

ting those ready in preparation for the storm, the fact is that a lot of these emergency crews are not going to be able to get into position to start restoring power until some of these winds have died down. And because of the nature of this storm, that may take several days.

So the public should anticipate that there's going to be a lot of power outages, and it may take time for that power to get back on. The same is true with transportation. There are going to be a lot of backlogs, and even after the storm has cleared, it's going to take a considerable amount of time for airlines, subways, trains, and so forth, potentially to get back on schedule, depending on the amount of damage that has occurred.

Let me summarize just by saying that I'm extraordinarily grateful for the cooperation of our State and local officials. The conversations that I've had with all the Governors indicate that, at this point, there are no unmet needs. I think everybody is taking this very seriously. We've got pre-positioned all the resources that we need.

But right now the key is to make sure that the public is following instructions. For those of you who still need additional information about how to respond, you can go to ready.gov. That's ready.gov. And that website should provide you with all the information that your family needs in terms of how you can prepare for this storm.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to all the people who are potentially affected. We are extraordinarily grateful for our first-responders, because they're going to be working 24/7, around the clock, nonstop. And I want to make sure that our thoughts and prayers go out to all those who may end up be dealing with a very difficult situation over the next several days.

## Remarks on Hurricane Sandy Relief Efforts October 30, 2012

*The President.* First of all, I want to thank Gail and Charlie who are on the scene doing work every time we have a disaster here in the United States of America. But obviously, the Red Cross is doing outstanding work interna-

Last point I'll make though: This is going to be a big storm. It's going to be a difficult storm. The great thing about America is, when we go through tough times like this, we all pull together. We look out for our friends. We look out for our neighbors. And we set aside whatever issues we may have otherwise to make sure that we respond appropriately and with swiftness. And that's exactly what I anticipate is going to happen here.

So I want to thank all the Federal teams, State and local teams that are in place. I'm confident that we're ready. But I think the public needs to prepare for the fact that this is going to take a long time for us to clean up. The good news is, we will clean up and we will get through this. All right?

### 2012 Presidential Elections

*Q.* What about the impact on the election, sir?

*The President.* I am not worried at this point about the impact on the election. I'm worried about the impact on families, and I'm worried about the impact on our first-responders. I'm worried about the impact on our economy and on transportation.

The election will take care of itself next week. Right now our number-one priority is to make sure that we are saving lives; that our search-and-rescue teams are going to be in place; that people are going to get the food, the water, the shelter that they need in case of emergency; and that we respond as quickly as possible to get the economy back on track. All right?

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:46 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House.

tionally, so we want to thank them for their outstanding work.

A few things that I want to emphasize to the public at the top. This storm is not yet over. We've gotten briefings from the National

Hurricane Center. It is still moving north. There are still communities that could be affected. And so I want to emphasize there are still risks of flooding, there are still risks of downed power lines, risks of high winds. And so it is very important for the public to continue to monitor the situation in your local community, listen to your State and local officials, follow instructions. The more you follow instructions, the easier it is for our first-responders to make sure that they are dealing with true emergency situations. So the better prepared individual families are for the situation, the easier it is going to be for us to deal with it.

Next, obviously, I want to talk about the extraordinary hardship that we've seen over the last 48 hours. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all the families who have lost loved ones. Unfortunately, there have been fatalities as a consequence of Hurricane Sandy, and it's not clear that we've counted up all the fatalities at this point. And obviously, this is something that is heartbreaking for the entire Nation. And we certainly feel profoundly for all the families whose lives have been upended and are going to be going through some very tough times over the next several days, perhaps several weeks and months.

The most important message I have for them is that America is with you. We are standing behind you, and we are going to do everything we can to help you get back on your feet.

