

the world, and all the American people deserve better than that.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:25 p.m. on September 13 in the Map Room for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 14.

### **Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Hurricane Fran in Raleigh, North Carolina**

*September 14, 1996*

**The President.** Thank you, Governor. I don't want to say too much right now. We mostly just came down to listen and to see what we could do to help. But I would like to say, first of all, that like most Americans, I've followed the course of the hurricane and the storms and the rains. I have followed very closely. I did see the video on the way down of the—specifically focusing on your damage along the beach, but I also have watched over the last several days as the damage took its toll and then this remarkable job of cleaning that has been done.

I want to thank all of you who have worked on this. I frankly was amazed when we flew over the damaged area and how much had been done to at least prepare the way to rebuild the homes and to get the trees up and do the other things that have been done, and I take my hat off to you. And we will do whatever we can to help. A lot of our administration people have been down here. Secretary Riley—I asked Secretary Riley this morning, I said, “Dick, why are you coming with us today?” And he said, “Well, I'm a Carolinian,” he said. [*Laughter*] He said, “Besides, there were schools damaged; I belong down there.”

And I thank you for what you said about James Lee Witt. I thought I should send someone down here who did not speak with an accent—[*laughter*]—so that you would—there would be no time lost in translation. But I believe that if we can perform as well over the next several weeks as the people of North Carolina have performed in the last week, we will be able to recover from this.

I also know, Governor, you told me on the way down there has been an enormous amount of loss to the agricultural crops, to

the tobacco, the corn, perhaps some others, and I'd like to hear about that. We just want to know what the full dimensions of the problems are and what we can do to help, and we'll do our best.

[*At this point, the roundtable discussion began.*]

**The President.** First of all, I would like to—let me begin by thanking all of you who have spoken and those who worked in public capacities and the citizens who told their stories. Thank you in Wilmington, Mr. Mayor, and the others for joining us by satellite. The wonders of modern technology have given us a picture of that house, which proves that no matter how modern technology gets, we are not in total control, and I thank you all for what you have done.

What I'd like to do in the time we have available here is just to—first of all, let me tell you that we talked—the Governor and Congresswoman Clayton and I talked on the way down here with Leon Panetta and Mr. Witt and others about what we could do before the Congress goes home, maybe, to get a little help here for North Carolina and for the other States that were damaged not as badly, but there was still quite a bit of significant damage from Hurricane Fran in some other States and whether we could get something done. So we're looking at that.

What I'd like to do is to have the clearest picture I can when I leave here today of what your priorities are. Phil Lader, our Small Business Administration director, is here. Jim, you told me, I think, 50,000 small businesses have been hurt by this hurricane, and I think we've acknowledged everyone else here. North Carolinian Martin Lancaster is here from the Defense Department, and General Genega, the head of the Corps of Engineers.

We'd like to know exactly what you need done the most quickly, and what priority—what we need to be sensitive to. And we want to do the best we can to try to fashion this relief package that's as adequate as possible within the limits of the law. We also want to organize our own efforts in a way that is most helpful to you.

We've been dealing with the emergencies in the last week, but Mr. Culbreth just said—

I mean, I frankly was astonished that you had over 98 percent of the people hooked up to their power again. I think it's a stunning achievement. But now we need to focus on where to go from here and how to do the rebuilding. I'm glad to see Commissioner Graham out there, and, Mr. Campbell, I'm glad to see you.

I asked on the way in about the farm losses and how we could help to deal with that. So I'd just like for anybody here around the table or out in the audience—again, there are a couple of public officials I see on the television there in Wilmington or at least citizens who haven't said anything. Anybody wants to say anything else to me about what you feel should be done in what order, I would like to hear it.

[*At this point, the discussion continued.*]

**The President.** I guess one of the things I would like to point out, just parenthetically, on the Federal assistance, most of the Federal assistance I think is funds we need to get to you for these big categories of things, whereas the mayor said, the people will know what to do with it. There are some things where we have direct Federal appropriations, where we're going to be looking to see that we have done everything that we should do—I'll give you an example—to fix the Federal-aid roads and the bridges, you know, where we ought to be moving that money as quickly as possible. I think that—and they've unleashed another \$5 million or something today that can fix a lot of the bridges.

And then there's money we have directly from the Department of Labor to help people who have lost their jobs, either to hire them as temporary workers or to retrain them, do whatever is necessary, and I believe that about \$8 million has been allocated for that. And so I think that's important, too.

We want to make sure that we have—that on the laws already on the books, the money already appropriated, the things that the Federal Government can just go ahead and pay for directly, even though the work may be done on contract or by people down here, we're getting that out here, too, because I think—the magnitude of the losses here is so great that there may be things that we haven't even thought of yet, that we could

be moving on. And we want to just—I think the main thing is, just to get as much happening as quickly as possible. It's obvious that you are all very well organized and will make the most of whatever is given to you.

