

Annan with indicted war criminal Slobadan Milosevic. This could not be further from the truth. Milosevic is accused of the worst of crimes against the ethnic Albanians, and Kofi Annan works tirelessly for the advancement of global truth and justice. In order to set the record straight, I ask that you issue an apology to the Secretary General and recommit yourself to the reunification process with Greek Cyprus.

Your statement clearly is not helpful to the reunification process of Cyprus. In sharp contrast, Greek Cypriot President Tassos Papadopoulos has proven to bend over backwards in order to move the talks forward. After the failure of the talks in March at The Hague, he did not waiver from his determination to arrive at a solution, stating that despite his "understandable sense of disappointment, we will not abandon our efforts for a Cyprus solution, which would be functional and viable."

It is also evident that you are not truly representing the will of your own citizenry. As you well know, tens of thousands of Turkish Cypriots protested in support of the U.N. plan for reunification with Greek Cyprus earlier this year. They demanded that they be given the same rights that are enjoyed by the Greek Cypriots, and reunite the country once again after 29 years of division. Your decision to open up the border to Cypriots on both sides for daily trips was a positive first step towards the cessation of tensions, but a first step is all it will remain if you do not return to the negotiating table.

A solution can still be reached in the Cyprus problem. You still have the chance to heed the advice of the international community and the demands of your own people. An apology regarding your recent comments about Kofi Annan, accompanied by a sincere commitment to the reunification talks, will go a long way for the people of Cyprus to have their country back.

Sincerely,

FRANK PALLONE, JR.,
Member of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, in that letter I demanded that he apologize for his statement and recommit himself to the U.N. peace process. His behavior further demonstrates what Mr. Annan stated about how it was solely Mr. Denktash who was the reason why these reunification talks broke down. I would ask him to start up the reunification talks again. This is what should be done, not making these outrageous statements about the U.N.

HURRICANE ISABEL RECOVERY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, this evening I will be joined here by a number of my colleagues from not only North Carolina but from States along the east coast that were hit by Hurricane Isabel with devastating force several weeks ago, and a number of lives were lost in my home State. More lives were lost, of course, as the storm made its way up the east coast through Virginia into the District of Columbia as it continued to move forward. And, of course, the amount of water that was dropped created flood conditions in

some parts of the east coast that they have not seen for a long time.

This evening, though, let me speak specifically about North Carolina and then we will cover some of the other issues. And my colleagues are going to join me in a few minutes. But I want to express my appreciation this evening, Mr. Speaker, to some hard-working folks who came to North Carolina really before the storm hit, from FEMA and the emergency management people in North Carolina, Under Secretary Beatty and Governor Easley, who really were planning in getting ready.

We had a lot of advance planning and time to get ready for the storm when it was a category 5. Unfortunately, no matter how well you plan, you cannot stop the wind damage, nor can you stop the tidal surge. And that is what created tremendous damage. We have roughly 400 FEMA workers in North Carolina as I speak this evening helping door to door.

I appreciate this opportunity to bring to my colleagues' attention in this House the issues as they relates to recovery costs from this devastating hurricane. I have to my right here a photograph of a road. You know, most of us think it hit the coast and that is where it ended. This was well inland. This really is a road here, and you see how it was washed out.

I want to turn, though, to the next photograph. And I am going to leave this up and refer to it from time to time. This is a small rural village, the county seat, of Hyde County. It is not in my district, but I have a lot of friends who live there. When I was State superintendent of schools, I spent time with my friends there. And this small town is under water, or was under water.

What is so sad and devastating about this situation is when Hurricane Floyd hit in 1999, they saw flooding, substantial flooding. They borrowed money through SBA and other sources and with the FEMA money razed their homes, did the things they needed to do. And now the whole town is flooded, not just part of it, the whole town.

And I could cite stories all over the East, and my colleagues are going to talk about more of those this evening, so I will let them join me in just a minute. But as it roared ashore on Thursday, September 18, I could not help but think that Hurricane Fran that hit in 1996 came on a Thursday, Hurricane Floyd which was the 500-year flood, came on a Thursday, it seems like Thursdays in September are not the kind of days in North Carolina when you have got a storm coming you want to look forward to.

But as this storm roared through North Carolina and into Virginia and Maryland, its effects were felt all the way up into West Virginia and Pennsylvania and finally ultimately in Canada. Although it lost its strength as it came inland, it was a huge storm. And the fury of this storm touched millions of people along the east coast. A lot of

folks were without power for a week. I was told today that finally, after now roughly almost 2 weeks, all the power is back on in North Carolina.

