

FEMA assisting tornado-wracked states

by UPI

WASHINGTON - U.S. federal emergency personnel have been sent to four states struck by tornadoes that killed at least 52 people and caused millions of dollars in damage. The Federal Emergency Management Agency is working with state and local officials to assess damage and identify needs in Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee and Kentucky, FEMA's parent department, the Department of Homeland Security, said in a news release. President George Bush offered condolences to the people affected by the storm before the ceremonial swearing-in of Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer. "Loss of life, a lot of loss of property -- prayers can help and so can the government," Bush said. "I do want the people in those states to know the American people are standing with them." During a press briefing, White House spokesman Tony Fratto said Bush and Homeland Security Secretary Mike Chertoff spoke with the governors of the affected states.

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