

need to end the overwhelming neglect of education.

In the minds of our citizens, the concerns related to national defense do not compete with the overwhelming mandate to improve our schools. Nothing in the minds of our citizens, the American electorate, the people who have common sense out there, nothing in their minds competes with education. It is number one. "It is education, stupid." It is education.

Look at the polls, but do not look at the polls and let your eyes blink. Here in Washington, in the Congress, Democrats and Republicans, we need to act on appropriating and vesting real dollars in an education system which will take us into a cyber civilization in the future where everybody needs to be educated.

The dollars that we are willing to appropriate in response to the American people's stated concern about education are minuscule. We are throwing pennies at a problem which requires billions of dollars. We must change our minds.

If the American people are listening, they might help open the eyes and ears of their own Congressman or Congresswoman. Have them make a survey. Even in the richest districts there are often schools that need help.

I challenge every Member of Congress to make a survey and select a few schools in their districts and go take a look at what they need. There are some places where they need money for wiring for the Internet; there are other places where they need money to fix the roof; there are some places where they need money to tear down old buildings and construct new schools. All over New York City we have schools that need money to put in a new furnace and get rid of the pollution and the asthma-generating coal-burning furnaces.

We need to address these issues in our Education Task Force and the Democratic Caucus, as well as the Committee on Education and the Workforce. Members of the Committee on Education and the Workforce were on the floor before, and I want to applaud what they had to say. They understand the problem, but I do not think that the solutions that are being proposed have yet come to grips with the magnitude of the need.

We need to spend many billions on school construction. School construction is just at the center of the problem, but that is a place to start. If we do not meet the need for adequate buildings, safe buildings, across America, the Congressional Budget Office says we need about \$147 billion to just stay even, if we do not meet that need or begin to step forward to move toward meeting that need, then everything else we propose to do in Washington at any level is fraudulent, everything else we propose to do about education.

We are feeding the people a spin on the problem without coming to grips

with the reality and the substance. We must go forward and invest in education in order to prepare our education system to take us forward into a new cyber civilization.

COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF MEMBER OF HON. DAN MILLER, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from Laura Griffin, staff member of the Honorable DAN MILLER, Member of Congress:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 8, 1999.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to formally notify you pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House that I received a subpoena for documents and testimony issued by the Circuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit of Florida In and For Manatee County, Florida.

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined to comply with the subpoena to the extent that it is consistent with Rule VIII.

Sincerely,

LAURA GRIFFIN,
Case Manager.

ILLEGAL NARCOTICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SWEENEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House at this hour to discuss primarily the issue of illegal narcotics and its effects on our young people and our country, but I could not help but hear some of the words of my colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS), who just spoke here and talked about education.

I want to say to my colleagues and to the American people that I too support education. I support anything this Congress can do, anything our Nation can do to enhance educational opportunities for each and every American. However, I do have some differences with the previous speaker.

The previous speaker represents 40 years of trying to get more education power, more education decisions, more education regulation in Washington, D.C.

□ 1815

And I think I represent a new wave of thinking that has come here in the last few years that education decisions, education of our children, and decisions about education policy are best decided at the local level with parents, with local school boards, and through local initiatives.

Then I think we also heard the argument that we are spending money on military defense and others, and this money could be converted into education. I might remind my colleagues in the House that the number one rea-

son that we came together as a Nation to allow us to live a free life in a free society is in fact the principal reason for the formation of the United States, and that is the question of national security.

Without national security, without the ability to defend ourselves, without the ability to have a defense of this Nation, all other things are impossible. And under the Constitution, if we care to look at that document, that is our prime responsibility and all things flow from that level.

So we cannot discard our military, particularly with an administration and folks what want to send our troops to every corner of the Earth and every conflict, at great expense, stretching our limited Federal dollars, and also spend additional funds or take away funds from education. So we cannot have both, but we try to do our best in meeting our Federal obligation.

I might say, and I did not really want to get into this too much tonight, but I just had the opportunity to meet with a couple from Florida, and they were here and heard some of the debate about education in the Congress, and one of these individuals, the wife, was a teacher and she was delighted to hear the philosophy of the new majority relating to education, that the power and the ability to teach and the funds go to the classroom, to the teacher and the student, not to the education bureaucracy in Washington, Atlanta, and is forced at different layers of the education bureaucracy even within the State and in particular in my State of Florida.