It destroyed homes, as I said. It destroyed whole towns, it flooded them, and it literally devastated crops. And I will talk about that more as the evening goes on with my colleagues.

And I am sorry to say that in North Carolina we lost five of our citizens as a result of this storm. And as is the case many times with a hurricane or storm that moves inland, we lose more lives from freshwater flooding than we do along the coast.

We asked our friends in North Carolina to send a photograph to us tonight to use to share with our colleagues, because many have seen the photographs or the things on TV as it relates to the Outer Banks and Hatteras and Ocracoke and others. This little small town is in a rural county; and, I dare say, no one has seen this photograph in Hyde County of Swan Quarter, a fishing village with some great people.

So far, 26 counties in North Carolina have been declared Federal disaster areas. And we just got word that the declaration may be extended to several more counties, and it should be. And I trust the people at FEMA will do it quickly. Because there is a lot of debris.

I talked this evening with a person who works for the State of North Carolina who works with our fishermen on the coast. And because of all the debris that has been washed on shore and clogged up the channels, many of our fishermen who would like to go out and earn a living, that even though the storm has passed, there is so much debris they cannot set the nets, their crab pots have been washed away. It is just devastating to their economic livelihood.

Preliminary damage estimates indicate, and these are only preliminary, the numbers will change, that North Carolina local governments have incurred more than \$55 million in damages, an assessment for individual losses thus far and is continuing to rise as those numbers come in.

This is a State, as I said earlier, that was hit with Hurricane Fran in 1996 that created untold hundreds of millions of dollars, actually in the billions of dollars, of damage, a devastating flood in 1999, ice storms et cetera. I will talk about that more later. 1.8 million acres of three of our State's most important crops were heavily damaged: peanuts, cotton, and soybeans. And the shame of it is it comes to one of the areas of my State where there is very little manufacturing. Agriculture is the lifeblood of many of these communities. And it comes less than 1 year after our farmers suffered one of the worst droughts that we have faced in a long, long time.

Sometimes those of us in North Carolina feel that our State has become a sort of disaster central. We get an awful lot of disasters. Some have said

that when you dial 911, it rings in North Carolina. They are really talking about when hurricanes head in. And they normally hit North Carolina because it sort of sticks out in the ocean, if you look at the maps.

In the past several years, as I have said, we have had two major hurricanes, a major ice storm, and a drought. That is why the economy of our State is in such tough shape right now. Along with the manufacturing jobs we have lost, it has had a heavy impact. We have lost the second largest number of manufacturing jobs in the country, second only to Michigan.

Fortunately, because of the advanced technology that we enjoy today, Isabel was one of the best forecast storms that we have had in a long, long time. We needed direction and they told us about where it was going to hit and it hit there, the approximate wind speed, and they were right. But as I said earlier, we could not control the waves; we could not control the wind. And a lot of damage was done.

However, as these two photographs show, there is water in every house in this small town. The whole town is flooded. One thing that we can improve upon that we do not now have the ability to do is that we ought to be able to determine the hydrology of how much water is going to fall so we will know what the flood levels are.

Most of our Nation's hurricane preparedness efforts have been focused on tracking storms, telling close communities to leave, and they did in this one. It saved a lot of lives, and we are grateful for that. But we cannot deal with the surge. With early warnings, communities can take necessary preparedness and protect our citizens and, in many cases, protect property as was done along the North Carolina coast to the extent we could.

However, as was demonstrated by Hurricane Floyd in 1999, Tropical Storm Alison in 2002, and now Hurricane Isabel this year, we need to improve our ability to raise the awareness of our inland residents of the destructive nature of flooding.

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And we can do something about it. A study done by Ed Rappaport of the Tropical Prediction Center shows that since 1970 fresh water flooding has caused 59 percent of storm deaths in the United States in all storms, whereas only 1 percent of the losses of life have come from coastal storm surges, and that is true in this storm.

That is why in the 107th Congress my colleagues joined me as I introduced and we got passed the Tropical Cyclone Inland Forecasting Improvement and Warning System Development Act. That is a long title to say we need a little bit of money to find out where the flash floods are going to be, how high they will be, so when we tell a person there will be a flash flood, they will know whether it will be 6 inches or 6 feet. There is a big difference in that to save lives.

This law authorizes a small sum, only \$1.15 million a year for 5 years to provide the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA, with additional resources to enhance the science of flood prediction and, most importantly, develop an important, effective flood warning index that will really save lives. We can do it. We have the technology to do it. It takes just a few dollars to help make our citizens here in the United States of America, who are paying the taxes, safer and to save lives.

