

all practices, the delivery of babies. Medical malpractice malignancy ultimately claimed the two senior physicians in the practice, as they retired early, while Dr. White was forced to leave town.

"They really had to scramble," Dr. White said of his fellow colleagues who didn't have the option to retire early. "They went to two local hospitals and asked them to just employ them because they couldn't afford to pay their bills anymore. And no, I don't know how hospitals afford it." Dr. White left the Bethlehem practice in 2002 because the bank requested a lien on his home and the co-signature of his wife, Tracy, to finance his malpractice premiums for that year.

"I could see the hand-writing on the wall," Dr. White said. "But I have delivered so many babies in that community. You invest so much time and energy into the practice and develop such a rapport with people. I delivered half of my daughters' friends, the children of my own friends. It was very difficult to just pack up and leave."

Collectively, Bethlehem's 72,000 residents lost the better part of a century of combined experience when Dr. White left for Tennessee and his two senior partners took early retirement. Let me underscore here, a better part of a century of experience claimed by exorbitant medical malpractice premium hikes.

In addition to taking a loss in order to buyout his partnership in Bethlehem, Tennessee has hardly been a refuge for Dr. White and his family. Yes, malpractice malignancy is also eating away in my own home state, where Dr. White's personal medical malpractice premiums jumped to \$65,000 this year, up \$20,000 from just last year in Tennessee.

Statistics indicate that as many as nine in 10 obstetric physicians have been sued in Tennessee if they're in the practice of delivering babies for more than 10 years, Dr. White said. This despite the fact that maternal death rates have plummeted to all time lows in this country.

"The trial lawyers will tell you they are trying to weed out the bad apples," Dr. White said. "Obviously, with 90 percent being sued, they're not all bad apples."

And that is the crux of the issue here.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. FRIST. I would be delighted to yield.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, through you to the distinguished majority leader, I got a call from a dear friend in Nevada today, a surgeon. He is very active in public affairs, a very close friend of our Republican Governor. He told me that in Nevada, where the Governor called a special session that we have caps, the insurance rates have not been affected at all; they are still going up. He originally had a policy with St. Paul. They pulled out. Another company came in and doctors are always concerned with what they call the

"tail," to make sure if something happens after their policy expires that they are covered for acts that took place in the past. He went with a new company. They pulled out after a year and a half. Now he is going to have to pay more than \$100,000 for 1 year to have coverage for today and acts that took place in the past.

I say to my friend, the distinguished Senator from Tennessee, a physician, this medical malpractice is something we have to address. I don't know the best form to do it. But when we do it, we are not only going to have to deal with some of the policies outlined by both parties today, but we will have to take a look at what the insurance industry is doing to my friend and other physicians. This is not just a problem generated solely by the trial bar; the insurance industry has some culpability.

I hope the distinguished majority leader, when again we get to this issue, will help us come up with a framework and we can discuss this issue. Part of the discussion has to be directed toward the insurance industry.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, let me respond through the Chair that the problem has gotten so big that patients are being hurt and potential patients are being hurt. It is a crisis. It is a complex problem.

As a physician, and as one who sees patients, I recognize they are being hurt by this system, and we have to start somewhere. Part of it is being able to proceed to debate. If the timing is not right, we will come back and do it at another time. We will come back to it. This problem is not going to go away. I look forward to addressing it again.

This particular bill is not a comprehensive bill. We are not talking about all of the doctors out there. Rather, we took one specialty. I am a little perplexed how to come back to it because I want to keep the issue out there. Patients are being hurt, and we are going to come back to it. We will work together to figure out the best way to try to have an appropriate forum for what is a complex issue. Hopefully, we will bring it back in some shape or form in the next several weeks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

CRISIS IN HAITI

Mr. GRAHAM of Florida. Mr. President, I wish to share a few observations and thoughts about the current circumstances, the tragic circumstances in our near neighboring country of Haiti.

Haiti was once a beautiful country. It was one of the jewels of the Caribbean. Its people, who secured their freedom from France in 1804, have suffered a long history of despair, poverty, and misrule. This country has now fallen into chaos.

Regrettably, Haiti is one of the poorest nations on Earth. It is ranked 172

out of 208 countries in per capita gross national income. It is the only country in the Western Hemisphere to be labeled a least-developed nation.

