

Remarks Following a Tour of Tornado Damage in Lafayette

February 8, 2008

The President. Phil and June Spears have just—I looked in their eyes and saw incredible sadness and worry.

Phil Spears. It's true.

The President. And I know the Governor joins me in sharing our concerns with you. But I hope a couple of things become evident to you. One, there's a lot of people who care about you, total strangers showing up here in this community to help you get back on your feet.

And the Government has got a role to play. And I want to thank the Senators and Congressmen for being here, because they know that there is programs available for you. And one of the things the people have got to do is call a phone number. Life has been turned upside down here. If you've been affected, you ought to call 1-800-621-3362—1-800-621-3362. And that's where you can find out the help that is available.

What happened is, is that the Governor and his team quickly moved as this storm moved through this—moved through the State of Tennessee, and he made an assessment, and he sent the paperwork up to me. And because he moved quickly, I was able to sign a disaster declaration that then frees help. And so we want the folks to know that there is help from the Federal Government, and he can get the number I just outlined. But there's also going to be a lot of help from loving neighbors.

And we're sorry you're going through what you're going through. You know, life sometimes is unfair, and you don't get to play the hand that you wanted to play.

Mr. Spears. That's true.

The President. But the question is, when you get dealt the hand, how do you play it? And I've come away with this impression of the folks in Macon County: One, they're down-to-earth, good, hard-working people. They have a respect for the Almighty. And this community is going to be as strong as ever. That's what I think.

Mr. Spears. Yes, sir.

The President. I bet you feel the same way.

Mr. Spears. Yes, sir. If it wasn't for my friends, I don't know what I'd do.

The President. And you're going to find you got some new friends showing up too——

Mr. Spears. Appreciate it.

The President. ——people you've never heard of, they don't know who you are, total strangers. But when they know there's a neighbor in need, they'll come and help you.

And I appreciate you giving me a chance to come by, and I know the folks traveling with me appreciate. We're so sorry you're going through what you're going through, but there's help, and that's what you've got to know.

Anyway, God bless. Thank you.

June Spears. Appreciate it.

Mr. Spears. Thank you.

The President. Yes. Hang in there, brother.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:43 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Phil Bredesen of Tennessee.

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.

February 2

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

February 3

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

February 4

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister-elect Samak Sundaravej of Thailand to congratulate him on his appointment. He then had separate telephone conversations with New

York Giants president and chief executive officer John K. Mara, chairman and executive vice president Steve Tisch, head coach Tom Coughlin, and quarterback Eli Manning to congratulate them on their February 3 Super Bowl victory.

February 5

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President declared a major disaster in Missouri and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding from January 7–10.

The President announced his intention to nominate Hugo Llorens to be Ambassador to Honduras.

The President announced his intention to designate John L. Morrison as a member of the Intelligence Oversight Board on the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board.

February 6

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had separate telephone conversations with Governor Bob Riley of Alabama, Governor Haley Barbour of Mississippi, Governor Mike Beebe of Arkansas, Governor Steve Beshear of Kentucky, and Governor Phil Bredesen of Tennessee to discuss the damage and recovery efforts in the areas struck by severe storms and tornadoes on February 5.

The White House announced that the President will host Secretary General Jakob Gijsbert "Jaap" de Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization at the White House on February 29.

The President declared a major disaster in Hawaii and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, high surf, flooding, and mudslides from December 4–7.

The President announced his intention to nominate Linda Thomas-Greenfield to be Ambassador to Liberia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Susan D. Peppler to be Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (Community Planning and Development).

The President announced his intention to nominate Ralph E. Martinez to be a member of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission.

February 7

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The White House announced that due to the President's travel to Tennessee on Friday, he will now welcome President Amadou Toumani Toure of Mali to the White House on February 12.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Donald Tusk of Poland to the White House on March 10.

The President declared a major disaster in Arkansas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding beginning on February 5 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Tennessee and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding from February 5–6.

February 8

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Nashville, TN, where, upon arrival, he met with Wilson County Emergency Management employee David Harmon, who rescued an 11-month-old baby after the February 5 tornadoes.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Lafayette, TN. While en route aboard Marine One, he, Governor Phil Bredesen of Tennessee, and Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator R. David Paulison took an aerial tour of the areas damaged by the February 5 tornadoes.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Camp David, MD.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Bush will host Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen of Denmark and his wife, Anne-Mette Rasmussen, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, on February 29 and March 1.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia to Washington on March 19.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted February 5

Clyde R. Cook, Jr.,
of North Carolina, to be U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of North Carolina for the term of 4 years, vice Charles R. Reavis.

Hugo Llorens,
of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Honduras.

Marianne Matuzic Myles,
of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Cape Verde.

Submitted February 6

Ralph E. Martinez,
of Florida, to be a member of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission of the United States for a term expiring September 30, 2010, vice Laramie Faith McNamara.

Susan D. Pepler,
of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, vice Pamela Hughes Patenaude.

Linda Thomas-Greenfield,
of Louisiana, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Liberia.

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Withdrawn February 7

Paul DeCamp,
of Virginia, to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor, vice Tammy Dee McCutchen, resigned, which was sent to the Senate on January 9, 2007.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released February 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Office of Management and Budget Director James A. Nussle

Transcript of remarks by National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace *

Statement by the Press Secretary on the terrorist attack in Dimona, Israel

Fact sheet: The President's FY09 Budget

Released February 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Press Secretary on the situation in Burma

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 3432

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Missouri

Released February 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Tony Fratto

* This transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 5.