

that the right thing to do is to save social security, to stop spending in deficit quantities.

They understand responsibility at school. When the teacher told the kids on Monday, the Congressman is coming and I want you to have these cards ready to go, the kids had their reports ready to go. Would it not be great if the Department of Education could do the same thing here in Washington, D.C.? When the Congress says, on the 19th of November you need to certify to the Congress that your books balance, we do not need to be hearing the answer we are going to get on Thursday from the Department, that their books are unauditable going back to 1998.

These kids understand responsibilities. They deserve a Department of Education that will work hard to help this Congress find that extra penny in savings so that these kids can get dollars to their classrooms, so that their teachers can have the resources they need to teach, so they can have a roof that does not leak, so they can have education opportunities that are the envy of the world and something to brag about in places like Ukraine, like these kids have done, and I am going to help them do later on this week.

That is what these children deserve. That is what their parents sent us here to Washington to do. Those parents want to know that the kids who made these products and created this artwork have somebody looking out for them in Washington.

If we walk around outside these hallways here, there are lobbyists all over the place. They are all here trying to get an extra dime here or there, or get extra money for their project or for their special interest. But these kids, we are all they have. They are counting on us to fight hard; to stay late into the evening, like we are doing tonight; to negotiate until the bitter end with the White House, so we can save that penny on the dollar and make sure that the education dollars get to the classroom, not hung up in Washington, so they have a social security retirement fund when they retire, and so that their country is run in a way in which they can be quite proud.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, the gentleman from Colorado. The tragedy is unless the Congress takes action, unless the Congress saves and does not spend on existing programs, for social security coming in, not one of those students will have social security by the time they are ready to retire. This Congress has to act.

I am very grateful that back 168 days ago, and I might mention, in a bipartisan manner, 416 to 12, this House voted overwhelmingly to lock up social security and not spend it. But right now what we are asking of the White House right now is a penny, we are down now even to compromise and find some places where we do not spend in other areas and maybe reduce by half a penny, and we cannot even come up

with that. It is really almost unbelievable.

I yield to my friend, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA).

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding.

What we have worked on so hard in the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and my colleague, the gentleman from Colorado, referenced it, the leverage point on giving kids a good education is moving the decisions closest to the kids in the classroom and the people that know our kids' names, the parents and teachers.

The money we are spending, let us make sure we move the flexibility for making those education decisions as close to those kids as possible.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, each of us are parents here, and I know we are coming to the end of our time, but what it is really all about is our children. Each of us here speaking are parents. Undoubtedly, most people who are listening tonight are parents.

Right now there will not be any social security unless we do something about it. We as Republicans are committed to do that. We believe there is a minimum of a penny that any Washington bureaucracy can find to trim out of each of their departments. We are asking that they do it, and maybe do a little more to make sure we save social security. We believe it is there to do. The American public believes we can do it. We are committed to do it.

THE SITUATION IN COLOMBIA, SOUTH AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOKSEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) is recognized for 60 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous matter on the subject of my special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to discuss one of the most pressing foreign policy issues facing our great Nation. That is, the situation in Colombia, South America.

Tonight my colleague and I want to speak about the many challenges that are faced in Colombia. We will discuss the civil war, the inequalities of wealth, the drug problem, the failure of the judicial system there, and the problem created by large numbers of displaced persons.

As we begin this discussion on Colombia, I guess I want to state from the outset that I would like this discussion to deal broadly with Colombia's problems and challenges. This body has all too frequently focused on Colombia, and in fact our Nation usu-

ally narrowly focuses on the issue of illegal drug production and trafficking. I strongly believe, however, that without addressing directly the broader problems that are faced in Colombia that we will not make significant progress in addressing the drug trafficking problem, because these problems are so interrelated.

I think we all must agree that drug addiction and abuse must be addressed by our government, that too many Americans and frankly people all over the world are addicted to illegal and sometimes legal drugs. We know that this is a problem that must be addressed. I think we can do so respectfully, agreeing that this is a problem that we are all committed to, but agreeing that we may have some different approaches and different perspectives on how to do that.

Colombia presents an important case study in this regard. It is a country that must be viewed comprehensively, not simply as a drug-producing Nation. The flow of drugs will not stop unless Colombia can achieve peace and economic security.

I wanted to start by sharing a little bit about how I first became interested in the policy in Colombia, U.S. policy towards Colombia, interested in the problems faced by the people of Colombia. I, too, used to view Colombia as a Nation, mostly by what I read about the drug production there, until I had the opportunity as a local elected official on my county board to become involved in a sister community project.