Our discussion was quite interesting because we did not identify the problems the way the previous speaker did; we identified the problems I think the way parents do, the way teachers do and local citizens who examine education. And we do not need a Harvard Education Ph.D. to look at American education today and see that teachers are not allowed to teach.

We asked the simple question in our conversation a few minutes ago off the floor with this couple from Florida, "How can you teach, how can you have order in a classroom when you cannot have discipline in a classroom?" And the same well-intended liberal policies from the other side of the aisle have amassed laws and regulations, which, combined with liberal judicial decisions, have handcuffed our teachers so that it is almost impossible to have discipline in the classroom through this maze of Federal regulations, mandates, and court orders. So we have said we want the teacher to have the ability to teach in the classroom.

Now, we also have a unique approach to education because we do not think that the money needs to be in Washington and again the power and the regulations all coming from Washington, but we think that those resources, that those abilities, should be at the local level with the teacher, with the parent, with the local school

board, again reversing this trend where everything has come to Washington at a very heavy expense.

Now, let us also for a minute, before I get into this drug discussion, talk about funding of education. My friends and my colleagues, the Federal Government only provides between 4 and 5 cents of every dollar on education, 4 and 5 cents. Now, of course we can provide more. The problem is we provide about 90 percent of the Federal regulations in education. So we provide very little money, but all of the constraints and mandates and regulations that cause teachers instead of teaching, not allowing them to teach, to be filling out papers, to be complying with Federal regulations, and to report to a maze of bureaucracy that now starts at the local level, goes to the State level, goes to the regional level, and ends up at the Federal level.

I was chairman during the past 4 years of the Subcommittee on Civil Service. One thing I learned as chairman of that Subcommittee on Civil Service is where the bodies in the Federal bureaucracy are buried. The first 5,000, if my colleagues ever care to go down to the Department of Education, now imagine, there are 3,000 of 5,000 Federal education employees in the Department of Education here in Washington D.C., or in the close environs, 3,000 people.

Now, we also got into the discussion of changes in education. And we have, as a new majority in the Congress, tried to shift again this responsibility from Washington, the authority, the regulation, and do away with some of the bureaucracy. We started out with some 760 to 780 Federal education programs, all well-intended, but each with its own administrative level, 760 to 780 of those. We have got it pared down to 700.

Quite frankly, we have only begun the paring process. But every one of these programs has turned into lobbying organizations, into special interest activities; and they justify their existence by lobbying the Congress, by telling what a good job they have done. And what, in fact, we have again are 3,000 bureaucrats in Washington D.C., most of them making between \$70,000 and \$100,000 if we look at the pay schedules.

Now, I am not saying that we should abolish the Department of Education, but I think we could do it with 10 to 20 percent of the personnel that we have just by consolidating the programs.

In fact, there are proposals and there will be proposals before this Congress very shortly to go to a Super EdFlex, where we take the amount of money, we divide it by the student population and other criteria and we send it to the States. This Congress, under this new Republican majority, has tried to reverse the trend in that 80 to 90 percent of the Federal dollars do not get into the classroom, do not get to the teacher. Now, is that what people want with their Federal money, that 80 to 90 per-

cent of this Federal money does not get to the classroom, to the teacher?

Again, we have to allow the teacher to teach and discipline in the classroom, authority, the responsibility, the ability to teach in the classroom. We have to give that first. And secondly, we have to give the Federal money to the student and to the teacher, a unique approach, not to the 700-plus Federal programs, not to the 700-plus administrators.

If we have only three administrators for each program at the Federal level, there are 2,100 that help account for the 3,000 just in Washington, D.C., in the Federal Department of Education. So we have to ask ourselves where we want our dollars to go? Into the classroom? To the teacher?

This Congress, this new Republican majority, said we want those funds to go to the classroom and to the teacher. Then what are we teaching? Again, in my discussion with this couple from Florida, the wife again taught school. My wife was an elementary school teacher. I have a degree in education, although I have never taught other than my school required certification internship.

But we have to ask the question, what is a teacher doing in the classroom? Does she have authority to control the classroom, first of all? Does she have the funds, Federal funds and other funds, coming to the classroom? Then the next question is, what is the teacher teaching?

The answer is, today Federal money goes on everything but basic education. Now, show me a student that has basic education, is able to read, is able to write, is able to conduct basic mathematics, and I will show my colleagues a successful student. But almost all of our Federal education programs go for everything except those basic education fundamental programs.