Earlier today I had a conversation with the Governors and many of the mayors in the affected areas, including Governor Christie, Governor Cuomo, and Mayor Bloomberg. I want to praise them for the extraordinary work that they have done. Sadly, we are getting more experience with these kinds of big-impact storms along the East Coast, and the preparation shows. Were it not for the outstanding work that they and their teams have already done and will continue to do in the affected regions, we could have seen more deaths and more property damage. So they have done extraordinary work working around the clock. The coordination between the State, local, and Federal governments has been outstanding.

Obviously, we're now moving into the recovery phase in a lot of the most severely affected areas. New Jersey, New York, in particular, have been pounded by this storm. Connecticut has taken a big hit. Because of some of the work that had been done ahead of time, we've been able to get over a thousand FEMA officials in place, pre-positioned. We've been able to get supplies, food, medicine, water, emergency generators to ensure that hospitals and law enforcement offices are able to stay up and running as they are out there responding.

We are going to continue to push as hard as we can to make sure that power is up throughout the region. And obviously, this is mostly a local responsibility, and the private utilities are going to have to lean forward, but we are doing everything we can to provide them additional resources so that we can expedite getting power up and running in many of these communities.

There are places like Newark, New Jersey, for example, where you've got 80, 90 percent of the people without power. We can't have a situation where that lasts for days on end. And so my instructions to the Federal agency has been, do not figure out why we can't do something; I want you to figure out how we do something. I want you to cut through redtape. I want you to cut through bureaucracy. There's no excuse for inaction at this point; I want every agency to lean forward and to make sure that we are getting the resources where they need—where they're needed as quickly as possible.

So I want to repeat my message to the Federal Government: No bureaucracy, no redtape. Get resources where they're needed as fast as possible, as hard as possible, and for the duration, because the recovery process obviously in a place like New Jersey is going to take a significant amount of time. The recovery process in a lower Manhattan is going to take a lot of time.

And part of what we're trying to do here is also to see where some resources that can be brought to bear that maybe traditionally are not used in these kind of disaster situations. For example, there may be military assets that

allow us to help move equipment to ensure that pumping and getting the flooding out of New York subway systems can proceed more quickly. There may be resources that we can bring to bear to help some of the private utilities get their personnel and their equipment in place more swiftly so that we can get power up and running as soon as possible.

So my message to the Governors and the mayors and, through them, to the communities that have been hit so hard is that we are going to do everything we can to get resources to you and make sure that any unmet need that is identified, we are responding to it as quickly as possible. And I told the mayors and the Governors, if they're getting no for an answer somewhere in the Federal Government, they can call me personally at the White House.

Now, obviously, the State, local, Federal response is important, but what we do as a community—what we do as neighbors and as fellow citizens—is equally important. So a couple of things that I want the public to know they can do.

First of all, because our local law enforcement, our first-responders are being swamped, to the extent that everybody can be out there looking out for their neighbors, especially older folks, I think that's really important. If you've got a neighbor nearby, you're not sure how they're handling a power outage, flooding, et cetera, go over, visit them, knock on their door, make sure that they're doing okay. That can make a big difference. The public can be the eyes and ears in terms of identifying unmet needs.

Second thing, the reason we're here is because the Red Cross knows what it's doing when it comes to emergency response. And so, for people all across the country who have not been affected, now is the time to show the kind of generosity that makes America the greatest nation on Earth. And a good place to express that generosity is by contributing to the Red Cross.

Obviously, you can go on their website. The Red Cross knows what they're doing. They're in close contact with Federal, State, and local officials. They will make sure that we get the

resources to those families as swiftly as possible. And again, I want to thank everybody here who is doing such a great job when it comes to the disaster response.

The final message I'd just say is, during the darkness of the storm, I think we also saw what's brightest in America. I think all of us obviously have been shocked by the force of Mother Nature as we watch it on television. At the same time, we've also seen nurses at NYU hospital carrying fragile newborns to safety. We've seen incredibly brave firefighters in Queens, waist-deep in water, battling infernos and rescuing people in boats.

