

Andrew Blandford, Research Associate at the Washington-based Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA), has recently authored a press memorandum entitled "As Catastrophe Approaches in Haiti, the U.S. Continues to Block International Loans." This important analysis, which was released on June 13, will shortly appear in a revised form in the upcoming issue of that organization's estimable biweekly publication, *The Washington Report on the Hemisphere*. Blandford's research findings spotlight the developing Haitian tragedy and examine the role played by units of our own government in orchestrating the withholding of over \$500 million in loans and grants to our poverty-stricken neighbors.

Following weeks of floods and increased potable water shortages in Haiti, residents are forced to spend, on average, nearly a tenth of their meager U.S. \$1 a day income on such a fundamental staple as water. As a result of its scarcity and inflated price, less than half of Haiti's population consumes potable water, compounding the nation's abysmal health standards. Over 4% of Haiti's populace is infected with HIV/AIDS while only 1 in 10,000 has access to a physician.

The sanctions against Haiti include the withholding of a \$146 million loan from the Inter-American Development Bank that was intended to fund education, healthcare and infrastructure projects. Because the IDB loans have already been approved, we have the ironic situation where Haiti must continue to pay interest on money it does not receive. While U.S. dollars flow in record amounts to such undemocratic nations as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, our Caribbean neighbors live in abject poverty. We must recognize the injustice of withholding, international development assistance to a country previously ruled by the U.S.-supported Duvalier family dictatorship which distorted the country's institutions while running up record debts.

COHA researcher Blandford calls for action through the passage of H.C.R. 382, sponsored by our colleague Representative BARBARA LEE and the Congressional Black Caucus. This resolution would urge the President to end the virtual embargo on development assistance to Haiti. Consequently, the article is of great relevance since the need to constructively engage Haiti is likely to grow in importance in the coming months, given the precedent for Haitian refugees to attempt to escape to Florida by means of a perilous sea passage when famine and destitution become unbearable at home, even though they face automatic interdiction and are forced to return to the island.

AS CATASTROPHE APPROACHES IN HAITI, THE U.S. CONTINUES TO BLOCK INTERNATIONAL LOANS

Less than a decade after the United States triumphantly pronounced the restoration of democracy in Haiti with the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the international community has financially repudiated the island nation. Only two years before its bicentennial, the unrest which has characterized much of Haiti's two centuries of independence has returned to the poverty-stricken nation. A loose and disparate opposition coalition of mainly tiny rightist factions, the Democratic Convergence, due to its tight links to conservative Washington powerbrokers, has been able to undermine the Aristide administration both abroad and at home.

THE DEVELOPING HAITIAN TRAGEDY

In recent weeks, in addition to Haiti's routine political and economic woes, its popu-

lace has been forced to spend, on average, nearly a tenth of their meager U.S. \$1 a day income on water alone due to a lethal shortage of supplies. Because of its scarcity and price inflation, less than half of Haiti's population consumes potable water.

Dr. Paul Farmer, a Harvard medical professor and director of Haiti's celebrated Zanmi Lasante clinic, notes the close connection between contaminated water and the cataclysmic HIV epidemic that affects 4% of the island's population. Dr. Farmer has of late witnessed the number of untreated patients in Haiti multiply at an unprecedented pace: "I had worried about 60-70,000 patients for the year. Now it'll likely be well over 120,000. The blocked \$146 million in IDB [Inter-American Development Bank] loans are for health, water, and education. It's insane for the richest country in the world to hold up financing of these projects in one of the poorest." Dr. Farmer's invaluable role in spearheading the battle against AIDS, nevertheless, is thus far a losing effort. Currently there is only one physician for every 10,000 Haitians. The Pan-American Health Organization's director, George Alleyne, laments that 74 Haitian babies die per every 1,000 live births and that life expectancy on the island is among the lowest in the Americas. To him the cause is clear: "It is poverty."

THE U.S. ROLE IN HAITI'S PLIGHT

Due to the U.S. Treasury Department's virtual veto power over the IDB, a low interest loan of \$54 million meant to improve Haiti's access to clean water cannot be disbursed, despite the fact that the bank's charter specifically forbids such political meddling. The IDB claims that no loans can be sent to Haiti because the country is in arrears, but the State Department has made it clear that international pressure will be removed only when the strict demands on the U.S. agenda are met. At June's OAS General Assembly in Barbados, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell asserted that Haiti needs the assistance of the international financial community . . . but it is difficult to provide that kind of aid until there is political stability." Despite Aristide's democratic authenticity, the Convergence's provocations have effectively cut off international resources to Haiti while billions of U.S. dollars flow to authoritarian nations such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

In January 2001, Ira Kurzban, the Aristide administration's general counsel in the U.S., claimed that the IRI facilitated the allocation of \$3 million of NED funds to the Convergence. Shortly thereafter, in a February 2 article, *The Washington Post* substantiated the IRI's connection to the origins of the Convergence. In effect, the IRI has arranged for the Convergence to have a de facto veto power over Aristide's constitutional mandate.

