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Statement on the Death of Raisa Gorbacheva

September 20, 1999

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Raisa Maksimovna Gorbacheva, wife of former Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev. We extend our deepest condolences to her family and friends in Russia and other countries. The example she set, through her help for child victims of leukemia and through her own courageous struggle against this terrible disease, was an inspiration to people everywhere.

Statement on the Earthquake in Taiwan

September 20, 1999

Hillary and I were saddened by news of injuries and deaths sustained by the people on Taiwan as a result of a major earthquake today. Our thoughts are with all of those who have suffered losses and who may still be in need of assistance. We are in touch directly with the Taiwan authorities to determine what assistance from the United States may be needed.

Remarks on Arrival in New York City

September 21, 1999

Hurricane Floyd

Good morning, everyone. I'm a little hoarse—forgive me. I want to begin my visit by expressing our concern and support for the families and the communities in this area recovering from Hurricane Floyd.

As you know, I traveled to North Carolina yesterday and saw some of the worst storm damage and flooding that I have, personally, ever seen. I know people in New Jersey and New York have also been injured. I want to thank the city, county, and State officials for all the work they have done to get help to people quickly where it's needed.

We are doing all we can at the Federal level, and I'd like to mention just three things. First, last Saturday, I issued a major disaster declaration for New Jersey. Sunday I issued a similar one for Orange, Rockland, Putnam, and Westchester Counties in New York. These actions help to speed Federal assistance for individuals and communities recovering from flood damage.

Second, FEMA officials are on the ground now responding to the challenges with clean water, housing, and restoring communication and power links. Housing inspectors, small business teams, community relations specialists are on the scene to help meet people's needs. Starting today AmeriCorps volunteers will be helping people clean up the damages to their homes and pick up the pieces of their lives.

Third, I'm sending our FEMA Director, James Lee Witt, to New Jersey and New York today to inspect the damage and report back immediately on what more we need to do. I want to make sure that the assistance is delivered responsibly, efficiently, and in adequate amounts.

Again I want to say, as I did yesterday, that in difficult times like this, we're reminded that the power of the American spirit is even stronger than the power of a hurricane. The American people are supporting all those who have been injured in this, and we will stand by them until they recover.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:20 a.m. at the Wall Street Landing Zone.

Remarks to the 54th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City

September 21, 1999

Thank you very much. Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, members of the United Nations General Assembly, good morning. I hope you will forgive me for being a little hoarse today. I will do the best I can to be heard.

Today we look ahead to the new millennium, and at this last General Assembly of the 20th century, we look back on a century that taught us much of what we need to know about the promise of tomorrow. We have learned a great deal over the last 100 years: how to produce enough food for a growing world population; how human activity affects the environment; the mysteries of the human