Our county essentially adopted a community in Colombia; in fact, a community in one of the most violent and war-torn parts of Colombia. Through this sister community, we got to experience exchanges. We had people come up, religious leaders, labor leaders, those interested in impacting poverty and fighting human rights abuses in Colombia. They came to our community and discussed the problems. In turn, people from my community got to travel to Colombia, as I did in 1993, to meet people there, to ask firsthand what was happening.

Perhaps learning about Colombia in this way stands in stark contrast to how many of our colleagues first discover the issues and the challenges faced by the people of Colombia, through high-level briefings, perhaps, meeting with generals, ambassadors, presidents, Members of Congress.

I started by meeting with people in agriculture, human rights leaders, people trying to organize collectives and cooperatives. It was a fascinating way to learn about Colombia. I met environmentalists who were engaged in the task of trying to protect the rainforests. I met people engaged in social work, trying to help address poverty in the big cities in Colombia, trying to help former gang members find another way of life. It was eye-opening for me.

One of the things I remember very vividly about my 1993 trip to Colombia

was learning about the human rights situation there. Years of civil war and state-sanctioned repression have resulted in nearly 1 million displaced persons, sort of internal refugees, many of them young people, children.

There are problems with paramilitary death squads, with revolutionary guerillas, and these have led to an escalating level of violence in the past decade. In the last year alone, over 300,000 people have fled their homes and have become newly displaced persons in Colombia. These are people who we do not always hear about.

As I mentioned, I traveled to Colombia in 1993 to see the situation firsthand. One of the shocking and sort of striking memories I have was understanding that some of the aid that we sent to Colombia as military aid, aid intended to help fight the war on drugs, was ending up being misused perhaps by corrupt officials, but was ending up being used in a way to repress the people, those who might be organizing labor unions, those who might be organizing collectives for the farmers, those who might be fighting for human rights.

The U.S. now provides almost \$300 million annually in military aid, making Colombia the third largest recipient of aid after Israel and Egypt. I must add, though, that things have improved in Colombia, very much so since the time that I was able to travel there. The military is beginning to address within their own ranks some of the issues of human rights abuses. The leadership, the President of Colombia, the Congress, has begun to act.

We have a number of policy options before us right now in the United States. There is a call for providing almost \$1 billion or perhaps a lot more than \$1 billion in new aid to Colombia. I think it is an important debate on how we allocate that money, how we approach this issue, how we look at the future of a war on drugs, how we look at making an impact in a country that is dealing with civil war, is dealing with human rights abuses, is dealing with poverty and economic downturn and struggling with a lot of things to put its country back together.

Before I go on to details about what policy options are facing the United States right now, I want to yield to my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR), who has been also very well acquainted with the people of Colombia, the issues that Colombians face, perhaps from a different perspective than my own. But I would love the gentleman to share his wisdom with us.

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Wisconsin very much. It is a pleasure to be on the floor with the gentlewoman, a very distinguished Member of this body who has so much compassion for people all over the globe, and particularly for the people of Colombia.

My introduction to Colombia was back in 1963. I was a young college

graduate who just applied for the Peace Corps and was told that I was going to be accepted to a Peace Corps program in Colombia, South America.

I was excited about it. I had traveled through Latin America when I was in college working as a factory worker in Argentina, and I fell in love with Colombia the minute I stepped off the plane. It is a country, an incredibly beautiful country with lots of green. Obviously the green is well known around the world because it is the major exporter of emeralds.

Colombia, as a Peace Corps volunteer, was the best 2 years of my life. I lived in a very poor barrio. We did not have much running water or electricity. Sewage was inadequate. But the people were so genuine and so friendly, and so much so that when my mother passed away with cancer when I was in the Peace Corps I came home, and immediately went back to Colombia, and my father, I brought my two sisters to Colombia.

My youngest sister, Nancy, who was in high school at the time, 17 years old, unfortunately was killed in an accident in Colombia. Rather than being very bitter about the country, we ended up falling in love with the country because the people were so friendly to our family and realized what a plight we were going through, and how much tragedy we were bearing.

The thing that I hope we can do tonight is put a human face on a country that we hear a lot about. It is a country that the Americans know of, Colombia, and unfortunately know of it for two reasons, one very negative, which is drugs, a country that grows the drugs and processes the drugs that are so destructive to our lives here in the United States and around the world.

