

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

(Mr. SMITH of New Jersey addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Connecticut?

There was no objection.

RESPONDING TO HURRICANE KATRINA

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

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, today we have approved \$10.5 billion in Federal funding to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. This is one of the largest natural disasters to ever hit the United States, and it is essential that Federal, State and local governments work together in a bipartisan fashion to provide the relief that is vitally needed.

As a member of the Committee on Homeland Security, I recognize the important job that the Federal Emergency Management Agency has to coordinate disaster relief and life-saving efforts. The funding that we provide here today will go a long way to supporting that effort.

The effort to recover the Gulf Coast is costing FEMA \$750 million a day. At that rate, we anticipated we would run out of funding by next Tuesday, so it is critical that we deliver this help today, and we have.

Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, but this is not just a Gulf Coast disaster. We are all in this together. We are all Americans. We all want to help our fellow citizens.

Back home in my State of Connecticut, Governor Rell and Members of the delegation are taking action. We have activated 100 National Guard troops with experience as military police to try to help regain civil order in New Orleans. In addition, the governor has added four colleges in our State university system to offer free tuition and space to students from Connecticut who otherwise were studying at colleges that have been demolished by the storm.

The governor has called upon Connecticut residents to do what they can to help, and they are responding. Around the State, civic groups, churches, businesses, and individuals are collecting bottled water, blankets, batteries and other essentials to ship into the region.

Just this morning, my wife, Heidi, dropped off food and baby formula at the New London armory in an effort to help. Others are doing the same.

Hurricane Katrina has given America a tremendous challenge. Family members cannot contact loved ones and are unaware of their condition and their fate. There are sanitation and health problems that must be addressed. People are homeless and need to be evacuated. Children are out of school and need to get back into school.

The hurricane and the ensuing flood were deadly, disruptive and costly. We must respond as a people and stay united in that response. Just as we recovered from the man-made disaster of 9/11 a few years ago, so we will recover from this natural disaster as well, if we work together. If we are divided, we fail. We fail ourselves, we fail those who look to us and who need us and we fail the Nation.

HURRICANE KATRINA RESPONSE

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

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise in support of the emergency relief bill. I know that all of us have been held rapt by the images and stories coming out of the Gulf Coast. The sorrow and suffering there is almost unimaginable, and it is my fervent hope and prayer that relief, real relief, will come soon.

On top of our grief, there is also outrage for it is nothing short of outrageous that in this country, where we talk of 9/11 every day, we still have not dedicated enough resources to improving our emergency response capabilities.

The people of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, as they wait day after agonizing day for help to arrive, are crying out for leadership and more simply, for help. For those who have died unnecessarily, the help is already too late. If this is the best the world's greatest power can do for its own people, or if it is not, it is a national disgrace.

There will be plenty of time in the future to assess exactly why we were so poorly prepared for this storm and why it has taken the Federal Government so long after the levees broke to get effective help to New Orleans.

Certainly the roots of the inept handling of the situation are old and deep, but in the short term we need to focus on solutions. We need real leadership, a real plan, and a much bigger contingent of emergency transportation and aid workers. Reports from every corner of embattled New Orleans are that the presence of law enforcement is at best minimal, despite the declarations of the Secretary of Homeland Security, and there is, 5 days after the hurricane and 3 days after the levees broke, still no effective distribution of food, water or medicine.

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How can this be? We cannot let another hour pass without a substantive response to the glowing shortfalls in the relief and evacuation effort. I would like to join the minority leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), in her call for the creation of a Select Hurricane Relief Task Force.

Our hearts go out to all those affected as well as those doing their best to respond to this disaster. Tragically, it is evident that the Federal Government's response has been wholly inadequate. Congress must insist on immediate improvement so that we can put an end to the suffering in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast as soon as possible.

Finally, we must learn some lessons. We must not save money by not preparing to prevent or to ameliorate potential catastrophes. We did not, despite ample warning, properly build up and strengthen New Orleans' defenses against hurricanes. We are paying a frightful price for that negligence.

We are not now buying the loose nuclear material in the former Soviet Union before it is smuggled to al Qaeda to make nuclear weapons.

We are not now inspecting more than about 6 percent of the millions of shipping containers that enter our ports every year, any one of which could contain a weapon of mass destruction.

We are not now adequately protecting our chemical and nuclear facilities against sabotage that could kill hundreds of thousands of Americans.

We should learn from this disaster. The administration and Congress cut the budget for building up the levees, and we are reaping the whirlwind. The administration has acted unbelievably lethargically in bringing relief efforts, and people have died as a result.

Let us not continue our negligent disregard until we suffer a nuclear or chemical catastrophe. I am tired, Mr. Speaker, of passing post-catastrophe relief bills. It is time the administration and this Congress act to prevent the next catastrophe.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MAINTAINING ORDER IN A TIME OF NEED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, we have all seen a tragedy of tragedies this past week. We are here as representatives of the American people to attempt to try and ensure that the proper governmental response is possible, and it is not a

time for recrimination or finger-pointing. As a matter of fact, I would like to draw the attention to the superb job that has been done by the Coast Guard. I have not heard one suggestion of criticism of the Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard, which has in our Nation's history a unique status of being both a civilian operation and a military operation, often is left in the shadows as we look to the other military establishments in this country. But the remarkable job done by the Coast Guard, particularly the work done by the helicopter pilots and those who are working with the pilots to rescue hundreds and literally thousands of people in the affected area, is something of which we should be proud, something of which we should be joyous; and it suggests to me that we should take another look at the way in which we have taken for granted the tremendous efforts made by the Coast Guard.