Haitians are also among the most malnourished people in the Western Hemisphere. The World Health Organization reports that the average daily caloric intake for Haitians is the lowest in the hemisphere and on a par with the poorest nations in Africa.

Violence is on the rise. At least 70 people have been killed in the recent uprising, and the number of dead and wounded grows daily.

Indeed, the country of Haiti now faces twin crises. The first is the possible collapse, if not the violent overthrow, of a democratically elected government, with no agreed-upon follow-on governmental structure. An opposition leader predicted on Sunday that the capital, Port-au-Prince, would fall to armed rebels in 2 weeks.

Second is the humanitarian catastrophe, primarily caused by the violence and the disruption that the violence has created.

The current humanitarian crisis is forcing poor Haitians to literally eat the seeds they have saved for spring planting. With nothing planted, there will be no harvest. These desperate food shortages will strike at the same time the weather improves, and a massive exodus by sea will be feasible and more likely.

The question before the United States and the world is, What should be our priorities? Tragically, it appears that our administration has taken a firm stance on the side of indifference. This may prove to be the longest running and biggest crisis of all for Haiti. The diplomatic effort this past weekend, unfortunately, has accomplished nothing to date.

Cap Hatien, the second largest city in Haiti, fell to the rebels the day after our Assistant Secretary of State left the country. We sent 50 marines to Port-au-Prince on Monday to protect our embassy. From what I can tell, there is no administration plan B.

Furthermore, I have detected very little concern for the potential impact of this crisis on the United States itself, with my State of Florida being on the front lines.

As we have seen repeatedly over the past two decades, one of the impacts of this catastrophe will almost certainly be a dramatic increase in the number of refugees risking their lives in leaky and unsafe boats to try to escape the violence.

Yet there has been little or no contact between Federal agencies and the State and local authorities, our first responders, to prepare for the potential influx of refugees. The principal agencies of the Federal Government have limited capacities to handle yet another immigration crisis. I am told the Department of Homeland Security, which includes the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, has the capability to handle only 150 additional

refugees once they reach our shores. This is in large part because of, in my judgment, the inappropriate use of what is supposed to be a temporary holding facility as, in fact, the permanent prison for long-term detainees. But that is another story.

The Defense Department is understandably hesitant to mix Haitian refugees with the detainees from the war on terror at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The Bush administration's feeling—which appears to be shared by others in the international community—is that the problem in Haiti is a political crisis, and that until these paltry and late-starting diplomatic efforts run their course, there is no basis for dealing with the humanitarian crisis.

When asked at a briefing yesterday what the administration is planning to do to halt the violence, Scott McClellan, the White House spokesman, responded:

We remain actively engaged in these diplomatic efforts to bring about a peaceful, political solution to the situation in Haiti.

That is simply and obviously not enough. Our first priority must be the humanitarian crisis and finding a way to halt the violence which has fueled it.

A political solution should, of course, be actively pursued, but not at the cost of abandoning efforts to address the humanitarian crisis and loss of lives which are occurring daily in Haiti.

There was already a humanitarian crisis as seen by the level of malnutrition. It is now crashing to new levels with the killings and the threats of violence which have forced international aid organizations to reduce support to the poor and impoverished of Haiti.

If we wait for a political settlement, we will be tolerating more scores of people being killed and more deaths due to the meager food supply and lack of adequate health services. Sadly, most of those who are feeling this humanitarian crisis, who are dying today, are innocent women and children.

If we continue to wait for a political solution, the country will be controlled by armed gangs, drug dealers, and thugs. These conditions represent a clear threat to the national security of the United States of America and to the security of friendly allies even closer to Haiti than we are.

It is estimated, for example, that approximately 30 percent of the population of the Bahamas represents Haitian refugees. Allowing the crisis in Haiti to continue could destabilize the Bahamas and its other neighbors, such as the Dominican Republic.

What do we need to do to avoid a humanitarian tragedy? What do we need to do to make that priority No. 1? First, we need to see a sense of urgency on the part of the United States, and that sense of urgency needs to start at the White House.

Just a few days ago, I met with the top administration official who effectively said that it was the policy of the administration to stand on the side-

lines and hope that someone else—France, Canada, the Organization of Caribbean Nations, CARICOM, or the Organization of American States—would take the lead in settling the problem.

