

This long-simmering crisis is largely Mr. Aristide's making. . . . We urge him to examine his position carefully, to accept responsibility, and to act in the best interests of the people of Haiti.

The administration's initial lack of attention and subsequent response left us with no policy levers to pull and no Haitian institutions to call upon to quell the crisis. In that situation—faced with violence and instability that threatened to lead to a refugee crisis—we deployed American Marines.

Emerging crises in the rest of the hemisphere are potentially as dire, but the administration still appears no more engaged.

Take, for example, Venezuela. Political turmoil and mismanagement have had a serious and adverse impact on economic growth in that country. In 2003, real GDP shrank by nearly 10 percent—after contracting 9 percent the year before—and inflation was the region's highest at 27.1 percent. All of this in a country that has the largest oil reserves outside the Middle East—providing the United States 14 percent of its oil—and increasingly sizable natural gas stores.

Moreover, slow economic growth may be the least of Venezuela's problems. The country is caught in a political crisis over a recall referendum that could bring the Chavez government to an abrupt end.

The situation was exacerbated by clear missteps on the part of the administration in April of 2002, when the administration overturned decades of American policy in the hemisphere by seeming to endorse, however briefly, an unconstitutional change of government. Former President Carter has done us proud by stepping in to pick up the pieces in order to ensure that the problems of this democracy can be resolved democratically.

But with deepening polarization and new developments in Venezuela each day, there is no substitute for official American leadership in pushing for the respect of democratic institutions over personalities and power.

As in Haiti, if we wait for others to take the lead in Venezuela, we will have waited too long.

There are other emerging threats to stability and democracy in the region—from Peru to Bolivia to Argentina. Economic growth is down, poverty and drug trafficking are increasing, and corruption is rampant.

Perhaps most alarming are observations from recent public surveys that anti-Americanism is approaching all-time highs while respect for democracy is reaching an all-time low.

Such a precarious time demands engagement and leadership from America. Instead, the administration has decided to limit American investments in the region this year, arguing, as I noted, that we have other priorities.

As one leading expert pointed out:

Relations between the United States and Latin America have acquired a rawness and a level of indecorum that recall previous eras of inter-America strain and discord.

It is not too late, and I hope the meeting tomorrow in Texas marks the administration's renewed interest in the hemisphere. If it does, we are prepared to work with the President and our friends in Mexico and in Argentina and in Venezuela and in Peru and in Bolivia, and in Colombia to build the institutions needed for peace, prosperity, and stability.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

Mr. REID. Will the Senator withhold?

Mr. DASCHLE. I will.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant minority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on our side, we have requests for 15 minutes and 20 minutes for morning business. I checked with the majority. There would be no objections so long as they have equal time. So I ask unanimous consent that both sides have 35 minutes for morning business this morning.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on the minority side, we yield 20 minutes to the Senator from Connecticut, Mr. LIEBERMAN; and then, following that, 15 minutes to the Senator from Iowa, Mr. HARKIN.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business with 35 minutes for each side equally divided, the first half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee, the second half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

Under the request of the assistant minority leader, the Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

REFLECTIONS FROM CAMPAIGN EXPERIENCE

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I thank my friend and colleague from Nevada.

Mr. President, it is now more than a month since I ended my quest for the Democratic nomination for President. It was a thrilling, demanding, purposeful journey across this great country. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity I had. I learned a lot. In fact, I would recommend anyone who has the opportunity try it at least once in a lifetime. But today I want to share

with my colleagues a few serious reflections from my campaign experience about the current state of our politics and the way they may affect our work here in this election year on the great questions of our economy and our security, particularly in Iraq.

It is now clear who the Presidential nominees of the major parties will be: President Bush and Senator KERRY. Therefore, it is time for members of both parties to start thinking and talking about how we want the national campaign to be conducted at this uniquely difficult and dangerous moment in American history.

For the United States, this is a very good time, but it is also a very difficult time. We have the largest economy and the strongest military in the world. Our core values of freedom and opportunity are ascendent around the globe. In so many ways here at home we live better than any people ever have because of the truly amazing advances in medical science, telecommunications, information technology, and transportation. However, these advances and the globalization they have facilitated have also brought painful changes for millions of Americans in lost jobs, declining income, skyrocketing health care costs, and a fear of what the future may bring.

On top of that, we face an unprecedented new challenge to our security and our freedom from fanatical Islamic terrorists who brutally attacked us and our homeland on September 11, 2001.

