

Sept. 29 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

Memorandum on Assistance for Federal Employees Affected by Hurricane Georges

September 29, 1998

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Assistance for Federal Employees Affected by Hurricane Georges

I am deeply concerned about the devastating losses suffered by many as a result of Hurricane Georges. Multiple parts of the Federal Government have been mobilized to respond to this disaster.

As part of this effort, I ask the heads of executive departments and agencies who have Federal civilian employees in designated disaster areas resulting from Hurricane Georges and its aftermath (including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands) to use their discretion to excuse from duty, without charge to leave or loss of pay, any such employee who is prevented from reporting to work or faced with a personal emergency because of this disaster and who can be spared from his or her usual responsibilities. This policy also should be applied to any em-

ployee who is needed for emergency law enforcement, relief, or clean-up efforts authorized by Federal, State, or other officials having jurisdiction.

I am also authorizing the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to determine whether there is a need to establish an emergency leave transfer program to assist employees affected by this major disaster. An emergency leave transfer program would permit employees in an executive agency to donate their unused annual leave for transfer to employees of the same or other agencies who were adversely affected by the hurricane and who need additional time off for recovery. If the need for donated annual leave becomes evident, I direct OPM to establish the emergency leave transfer program and provide additional information to agencies on the program's administration.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of United States Forces in Response to the Situation in Liberia

September 29, 1998

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Liberia is just emerging from a 7-year civil war. Since democratic elections were held in July 1997 there have been moments of instability in that country. In the past 10 days, conflict erupted between Liberian security forces and supporters of another former faction leader, Roosevelt Johnson.

On the morning of September 19, Liberian government security forces fired on a small group of Liberians led by former Ulimo Krahn faction leader Roosevelt Johnson, who was speaking with U.S. Embassy officials outside the Embassy compound, after Johnson and his group were initially refused refuge. When Liberian government security forces opened fire on the group, the Embassy officials fled into the U.S. Embassy, and in the chaos were joined

by the Johnson party. Two Americans were wounded in the melee and four members of the Johnson party were killed. The U.S. personnel injured in the gunfire were a government contractor and an Embassy staff member.

Responding to a U.S. request for enhanced security, forces of the Economic Community of West Africa Observer Group (ECOMOG) subsequently positioned themselves in a defensive perimeter around the Embassy. Later, a group of 23 supporters of Mr. Johnson was discovered hiding on the Embassy grounds. After extensive negotiations between President Taylor and representatives of the U.S. Government and western African states, permission was obtained to airlift Mr. Johnson and his party to Freetown, Sierra Leone. This was accomplished without incident on September 25, 1998.