□ 2230

Unfortunately, we are the purchaser of those drugs and so we have this problem of those who produce and those who buy and use. And this relationship, Colombians always tell us that if we did not buy the drugs, they would not produce them. And we always say if they did not produce them, we would not buy them. And this is a battle where we have sort of lost sight of what this country is all about.

I hope tonight we can get into some of those issues. So put a human face on a country that is unique in its geographical location. It is the only country in South America that borders on both the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. It is a country much bigger than most think by looking at a map. The third largest country in Latin America. It is bigger than California, Texas, Montana and Illinois all combined for about 625,000 square miles. It is a huge country.

It has 38 million people. The people are spread out in Colombia in many big cities. The most urbanized of all Latin America countries. The Colombian market is bigger than that of the mar-

ket of New York and Texas put together.

It is a remarkable country because not only does it touch both oceans, but it starts almost at the equator and goes up to 20,000 feet with snowcapped mountains close to the shore. So it has every kind of microclimate and can grow anything. Colombia is the second most diversified country in the world. It grows more fruits and vegetables than any other country in the world; and, obviously, that makes it a climate that is attractive to growing things that are illegal. And with the poverty in the country, we can see why the drug crops expanded there.

Mr. Speaker, the issue now is how do we take a country and really get it on its feet? In many ways Colombia, despite all of the problems that it has had with drugs, has remained an economically strong country with an honest economy. It is one of the strongest in Latin America. It has had a longer period of growth with an average of 4.5 percent per year for the last four decades. Between 1990 and 1995, it has grown at 4.2 percent. This is the longest sustained record of economic growth in the Americas. In all of the Americas, Colombia has outperformed the United States.

Now Colombia is in the midst of a recession after more than 30 years of unbroken growth. It is in the midst of problems, turmoil, but it is a democratic country. It had a remarkable turnout in its election for its president, President Pastrana, despite the pressures on people not to vote. It has political factions in the country that are historical between the rebels, between banditos or mafiosos as they are known. So it has got a collection of interests where people are trying to defend their own private lands with privately hired mercenaries, so we have private armies, a public army, a national police. They have rebels, and they have other factions that play in the shadows of all of these.

So we as the United States are now giving aid to Colombia. We have given an awful lot of that aid in the military section primarily for suppressing drugs. The country has now come to the United States. The President has met with our President. They have sat down and worked out an agreement that encourages that Colombia needs to get its own act in order, so to speak. It has done so by coming up with a plan. It has taken that plan not only to the United States but to its allies in Europe and asked for help.

Now, we are on the verge of the last night of the session of the first year of the 106th Congress. The big vote here tomorrow night will be the vote on appropriating monies and particularly the foreign aid money. Colombia is not getting a great deal of that money, unfortunately, because other priorities have taken its place. And I think that we have to recognize that if we are a country that is going to ask them to extradite their criminals, the people

they are arresting in their country, in violation of their laws and our laws, and extradite these people to the United States so that they can be tried, sentenced, and imprisoned here, at great risk to the Colombian politicians and to the Colombian government, that they are doing that at the request of our government, and in turn we need to think comprehensively about how we are going to give them enough aid. Not just military aid, but compassionate aid to help the people help themselves in a better life.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the gentlewoman from Wisconsin has come to discuss some of that; and I really, really appreciate it. I appreciate the gentlewoman being a new face in Congress with a new slant on the Colombian situation. It is so healthy for this body, which has sort of been debating the macho military aid by essentially people that are pro-military and pro-national police, to say that if we just help them we are going to really help the country. When we know and the gentlewoman knows, particularly the first voice that has really come in and talked about the plight of women in this culture, and the fact that we are not going to win this war on poverty; we are not going to win the drug war; we are not going to win the political war or any war just by might. We are going to have to win that war through education. We are going to have to win that war through help with understanding family planning in countries like this. We are going to have to have micro-loan programs and do what we did in the Peace Corps.

Unfortunately, the Peace Corps left Colombia because it became too dangerous. But there are some 8,000 returned volunteers from Colombia, Americans who have lived in Colombia for at least 2 years who have learned the language and the culture, and who are very passionate about those years that they spent there and are wanting to see the country regain its incredible grandeur that it can and to develop the wonderful culture and people and particularly the opportunity for tourism. Making it safe for people to travel, safe for our sons and daughters to go and be educated in their great universities and essentially a much better cultural, educational, political interchange leads to support of a country through tourism and microtourism.