These two new realities have made the American people more anxious about their future, as I met them during this last year, than I have ever seen them before. Our confidence and our optimism must be restored. How best to do that and who can best do that is ultimately what this year's Presidential campaign is all about. Ideally, the campaign will raise our hopes, not deepen our insecurities; it will unite us, not divide us; it will strengthen us, not weaken us; it will create an environment in which our Government, including this Congress, will produce relief for some of what ails America, hopefully this year. But I can't say I am optimistic that any of these ideals will be achieved because of the rigid and reflexive partisanship that has come to dominate so much of our politics.

Warnings about factionalism are, of course, as old as our Republic, but they seem especially relevant and necessary today, when strategists from both major parties seem poised to seek electoral victory by inflaming their inner constituencies with ideological tinder and brutal personal attacks on the other party's candidates. That will only divide us more deeply and make it more difficult for us to overcome the enormous threats to our security and our prosperity.

Our political parties and Presidential candidates must find ways to differ without being destructive, to debate

without demonizing, to put our national interests ahead of special interests, to take the long view rather than the most politically expedient short view, to rise above partisan politics, to put America first.

I know the conventional wisdom is that in an election year, the breakthrough in our politics and Government I am calling for is unlikely to occur. But I also know there have been many times in our history when the proximity of an election has induced exactly the kind of leadership and consensus building that produce progress in our democracy. Congress passed and previous Presidents signed the Federal Highway Aid Act in 1956, the Civil Rights Act in 1964, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act in 1972, and welfare reform in 1996. These were all landmark pieces of legislation that required and received bipartisan cooperation in an election year.

Let us hope we can produce similar progress this year. Let us work together to lower the crushing price of health care, to develop and implement a plan to stop the bleeding of American manufacturing and service jobs, to restore fiscal responsibility to the Federal budget, to reduce the growing number of poor people in our country, to address the real threat of global warming, and to reassure the American people that we understand their anger at the contemporary culture which too often undercuts their traditional values of faith and family, of right and wrong. Let us hope we can work effectively toward those goals.

There is one area of challenge that demands more than hope, where we simply cannot afford to allow campaign-year politics to take over until after election day. That is the current crisis in Iraq.

We are at war. The lives of more than 100,000 American troops are on the line in Iraq. So, too, is the fulcrum of our present and future national security. Yes, there is violence and bloodshed, sadly, elsewhere in the world, but the impact Iraq will have on our future security and our prospects for victory in the wider war against terrorism is of the greatest magnitude. It has no equal in the world today. Our politics must catch up with that reality.

I recognize the differences of opinion about why and how we went to war in Iraq. I know they run deep and they run wide. As for myself, I remain a strong supporter of the war that removed Saddam Hussein. Yes, I have criticized the administration for some of its policies, both before and immediately after the war. But I believe deeply we cannot allow arguments about past policy to stop us from finding common ground to face the present threats in Iraq. We cannot refight the last war in Iraq against Saddam with such ferocity that we falter in fighting the terrorist insurgents that threaten Iraq and us right now.

The days between now and our election day in November will be critical

days for Iraq, as sovereignty is returned to the Iraqi people and they prepare for what we hope will be their own historic election day in December. Unless the security situation in Iraq improves dramatically, that election day may not come. The fact is, as the newspapers and media have told us in the last 2 days, there is danger in Iraq. One hundred and eighty-five people were killed on Tuesday by suicide bombings. These are threats not just to the lives and security of the Iraqi people, but they present the staggering prospect of civil war in Iraq. Together with the Iraqi people and our coalition partners, we are going to need to make critical decisions and take strong, difficult, tough actions in the upcoming weeks and months to maintain security in that country.

To do so, we here at home must transcend the partisan reflex rancor that has become the norm in American politics.

The consequences of failure in Iraq are staggering. The fact that the battle has been joined in Iraq—the historic battle between security and terror, between freedom and tyranny.

Iraq is a critical battleground now in our larger war against terrorism because the fact is that members of the same Jihadist movements that killed nearly 3,000 Americans on September 11, 2001, are now fighting alongside Saddam loyalists, systematically targeting and murdering Americans and Iraqis for working so hard to build a secure, new civil society in that country.

If we fail to stop these insurgents and lose the peace in Iraq, the Iraqi people will be condemned to chaos and relentless violence. The Middle East will be destabilized. The forces of worldwide terrorism will gain new confidence, energy, and resources to attack us.

