

do not think it went near far enough. But the only way we are going to have progress in that area, the only way we are going to begin to address these problems with this Congress and this President is to go with a bipartisan budget. It is my belief that will put the President in a position where he has to go along with the Congress if we have a budget that has strong bipartisan support.

The Chafee-Breaux budget's value is it is real. The numbers are real, and the savings are real. Second, it has a very significant long-term effect in dealing with the trust funds, perhaps even better than other alternatives we have looked at. And third, Mr. President, it is the only game in town. It is the only bipartisan effort that we have on the table. It is the only way we are going to make progress.

Is it less than what I would like to see? Absolutely. I do not think it goes near far enough in dealing with our problems. It is clear, significant progress. And without it, without moving that bipartisan budget, I suspect we will find that we have put off dealing with one of our most serious problems.

I yield the floor, Mr. President.

Mr. DODD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

THE PRESENT SITUATION IN HAITI

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, last Friday, the majority leader, Senator DOLE, took to the floor and made a rather critical speech of our present policy in Haiti. He introduced at that time a report which was prepared by a Republican staff delegation that had gone down to Haiti during the Easter recess. I think the report probably could have been written a week or two in advance of the trip and the trip might not have even been necessary since there was not any real effort to examine the issues in Haiti and what has happened there over the past 18 months or so.

This morning I wish to take a few minutes to apprise my colleagues of how I see the present situation in Haiti. Where we have come over the past number of months in making real progress there. The good news is, of course, that Haiti is not in the headlines on a daily basis but there has been significant progress.

I think it is important that my colleagues and others who have heard Senator DOLE's remarks have an opportunity to hear another point of view, and that is what I would like to do this morning.

I am no stranger to Haiti. I have visited the country many times over the years. When I was a Peace Corps volunteer 30 years ago, I lived very close to the Haitian border in the Dominican Republic. I visited Haiti often in those days and still have many close friends in the country of Haiti.

Most recently, I visited Haiti this past January to make my own first-

hand assessment of the political situation. Based upon that visit, and the many others that I have made over the years, one thing is crystal clear. President Clinton's decision in September 1994 to support democracy in Haiti was the right thing to do. Whatever else one might say about United States policy, Haiti is a far, far better place today than it was 19 months ago.

Remember what those days were like. The reign of terror was the order of the day. Murder, rape, and kidnaping were daily occurrences in Haiti, all in an effort to intimidate the Haitian people. Those days are gone now. And, despite the fact that Haiti is a long way, a long way from becoming a Jeffersonian democracy, we are not going to rewrite almost 200 years of Haitian history in less than 2 years—I believe that today the Haitian people are one step closer to fulfilling their aspirations of living in freedom and dignity without fear of their Government.

An important phase of our Haiti policy came to a close just a month or so ago. U.S. forces are no longer participants in the United Nations mandated mission. In fact, last week the final contingent of United States forces left Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

When President Clinton dispatched United States forces to Haiti in the fall of 1994, he set a deadline of February 29, 1996, as the date when United States military participation in the mandated mission of the United Nations would terminate. He has stood by that situation and it has been fulfilled.

The goals of the United States policy have been clear from the outset, that is, to restore the democratically elected President of Haiti to office, to provide a secure and stable environment within which Democratic elections could be conducted, to protect international personnel and installations, and to facilitate the creation of a Haitian national police force.

Despite what some might have you believe, we have made tremendous strides toward fulfilling those goals. The duly elected president was restored to office. Municipal, congressional and presidential elections were successfully conducted. A civilian national police force has been established. The army no longer exists. The dreaded Haitian military has been dissolved.

During my January visit to Port-au-Prince, Mr. President, it became very apparent to me that there was a shared consensus across the broadest segment of Haitian society for a continued United Nations presence after February 29. President Aristide, then President-elect Preval, members of the Haitian Congress, the business community, the United States Embassy, U.N. officials, virtually everyone with whom I met, expressed the strong view that a follow-on presence by the United Nations was vital to solidifying the very real gains that have been made in Haiti over the last many months. Fortunately, the United Nations Security Council concurred with the prevailing

wisdom in Haiti and extended the U.N. mission for an additional 4 months until June 1 of this year. The Canadian Government, not the United States Government, has assumed the leadership role in the extended, albeit smaller, United Nations mission. I for one have expressed my appreciation to Canadian authorities for their willingness to do so.

No one is saying that the job is complete in Haiti. Far from it. Much remains to be done on the economic front, on the judicial front, on the human rights front, and on the migration front.

Public security, for example, continues to be a major challenge to the current Haitian administration, as it was to its predecessor. In that regard, some critics of Haiti have singled out the performance of the newly formed Haitian national police as an example of how United States policy has failed. That was included in the majority leader's remarks last Friday.