Mr. Speaker, I think that Colombia, because it is on both oceans, has so many opportunities for small economic development programs that would enhance the plight of people in rural areas by allowing them to have kind of ecotourism expand. So I appreciate the gentlewoman bringing these issues to the floor of the United States Congress tonight on the verge of our significant vote tomorrow night.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. And one of the similarities I think of our approach to this is that each of us comes from a background of getting a real opportunity to

meet and exchange with the people of the country of Colombia. Not so much their advisors and their elected officials, perhaps local elected officials, but we really got a chance to interchange and understand what a person who is living in the rural areas or a person who is living in the cities experiences living there and the struggles that they face due to some of the economic challenges.

The gentleman was very right to note the success economically that Colombia has enjoyed. I always observed that while on the macro-level that country was observing great prosperity and growing, although now there is certainly an economic downturn, there is now 23 percent unemployment in some of the major cities, about an average of 20 percent unemployment nationwide. But one of the nuances of Colombia is that there is a concentration of wealth in the hands of few. That is particularly exaggerated in the case of landownership.

Mr. Speaker, about the top 3 percent of Colombia's landed elite own about 70-plus percent of all the agricultural land, while 57 percent of the poorest farmers subsist on about 2.8 percent of the land.

Those sort of challenges internal to Colombia, I think, play a big role in what we see happening there and the concerns that we have there right now. I look at it as a country struggling with civil war, struggling beyond that with a justice system that is in some ways broken down and for that reason people take justice into their own hands. And, of course, that creates in some parts, even though it is a wonderful democracy nationally, in some localities there is almost anarchy existing. It is very violent in certain regions.

But I want to be helpful this evening. I had the opportunity today to meet with a wonderful activist who is visiting the United States from Colombia. What he was doing was describing a program that he is working with in the central part of the country that has been operational for about 4 years now that is bringing a diverse array of parties together to the table to talk, to be engaged in dialogue, and to tackle drug issues, to tackle issues of the unstable economy right now, to tackle issues of violence and large numbers of refugees in a dialogue with people at the regional level.

This individual told us a very hopeful story of a program that is working because, rather than sending merely military equipment to respond to a problem, they are talking about alternative crops. They are giving peasants who would otherwise possibly be lured into production of coca and giving them options that are viable, that allow them to support their families, that allow them to have a hopeful future. It is this sort of balanced approach that I think is the hope for the future.

Now, one thing that we were delighted to see and will hopefully serve

as a basis of our conversation as we move forward about how to really and truly tackle drug problems here and in producer countries is the Plan Colombia that President Pastrana and his government have put together.

What we see is a plan that has been offered to an international community that does not just focus on one component of the struggles that Colombia faces, but really is a multifaceted program that I think we can take heart in. What they recognize is how unstable the Nation has been and the fact that in this plan they need to really consolidate in the State of Colombia, make sure that the State is the entity responsible for protection of the public interest, for promoting democracy, the rule of law, to make sure that it is the monopoly in the application of justice and that it plays a stronger role in full employment, in respect for human rights.

They look at building peace as a building process. Not something that will happen, but things that will take years to accomplish. As the plan says, peace is not simply a matter of will; it has to be built. And central to their strategy is, of course, a partnership with other countries to look at not only production of illegal drugs, but consumption and recognizing that there are principles of reciprocity and equality that need to occur in order for countries to move forward together in a partnership to confront mutual problems.

Mr. Speaker, Colombia is in an economic crisis right now, and we have got to tackle that in part also to respond to the larger problems.

Mr. FARR of California. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. BALDWIN. I certainly will yield to the gentleman.

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman yielding to me. I wanted to point out that this Plan Colombia I think is very exciting because it outlines not just a military approach, and a national police approach, and a law enforcement approach to preventing crime and to stopping the drug traffickers and so on, but it really is a plan about education of the country. It is a plan about economic revitalization through land reform and having more people have a stake in the outcome. It is about a plan about economic development at the micro level, at the rural level, at the barrio level.

I mean, it is interesting. I do not think we ever outlined it as Peace Corps volunteers some 30 years ago when we were serving there, but what this plan reflects is many of the things that young Americans, professionals recognize that the country needed to do.

