

Angeles or any other city has rendered a verdict on America. If we are to remain the most vibrant and hopeful Nation on Earth we must allow our diversity to bring us together, not drive us apart. This must be the rallying cry of good and decent people.

For their sake, for all our sakes, we must build a future where, in every city across this country, empty rage gives way to hope, where poverty and despair give way to opportunity. After peace is restored to Los Angeles, we must then turn again to the underlying causes of such tragic events. We must keep on working to create a climate of understanding and tolerance, a climate that refuses to accept racism, bigotry, anti-Semitism, and hate of any kind, anytime, anywhere.

Tonight, I ask all Americans to lend their hearts, their voices, and their prayers to the healing of hatred. As President, I took an

oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution, an oath that requires every President to establish justice and ensure domestic tranquility. That duty is foremost in my mind tonight.

Let me say to the people saddened by the spectacle of the past few days, to the good people of Los Angeles, caught at the center of this senseless suffering: The violence will end. Justice will be served. Hope will return.

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

Note: The President spoke at 9:03 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. The address was broadcast live on nationwide radio and television. The proclamation and Executive order on law and order in Los Angeles are listed in Appendix E at the end of this volume.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Cabinet Members

May 4, 1992

Federal Aid to Cities

Q. Mr. President, what hopes do you have for any long-range help for urban areas like Los Angeles?

The President. We have some very good proposals out on the table right now, proposals that clearly have come of age. But we're going to be talking about that today and tomorrow. Today we're probably going to think more about what we can do immediately in the aftermath of this violence. And then tomorrow, we'll put it in a little longer term perspective.

But I'm very pleased that it's calmed down out there. And we will do everything we can to support the people out there, to make things tranquil, and then to help get to the core of the problems.

Q. Do you intend to visit any of the damage sites?

The President. We're talking now about the schedule. It will probably change from what had been planned. As you know, I planned a trip out there for some time, so

it fits in very nicely. And we had a briefing this morning from the Attorney General, who's here, Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Dave Jeremiah about the Federal presence on the ground and the state of play on the ground. And now we're going to be talking with our top people here as to how our various Cabinet Departments can assist. And then we'll have people going out there, and by Thursday a schedule will be worked out where I will be able to meet with the key participants in this recovery and those who also have responsibility for the long run.

Q. Are you saying, Mr. President, you have no idea what the core of this problem is?

The President. No, I'm not—didn't say that at all, Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International]. I don't know how you could conclude that from what I just said. We have some very good ideas that we have out there that would have been extraordinarily helpful if they'd been put into

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effect. We think homeownership is a very good concept, and we've been fighting for it for a long time. So it's not that we have no idea whatsoever. I don't imagine how you could have concluded that from what I just said.

Q. You said you were going to look into the core of it.

The President. Well, we don't think we know all the answers. And I think you learn from every incident. As history shows, that after each one of these uprising, these things that have happened, people have taken a look to see what they could do to help. And certainly we're willing to do that.

I feel obligated to do that. And it's not like we have no idea whatsoever. If people had listened to some of our Cabinet Departments up on the Hill, we might be a little further along.

Q. How soon would you hope to see U.S. troops out of Los Angeles?

The President. I want to go to work here. Thank you very much.

Note: The exchange began at 9:15 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to D.E. Jeremiah, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Remarks at the Unveiling Ceremony for the Portrait of House Republican Leader Robert Michel

May 4, 1992

Thank you all very much. This is a wonderful occasion, and we need more like it. And may I salute the Chaplain of the House, Jim Ford, thank him for the invocation. I thought he was giving a speech out there, but it was a fine invocation; delighted to see him.

Of course, being with Bob Dole and Tom Foley and Dan Rostenkowski in this friendly, wonderful setting is very, very special. And we're here to honor our beloved Republican leader. I am glad to be here. Whenever you hear about somebody being done in oil in this town, you can't be sure that that means painting or boiling. [*Laughter*] But today it means honoring.

And I will confess it took me a while to convince Bob that it's an honor to be framed in Washington and hung in the Capitol. [*Laughter*] But before the portrait is hung, Bob wanted to make sure it would do what the Speaker talked about, play in Peoria. Well, it will, in Peoria and the Nation. And the reason is very simple, and I think you all have heard it here today from his friends, all of whom I have great respect for. To know you, Bob Michel, is to respect you.

And for 36 years Bob Michel has, indeed, embodied what is best in American politics

and best about the traditions of the House of Representatives. And I speak of honesty and fairplay and character and integrity, all the qualities that Dan and Bob Dole and Tom Foley mentioned. A willingness to govern, to work things out, to fight his opponents tooth and nail during the day and yet remain a good friend, someone they can talk to during the evenings.

And Bob Michel has stood up for fiscal sanity. I think he's done a lot to help our economy. He's helped keep our military strong. And it's true that he can be a fierce partisan. After all, that goes with the American psyche; that's the way we are. And Bob has been a true American. He won two Bronze Stars for his service in World War II; then in serving his district, our party, and most of all, the future well-being of our country.

I haven't seen this portrait over here, Corinne, but I'm sure it's going to depict what we admire in your husband: a man of conscience, a man whose word is good, a man who means what he says, says what he means, a man that one fellow Illinoisan would have loved very much. Remember Lincoln's words, "The noblest work of God is an honest man." And you've been all of that, Bob, and more. And ask anyone who is