The Convergence essentially delivered an ultimatum to the Haitian president when it called for the annulment of the results of the May 2000 election, which its leaders insisted were flawed. Aristide agreed over a year ago to fire the seven senators whose votes were contested and to move up the elections despite the fact that an American delegation led by Congressman John Conyers (D-MI) of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) witnessed the balloting and characterized it as "the democratic process working, exceptionally well." The Convergence, however, still stonewalls negotiations, choosing instead to advance its policy of economic asphyxiation of the government.

The Republican leadership argues that USAID already delivers sufficient funding to Haiti. According to remarks made by Secretary of State Powell, the U.S. only provided \$73 million in aid last year for emergency rations, but this figure will be slashed

to \$20 million for Fiscal Year 2002. Moreover, a USAID official in Haiti recently told visitors "79 cents of every USAID dollar worldwide is actually spent in the U.S."

THE OAS-SPONSORED NEGOTIATIONS

A total of \$500 million in approved international loans and grants have been withheld as a result of demands made by Aristide's political enemies that a consensus be reached between the democratically-based Aristide administration and the Convergence's questionable bona fides. Few analysts see any grounds for optimism as an OAS negotiation team is in the country on its twentieth visit in an attempt to produce a peace accord. Like Aristide, the OAS has been unable to accomplish its goal due to a lack of political and financial assets. Section nineteen of the OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Report specifically cites a lack of resources as the leading cause behind Haiti's inefficient judicial institutions and the OAS has displayed a particular lack of ability to operate independent of State Department dictates.

At a June 28 Haiti Symposium in Washington, the leader of the OAS peace initiative, Assistant Secretary General Luigi Einaudi, fresh from the island, agreed that it is now "the absolute critical time" to move forward and set a deadline for negotiations. This step would thwart the Convergence's strategy of issuing perpetual ultimatums. Einaudi stressed, "There is not one nation—certainly not one of the 34 in the OAS—which disputes Aristide's presidency." The problem, as he explained it, is that the international community will not sign onto the process of renewing development support until Aristide and his administration's opposition reach an agreement. "I hate sanctions," Einaudi griped, "they're easy to put on and hard to take off."

Since a consensus in Haiti is far from assured, Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA) and the CBC introduced in April H.C.R. 382, "New Partnership for Haiti," which calls for an end to U.S.-influenced sanctions on the island, regardless of the Convergence's obstinacy. However, while the resolution remains stalled in committee, and with Congress sharply divided along party lines, it is doubtful whether the legislation will reach the House floor. Furthermore, Haitian advocacy groups stress that a resumption of international development assistance is only the first step in addressing Haiti's dire condition. Once the Haitian government is able to establish its authority and marshals the necessary resources, it will have to begin to create solid institutions and reform its judicial process in order to effectively serve the nation.

H.R. 4954, THE MEDICARE MODERNIZATION AND PRESCRIPTION DRUG ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 27, 2002

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 4954, the fraudulent Republican Medicare bill.

Prescription medicine coverage is one of the most important issues facing our nation today. Since it was created in 1965, Medicare has been the bedrock of health security for America's senior citizens. However, Medicare is incomplete without prescription medicine coverage. I support a plan that is simple, comprehensive, and without gaps in coverage.

The Republican Medicare bill fails on all of these points.

Today, prescription medicines are a critical component of medical treatment. Indeed, prescription medicines keep many seniors out of the hospital and at home with their families. But too many of our seniors must choose between paying for food and other necessities or the prescription medicines they need to live full, healthy lives. Seniors deserve prescription medicine coverage under Medicare. Yet, the Republicans continue to play politics with this vital issue.

There are several flaws in this Republican bill. First, it is inadequate. The Republican Medicare bill would cover less than 20 percent of what seniors are projected to spend on prescription medicines over the next ten years. The bill also leaves seniors who spend between \$2,000 and \$3,700 on prescription medicines without coverage for part of the year forcing nearly half of all seniors to pay the full cost of their medicines.

Second, the Republican bill provides no guaranteed benefit to seniors. The only thing this bill promises seniors is the ability to shop around for some type of coverage. There is no specific language in this bill that sets premiums at \$35. In reality, private plans can charge whatever they want for premiums. What's more, under their plan the insurance companies that will administer this plan are allowed to vary their prices and the availability of coverage all across the country, which will shortchange the seniors who need this benefit the most.

Finally, this Republican bill provides subsidies to private insurance companies instead of providing seniors with a guaranteed prescription medicine benefit. Tonight we see the Republican majority's priorities, Mr. Speaker. They put insurance companies first, not our seniors.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a prescription medicine benefit plan. It's a sleight of hand proposal designed to hide the Republican Leadership's true intention to eventually privatize Medicare.

It is noteworthy that the Republican majority has placed a number of provisions relating to physicians and hospitals into the bill that I strongly support. Currently, physicians are not being adequately reimbursed for taking care of Medicare patients, making it difficult to keep their doors open. The current system defies common sense, basing physician reimbursements on the state of the economy instead of the cost or need of health care. The fact is folks do not stop visiting the doctor because the economy is sluggish. I support the provisions in this bill that would correct this flawed payment system.

