

make some phone calls for me, we'll win Hillsborough County again. We'll win New Hampshire again. We'll finish what we started. And we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:59 p.m. at Elm Street Middle School. In his remarks, he referred to former State Sen. Margaret Wood Hassan of New Hampshire; Ann McLane Kuster, founder, Newfound Strategies, LLC; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks Following a Briefing on Hurricane Sandy Preparedness Efforts October 28, 2012

The President. Well, good afternoon, everybody. Obviously, all of us across the country are concerned about the potential impact of Hurricane Sandy. This is a serious and big storm. And my first message is to all people across the Eastern Seaboard, Mid-Atlantic, going north, that you need to take this very seriously and follow the instructions of your State and local officials, because they are going to be providing you with the best advice in terms of how to deal with this storm over the coming days.

We've just had an excellent meeting with the FEMA team here, the various agencies that are in charge, including the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, and others that are going to need to respond very quickly.

Under Craig Fugate's leadership here at FEMA, we've had a chance to talk to the regional officials as well. And I just had a phone call with the Governors of the potentially impacted States as well as some of the major cities in the region.

At this stage, everybody is confident that the staging process, the pre-positioning of resources, commodities, equipment that are going to be needed to respond to this storm are in place. But as Craig has emphasized, this hasn't hit landfall yet, so we don't yet know where it's going to hit, where we're going to see the biggest impacts. And that's exactly why it's so important for us to respond big and respond fast as local information starts coming in.

I want to thank all the members of the team for the outstanding work that they're doing. But the other thing that makes this storm unique is we anticipate that it is going to be

slow moving. That means that it may take a long time not only to clear, but also to get, for example, the power companies back in to clear trees and to put things back in place so that folks can start moving back home.

So my main message to everybody involved is that we have to take this seriously. The Federal Government is working effectively with the State and local governments. It's going to be very important that populations in all the impacted States take this seriously, listen to your State and local elected officials.

My message to the Governors, as well as to the mayors, is anything they need, we will be there. And we're going to cut through redtape. We're not going to get bogged down with a lot of rules. We want to make sure that we are anticipating and leaning forward into making sure that we've got the best possible response to what is going to be a big and messy system.

So again, thank you, everybody. Craig, would you like add to something?

Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate. Now, again, as the President says, it's going to really come down to the public heeding those evacuation orders, taking protective measures. If they haven't gotten ready, they can go to ready.gov, get information on how to protect them and their families, but also check on your neighbors. This is going to be a big storm. We need to be there for each other.

The President. Okay. That—let me emphasize that again—ready.gov—for the general public. If you need to know how to respond, that's where you can get centralized information.

But I think Craig's point is exactly right. In times like this, one of the things that Americans do is we pull together and we help out one another. And so there may be elderly populations in your area. Check on your neighbor, check on your friend. Make sure that they are prepared. If we do, then we're going to get through this storm just fine. But we're going to have to make sure that we are vigilant and vigilant for a couple of days.

Don't anticipate that just because the immediate storm has passed that we're not going to have some potential problems in a lot of these communities going forward through the week.

All right. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. at the headquarters of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Remarks Following a Briefing on Hurricane Sandy Preparedness Efforts and an Exchange with Reporters October 29, 2012

The President. Hello, everybody. I just received a full briefing from our emergency response teams, including FEMA, and agencies that are going to be helpful in the response and recovery efforts: the Department of Energy, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Health and Human Services. Obviously, everybody is aware at this point that this is going to be a big and powerful storm. And all across the Eastern Seaboard, I think everybody is taking the appropriate preparations.

I've spoken to all the Governors in all these States. They have issued emergency declarations. Those have been turned around quickly here in the White House. We have pre-positioned assets so that FEMA personnel are working closely with State and local governments. We're making sure that food and water and emergency generation is available for those communities that are going to be hardest hit.

We anticipate that the center of the storm is going to hit landfall sometime this evening. But because of the nature of this storm, we are certain that this is going to be a slow-moving process through a wide swath of the country, and millions of people are going to be affected.

So the most important message that I have for the public right now is, please listen to what your State and local officials are saying. When they tell you to evacuate, you need to evacuate. Do not delay, don't pause, don't question the

instructions that are being given, because this is a serious storm and it could potentially have fatal consequences if people haven't acted quickly.

The good news is, is that the Governors and local officials, I think, have had a few days of preparation. There's been extraordinarily close coordination between State, Federal, and local governments. And so we're confident that the assets are pre-positioned for an effective response in the aftermath of the storm.

But keep in mind that, for folks who are not following instructions, if you are not evacuating when you've been asked to evacuate, you're putting first-responders at danger. We're going to have to have search-and-rescue teams in and around multiple States all at the same time. And although we've got Coast Guard and the Department of Defense all positioned, if the public is not following instructions, that makes it more dangerous for people and it means that we could have fatalities that could have been avoided.

Transportation is going to be tied up for a long time. And probably, the most significant impact for a lot of people, in addition to flooding, is going to be getting power back on. We anticipate that there are going to be a lot of trees down, a lot of water. And our—despite the fact that the power companies are working very closely with their various State officials and local officials to make sure that they are bringing in as many assets as possible and get-