

They long to return to Colombia even as they describe the terror that forced them to seek safe haven in Ecuador.

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They spoke of the need for community development projects but have no one to turn to to help them help bring their modest ideas into reality. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR, is nearly the lone partner with the Ecuadorian government in dealing with the largest refugee crisis in the hemisphere, with some aid from the World Food Programme and the IOM. Where are the other NGOs and U.N. agencies that would normally be involved in a crisis of this magnitude?

These crises are not of the making of the government of President Rafael Correa. Ecuador needs and deserves the support of the international community and Congress to address these challenges. They cannot be allowed to remain invisible.

Mr. Speaker, I was deeply moved by my visit to Ecuador, and I will never forget the courageous people, Ecuadorians and Colombians, who told me their stories and asked for my help. They deserve to live a much better life. In the weeks ahead, I hope I can count on my House colleagues to help these communities in this effort.

[From the Christian Science Monitor, June 24, 2008]

TACKLING ECUADOR'S REFUGEE BUILDUP

LAGO AGRIOS, Ecuador.—Less than a month ago, Rosalba Agredo González was given only a few minutes to leave her house in Colombia. She was woken up in the middle of the night by armed men who threatened her and took away her neighbor.

"They told me they wouldn't do anything to me because of my children. Otherwise they would have killed me," she says.

Agredo now lives with her elderly father and her three children in Lago Agrio, a small city in northern Ecuador, 15 miles from the Colombian border. They've made their temporary home alongside one wall of a small wooden house, with only a tin roof, concrete floor, and plastic sheets for walls. She doesn't have a job but sometimes prepares a local pastry at a neighbor's house which her eldest son sells on the street. Despite her precarious situation, she is happy to be in Ecuador. "I don't want to go back to Colombia, even if I have to maintain myself by selling empanadas," she says. "I feel very happy here because even if I don't own anything I know my children are safe." Agredo's story is not uncommon. Ecuador has more refugees than any other Latin American country—a consequence of the longstanding conflict in Colombia, which has received little international attention. Five to 10 refugees arrive in Ecuador every day, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), mainly from two southern Colombian provinces bordering Ecuador, Putumayo and Nariño. Given the buildup of refugees, the Ecuadorean government and a few humanitarian agencies are taking measures to provide asylum and assistance. But the challenges remain large. Of the estimated 180,000 who have entered Ecuador escaping violence, 16,500 have received a refugee visa and 22,000 are awaiting a response.

TROUBLE SECURING ASYLUM

The remaining 80 percent have yet to apply—some fear becoming vulnerable to

further persecution, while others are unaware they might qualify for asylum. Asylum seekers are granted access to public health and education from the moment they set foot in Ecuador. However they often have trouble affording decent housing and supporting their families, as they are not allowed to work until granted a refugee visa. "Legalizing refugees is very important so that they come out of their invisibility, otherwise they can't get legal jobs and become very vulnerable," says Alfonso Morales, who heads the department for refugees at Ecuador's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "They become easy prey to illegal networks and often end up participating in illegal activities." On June 20, to coincide with World Refugee Day, the Ecuadorean Ministry of Foreign Affairs inaugurated a new office in Lago Agrio, an important step toward improving refugee registration. The new office will make registration faster for applicants, as documents will be processed directly instead of being sent to Quito, Ecuador's capital. Another new measure is an enhanced registration process that will start in September and will make it possible for refugees to apply for and receive their visas in one day. Right now the registration process takes about four months if applicants can go to Quito and between 18 and 24 months if they can't leave the north.

ISOLATED, POOR COMMUNITIES

But registration is just an initial step in the process of providing better living conditions for refugees. The northern province of Sucumbíos, of which Lago Agrio is the capital, faces the largest influx of refugees. A jungle area separated from Colombia by two rivers, the area also presents many logistical and security challenges for humanitarian work. Border communities here are difficult to access and often lack basic infrastructure such as roads, drinking water, and health facilities. Though Sucumbíos is rich in oil, the province is among the least developed in Ecuador, with high levels of unemployment and an informal economy that relies on illegal activity such as drug trafficking, weapons smuggling, and human trafficking. It was in this province that Colombia's cross-border raid on March 1 took place, leaving FARC commander Raul Reyes—and another 25 people—dead and creating a regional diplomatic crisis. "In small communities the solidarity is amazing. They are willing to share everything, but it's important to intervene quickly so as not to allow tensions to develop," says Xavier Creach, head of the UNHCR field office in Lago Agrio. UNHCR has prioritized reaching those isolated communities along the border.

