyalist paramilitaries present the best hope for peace in a generation in Northern Ireland. The parties must now build on this historic step forward and enter into negotiations for a lasting settlement.

Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom and Prime Minister Albert Reynolds of Ireland deserve great credit for their leadership and persistence in pressing for progress. The principles put forward in their Downing Street Declaration provide an important foundation for a just and lasting peace. I look forward to the next steps in the process, including the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation proposed by Prime Minister Reynolds and the roundtable talks convened by the Irish and British Governments with all involved parties.

I am pleased that the United States has been able to contribute to the peace process in Northern Ireland. We continue to stand ready to assist in achieving a negotiated, democratic settlement supported by both communities in Northern Ireland.

Statement on Disaster Assistance for Georgia
October 13, 1994

I am pleased that we can provide additional assistance to the people of Georgia in their efforts to rebuild their communities. I look forward to working in cooperation with them in the recovery.

NOTE: This statement was included in a White House statement announcing the President's decision to authorize an increase in the Federal Government's part of the cost-share program for repairing flood-damaged public property.