

Remarks at the Asian-Pacific American Heritage Dinner in Los Angeles

May 29, 1992

Thank you, Governor. And listen, it is a joy to be here. In a sense, it feels like a reunion. It's good to be here with Senator Seymour, who you met earlier, John Seymour, doing a superb job in Washington. I'm very proud of Pat Saiki, who came out with us yesterday, the Administrator of the SBA. Let me just say this, SBA moved faster in this situation than in any other situation of this kind across the country. And Pat, thank you for your leadership in that regard.

May I salute my old friend Johnny Tsu here. We go back a long time. Susan Allan, Matt Fong, one of our most senior elected officials, Inder Singh, Elizabeth Szu, and let me acknowledge this marvelous choir and the fantastic band. I'll tell you, that was a great combo. You guys ought to go on the road for "The Star-Spangled Banner." Thank you all very, very much. First class. Then, of course, the honorees, the eight that you have selected tonight, the men and women we honor tonight, and all of you. And what a moving welcome from the 442d Battalion, not only the most highly decorated unit but also a dramatic, inspiring personal story. I'm proud to be with you all to honor the Asian-Pacific Heritage Month.

On days like this, America celebrates our exuberant diversity. The genius of this land is how we take the bright, varied pieces that immigrants bring with them from all over the world and together create the proud, strong mosaic that is America. One passion unites everyone who comes to these shores: the yearning to reach for a piece of the American dream. Millions of people, your parents, or their parents, maybe even some of you, yourselves, chose to come here, to the land where we make our dreams come true.

I think of Quang Trinh, a young Vietnamese "boat person," kissing the ground when he arrived and calling America "Freedom Country." Asian-Pacific Americans came here seeking freedom. You came here wanting to work for it, determined to accept only the success you could carve out with your

own discipline, sacrifice, and of course, tireless quest for excellence.

When we were privileged, Barbara and I, were privileged to represent this country in China, Barbara and I felt strongly that everyone could learn from the Asian culture with its emphasis on hard work and family. Like you, we should all strive for the success that comes not from luck and shortcuts but from education and merit. Like you, we should live by an inner moral compass that stresses not entitlement but personal responsibility. In your homes each generation grows guided by values proven by the test of time. Children revere their parents, their parents' parents, and the wisdom of morality which they embody. In the words of a Chinese proverb, "One generation plants the trees, another gets the shade."

In this land, Asian-Americans have created your own success and become full participants in the American dream. Through this proud determination, you've contributed to the strength of this entire Nation. Think of the legacies of so many who have enriched our lives, and this is but a handful, an honor roll of men and women like I.M. Pei; Yo Yo Ma, who performed so beautifully in the White House just a few nights ago; Seiji Ozawa; recently we all marveled at Kristi Yamaguchi; Michael Chang; Nobel Prize winners Leo Esaki and Yuan Lee; public servants like the late Spark Matsunaga, a dear friend; Hiram Fong; Danny Inouye; Patsy Mink; S.I. Hayakawa; Ambassador Julia Chang Bloch. Then of course, I take special pride in our Federal Agency heads Pat Saiki, Elaine Chao, Wendy Gramm; men of courage like Ellison Onizuka; and Taylor Wang and Damon Kanuha, who gave their lives for their country in the Gulf war.

You have contributed more than inspiration. We need look no further than your commitment to the entrepreneurial spirit to see how you've helped our country and helped our economy. You've built dreams.

You've also built jobs. You've opened up opportunities for all Americans by bolstering economic growth.

We look to job-creation leaders like those that we honor: Maryles Casto, David Lee, Bob Nakasone. I told Bob that I'm sorry Barbara's not out here because if he ever runs for anything, Barbara Bush will be his campaign manager. I'll guarantee you that, another great admirer. But another old friend over here, Jhoon Rhee; Ram Thukkaram; Ted Ngoy; Jang Lee, another man who I saw in action the other day in Koreatown; and the late John Fang, represented here tonight by his wife, Florence, another friend of mine.

Like these, the Asian-Americans' proud hold on the American dream seems secure. I still believe that today, even after this terrible tragedy that part of the Asian-American community suffered. I went through Koreatown, and I saw how a community that had been building its roots and reaching out for its dreams for 25 years could be reduced overnight to ashes, over 1,600 stores burned or ransacked in the rampage. I talked with victims like Helen Lim, who said that with each statistic America must realize that "It's a life, a human being is suffering."

One person told me how teenager Edward Song Lee said to his dad that "the Korean community needs my help," and then went out unarmed to protect his neighborhood, only to be killed in the crossfire. I heard of devastation that spread through Chinatown, Japantown, Vietnamese and Cambodian neighborhoods in Long Beach. I was heartsick to see how low humanity can sink. But on the same streets, on the same streets, I also saw how high humanity can rise.

