

build and get started once again. And everyone is—[*inaudible*]. We have sat here the last 2 days and have shared more with each other about our businesses—[*inaudible*].

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. That is wonderful. Yes, you know, the approach was to try to coordinate it. We've got all these different Agencies, and I think there are now 10 of these—I thought it was 7; it's up to 10 now—of these centers. The Federal Government can be so complex because there are so many different Agencies, and we're trying to get it in what is called this one-stop shopping mode, yes, one-stop shopping mode. If it just continues like that, I think we can move faster.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Well, best of luck to you, to you all. And I'm impressed with the fact that some of these people that come in to help, to help fill out the forms, are from all across the country, Atlanta or Puerto

Rico even, Niagara, yes, Texas. Putting in a plug for the Texans down here. [*Laughter*] No, but it's good. It's a good thing.

Q. One more group to meet down there.

The President. There's one more stop down there? All right. Good luck to you now in your business. Lots of luck, sir.

Mr. Robertson. Sent a T-shirt to you.

The President. Did you? Wait a minute, you gave me a T-shirt, I'll give you my—here, take that, souvenir. If she makes you put on a tie, why, you can wear that. Okay.

Ms. Hagen. Thank you very much.

The President. Well, good luck. I'll get out of here.

Note: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. at Harvard Recreation Center. In his remarks, he referred to Harvard Disaster Application Center managers Ava Hagen, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and Maurice Robertson, California Department of Social Services.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With State and Local Officials in Los Angeles

May 29, 1992

Q. Sir, why do you think you're running third in recent California polls?

The President. Hey, John [John Cochran, NBC News], we're not taking any questions today.

Q. No?

The President. This is a nonpolitical visit. I've heard some very encouraging news about Federal cooperation and working with the State, localities, private sector. And I'm out here to try to follow up on a visit to see if we can be of further help to the people in this area. So, I prefer to keep it on that basis and thus will not be able to help you, as I wasn't able to help you yesterday—[*laughter*—different setting. Thank you very much.

Q. —about politics, sir? When are you going to start defining the—

The President. After our convention, I think we'll start working on that.

Q. After the convention?

Q. Are you deliberately waiting, sir?

The President. I'm not going to take any questions. You didn't hear what I said in the beginning. I want to find out from these people how the effort is going. Federal, State, local, to help people that have been hurt. And that's what this is about. And if I get diverted talking about these other subjects, it isn't going to help anybody. So, let's try to keep it on that basis. Thank you very much.

Q. Do you think the drive for the urban agenda is losing steam in Congress, though?

Q. Mr. President, are you optimistic about Mr. Ueberroth's Rebuild L.A.? Are you optimistic about what he—

The President. Anything he tackles, he can get done. That's the way I look at it.

Note: The exchange began at 11:08 a.m. in

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the Grecian Room at the Biltmore Hotel. Peter Ueberroth, chairman of the Rebuild In his remarks, the President referred to L.A. Committee.

Remarks to Town Hall of California in Los Angeles

May 29, 1992

Thank you, Lod, for that very warm and very generous introduction and welcome back to Los Angeles. May I greet our Mayor, Tom Bradley, Governor Pete Wilson, and single out two of your former Governors, one sitting on the left and the other on the right of mine, read nothing into that politically—[laughter]—George Deukmejian and Pat Brown. It's a great pleasure to see both of them. And may I single out Pat Saiki, our head of SBA; and our fine Secretary of HUD, Jack Kemp, who is trying to do an awful lot to help over here, Jack, a fellow Californian. And to Adrienne and the others who are officials here with Town Hall, thank you for giving me access to what I am told is one of the most prestigious forums in all of California.

This morning I was over in South Central talking with some of the people that are trying to restore that neighborhood, put it back together. We have a long way to go. But let me say this: I was really struck by the progress that's already been made in bringing this great city back. And I was struck by the spirit of those individuals that were there, not as spear carriers from some TV shot, but were there actually filling out the loans. And these were people that had been devastated by what happened, and there they were with faith in God and with the spirit that they could make it back. I wish everybody could have seen that.

Now, this remarkable effort has brought together Federal, State, and local officials, and most importantly, thousands of volunteers, churches, and neighborhood groups. I think we've seen enough of the horrible images over and over. And my plea is, how about some of the wonderful things going on? Yes, Los Angeles will come back. And with all due respect, I hope the media will tell this heartening story loud and clear and give it as much attention as the looters and rioters received just a few weeks ago.

As you may know, at the outset of the riots I pledged to do whatever was necessary to restore order. And I ordered the federalization, after consultation with Tom Bradley and Pete Wilson, of the National Guard and dispatched several thousand Federal law enforcement officials to L.A. We also had several thousand troops stand by for any emergency, 7th Army and the Marines. And I've been pleased to hear that that swift response did a great deal to stabilize, help stabilize I should say because the LAPD and others were out there helping as well, certainly the sheriff's department, help stabilize an explosive situation.

We were also able to get disaster relief to Los Angeles in record time. Seven relief centers opened in the first week after the rioting, three more a few days later. We have now 10. Housing assistance checks were being mailed to applicants within 3 days. And the SBA, and I would again credit Pat Saiki, with us today, was able to approve loans in weeks instead of months. Within 3 weeks the first checks were cut, and that is a record for this kind of disaster assistance. Our response was massive; it was quick. And to my team, led by David Kearns and Al DelliBovi, and to all the people who made it work, my thanks for a job very well done.

I am proud of what the Federal Government was able to do, but there should be no misunderstanding: Federal assistance offers no reward for rioting. This help has been directed to the victims, not to the perpetrators of the violence. To the criminals who subjected this city to 3 days of terror and hate, the message has got to be unequivocal: Lawlessness cannot be explained away. It will not be excused. And it must be punished.

In the starkest possible terms, this tragedy made clear the great unfinished business that we face as a Nation. We've got to strike