We need to better understand the damage these storms can cause and better inform our citizens of the danger these storms pose.

I am working hard with my colleagues and this delegation and others to provide the funding this year to bring the process of developing an inland flood forecasting and warning system that our communities will have so that when the next hurricanes come, hopefully we will have a way to deal with it and we will be better informed to share with our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, it is now my privilege to yield to my colleague really from the Northeast, whose district encompasses a lot of the area that received substantial damage, a hard-working member who has really spent a lot of time working with his colleagues, working to make sure we get the money, to make a difference, to help his people back home, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BALLANCE). I thank the gentleman for his hard work.

Mr. BALLANCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE), my colleague, for organizing this special order tonight. And we thank our other colleagues who are going to join us, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE) and others.

I represent the First Congressional District of North Carolina, all or part of 23 counties. Most of these 23 counties were sort of in the eye of the storm, but there were about seven or eight who were actually hard hit and power was knocked out for more than a week.

We are here tonight because we want to talk about this storm and its impact on the communities, the cleanup and recovery process that has gone on and is going on. Tragedies such as these kinds of storms bring out the best in our people, and we want to talk a little bit about that and congratulate all of the volunteers and those who worked so hard. People find that in these kinds of tragedies they can lean on one another and they can lean on their faith and they can have hope for a brighter future, even while they are sitting in the dark, maybe with a candle flickering as the only light in their household.

As my colleague has pointed out, Hurricane Isabel made land 2 weeks ago, hitting North Carolina's coast and coming right across Greenville and Roanoke Rapids and Hoskey and on into

Virginia and on up the coast and right across the District of Columbia. The resulting impact left entire communities in the dark for the better part of an entire week. As we learned today, the last out customer in Hartford County was to have their lights by dark tonight, and one customer in Washington County hopefully by midnight tonight.

There may still be a few isolated power outages where the storm has damaged the home itself or the meter box, and the power companies are not able to turn the power on until those areas are fixed. But people were left without lights, without water, without the necessities. And I know that there are some people who depend on their telephone as a lifeline. At some point, after a day or two, in most of these areas, telephones were out, roads were out and impassable.

I wanted to say a hearty thank-you to the thousands and thousands of volunteers, first responders who comprised about 95 percent of the relief operations early on in all of these communities. They, the firemen, were out there almost in the middle of the storm, the police officers, the sheriffs' departments. And then just individuals who knew that there were problems with trees across the highways and they went out with their chain saws, and they removed those trees so that people could get home; or if there was an emergency, they could get to the emergency relief.

And as the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) has pointed out, we are pleased that almost all of the power in these communities is now back on.

I want to talk about a few of the communities that I visited. My staff and I tried to go to every one of these 23 counties. It was a little difficult for me to get to all of them, but I got to maybe about eight or nine. But over in Northampton County, which was hard hit and out of power, we went to Jackson and to the emergency relief operation. They had just completed their building with help from the USDA rural development grant and loan and that building, they told me, was right on time. They had a generator there and they had power there, and they had some space for people to sleep. After about 24 hours, they needed about an hour's sleep and they could go in and get a little relief.

Over in Martin County I was pleased to go by and ride with a county commissioner, Mr. Lilly, and he took me into areas of that county where trees had blown across the highways. And he told me how the fire departments, even in the dark of night and early into the next morning, were out there with their chain saws. I said, well, how did they decide whose jurisdiction they were in? He said, Well, they did not worry about that. They just decided they would get together and work and solve the problem.

We went down to Bertie County, and the one thing that they were concerned

about, the county manager and the emergency personnel and the elected officials were all there at the center, and they said, We need generators because we are worried, they have a county-wide water system, we are worried about the water system. We have got some water, but we need generators to pump water into the holding tanks so we will not lose our water system, and they get contaminated.

In Hartford County we had similar situations and one of the churches just opened its doors. The National Guard brought a generator down to Mount Nebo, and they fed for 5 days; and the church just picked up the tab itself until they got some other people who gave food and allowed them to feed people who had no way of preparing their own food and many of whom had run out of money.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, since the gentleman is talking about the number of meals, I was looking through my notes here, and I think it is a good point to share with my colleagues.

As these things happen, it is amazing what happens with our neighbors and friends and our first responders. In many of these areas, especially in the gentleman's area and down east, almost all of them are volunteers. They are very few paid fire, rescue and other folks. They were out working 24 hours a day really in some cases. As a matter of fact, in Franklin County we lost a volunteer firemen who was killed as a result of being out that night, hit by a tree.

