

Administrative Incompetence and Hurricane Katrina

Statement from the House Floor By Rep. Cynthia McKinney, September 6, 2005

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to take this opportunity to join in the remarks of my colleague about the intensity of the feeling that we have for the people of New Orleans—or the people of Louisiana and Mississippi and Alabama, and of course, Florida in the first stop of hurricane Katrina—and the situation that has unfolded literally before our very eyes. I should also take a moment to commend the journalists who have facilitated us being able to see what has unfolded. But part of what has unfolded is sheer incompetence on the part of this administration and the feelings that the people are experiencing result from the fact that we've got an administration who let the American people down, who let the people in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, and Florida down, and just won't say: "We let you down, we made a mistake."

They, instead, try to defend the indefensible! Part of the late response comes from the fact that 40% of the Mississippi National Guard are in Iraq, 35% for those of Louisiana are in Iraq, 26% of the Florida National Guard are in Iraq, 23% of the Alabama National Guard are in Iraq.

And I have seen the interviews that have been done by Aaron Brussard of Jefferson Parish, Malik Rahim in New Orleans proper. Aaron Brussard said: "We have abandoned by our own country." Investigative journalists sent information to me that customs black hawk helicopter pilots were livid because they were not allowed to rescue people. And then on the matter of attitude (of course I will be speaking more at length on this on Thursday in a one-hour special order) but in attitude, Fema Chief Michael Brown had the nerve to say no one was clairvoyant enough to foresee this happening. But there have been studies, there have been articles. It is his job, to foresee this happening. I've got articles from National Geographic, Scientific American, all saying exactly what happened, what we witnessed unfolding. And then he had the unmitigated gall to say "People must take some responsibility." Well, Mr. Brown, you need to take responsibility. And Mr. bush, you need to take responsibility. The Times picune" has called for Mr. Brown's firing, and I have to say that they are absolutely correct. And I would just like to ask this administration just admit that they messed up instead of appearing before the American people with all kinds of excuses about what they did and what they didn't do and we're not going to revisit the past, we're going to make sure we move forward, we look forward. But there are a million people who have been affected by this, dispersed all over our country. The State of Georgia has received, is receiving thousands of them, the Fourth Congressional District is receiving as many of them as we can. The City of Atlanta has opened its arms to the victims of this administration. And with interest, I note: on the State Department website that they provide us a clue as to when we're seeing misinformation. And what they tell us is that we are being misinformed when we are being told something that is clearly not true. What the Administration has said to us tonight in many instances is clearly untrue.

And let me just say, that it is unconscionable that the Secretary of Energy could stand before us tonight and say that he doesn't know how to bring down gas prices, which was the original reason that I asked for this five minutes tonight. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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