

July. It was followed by a subsequent tropical storm that dropped more than a foot of rain on my region, which is represented by Congressmen ORTIZ, CUELLAR and myself. Even more rain, 30 inches, fell in the mountains of Monterey, Mexico, and over the next 2 weeks, the Rio Grande River swelled to record levels, causing flooding along the U.S.-Mexico border in Texas.

The Texas border, from Laredo to Brownsville, is home for over 2 million people. The international bridges in this region carry the bulk of U.S. land trade between the United States and Mexico. The border region is primarily protected by a Federal levee and floodway control system operated by the International Boundary and Water Commission, better known as the IBWC.

Although it is responsible for over 500 miles of levees just on the U.S. side and seven dams, for decades it received approximately \$5 million a year for maintenance of those levees. As a result, a Corps of Engineers assessment in 2005 showed that hundreds of miles of the levee system were inadequate, too low or to weak to be certified. Several of the dams were also of great concern.

When the report was published, my border colleagues and I knew we had to work hard and fast to protect the millions of people we represent. We began working with the IBWC, the Corps of Engineers and local officials to get the information we needed to make our case to Congress. We thought outside the box.

Hidalgo County, with 750,000 people, one of the fastest growing counties in the Nation, worked with IBWC and the Department of Homeland Security to develop an ingenious plan to combine the Federal effort to fix the levees with the effort to build a new border fence. The resulting border-wall concept met DHS's criteria for a fence and reinforced the IBWC levees.

The county believed so much in this project and its urgency that it raised bond money and gave \$82 million to the IBWC to expedite the repairs, even though these structures were totally a Federal responsibility. Hidalgo County is one of the poorest in the Nation and should not have had to spend their scarce resources on a Federal project. They deserve to be reimbursed.

In Washington, we met with the appropriators from both sides of the aisle to make our case. I want to particularly thank Congressman FRANK WOLF, Congressman DAVID PRICE, Congressman JOHN LEWIS, Congresswoman NITA LOWEY and Congressman DAVID OBEY for understanding the need and providing us with \$400 million over the last 4 years to make the badly needed repairs.

As a result, the river levees in Hidalgo and Cameron Counties were repaired. Dams and floodways near Presidio were repaired, although not be-

fore we suffered flooding that cost the lives of U.S. and Mexican heads of the International Boundary and Water Commission who died in a helicopter crash while surveying the damage. All along the U.S.-Mexico border, repairs have been made.

I have a few pictures that demonstrate what this meant during Hurricane Alex. Here is a map showing what we would have experienced in Hidalgo County if the levees had not been repaired. Everything in blue would have been a humongous lake of approximately 150 miles. It would have looked like New Orleans did under Hurricane Rita and Hurricane Katrina. This blue area of water would have covered most of the major population area, endangering hundreds of thousands of people and causing billions and billions of dollars worth of damage.

Despite historic levels of 20 and 30 feet over flood stage, which makes the Rio Grande cresting at 59 feet, the cars on the new Anzalduas Bridge show the daily traffic coming north from Mexico. As you can see the Anzalduas Bridge, it shows that the water all around us is holding up very well because of the wall and the strengthening of the levee system.

Look at this. Unfortunately, despite our progress and historic funding, IBWC internal floodways north of the river still have not been repaired. Levees in this area did not hold and communities have been flooded.

This picture shows a section of the Rio Grande River with no levees and the resulting flooding that occurred.

This final picture is of the Anzalduas Dam. Record river water flows forced the IBWC to divert river water into the spillway that leads to the floodway. For weeks, water releases from all of the upstream dams have been diverted into the floodway because there was too much water for the dams to hold back. The record river flows have weakened dams like Amistad and Falcon which were of concern to the Corps back in 2005. Although they held this time, they may not the next time.

In conclusion, I want to thank Congressmen ORTIZ, CUELLAR, REYES, DOGGETT, RODRIGUEZ and the other members of the Border Caucus for their help. I appreciate the assistance Chairman BARNEY FRANK and his staffer Tom Glassic provided with our flood mapping and insurance issues.

I close by saying that I want to thank all the Members of this body who responded to our pleas, and I urge them to help us finish the job and complete the system. It is much less expensive than cleaning up after a natural disaster.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 13 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Through Your Word all was created. In Your Word all can be healed and brought to the fullness of life. By Your Word we are taught the ways of justice and led to peace.

Speak, Lord, Your Word to this assembly of the 111th Congress, that this Nation may be strengthened in virtue, grow in its capacity to embrace the diversity of peoples, surround them with security and right order, and so give You glory, now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. POE of Texas led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

SOCIAL SECURITY

(Mr. TONKO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TONKO. Madam Speaker, I rise today just a few weeks in advance of the 75th anniversary of Social Security. This bedrock promise, earned with a lifetime of hard work, should be available for our Nation's seniors and future generations. However, my friends on the other side of the aisle are once again attempting to privatize Social Security.

Returning to previously rejected ideas, Republicans want to create a casino economy and play Russian roulette with your hard-earned benefits. If they had succeeded, for instance in 2005, seniors would have lost trillions more in the stock market meltdown of the Bush recession. Instead, nobody lost a penny of Social Security.

In the area that I represent, many people are hurting. Families and seniors are facing uncertainty and anxiety ranging from their mortgage payments, to credit card bills, and more.