□ 2245

It is almost as if the ideas that we are espousing have caught up with the government, and they are now wanting to implement it. I think that is really

courageous of the government because, obviously, if they just went out and said all we want to do is get money for military purposes to eradicate the drug program, I think the countries would be more interested, but they are going far beyond it.

They are looking into programs that would, and I have a list here just asking for \$50 million for the year 2000 for the Agency of International Development in the area of human rights to do things like train judicial officials so that they can investigate and prosecute on human rights claims.

One can have violations of human rights, but if one does not have the ability to document them and one does not have the ability and the court, get access to the court and standing before the court, have a court that is honest, a system that, indeed, will listen to the law and listen to the facts and then will sentence people and hold them in sentence and not let them off, this is all a process where the ability is there, but not necessarily a comprehensive training of how one puts it all together.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I remember learning about this issue of impugnity that perhaps is a foreign notion here in the United States. But in the past, in Colombia, and they are under way to reform this, if, for example, a military official engaged in an egregious human rights violation, they would be tried in a sort of military court. The judges were hired by the people that they were then trying. The relationship was such that almost always people were let off the hook, almost always. This is now beginning to change, which does give us tremendous hope for the future.

The congress of Colombia has now passed a law that would put teeth in the military judicial system and hold military officials accountable if they were found to have engaged in human rights violations. So it is a very positive step forward. But I think for many of us in the United States who expect the rule of law, it is confusing to hear the people who conducted massacres might not even be held accountable, might not even be discharged from their job, let alone imprisoned and held accountable for their actions.

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. BALDWIN. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, it is very hard, I do not know, we can imagine it, but it is very hard to sort of project this on another country, because we take it so much for granted. We feel secure in our workplace. We feel secure in our communities. Now, there is always exceptions to that with crime, but we do not wake up every morning thinking today is the day something awful is going to happen to me or my child or my spouse when they go to work.

But in Colombia, that happens. There is not a sense of individual security.

One is not secure in one's workplace. One is not secure on the street. If one does have money or resources one will be a target of, perhaps, kidnapping. People know who the people are with wealth. If one has wealth, one has to hide it, or one lives a prisoner of one's wealth. One cannot really go out and enjoy society.

I had friends who told me that their children were in school, and they would get a picture, like picture postcards with the crosshairs of a rifle on their children's faces as they exited school, meaning that somebody had taken a picture of these children through a scope of a rifle, showing that they know what school they are going to, when they are getting out, and that they could shoot them at any time they wanted to. If that does not strike fear into a family.

So what happens is if one does have means, one wants to leave. That is the worst thing that can happen to a country is to take the talent, the educated talent, and leave, because it takes a dedication of a total society.

One of the things that you did not mention that I think I am so impressed with is just, what, 2 weeks ago, Colombia, in a demonstration of its own self, of its country, asked people to march in a march they called No Mas. They did it, I believe, in eight of the major cities in Colombia. Anywhere between, depending on the count, 6 to 10 million people marched. That is one in about every eight persons or less that lives in Colombia.

No other country in the world, to my knowledge, has ever turned out that many people to march in protest of what is occurring to the society. I think we ought to be very encouraged as Americans that Colombians feel strong enough about the problems in their country that they are willing to demonstrate in that type of fashion, in a peaceful fashion, with so many people. I do not think we have ever had a demonstration in the United States, and we are a much bigger country, of that many people.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, the story that I remember so vividly about the lack of security in all realms of life is, when I visited a banana plantation in the areas outside of Portado, Colombia. I remember seeing graffiti spray-painted on one of the buildings on the plantation and asking what the, I could not read the language, and asking what it said. It was graffiti in this case from one of the guerilla organizations.

I asked, what would happen if one simply painted over this? The graffiti was beckoning to the workers at the plantation to join the FARC. I said, what would happen if one spray-painted this? Well, the next week, the paramilitary forces might come through, and if the spray paint is still there, they will be accused of being sympathizers for not having painted over it. But on the other hand, if they paint over it and get rid of the graffiti, the guerillas might come through and also

intimidate these individuals as being sympathizers with the paramilitary organizations.

So you have a group of civilians literally in the crossfire of a civil war in a country who go to work, and one knows their buildings have been essentially tagged by these forces, one side or the other, and know that they are so close to, perhaps, being kidnapped or being sent away. This is a daily thing that these people live with.

So when the gentleman talks about the peace rally with, I have heard, up to 10 million people marching in cities across Colombia, the courage that it took to protest openly, to march for peace, no more openly, is remarkable because the consequences are so high.