As a Member of the Congressional Rural Health Coalition, I also support provisions in this bill to increase the reimbursement payments for our nation's hospitals, especially those facilities located in rural areas. In fact, I joined 77 of my colleagues in writing the Chairmen of the Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means Committees in support of provisions to standardize the base payments between rural and urban hospitals. Language to this effect is also included in the bill. There are other worthwhile measures in this bill, and it is a shame these provisions are included in a fundamentally flawed bill.

Despite these provisions, I am unable to support H.R. 4954 because the Republican

Majority's Medicare bill will not help America's seniors get access to affordable prescription medicines. I support the Democratic alternative that is easy to understand, designed to fit into our Medicare system, and provides seniors access to all of the medicines they need. It also includes all of the provider reimbursement provisions that are contained in H.R. 4954. Unfortunately, the Republican majority has denied us the opportunity to offer this alternative.

America's seniors deserve a prescription medicine benefit that allows them to remain healthy in their golden years. We must strengthen Medicare with a real, guaranteed Medicare prescription medicine benefit, not a private insurance plan that leaves half of America's seniors without prescription medicine coverage. I urge my colleagues to reject this sham Republican Medicare bill, and to support the Democratic Motion to Recommit.

NEW HAMPSHIRE CONGRESSIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AWARDS

HON. JOHN E. SUNUNU

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 9, 2002

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the men and women of law enforcement who have exemplified themselves through uncommon and distinctive service to the citizens of New Hampshire during the course of their duties.

Few among us would question that one of the most demanding professions in our nation is law enforcement; it is a profession that requires sacrifice, courage and a dedication to serve others. Each day, these brave men and women put themselves in harm's way in order to administer the laws of our society. In so doing, they have earned—and deserve—our respect and our gratitude.

In 1998, my friend and colleague, Representative CHARLES BASS, and I first established the New Hampshire Congressional Law Enforcement Awards at the request of current and retired New Hampshire law enforcement personnel. We both agreed that these awards would be an excellent way to honor the men and women of law enforcement whose service and professionalism was truly extraordinary, and this Sunday, July 14, a ceremony will be held at the New Hampshire Police Standards and Training facility in Concord to honor the 82 recipients of this year's awards.

In New Hampshire, the nominations process for the awards starts with all duty sworn officers of the law, full or part-time, including local, county, state and federal law enforcement agencies. Law enforcement professionals from other states who distinguish themselves in serving the people of New Hampshire are also eligible. Nominations are then made based on exceptional achievement in any police endeavor, including: extraordinary valor; crime prevention; drug control and prevention; investigative work; community policing; community service; traffic safety; search and rescue; and juvenile training, programs. Individual officers are nominated for the award by citizens, an officer's department or his or her co-workers, a city or town official or a government agency.

The awards honor law enforcement personnel in one of five separate categories: Ca-

reer Service Award, which recognizes those who have shown an outstanding dedication to law enforcement over the length of their career; Unit Citation Award, which recognizes officers for actions taken as a group in dangerous situations; Dedication and Professionalism Award, which recognizes personnel who exceed their normal duties in service to others; Above and Beyond the Call of Duty Award, which honors officers who put their lives in harm's way in service to others; and Associate Service Award, which honors fire and rescue personnel as well as civilians who assist law officers in the course of their duties—at times putting their own lives at risk.

While Congress works each day to pass legislation that supports local law enforcement and protects the interests of our communities, families and children, the men and women of law enforcement, working on the front lines every day, take the necessary risks to ensure our safety and the safety of our loved ones. These awards have been a fitting tribute to our officers and a reminder to all of us of the important role they play in our lives and in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I join with Congressman BASS and all the citizens of the Granite State in offering our appreciation for the service and the dedication of our law enforcement personnel. I congratulate each recipient of the 2002 New Hampshire Congressional Law Enforcement Awards, and thank the people with whom they work and the citizens they serve for nominating such outstanding individuals.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO ALAN TERRY

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 9, 2002

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate an outstanding individual from Colorado whose hard work and dedication has produced a number of awards throughout his business career. Alan Terry, the president of Terry & Stephenson, P.C. has just received a very high honor from the business community, as he is the recipient of the Accountant Advocate of the Year award. The Denver Urban Renewal Authority nominated Alan for this award, which is among the most prestigious and coveted forms of recognition given in the business world, and I am honored to bring forth his accomplishments before this body of Congress and nation.

Alan attended Trinidad State Junior College, received an AA in Business Administration and went on to complete his undergraduate work at the University of Southern Colorado where he earned a BS degree in accounting. His professional career began with Price Waterhouse in Baltimore, Maryland and after several years, Alan moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where he started Terry & Stephenson, P.C., a certified public accounting, and management consulting firm. In 1986, he moved to Denver, Colorado and opened the Denver office of Terry & Stephenson, P.C.

Since opening the Denver office, Alan has worked with a variety of businesses including start up businesses, Fortune 500 corporations, the State of Colorado, the City and County of Denver, and various nonprofit organizations.