My notes indicate, as of today, a note I just received from Secretary Beatty, the governor's person who is in charge of Emergency Management, Crime Patrol and Public Safety, that in North Carolina the volunteer groups and Red Cross and Salvation Army, the North Carolina Baptist Men, and I am sure a lot of these that you talked about in churches, probably are not in this number that had prepared meals. They had prepared 623,168 meals to people in eastern North Carolina.

That gives you some idea what the devastation was. For many of these folks, not only are they living in shelters; FEMA has had to move in portable trailers because their homes are uninhabitable as they try to work through it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. BALLANCE. Mr. Speaker, this spirit of volunteerism, that was what impressed me most as I toured around these counties. And people who had trees to fall literally on top of their houses, well, I am thankful that it was not any worse than it was.

That kind of buoyed my spirits because when you go in and see the people and look at the devastation, it just touches you, and you have a feeling of, what can I do to help?

I am here because I want to let you know that those of us who represent you in Washington and those who rep-

resent you in the State of North Carolina and the Federal and the State and the local governments are all coming together to try to fix this problem.

We went to Gates County, and over in Gates it is amazing. It was one of the hardest hit counties. They lost all of on their electric power. They lost their telephone power, and they even lost their radio power. The only way they could communicate for a while was by cell phone, and then they lost their cell phone power. It was amazing. The way they figured out to do it was they got some signs, and as people would ride by, they would have on the signs where they could go to get ice and water and food and help.

I talked to the sheriff over there and he was telling me that he was so proud of not only his employees but every last person that came out and volunteered their time and said, What can I do to help?

He did tell me, and I hope I am not stepping over the line to say this, at one point he saw some power trucks coming through his community to head down to the coast. He started to pick up the next phone to say that the next one that comes through, I am going to hijack them and make them help. But he did not do that. He said he knew they were directed where to go and they had an obligation.

But for several days the community was cut off from the rest of the world, and they were left to their own devices of how they were to communicate. They were able to do it and they were successful. And after first striking out with DOT, they were able to get some of those battery-powered signs that they could put up and to help them with their communication.

Over in Washington County, another county that was hard hit and the power knocked out, the story is told of residents who could not travel down the main highways, but they had to use, instead, dirt roads on the farmers' farms, and the farmers were on standby with their tractors just in case someone got stuck and could not get through. That is the kind of spirit that this hurricane brought out.

But it was so devastating and there are still people who, even though they have their power, they have damage in their yards, to their homes, and it is going to be a long time before they can recover and get back to a normal life.

But yet I want to say that the emergency management, FEMA people, everybody that I saw as I traveled through was working just as hard as they could. And the private insurance companies, I am told, I did not see them, but I am told they came in and tried to set up stations and do what they could.

We have already talked about the agricultural loss, \$168 million loss of prospects. We grow a lot of peanuts, a lot of cotton and corn. We do not know yet all of that damage that has taken place, but yet we are hopeful that we are going to come through. And we had

eight counties in this district that were initially not declared, Greene, Lenoir, Vance, Warren, Nash, Granville and Wilson; and I understand they have been and are being added to the list and they can get some relief. That will take some of the pressure off of the local government.

Mr. Speaker, I want to come back later and talk about one little community in Bertie County, Colerain, and the fishery that was destroyed down there, but I will yield to the gentleman at this time.

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Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I just have gotten a copy of a document from Department of Homeland Security and FEMA where those counties have now been declared part of this disaster area.

I now want to yield to my colleague, the gentleman from the 4th Congressional District (Mr. PRICE). When he was talking about being without power, he and I remember very vividly, as busy as we were with Floyd, Fran hit us real hard, and I will never forget being out of power for a week. One of the things I always said, you really knew who your friend was then. It was the people who shared ice with you in September when it was really hot, but that being said, we need not forget tonight that a lot of these people in eastern North Carolina, even though we have got FEMA there working, all of our friends working, there is some insurance available, there is going to be a lot of hurt and need, and we are going to need to work together to make sure resources are available because, if not, some of these communities, as total communities, will have real problems continuing to exist, and a lot of our agricultural friends will not be able to make it. There is not enough insurance. The State's going to have to come up with about a 25 percent match. I think these are the kind of times when our States face some tough times, but the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE) has been there every step of the way helping in this, and I want to thank him, and I yield to him now for his comments.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me and for taking out this special order tonight. It is a real service, I believe, not only to the people of North Carolina but to our fellow citizens across this country to point out the dimensions of this disaster and to point out the human needs and to line out what we in the Congress, and in government at all levels, are going to need to do to meet this challenge.