Americans everywhere condemned the violence and the looting. Victimized neighbors, black, Hispanic, Asian-American, came together to renounce darkness and embrace healing. The buildings were destroyed but, you could feel it, not the spirit, not the spirit. The community will rebuild not just to make things the way they were but to make things better.

You've drawn on your inner strength for courage and hope. Thousands of you marched together to reclaim your streets.

And even as cinders smoldered, volunteers started cleaning and family storeowners started rebuilding. You have years of your lives' work invested in your communities and thousands of years of heritage to guide you. For those not in the devastated areas, you have support from the Asian-American community all across this country. And even after all that's happened, you still take to heart in the old Korean saying, "After sorrow, joy."

The Federal Government will help. We're trying hard to help. I wanted to come back here 3 weeks later to see what we are doing to help. I'm proud of our Federal Agencies. Pat Saiki here came out the day after the riots and worked tirelessly to expedite relief, especially for small-business owners who are the heart of your community. We will help, and we'll be here for you until the sprouts of a new spring of hope can be seen on Vermont Avenue.

America has embarked on a new chapter, a chapter of healing. Your Asian-American community shows how to begin. You came to this country to earn your share of the American dream, and you won't let this tragedy shatter it for you. You remind this Nation that the Asian-American values, freedom, family, self-determination, and opportunity, are the treasures of this land and the goals of our people.

In Asia I learned a lot. And I learned that the phoenix is one of the four sacred creatures in Chinese tradition. It can become for this country the symbol of our healing, for the phoenix is a bird reborn triumphantly from its own ashes. Shopowners in Los Angeles are resurrecting their physical lives right now. Together, let's do the same work for our spirit.

I wanted to be here today not just to speak to those whose close-in community had been victimized but to other Asian-American leaders from California and some from across this country. I have great respect, as I said at the beginning, for the values that unite you all, and I would say, unite us. I really wanted to come here and say thank you for this broad community's proud and very positive contribution to this land today and in the future.

May God bless each and every one of you

and this wonderful land that we call home, the greatest, the freest country on the face of the Earth, the United States of America. Thank you all very much for letting me come.

Note: The President spoke at 6:40 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency at Broadway Plaza. In his remarks, he referred to John Tsu, president, Asian American Political Education

Foundation; Susan Allan, chairman, Pan American Chamber of Commerce; Matt Fong, member, California State Board of Equalization; Inder Singh, president, National Federation of Indian Americans; and Elizabeth Szu, coordinator, Asian/Pacific Islander American Coalition. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Nomination of Robert L. Gallucci To Be an Assistant Secretary of State

May 29, 1992

The President today announced his intention to nominate Robert L. Gallucci, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State for Politico-Military Affairs. He would succeed Richard A. Clarke.

Currently Dr. Gallucci serves as a Senior Coordinator for the Deputy Secretary at the Department of State in Washington, DC. Prior to this, he served as Deputy Executive Chairman for the United Nations Special Commission, 1991–92; professor at the National War College in Washington, DC, 1988–91; and Deputy Director-General of

the Multinational Force and Observers in Rome, Italy, 1984–88. Dr. Gallucci served at the Department of State as Office Director for the Office of Politico-Military Affairs, 1983–84; and the Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, 1982–83.

Dr. Gallucci graduated from the State University of New York at Stony Brook (B.A., 1967) and Brandeis University (M.A. and Ph.D., 1973). He was born February 11, 1946, in Brooklyn, NY. Dr. Gallucci is married, has two children, and resides in Arlington, VA.

Nomination of Joseph Monroe Segars To Be United States Ambassador to Cape Verde

May 29, 1992

The President today announced his intention to nominate Joseph Monroe Segars, of Pennsylvania, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the Republic of Cape Verde. He would succeed Francis Terry McNamara.

Currently Mr. Segars serves as a member of the Senior Seminar of the Foreign Service Institute at the Department of State. Prior to this, he served as a career counselor in the Senior Officer Division, Department of State Office of Personnel, 1989–91; Dep-

uty Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, 1986–89; and as Consul General of the U.S. Embassy in Lagos, Nigeria, 1983–86. From 1981 to 1983, Mr. Segars served as desk officer for Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and Swaziland in the Office of Southern African Affairs at the Department of State.

Mr. Segars graduated from the University of Pennsylvania (B.S., 1961). He was born January 6, 1938, in Hartsville, SC. Mr. Segars is married, has one child, and resides in Washington, DC.