This is unacceptable as American foreign policy. There is no other alternative but the use of U.S. influence. We must become engaged at a serious and sustained level or, failing to do so, be prepared to pay the cost of chaos 700 miles off our coast and on the seas which separate us from Haiti.

Second, the next step should be a police presence of sufficient scale that it can quell the violence. This can and should be done under the auspices of the Organization of American States, but the United States must be a leader and full participant.

Third, to assure the success of that police presence, the U.S. military should serve as a visible backup force. Recently, this visible backup force worked off the coast of Liberia when we sent a marine amphibious group aboard Navy ships to stand by off the coast while we put ashore a marine security team to protect our embassy. If we can provide the powerful influence of U.S. military troops 3,000 miles away, certainly we can do so in our own neighborhood.

Next, we must enhance our humanitarian presence starting with emergency deliveries of additional foodstuffs and medical supplies, and we must assure that delivery of those supplies is available throughout the countryside.

Next, given the indifference of the State Department and the National Security Council, the President should seriously consider the appointment of a high-level delegation to Haiti, such as that represented by President Carter, Senator Nunn, and General Powell in 1994, to make certain that our expectations, as well as our level of commitment, is clear.

Next, we must enhance our capacity to understand what is happening inside Haiti. In a manner which is eerily similar to the situation in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, our capacity to gather information inside Haiti is woefully inadequate to the scale and the significance of the crisis.

Among other problems, all diplomatic personnel are confined to the capital Port-au-Prince. As one senior administration official described it:

Our intelligence is very thin.

This limited understanding, without question, has contributed to our allowing the situation to reach near anarchy without the United States assertively engaging itself. These circumstances in Haiti are part of a disturbing pattern of our current international relations. One, by its unwillingness to engage in a leadership role in the world, with the dramatic exception of Iraq, this administration is ceding its sovereignty to other nations. We have ceded to China the leadership for negotiations with North Korea over its nuclear capa-

bility. We have ceded to the French, the Canadians, the OAS, and the Caribbean leadership our sovereignty in dealing with the crisis in Haiti.

That loss of sovereignty comes at a heavy price in our ability to influence other nations and international organizations from a position of strength. How can we challenge China on its trade practices when we are relying on China to handle the most sensitive negotiations with North Korea?

Just a year ago, our fragile relations with France were center stage. How can we now rely on France and regional organizations alone to defend our national interests in the Caribbean? The current administration appears indifferent, at best, to our neighbors in the hemisphere, specifically those in the Caribbean and Latin America. This is surprising and distressing because candidate George W. Bush stated that as President George W. Bush he would pursue a policy of much greater U.S. involvement in Latin America.

On August 25, 2000, speaking at Florida International University in Miami, FL, candidate George W. Bush declared:

This can be the century of the Americas. . . . Should I become president, I will look South not as an afterthought, but as a fundamental commitment to my presidency. . . . Those who ignore Latin America do not fully understand America itself.

After crises in Argentina, in Bolivia, in Venezuela, and now this test in Haiti, the Bush administration has yet another credibility crisis and yet another failure of intelligence. While not on the scale of missed opportunities to disrupt the plots of September 11 or the misinformation which led us to war in Iraq, again we have a failure of intelligence to inform national leadership as to the true state of an international situation or of national leadership to effectively utilize the intelligence which was provided.

Had we secured and utilized accurate and timely information on Haiti, possibly our response would not have been as impotent and retarded as it now is.

Finally, this is the latest example of the need for a United States or international capacity to respond effectively in nation sustaining, even nation building, after our military has successfully secured the territory.

In 1994, the United States effectively invaded Haiti in order to remove a military dictatorship and replace its democratically elected president. We did that with the kind of surgical precision that has come to characterize our military efforts. We then proceeded to spend almost \$3 billion attempting to sustain and build the nation of Haiti. I suggest that today, 10 years later, Haiti is in worse condition than it was when we invaded in 1994. The very things that make our military so effective; recruitment, training, support, the exercises of actions, have allowed us to have such a string of successes in the military phase of dealing

with a hostile or chaotic foreign situation. Unfortunately, none of those characteristics is true of the efforts that are made after the war concludes. We need to take the leadership, either unilaterally or, I believe, preferably with other international allies, to develop a capability which has the same characteristics of recruitment, training, support. Having exercised, before actual use, the security, the development of democratic institutions, the restoration of a governmental structure, the development of infrastructure necessary to support the population and a market economy, which can be available after the bullets stop flying, assures our future investments in nation sustaining and nation building are not as ineffective as they have been in the last decade.

