

they fail to raise the level, the number of DEA agents in their country that would be adequate to deal with the severe problem that they have, and they fail to enforce laws that they put on the books and have made a mockery of those laws, including the most egregious incident I have ever seen a country take, which was last year in an operation called "Casablanca" in which our Custom officials identified millions and millions, hundreds of millions, of illegal drug dollars going through Mexican banks and some into the United States, and when it was uncovered, the Mexican officials threatened to indict the United States Customs officials rather than cooperate with our officials. What we got in return was a threat against our agents, and only again until we came to the issue of possibly decertifying them through a step of Congress, the House of Representatives and the other body, not this administration who certified them.

The President went a few months ago down and met with President Zedillo, and he met there in the Yucatan Peninsula, this little point here.

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We are told by our DEA officials and others in hearings that I conducted that the entire Yucatan Peninsula is corrupt, that it is run by drug lords. It is corrupt from the officer on the street to the governor.

In fact, we knew it was corrupt. We are told the entire Baja Peninsula is corrupt. We are told that entire other regions and states in Mexico are corrupt from the bottom to the top.

We had testimony at a recent hearing, which I conducted as chairman of the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources, that in fact this corruption may go even to the highest offices in Mexico. There were indications that there was as much as a billion dollars that one Mexican official was trying to place from his proceeds of dealing in illegal narcotics.

Now, President Clinton went with President Zedillo and met in the Yucatan Peninsula, one of the, again, centers of corruption, one of the centers of illegal narcotics. We knew that the governor of this state was corrupt. We knew that he was involved in narcotics, but they have a quirk in Mexican law that is interesting, that when you are in office you cannot be charged.

So they were waiting until a few weeks ago when this Mexican governor, we were told, would leave office so they could indict him. That is what we were told.

Then what happened? Under investigation, this is *The Washington Post*, April 1, April Fool's Day, this would almost be funny if it was not the truth, but this Mexican governor of the Yucatan Peninsula, Quintana Roo is the

name of the area, under investigation the headline says, "Mexican disappears; governor may have fled to avoid expected arrest."

Now, that should tickle the conscience of everyone in the Congress to see that the Mexican official that we were told was going to be arrested when he left office fled.

Now, to really rub salt in the wound, this is the *Miami Herald* story of just a few days ago, missing governor fled to Cuba, paper reports. So here is where the President of the United States, the President of Mexico met. Here is where we were told it was corrupt from the bottom to the top, and now we are told that that official, who was supposed to be arrested, has fled the country and possibly may be in Cuba.

Do they think the Members of Congress are going to ignore this? Do they think the American people are going to be fooled by the actions of this government to fail to take actions against one of the most corrupt officials? Do they believe, in fact, that this Congress will certify that Mexico is fully cooperating when they turn a blind eye on the escape of one of the major drug traffickers and one of the major officials in the Mexican Government?

So this is where we are today. This is the history of the supposed war on drugs by this administration; again, an administration that has almost dissolved the Drug Czar's office; again, an administration that appointed a Surgeon General that sent a mixed message to our children; again, an administration, and the previous majority, the Democrat majority that slashed the programs that stopped drugs cost effectively at their source.

These are, again, the results that we see when we certify that a country is fully cooperating and they make a mockery of the entire process of cooperation, a country that we help with trade, a country that we help with financial assistance. When it was going down the tubes, the United States Government held back the financial instability, that we still back through the International Monetary Fund, through world financial organizations and through the corporations of America.

So I ask tonight, where is the outrage? There is outrage about Kosovo. There is outrage about Saddam Hussein in Iraq. But these folks from Mexico, these corrupt individuals, these illegal narcotics dealers, have killed 100,000 Americans in the last 6 or 7 years of this administration; 14,000 young people, young adults and Americans who lost their lives, a cost of a quarter of a trillion dollars to the American people. Where is the outrage?

If it takes every week, if it takes every night, I will be here on the floor. If it takes 100 more committee meetings to bring this to the attention of the Congress that we need to make certain that we get this effort back on

track, we need to make certain that we seek the cooperation and that we seek working with our allies, such as Mexico, to see that the flow of illegal narcotics, the production of illegal narcotics, hard drugs like heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, that are killing our young people are stopped at their source before they ever reach our border, before they ever imprison our young people and destroy the lives of so many Americans and destroy the lives of their families. So whatever it takes, I will be here.

I see my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), on the floor. The Speaker has appointed myself, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) from Ohio, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM). The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) is in charge of working on the demand side and has done a tremendous job in trying to put together community programs which, again, this administration has not adequately funded, to educate our young people, to work in our communities, to work with local organizations. He has done an outstanding job.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM), the Speaker has appointed him another cochair with me to the Speaker's Working Task Force on the Drug Problem for the House of Representatives.

Both have done an excellent job. I commend them. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM) chairs the Subcommittee on Crime and works on criminal justice legislation.

So with those comments, I am pleased to conclude my remarks tonight, but I will be back as many times as it takes, as many hearings as it takes, and as much attention as we must give this problem that, again, I believe is the most important social problem facing our Nation, our Congress and the future of all Americans.

VICTIMS OF TORNADOS IN OHIO GET SUPPORT FROM NEIGHBORS AND OTHERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the previous speaker for being willing to offer me some time, as well as our next speaker, and also to commend the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA), who just gave an explanation of some of the tremendous problems we face fighting drugs in this country and in our hemisphere, for his hard work on this effort.

He chairs the subcommittee and committee that deals with this issue, not only in terms of reducing the supply of drugs into our country but also the demand, which is, as he said, where I focus more. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) has taken a strong and

balanced approach on this that is going to lead, over time, I think, to a much more effective policy to save our young people from the scourge of drugs.

