

Ladies and gentlemen, even as we recall the devastation here today, we know that nature has struck again here at home in California with the floods and with extraordinary fury in the earthquake in Japan. I know all of you join with me in extending our profound condolences to the families of those in the Osaka-Kobe area of Japan who have suffered such a tremendous loss in the last day.

We have spoken with the Japanese Government and, with their agreement, based on our experiences here, I have ordered a high-level team that includes representatives of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Department of Transportation to leave for Japan shortly to see if anything we learned here can be helpful to them there. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John Shalikashvili, is in Japan now, and he has already stated that our military forces there are also available to help them in any appropriate way.

You know what they're going through. So I'd like to ask, before I begin my remarks, if we could just have a moment of silence for the victims of the flood here in California and the victims of the earthquake in Japan.

*[At this point, a moment of silence was observed.]*

Thank you.

I am so glad to be here at Cal State Northridge. You are now the symbol of the ability of the people of this State to keep coming back after adversity upon adversity, as well as the symbol of California and America's future because of the educational opportunities open to all kinds of people from all walks of life and all different backgrounds here at this fine institution.

The most damaging earthquake ever recorded on our continent destroyed a great deal here when it hit a year ago. But as the mayor said, even though it shook you, it didn't break you. It didn't break your faith in the future. How else can you explain the fact that here there is a baseball team known as the Earthquake Kids? I want to ask them to be recognized here in a minute, but I do want to note, as the spring slowly approaches, that they did something the pros couldn't: They kept baseball going. And they won the national championship in the Little League World Series. Let's give them a hand. Would the team stand, please? *[Applause]*

You know, you might think that Californians have had too many opportunities to show heart. *[Laughter]* The wonderful, sainted Mother Teresa once said that she knew God wouldn't give her any more than she could bear; she just wished God didn't have such confidence in her sometimes. *[Laughter]* That's the way I feel about you from time to time. I told the mayor last night that I hope that there would be no simmering volcano uncovered around here—*[laughter]*—anytime in the future. Fires, earthquakes, and devastating floods are quite enough.

But in these disasters where lives are lost and others are shattered, I know it's not easy to keep going and to keep your heart. A year ago I said that we would not leave you to pick up the pieces alone, that we would stay on until the job was done. We have kept that pledge today, and today I renew that pledge into the future.

Since the flooding began a few days ago, I have been working closely with Governor Wilson and Senator Boxer and Senator Feinstein and your other officials to help fight the flooding. The disaster I declared across California and the work of FEMA and other agencies are already helping to move on the road to recovery.

This afternoon I'll have a chance to go to northern California to view some of the damaged areas there. But I say again to the victims of this disaster: You are not alone. We will work with you to help you reclaim your lives, as the earthquake victims have been reclaiming theirs.

Who would have thought a year ago that the highways and bridges could be rebuilt and reinforced in just a fraction of the time the experts had predicted and the time the law allowed until we changed the way things worked. The Santa Monica Freeway was reopened on April 11th, the Golden State Freeway on May 17th, the Simi Valley Freeway partly opened in February and fully opened in September. I could go on and on. Who would have thought this campus would reconvene classes in one month? The main section of the library behind me was reopened in 64 days, a job that would normally have taken a year, a great tribute to your president and to all of the leaders of this fine institution.

I just verified with James Lee Witt what strikes me as an astounding statistic: There were 5,600 school buildings damaged a year ago, and today all but 40 are open, doing business, edu-