And what is interesting is that the individuals who suffer the most from this deficit in a Federal approach to education that again has been adopted and culled and now culminates in this bureaucracy from Washington and this sad approach to education as the ones who suffer the most are our most disadvantaged students.

So our disadvantaged students are not learning the basic skills. Those disadvantaged students, because they do not have these opportunities to learn basic educational skills, I will tell my colleagues what has happened. They are our first problem in the classroom. Ask any teacher. They are our discipline problem. And the teacher does not have the right to discipline or have control of her classroom because of the Federal regulations and the bureaucracy that has been created to make certain that a teacher does not have control of the classroom.

So here we have the most disadvantaged, not able to learn the most basic skills that are necessary. They become discipline problems. Then next they become dropout problems. After they are

dropout problems, they become societal problems. They do not have a job. Sometimes they get into drugs and into other illegal activities. Just look at the statistics for unemployment among our minority youth. Look at the statistics about dropouts among our minority youth.

So if we really care about education, if we really care about those disadvantaged children, if we really care about getting dollars into the classroom for our students, for our teachers, for basic education, why not adopt a different approach? And that is the EdFlex approach that we have talked about. And we may want to look at Super EdFlex.

As chairman of an oversight subcommittee on education, I intend to conduct hearings in the future on this subject and see why we cannot get more Federal dollars into the classroom, to students, to teachers, to do away with the mass of bureaucracy.

It is interesting now this concept of charter schools. And what does a charter school do? A charter school basically lets a teacher teach, go back to basic education without the mass of regulations, whether they are locally imposed, State imposed, or federally imposed.

So I did not intend to get off on this subject of education, but when I hear those who have helped develop a system that has helped ruin public education, and I am a strong advocate of public education. Again, my wife taught in public schools; I was educated to teach in public schools.

The public schools helped make this country great. The greatest minds of this country, some of them were taught in a one-room public school, and I think we can still achieve greatness in our public schools. And public education has helped make America great, and our public teachers deserve practically a little award of merit, the survivors, those who have managed to survive the mass of bureaucracy passed down from Washington, the mass of regulations that do not allow them to do what they went to an education university or college for, and that is to teach students in a disciplined atmosphere basic and fundamental education and to help develop that policy of working with parents and working with local school board members rather than edicts from some bureaucrat at some level who causes them to do everything but what their original mission was.

So I take great exception when I hear those who have helped create the disaster talk about criticism about this approach to get back to the basics that made American education and public education so great in this Nation. And again, I commend our public teachers, those survivors of this mass of bureaucracy we sent them from Washington and regulations that they must try to deal with every day.

My purpose tonight also is to talk about another issue, an issue that is not on the front page like Kosovo and

is not an issue like Iraq. It is an issue that I feel is one of the most critical social issues facing this Congress, this Nation, our young people, and every American in every walk of life now.

□ 1830

It is a social problem that for many years was limited to folks who were the unfortunate victims of illicit narcotics, illicit drugs, sometimes lived in urban areas and became drug junkies or drug addicts and were the cast-asides of our society. But, ladies and gentlemen of the Congress, there exists in our Nation tonight and today a drug problem that is of serious dimensions and proportions. Last year, over 14,000 Americans lost their lives because of drug-related problems, drug-related deaths; 14,000. Since President Clinton has taken office in 1993, 100,000 Americans have lost their lives. In many instances young people, some of those in the prime of their life, have become victims to illegal narcotics.

Now, this problem is so serious that I want to try to bring it into some understanding to those individuals who represent various locales here in the Congress. But if we took Hattiesburg, Mississippi and we wiped it off the map and its population of approximately 100,000, that would be equal to the number of individuals who have died because of drug-related deaths. If we destroyed Gadsden, Alabama, again close to 100,000 people would vanish from the face of the planet. Iowa City, Iowa would be wiped out, 100,000 died. If we had everyone die now in Iowa City, everyone would be alarmed. In Elmira, New York, again a population approaching 100,000, 95,000 Americans have died, more than 95,000, because of illegal narcotics in this country during this administration. Bangor, Maine would be wiped out. Pine Bluff, Arkansas, the population of that city would be wiped from the face of this country. Cheyenne, Wyoming. I could give a long list of others that are equal in population to those individuals who have lost their lives in this social problem of illegal narcotics, in this criminal enterprise now that is affecting every corner of America.

