

to continue this national emergency and to maintain in force the sanctions to respond to this threat.

**George W. Bush**

The White House,  
February 28, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 1.

**Remarks Following a Visit With Gulf Coast Grant Recipients in Long Beach, Mississippi**

*March 1, 2007*

You know, it's interesting to come back down here to the gulf coast. I tried to think back about what it was like the first time I came after the storm hit. And I guess the—my most vivid recollection is the piles of rubble, literally debris stacked upon debris. It was—it's hard to believe then that I would be—I had faith that I'd be able to come to a home, but I had trouble visualizing it. And then I kept coming down, and I watched the improvement, because of the hard work of the local citizens, people like the mayor here and the Governor, who set a vision that was a hopeful vision.

The Federal Government's role has been to write checks. The Governor's role and the mayor's role is help to expedite the Federal money to the local folks. And today we are able to sit in a homeowner—the Woodward's home. Again, one of the things I like to say is, when somebody walks in, "Welcome to my home." And it has a special ring to it here in the gulf coast, because there was a time when their home was totally destroyed.

Part of the reason I've come down is to tell the people here in the gulf coast that we still think about them in Washington, and that we listen to the Governor when he speaks. The other reason I've come down is I want the taxpayers of the United States to see firsthand what their money has done to help revitalize a series of communities that were literally wiped out because of a major storm.

It's a—this is a hopeful day. There's obviously a lot more work to be done. You can see vacant lots where there's going to be new

building. There's still work to be done here in Mississippi, and the Governor and I are going to go listen to some of the local officials describe to me what's on their mind and how we can continue to help. But times are changing for the better, and people's lives are improving, and there is hope. And I congratulate the good folks in this part of the country for their resiliency, their courage, and the fact that they never abandoned hope.

So thank you for giving us a chance to come by. We're proud to be with you. Love being with you. Thank you all for your hospitality. Appreciate it. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:11 a.m. at the home of Cheryl and Ernie Woodward. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor William Skellie, Jr., of Long Beach, MS; and Gov. Haley Barbour of Mississippi.

**Remarks Following a Meeting With Elected Officials and Community Leaders in Biloxi, Mississippi**

*March 1, 2007*

Governor and First Lady, thanks for your welcome. It's great to be back in the gulf coast of Mississippi.

I've had the privilege of coming down and meeting a lot of these folks before, so I really feel like it's, in many ways, a chance to reconnect with people who I admire. I can remember the looks on your faces when I first came down here during the incredible destruction—right after the destruction of Katrina. You know, there was something about the spirit of Mississippi, though, that made it clear to me that there was no doubt that progress was going to be made.

Mayor, I remember you and I walking through the streets of Biloxi and finding people that were literally stunned and were in shock and were wondering what life meant for them. And I remember the piles of debris, Mayor, in your city. Or, Rocky, I remember talking to you when you came, and you had the same set of clothes on for the last 4 days. You were trying to recover from a brutal devastation in your county.

And I've come back again because I'm inspired every time I come here to see progress and the spirit alive. In other words, people