

San Pablo, working as the coordinator of the Program of Development and Peace headed up by Father Francisco de Roux.

Why are these innocent people, doing this economic development work—who have done such good work—why are they being targeted? Lamentably, these are just two more examples of paramilitary impunity in Colombia.

I intend for this statement not only to be made on the floor of the Senate, but I hope it is sent out throughout Colombia. As the Plan Colombia debate has unfolded in the Senate, we have come to know the terrible reality of the last few decades for the people of Colombia—kidnappings, assassinations, disappearances, and terror by the guerrilla and paramilitary organizations.

I am no defender of the guerrilla organizations. The FARC and ELN are involved in narcotrafficking up to their eyeballs. They have been vicious in their treatment of the civilian population. They publicly renounce universally accepted human rights standards. But the paramilitary organizations, the AUC, because of their open association, because of their extrajudicial killings and open association, especially at the brigade level with the Colombia military, must be held to the highest standard of human rights. They cannot be allowed to justify their human rights abuses by equating the laudable civic involvement of those they persecute with the sympathy for the guerrillas. The paramilitary organizations penetrated ever deeper into Colombian civil society and brought terror to many of the communities—in many cases, with the acquiescence of the military.

I rise as a U.S. Senator on the floor of the Senate to communicate a message to the Colombian Government that the paramilitary should not be allowed to murder civil society people, defenders of human rights, people doing good work, as the men and women in Father Francisco de Roux's organization do, with impunity. We must send a message to all the violent actors in Colombia, especially the paramilitary groups: The targeting of the civilian population with murder, extortion, kidnapping, torture, and mutilation is unacceptable. Our Government has an obligation to nurture and defend civil society efforts in Colombia. The Program of Development and Peace of the Magdalena Medio is doing critically important work. They need and deserve our thanks and encouragement. They represent hope and peace for Colombia.

Before you came to the chair, Mr. President, I was saying this organization is doing the best, by all accounts, social and economic development work. This priest is beloved and highly respected. Two members of his organization have been brutally murdered in the last 40 days. Their plea, and the plea from many civil society people in Colombia, is: Please, U.S. Government, please U.S. Senate, call on the Govern-

ment and the military and the police to defend us. That is what I am doing. That is supposed to be part of Plan Colombia.

We have a deep involvement in Colombia. Therefore, we have an opportunity and a duty to defend Colombian civil society against the abuses of the guerrillas and the paramilitaries alike. The message needs to be communicated to the military in Colombia that with the Blackhawk helicopters and the military assistance come human rights conditions you have to live up to. Otherwise, we are going to continue to see the murder of innocent people with impunity.

I want this statement to certainly be sent out to Colombia because I want the paramilitary forces and others to know we are paying attention to Father Francisco de Roux and his organization, the Program for Development and Peace, and their work, and that we mean to defend civil society people.

Again, I want to point out that the Colombian Government has an obligation to defend civil society people from the violence both from the guerrilla left and the paramilitary right. Up to date, they have not defended people from violence in Barranca, which I have visited twice now. The paramilitary cut the telephone wires, isolated the people. They have no phone service. They took away their cell phones and moved into their homes. They control the city. With the exception of the bishop and the priest and his organization, and a few others, hardly anybody can speak up any longer without the real risk that they will be murdered.

Francisco de Roux's organization, widely credited for this great economic development work, has had two members—a woman and a man—disappeared, brutally murdered. It is time for our Government to make clear to the Colombian Government and police and military that they have to defend these civil society people.

#### UNIONS UNDER SIEGE IN COLOMBIA

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I rise today to also address the disturbing level of violence perpetrated against Colombia's union leaders.

As another Labor Day passes, I could not in good conscience neglect to mention the plight of our brothers and sisters in the Colombian labor movement. There has been a dramatic escalation in violations against them and the response by the Colombian authorities in the face of this crisis has been negligible.

For the past 15 years, Colombia has been in the midst of an undeclared war on union leaders. Colombia has long been the most dangerous country in the world for union members, with nearly 4,000 murdered in that period. Today, three out of every five trade unionists killed in the world are Colombian.