I'd like to thank the Red Cross and all of the volunteers. I know you've had people here from 18 or 20 States coming in. I see some of our AmeriCorps volunteers out there; I know they've been working; I thank them for doing that. If you can think of anything else—let me tell you what we're going to do on the budget issue. We talked to Congresswoman Clayton, and we'll get in touch with Senator Helms and the others next week—well, the first of the week, the day after tomorrow—to see if before the Congress recesses for the election recess, we can find an amendment process by which we could actually get some relief now so that it's not just a bill that everybody says they're for, that we actually produced something for you in the next 3 or 4 days. We could do it next week if we got real lucky and everybody just pulled together.

You know, this country has been so afflicted by disasters in the last 4 years, just since I've been President, I mean from the earthquakes and the floods and the fires in California to the Pacific Northwest and the 500-year flood in the Mississippi River Valley to any number of things that have happened along the East Coast. My guess is that there will be an enormous amount of sympathy for this across the country, because all of those people know that people from North Carolina and West Virginia and Virginia helped them when they were in need, and I think they will respond.

[*At this point, the discussion continued.*]

**The President.** Thank you very much, Governor. Let me just say in closing, I've been coming to North Carolina for many, many years now, long before I ever got into my present line of endeavor. And I've always been impressed by the combination of sort of old-fashioned, friendly hospitality and creative aggression—[*laughter*—in this State. I mean, I think it really accounts for a lot of your success. And I will do exactly what you ask. That's why I made the point I did about the Labor Department funds and the high-

way bridge funds. We want to be a good partner and a good friend and a good neighbor.

The second thing I'd like to say is that you were very generous in complimenting everybody else, but you and I have been friends for nearly 20 years now, and I can say that if every one of us in public life had the level of energy, intelligence, and determination you do, we wouldn't have as many problems as we do, and I thank you for your leadership.

The last thing I want to say is, you told me today North Carolina State was getting a new basketball gym, and as somebody who once gave a speech in the old one—and it was so hot I destroyed a suit while I was doing it—I'm proud they're going to do it, and I wish them well this year, and I hope they have a good season.

Thank you very much. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. at the State fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr.; Mayor Don Betz of Wilmington; Maj. Gen. Stanley Genega, USA, Director and Assistant Commander for Civil Works, Army Corps of Engineers; Carson (Doug) Culbreth, energy division director, North Carolina Department of Commerce; James Graham, State commissioner of agriculture; and Wayne Campbell, State auditor.

### **Remarks at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Dinner**

*September 14, 1996*

Thank you, Congressman Payne. He was up here talking about me and our administration and laying it on so thick, it sounded so good I wasn't quite sure who he was talking about. [Laughter] And Alexis Herman, sitting over there with me, and he got down to the end, she said, "He's talking about you. This is your introduction. Stand up; stand up." [Laughter] Thank you so very much.

Thank you, Congressman Don Payne, for your leadership of the Congressional Black Caucus and for your passion for the people of America and indeed for people around the world. Thank you, Congressman Bill Jefferson, for chairing this dinner for 2 years in a row. [Applause] That is worth more than applause, folks. Thank you for being my friend for so long and way back in the begin-

ning when only you and my mother thought I could be elected President. [Laughter]

Thank you, LeBaron Taylor, for chairing the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. To all the members of the Congressional Black Caucus, Senator Carol Moseley-Braun, honored guests. I'd also like to recognize and thank for their service the retiring members of the CBC: Kweisi Mfume, Cardiss Collins, Cleo Fields, Barbara Rose Collins, and my neighbor Harold Ford from Tennessee. Please give them all a big hand. They have served our country well. [Applause]

We have a lot of members of our administration here tonight: our Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, the Commerce Secretary Mickey Kantor, Assistant Attorney General Deval Patrick—thank you for sticking up for the civil rights of all Americans, Deval—Federal Highway Administrator Rodney Slater, Assistant to the President for Appointments Bob Nash. If you get one, credit me; if you don't, blame him. [Laughter]

I'm glad to see my friend Mayor Dinkins here tonight. The Director of the Office of Drug Policy Control in the White House, General Barry McCaffrey; former deputy chairman of the African National Congress Walter Sisulu is here. Thank you, Walter. And the future Speaker of the House of Representatives is here, Dick Gephardt, and we're glad to see him.

This is my fourth CBC dinner. I enjoy each one better than the last. I thank all of you for coming up here to shake my hand, and I apologize for everyone I didn't get to see.

Let me begin by recognizing your outstanding awardees tonight. Thank you, first of all, for honoring Alma Brown and for what you have done also to honor the memory of Ron Brown, who was clearly the greatest Commerce Secretary in my lifetime, perhaps in the history of the United States. I congratulate Mary Frances Barry, Ingrid Saunders Jones, Toni Fay, Elaine Jones, Congressman John Conyers, Congressman Donald Payne, LeBaron Taylor, Wade Henderson, and my good friend Andy Young. All of you in your own way have moved our country toward greater justice, equality, and opportunity. Not only the members of this foundation and the people at this dinner, but