

the money they do earn. Or you can increase the education and skill level of people.

Now, let me say, we're getting more high-wage jobs into the economy. And I want to support a middle class tax cut like the one I have outlined in the middle class bill of rights that will give people more take-home pay. But the most important thing of all is to do it in a way that will support the mission of education and training, not only for our schoolchildren but for the adults I met at that community college today, because we know now that for the first time in history, we're going to have economic recovery and job creation that don't benefit ordinary people unless we can raise the education levels of all the people in the United States in the work force, the adults. That means we've got to get more people to the colleges, more people back to the community colleges. We've got to help people work and train and raise their kids at the same time. That's what I talked about today.

Whether you are a Democrat or a Republican, I hope you will support these ideas because they're American ideas. Let's give a tax deduction for the educational expenses that people have after high school, whether they're in a college or a community college. Let's let working people invest in an IRA, an individual retirement account, but be able to withdraw money from that tax-free for education, for health care, for caring for their folks. Let's give tax relief to working people for their children in their homes so they can help be successful parents and successful workers. And finally, I propose to take all these Government programs that are paid to train people and consolidate the money. And if you qualify because you're unemployed or because you're a low-income person, if you want to go to school, I propose, in effect, letting

you send a check to the local community college and not having to go through all these Government programs and redtape. Just go to school, get the education, go forward. Just do it.

Now, folks, these are good ideas. They're American ideas. I don't care who gets credit for it, but I want us to do them. There is no party label that will change the reality that the most important thing we can do for Americans is to give everybody a good education, give people the skills to compete and win in this global economy, and give not only our schoolchildren but their parents and their grandparents, if they need it, the ability to go back to these community colleges and get the skills to have a better life and a stronger life and do a better job for themselves and the rest of this country. That is the most important thing we can do to lift the income of the American people.

So, that's what I said over there, but I took about 5 minutes longer to say it. I care about you and your future. My job is to make sure that when all these young people get out of this high school, the American dream is alive and well; this is still the strongest country in the world; we are still a force for peace and freedom and opportunity. But in order to do it, you, every single one of you has got to make a commitment that we are going to develop the capacity of our people. That's how we're going to win. That's how we're going to get wages up. That's how we're going to bring security back. That's how we're going to bring this country together again. That's how we're going to do it. And we can with your help.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:23 p.m. in the gymnasium.

Statement on Disaster Assistance for Floods in California

January 10, 1995

Tonight I have declared that a major disaster exists in California caused by the damaging floods in northern and southern California. I have directed Federal Emergency Management Agency Director James Lee Witt to oversee the Federal response in the recovery.

FEMA officials are already working closely with State and local officials to ensure a quick response to this flood. Director Witt is in California making sure disaster funds begin to flow quickly to help the people affected by the flood

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damage. These funds will help to begin the process of recovery.

Californians have a resilient spirit and great sense of community. You have shown over the past year during the earthquake, the fires, and now the current floods that you are a people that come together in times of crisis. The American people support you as you would them

in a similar time of need. Our hearts are with the thousands of victims affected by the floods and the family members of those who have died.

NOTE: This statement was included in a White House statement announcing disaster assistance for California.

Radio Address to California Flood Victims

January 11, 1995

Last night I declared a major disaster in the State of California. The necessary assistance will be made available to thousands of victims of the flooding in both northern and southern California.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, is working closely with State and local officials to ensure a quick response to the flood. FEMA Director James Lee Witt is in California to ensure that disaster funds begin to flow quickly to the State. These funds will help to begin the process of recovery, and we'll be with you for the long haul.

I want to say a special word of thanks to all the young volunteers from AmeriCorps, our

national service program, for the quick and good work they have done. Californians have proven over the last few years that they have a resilient spirit and a great sense of community. You have shown in the earthquake and the fires and now in these floods that you are a people who come together in times of crisis. The American people are with you.

Hillary and I send our thoughts and prayers to the thousands of victims, and we wish you well.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 9:20 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama of Japan

January 11, 1995

California Floods

Q. Mr. President, we know you're having this meeting, but can you help us with any comments on the situation in California?

The President. We're going to have a press conference after our lunch. I'd be happy to talk about it then. I talked with Mr. Witt last night at 1 a.m. in the morning our time, so I'm up to date. But I'd rather defer questions until our lunch, until our press conference after the lunch.

Japan

Q. Can you tell us if you do expect to make some progress here today given the political situation in Japan?

The President. When the Japanese press come through here, they may say, "Do you expect to make some progress here given the political situation in the United States?" [*Laughter*] Of course I do.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Do you want to—what did you say? Sure. Should we have a handshake? It's a big table, but—[*laughter*].