

FEMA, is working around the clock, cooperating with each of the affected States and managing our coordinated response. FEMA personnel are in five States now, assisting State governments with preparedness and recovery efforts. And FEMA's in close coordination with other States.

Where disasters are declared, FEMA will set up facilities called "disaster application centers" to provide a speedy and efficient one-stop process for recovery. It's also providing an 800 number for victims of the flooding which allows for rapid application for aid by telephone. The Department of Transportation is monitoring the conditions of barge traffic and damage to highways. The Army Corps of Engineers and the National Guard are out fortifying levees and flood walls, providing security and traffic control and simply doing their best to stop or alleviate water damage wherever they can. The Department of Agriculture is making shelter available, helping farmers with their loan obligations, and working to alleviate crop losses and losses farmers experience when they can't plant their crops. The Emergency Broadcast System is being used throughout the region to provide notifications of flash floods, evacuations, and tornadoes.

Efforts are being made now to remove debris in Minnesota, to provide sandbags in Iowa and Illinois, to guard against public health problems, and to provide potable water where needed. I've asked our Budget Director, Leon Panetta, to begin assembling a funding bill that will provide emergency assistance to the region. We'll be working with Congress early next week to get

this process underway. We'll ask for Federal funds on an emergency basis to help pay for crop losses and damage to homes, businesses, and public property.

Times of turmoil and trouble bring out the best in Americans. This flood has been no exception. Members of the Red Cross and the Salvation Army are doing what these organizations have always done, bringing comfort to people of your region who have had their lives turned upside down by this flood. National Guard personnel have been mobilizing, filling sandbags and providing assistance wherever they can. Some of them have canceled vacations to come home and help the people of their communities, strangers and friends alike. These are good people, and I'm thankful to them for all they're doing.

In closing, let me ask each of you to take heart and have faith. As hard as these times are, you know that the waters will soon recede and the work of recovery will begin. The people who grow our food and the communities that surround and support you are central to the American way of life. Just as we depend upon you for the harvest, you can depend upon us for support at this critical moment in your lives. For that is the American way.

Thanks for listening, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:06 p.m. from the Okura Hotel in Tokyo for broadcast in the United States.

## Remarks to the American Chamber of Commerce in Tokyo July 9, 1993

*The President.* I would like to resume the discussion because I want to have as much time as possible just to listen and learn today. Let me say that in my former life I came here several times and met with business leaders on behalf of the interests of my State.

I'm sure that the people who have spoken before me have basically outlined the strategy we are attempting to pursue back home. But essentially what we're trying to do is to deal with the major problems of America at home and then try to get ourselves in a better position

to do what we can to be a good partner for the private sector in competing in a global economy.

We are well on the way to passing a record-breaking deficit reduction plan that has great credibility in the financial markets. And we've got a big decline in long-term interest rates at home, which I think is quite good. For all the economic softness, and it's quite considerable at home, we have over 950,000 new jobs in the economy in the last 5 months. That's about as many as the United States produced in the

previous 3 years.

We've got a serious attempt going on to bring health care costs under control, which as all of you know is one of the major causes of America's lack of competitiveness. We're over 14 percent of GDP in health care; nobody is over 9 except Canada, and they're barely over 9. And we're working on significant changes in our policies with regard to technology, defense conversion, and trade, among other things.

So, that's a basic outline of what I've been trying to do for the last 5 months. I wanted to come here and just listen to you today because you've been able to do something that I think is very important, which is to operate in Japan to create opportunity. And I just want to know what you think we should be doing and how we can do more to help you and to create more people like you.

I didn't hear what Mr. Fallon said, but if the Ambassador fairly characterizes it, and he's pretty good at doing that, my attitude about this is that I prefer an open trading system. I don't think a wealthy nation can grow wealthier unless there is global economic growth. There are all kinds of challenges to that. Now, I think the environmental movement that is sweeping the globe actually gives us a chance to create more jobs, not lose them, if we do it in an intelligent way.

But my view is also that the United States should try to get better rules but play by the rules that are in play. That's sort of always been my attitude. I could never have won an election if I wanted the rules to be different from those that obtain at the time. You can always try to improve the rules. We're trying to have a different campaign finance reform system, we're trying to have a different lobby reform system in America, but meanwhile we all play by the rules that are there. So, that's my attitude about that. I wish I'd heard exactly what you had to say but I think—I get criticized in some quarters for saying that, but normally when you show up for a game you've got to play by the operative rules, not the ones you wish were in play.

[At this point, panelists discussed problems and successes unique to operating an American business in Japan.]

*The President.* I was just going to make one other comment about this. You made a very perceptive observation when you said the Justice Ministry only has this issue to negotiate and we've got nothing to give back because they can't imagine why Japanese lawyers would set up offices in New York to do business or anything like that. I mean, I can understand that. Most people just assume when they go to another country they'll use lawyers who understand the law and practice in those countries. But one of the big problems we've got in America, as I'm sure you know, is that we don't have enough lawyers who are facilitators and we have too many who are, in effect, litigators. We have too many who slow down the operations of the private sector rather than who speed it up.

And there may be a little something we can do on the political side by indirection, by, you know, by sort of saying that Japanese companies doing business in America—one of the things that this administration is looking at in the whole productivity mix is how we can reduce the cost of litigation and the cost of decision making and the delays there. And there may be some merit in our taking some initiative to bring some Japanese lawyers who do business work to the United States to work with American lawyers, to work with American businesses to see if we can kind of change the culture a bit and maybe some of the laws in our country. That is a little something we could give back, and it wouldn't do us any harm to do that anyway.

*Q.* There are some who are there already. And they can do that. We can't do the same thing here.

*The President.* I know but, I mean, if they thought they were going to, their companies operating in America—

*Q.* I'm talking about the lawyers.

*The President.* Yes, I know, but if they thought their companies in America were going to get something out of it, it might help us to get a little more leverage here. And we'll pursue that. You made a very compelling point.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:10 a.m. in the Akebono Room at the Okura Hotel.