Well, one of the things that I got a chance to do as a county board official when I first traveled to Colombia was to meet other local officials, many who had run for office with a real commitment to peace and had done things like inviting warring factions to speak, and how many of these individuals risked assassination. I thought, what amazing courage it took for somebody to run for local office in parts of Colombia that we could not fathom here the courage that that would take.

So this march for peace was quite remarkable at the beginning stages of the peace talks in Colombia that Pastrana is leading.

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. BALDWIN. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I have a question, and it is a question that I think we both know the answer to, but it bears asking, and that is: Why should the American public care about Colombia? It is one of many countries in Latin America. It is historically very dear, I think, to our country. Our President Kennedy traveled to Bogota. The airport was named after him. Many schools were named after the President.

It is a country that has had a lot of people come to the United States to be educated. I think there is about almost a half a million Colombians living in the greater Washington area. I mean, there is a lot of connection.

But for those people in the gentlewoman's State and in my State of California, or others around who are listening to this and who are watching Congress in its foreign aid appropriations who are saying, well, we have enough problems here in the United States, why should we give any money to a country overseas and particularly one country that is producing all of these drugs that we seem to be addicted to? Why should we be helping them at all?

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, well, for me, in many ways it is an easy question because I have had the opportunity to get to know people there, leaders there, people with great hope, not only for their country, but for co-existence in a more peaceful world. We are large trading partners in the sense

that the agricultural products of Colombia, and I am not talking about illegal ones, I am talking about coffee, bananas, and many other products, are so important.

One of the exciting things for our local community when we first decided to adopt or be adopted by a Colombian community when we started this sister community project, and I know there are so many across the country now, there are many communities across the United States that have sister communities in Colombia, that we found all the similarities.

I come from an agricultural State. We are partnered and have a sister community with the banana growing region, which actually is not one of the major drug-producing areas of Colombia, but, yet, still faces some of the violence that we have been talking about, a lot of the violence. It is an area that has absorbed a large group of refugees. It is an area struggling for a more fair division of wealth.

I described before the ownership of vast amounts of land by one or two landlords. They are struggling to start collectives. So we had experts from Wisconsin in the cooperative movement, electrical co-ops, credit unions, et cetera, go and advise people in Colombia on how they can set up collectives to prosper. Those type of ties for me, all aside from the very important issue of fighting drug addiction and drug abuse, call for us to care about what happens there.

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear that. Colombians are very entrepreneurial. As the gentlewoman talked about agriculture, the one thing that has really hit our district probably more so than drugs is how successful the Colombians have been in growing flowers.

I represent an area in California which has a substantial number of flower growers, and they are really hurt by the Colombian imports. I mean, it is a good news-bad news story. It is a good news for Colombia that they have been able to be so successful that they have a \$4 million export business to the United States and have 80 percent of the entire U.S. market for cut flowers. We have given them free rein to have that because we do not charge them any tariffs where we do charge other countries.

So it is good news for them and it has been bad news for our flower growers. Hopefully, we can negotiate with Colombia and make some differences about that.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, that offers another example of a way we can also be very helpful to Colombia, because when I visited the flower-growing region, a carnation-growing region, I had the chance to speak with a number of the workers who were trying to organize, trying to address a number of worker-related issues that I think it would make a big difference to people here in the United States, particularly, the labor conditions and issues of use

of pesticides, to make sure that we promote trade in a way that helps the Colombian worker as well as the U.S. worker.

When we have discussions about NAFTA and GATT and expansion of trade agreements, and of course NAFTA does not include Colombia, but there are people talking all the time about global trade, we have a capacity because they are trading partners, to help address some serious issues of abuse of labor that ought to concern us all.

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, we are going to have a chance to do that in the year 2001. The Andean Trade Pact, which gives these preference trade agreements to the Andean countries, will be up for renewal, and we will be able to have the ability to negotiate on that.

I look forward to some hard, tough negotiations. Hopefully, we can improve the condition of the working class in these countries, the Andean countries, and particularly, I think, help some of our flower growers that are struggling as well.

Another interesting thing about Colombia that many people do not think about, I just got some facts today that today there are 25,000 American citizens who live in Colombia. From October 1997 to September 1998, more than 158,000 Americans visited Colombia. Currently, we have 250 private American businesses that are registered in Colombia.

