AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

friend of my family's—friends of my family for a long period of time. We're really lucky to have with us today the Oak Ridge Boys. I'm honored they are here.

Thank you all for coming. Please enjoy yourselves. May God bless you and your families. And may God continue to bless the United States of America. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:43 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to entertainers the Oak Ridge Boys.

Remarks Following a Meeting on Earthquake Relief Efforts in China

June 6, 2008

Thank you very much, Bonnie, for inviting me here. I'm proud to be here with Secretary of State Rice, Secretary of Treasury Paulson. Ambassador, thank you for being here.

I've just been briefed about how the United States private sector, faith-based community, NGO community's responding to what is a horrible human disaster in China—estimated 70,000 people have died, 18,000 people missing, 15 million people homeless, and the tally is still being counted. There's no question, this is a major human disaster that requires a strong response from the Chinese Government, which is what they're providing, but it also responds—a compassionate response from nations to whom—for—that have got the blessings—good blessings of life, and that's us.

I told the folks assembled here that I'm not surprised that the American people have responded to this challenge. And the reason I'm not surprised is, we're a compassionate, decent nation that cares deeply about a stranger who hurts. And so the response of the—so far of our American citizens have been impressive—unprecedented and unparalleled in its compassion.

There'll be more work that needs to be done. My message to the Chinese Government is, thank you for welcoming our aid; thank you for taking a firm response to this disaster; and just know the American people care about the people of China. When a brother and sister hurts, we care about it.

And so that's why our response has been so robust and so compassionate to date. I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for showing the great compassion of America.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. at the American Red Cross National Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Bonnie McElveen-Hunter, chairman of the board of governors, American Red Cross; and China's Ambassador to the U.S. Zhou Wenzhong.

Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for Steven C. Preston as the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development

June 6, 2008

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you. Welcome. Thank you. It's a—so glad to be here at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. And I've come to introduce you to your new boss, Secretary Steve Preston. I want to thank Steve's wife, Molly, five children, and his mom and dad, Lee and Ursula.

Mr. Secretary, thanks for coming—Secretary Kempthorne; and Director John Walters. It's good to see two of your predecessors here, Steve—Alphonso Jackson and Jack Kemp. Thank you all for coming.

This is a time of turbulence in the housing market and slow growth for our overall economy. This morning the Labor Department reported that our economy lost 49,000 jobs in May and the unemployment rate rose to 5.5 percent. This rise was caused, in part, by a surge of new, young entrants into the job market, but it's clearly a sign that is consistent with slow economic growth.

To help keep this economy growing, we did pass an economic stimulus package that provides tax rebates for American families and incentives for businesses to invest in new equipment. We're beginning to see the signs that the stimulus may be working. And now the Congress needs to take the next steps. At a time when Americans are concerned about higher gas prices, Congress needs to pass legislation that expands—it will allow for