The cost of illegal narcotics in this country is approaching a quarter of a trillion dollars. In addition to lives that I mentioned, 100,000 over 6 or 7 years, we had 14,000-plus last year, we have a cost to this country estimated at over a quarter of a trillion dollars.

This Congress in our budget debate is debating a number of measures to deal with illegal narcotics just in this next fiscal year. The estimate is somewhere around \$18 billion will be expended. We now have in the United States of America 13.9 million Americans who are users of illegal narcotics. Drug use by 12 to 17-year-olds in this period since President Clinton has taken office to now has doubled, has doubled since 1992, drug use by our teenage population. More than 6 percent of Americans have used illegal narcotics in the past 30 days.

What is another dimension of the illegal narcotics problem in this country is the change in the pattern of usage. When I came to Congress, crack and cocaine were the big problem. Today, heroin is a major, major problem, not only in our urban areas but in suburban areas across this land, including my own area, central Florida, from Orlando to Daytona Beach, one of the highest income, highest educated, one of the most prosperous areas in America, and we have experienced an incredible heroin epidemic and particularly again among our young people.

In the United States of America, first-time heroin use surged 875 percent from 1991 to 1996, again under the charge of this administration. Heroin-related emergency room admissions increased from 1989 to 1995 some 80 percent. In Florida, I want to talk about the problem that we have been experiencing again with heroin. Recently, a number of our newspapers featured headlines that said that heroin deaths increased 51 percent in the State of Florida from 1997 to 1998, a 51 percent increase in heroin deaths. Two hundred six deaths in Florida in 1997. Fortunately no Americans have been killed in Kosovo, no Americans have lost their life in the current Iraq crises. Even in the Gulf War, we had fewer than that number of casualties. But just in the State of Florida, we had 206 heroin deaths in 1997, a 51 percent increase from 1997 to 1998.

In Orlando and again central Florida, a very prosperous area that I represent part of, we had 36 deaths, heroin deaths, and we had the highest death rate, we had 3.6 per 100,000 population die from heroin overdoses or heroin-related deaths. Additionally, our cocaine problem still is with us in Florida. We had 1,128 cocaine deaths in Florida in 1998, up from 1,039 in 1997. So we are seeing an incredible epidemic of heroin deaths, particularly among our young people, and even an increase in cocaine deaths.

Now, you might say, how did we get into this situation? Let me review, if I may, for the Congress and for the American people the history of how this administration got us in this situation with these statistics, with an epidemic of heroin, with the continued problems with cocaine, with methamphetamine and designer drugs at epidemic levels in other parts of our Nation.

The first thing this President and this Congress did when it was under the control of the Democrat Party, and I do not mean to say this in a partisan way, it is a matter of fact, but their policy was to eliminate much of the war on drugs. Their policy was to try to just deal with treatment of those who had drug abuse or illegal narcotics problems and put our resources in that area. The first thing this President did as President was to cut the positions in the drug czar's office, and they were slashed dramatically, practically closed down the drug czar's office. This

was the very first action, as we may recall.

The second action was to appoint a surgeon general who really said "just say maybe" to the use of illegal narcotics. Now, if you do not think that the chief health officer of the United States, who gives a mixed message to our young population, does not influence that young population in that important position, if you do not think the President of the United States, if he would say that "I didn't inhale" or "if I had it to do over again I would," if you do not think that influences young people, then I think you have another thought coming, particularly when you see the statistics of the dramatic increase in illegal narcotic use from 1993 to today.

Additionally, when the Democrats and the Democratic majority controlled the other body, the Senate, the House of Representatives and the White House, some of their first actions in the Congress in 1993 and 1994 when they controlled the entire governmental operation was to start to slash the efforts of stopping drugs at their source. These are source country programs. We know where 100 percent of the cocaine is coming from in the world. Every bit of it is coming into the United States, or was coming from and comes from today Bolivia, Peru and Colombia. That is it. There are no other locales. We knew where heroin was coming from, and this administration with this majority on the other side slashed the eradication programs, slashed the interdiction.

Now, the most cost-effective way to stop illegal narcotics is at its source, where they are grown, where the supply comes from. The next line of defense is interdiction. What did the administration and this majority in Congress, this past majority in Congress, do? They cut interdiction. They slashed the programs for source countries, to stop drugs at their source cost effectively. Then they stopped interdiction programs. They also stopped the use of the military. They stopped, at least temporarily, the sharing of information with some of the countries in shoot-down policies. Only after a great ruckus in Congress were we able to reinstitute the information sharing policy that allowed us to give assistance and aid to other countries that had shoot-down policies, these principal producing countries, so that they could take action to stop those illegal narcotics from leaving their borders.

