

invented the Internet, that launched an information revolution, that transformed the world, will do what we did in the 20th century and lead once more in the 21st.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:08 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Remarks Following a Briefing at the Federal Emergency and Management Agency May 29, 2009

The President. All right. Well, for all of you who've just joined us, I've just received a briefing here at FEMA at the National Response Coordination Center for our preparations for this year's hurricane season, which begins on Monday. And I want to thank Secretary Napolitano, as well as John Brennan, my Homeland Security Adviser. And we've welcomed Craig Fugate, who has hit the ground running and is already doing an outstanding job not just leading this briefing but leading this excellent agency. And I want to thank all the people here at FEMA who do such an excellent job for their diligence and their commitment for this task.

We are all here together because we are determined to be as prepared as possible when the next catastrophic hurricane hits the United States. And we want to make sure that cities and our people remain resilient enough to weather any storm.

Our top priority is ensuring the public safety. That means appropriate sheltering in place, or, if necessary, getting as many people as possible out of harm's way prior to landfall. But most of the work, as you would hear from these individual agencies, most of the work takes place before a hurricane hits. True preparedness means having Federal and State and local governments all coordinating effectively, and as you just heard, one of the most important things we can do is make sure the families have prepared appropriately.

We just saw some statistics coming out of Florida indicating that a huge percentage of people in hurricane areas simply don't make plans. They don't have a plan, they don't have a set of contingencies that will allow them to respond in an effective way. Those people who have the capacity to plan, they will thereby relieve some of the resources that the Govern-

ment has to provide, and we can stay focused on those folks who are most vulnerable and have the most difficulty dealing with a storm.

So I hope that message of personal responsibility sinks in. And, Craig, is there a web site that we want to provide that would help people formulate a plan right now?

Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate. Yes, sir, it's real simple, ready.gov.

The President. Ready.gov.

Administrator Fugate. It will help you get ready for your disaster threats.

The President. Okay. That's the reason that all the representatives here met and have been meeting over the last several months, is because they want to be ready. And States are going to have the primary responsibility in preparing for and responding to disasters, but they're going to have the full resources of the Federal Government backing them up.

And the last point, I guess, I would like to make, is that when you go on ready.gov, you'll see that—I think the public will see that a lot of these plans are not complicated. They're pretty simple. It's a matter of having a basic emergency supply kit with items such as water, some nonperishable food, an all-weather radio, a flashlight, a first aid kit; making an emergency family plan; staying informed of developments in your area; and learning about your community's emergency plans.

So I have no greater responsibility than the safety of the American people. I want to thank all of the people here today who, in their various roles, do such a terrific job even in non-emergency situations, helping to keep the American people safe. But as we enter into hurricane season, I hope that everybody who's watching is going to be paying attention and

May 29 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2009

take seriously their responsibilities as citizens so that the entire country is ready.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:17 p.m. in the National Response Coordination Center at

FEMA Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Homeland Security Janet A. Napolitano; and Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism John O. Brennan.

Statement on Beginning Negotiations on the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty *May 29, 2009*

There is no greater security challenge in the world today than turning the tide on nuclear proliferation, and pursuing the goal of a nuclear-free world. I welcome today's important agreement at the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiations on a fissile material cutoff treaty, which will end production of fissile materials for use in atomic bombs. As I announced in Prague, a verified cutoff treaty is an essential element of my vision for a world free of nuclear weapons. The treaty will help to cap nuclear arsenals, strengthen the consen-

sus underlying the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and deny terrorists access to nuclear materials.

Today's decision ends more than a decade of inactivity in the Conference on Disarmament and signals a commitment to work together on this fundamental global challenge. It is good to see the Conference at work again. I am committed to consult and cooperate with the governments represented at the Conference on Disarmament to complete this treaty as soon as possible.

The President's Weekly Address *May 30, 2009*

This week, I nominated Judge Sonia Sotomayor of the U.S. Court of Appeals to replace Justice David Souter, who is retiring after nearly two decades on the Supreme Court. After reviewing many terrific candidates, I am certain that she is the right choice. In fact, there has not been a nominee in several generations who has brought the depth of judicial experience to this job that she offers.

Judge Sotomayor's career began when she served as an assistant district attorney in New York, prosecuting violent crimes in America's largest city. After leaving the DA's office, she became a litigator, representing clients in complex international legal disputes. She was appointed to the U.S. District Court, serving 6 years as a trial judge where she presided over hundreds of cases. And most recently, she has spent 11 years on the U.S. Court of Appeals, our Nation's second highest court, grappling with some of the most difficult constitutional and legal issues we face as a nation. She has more experience on the Federal bench than

any incoming Supreme Court Justice in the past 100 years. Quite simply, Judge Sotomayor has a deep familiarity with our judicial system from almost every angle.

And her achievements are all the more impressive when you consider what she had to overcome in order to achieve them. Judge Sotomayor grew up in a housing project in the South Bronx. Her parents came to New York from Puerto Rico during the Second World War. Her father was a factory worker with a third grade education. And when she was just 9 years old, he passed away. Her mother worked 6 days a week as a nurse to provide for her and her brother, buying the only set of encyclopedias in the neighborhood and sending her children to Catholic school. That's what made it possible for Judge Sotomayor to attend two of America's leading universities, graduating at the top of her class at Princeton University, and studying at Yale Law School, where she won a prestigious post as an editor of the school's law journal.