

the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission. Why? Because the Lower Mississippi is the poorest area of America.

And we started in Illinois, in southern Illinois, and went all the way to the mouth of the Mississippi, past New Orleans. And we went up and down the length of that great river, into little towns and to rural areas, talking to people about what we needed to do so that they could lift themselves out of poverty, so they could educate their children. Now, 12 years later, a lot of the things that were nightmares to us then are problems that are being solved.

This is a better country than it was 6 years ago. And if we bear down and choose progress over partisanship in this election, it will be better 2 years from now. But I want you to understand that it requires you to be vigilant. It requires you to say, "We are going to build on what we have done, not rest on it." And I will say again, I served as a Governor for 12 years. We've got the smallest Federal Government we've had in 35 years. I'm proud of that. But as a result of our policy, it is now more important who the State Governors are, not less, because it's education, it's health care, it's the environment, it's the economy. It matters.

Statement on Hurricane Georges September 25, 1998

Hurricane Georges, which is bearing down on south Florida, has already cost many American citizens their lives in Puerto Rico, as well as caused huge human and material harm throughout the Caribbean. As we prepare for the impact of the storm on the mainland, we are working to bring relief to those already affected by the storm and to help them to begin rebuilding.

Yesterday I declared Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to be disaster areas. Already, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has sent over 200 emergency relief workers to assess the damage. I have sent Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Andrew Cuomo and Small Business Administrator Aida Alvarez to Puerto Rico to report to me on what further steps need to be taken. We are gravely con-

cerned about the loss of life and property in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands and will continue to work at the highest levels to bring the islands and their people back.

We are also working to help those affected outside our borders. Yesterday I sent an emergency response team from the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, together with relief workers and supplies. I have asked Hugh Palmer, the head of Humanitarian Response Programs at the Agency for International Development, to go to the Dominican Republic this weekend to assess the damage, supervise our efforts, and report to me on what further should be done.

Our thoughts and prayers are with those who have felt the force of this storm.

So I ask you to go out here in the remaining days of this election—we've got several weeks—and first of all, send a message to Congress that you're tired of the partisan politics and you'd like to be considered first; you'd like for people to think about everybody outside of Washington, not everybody inside of Washington. You'd like to think about our future and our children.

And secondly, go out here and talk to your friends and neighbors and tell them that we've got a good ticket for Governor and Lieutenant Governor, and they deserve their consideration. They deserve their vote. They deserve their support, and there's a lot riding on it for the future of your children.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:04 p.m. in the auditorium of the Mercantile Club. In his remarks, he referred to Mike Cherry, cochair, Democratic Business Council; Jim Levin, event cochair; Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago; Michael Madigan, speaker of the house, and Emil Jones, senate minority leader, Illinois State Legislature; Mary Lou Kearns, candidate for Lieutenant Governor; and Representative Poshard's wife, Jo.