So we have seen what this administration has done as far as the military, interdiction, eradication. Another thing that folks do not realize is that the Coast Guard is a great line of defense, particularly for Florida, around Puerto Rico. The Coast Guard has been the first line of defense around Puerto Rico. It stopped under the Bush and Reagan administration most of the illegal narcotics coming into the United States. Puerto Rico is part of the United States and once you get into

Puerto Rico, you are into the United States, and the Coast Guard provided that shield.

This Congress under the previous Democrat majority and under the Clinton administration slashed dramatically the budgets of the Coast Guard and particularly the defenses and ability to interdict drugs around Puerto Rico were eliminated.

So this is what this administration had done. We know what the other administration had done. The Bush administration, the previous Reagan administration had put into place programs that cost effectively stopped drugs from coming into our borders, stopped our young people from using drugs, and we actually saw decreases in use of illegal narcotics and drugs coming into our Nation.

□ 1845

Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue on how this administration lost the War on Drugs and how under the control of the previous majority this country lost the effort to interdict drugs cost-effectively at its source. In fact, under this administration and under the previous Democratic majority, they slashed stopping these efforts by funding a percentage that went from 33 percent of all the funds we expended in the drug war down to 12 percent. So basically what they did was gutted by two-thirds the programs to stop drugs at their source. Again, their emphasis was solely on those wounded in battle, treatment of those victims of illegal narcotics.

This administration also decided to have the Department of Defense rank counter-narcotics efforts at the bottom of its priority list. If we look at a priority list developed by this administration in its priorities, previously under again the Reagan and Bush administrations this was a high priority. With DOD, the Department of Defense, it is now a low priority. The President, not learning from experiences of the past, proposed to this Congress through the Office of Drug Control Policy and the Drug Czar a budget to the Congress that is \$100 million less this year than last year, and again in the areas that are most important to stop drugs cost effectively at their source, the President also failed to provide adequate proposals for funding of these programs, including again the Coast Guard which plays such a vital role, including the source country interdiction programs, including the use of the military.

In fact, if my colleagues want to look at the budget, in addition to being \$100 million less, there is \$73 million that is being currently used to relocate our forward drug interdiction efforts in Central and South America. We have previously been stationed at Howard Air Force Base for these efforts, the advanced surveillance activities in our illegal narcotics efforts over the South American region, again where these drugs come from, again the source of

production, the source of transshipment of these drugs. Our eyes and ears and our frontline defense in the War on Drugs is located in Panama at Howard Air Force Base, and \$73 million in this budget is to move our operations to locations that will not under any circumstances be as good because this administration, and it is not widely publicized, but basically they blew the negotiating with the Panamanians, and the United States of America is being kicked out lock, stock and barrel from Panama as I speak here.

We have lost \$10 billion in assets, lost every one of them. They negotiated without success. We have lost every asset. There we have lost 5,000 buildings, over 5,000 buildings, and we will not be conducting one advanced forward drug surveillance operation there. In fact, we will be paying \$73 million out of this budget that has been proposed by the President to make up for the failed negotiations which got us totally kicked out of Panama and giving these assets to the Panamanians is a disastrous consequences, I predict, not to mention that the Panamanians, through a corrupt tender, have given one of the ports to a Chinese group that basically is run by the Chinese Army. So the Chinese will control one of the ports through a corrupt tender, and this is the situation we find ourselves in, and again part of this President's budget is being expended. Even though he has \$100 million less than we proposed last year and appropriated last year, additional funds will be paid to correct mistakes by this administration.

So this is the situation we find ourselves in today. We have a very serious drug problem, and I want to, if I may, to put this chart up here and show the drug problem that we have in the United States, and again, as a result of the inactions or lack of proper actions by this administration in the 1990's we see this new pattern of illegal narcotics coming from South America. Again, production of cocaine through Columbia, Peru and Bolivia, and that was the pattern we saw at the beginning, it is the pattern we still see, but we see the drugs now coming through Mexico, and we see them coming from Columbia into the United States, some through Puerto Rico into the northeast United States and other routes, but the two major sources of illegal narcotics coming into the United States are Columbia and Mexico.