One of my favorite stories is down in North Carolina, the Coast Guard going out to save a sinking ship. They sent a rescue swimmer out, and the rescue swimmer said: "Hi, I'm Dan. I understand you guys need a ride." That kind of spirit of resilience and strength, but most importantly, looking out for one another, that's why we always bounce back from these kinds of disasters.

This is a tough time for a lot of people: millions of folks all across the Eastern Seaboard. But America is tougher, and we're tougher because we pull together. We leave nobody behind. We make sure that we respond as a nation and remind ourselves that whenever an American is in need, all of us stand together to make sure that we're providing the help that's necessary.

So I just want to thank the incredible response that we've already seen, but I do want to remind people this is going to take some time. It is not going to be easy for a lot of these communities to recover swiftly, and so it's going to be important that we sustain that spirit of resilience, that we continue to be good neighbors for the duration until everybody is back on their feet.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you, Red Cross.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:18 p.m. at the headquarters of the American Red Cross. In his remarks, he referred to Gail J. McGovern, president and chief executive officer, and Charles S. Shimanski, senior vice

president of disaster relief, American Red Cross; Gov. Christopher J. Christie of New Jersey; Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New

York; Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City; and PO Daniel Todd, USCG, rescue swimmer.

## Remarks Following a Tour of Storm Damage in Brigantine, New Jersey October 31, 2012

*Governor Christopher J. Christie of New Jersey.* Good afternoon, everybody. And thank you all for coming today. I want to thank the Members who are here as well. And obviously, I want to thank the President.

We spent a significant afternoon together surveying the damage up and down the New Jersey coastline; we were on Marine One together to be able to show the President that personally. I had an opportunity to see it, and we had an opportunity to discuss it at length. And then, going over to the shelter here, being able to meet with folks, to have them see the President and his concern and the concern all of us have for making sure that things get back to normal as quickly as possible.

We have lots of challenges. Our challenges now is to get back to normalcy. And so the things we need to do is to make sure that we get power restored as quickly as possible, make sure that people have clean drinking water and waste water treatment plants are working, hospitals are taken care of the way they need to, and that we get kids back to school.

And so I discussed all those issues today with the President, and I'm pleased to report that he has sprung into action immediately to help get us those things while we were in the car riding together. So I want to thank him for that. He has worked incredibly closely with me since before the storm hit. I think this is our sixth conversation since the weekend, and it's been a great working relationship to make sure that we're doing the jobs that people elected us to do. And I cannot thank the President enough for his personal concern and compassion for our State and for the people of our State. And I heard it on the phone conversations with him, and I was able to witness it today personally.

And so we're going to continue to work. The State government is here. We're doing what

we need to do. We're coordinating with FEMA, and I want to thank Administrator Fugate for being here and for the input he's already had in helping to make our operation even better. And we will move on from here.

What I said yesterday I really mean. I know there has got to be sorrow, and you see that, and the President has seen that today in the eyes, the faces of a lot of the folks he's met. And that sorrow is appropriate; we've suffered some loss. Luckily, we haven't suffered that much loss of life, and we thank God for that. But we have suffered losses, and this is the worst storm that I've seen in my lifetime in this State. But we cannot permit that sorrow to replace the resilience that I know all New Jerseyans have. And so we will get up, and we'll get this thing rebuilt, and we'll put things back together, because that's what this State is all about and always has been all about.

And so, for all of you who are here—and I met a bunch of you today at Brigantine who disregarded my admonition—[laughter]—to get the hell out of here; you're forgiven this time. You are forgiven this time, but not for much longer. We've got to make sure—when all of you look around and you see all this destruction, that's fine. But you know what, all that stuff can be replaced. You look to your right and to your left, to your husband or wife, your son or your daughter, right, those are the things that can't be replaced. So I'm glad that we don't have that kind of loss of life to have to deal with.

So I want to thank him for being here today, for bringing his personal attention to it. And it's my honor to introduce to all of you the President of the United States.

*The President.* Good job, Chris. Thank you, everybody. Let me just make sure that I acknowledge the folks who are here, because they've played an important role in this: first of