The failure to have such a capacity after the 1994 invasion is a primary reason why today we stand on the edge of the volcano of chaos in Haiti yet again, 10 short years later. Let us today, by our inaction and indifference, not provide as a heritage to future generations in America and to future generations in countries like Haiti, Iraq, and Somalia the heritage of a failed effort because we were not able to complete the mission that began so brilliantly with military actions to the conclusion of a stable, democratic, functioning country that gave to their people some reasonable prospect of prosperity and personal peace.

I ask that immediately after my remarks editorials from the Miami Herald, the St. Petersburg Times, the Palm Beach Post, the Washington Post, and the New York Times be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Miami Herald, Feb. 19, 2004]

SET THE RIGHT PRIORITIES IN HAITI; OUR OPINION: IT'S TIME FOR WASHINGTON TO TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE

Now that Haiti is in flames again, an epidemic of hand-wringing is spreading from Washington to the United Nations to the Elysee Palace in Paris.

Where was everybody when the first puffs of smoke appeared years ago? When President Jean-Bertrand Aristide started relying on thugs to maintain order? When brave journalists were murdered for writing and broadcasting the truth? When peaceful protests were repressed by violent means? Today, in the belated haste to do something—anything—there is a danger of failing to adopt the right set of priorities.

PREVENT A DISASTER

The first goal should be to prevent a full-scale humanitarian crisis, and it is already late in the day. It shouldn't take an armed invasion of Haiti to put an end to the hooliganism that has made food, gasoline and medicine scarce. But if strong diplomatic pressure on all sides can't do the job, a small military force may have to be deployed before conditions worsen.

Restoring civil order on the streets is the next priority. Here the challenge is both military and, ultimately, political. Before any outside attempt to launch a police action is made, the nonviolent opposition should be given a chance to show that it is

capable of doing something besides voicing demands that Mr. Aristide must go. An effort by Mr. Aristide's critics to curtail the growing insurrection would demonstrate that the opposition is a legitimate political force with clout. The opposition should be mature enough to try to reach at least a temporary accommodation with Mr. Aristide that could lay the groundwork for a political settlement.

Although the president has failed to live up to previous promises to govern in a more democratic manner, the crisis demands a suspension of political demands from his opponents because violence threatens the survival of all political factions in the country.

Mr. Aristide carries the main burden of political responsibility. A band of thugs must not be allowed to depose an elected president, but Mr. Aristide has to do more than simply insist on remaining in power. Reaching out to the opposition to form a bulwark against the forces of violence is the best way to show that he has Haiti's best interests at heart.

DEMOCRACY TAKES TIME

The fundamental problem is that Haiti is a failed state, and will remain one until democracy takes root—the ultimate goal. CARICOM and the OAS can help Haiti get there, but only the United States has the authority, or the muscle, to lead this effort. It is time for the Bush administration to take a more active role in stabilizing the situation. As Sen. Bob Graham has pointed out, if we can send a military force to Liberia to protect our interests, we can do the same in Haiti, the sooner the better.

[From the St. Petersburg Times, Feb. 21, 2004]

CRISIS IN HAITI

With violence and chaos spreading in Haiti, the world community cannot afford to just stand by and do nothing. With the police hiding in their barracks, armed thugs patrolling the street and the elected president appealing for international protection, Haiti is on the verge of another major humanitarian and political crisis. It's understandable that the Bush administration has "no enthusiasm," as Secretary of State Colin Powell put it, to intervene militarily. However, there is an urgent need for an international peacekeeping effort. If ever there was a situation calling out for United Nations peacekeepers, Haiti is it.

The two-week-old uprising has killed at least 60 people. The U.S. government Thursday urged Americans to leave, and the Peace Corps began withdrawing its staff. Washington also dispatched a military team to assess security at the U.S. Embassy. As the nation that stood behind the president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the United States has a special obligation to help. Since American military forces restored Aristide to power in 1994, after his ouster in a coup, Aristide has cruelly turned his back on his people and promises. He has not alleviated the human misery in Haiti or reached out to his political opponents. Armed vigilantes roaming the streets terrorize in his name. Aristide has become a polarizing force and a discredited figure internationally. The rebels, however, are not any better. Many leaders are one-time death squad commanders, who have no political legitimacy or idea how to govern.