Union members and activists are among the main targets of human rights violations—including murders, disappearances and threats—in the escalating conflict in Colombia. Paramilitary groups, who are linked with Colombian security forces, are responsible for most of these attacks, although guerrilla groups have also targeted activists.

The right-wing AUC has been especially brutal, killing hundreds simply because they view union organizers as subversives. One of the most recent killings occurred on June 21, when the leader of Sinaltrainal, the union that represents Colombian Coca-Cola workers, Oscar Dario Soto was gunned down. His murder brings to seven the number of unionists who worked for Coca-Cola and were targeted and killed by paramilitaries. Earlier this summer, the International Labor Rights Fund and the United Steelworkers of America brought a suit against the Coca-Cola company alleging that the Colombian managers had colluded with paramilitary security forces to murder, torture and silence trade union leaders.

According to a recent New York Times report by Juan Forero, the number of union workers at Coke plants in Colombia has dropped to 450 from 1,300 in 1993. Total Sinaltrainal membership has dropped to 2,400 from 5,800 five years ago.

Regardless of the outcome of this particular legal case, U.S. companies with subsidiaries in Colombia have an obligation to address the upsetting trend of violence against workers, particularly union representatives. It is clear that some companies regularly hire out paramilitary gunmen to intimidate and kill in order to break labor unions. Last year alone, at least 130 Colombian labor leaders were assassinated. Four times as many union workers have been killed this year as during the same time last year. That's more than 80 unionists killed since the beginning of this year.

Colombia, like the United States, guarantees workers a legal right to organize. However, when they do, they face grave threats. This is a serious violation of human rights, under Article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Colombian government must take an active role in protecting and ensuring that these rights are enjoyed by all its citizens.

Likewise, the Senate should bear in mind the deteriorating plight of union membership in Colombia before sending additional military aid to a government that can't—or won't—crack down on paramilitary forces.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARPER). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I ask I be given an opportunity to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

#### BUDGET SURPLUS NUMBERS ARE NOT GOOD

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, while the Senate was in recess for the month of August, the Congressional Budget Office released its projections as to the size of the Nation's surplus. As we expected, the numbers were not good.

For fiscal year 2001, the CBO indicates the Federal Government will not only not have an on-budget surplus for the first time since 1999 but that Washington will actually dip into the Social Security surplus to the tune of \$9 billion in order to cover spending.

The Office of Management and Budget says we will have a \$1 billion surplus, but, in my view, that is effectively no surplus. So our financial situation this year is basically somewhere between a negligible surplus at best and a \$9 billion deficit.

Some of my colleagues might look at the CBO midterm budget review and see the problem of on-budget deficits as a short-term phenomena since CBO projects a return to consistent on-budget surpluses after 2004.

This belief is misplaced. I remind my colleagues that CBO's forecast is based on the dubious assumption that spending in the outyears will increase only at the rate of inflation, which is roughly 2½ percent. To say that level of spending is unrealistic is an understatement, and anyone in this Chamber who honestly thinks Congress can keep spending at the level of inflation just does not live in the real world.

I remind my colleagues, around this time last year, Congress increased non-defense discretionary spending 14.3 percent and overall spending was increased by more than 8 percent over fiscal year 2000. Had we not spent money like drunken sailors in the fiscal year 2001 budget, even with the economic turndown and the needed tax cut for the American people, Congress would not have invaded the Social Security this year. The problem is we just spend too much money. If we had increased overall spending in fiscal year 2001 by only 6 percent, we would have saved tens of billions of dollars and we would not be dipping into the Social Security surplus and we would not have a problem in the 2001 budget.

The concern now is, what will happen in fiscal year 2002? As it is, we are on track to increase 2002 discretionary spending by at least 6 percent over last year. The President originally talked about 4 percent, and we came out of the Senate with roughly a 5-percent increase. Based on the current demand for money in Washington and based on our past performance, spending in fis-

cal year 2002 will likely grow faster than that anticipated by CBO. That means next year we will not have an on-budget surplus and we are going to spend Social Security surplus funds to cover the growth in spending. That is where we are.