There is a strong American-Colombian connection, despite all of the violence and problems that have been going on. The key that we are here tonight on the floor talking about is how do we move beyond this impasse. Colombia has come to us and said we want to move on. We want to move significantly further than we have ever been before in all kinds of reforms. We need the aid of the United States. We have a plan. It is a well-thought-out plan. It has been applauded wherever it has been presented as a comprehensive plan, as a plan that could work.

But there is no free lunch. Colombians are asking us, as well as the Europeans and other countries, to help finance that plan.

□ 2300

Because as the gentlewoman mentioned, they are in a historically deep recession right now, and no country in conditions like that can pull out of that without some international help.

And so as we approach how we are going to bail out Colombia, what we have to break here in Congress is the stranglehold that has said the only way we are going to help Colombia is to give them Blackhawk helicopters, more money for military, more national police money. It may be that some of that is essential, but that is not the whole package. And Colombians keep reminding us that is not all that we have asked for, we have asked for a lot of other help that is essential.

Because none of the aid to the military for suppression of drugs will work unless the rest of the country is brought up on its feet.

Ms. BALDWIN. And, in fact, there is certainly some sobering statistics that we have heard in terms of the effectiveness of some of our targeted expenditures in Colombia before. Drug production is up markedly, even though U.S. military assistance and police assistance has been increased. And that is obviously not the direction that we want to go.

And as people who are truly concerned about the problem of drug abuse and drug addiction, we want our resources to be used effectively. I believe in so doing what we will recognize is that the problems in Colombia are truly interrelated, and achieving peace, and achieving a more balanced economy, and achieving a greater rate of employment in Colombia, achieving all those things will truly help us reduce the production of drugs and the importation of drugs and the drug trafficking, and thereby decreasing violence, and that is where we have to push our U.S. policy.

Now, I am still not sure when we are going to have this grand debate on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. I know that there was some suspicion that we might be having this debate yet this fall, but it appears that it is a debate that will be deferred until the early months of next year. We have heard of a variety of proposals. There is a bill in the other body that has been put forward. There has been discussion in this House of proposals. Different parts of the administration have talked about different ways of providing increased funding to Colombia.

I think my strongest concern is that we not oversimplify the problem there; that in a combined and dedicated effort to really respond to a drug crisis, that we do so in the most effective way possible, using our resources as best we can, and that that, in this case, probably means responding to poverty and investing in economic development, helping rebuild a responsive judicial system. It is, as the gentleman indicated, not merely a matter of providing more guns and helicopters and sending more people through the School of the Americas, and simply a matter of almost engaging in part of their civil war; that, instead, it is a much more comprehensive and complex strategy that we must engage in.

Mr. FARR of California. Has the gentlewoman not been impressed with the number of organizations, nongovernmental organizations, the human rights organizations, the number of active missions, of technicians, of people, as the gentlewoman talked about, who are just skilled farmers or skilled nurses, people who would really want to help Colombia? I think if we can make this country safe to return to, we will see an outpouring of Americans. It is such a beautiful country. There is so much possibility there. And I just

think that we in Congress have to provide the resources to make this possible.

My daughter is 21 years old. I would hate to think that there is any place in the world that she cannot as an American citizen go and be safe in, and particularly in a country which her father spent two of the most marvelous years of his life as a Peace Corps volunteer. Yet my wife and others do not think it is safe for her to go down there, particularly alone. It may be, but the perception is that it is not. And that is a tragedy, that we have a country that we are so close to and people that we have had such a long historical relationship with and a country that has probably been historically the strongest democracy in Latin America that our own children cannot feel safe to visit or study in their schools.

I hope that those of us who are Members of Congress who care about this will have the ability to do something about it in a very short time.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that the gentleman was able to join in this discussion. I think it is a very important discussion. I suspect that the next special order will carry on with a similar concern about fighting drug abuse and drug addiction in this country and talking about those efforts. And I certainly want to be one to reach out to both sides of the aisle, to reach over to the other body, to work with the administration, and certainly to keep in close contact with the people of Colombia who can, I think, inform this debate and help us find true solutions to real problems. And I very much thank the gentleman for joining in this with me.

Mr. FARR of California. Well, Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for scheduling this hour, and I would encourage everyone who has listened to this, who cares about Colombia, to petition and to write the President, to let the President of the United States know that it is important for the President to make Colombia a high priority, not just Members of Congress. And also to remind us that we, as Americans, are part of the problem. Because we are the buyers of the illicit drugs that are coming out of Colombia. If there was no market, there would be very little production. We need to take some responsibility for that as well.

