

and a major disaster declaration for North Carolina to provide individual assistance to those directly affected.

In addition, we're working with officials from South Carolina to assess what else we can do there. And we're keeping in close contact with State and local officials in Maryland and the other coastal States, now that the storm has moved on.

Again, I'd like to say that I want to commend the citizens from all the States who heeded the warnings to move safely away, under difficult circumstances. I'm sure there will be those that second-guess us now, because Florida was not hit, and we moved a lot of people out, and there were plenty of people that moved out of other places. The storm wasn't as bad as we thought.

But we now have technology that imposes on us the responsibility of telling people what we think is going to happen. And there is no question that because we can do this, thousands and thousands of lives will be saved. Governor Hunt said today, there is no question in his mind that lives were saved in North Carolina, because of the people who did evacuate.

So while we thank goodness that the storm was not as bad as we had feared, I just want to reaffirm my absolute conviction that the people in the emergency services work did the right thing to issue the warnings, did the right thing to recommend evacuation. And we got a lot of good practice here, which is going to save a large number of lives in the future.

I also would just like to say, in closing, that the United States, at times like this, always pulls together. There are a lot of people out there today without power; there are a lot of people with their homes flooded; a lot of people feeling fairly desperate. And I know I speak for all of you when I say, we don't want them to feel alone. We will do everything we possibly can to be good, loyal, helpful neighbors to them and get them through this.

Thank you very much.

Coastal Development

Q. Mr. President, with Federal flood insurance, is the Government encouraging coastal development at a time when we may be in a new cycle of more dangerous and more frequent storms?

[*Federal Emergency Management Agency Director James Lee Witt answered the question.*]

Agricultural Assistance

Q. Mr. President, will there be any central hurricane relief for farmers whose crops have been damaged, Mr. President? There seems to be a shortfall in the hurricane relief they've gotten.

The President. Well, that's one thing that Governor Hunt asked me about yesterday, and I am looking at that, because the general disaster assistance performers tends to be targeted to the big, grow-crop places in the Middle West primarily—not exclusively—as is natural, because that's where a lot of the big dollar-volume losses have been.

So we've got to go back and look, now, and see what we're doing, because we've got not only this flooding but also, in this part of the country, we've had the biggest drought that these farmers had ever had. So most of them—not most but a large number of farmers from Maryland north, in this country, had lost their crops before the flood came. So we need to look at that, and we will now go back, obviously, down to the Carolinas, and go upward and see where we are. And I'll do my best to work with Congress to get appropriate relief for them.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. at the Federal Emergency Management Agency headquarters. In his opening remarks, he referred to Gov. Jim Hodges of South Carolina; and Governor Hunt's wife, Carolyn.

Statement on the Announcement of the Gates Millennium Scholarships *September 16, 1999*

I applaud the leadership and foresight shown by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation today

with its \$1 billion pledge to provide full college scholarships for minority students in the fields

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of education, math, science, and engineering. These landmark scholarships will help address important needs: the need to encourage young people to become teachers, the need to ensure that our children are well-prepared in math and science, and the need to open the doors of

higher learning to all students. The Gates millennium scholarships remind us what vital role philanthropies can play in American life and how urgent it is for all of us to invest now in our Nation's young people.

Statement on Robert E. Rubin's Decision To Accept the Position as Local Initiatives Support Corporation Chairman of the Board

September 16, 1999

I am pleased that Bob Rubin has accepted the job as chairman of the board of LISC. This service is consistent with his longstanding commitment to bring economic opportunities to America's most underserved communities. His

selection is not only a tremendous boost for LISC but also for those who advocate community economic development to ensure that all Americans share in our economic prosperity.

Statement on the Montreal Protocol on Ozone-Depleting Substances

September 16, 1999

Today, on the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, I am transmitting to the Senate for its advice and consent an amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

Preservation of the ozone layer is critical to life on Earth. The Montreal Protocol has led to a dramatic reduction in the production and use of ozone-depleting chemicals, and scientists report that the ozone layer is on its way to recovery. The amendment I transmit today builds on this progress, in part by strengthening

measures to promote compliance with the protocol. I urge the Senate to approve this amendment.

It also is critical that the United States support efforts by developing countries to phase out their use of ozone-depleting chemicals. Regrettably, appropriations measures now before Congress would deny funds I have requested for the Montreal Protocol Fund, which has a long record of success in these efforts. I call on Congress to approve the funds needed to help preserve the Earth's protective ozone layer.

Message to the Senate Transmitting an Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Ozone-Depleting Substances

September 16, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, the Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (the "Montreal Protocol"), adopted at Montreal on September 15-17, 1997, by the Ninth Meeting of the Par-

ties to the Montreal Protocol. The report of the Department of State is also enclosed for the information of the Senate.

The principal features of the 1997 Amendment, which was negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), are the addition of methyl bromide