As we look forward in analyzing what occurred and what is occurring now, we ensure that as we make plans for the future, we equip the Coast Guard with everything that the Coast Guard needs to be able to carry out its functions, the traditional function which we have seen over the past week, and the new responsibility we have given them in the war on terrorism.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss as someone who spent 8 years as the chief law enforcement officer of the State of California if I did not remark on what I observed with the breakdown in order that we saw in the city of New Orleans.

Quite simply, when we have a situation in which law enforcement stands by and allows looting to take place with the excuse that it is only for food and water, one should understand that if we say looting is okay for food and water, we will ensure that only the strong get the food and the water and the weak will not.

It was not the weak that were breaking into those places and taking that home; it was, rather, those who were healthy and those who were able to go in and do that, and I doubt that they were running back to assist those who were far less fortunate.

When you suggest that that breakdown in order is allowable, what you do is suggest to the criminal community that they can do more, and we saw the spiraling from food and water to clothes, to appliances, and finally to guns and ammunition; and we saw terrible tragedy that ensued that was man-made, not as the result of the terrible forces of the hurricane and the terrible forces of the flooding that took place thereafter, but rather those who would take advantage of that tragedy for their own purposes.

My only suggestion, Mr. Speaker, is that it ought to be a lesson for all of us, all of us, that when we are confronted with tragedies of this sort, whether they are man-made or natural, we must understand the importance of order being maintained.

While some may believe it is in a sense of generosity or a sense of empathy to say that looting is okay for selected purposes, we should understand that ultimately it does the greatest damage to those who need our help the most, the least among us, the weakest among us, those who cannot fend for themselves.

So as we sort things out and as we in this Congress look for those things that are necessary for the Federal Government to do related to the State and local governments, we should understand that we need to have order in the midst of chaos to the extent we can so that we can ensure that our efforts are made to protect those who are least able to protect themselves. It is a terrible lesson that we had to learn once again, but it is a lesson that we ought to embrace and a lesson that we ought to utilize to assist us in any future problem.

We have many things to look at over the next few weeks as we continue in response to this terrible tragedy, but I would hope that we would understand that those who are the least among us, those who are the weakest among us, need the support from the strongest, and that in very real terms necessitates every effort to protect order.

EMERGENCY ACTIONS NEEDED TO ADDRESS SKYROCKETING ENERGY PRICES

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

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, our hearts go out to all of the victims in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi; and we in Congress stand committed to ensuring that we rebuild each of those families' hopes and dreams. But, unfortunately, during this time of crisis, I am very, very concerned that the American driving public is being gouged at the pump by Big Oil and by OPEC, which has been taking advantage of this crisis in our country. I am very concerned that Big Oil is exploiting this tragedy by tipping consumers upside down at the pump and shaking money out of their pockets. This is no time to take advantage of the American consumer. This is a time for the oil companies, as well as OPEC, to rally to the protection of the American consumer and the American economy.

We have all been disturbed by the television footage of looters ransacking stores and homes in New Orleans, but it also appears that Big Oil is engaging in widespread looting as it runs up the price of gasoline paid by the driving public.

We need action by this administration. They have to make it clear that they are going to put in effect immediately investigations, put investigators in the field, in the board rooms, to make sure that people understand that this kind of exploitation of the American consumer will not be tolerated.

Unfortunately, right after 9/11, the very same oil companies took advantage of the American consumer, resulting ultimately in large fines having to be paid by oil companies for their exploitation of the American consumer in the immediate aftermath of 9/11.

Also the President should demand that OPEC help us at this time. OPEC has announced that they will take up the issue of producing more oil at their September 19 meeting. September 19? When Saddam Hussein was threatening the Middle East, we did not say to our friends, Call us next month. We said we would respond immediately.

OPEC, led by Saudi Arabia, should announce that they are going to produce 1.5 million to 2 million barrels of oil a day beginning today, not waiting until some September 19 meeting. And the President, who held the hand of the Saudi prince in April at his ranch in Crawford, should now hold OPEC's feet to the fire and ensure that, as they are now saying they may have a surplus of 1.5 million to 2 million barrels of oil a day to produce, and they may consider releasing it all.

They should have done that back in April, when the price of gasoline was already skyrocketing. We should not be at a point where a barrel of oil is at \$65 a barrel, now approaching \$70 and going higher. All of that has happened subsequent to Katrina, this additional spike.

So we need a response from OPEC. We can no longer allow them to sit on the sidelines with this additional 1.5 million to 2 million barrels of oil that they are going to consider releasing on September 19.

In addition, the President should immediately suspend all royalty relief for the oil and gas companies for drilling on public lands, the Secretary of Interior should require the oil companies to pay the full royalty for drilling and extracting oil and gas from public lands, and those revenues should be earmarked for the victims of this enormous disaster. That is where those revenues should go. And the President and this Congress should enact a windfall profits tax on the oil industry, and the proceeds should go to the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program for this coming winter, the neediest people in our society, who are going to be most adversely affected by these skyrocketing energy prices.

But we just have to look in the rear-view mirror 5 weeks ago when this Congress and President Bush passed and then signed a historic energy bill that was a failure in dealing with increase in fuel economy standards for SUVs, encouraging renewable energy resources that would be used by the utilities in this country. Instead, we gave tax breaks to the oil and gas industries of our country. It is time we got something back from those industries. It is time for this Congress and this President to stand up.