I also thank the gentleman from the 1st District (Mr. BALLANCE) for his words. He is a fine Representative for that part of North Carolina and has shown that once again in these recent days by being out there with his people, assessing the needs, offering words of support and comfort and coming back here to fight for the support that is needed.

So we are facing, once again, a challenge. As the gentleman indicated, it is one that we have had some personal experience with. North Carolina has had more than our share, it seems, in recent years of these kinds of disasters, I believe, being days without power in the aftermath of Hurricane Fran, days without power in very cold weather last December with the ice storms. This time in our area it was only a little over a day without power; although I think most of us did spend most of our weekends, the last couple of weekends, cleaning up debris and getting our property back in order.

The fact is that to the east of the 4th District and of the 2nd District, the devastation is far worse, and we understand that, and we understand the need for all the members of our congressional delegation to pull together and to look out after our friends and neighbors in eastern North Carolina, particularly the northeastern part of our State, an area which the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BALLANCE) represents so well.

We are mindful also of the needs of our friends in Virginia, in Maryland, in all the States and counties along the path of this devastating storm, Isabel.

Once again, we are facing the daunting challenge of recovering from a major hurricane. It has devastated our coast in North Carolina. It has caused major damage to homes and public facilities. It has displaced thousands of families. Preliminary damage assessments indicate that at least \$55 million in damage costs have been incurred by local governments. The losses to individuals are still being determined, but that is going to be a very high number. Agricultural damages are over \$160 million, and that number also is very, very likely to climb.

Twenty-six of North Carolina's counties have been designated as disaster areas. We are almost certain that 10 more will be added and perhaps more after that.

As with Hurricane Floyd and Hurricane Fran, the North Carolina congressional delegation is already working together to support the State's recovery efforts in every way that we can, and as my colleagues have expressed tonight, we are very, very grateful for the partnership that we have experienced with Federal agencies being on the scene, State agencies, local governments, volunteer groups, congregations, civic-minded individuals, people who have demonstrated once again the importance of reaching out to those in need, the importance of that value of community, that notion that we are all in this together and that when adversity strikes a portion of our community, we have all got to do our part to make the community whole.

The Federal relief agencies, of course, we in the Congress pay special attention to, and I am happy to say that they have been on the job. This storm did give some ample warning. We had actually very accurate predictions

this time of when this storm would arrive, and where it would go, and FEMA and other Federal agencies were on the ground as the storm approached. That is also true of our State agencies. They came in before the storm. They have remained in the State, and they have worked together cooperatively. I think we can be proud of the Federal-State-local cooperative effort, the public-private cooperative effort that this storm has brought forth. Once again, adversity sometimes brings out some of the best aspects of our communities, and we have experienced that.

Most of the Federal assistance, Mr. Speaker, is going to come through FEMA's regular disaster assistance programs. They will pay 75 percent of the costs borne by the State and local governments associated with the disaster. In the worst hit counties, FEMA will make special assistance available to individuals. They will help make repairs to their homes and for other immediate needs.

Congress replenished recently FEMA's disaster account by some \$1.4 billion through two supplemental appropriations bills. This funding was provided in response to an administration request based on disasters in other parts of the country earlier in the year. Unfortunately, the money that Congress has thus far provided does fall short still of the administration's request, and the administration's request itself was not intended to cover Isabel or future disasters.

So, once again, we have a disaster coming in the period between two fiscal years, and we have some important questions we must address about the funding that is available from existing resources and also the funding that is available in the fiscal 2004 Homeland Security bill. That bill, by the way, was signed by the President today in a very impressive ceremony over at the Department of Homeland Security. That bill contains funding for FEMA, money that we are going to have to draw on.

I am not sure the money in that bill will be sufficient to carry us through the next fiscal year. In fact, I am fairly certain that it will not be because there are surely more disasters to come, and we are still in the midst of assessing the costs for this disaster.

I spoke last week on the House floor, Mr. Speaker, about the shortfalls that could occur in the disaster relief accounts and the impact of such shortfalls on disaster victims. Our colleagues know that when the balance of these accounts begins to shrink, FEMA is obligated to stop the flow of relief to ensure that they have enough funding to help victims of disasters that might be just around the corner.

So I am determined, Mr. Speaker, that we are not in this case going to put either FEMA or the victims of Isabel in that kind of position. I am a member of the Appropriations subcommittee that funds FEMA, and I am already conferring with that agency

about the status of their disaster account and whether or not it has sufficient resources to also cover the needs resulting from Hurricane Isabel, and we are going to assess that in very short order. We will be working with the administration and with the Congress to act quickly on any supplemental spending requests, if they are needed, so that the disaster relief account has adequate resources, and FEMA assistance is able to flow quickly and efficiently to North Carolina and to other affected areas.

