

by Robert Krzewinski

In 1998 Hurricane Mitch absolutely devastated Central America causing extreme hardship and grief for thousands. Many Americans felt that it was a true humanitarian gesture for our country to offer aid to the people of Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua who lost family members, jobs and possessions. But does it really make sense to make the poor of this country even worse off by making them help pay for hurricane relief efforts?

Before Congress took its Easter recess (you know, the day we honor somebody who said helping the poor should be a priority), they passed emergency spending bills to pro-

vide hurricane relief in Central America as well as helping small farmers in the US. The problem with these decisions comes in how to pay for the hurricane/farm emergency spending. Congress chose to do it by making comparable cuts to programs in the US such as food stamps and international development projects.

At the same time that they're cutting aid programs for one group of poor people to help another group of poor people, Congress and the President are also considering giving record amounts of funding to the military, over and above it's own requests.

If you think that Congress has it's priorities off kilter when it comes to helping those in need, you can take literally one

minute and call your Representative and/or Senators offices to let them know. It's easy. Call the Capitol Switchboard (202/224-3121) and ask for the office of either Senator Abraham, Senator Levin, Representative Rivers or Representative Stabenow. When the person at the office answers tell them you want to register an opinion. Then just simply state that you support hurricane relief and farm aid programs but not at the expense of hurting other people by cutting domestic or international poverty relief efforts. Also, ask for a reply from the member of Congress on your thoughts. (You will have to supply your address.)

In the times of Robin Hood, robbing the rich to help the poor was thought to be noble. But making the rich (i.e. the military) richer, while making the poor help the poor is anything but admirable. ☑