

morning before I came out here, he reminded me of some time we spent together way back in 1986. That seems like—I still remember 1986, but vaguely now. [Laughter] And he and I, as you heard him say, were on something called the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission. Why? Because the Lower Mississippi is the poorest area of America.

And we started in Illinois, in Southern Illinois, and went all the way to the mouth of the Mississippi, past New Orleans. And we went up and down the length of that great river, into little towns and to rural areas, talking to people about what we needed to do so that they could lift themselves out of poverty, so they could educate their children. Now, 12 years later, a lot of the things that were nightmares to us then are problems that are being solved.

This is a better country than it was 6 years ago. And if we bear down and choose progress over partisanship in this election, it will be better 2 years from now. But I want you to understand that it requires you to be vigilant. It requires you to say, “We are going to build on what we have done, not rest on it.” And I will say again, I served as a Governor for 12 years. We’ve got the smallest Federal Government we’ve had in 35 years. I’m proud of that. But as a result of our policy, it is now more important who the State Governors are, not less, because it’s education, it’s health care, it’s the environment, it’s the economy. It matters.

So I ask you to go out here in the remaining days of this election—we’re got several weeks—and first of all, send a message to Congress that you’re tired of the partisan politics and you’d like to be considered first; you’d like for people to think about everybody outside of Washington, not everybody inside of Washington. You’d like to think about our future and our children.

And secondly, go out here and talk to your friends and neighbors and tell them that we’ve got a good ticket for Governor and Lieutenant Governor, and they deserve their consideration. They deserve their vote. They deserve their support, and there’s a lot riding on it for the future of your children.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:04 p.m. in the auditorium of the Mercantile Club. In his remarks, he referred to Mike Cherry, co-chair, Democratic Business Council; Jim Levin, event co-chair; Mayor Richard M. Daley; Michael Madigan, speaker of the house, and Emil Jones, senate minority leader, Illinois State Legislature; Mary Lou Kearns, candidate for Lieutenant Governor; and Jo Poshard, wife of Representative Glenn Poshard.

Statement on Hurricane Georges

September 25, 1998

Hurricane Georges, which is bearing down on South Florida, has already cost many American citizens their lives in Puerto Rico, as well as caused huge human and material harm throughout the Caribbean. As we prepare for the impact of the storm on the mainland, we are working to bring relief to those already affected by the storm, and to help them to begin rebuilding.

Yesterday, I declared Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to be disaster areas. Already, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has sent over 200 emergency relief workers to assess the damage. I have sent Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Andrew Cuomo and Small Business Administrator Aida Alvarez to Puerto Rico, to report to me on what further steps need to be taken. We are gravely concerned about the loss of life and property in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and will continue to work at the highest levels to bring the islands and their people back.

We are also working to help those affected outside our borders. Yesterday, I sent an emergency response team from the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, together with relief workers and supplies. I have asked Hugh Palmer, the head of Humanitarian Response Programs at the Agency for International Development, to go to the Dominican Republic this weekend to assess the damage, supervise our efforts, and report to me on what further should be done.

Our thoughts and prayers are with those who have felt the force of this storm.

Statement on the National Economy

September 25, 1998

Today, we received more proof that our economic strategy is working to deepen America's prosperity and widen the circle of opportunity to more American families. Over the past year, personal incomes have increased 5.0 percent—much faster than the rate of inflation. While our economic progress is strong, now is not a time to rest; it is a time to build.

To keep our economy on the right track, we must maintain our three-part economic strategy. We must maintain our fiscal discipline by reserving every penny of the budget surplus until we have strengthened Social Security. We must continue to invest in our people through education, health care, and research and development. And we have to continue to lead the global economy and meet our obligation to the International Monetary Fund.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

September 20

In the morning, the President attended a brunch for Representative Donald Payne of New Jersey aboard the cruise ship *Spirit of Washington* at Pier 4 in Southwest.

In the early evening, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to New York City. Later, the President met with Prime Minister Romano Prodi of Italy at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel.

September 21

The President announced his intention to nominate David Michaels to be Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety, and Health at the Department of Energy.

The President announced his intention to nominate Eljay B. Bowron to be Inspector General of the Department of the Interior.

The President announced his intention to nominate William B. Bader to be Associate Director of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Information Agency.

The President declared an emergency in the U.S. Virgin Islands and ordered Federal aid to supplement territory and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Georges on September 21 and continuing.

The President declared an emergency in Puerto Rico and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Georges on September 21 and continuing.

The White House announced that Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary will make a working visit to Washington on October 7.

September 22

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

September 23

In the morning, the President met with President Nelson Mandela of South Africa in the President's Study.

In the afternoon, the President met separately with Head of State Abdulsalam Abubakar of Nigeria and with Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong of Singapore in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to appoint Daniel L. Doctoroff as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The President declared a major disaster in Texas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding associated with Tropical Storm Frances beginning and September 9 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Louisiana and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Tropical Storm Frances beginning September 9 and continuing.

September 24

In the afternoon, the President hosted a working lunch for Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia in the Old Family Dining