There are other disaster-related programs, Mr. Speaker, at the Department of Transportation, at the Natural Resources Conservation Service, at the Small Business Administration, and they are also going to need to be tapped. So we will need to keep an eye out for those programs as well.

As we get more details about the agricultural losses, and I know that our colleague from the 2nd District is in a particularly good position to assess that, because of the nature of these districts and also his service on the Committee on Agriculture, we will need to work with the administration and our colleagues in Congress to provide relief to farmers, as we normally do following major disasters.

So we have a lot of work to do. There is a lot to be heartened by, the kind of human sympathy and compassion that has been displayed in the face of this awful disaster, the kind of cooperation we have seen among governmental agencies and private organizations, but there is a lot of work yet to do.

We are going to need to cooperate with Members from all over the country, but particularly with Members from Virginia and Maryland and other affected States, and we are going to need to work across party lines, with the administration and with each other, to ensure that the Federal Government is a full partner in this effort, that it does all that it can do and all that it should do to aid in this recovery effort.

So I am appreciative, Mr. Speaker, of the chance here tonight to join with these colleagues and to highlight some of the needs and to serve notice that we are going to be working as hard as we know how and as cooperatively as we can possibly manage, to address these needs in the weeks ahead, and I thank my colleague for giving us the chance to make our case and to look toward the challenges facing us in the future.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for not only joining us this evening but, more importantly, for his leadership and his hard work on the Committee on Appropriations, as we work through other issues dealing with a host of other issues. I remember the challenge we had with Hurricane Floyd, which was one of the most devastating things we dealt with in FEMA, and you were there carrying a full load and a half, and we appreciate that and all your efforts, and I

thank the gentleman for his leadership in this area, and I know the people of North Carolina appreciate it as well and others across the country because I think you appropriately pointed out, and I thank you for that, it is really when one part of the country is affected, all of us as Americans are affected and as tax-paying citizens.

I want to express again my appreciation to our friends in North Carolina at the Emergency Management. I was there on Wednesday evening late, and again Thursday morning for the briefings, and I would encourage my colleagues in the Congress, if you have not been to visit the folks, you ought to go by and visit them. It is kind of hard to say you ought to go when they are having an emergency, but when you have got an impending disaster, to see all these groups come together, FEMA, the power companies, the different areas, the National Guard, the Red Cross, all these different volunteer groups who are in the same meeting and they get all the briefings on the weather, et cetera, and each one has to report what they are doing, where they are throughout the day, as they get ready, as the storm is approaching.

I did that on Thursday morning and then went down to Fort Bragg which was the staging area for FEMA where they brought in something like 19 or 20 trailers loaded with fuel. That just happened to be one of many staging areas in North Carolina. They were ready for the storm to hit, and as soon as it hit and they could get in, they started disbursing things. It shows that I guess in North Carolina, we have been through it a lot, and they sort of know how to get ready, but so does a lot of other parts of the country. It is a great tribute I think to how we work together to get things done, Federal, State and local, and we can work together when we need to, and I appreciate that.

I know on Friday morning after the storm had hit and such devastation was out there, I joined with the interim Agricultural Commission to fly around the State to take a look at not only the home loss and road damage, but also agricultural damage. And we flew over to Lewisburg and Rocky Mount, Roanoke Rapids over by Hoskey, landed in Elizabeth City where they had no power. Everything was being run by a generator. Part of the buildings were gone, as you can appreciate in a major hurricane, and back over Edenton, a beautiful city right there on the Sound and back into the Raleigh, and it almost breaks your heart to see these, as we know, the really colonial towns that took such a hammering in the storm.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the town of Edenton, North Carolina, is a beautiful town. At one time, it was capital of North Carolina.

It took a devastating hit in this storm, and the previous high-water mark, I think, was probably Hurricane Hazel in the 1950s, to say nothing of Fran and Floyd later, and this storm in that part of North Carolina topped all of those. The damage was far greater, and so it is important to stress that while the Outer Banks are hurt very badly, and there has been a great deal of attention focused on that area, and that carries with it, of course, a lot of agricultural damage, those inland areas in northeastern North Carolina are hit fully as hard and have a huge challenge in this road back.

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Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE), for all his hard work and for those remarks. He is absolutely correct.

Mr. Speaker, I would now yield to my colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BALLANCE).

