

cating our children, and giving them something to look forward to.

This happened because we put aside politics and worked on being partners, partners as citizens, as businesses, as government, partners in the person of people like Ramona Sanches Vega, a volunteer who sought out families living in their cars because their homes were too damaged. She helped them to get housing. People like your own college president, who did make the impossible possible on this campus. People like so many of you in this audience who did countless things for your friends and for total strangers that will never be recorded anywhere except in the minds and hearts of those whom you touched.

For Government's part, 27 Federal departments and agencies worked with State and local officials in unprecedented ways to produce, as Mayor Riordan said, the most efficient and effective disaster operation in American history. So far, over \$11.5 billion in aid has come to California to help to deal with the aftermath of the earthquake. But in addition to that, the whole system was literally reinvented, with new technologies, ways found to cut business-as-usual and the bureaucracy that too often goes with Government assistance. Decisions were based on need, not paperwork and rules. More than 270,000 homeowners received Federal grants to help repair their homes. More than half a million people were given grants or low-interest loans for disaster housing.

I know there are those today who say that Government is inherently bad, always gets in the way, and never amounts to anything. Well, I say, look at the difference it made in dealing with the disaster. It can work if we put people first and think about how to make it work.

But this institution is another example of how Government can work. We can't wait for disaster to strike to deal with our long-term challenges. Every day millions upon millions of Americans fight other kinds of struggles, to get and keep new jobs, to provide health care for their families, to deal with the struggles of modern life, and to strengthen the ties of community when there are so many pressures that divide us one from another. And anytime an American loses one of those fights, it's a disaster for our future as well.

Everyone knows that we live in an era of enormous change, a time of great uprooting of things both good and bad. As we change from

what has popularly been called the industrial age to the information age, from the cold war of global division to a globe united in economic cooperation and one which must unite to deal with the common threats to all of us in terrorism and ecological destruction—in this era of change, our biggest challenge is to simply keep alive the American dream for all of our people, to make sure that we go into the next century just 5 years away still the strongest country in the world, the most profound force for peace and freedom, and still with the American dream alive for all people, regardless of their race, their region, their religion, their background, the capacities they came into this world with.

My simple belief is that in this time, we know that the Government cannot really solve problems for people, but I think we know that the Government cannot walk away, either. The role of Government in this age is to be a partner, to help give people the tools they need to solve their own problems, to fulfill their own dreams, to make their own future. And I am determined to see that the rest of your Government works as well as the disaster team did in the California earthquake. That is a good standard for all of us to meet.

I believe, my fellow Americans, that we need to do three things: We need a new economic strategy that I have fought for, for 2 years, appropriate to the new world we're all going to live and compete in. We need a new form of Government that is smaller, less bureaucratic, more creative, more oriented toward flexibility in solving people's problems, but one that is an effective partner, not a disabled or a mean participant on the sidelines just telling people what to do instead of helping people to do it.

And third and most important, I think we need what I call and have for 3 years now called—my contract with America—a New Covenant, one that says here are certain opportunities and here are your responsibilities. How are we going to rebuild the American community to look like this crowd does unless we all have opportunity and we all assume responsibility? If all you do is assert rights and there are no responsibilities, pretty soon nothing good happens. If all people do is go around being responsible and they're never rewarded for it, pretty soon they get tired of it. We need both, more opportunity and more responsibility in this country. And that's how we're going to rebuild America and keep the American dream alive.