

And that's exactly what we're doing right now.

Another area of cost, for example, is debris removal. See, we know what our obligations are. We just, by the way, cut through a lot of redtape to allow for Federal debris removal from private property if the mayors were to sign a form basically designating parts of their city to be cleared by—private property to be cleared by the Federal Government. Now, we're beginning to understand what that—how much of that territory will be cleared by the Government and what our cost obligation is. And when we get those costs up, we'll be happy to share those with the United States Congress and then work through how we can pay for all this.

Thank you all very much.

Q. Mr. President, when you look at expenditures, do you have the list on the offset side?

The President. No, let me make sure you understand where we're headed. It's hard to work with Congress until we fully understand the size and scope of what is going to be expected for us to pay. And so we're in the process of now gathering that information, so that when we sit at a table, we're not guessing. It's not going to be perfect, but it's going to have some size and scope of what we're dealing with.

Now we're going to have, by the way, have to calculate in the effects of Rita. And once we do that—but it doesn't happen—see, you seem to think that somehow you go down there, and overnight it's clear what we owe. But it requires assessment and inventorying of—like, for example, sewage treatment facilities. It takes a while to understand how many of those need to be repaired and what the cost will be. And that's what we're in the process of doing.

Q. —without targeting expenditures, how about targeting offsets?

The President. We'll work with Congress on that, of course, and—but the point is, is that we're going to work together and come up with a solution that will, obviously, help deal with the budget and—but first and foremost, the Federal Government has got obligations by law, and I want to understand those obligations and the extent of those obli-

gations and, as best we can, estimate the cost of those obligations.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:57 a.m. at the Pentagon. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad; Gov. Rick Perry of Texas; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Mayor Lyda Ann Thomas of Galveston, TX; Rear Adm. Larry L. Hereth, USCG, commander, Fifth Coast Guard District; Vice Adm. Thad W. Allen, USCG, U.S. Coast Guard Chief of Staff; Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, senior Al Qaida leader responsible for planning the September 11 attack, who was captured in Pakistan on March 1, 2003; and Abu Faraj al-Libbi, senior Al Qaida associate arrested in Pakistan on April 30.

Remarks Following Discussions With King Abdullah II of Jordan

September 22, 2005

President Bush. Your Majesty, welcome back. We have just had a wide-ranging and fruitful discussion about the Middle East. I want to thank you very much for your vision of a peaceful world, one in which people are able to practice their religion freely and one in which women are empowered. Your Majesty is a leader, and the United States of America respects his leadership a lot.

One of the things I asked His Majesty to do was to go to visit with Prime Minister Sharon and President Abbas, to help in the peace process there, and he's graciously agreed to go. I want to thank you, sir, for taking a leadership role. It will be very helpful to have your voice of reason there to talk to both leaders.

Relations between Jordan and America are strong and important and vital. And again, I want to welcome you and thank you very much for your advice and counsel on a lot of different subjects.

King Abdullah. Thank you, Mr. President, always a pleasure to be back. And thank you very much for always the kind support that you've given me and all Jordanians.

As you said so, we've had some very fruitful discussions on the peace process and Iraq. And I want to thank you again for the support that we have gotten from you for so many years on giving hope to Israelis and Palestinians. And I know that you want to find a solution that Israelis and Palestinians can live in peace and harmony, and I hope that, if we can help in that respect, that is a great honor for us.

Thank you for allowing us to see you again, sir.

President Bush. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:48 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; and President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks at the Federal Emergency Management Agency and an Exchange With Reporters

September 23, 2005

The President. I stopped by the center to get a full briefing on Rita. We're now facing yet another big storm, and I appreciate the folks here who are working so hard to help the folks on the ground prepare for the storm.Q05

I'm going down to San Antonio to see the prepositioned assets, to understand the relationship—or that the Federal Government's role is to support State and local governments. I want to watch that happen. Then I'm going to go out to our NORTHCOM headquarters to watch the interface between our United States military and again, the State and local authorities. Our job is to assist—prepare for and assist the State and local people to save lives and to help these people get back on their feet.Q05

Again, I want to thank the people here in Washington who are working with the folks in the field to do everything we possibly can to prepare for this second big storm that's coming into the Gulf of Mexico.

Thank you all.

President's Upcoming Visit to Texas and Colorado

Q. Sir, what good can you do going down to the hurricane zone? Might you get in the way, Mr. President?

The President. One thing I won't do is get in the way.

Q. But I mean, how—what good can you actually do? I mean, isn't there a risk of you and your entourage getting in the way?

The President. No, there will be no risk of me getting in the way, I promise you. We're going to make sure that we're not in the way of the operations. What I am going to do is observe the relationship between the State and local government, particularly out in Colorado Springs. That's what I want to see.

See, NORTHCOM is the main entity that interfaces, that uses Federal assets, Federal troops to interface with local and State government. I want to watch that relationship. It's an important relationship, and I need to understand how it works better.

Q. But critics might say this is overcompensation for the response to Katrina.

The President. We will make sure that my entourage does not get in the way of people doing their job, which will be search and rescue immediately. And rest assured, I understand that we must not and will not interfere with the important work that will be going forward.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:32 p.m. at the Federal Emergency Management Agency Headquarters.

Remarks on Presenting the Congressional Medal of Honor to Tibor Rubin

September 23, 2005

Laura and I welcome you to the White House. This is a special occasion for our Nation. We're here to pay tribute to a soldier with an extraordinary devotion to his brothers in arms and an unshakeable love for his adopted homeland of America.