

to the Vice President and to me on their progress in meeting the terms of this memorandum, through the Electronic Commerce Working Group (ECWG) in its annual report. To the extent that substantial new policy issues emerge, the analysis

and action on those policies will be coordinated in a manner consistent with the responsibilities of the ECWG, the National Economic Council, and the Domestic Policy Council, as appropriate.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Remarks at a Memorial Service for Firefighters in Worcester, Massachusetts

December 9, 1999

Thank you. First, to the wonderful families of our six fallen heroes, who the Vice President and I had a chance to visit with before the beginning of this service; to their colleagues in the fire department, their friends in this wonderful community; to the thousands of men and women in uniform who have come here to join the mayor, the Governor, the Senators, the Members of Congress, the Bishop and members of the clergy; President Whitehead and members of the firefighters; especially to Chief Budd and Frank Raffa and all the grieving members of this fire department, too.

I hope you can all sense how clearly we know, in spite of our talks, that words have a poor power to alleviate the pain you feel now. But as you look around this vast hall and know that there are thousands and thousands more standing outside and other places, we hope that by our collective presence we will speak louder than words in saying that your tragedy is ours, your men are ours, our whole country honors them and you. We grieve with you, and we will stay with you.

More than two and a half centuries ago, Benjamin Franklin wrote an essay entitled "Brave Men at Fires." He might have written it last week. This is what he said: "Neither cold nor darkness will deter good people from hastening to the dreadful place to quench the flame. They do it not for the sake of reward or fame, but they have a reward in themselves, and they love one another."

Today we honor six brave men who found a reward in firefighting, who loved one another, six men who, in turn, richly rewarded this community. So they hastened to the dreadful place to save others. For them, there was no other way.

In the book of Isaiah, God asks, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And Isaiah says, "Here am I. Send me."

When the question again rang from the smoking skies last week, Paul Brotherton, Timothy Jackson, Jeremiah Lucey, Jay Lyons, Joseph McGuirk, and Thomas Spencer also answered with a single voice: Here am I. Send me.

They were firefighters to the core, heroes already, as we have heard, to their friends and loved ones, not to mention the people they saved through the years. For all six, being a firefighter was more than a job; it was in their blood. So when they went into that building that night, they were following their dream to serve, to save lives, and to stick together.

Like their fellow firefighters everywhere, they embodied the best of our Nation of commitment and community, of teamwork and trust, values at the core of our character; values reflected in the daily service not only of those we lost but in this awesome parade of men and women who have come from all over our country and from some countries beyond our borders to honor their comrades and console their families.

Too often, we take them for granted, our firefighters. In the days ahead, I hope every American will find an occasion to thank those in their communities who stand ready every day to put their lives on the line when the alarm bell rings.

In the Book of Kings, we find the wonderful story of the prophet Elijah, who climbs a mountain to seek the voice of God. A wind shatters rocks in pieces, but the Bible says, the Lord is not in the wind. Then, there's an earthquake and then a fire, but God is not in the earthquake or in the fire. But then, the Scripture says, "after the fire, a still, small voice." It is

that still, small voice that spoke to those six good men, that moved their souls to service and sacrifice. The still, small voice that endures through the ages, that inspires the songs and words we have all shared today, that must now carry this group of grieving families through their grief to going on.

Today we thank God for the lives our fallen firefighters lived. We hope their families can remember the good and happy times and bring some smiles through their tears. We commend their souls to God's eternal loving care, and we pray that His still, small voice will bring strength and healing to these families and to

this wonderful community who loved them so much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:50 p.m. at Worcester's Centrum Centre. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Raymond V. Mariano of Worcester; Gov. Argeo Paul Cellucci of Massachusetts; Bishop of Worcester Daniel P. Reilly; Dennis L. Budd, chief, Worcester Fire Department; Frank Raffa, president, Worcester Fire Fighters Local 1009; and Alfred K. Whitehead, general president, International Association of Fire Fighters.

Statement on Renewed Flooding in Vietnam

December 9, 1999

I was saddened to learn of renewed flooding in the central provinces of Vietnam, which were already inundated by heavy rains last month. On behalf of the American people, I extend my deepest sympathies to all those who have suffered losses and are struggling to rebuild, including the families of many Americans of Vietnamese descent.

The United States is providing emergency assistance to support flood relief efforts, just as we provided almost \$600,000 in November to deliver supplies and build flood-resistant homes. We stand ready to provide further help to meet the urgent needs of those affected by the flooding and to help the Vietnamese people better withstand future flooding.

Statement on Signing Chattahoochee River Protection Legislation

December 9, 1999

Today I have signed into law H.R. 2140, a bill that will enhance the protection of a 48-mile segment of the Chattahoochee River, a vital natural resource for the Atlanta metropolitan area and an important unit of the National Park System. This legislation ensures that the natural, scenic, recreational, and historic values of one of our Nation's great urban rivers will be preserved for the benefit of future generations.

This Act provides the foundation for a cooperative effort by the Federal Government, the State of Georgia, local governments, and private entities to link the separate units of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area through purchases of remaining open space along the Chattahoochee River corridor north of Atlanta. It gives the National Park Service

the authority to expand the land base of the recreation area from approximately 6,800 acres to 10,000 acres through a revision of the boundary, by adding undeveloped land within the 2,000-foot river bank corridors. The National Park Service also will be authorized to exclude some properties currently within the boundary that are no longer suitable for the park because they have been developed.

From the time the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area was established in 1978, the pace of residential and commercial development in the Chattahoochee River corridor has accelerated rapidly. A U.S. Census Bureau report issued earlier this year names Forsyth County, Georgia, where the recreation area boundary begins, the fastest-growing county in