The United Nations, working with Caribbean leaders and France and Canada, should dispatch a peacekeeping force as soon as possible to try to end the bloodshed. Beyond the need to protect innocent lives and extend a humanitarian hand, the United Nations should underscore that change in Haiti must come through the democratic process.

Aristide should be held to the commitments he made to his people. He needs to disarm and disband the vigilante groups, disassociate himself from their operations and bring political opponents into the governing process. The world community has an interest in protecting Aristide, but it stems from his standing as a democratically elected president and because the alternative is even worse. Far from endorsing his presidency, international intervention would be a slap at the character of a man who sold himself to the world as a champion of democratic principles and then betrayed those very principles.

Washington has a major role to play in defusing this crisis—and a big stake in the outcome. This country, after all, restored Aristide to power, and it will become the destination of any mass exodus of Haitian refugees. On Friday, diplomats from the United States, Europe and the Caribbean were preparing to present Aristide and opposition groups a plan for political reform and a return to the rule of law. It's largely the same plan that was presented to the warring parties weeks ago. Secretary of State Powell said the plan does not call for Aristide's resignation but added that the United States would not object if he decided to step down before his term ends as part of a negotiated political solution.

Even if the violence can be quelled in the coming days, a humanitarian crisis is already upon one of the poorest countries in the world. The world community should quickly unite behind an effort that offers humanitarian aid and protects both human rights and Haiti's sovereignty.

[From the Palm Beach Post, Feb. 21, 2004]

ON HAITI, U.S. CAN'T WAIT

As President Bush tries to install democracy thousands of miles away in Iraq, he no longer can remain disengaged from the moral and practical need for democracy hundreds of miles away in Haiti.

Late this week, the State Department acknowledged that Americans in Haiti should leave the "steady deterioration of the security situation" between an increasingly defiant President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the loosely organized movement to oust him. But as the administration finally has become more active in trying to broker a political settlement, it has become increasingly unrealistic to think that a settlement will not require military action. Ideally, that would take place in concert with regional allies, stabilizing Haiti and bolstering the country for the long haul beyond the end of Mr. Aristide's term in 2006.

Each hour's delay only makes the problem more difficult, as the loyal opposition that Mr. Aristide calls a band of terrorists is being subordinated by gangsters returning from exile. Haiti's outnumbered and outgunned police force of fewer than 4,000 is retreating from its posts. If certain rebels take control, they will not easily give it up.

Gov. Bush was brief by the Coast Guard again this week. "But we have the power to some degree to stop this from hitting our shores," said U.S. Rep. Mark Foley, R-West Palm Beach. "We can't take the standoff position." Colombia, he said, is a case where the U.S. has "used the military to try to rebuild the economy and stem the drug flow. Liberia also is an example that's on point. (Former President) Charles Taylor wasn't going anywhere until the U.S. said we're backing the nations that are liberating Liberia."

In Haiti, Rep. Foley said, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas "need to be leading the dialogue rather than have the perception of imperial saber-rattling. We

have to have the sense that we're all in this together. With America saying, 'We're behind you.'" But it is important, as he said, "to make sure the Haitian people understand, as well as Aristide, that we are not there to prop him up."

That's the message the international delegation led by Assistant Secretary of State Roger Noriega should carry to Haiti today. There's a lot at stake for Florida and the United States, which doesn't need a failed state close to home. It is too late just to assume that things will get better.

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 9, 2004]

NO HELP FOR HAITI

Once again a poor nation with strong ties to the United States is in desperate trouble—and once again, the response of the Bush administration is to backpedal away, forswear all responsibility and leave any rescue to others. Last summer President Bush refused to commit even a few hundred U.S. troops on the ground to help end a bloody crisis in Liberia. Now he and his administration stand by as Haiti, a country of 7.5 million just 600 miles from Florida, plunges into anarchy.

Armed gangs are spreading through cities across the country in a violent rebellion against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, whose own police force is so weak that a group of about 40 thugs was able to take over a town of 87,000 people on Tuesday. France and the United Nations have begun exploring the possible deployment of police or peacekeepers—which is probably the only way to stop the killing. But Secretary of State Colin L. Powell made clear that "there is frankly no enthusiasm" within the Bush administration "for sending in military or police forces to put down the violence." Mr. Powell rejected "a proposition that says the elected president must be forced out of office by thugs." But that, apparently, doesn't mean the United States—which has intervened repeatedly in Haitian affairs during its 200-year history—is prepared to take any action to stop it.