"We have serious economic and institutional limits when it comes to taking care of the huge quantity of Colombian refugees that have come to our country," says Mr. Morales, the government official. "The international community hasn't yet recognized the magnitude of the problem. We need foreign support."

[From UNHCR—The UN Refugee Agency, June 24, 2008]

ECUADOR OPENS FIRST REFUGEE OFFICE ALONG BORDER WITH COLOMBIA

LAGO AGRIOS.—Ecuador's Directorate General for Refugees has just opened an office in the border province of Sucumbíos, the first state-run facility of its kind to be established outside the national capital, Quito.

President Rafael Correa presided over the opening ceremony in the provincial capital of Lago Agrio last Friday, World Refugee Day. Lago Agrio is located just a few kilometers from northeast Ecuador's border with Colombia.

Foreign Minister María Isabel Salvador told guests that the office would help Ecuadorean

fulfill its obligations to refugees and others in need of international protection. Ecuador has the largest refugee population in Latin America, coming mostly from Colombia.

"This is in agreement with Ecuador's commitment to all human rights, a commitment that calls us to welcome any person forced to leave their home country in search of safety and a secure life," Salvador said, adding that the government hoped to soon open more refugee offices along the border.

The new refugee office will provide advice and orientation to registered refugees and other people of concern. Its staff will also conduct interviews to assess the applications of asylum seekers as well as issue documentation.

It will be fully operational as of next month, allowing the UN refugee agency to focus its activities on border monitoring and local integration of refugees, with projects that help both refugees and their host communities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WOLF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. LEE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

BRIDGE LOAN FOR THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, it's a particular joy this evening to have Congressman NICK LAMPSON in the Chair as Speaker Pro Tem and thank him for his remarkable and exemplary service to the people of the United States.

Tonight, I would like to address the subject of the fact that a majority of House Members today voted for a bridge loan, a very tightly structured bridge loan, to throw a lifeline to American workers, American communities, American manufacturing, to save American jobs, in fact, one of every 10 jobs in our country. They're jobs not just in the so-called automotive assembly plants, but twice as many jobs in the automotive parts plants, the steel industry, the plastic industry, the semi-conductor industry, even the textile industry. Nearly half of that production is used in automotive products. It is simply staggering the way in which this integrated set of production occurs in our country.

What was passed was a bridge loan to the auto industry, and I underline the word "loan." It has to be paid back. It has to be paid back in 7 years, and it has to be paid back with interest, 5 percent interest over the first 5 years, and 9 percent interest over the last 2 years.

It requires restructuring by March 31, severe restructuring in order to place the United States in a competitive position again in our country and globally. It requires enormous sacrifice.

Now, what's interesting to me is the amount of the total loan was \$15 billion; yet Wall Street received \$700 billion plus, \$750 billion, in that bill that passed here. There were no such requirements. There's no mandatory payback. There are no sacrifices that are as significant as they're being asked of this manufacturing industry, and the manufacturing of automobiles is a really tangible, goods producing industry. It creates real value. It creates wealth because you sell something. Wall Street's bailout is basically accounting and paper trades. They don't really produce anything.

And one of the points I want to make tonight is that in order to lead America forward out of this deep, deepening recession in which we find ourselves, we have to manufacture our way out. We have to grow our way out of it, and we are not in recession because of the automotive industry. In fact, the reverse is true. The auto industry is the victim of the credit crunch caused by the mortgage foreclosure crisis. The bailout of Wall Street, the improper bill that was passed here, is making the situation worse, and it's affecting industries like the automotive industry.

I visited the U.S. Treasury Department today as well to share a list of foreclosures just in my home county of Lucas County in Toledo, Ohio. That is 4,100 homes since the beginning of this year. Before the end of January of next, an additional 600 families will lose their homes just in that county because the TARP program, the Wall Street bailout program, is not working at the local level. The list is so long I could roll it through the Chamber and out that door, and there would still be more paper left, and that's with four columns. In fact, it could probably be rolled over to the Senate for the size that it is.