Mr. President, I could not disagree more. It does a great injustice to the real progress that has been made in this area in less than a year's time. Let us remember that until last June a civilian police force did not exist in Haiti. It had to be built from scratch while dissolving the army, the dreaded military.

In less than 8 months, a force of 5,000 freshly recruited and trained Haitians has been deployed throughout the country. Yes, they are green. They have made mistakes. But it is really quite a remarkable feat, when you think of it. Can you imagine establishing something like a 5,000-person force from the ground up, going through all the training, in a major city in this country overnight?

Haiti is not the only place we have endeavored to support the creation of a new professional civilian force to replace corrupt and brutal militarily justice. In Panama and in El Salvador, we joined with their government leaders to do something similar. In those cases, we had bipartisan support. Unfortunately, bipartisanship seems to be absent in the case of Haiti.

Some of the same problems in Haiti did, in fact, existed in these countries as well, Panama and El Salvador, and continue, I point out, to confront us to today.

Continued international assistance and support at this juncture is terribly important for this little country. These are critical to ensuring the strengthening and permanency of still fragile democratic institutions in Haiti. I believe the United States must remain engaged in Haiti.

U.S. humanitarian and democracy-building programs will continue to be important to future progress in a wide array of areas: the national police, the judicial and legislative branches, economic reforms, human rights and migration. If we do not remain engaged, I predict the previous problems that confronted both the Bush and Clinton administrations with respect to Haiti will

be right back in the laps of some future administration, and much more so.

Last Friday, in the course of his remarks, Senator DOLE stated it would be wrong to make Haiti a political football. Mr. President, I could not agree more. In that regard, the endless congressional holds that have been placed on purely humanitarian assistance—we have had holds, now, in some cases that have been in place since late last year, on proposed humanitarian assistance to Haiti. These holds in my view threaten to make Haiti the political football that the Majority leader has warned about. These United States assistance programs for vaccinations, for AIDS prevention, for textbooks, for primary schools, are targeted at the weakest and most vulnerable sectors of Haitian society. It is deplorable that we have held up these funds that were voted and appropriated by this Congress.

In my view, the administration has more than adequately addressed the questions about specifics of most of these programs—in briefings of congressional staff and written responses to questions submitted from the Congress. If the Republican majority mean what they say about not making Haiti a political football, then the time has come for these congressional holds to be lifted so the continuity of these programs can be maintained.

Again, I do not mean to suggest that all of the questions and concerns raised about the implementation of certain U.N. and U.S.—sponsored programs have not been without merit. There is merit to those questions. But let us remember that when the President and the international community decided to restore democracy to Haiti, they were navigating in uncharted waters. After all, this was the very first time in our history that international action would be utilized in an effort to restore a democratically elected government to power following a military coup.

United States officials, United Nations officials, and most especially Haitian officials had to learn on the job. So, not surprisingly, mistakes were made. But I would also say that administration, United Nations and Haitian officials have bent over backwards to answer questions and to make adjustments in programs as necessary.

Despite those efforts, criticism continues and the holds persist. As I mentioned earlier, these Republican holds placed on United States aid programs are jeopardizing some terribly important programs. One wonders if these aid programs have been put on hold, not so much because answers are wanted, but in the hope that policy successes that have occurred to date will be undermined. If so, this is very cynical and shortsighted and most certainly contrary to United States interests.

While I acknowledge that some criticism about events in Haiti have had merit, others have been far off the

mark. For example, some have charged that last year's Haitian elections have produced a one-party state in Port-au-Prince. Nothing could be further from the truth. I can tell you from my meetings with leaders of the Haitian Parliament that they are no rubber stamp for an executive branch. In fact, during my visit in January, the Haitian Senate overwhelmingly rejected President Aristide's controversial nominee to head the national police force. President Preval subsequently nominated, and the Haitian Senate confirmed, a very able individual to head the police force in the country. All that to say the political process is working.

Turning to another area of concern, the possibility of politically motivated killings. There has been a great deal of misinformation, I would say, Mr. President, about these so-called politically motivated murders. The number is much smaller than the 20 to 25 that some have alleged. As to the lack of Haitian cooperation, it is my sense that the FBI did not make a lot of friends in the manner in which it first went about conducting its initial investigations in Port-au-Prince. I was amazed to find out the FBI never bothered to meet with the members of the U.N./OAS civilian mission, the mission that had been monitoring cases since 1993. This is particularly troubling, I would say, since representatives from the civilian mission would have been of enormous assistance to the FBI's investigation. You will recall that most often they were the first ones at the crime scene to gather evidence and interview onlookers.