Nor has the administration been willing to take the lead in seeking a political settlement to the crisis. For several years it has delegated the arbitration of Haiti's mounting domestic conflict to well-meaning but powerless diplomats from the Organization of American States or the Caribbean Community, also known as Caricom. In particular, it has declined to exercise its considerable leverage on the civilian opposition parties, some of which have been supported by such U.S. groups as the International Republican Institute and which have rejected any political solution short of Mr. Aristide's immediate resignation. Apart from Mr. Powell's statement, the administration's rhetoric has mostly been directed at Mr. Aristide. "There certainly needs to be some changes in the way Haiti is governed," said White House spokesman Scott McClellan.

Mr. Aristide is guilty of supporting violence against the opposition and has cruelly disappointed those who expected him to consolidate democracy. But Haiti's mess flows in part from U.S. actions. After restoring Mr. Aristide to power in 1994 and abolishing the army that previously ruled the country by dictatorship, the United States failed to follow through. U.S. forces were pulled out after only two years—they are still in Bosnia and Kosovo eight and five years, respectively, after they arrived—and all aid to the government was suspended after Mr. Aristide's party tampered with the results of a congressional election. Some of the military's former death-squad leaders command the gangs that would seize power. But the Bush administration would rather leave the answers to Caricom or the United Nations or France. It's an inexcusable abdication.

[From the New York Times, Feb. 24, 2004]

HOUR OF THE GUNMEN IN HAITI

Rebels in Haiti were going house to house yesterday, arresting supporters of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and looting their possessions. The capital, Port-au-Prince, remained in government hands, but the nation's second-largest city, Cap-Haitien, was held by the insurgents. The situation is clearly becoming dire. The United States needs to take the lead in protecting the Haitian people from the growing anarchy around them. There is much that Washington could do.

Only the slimmest hope remains for salvaging an international mediation effort that began last weekend. If it cannot be revived, there is a strong likelihood that the country's raging political crisis could ultimately be resolved by brute force. Abrupt and violent changes of government have been a regular feature of Haitian politics over the years and are among the main reasons that Haiti has never developed stable democratic institutions.

Mr. Aristide is no beacon of democratic principles, but he was freely elected to a five-year term that is not scheduled to run out until February 2006. It would have been better if all sides had accepted the proposed compromise that would allow him to stay in office while sharing power with the opposition.

Most, but not all, of the responsibility for the failure to reach an agreement lies with the leaders of Haiti's nonviolent political opposition. They argued that with popular anger against Mr. Aristide running so high, they could accept no compromise that did not cut short his presidency.

That public anger is largely Mr. Aristide's fault, because of a succession of betrayals of his original democratic promises. By failing to end a long impasse over flawed parliamentary elections, he has effectively shut down Parliament and now rules by decree. He has politicized the police and courts and uses special police brigades and armed gangs of his supporters to terrorize civilians and break up opposition demonstrations.

Yet the opposition's unwillingness to stand up to the former army leaders and opposition thugs now demanding Mr. Aristide's departure—and their failure to back a compromise that would have been strongly supported by Washington and other mediating countries—is a troubling sign. It suggests that these politicians may not have the toughness needed to make sure that any armed ouster of Mr. Aristide does not lead to a rapid restoration of the same discredited forces that ruled Haiti before he came to power. These include thuggish leaders of the country's officially disbanded army and the murderous paramilitary groups that supported military rule. Some of these elements have already re-entered Haiti from the neighboring Dominican Republic.

There is still time for the political opposition to reconsider its rejection of compromise before the armed rebels impose their own new tyranny.

Whether or not the opposition comes to its senses, Haiti's people deserve protection. More than 70 lives have already been lost. The United States should quickly offer to build up the current force of 50 marines who arrived Monday to protect the American Embassy and make it the core of a multinational stabilization force that would also include soldiers from France, Canada and Latin America. Haiti's army was dissolved in 1994, and a modest international military force could go a long way. It should be in place before armed rebel elements grab power for themselves.