On the other hand, establishing a stable democratizing, modernizing Iraq would be a major victory in our battle with the terrorists and our struggle to bring hope to the majority of Muslims in the world, who clearly desire peace, not war. It will show them a better way to a better future than the hatred and death that the fanatics of al-Qaida and their ilk preach. It will bring about much greater stability and opportunity throughout the Middle East.

In the weeks ahead, I intend to speak in more detail about how together we can accomplish these critical American goals. But for today, I want to concentrate on how best we can separate the challenges to us in Iraq from this Presidential campaign.

There are significant differences of opinion, clearly, between the Presidential candidates, President Bush and Senator KERRY, about our past policies in Iraq. But I don't see significant differences between them about the need to successfully finish what we have started there. Both have asserted that we must not cut and run from Iraq. We cannot allow the politics of this campaign to obscure or block that agreement, that commitment to finish our mission.

We must recapture the spirit of bipartisanship and national purpose we achieved following the September 11 attacks. It is that important. For Democrats, that doesn't mean that all debate about the war must stop. But I believe it does mean we must focus on how best to win the war we are engaged in now against terrorist insurgents. Only questioning how and why we got into the last war against Saddam is simply not enough. Doing only that is not acceptable anymore.

For the President, his party, it means not politicizing the conduct of the war in any way. As Commander in Chief, the President has a special responsibility to focus on winning the war, even in this election year—perhaps most particularly at this time.

In the months ahead, the President must make tough decisions necessary to bring security to Iraq and a better life to Iraqis, regardless of the political consequences at home because that is what will best serve America's values and security.

The fact is, both parties and our leaders must reach out to each other—difficult as that is in an election year, but it is necessary at this moment—to find a common ground that will secure our common future.

Mr. President, it is reassuring to look back across American history and find that at some of our most difficult times our predecessors in positions of power in the American Government have made sure that partisan politics ended at our Nation's borders.

Following the Second World War, for example, leaders in Congress and the White House forged a bipartisan foreign policy to combat communism. It lasted half a century and brought us to victory in the cold war. During that time, the best of our elected officials no longer saw themselves just as Democrats or Republicans. They saw themselves as Americans fighting a common enemy.

Our times demand from us that same spirit of surpassing bipartisanship in the war against terrorism, for obviously the terrorists do not distinguish among us based on our party affiliations. Each of us is their enemy because we are all Americans, so we Democrats and Republicans must, therefore, in this campaign year, see beyond the red States and the blue States to a larger cause that is as critical to the red, white, and blue as any America has ever fought for.

It is the cause of defeating Jihadist terrorists who hate us and our free and tolerant ways of life more than they love life itself, and who would, if we allow them, plunge this modern world into a primitive global religious war. For the sake of our children's futures, for the sake of America's core values, for the sake of world peace, we cannot allow that to happen.

I am a proud member of the Democratic Party and, as such, I will work for a Democratic victory in the elections this fall. I know my Republican

colleagues in this Chamber will work just as hard for a Republican victory. But during this time of war, we each must make certain that our party loyalties do not prevail over our national responsibilities.

As important as a partisan victory is to each of us, it cannot be more important than a victory over terrorism for all of us, a victory that will enable the American people to feel secure again at home, that will enable our soldiers to return from Iraq, that will enable the Iraqi people to enjoy the blessings of liberty, which it is America's historic mission to advance and defend.

A final word. On November 2 of last year, PFC Anthony D'Agostino of Waterbury, CT, was killed in Iraq. A few weeks later, I received a note from Anthony's father, Steven. I read this paragraph from it:

Please continue to support all our men and women in uniform. Please support our Commander in Chief in his resolve to obtain his objectives. Please keep America the true leader of peace in the world. Tony was our only son, our only legacy. Although this was a great loss to our family, we wish you god-speed in making the world a safer place.

The quiet, selfless strength and patriotism of the D'Agostino family have been echoed for me in other voices I have met throughout America during the last year. We must hear those voices through the sound and fury of the coming national campaign. We must assure them by our words and our deeds that we have our priorities right, that we will come together in this election year across party lines to protect their sons and daughters, to make certain that America will remain the true leader of peace and freedom in the world, and to achieve a better life for all of our people at home.

I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Iowa is recognized, under the time controlled by the Democratic leader or his designee, 17 minutes.

THE SITUATION IN HAITI

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes this morning to address the issue of Haiti and the events that occurred there over the last few weeks. Haiti, a country, as colleagues know, is just off the coast of Florida. Sunday morning, the democratically elected president of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was forced to leave office and his country on a U.S. aircraft. The armed rebellion, led by former members of the Haitian army, which I point out to colleagues was disbanded by President Aristide in 1994, and members of the paramilitary right-wing group called FRAPH, made it impossible for the Aristide government to maintain law and order.

