

SENATOR BOB DOLE --KANSAS

CIVIL DEFENSE COUNCIL

SHERATON PARK

APRIL 1, 1970

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IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE HERE THIS MORNING WITH YOU WHO ARE THE FIRST LINE, SO TO SPEAK, OF OUR RESPONSE TO NATURAL AND ATTACK DISASTERS. AS A MEMBER OF THE DISASTER RELIEF SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE SENATE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE, I HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR NATION'S RESPONSE TO NATURAL DISASTERS.

1969

IN 1969, THE PRESIDENT MADE 29 MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATIONS. BOTH IN NUMBER AND IN EXTENT, THE DISASTERS OF LAST YEAR SURPASSED THOSE OF ANY SINGLE YEAR SINCE THE FIRST COMPREHENSIVE FEDERAL DISASTER ACT WAS PASSED IN 1950. AS YOU ARE AWARE, SOME OF THESE DISASTERS, PARTICULARLY HURRICANE CAMILLE AND THE VIRGINIA AND CALIFORNIA FLOODS WERE EXCEPTIONALLY DESTRUCTIVE. AS A RESULT, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ALLOCATED A TOTAL OF \$150 MILLION FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DISASTER FUND, THE LARGEST SUM FOR ANY YEAR IN HISTORY.

BECAUSE THE RECORD-BREAKING DEMANDS OF 1969 INDICATED A SUBSTANTIAL NEED, THE SENATE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE CREATED A SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE TO STUDY THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FEDERAL RESPONSES TO THESE DISASTERS. IN ORDER TO OBTAIN FIRST HAND INFORMATION, OUR SUBCOMMITTEE HELD HEARINGS IN BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI AND ROANOKE, VIRGINIA. HEARINGS ARE SCHEDULED HERE IN WASHINGTON THE LAST PART OF THIS MONTH.

MISSISSIPPI AND VIRGINIA

IN MISSISSIPPI AND VIRGINIA WE HEARD AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF TESTIMONY ON THE RESPONSE OF GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE RELIEF AGENCIES TO CAMILLE. GENERALLY IT WAS INDICATED THAT THE FEDERAL AGENCIES MOVED QUITE QUICKLY TO PROVIDE THE ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE AT THAT TIME. THE NEW DISASTER RELIEF ACT OF 1969, SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT ON OCTOBER 1 ADDED NEW TYPES OF ASSISTANCE WHICH HAD TO BE PROGRAMMED INTO RELIEF EFFORTS. UNFORTUNATELY, THIS TOOK TIME AND GENERATED FRUSTRATION AND CONTINUED HARDSHIP FOR CAMILLE VICTIMS. OF COURSE, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE PROBLEMS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF DISASTER RELIEF, BECAUSE BY DEFINITION A DISASTER INVOLVES LOSSES AND UNUSUAL HARDSHIP, NOT ALL OF WHICH IS EITHER PREDICTABLE OR RESTORABLE. RECOMPENSE CAN NEVER BE MADE FOR THE SUFFERING AND SHOCK OF SUDDEN CALAMITY.

DESPITE THIS FACT, IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE YOU WITH THE BEST TOOLS POSSIBLE SO THAT YOU MAY RESPOND TO PEOPLE'S NEEDS. TO DO THAT WE MUST CONTINUE TO SEEK BETTER LEGISLATIVE SOLUTIONS AND UPGRADE OUR ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES. DURING EMERGENCIES, RED TAPE AND DELAY IN ACTION SHOULD NEVER BE ALLOWED TO COMPOUND EXISTING HARDSHIP. THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION REALIZES THIS FACT, AS DOES THE CONGRESS. WE ARE PRESENTLY EXPLORING THE AREAS, WHICH EXPERIENCE IN PAST DISASTERS INDICATE, REQUIRE LEGISLATIVE OR ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION. FOREMOST, IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE TO THOSE SEEKING DISASTER RELIEF.

