

routes and provide even more efficient service, laying the foundation for high-speed rail. With this major funding increase this year, we can help ensure a thriving passenger rail system for many years to come.

NOTE: A portion of the President's statement was also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

### **Statement on Floods in Southern Africa**

*February 28, 2000*

I am deeply saddened by the devastation caused by flooding in southern Africa, which has worsened over the past few days. Almost a million people in Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe have lost their homes or their livelihoods, and tens of thousands of people in Mozambique are stranded in flooded areas and require urgent rescue.

Today we are allocating \$1 million, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, to support aircraft for critical search and rescue operations and the delivery of relief supplies. In addition, we have already provided over \$1.8 million to fund air transport, prevent disease, deliver supplies, and support relief efforts. Two aircraft from the Department of Defense are on the way to deliver shelter materials, blankets, and other relief supplies. Also, we are dispatching a disaster assistance response team to the region to determine other ways that we can help our friends in southern Africa.

The thoughts and prayers of the American people are with the people of the region as they cope with this disaster.

### **Remarks to the Democratic Governors' Association Dinner**

*February 28, 2000*

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the warm welcome. Thank you for this wonderful book. Governor Patton, Mrs. Patton, Governor Davis, Governor O'Bannon; to B.J. Thornberry, and all the officers of the DGA; and especially my great friend Mark Weiner. I want to acknowledge also the presence—Mark Weiner did

a good job tonight, and all the rest of you did, raising this money. I thank you for that.

I want to acknowledge the presence in this audience of the man who was the executive director of the DGA when I was a member, my good friend Chuck Dolan. I thank you for being here and for all you did for us. And all my colleagues—I know there are five or six Governors out there who are former Governors with whom I served—thank you for being here.

I want to acknowledge the Governors who are retiring. Governor Rossello, thank you for everything you've done. And Governor Carper and Governor Carnahan are going to be Members of the United States Senate, and that will be a good thing for the Senate, a bad thing for the Governors.

I want to say a special work of thanks to the man who nominated me to be vice chairman of the DGA in 1979, Governor Jim Hunt, one of the finest people I ever met in my life. Thank you, Jim Hunt, for what you did.

You know, I will treasure this book. I have a first edition of "Profiles in Courage," but not one signed by John Kennedy. Hillary says that the reason I admire John Kennedy so much is he's the only person to ever serve as President whose handwriting was even harder to read than mine. [*Laughter*] But I can recognize the signature, and I thank you.

President Kennedy once said, "The party which, in its drive for unity, discipline, and success, ever decides to exclude new ideas, independent conduct, or insurgent members is in danger." Well, thanks to the Democratic Governors, to your new ideas, your independent conduct, and your willingness always to try to do better and to be different, the Democratic Party is in no danger. We're stronger tonight than we have been in many, many years, thanks to you.

As President, I have been deeply indebted to my service as Governor. It has stood me in good stead. And I have been deeply indebted to so many of you for the friendship, the advice, the counsel you have given me, and to so many who were members of this organization with me who continue all during these years to call with a helpful word or sometimes just a word of friendship and support.