Now, why is the Treasury program not working? The first reason it's not working is Treasury's not a housing agency. Its experience is not in resolving mortgage workouts. More paper shuffling isn't going to solve the problem.

What's happening over at Treasury is they're buying banks. They are concentrating the banking system of this country rather than doing mortgage workouts, and they're concentrating them up on Wall Street, and the big banks like PNC, which has just bought National City Bank in the State of Ohio, National City shouldn't have been purchased. A workout should have been done in Ohio for the loans that gravitated to Ohio and may have been troubled. Seventy-five percent of the loans were working before the Treasury Department took over. The problem is that the Treasury Department is

like a truck with several wheels, and they're all going in a different direction. There's not coordination.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation should be involved to do the mortgage workouts on the books of local banks. That's really not happening for most of the loans at risk.

The Securities and Exchange Commission should be taking a look at their accounting standards and marking them to true value.

You know, in order to fix the automotive industry, you've got to fix the mortgage industry, and the Wall Street bailout isn't working.

Mr. Speaker, Godspeed to you in your future years.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PAUL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ECONOMIC STIMULUS: BIG, FAST, TOUGH, TEMPORARY, AND SELF-REVERSING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, let me commend you on your years of service to this House, to your district, and to the Nation, and I look forward to working with you and serving the people of this Nation in whatever capacity your future takes you.

I'd like to address the kind of economic stimulus that we should write next month. I hope that the economic stimulus is big, fast, tough, temporary, and self-reversing.

We face the specter, not just of a recession, but of a depression. A deflationary cycle threatens a long period of economic contraction. We need an enormous, immediate economic stimulus. But unless that stimulus is well-designed, it may not pass Congress, and we may not achieve its objectives or it may sow the seeds of future, disastrous declines in the value of the dollar.

Now, it is important that this stimulus be fast and be very large, but it also needs to be tough because Federal

dollars should not be extended to private interests except on the toughest terms. Taxpayers should demand the highest yields, the largest equity upside, and the strictest limits on executive compensation and perks.

Being tough on those who get bailouts will give us three advantages. First, it will increase public support for the bailout, and we are going to need a lot of public support to enact the size of stimulus that is necessary.

Second, by being tough on those obtaining bailouts, we can limit the number of companies that seek bailouts. Not even the Federal Government can afford to provide a bailout to everyone who will ask for it if executives see the Federal Government as a source of easy and cheap money.

Third, by getting a good deal on each investment we make, we minimize the eventual increase in the Federal deficit and the eventual burden to succeeding generations. Many of the companies that we make investments in will still not make it. So we had better make a good profit on our winning investments. We need to look at not only the rate of return that we get on preferred stock but on the value of the warrants because the warrants are our share, as taxpayers, of the upside of those companies that are successful.

It, therefore, concerns me that on a recent bailout of Goldman Sachs by the Treasury Department, we taxpayers got half the rate of return and one-sixth the warrants that Mr. Warren Buffett was able to receive on a very similar investment in the same firm.

So we must be tough. But we also must make sure that the stimulus we adopt is temporary and reversible. Keynesian economics offers a simple prescription for the difficult economic times ahead. Easy money now, and austerity when the economy improves.

But how in good conscience can I vote for a massive economic stimulus now if I believe that Congress will not be able to adopt fiscal restraint later? I know we in Congress love handing out money in the form of tax cuts or infrastructure projects or subsidies or aid. Can we count on a future Congress to discontinue expansionary policies and adopt austerity when times demand?

If we adopt a huge fiscal stimulus economy now, then both our tendencies toward profligacy and toward inertia may cause us to leave the spigot on too long, perhaps permanently.

What is likely to happen I fear is that the advocates of fiscal responsibility will prevent us today from getting the full measure of economic stimulus that we need now, and that advocates of tax cuts and free spending tomorrow will prevent us from turning off the spigot when that is what we should be doing. We will get inadequate stimulus in 2009, and we will continue the stimulus long after it is necessary and even when it is harmful.

To avoid this outcome, the stimulus package should be both temporary and self-reversing. The same statutes which