A COORDINATED EFFORT BY ALL FEDERAL AGENCIES UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE OFFICE OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IS IMPERATIVE. ALTHOUGH THE 1969 ACT PROVIDED FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF FEDERAL AND STATE COORDINATING OFFICERS AND THE FORMULATION OF STATE CONTINGENCY PLANS, MORE MUST BE DONE. THE CHAIRMAN OF OUR DISASTER RELIEF SUBCOMMITTEE, SENATOR BIRCH BAYH, HAS INTRODUCED ONE SET OF PROPOSALS, AND I UNDERSTAND THE ADMINISTRATION IS PREPARING LEGISLATION THAT WOULD BENEFIT FROM OUR EXPERIENCE LAST YEAR.

AS I POINTED OUT, WE MUST SECURE THE PROMPT RESPONSE OF PERSONNEL, TRAINED AND EQUIPPED TO PLAN FOR A DISASTER AND RESPOND TO IT. THIS MAY INVOLVE REORGANIZATION OF THE OFFICE OF CIVIL DEFENSE AND THE OFFICE OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS. TO DO THIS, A THOROUGH STUDY MUST BE MADE THAT WILL CONSIDER NOT ONLY OUR RESPONSE TO NATURAL DISASTERS BUT NATIONAL SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF REORGANIZATION.

ADEQUATE COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS ARE CRUCIAL TO OUR DISASTER RESPONSE. LOCAL CIVIL DEFENSE WORKERS HAVE GIVEN OUTSTANDING SERVICE CONSIDERING THE LIMITATIONS PLACED ON THEM BY INADEQUATE COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER BASIC EQUIPMENT. BUT I HOPE WE CAN DEVISE A MORE SOUND AND COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH.

IN MISSISSIPPI AND VIRGINIA, WE FOUND THAT ONE OF THE GREATEST PROBLEMS WAS THE LOSS OF PROPERTY TAX REVENUE WHICH OCCURS WHEN A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF A COMMUNITY'S PROPERTY TAX BASE IS DESTROYED.

THIS REDUCTION IN REVENUE TAKES PLACE AT THE SAME TIME THAT LOCAL EXPENSES ARE INCREASING BECAUSE OF THE DISRUPTIONS OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES. THE FISCAL SQUEEZE WHICH RESULTS FROM THIS DESTRUCTION OF THE PROPERTY TAX BASE CAN SERIOUSLY HAMPER THE RECOVERY PROCESS AND HAVE A LASTING EFFECT ON THE COMMUNITY. SOME FORM OF PROPERTY TAX MAINTENANCE PLAN SUPPORTED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE IN REESTABLISHING COMMUNITY ACTIVITY.

#### ALL-RISK INSURANCE

RECOVERY FROM PROPERTY LOSS COULD ALSO BE GREATLY IMPROVED IF MORE ADEQUATE PROPERTY INSURANCE PROGRAMS WERE AVAILABLE. ONE OF THE WEAKEST LINKS IN RECOVERY EFFORTS AFTER PAST DISASTERS HAS BEEN THE INADEQUACY OF INSURANCE COVERAGE. THIS WAS PARTICULARLY APPARENT IN THE AFTERMATH OF CAMILLE.

ONE CURRENT PROGRAM IN THE INSURANCE AREA IS THE NATURAL FLOOD INSURANCE ACT OF 1968 WHICH PERMITS FEDERAL INSURANCE ASSISTANCE IN FLOOD-PRONE AREAS. AT THIS TIME IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER THIS APPROACH WILL MEET THE NEED FOR IMPROVING AND EXTENDING PROPERTY INSURANCE COVERAGE. WE MUST STUDY ALL POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS IN THIS AREA THOROUGHLY AS THERE ARE MANY RAMIFICATIONS FOR THE PROPERTY OWNER AND THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY.

#### CONCLUSION

THERE ARE MANY OTHER AREAS WHICH REQUIRE ATTENTION BUT WHAT WE MUST GUARANTEE IS AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE IN THE EMERGENCY PHASE OF A DISASTER. IT IS SIGNIFICANT TO NOE THAT YOU IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES ARE CALLED INTO ACTION AT THE VERY TIME THAT YOU YOURSELF ARE DISASTER VICTIMS. THAT IS WHERE YOU HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE AND PERFORMED ADMIRABLY. BUT YOU KNOW, BETTER THAN MOST, THAT WE MUST DO MORE. IF YOU HAVE IDEAS ON HOW WE CAN IMPROVE THAT RESPONSE, LET US HEAR FROM YOU.