Mr. BALLANCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding to me, and I too want to thank the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE). He mentioned the SBA. We know that 75 to 80 percent of all of our businesses in this country are small businesses.

One of the problems that we are going to have in this devastated area is that a lot of these small businesses are wiped out and they are going to have difficulty cranking back up. Some of them did not have insurance. I want to just mention one. This is not necessarily a small business, Perry-Wynns Fish Company, out on the Chowan River, in a little town called Colerain, not far from Edenton. They had seven buildings there on the river, and every last one of them was blown down.

Mike Perry was searching through the debris looking for his whistle he blew at the end of every workday, and he could not find it. Hopefully, by now, he has found that whistle. He said he had \$2 million worth of property that was not insured, but he said he is going to rebuild. He is going to back up a little bit from the river and rebuild and start again.

I think that is the spirit that we are going to see in a lot of our small businesses, whether they had insurance or whether they did not have it. The attitude that I saw is that we are not going to let this defeat us. We are going to get right back in the game. We are going to start our business back. We are going to serve this community as we have done in the past.

One of the other items I want to mention is, as the gentleman has said, we were able to predict this storm with great accuracy. One of the things I think we are going to have to do in the future is to stockpile, at least in certain strategic areas, generators. Somebody mentioned to me that maybe firemen ought to have as part of their issuance in rural North Carolina a chainsaw, so that they can put it on

their fire truck and have it as part of their standard equipment, because we have a lot of trees, a lot of pine trees and other trees in this area, and they need to remove those.

But I want to close on the point of again saying how much I admire and still admire all of our citizens and all of our people in the community and all of our first responders and all of our FEMA people for the spirit that was displayed in the face of all of this devastation. Everybody was upbeat and ready to go and ready to help.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, and then I will yield back to him, because I think that is important to remember.

The gentleman mentioned our firemen and others who used chainsaws. So many times when we think in terms of our first responders, emergency folks, the EMS people who save lives and go out, we fail to realize they do more than that. They are doing other things in the community, especially our firemen, and especially in rural parts of this country.

I remember as a small child growing up in rural eastern North Carolina seeing a tobacco barn burn, because that is where I grew up, and I will never forget watching it burn. There was nothing my parents could do. And I am sure they did not have insurance on it. And the gentleman knows exactly what I am talking about, as he grew up there. What a frightening thing that was as a child. And I had no concept, as small as I was, that that was part of the year's income for the family and that was going to be devastating for the family in terms of the economic loss. But to see that fire as it moved, and there was nothing you could do, absolutely nothing.

Then we started to form volunteer fire departments, and they had just trucks. And today we call on them to do more than that. In this flood they did not have to put out a fire; they were saving people from flooded buildings. They were going in with their heavy equipment where they could and getting people out of buildings, as were our emergency personnel. We call on them to do more and more. And we in this Congress, I think, beyond FEMA and the things we need to do, should not forget that we have a partnership with these local volunteers, Federal, State and local, to help them and their families. Because they are giving an awful lot of time in emergencies. They are at the table. They are called to be at the table.

Our National Guard folks in North Carolina, we called them up, what few we had left. About half of them had been called up for Iraq, but we called up something like 800 to 1,000. And we still have tonight, I understand, somewhere in the neighborhood of 220, 230 still on duty in different places of the State, especially in eastern North Carolina where they are still trying to continue to move things before they are deactivated.

And, Mr. Speaker, I yield back to my colleague.

Mr. BALLANCE. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleague in those sentiments. Many times we do not even say thank you collectively to this group of people. They do not ask any questions. They are sort of like soldiers. When they see a problem, they just grab their equipment and go; and the community depends on them. We depend on them, and they save the government a lot of money. We hope that in some way we can figure out how to make available to them at least some types of equipment.

I heard, as I mentioned earlier, I heard the word "generator" mentioned over and over again. Hopefully, we can figure out a way to make some funding available to these small towns, rural areas, to have generators available to them when these crises come into the community. They can at least keep the water system and the sewer system going until we can get the power back on.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Along that line, Mr. Speaker, as we were talking about our volunteers, we have a bill in, as the gentleman well knows because he is a cosponsor of it and which I introduced, to provide a benefit. This fireman that lost his life in Franklin County may have very well have been eligible as a volunteer for the death benefit for those who are saving people's lives or helping save lives and ultimately give their life in that regards. That is something this Congress can do. I think currently we have about 276 Members who have signed that piece of legislation. Last time I checked, it takes about 218 to pass it. I hope we will move it.

