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NEWSLETTER

97-834

February 11, 1962

Washington, D.C.

INTERPARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES. For the fifth year in a row, House Speaker Tip O'Neill has named me Chairman of the U.S.-Mexico Interparliamentary Group.

Legislators from Mexico are coming to Washington at the end of May to join me and 10 colleagues from the House in a discussion of items of mutual interest to our countries. It will be the 22nd session to meet since the group was created by Congress in 1960. Since coming to Congress in 1965, I have continuously attended the annual meetings.

At last year's session, which was held in Mexico, we examined a variety of important issues affecting our nations, including migrant workers, narcotics traffic, border ecology and cultural, scientific and technical cooperation.

In addition, I have been appointed to the U.S. delegation to the Spring Meeting of the Interparliamentary Union. Members of legislative bodies of 80 countries around the world as well as international observers from United Nations organizations and other international bodies will attend the April meeting in Lagos, Nigeria.

The Interparliamentary Union dates from 1889 and it is the oldest and most broadly representative interparliamentary association of its kind. Discussions of trade, human rights, and global security issues are common themes of meetings held twice annually, in the spring and the fall.

* * *

HONORING THE THUNDERBIRDS. It saddened me to hear of the fatal crash of the four Air Force Thunderbird jet pilots in the Nevada desert recently.

A resolution I have supported honors the four men who tragically died last month as well as a Thunderbird team leader who crashed at a Cleveland airport last year.

The Thunderbird program has kindled many a young American's interest in a career in aviation, and has made thousands feel proud and patriotic. This unhappy incident should not detract from that function of the program.

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NATIONAL PATRIOTISM WEEK. Speaking of patriotism, next week is National Patriotism Week, and a House Joint Resolution I support calls upon the President to encourage appropriate celebrations among federal agencies, citizens and primary and secondary

—KIKI DE LA GARZA, 15TH DISTRICT, TEXAS—

schools.

It is fitting that this week occurs during February since two of our greatest presidents were born during this month: George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. I have supported legislation that would authorize the striking of a commemorative half dollar and postage stamp to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Washington's birth.

* * *

COMING TO THE RESCUE. Last month the United States Coast Guard announced massive cutbacks in operations due to reduced funding.

The Coast Guard proposed a nationwide reduction of its military personnel by 3,400; decommissioning 11 cutters; closing or reduction operations at 31 search and rescue stations and 11 air stations; closing two district offices; 94 vessel documentation offices; 30 recruiting offices; and making huge reductions in ocean research, maintenance of equipment and personnel training.

Eight commercial vessel safety documentation offices are due to close in Texas, including one in Brownsville.

The Coast Guard has served the United States well for almost 200 years. It is a cost efficient, highly competent organization. Many of my colleagues and I want to see that it continues to serve us. Therefore, we are coming to the Coast Guard's rescue.

Legislation I have supported would provide \$136 million in fiscal year 1982 supplemental funds to the Coast Guard to allow it to operate at the same level as last year, keeping pace with higher fuel and operating costs.

A congressional subcommittee last year thoroughly reviewed Coast Guard operations in order to devise a strategy which would let the agency spend more money on its search and rescue, law enforcement, military readiness and aids to navigation missions while spending less on other functions. But for now, if we don't act the agency may not even be able to perform its high priority tasks.

* * *

VISITOR FROM HOME this week: Dr and Mrs Frank J Morales of Brownsville; Bob Chandler, Mr and Mrs James C Abbott, and Bill Meyers, all of McAllen; Willacy County Judge Bill Rapp of Raymondville; Tony Gonzalez of San Juan; Sam Sparks of Santa Rosa; and Robert Vanderveer and Terry Bergstrom of Weslaco. (Knapp Memorial Hospital)

Also visiting were hospital officials from the 15th District: Eddie Caughfield, Ben McKibbens, and Jim Elkins of Valley Baptist; Ms E W Mangum and T E Morrison of McAllen; Lino Perez of Starr Memorial and William E Watts of Starr Memorial.

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