Once a stabilization force is established, an American-led international effort should be

mounted to train professional, politically independent police officers and judges. It was the absence of such institutions that allowed Mr. Aristide to create a new authoritarianism behind a democratic shell. American police training programs during the Clinton administration did not reach far enough or last long enough to succeed. Washington should also make it easier for Haiti to earn its way out of poverty by eliminating the American rice subsidies that have contributed to pricing poor Haitian rice farmers out of the market.

Developing a durable democracy in this deeply impoverished country, which has no history of strong, independent civic institutions, will take plenty of time and effort. Failure to begin that effort now will surely result in future revolts, future dictators and future tides of desperate refugees headed for American shores.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise today to express my concern about the violent political crisis engulfing Haiti. We dare not remain silent when faced with such a widespread insurrection in our backyard. I believe that we, members of Congress and the Bush administration, must make an honest reckoning regarding our history of often inconsistency and sometimes even negligent U.S. policies toward this neighboring country, the poorest in the western hemisphere. If the current vicious cycle of resistance and violent reaction to the resistance continues, the resulting instability will have a substantial impact on democracy and security in the Caribbean and will affect our entire hemisphere.

Just last month, Haiti celebrated the 200th anniversary of its independence; it was only the second country in the western hemisphere after the United States to throw off the yoke of foreign domination and to declare independence from a European colonizer. Unfortunately, Haiti's long experience with democracy and self-rule has been impeded by successive waves of military coups—over 30 since its independence—and power consolidation by elites. Poverty and disease are pervasive and government corruption rampant. In its October 2003 survey, Transparency International labeled Haiti the third most corrupt country out of 133 countries in the world and the most corrupt of the 30 countries in the Americas and the Caribbean.

Prior to Jean-Bertrand Aristide's election to his first term in 1990, Haiti had been ruled by successive military dictators, many of whom were anointed by foreign leaders. In 1990, the U.S. government and we, the members of the U.S. Congress, felt optimistic about democratic prospects under Aristide's leadership. The subsequent U.S.-backed restoration of Aristide to power derived from an American hope, perhaps even a naive idealism, that he could rebuild viable democratic institutions and further democratic progress as a legitimate head of state. This American idealism, I believe, led the Clinton administration to deploy 20,000 American troops to support Aristide. Since this time, however, Aristide and his political party have made poor economic

choices; they have consolidated power, eviscerated the role of the parliament, and allowed corruption and cronyism to corrode the government.

Indeed, over the past few years, as our foreign policy attention has shifted eastward, towards hotspots in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, we have been dangerously negligent of Haiti's continuing political dissolution and Aristide's failed leadership.

I believe that the current violent expression of political opposition, which has taken the lives of over 40 Haitians in the past two weeks, derives directly from the Haitians' frustration with their government. Haitian political rights have been chipped away since Aristide's 2000 re-election, based on only five percent voter turnout, created a political stalemate. The Haitian parliament has since stopped functioning, prompting international aid donors to block millions of dollars in needed economic aid.

The resulting economic situation is bleak. Most of Haiti's 8 million people live on less than \$1 per day and it ranks 150th out of 175 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index.

But Aristide's government has exacerbated Haiti's economic crisis. The U.S. State Department classified the country's current situation as "economic stagnation" caused by ineffective economic policies, political instability, environmental deterioration, the lack of a functioning judiciary, and the migration of skilled workers.

On the other hand, we know that this month's violent outburst is not the only means for Haitians to express political opposition. For years, legitimate opposition groups have opposed Aristide's government and most of them do not condone today's violence. Instead they endorse new elections and a peaceful transition of power.

We have a unique obligation to stand up for the people of Haiti. Our two countries are inextricably linked—by the virtue of our similar histories, because of our involvement in Aristide's return to power, and as a result of the influx of Haitians who have come to our shores seeking refuge from the economically and politically ravaged country. These Haitian Americans have contributed greatly to American life and I am proud to have a talented young man of Haitian origins on my staff and to represent nearly 60,000 Haitian Americans in my State.

The Bush administration has advocated for a negotiated political solution to the crisis. Yesterday, Southern Command has dispatched a small military team to Haiti to provide the ambassador and the embassy staff with an enhanced capability to monitor the current situation. Secretary of State Colin Powell recently met with regional officials and the Canadian and Haitian ambassadors to discuss a possible Caribbean-Canadian police force for Haiti. I support the State Department in its efforts to forge a negotiated political solution brought about

by dialogue, negotiation, and compromise and fully support the power sharing agreement put forth by Secretary Powell and international community. I urge the opposition groups to accept this proposal to share power with Aristide until he can be replaced democratically.

