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Bush: I'll never deal with Adams again - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/3/13 16:32

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President Bush personally ordered that Gerry Adams be frozen out of official engagements during his visit to America, furious that the Sinn Fein leader had betrayed his efforts to help to re-start the Northern Ireland peace process.

Mr Bush now views Mr Adams in the same unfavourable light as he did Yasser Arafat, the late Palestinian leader, a senior presidential adviser said last night. "At the White House, Adams is now regarded with the same sort of disdain as Arafat," the adviser told The Telegraph. "The President no longer considers Mr Adams a reliable partner for peace. He doesn't want to meet him."

Mr Bush was enraged to learn that at the same time as he was pressing Mr Adams late last year to relaunch the power-sharing deal, Sinn Fein's armed wing, the IRA, was planning the Â£26 million Northern Bank raid in Belfast. He had telephoned both Mr Adams and Ian Paisley, the leader of the Democratic Unionists, in an attempt to persuade Northern Ireland's two biggest parties to resume the stalled peace negotiations.

Mr Bush's displeasure has forced Mr Adams to abandon plans to raise money while in America. The United States government made it clear that it would not grant him a visa that permits fund-raising, this newspaper has learnt. Sinn Fein had claimed that Mr Adams had chosen not to raise money "to avoid it being made into a contentious issue". In reality, he was told not even to bother applying for the appropriate paperwork for the week-long visit, which began in Ohio yesterday. American officials are also demanding major concessions from Sinn Fein, most significantly that the IRA be disbanded.