

provide basic information about the evacuees.

I would like to place on the record this evening efforts our office has been making to try to connect housing from the North in communities that we represent, whether that housing is inspected mobile homes, manufactured homes and trailers, to move those units south, to move that excess supply south to the Gulf to people who need the help.

Do you know FEMA does not even have a central Web site yet where we can offer these available units? I represent the longest coastal district in Ohio. We have mobile home courts, manufactured housing, fishing trailers, we have all kinds of units that are sitting empty now that are on the list for sale. They could be easily inspected by Ohio inspectors or taken down to Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Alabama, places where people have been displaced. FEMA cannot even create a central records system.

The article this morning talks about the National Low Income Housing Coalition and all the trouble they are having getting basic information about who needs help, who needs shelter as we approach Thanksgiving, how many people have been displaced, where are they living. How is it possible this many months after these tragedies we do not have this information?

FEMA spokeswoman Nicol Andrews said she could not explain why at least three relief groups did not get the data. And, by the way, even our government's Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation are waiting to receive this basic information.

Douglas Culkin of the National Apartment Association, one of the most recognized organizations in our country, says that his association, anxious to be helpful, cannot get information on where evacuees are staying; and at an October 17 meeting here in Washington, Mr. Culkin said he was told someone would get him the information. Guess what? He still does not have it. He says it is unconscionable, and I agree.

What could be so hard about linking supply from the North, for example, with people who need help in the South? Why do I have to come down here to the floor of the Congress and let the country know that, again, FEMA just cannot seem to get its act together?

I had to call the office of the new director of FEMA, R. David Paulison, who did return my phone call, and I appreciate it very much, simply to let him know that I wanted somebody in that agency who knew something about housing, or I said, lacking that, get us somebody from the Department of Defense who is used to putting up field housing. Let's get an interagency transfer and someone who can work with us to move supply, excess supply from the North to those who need supply in the South. Even if it is tem-

porary, it is better than nothing as we approach Thanksgiving season. Why should this be so hard?

All you have to do is talk to the people who run the manufactured housing parks, the mobile home parks, the trailer parks. Let us get those units inspected. We can even put them on trains.

I represent a major rail center. We can get them down into Memphis and take them right into Gulfport, Mississippi. What is the problem? Why cannot FEMA help us?

Plenty of stories have been written about Mississippi. The Manufactured Home Association down there says they have sent notices to FEMA offering housing, never receiving a reply. That is from people inside of Mississippi. Then they found out that Mississippi's government, the government of Mississippi, made purchases from outside Mississippi rather than inside Mississippi.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will place this article in the RECORD this evening; and, please, we are begging FEMA, let all Americans have a blessed Thanksgiving this year.

[From USA Today, Nov. 1, 2005]

LACK OF FEMA DATA SLOWS RELIEF

(By Mimi Hall)

Relief groups trying to help Hurricane Katrina evacuees find new homes and reunite with families say they have been stymied by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's failure to provide information about evacuees.

"It's scandalous," said Sheila Crowley of the National Low Income Housing Coalition. "Congress should have hearings about the lack of information that's available."

Crowley said her organization has been trying for weeks to get information that FEMA collected on how many people were displaced from low-income housing and where they are living. She said the group needs the information to "understand the various situations that evacuees find themselves in."

FEMA spokeswoman Nicol Andrews said she couldn't explain why at least three relief groups didn't get the data. She said FEMA is "happy to share" the information except with groups trying to profit from the evacuees.

Most groups that have complained are non-profits. Others that requested but didn't immediately receive the data were the government's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

The complaints have sparked the latest wave of discontent against the beleaguered disaster-relief agency. Since Katrina hit the Gulf Coast on Aug. 29, FEMA has been widely assailed for its response.

PICO National Network, a coalition of 1,000 churches, including 100 in New Orleans, also has been trying to collect information about evacuees' whereabouts to help pastors find parishioners and help them contact relatives and friends.

"It's critical that we rebuild all these social networks," PICO's Gordon Whitman said.