Alarm bells should be going off all over Capitol Hill because we are getting ready to do something Senators and Representatives from both parties have vowed not to do, and that is spend the Social Security surplus. I often say "there is always some good that blows in an ill wind." In this case, the "ill wind" is Congress's potential use of the Social Security surplus. The "good" is the hope that it will force Congress to control spending, prioritize, and make hard choices—what the Presiding Officer and I had to do when we were Governors of our respective States. We had to prioritize, we had to make those tough choices and live within a budget limit.

We didn't do that in fiscal years 1999 and 2000 here in Washington. We had a combined on-budget surplus of \$88 billion and Congress and the previous administration did not believe they had to make hard choices.

Well, things are different today, and now we must make the hard choices. The first thing we have to do is avoid spending the Social Security surplus. The second thing we have to do is not increase taxes. According to a national poll released by CBS news just yesterday, more than 70 percent of Americans opposed using the Social Security surplus to fund general government spending; 66 percent of Americans oppose using the Social Security surplus even in the event of a recession. Our constituents are making it pretty clear where they stand. They stand against spending the Social Security surplus.

Some of my colleagues and the media say we should spend the Social Security surplus to stimulate the economy. I say to that, "hogwash," and so do the American people. For me, spending the Social Security surplus is black and white. It is simply wrong. The fact of the matter is there is a difference between income taxes and payroll taxes. Just ask the people who count, the hard-working men and women who pay those payroll taxes, if there is a difference. More people pay higher payroll taxes in this country today than they do income taxes. They expect that money will be used for their Social Security benefits and not for general government spending.

As my colleagues know, there are only two things we should legitimately spend the Social Security surplus on: Social Security benefits or paying down the debt. It is that simple. If we are not spending it on Social Security, we have a moral responsibility to use it to pay down the national debt.

One of the primary reasons I wanted to serve as a U.S. Senator was to have an opportunity to bring fiscal responsibility to our Nation and help eliminate the terrific debt we have accumulated.

As my colleagues know, for years successive Congresses and Presidents have spent money on things that, while important, they were unwilling to pay for; or in the alternative, do without. In the process, Washington ran up a staggering debt and mortgaged this country's future, my children's future, and my grandchildren's future.

We have been reaping all the benefits and putting the future of our children and grandchildren in jeopardy. In other words, "we buy now, you pay later."

I cannot convey how wrong I think it is to saddle them with such an excessive financial burden, something this Congress should correct. Using the Social Security surplus to repay the publicly held national debt will make it easier for the Government to meet its obligation to pay Social Security benefits in the future. At this point, the vast majority of projected debt reductions—some 75 percent over the next 10 years—will be out of that Social Security surplus.

In testimony before the Senate Budget Committee last year, Dan Crippen, the CBO Director, stated "most economists agree saving the surpluses and paying down the debt held by the public is probably the best thing we can do relative to the economy."

It was true then and it is true today. If the Government has little or no publicly held debt when the baby boomers begin to retire, it will be more manageable for the Government to borrow money, the money that it will need to meet its obligations if Congress has not reformed Social Security by that time.

The baby boomers will retire. We will either take care of their situation by raising payroll taxes or raising income taxes or having to borrow the money. We ought to at least anticipate that.

Everyone knows that the lockbox we are talking about is nothing more than a slew of IOUs that must be repaid when the baby boomers start to retire. As I mentioned, either higher payroll taxes or higher income taxes or borrowing the money, those bills will be paid, one way or another.

Moreover, by reserving the Social Security surplus to help repay that \$3.1 trillion publicly held debt, money currently invested in U.S. Treasury bonds will be released to be invested more productively in the private sector. More private investment means more capital formation and a more robust economy now and in the future, which is precisely what we need most to meet the demands of our retiring baby boomers. We have to have a growing economy. That is the most important thing we have.

Reserving the Social Security surplus to reduce the publicly held debt has the effect of reducing interest rates by reducing the overall demand for savings. In short, reserving the Social Security surplus to lower the debt sends a positive signal to Wall Street and Main Street that encourages more investment, which in turn fuels productivity and economic growth. It also lessens