Now let us examine, if we can for the record, how we got into the situation where again Peru and Bolivia were the primary producers of cocaine. I could not possibly believe this would be true if someone told me it 5 years ago, but this administration managed to make Columbia the biggest cocaine producer in the world, and they have done that because in the past 5 or 6 years of this administration they have fought every effort by Congress, they have fought every request of Members of Congress, they have fought requests of the Drug

Task Force of Congress to get resources to Columbia to stop the production, to stop the trafficking of illegal narcotics from Columbia. This administration has done everything possible to make sure that those resources did not go to Columbia. They stopped helicopters, they stopped ammunition, they stopped resources. Now we have Columbia as the number one producer. It has outstripped Peru and Bolivia and is the number one producer of cocaine.

What is even more incredible is 5 years ago Columbia produced almost no heroin, almost no heroin. Today Columbia is the source of most of the heroin coming into the United States of America.

While this administration blocked equipment and supplies, resources, military and police aid going in to stop the production and transiting, when they blocked this, what happened? The drug dealers began producing, and of course we heard cocaine. Now they are the major producers, but in Columbia they are also now producing heroin, and it is not like the heroin of the 1980's. This is tough stuff. This is high purity, not 10, 12, 15 percent pure; this is 70, 80 percent. This is the heroin that is killing our young people on the streets of Florida and across this Nation.

So again, through the inaction or improper actions or inadequate steps that this administration failed to take, Columbia is now the biggest drug producer on the globe. It is my hope, it is my prayer, it is the intent of almost everyone in the Congress who serves on the subcommittees of jurisdiction, that this administration now will allow helicopters, equipment, resources to get to Columbia.

I met several times with the President of Columbia, President Pastrana. He is committed to the war on drugs. He has a very difficult civil war on his hands. Thousands and thousands of police and military have lost their lives at the hands of drug dealers and narco terrorists and Marxist terrorists in Columbia. We have a very difficult situation, but hopefully now this administration, with the urging again of Congress, will get the resources to stop drugs at their source, which the source is Columbia.

Now the other major source area and problem that we have today is Mexico. Mexico has become the primary source of hard narcotics and marijuana coming into the United States of America. It is the primary source. Some of this is heroin and cocaine being produced in Columbia, but now in concert with the drug dealers in Mexico, and with the cooperation and with the consent in many instances of almost every level of government, corrupt government in Mexico, we see the drugs coming through Mexico into the United States. They are coming into the United States through the largess of this Congress which voted NAFTA, which voted almost an open commercial border between Mexico and the United States of

America through again a policy that allowed us to give trade benefits.

Now we have to stop and think. This Congress gave great trade benefits. They are not really an equal trading partner, not when they pay people 25, 35 cents, even \$1 an hour. These are not equal trading partners as we did with Canada, which is a very equal trading partner. We gave them a great trade advantage. And what did they give us in return? An unprecedented supply of illegal narcotics transiting across our border. This is a fact; this is incontrovertible.

The DEA administrator, who testified before my subcommittee and on the other side of the Congress, said the corruption among Mexican anti-drug authorities was, and let me quote him, "unparalleled with anything I have seen in 39 years of police work." This is one of the most professional, most dedicated capable administrators we have ever had. He does not buy the administration line even though he is a member of this administration, and he tells it like it is. He has said that the level of corruption in Mexico is absolutely unparalleled.

Now this administration has certified Mexico. Under Federal law we have a certification law that says that every year the President must certify whether countries who deal in illegal narcotics or are the source of illegal narcotics coming into the United States, that the State Department and the President must certify under this Federal law that they are fully cooperating with eliminating both the production and trafficking of drugs under this 1986 law. And this administration has the past several years certified that Mexico is fully cooperating and did so just a few weeks ago.

How can an administration certify that Mexico is cooperating when even this Congress asked 2 years ago, this House of Representatives, simple steps for the Mexicans to take? First, to extradite those who are convicted of illegal narcotics trafficking, and to date I believe they extradited one individual, and that is only under the pressure of decertification, only under the pressure of so many people, from the Minority Leader, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), the Speaker of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), by a bipartisan majority saying that Mexico must take some steps to show that they are cooperating. But they fail to extradite major drug traffickers, they fail to install radar in the south, they fail to allow our DEA agents to arm themselves, 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.

□ 1900

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 Deer-

field 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 po-

lice 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