Many of the groups are seeking updates to data that FEMA had given to USA TODAY. On Sept. 29, the newspaper published a map showing that tens of thousands of evacuees were scattered across 18,700 ZIP codes in all 50 states.

Douglas Culkin of the National Apartment Association said he wants the information so his association can determine how much apartment stock is available in towns and cities where evacuees are staying. At an Oct. 17 meeting with FEMA officials in Washington, D.C., Culkin said he was told someone would get him the information.

He still doesn't have it. "It's unconscionable," Culkin said.

AVIAN FLU AND THIMEROSAL

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, the President of the United States today made a speech before our health agencies that I think was very timely and very important. It dealt with the possible outbreak of the bird flu, better known as the avian flu, and he talked about steps that needed to be taken to speed up the process to create more vaccines to protect the American public against a pandemic that could kill tens of thousands, if not millions, of Americans. I think it is very laudable that he did that.

One of the things he talked about was tort reform to protect the pharmaceutical industry against liability suits, because he said there is only one vaccine manufacturer in the United States, and that is because the vaccine manufacturers have been afraid to produce vaccines because they might be sued on a class action basis. There might be thousands of people suing them because of damage that has been done to them.

So if I were talking to the President tonight, I would say, first of all, Mr. President, I think what you said was very good and what you proposed is very good. There are a couple of things that ought to be added to the mix though, Mr. President, that I think are very important.

First of all, we had hearings for about 4 years on mercury in vaccines. It used to be one in 10,000 children were autistic. Now it is one in 166. We had scientists from all over the world and doctors from all over the United States come in and testify that one of the leading causes of neurological problems in children and adults who are suffering from things like Alzheimer's is they have been damaged by the mercury that is used as a preservative in vaccines. It is called Thimerosal.

We need to get mercury out of all vaccines. Until that happens, I think it is going to be very difficult for this body and the other body to pass legislation to protect the pharmaceutical industries and the vaccine industries against class action lawsuits.

So the first thing I would say to the President was, get mercury out of all vaccines. That is very important.

Second, make the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program user friendly. Right now, people who have had children who have been damaged are losing their homes. They are having to mortgage everything they own to pay for

the damage done to their children and loved ones. So we need to make it more user friendly.

There is about \$3 billion in that fund. It was created to protect the pharmaceutical industry from class action lawsuits while at the same time providing a mechanism for people who have been damaged by vaccines to get compensation. It needs to be changed. It needs to be improved so that it is more user friendly. If we need to put more money into the fund, the pharmaceutical industry can add a nickel to the cost of each vaccination. That should cover ever any shortfall. That is very important.

The final thing is to make sure that we do not leave anybody behind. There are thousands and thousands and thousands of children and families that have been damaged by the mercury that was in vaccines. We must not forget them. We must make sure that they get compensated for the liability they have incurred, how they have been damaged. It is extremely important.

Right now, we have demonstrations all the time when people come out and say, "My child has been damaged and we do not know what to do about it." The only thing we can do as a government, in my opinion, is to make sure they get compensation from the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund and get mercury out of all vaccines. If we do that, I will sponsor the legislation to protect them against all class action lawsuits.

I have talked to leaders of the major pharmaceutical companies about this. I said, in exchange for giving you protection against class action lawsuits, make sure people who are damaged by vaccines can get compensation from the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund and take away one of the leading causes of neurological damage and damage that has been caused by vaccines, neurological problems like autism and Alzheimer's. Get mercury out of all vaccines.

So, Mr. President, if I were talking to you tonight, I would say it is extremely important that we do what you suggested today to protect the American public against a flu outbreak that could kill millions of people, but, at the same time, let us not forget those who have already been damaged by vaccines that were tainted with things like mercury.

ERRONEOUS PREDICTIONS ON THE WAR IN IRAQ

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, last week, America reached a tragic milestone in Iraq, the 2,000th American died. As of today, nearly 2,030 Americans have been killed in Iraq and a little over 200 in Afghanistan. In fact, October was the deadliest month in Iraq

since January. I say this not to exploit the grief felt by those families who have lost loved ones. Rather, I raise this grim milestone because it should give us, all of us, pause.