I want to thank him for what he does every day. He could be out enjoying dinner tonight, maybe be with his family. Instead, he is here on the floor, as he is so many evenings, talking about this issue as he does in his committee constantly.

Mr. Speaker, I am here tonight to talk about something else. It has to do with a natural disaster. Last Friday, Mr. Speaker, a tornado ripped through the very heart of my district near where I live, near where my office is. The cities of Blue Ash, Ohio, Montgomery, Ohio, Loveland, Ohio, Symmes and Sycamore Townships were some of the communities hardest hit in Hamilton County where I live; also Deerfield Township and several other townships, Hamilton, Salem and others in Warren County, Addyston in Western Hamilton County, were hit by these high winds and devastating storm.

The damage is extensive. I have spent the last few days visiting the area and meeting with victims and local officials trying to help out. Four people were killed, many injured. It is a miracle that more were not killed when one looks at the devastation.

Hundreds of southwest Ohio residents are tonight without homes. In some areas, entire neighborhoods were virtually wiped out. In other areas, individual houses have been destroyed and then the house right next to it stands unscathed.

Although the damage estimates are still under way, we know that there are about 900 homes that have been damaged by the storm; 200 of them have been so severely damaged that they probably will not be able to be rebuilt or they have been totally destroyed. Another couple of hundred have sustained very extensive damage. Dozens of businesses were damaged or destroyed.

Tonight our hearts go out to those families who are trying to put their lives back together. There are some people who lost everything. We have seen from other natural disasters in our area, particularly the flooding in 1997, how difficult it can be for a community to rebuild after a natural disaster; and our thoughts and prayers are with everyone in these hard-hit communities.

The good news is that the response to this storm has been decisive and quick. Truly, I have been overwhelmed by it. Victims are getting help. Neighbors are helping, friends are helping, total strangers are pitching in, all to get people back on their feet.

I spent the last few days working with local, State and Federal officials, working alongside Red Cross and so many other volunteers, police, fire fighters from every neighborhood in

our region. It has been truly heartwarming to see people throughout southwest Ohio rally around these communities.

I had occasion on Saturday to tour some of the areas with the Federal Small Business Administration personnel who were sent in to evaluate the damage, and I asked them after some of our visits what they thought about this disaster and how they would compare it to the many others that they have seen around the country, earthquakes, floods, fires and so on.

They said, well, the big difference we see here is the fact that your community, Congressman, really has pulled together and people are helping in every way they possibly can, businesses, individuals and so on. That, again, was heartwarming for me to hear that in the area where I live, folks have come together in a way that is so effective at helping their fellow persons.

There are too many people to thank, so many people have done this, the police and fire departments in Blue Ash, Montgomery, Loveland; Sycamore and Symmes Townships, Deerfield Township, all the affected areas have been fantastic. I think they have done an outstanding job. The sheriffs' departments in Hamilton and Warren Counties provided rapid response. Emergency management throughout southwest Ohio were well prepared and well organized. Our Governor, Bob Taft, came down to the area immediately. His emergency management agency officials have been excellent, and I want to thank the Governor personally for his interest and personal concern for our area.

The Hamilton County Urban Search and Rescue Task Force, so-called USAR team, has been great. They have been working along with elements of FEMA's Ohio Task Force One and they have really been a Godsend to the communities. They searched about 70 homes the morning of the tornado to make sure there was indeed an accurate count of those damaged and injured and those killed.

They also searched numerous businesses to look for survivors, and they have helped since then to be sure that as the clean-up is proceeding, people are entering these homes and businesses in a safe way. Dozens of other agencies throughout the area have lent their mutual support and assistance to these devastated communities.

The Red Cross, of course, and the Salvation Army have been on the scene since the start, offering help to victims and their families; and all of us owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to untold hundreds of volunteers, people who have come out to these communities, some neighbors again, some friends, some total strangers who have taken time and energy to help these folks who are in distress.

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Our prayers go out to the families, and our thanks and appreciation go to all the hardworking volunteers and emergency management personnel and local officials who I think have done an outstanding job at a difficult time.

This clean-up process is going to be long and hard. There is still more we need to do to help families get back on their feet. One area where we have made some progress is getting relief from the April 15th tax filing deadline for tornado victims. Victims have much too much to worry about on their minds right now to worry about whether or not they get their taxes in and to worry about the IRS.

We have worked with the IRS here 2 days before the April 15 deadline to get some relief, to get extensions. The IRS has had officials at my office on Montgomery Road to answer questions and help tornado victims right through April 15. People can stop by my office in Kenwood, or call us at 791-0381 to get filing extension information, to get expedited refund checks from the IRS, or to expedite the process of their tax returns.

We have forms to be able to help people extend their tax filings and also to get expedited refunds. The IRS has also agreed to set up a special phone number for tornado-related problems in Cincinnati. That number is 241-2929, and after hours you can call the IRS Helpline at 1-800-829-1040.

We are making some progress, but we still need a lot more help. The Federal Small Business Administration had a disaster relief team again I joined in the district last week. FEMA officials arrived at the disaster scene to conduct a disaster assessment.

I understand from local and State and Federal officials that the area is likely to meet the threshold to be declared a Federal disaster area, and I urge President Clinton to give prompt consideration to a request that may come from Ohio Governor Bob Taft shortly.

I would also like to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, many of whom have come up to me to express their condolences and support as the area I represent recovers from this devastating storm. Now it is time for all of us to do all we can do to help these victims pull their lives back together.

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY FOR THE 106TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. HYDE, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the Rules, I am submitting a copy of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee on the Judiciary adopted February 4, 1999.