Nor, apparently, did the FBI seek advice from the U.S. Embassy or utilize its expertise and local contacts. Do not misunderstand what I am saying. I am not condoning these or other acts of violence in Haiti. One politically motivated killing is one too many. But I did not notice quite the same level of outrage in some quarters when the military dictatorship of Haiti was killing hundreds—hundreds—of Haitians, many them prominent political figures, in plain view of international journalists and cameras. Certainly, Haitian authorities need to confront the problems of impunity head on and to put together a credible investigation of the various suspicious murders and bring the matter to closure, but this should not become an excuse for walking away from Haiti or putting every other initiative in the deep freeze.

There has been a great deal of focus on the police and the security situation in Haiti, and rightfully so. These are important areas of concern, but they are not the only ones that will determine Haiti's future. Haiti, like many developing countries, suffers from serious brain drain, with many of its most talented citizens leaving the country. We need to try to redouble our efforts to help them find capable people to fill upper and middle management positions throughout the government, particularly with respect to the police

force. Haitians living abroad need to take some responsibility for their country's future as well.

The economy is also pivotal to Haiti's future. In fact, what happens with respect to the Haitian economy is perhaps more important than any other single issue we could mention. Economic growth and investment create jobs. Jobs mean hope and opportunity for the Haitian people. That is what gives people a stake in their country and their government. The economic policies that the Preval administration decides to implement will determine whether the Haitian economy will rebound and grow or simply stagnate.

Privatization of certain key State-owned enterprises—power, telecommunications, flour and cement—can play an important role in creating a favorable economic climate in Haiti as well, and should serve, I would add, to attract badly needed foreign investment in critical sectors.

Last month, the Committee on Foreign Relations had the honor of hosting a working coffee for the recently inaugurated President of Haiti, His Excellency Rene Preval. We had a very useful and, I think, candid discussion about issues of mutual concern to our two countries. It was a very helpful session. Surprisingly, many of those who have been the harshest critics of Haiti did not bother to attend this meeting or to give President Preval an opportunity to address some of the concerns that they have raised. I wonder why?

Among other things, they would have heard President Preval—

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair advises the Senator his 15 minutes has expired.

Mr. DODD. I ask for an additional 2 minutes.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DODD. Among other things, they would have learned from President Preval about his commitment to helping keep Haiti on its course toward democracy and about the high priority he accords to implementing significant economic reforms.

President Clinton has fashioned our policy toward Haiti as he has because he wants to give the Haitian people a chance, a chance to live without intimidation and fear, a chance to make choices and decisions about their own destiny. Our policy is making that possible, perhaps for the first time in Haitian history.

As I said earlier, I could not agree more with our distinguished majority leader that Haiti should not become a political football. Sadly, for most of that country's history, it has been somebody's political football. The people of Haiti deserve a lot better.

Mr. President, President Preval seems determined to do whatever he can to ensure the people of Haiti have a brighter future, but he alone cannot make that happen.

He needs and deserves the support of the United States in that endeavor, and I hope that he will receive it.

MENTAL HEALTH AMENDMENT

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I am extremely gratified that the Senate has unanimously approved the Health Insurance Reform Act, S. 1028, with the inclusion of Senator DOMENICI's amendment relating to mental health coverage. Specifically, this amendment prevents insurers from imposing limits on benefits for mental illness that are not imposed on benefits for physical illness. This bill requires insurers to treat consumers fairly. It guarantees that insurers do not drop people's coverage when they change jobs or for pre-existing health conditions. It also prevents insurers from imposing arbitrary coverage limits on persons who need services for mental illness.

I have long been a strong supporter of nondiscriminatory coverage for persons suffering mental illness. In the last Congress, I sponsored, with Senators DOLE and SIMON, a resolution, Senate Concurrent Resolution 16, that called on Congress to ensure that persons with mental illness receive equitable coverage with that afforded for physical illness. Our resolution received strong bipartisan support, and the Senate has included nondiscriminatory coverage for mental illness in S. 1028.

Americans with mental illness deserve to have equitable access to health coverage. Because these Americans often cannot find adequate coverage under private coverage, they are frequently forced to resort to coverage in public programs. Without jobs and coverage, many are not adequately treated. This legislation will permit many mentally ill persons to have the coverage they need to hold down jobs and to lead productive and fulfilling lives.

Mr. President, it is no secret that mental illness can strike at any time, to anyone. Many of us know someone who has suffered mental illness. This amendment will provide nondiscriminatory coverage for a range of mentally ill disorders, including schizophrenia, manic depressive disorder, or panic disorder.

I believe that this amendment will make for a more productive and efficient work force. American businesses lose more than \$100 billion per year due to lost productivity of employees because of substance abuse and mental illness. We can reduce this drain on employers by permitting employees access to nondiscriminatory mental illness coverage.