Two-and-one-half years after President Bush stood on the deck of the USS *Abraham Lincoln* and declared "mission accomplished," the brave men and women of our Armed Forces are still fighting and dying in Iraq, worse today than during the actual hostilities, and there is no end in sight.

There is not a time to debate how we got into Iraq. There is a place for that. What is more important now is resolving the issues and the sense of how we have gotten into this quagmire and bring our men and women home to their families.

It is time the administration finally leveled with the American people and presented us with a viable strategy towards success and victory. It is time that the President finally surrounded himself with competent leaders who can get the job done, rather than cronies and political operatives interested in advancing a political agenda.

Before the war, General Shinseki said it would take several hundred thousand troops to secure Iraq. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz said his estimate was widely off the mark and General Shinseki was let go.

Lawrence Lindsey predicted the war would cost hundreds of billions of dollars. In fact, many ridiculed his estimate and said again he was widely off the mark, that oil revenues would pay for the reconstruction.

□ 1945

His predictions were ignored; and \$400 billion later, the tab keeps rising. Some say it will finally cost nearly \$1 trillion, this war.

DICK CHENEY famously predicted that we would be greeted as liberators. Let me say, if Iraq treats liberators like this, they have a funny way of greeting liberators.

Weeks after the invasion of Iraq, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld fought against increasing the troop levels in Iraq. In fact, months before the war, he was still debating whether we needed less than 100,000 troops, when those in the Armed Forces were saying we needed 200,000-plus to win that war.

When the looting broke out in Iraq right after the invasion, Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld replied "stuff happens." Later he said during the looting, "freedom is untidy, and free people are free to make mistakes and commit crimes and do bad things." That was the Secretary of Defense. That sense of freedom has led to the situation we have today because we did not create order in that society in Iraq and a sense of who was in control.

In fact, the Defense Secretary has been flat wrong on countless occasions, both before hostilities and after the hostilities. I have lost track of the number of times he has told us that the insurgency was in its "last throes." On

March 30, 2003, regarding the fabled weapons of mass destruction, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld again: "We know where they are. They are in the area around Tikrit and Baghdad."

He has misled us on the number of Iraqis trained to conduct police and military operations. In September of 2003 he said 55,000 Iraqis have been trained. Earlier this year, he told us three battalions were operational. About a month ago, in front of the Senate, we were told that there was only one operational Iraqi battalion. Imagine that: Mr. Speaker, \$450 billion, a little over 2,000 American lives, over 10,000 Americans wounded, and one operational Iraqi battalion to show for that, and two elections.

The truth is that the administration's plan for their invasion was brilliantly planned, but they have failed to plan for the occupation, costing American lives, our treasury, and our reputation, and all because of the incompetence of this administration.

Today we are left with a quagmire that has created terrorists and threats to destabilize the region.

Let me read you what some of the experts in the Republican national security apparatus have said. Retired Army Lieutenant General Odom, former head of the National Security Agency, said the invasion of Iraq "will turn out to be the greatest strategic disaster in U.S. history."

Brent Scowcroft, National Security Adviser to the first President Bush said: "You have to know when to stop using force. You encourage democracy over time, with assistance, and aid, the traditional way. Not how the neocons in this administration do it."

Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, Colin Powell's former chief of staff in the State Department, called President Bush's foreign policy "ruinous" and said that "we have courted disaster in Iraq, in North Korea, in Iran."

The people I just quoted are not exactly the board of moveon.org or the Democratic Party. These are the pillars and the heads of the national security apparatus of the Republican Party. These experts are saying that it is time for a new direction with new priorities when it comes to Iraq.

We have to get it right in Iraq, but the current path the President has us on is not the path to success; and it is not simply, as he says, the choice between doing more of the same and getting the same results or merely pulling out. Mr. Speaker, \$400 billion and one Iraqi battalion. Some are estimating, as I said, the cost of this war will get closer to \$1 trillion.

It is time for the President to level with the American people and show us a path to success. We need a performance-based Iraqi strategy. How many police will we be reduced to this quarter? How many police will be reduced next quarter? How many Army members will be produced this quarter, the next quarter, and for the next 2 years,