Mr. BALLANCE. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentleman again for organizing this Special Order tonight and thank him for that bill. I am very proud to be a part of it and am hopeful that it will come to fruition.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, my friend from the first district, for joining me this evening in this Special Order and to share with our colleagues here what North Carolina has gone through. And it is not just North Carolina when a hurricane hits. This one hit in North Carolina, but bad storms do not really know where county lines or State lines are; they just keep rolling. In this case, it rolled right through Virginia, where there was tremendous devastation in Virginia and in Richmond; and it rolled up into Maryland and the District of Columbia, where we saw power lines down, and we have seen here recently where people lost power and there was a fear that we would have flooding on a scale here in this city unlike what we had seen since the 1930s.

So it was a devastating storm that caused immense damage and a lot of heartache and loss of life. And the loss of lives were substantially more in Virginia and Maryland as it moved up the coast. Lives were lost, and the storm caused hundreds of millions of dollars

in damage to homes, roads, crops, and livestock. In North Carolina, I have to add beyond livestock, poultry too. We sort of think of that as being a little different.

The truth is many of these people that lost, even though FEMA is there helping and they have some insurance, they will not be made whole. They are coming up short. And the shame of it is that for many of them they had the flood in 1999, some of them did, the drought hit them last year, and now they have gotten a real bad body blow this year with another storm. I have talked to a number of the farmers and the interim commissioner of agriculture, and he is afraid some of these people just will not make it. And it is not because they are not good folks, they are not good farmers, they are not good people. It is just the fact that nature has hit them hard.

I hope that FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security, the administration, and certainly this Congress, recognize the need to support these storm-damaged areas through recovery and rebuilding, not only just on the outer banks of North Carolina, as we suffered in our State, but in Virginia, Maryland, the District of Columbia, and other places in Pennsylvania and up West Virginia, matter of fact, traveling all the way into Canada. I do not really think we are going to reach to Canada, but certainly we want to help our people here at home.

The United States has an outstanding and a very commendable record of responding to disasters around the globe. We are usually the first ones there. But I think now we need to respond with the same kind of effort and the same level of enthusiasm when disaster hits here at home. These are our neighbors. They are our friends. They are taxpaying citizens of the United States of America. And as my friends and colleagues have pointed out, they are not looking for a hand-out. They do not want that. They want an opportunity to get back in business, to get their lives back in order, and to once again be contributing taxpaying citizens of America.

They will do it. But they would do it a whole lot quicker if we could help them. North Carolina is suffering through one of the toughest economic times we have seen in a long time, and I commit to my colleagues that we are going to join hands and ask all our other colleagues from North Carolina and across the aisle, because these people in North Carolina need our help, and in Virginia and Maryland. It is our obligation, in my opinion, to make sure the job gets done.

Let me thank my colleagues one again, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BALLANCE), from the first district, whose district really was hit hard. Very hard. I think I only have about three counties, well four, Vance, Franklin, Nash, and possibly Sampson may be put in that

group that have been declared disaster counties. Others may be added. At least one more. But it is tough.

I remember going through Floyd, when almost all of them were in it, and it is tough to see people lose everything they have. I remember when I went in the Rocky Mountains, and the lady was sitting beside the road trying to go through a family Bible. It was wet, and that was all she had been able to save because that had her family photographs in it. These are the kinds of things that happen. These are the things you cannot replace. But we sure can help them get their lives back in order.

I thank my colleagues for their help in this Special Order this evening. We will keep our colleagues up to date on what is happening in North Carolina and with our friends in Virginia and Maryland.

PARTIAL-BIRTH ABORTION BAN ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KENNEDY) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that there is finally light at the end of the tunnel in what has been a long battle. Tomorrow, the House is poised to pass the conference report on S. 3, the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003. This conference report represents several years of hard work on the part of the Congress to produce a bill that passes constitutional muster.

Since 1995, State legislators in both Houses of Congress have passed laws with broad bipartisan support banning this barbaric procedure. Although successful in 31 States, twice bills passed by Congress to ban partial-birth abortion were vetoed by President Clinton. However, I am happy to say that President Bush has indicated that he will sign this bill into law and ban what he calls this abhorrent procedure that offends human dignity.

We have several Members here joining me to speak on why this needs to happen, and I want to first yield to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE).

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me; and more importantly, I thank the gentleman for hosting this critical Special Order on the eve of some extraordinarily good news for the right to life in America.

As the gentleman from Minnesota just suggested, it is astonishing to think how long it has taken this Congress to address this issue, literally first coming to the floor of the 104th Congress on November 1, 1995. That was the day that Congress first considered the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act. And here we stand in October of 2003, 8 years almost to the day since; and we