I also ask my colleagues to follow this crisis closely and to join me in demanding that President Bush, Secretary Powell and other foreign policy advisors continue to play a leading role, facilitating negotiations between the Haitian government and the opposition factions.

If the opposition accepts the power-sharing agreement, Secretary Powell should enlist French, United Nations, and Caricom help to see that forceful diplomatic intervention ends the current stand-off. The next step is for the U.S., in concert with international organizations, to assist Haiti in creating a unity government, a council of advisors and the installation of a new prime minister. American diplomacy and influence can be effectively mustered to convince both Aristide and the opposition to accept these reformist measures.

U.S. hegemony, wealth, and power have, over the course of our country's history, generated myriad international obligations to resolve global conflicts and preserve peace and security. Our responsibilities emerge no clearer than when conflicts arise in our own neighborhood. It is time to break with a recent policy of U.S. dismissal and neglect regarding Haiti's self-destructive government and devastating economic situation.

I urge my colleagues to join with me in insisting that the administration, with Congressional support, rise to fulfill the responsibilities of global leadership.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SPC BILLY JESS WATTS

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President. I express our Nation's deepest thanks and gratitude to a young man and his family from Meeteetse, WY. On February 5, 2004, SPC Billy Jess Watts was killed in the line of duty while preparing to deploy to Iraq to serve his country in the war on terrorism. While traveling in a military convoy to a final training exercise before leaving for duty in Operation Iraqi Freedom, SPC Watts died when the vehicle he was riding in hit ice and rolled over.

SPC Watts was a member of the Wyoming Army National Guard's 2-300 Field Artillery Battalion. He enjoyed the outdoors, hunting and camping, and loved watching NASCAR racing and pitching horseshoes. He loved his family and his country. SPC Watts' profound sense of duty led him to join the U.S. Army following his high school graduation, and the National Guard upon his return to Wyoming. He was an American soldier.

It is because of people like Billy Watts that we continue to live safe and

secure. America's men and women who answer the call of service and wear our Nation's uniform deserve respect and recognition for the enormous burden that they willingly bear. Our people put everything on the line everyday, and because of these folks, our Nation remains free and strong in the face of danger.

SPC Watts is survived by his wife Connie and his son Austin John, as well as parents, Bill and Bertha, sisters Bonnie, Betty and Barbara, and his brothers in arms of the 2-300 Field Artillery Battalion. We say goodbye to a husband, a father, a son, a brother, a soldier, and an American. Our Nation pays its deepest respect to SPC Billy Jess Watts for his courage, his love of country and his sacrifice, so that we may remain free. He was a hero in life and he remains a hero in death. All of Wyoming, and indeed the entire Nation are proud of him.

2LT LUKE S. JAMES

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, you don't have to do much more than open the morning newspaper or turn on the evening news to understand that the enemies of freedom are working hard in Iraq.

They lay ambushes for our troops, set off bombs by remote control, and drive explosive-laden autos into crowds of innocent Iraqis who want nothing more than a brighter future for their country and their children.

Terrorists connected with al-Qaida, foreign interests and Baathist loyalists conspire to destroy the dream of a free Iraq before it is fully born. They will fail.

But Saddam Hussein, a one-man weapon of mass destruction who preyed on his countrymen and threatened his neighbors, is in custody. His murderous sons are dead. His lieutenants and henchmen are captured, killed, or moving nearer those fates with each passing hour.

The same fates await those who would steal the dream of liberty and replace it with a nightmare of repression, corruption and domination. America's front line in her war against terrorism is now in the fields of Afghanistan and the streets of Iraq instead of in the skies over New York and Washington, DC.

Like Americans everywhere, I was thrilled to see the statues of Saddam Hussein knocked from their pedestals. Those images reminded me that the Iraqi people needed our help, our tanks, our troops, and our commitment to topple a brutal dictator. I am proud of our military and America's commitment to make the people of the Middle East more free and secure.

Without a doubt, our military men and women will face more difficult days in Iraq, and the Iraqi people will be tested by the responsibilities that come with freedom. Everyone expects more violence. Freedom is messy—nowhere more so than in a country that has just shaken off a brutal dictatorship.