ILLEGAL NARCOTICS AND DRUG ABUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOKSEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for the time remaining until midnight.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to come before the House. Although the hour is late, I think the subject is extremely important, and some of it will continue upon a dialogue that was begun in the last hour by the gentleman from California and the gentle-

woman from Wisconsin on the subject of Colombia.

I do chair in the House of Representatives the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources, and have attempted this year, almost on a weekly basis, to come to the floor of the House and spend part of a Tuesday evening, when we have the extensive time granted to Members to discuss issues up until the magic hour of midnight. I have used that time to speak on what I consider the biggest social and criminal justice and health policy facing our Nation, and that is the problem of illegal narcotics and drug abuse.

Just as a wrap-up tonight, discussing some of the activities of our subcommittee, and I think it has had a very effective and also full schedule during 1999, we have held almost 30 hearings, and almost 20 of them on the topic of drug policy.

I remember coming to Congress in 1993. From 1993 to 1995, when the other side controlled the House of Representatives, the White House, and the other body, during that period of time only one hearing was held in an oversight capacity on the topic of our national drug policy, and that is part of how we got ourselves into the situation we are in today with the dramatic increases in drug-induced deaths resulting from illegal narcotics and also from the incredible numbers we have in prison and also the societal problems and costs that we see that are incurred not only by Congress but to American families and parents throughout our land.

□ 2310

So we have had, as I said, a full list of hearings. We have tried to cover a number of topics starting last January in my own district to assess the problem in central Florida and the area that I serve.

I have repeatedly mentioned that central Florida is a very prosperous area of our Nation and it has been ravaged by illegal narcotics. Their headlines have blurted out this past year that drug deaths now exceed homicides. And the situation continues to be critical in spite of some of the solutions that we have put in place and steps that we have taken. It is a very difficult problem to solve. We have seen that.

We do know that in some jurisdictions through some efforts there have been successes; and, in others, there have been failures.

In February of this year, we asked one of those success stories to be heard before our subcommittee and we conducted a hearing that featured New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani. And certainly of all the examples of successes in this country, no one has been more successful or more effective in curtailing illegal narcotics, crime, and certainly bringing the murder rate under control than Rudy Giuliani.

In fact, when he became Mayor of New York some years ago, the average

annual murders were around the 2,000 mark, in fact, in excess of 2,000. A 70 percent decline in the murder rate there has been achieved through a zero-tolerance and tough enforcement policy that has worked. Hopefully, the success story that we heard about there is being replicated. And we know that it is being replicated in other communities; and where it is, we have seen also some dramatic decreases in crime, violence, and narcotics use.

Also important to our subcommittee and in developing the House's strategy for dealing with the problem of illegal narcotics, narcotics trafficking, is looking at the areas that bring drugs forth into our country into our borders; and we have spent several hearings back in February looking at the situation as far as Mexico.

Seventy percent of the illegal narcotics coming into the United States transit through Mexico. We conducted a rather thorough review and oversight of our policy toward Mexico in advance of the President's requirement under law to certify Mexico as cooperating under again a Federal law that requires that certification that Mexico is cooperating with the United States to stop both the production and trafficking of illegal narcotics.

In return for that certification and cooperation, a country under that law, whether it is Mexico or other countries, is eligible to receive benefits of the United States, either foreign assistance, financial assistance, financial support, votes in international organizations, and also they receive certain benefits as far as trade from the United States. That is once they are certified as fully cooperating.

We did review the previous year's experience with Mexico and found some of their efforts lacking, in fact, reductions in seizures of both heroin and cocaine, and not really addressing some of the requests that the Congress had made some 2 years ago, including extraditing major drug kingpin traffickers; signing a maritime agreement, which they still have not done; allowing our DEA agents to protect themselves in their country, and that was based on the experience we had with one DEA agent murdered some years ago; and also enforcement of Mexican drug laws that were passed and money laundering laws that were passed that were, unfortunately, passed but not fully executed.

We looked at all of the range of requests that this Congress had made 2 years ago to see if Mexico, in fact, had complied; and we found, in fact, their cooperation lacking. In fact, one of the most disturbing reports that we had from that hearing was, in fact, that Mexico, according to our United States Department of State, continues to be the primary haven for money laundering in Latin America.

One of the things that was most disturbing about the actions of Mexico was that, while we had asked them to execute and enforce the laws that they