Unfortunately, President Aristide had little choice but to leave office, as the U.S. and international community made it very clear to him they would

do nothing to protect him from the armed thugs and convicted murderers who had taken over most of the major cities in Haiti and terrorized and killed many people.

I point out to my colleagues that President Aristide's departure is hardly a voluntary decision to leave. I had several communications with President Aristide, high-ranking members of our administration, and other Members of Congress over the weekend.

On Monday, I had a very lengthy conversation with President Aristide, who had called me from the Central African Republic. I was very disturbed about reports that were circulating that he had been forcibly removed from the President's palace, put on an aircraft, and flown out of Haiti. Some of this now has been talked about in terms of whether or not he was at gunpoint or how was he forced out.

The administration is taking the position that he voluntarily resigned and got on the aircraft and they flew him out of the country. There are others who are saying that perhaps he was forced out at gunpoint.

After my long conversation with President Aristide on Monday afternoon, I am convinced of at least three things. One, President Aristide was not put in handcuffs. He was not marched at the end of a rifle and told to get on the airplane or they would shoot him. No, that did not occur. So in that contextual framework he was not "forced," "abducted," or "kidnapped" out of the country.

On the other hand, during the late afternoon of Saturday, after I had spoken with him, in the evening hours of that same Saturday, he was contacted by our ambassador in Haiti who, according to Mr. Aristide, told him he had basically three options: He could stay in Haiti and be killed and thus precipitate a bloodshed that might cost thousands of lives because we would do nothing to protect him from the armed thugs and the killers; secondly, he could leave with bloodshed, that is, he could leave after precipitating a crisis that might cost thousands of lives; or he could leave without bloodshed.

Confronted with those options, if a President such as Aristide, who is democratically elected, leaves, is that voluntary? As Congressman RANGEL said yesterday in a hearing: Under a threat to his life, Mr. Aristide had little choice but to sign a resignation letter. I would have signed one, too, Congressman RANGEL said.

That is the essence of what happened. Our Government basically left Mr. Aristide, a democratically elected President, with no options. Either leave with bloodshed or leave without bloodshed, but in either case he was leaving.

As President Aristide told me, he had an obligation to the Haitian people. He did not want to see bloodshed. He did not want to see thousands of innocent people killed. So, therefore, under that kind of duress he was forced to leave.

I was asked why the United States did not honor the Santiago treaty in 1991 signed by the United States, which clearly states that any government democratically elected in the Western Hemisphere that seeks the support of other Organization of American States member nations, when threatened with an overthrow, will be assisted? That agreement was signed by the first President Bush in 1991.

I point out a couple of things. When President Aristide was first elected in 1990, he served for a total of about 8 months, from about January through August of 1991, and then was overthrown by a military coup.

What did the first President Bush administration do? Absolutely nothing. They let the military take over and throw out a democratically elected President, at the same time that the first President Bush was signing the Santiago Resolution saying we would come to the assistance of a democratically elected government in our hemisphere if they were threatened with an overthrow.

Then President Clinton came to office the following year and we restored President Aristide to office. He had about 1 year left, because he agreed that the 3 years he spent in exile would count toward his 5-year tenure. Under the Constitution of Haiti, a President cannot succeed himself. Mr. Aristide agreed that he would abide by the constitution.

So when he came back to Haiti, he served about 1 more year and then elections were held in 1995 and he did not run, of course, because the Constitution would not let him do so. During the year he was back in Haiti, he did one significant thing. He disbanded the Haitian Army, the army that had been used for probably as much as 100 years to repress and suppress the people of Haiti. The Army had been used by one dictator after another to suppress the legitimate aspirations of the Haitian people.

After he had done that, he called me up. I remember that phone call very well when President Aristide called and said he was soon to leave office and had decided to disband the Haitian Army. I remember him telling me he did it for a couple of reasons.

President Aristide told me that Haiti did not need a military. The military had been used to repress the people. No one is going to invade us. He said they wanted to be like Costa Rica, that did not have an army and they did not need one.

Secondly, he said the military in Haiti did nothing but repress people. The military had been using up about half of the GDP of Haiti to pay for these military thugs.

Well, guess who is leading the insurgency against Aristide now? Former leaders of the old Haitian military, many of whom had left the country, at least one of whom had been Chamblain. He had been convicted in absentia because he fled the country. He had been