I strongly support S. 1028 with inclusion of nondiscriminatory coverage for persons with mental illness. Inclusion of this provision is not only the right and compassionate thing to do, but it will also reduce overall mental health spending and make our health system more accessible for persons with mental illness. I urge my fellow Senators to support this provision in conference.

CENTRIST COALITION BUDGET PLAN

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, I am very pleased to join Senators CHAFEE and BREAUX and the rest of the Centrist Coalition in announcing this bipartisan proposal for a balanced budget. This is a comprehensive plan that confronts our budget problems head on. I encourage all of my colleagues to take a serious look at it.

I am particularly pleased that our plan partially corrects the inaccuracy of the Consumer Price Index [CPI]. What we propose is to reduce the CPI by one-half of a percentage point in 1997 and 1998—and by three-tenths of a percentage point thereafter—for purposes of computing cost of living adjustments [COLA's] and for indexing the Tax Code.

While the AARP and other seniors groups will shriek and wail to the high heavens about this being some backdoor effort to cut Social Security benefits, that is not what is driving this issue. What we are striving to do is to have a more accurate CPI that reflects the true level of inflation.

Last year, the Senate Finance Committee heard compelling testimony from Alan Greenspan, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, and others who believe the CPI may be off the mark by as much as two percentage points. A commission appointed by the Finance Committee issued an interim report which estimates the CPI to be overstated in the range of 0.7 to 2.0 percentage points.

The Coalition has selected the figure of 0.5 percentage points—which is a conservative estimate of how much the CPI is overstated—precisely because we want to avoid any perception that we are being unfair or unduly harsh. This modest step achieves \$110 billion in savings over 7 years. This is not a popular proposal, but it is understood by us as a critically important component of our plan.

Before I discuss other elements of our plan, let me join my colleagues in underscoring the importance of our product being received as a total package. Any balanced budget plan will have elements that we do not like. But we will all have to accept some of the undesirable in order not to lose all that is so necessary.

Accordingly, this bipartisan budget plan also includes some very appropriate first steps toward slowing the growth of Medicare spending. These reforms would achieve \$154 billion in savings over 7 years. From a long-term perspective, the most important reform is a provision that would conform the Medicare eligibility age with the Social Security retirement age. By gradually increasing the eligibility age to 67, this plan acknowledges that life expectancies are certainly higher now than when Medicare was first enacted in 1965.

We also impose an affluence test on Medicare Part B premiums, beginning with individual seniors who have an-

nual incomes exceeding \$50,000 and couples who have incomes exceeding \$75,000. I personally believe we should begin this affluence test at much lower income thresholds, but I realize that we simply do not have the votes to do that at this time.

The Coalition plan also limits the future growth of Medicaid spending, saving \$62 billion over 7 years. While our plan does not give the States as much flexibility as I would like to give them, I am willing to swallow these Medicaid reforms in the context of this comprehensive budget package, even though I might not be able to support them if they were to be considered separately in isolation from the broader package. I am absolutely convinced that the positive aspects of the total package are so critically important that they overwhelmingly outweigh certain concerns I have about the Medicaid provisions.

On another front, our plan also calls for meaningful welfare reforms, including tough work requirements for welfare recipients and a 5-year time limit on cash assistance. At the same time, we include additional funds for child care assistance—thereby recognizing the importance of child care in helping recipients make the transition from welfare to self-sufficiency. Overall, these welfare reforms achieve another \$45 billion in savings.

In the area of taxes, many of us had to bite the bullet—and hard—on specific issues in order to reach consensus on the broad package. What we have here is a tax package that provides \$130 billion in tax cuts. On the child tax credits, I have a personal concern about just giving away \$250 for every child under the age of 17. But in the spirit of cooperation and consensus, we were able to address some of my objections by offering a real savings incentive if parents contribute \$500 toward an individual retirement account established in the child's name.

The tax package has something for everyone to like—and to dislike. I urge my colleagues to look at this package in its entirety. If we start picking it apart, the package will fail and the Coalition that worked so hard to bring this all together will collapse. This plan brings us to the goal we have all been working so hard to achieve—a balanced budget and tax cut package that ends deficit spending by the year 2002.

Again, I urge all of my colleagues to consider this plan. Those who automatically reject the notion of a bipartisan budget will have no trouble finding one or two reasons to oppose it. But I am convinced that anyone who approaches this plan with an open mind—and a recognition that bipartisanship always requires some degree of compromise—will conclude that this is an impressive plan. It does not rely on gimmickry or smoke and mirrors. Instead, it makes the tough, politically unpopular decisions that Republicans and Democrats alike have been putting off for too long. It deserves our earnest support.