

the Scout Slogan reads "Do a Good Turn Daily."

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HAGAN). The Senator from Florida is recognized.

NASA

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, the President of the United States has come forth with a budget for the future of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. I can tell you that, among the aerospace community, it has not been well received. The perception is that when the President's proposed budget is to cancel the Constellation Program, which was the program from the previous administration that was to take us to the Moon by 2020—a position, by the way, that then-candidate Senator Obama had embraced—it has not been well received because the perception is that it is killing the manned space program for the United States. That perception is not entirely true, but we live in a world here in the government where we have to set policy and flesh out that policy with authorization and then appropriations for that policy. We live in a world where perception often governs instead of the actual substance.

It is my hope, as we have a hearing in our Science and Space Subcommittee of the Commerce Committee, which I have the privilege of chairing, that we can start to separate the perception from the substance. What the President has proposed actually has some very good things. In the first place, this ridiculous idea from the previous administration that we were going to shut down the International Space Station in 2015, when, in fact, it hasn't even been completed—as a matter of fact, the mission that took off, I guess it was last night, that has the last major component to go up to complete the International Space Station, and then the remaining four flights of the space shuttle will take up additional experiments and equipment, and then the station will be fully ready for business.

The idea from the previous administration that we were only going to have it until 2015, of course, was ridiculous. The Obama administration has come out and said we are going to extend it until 2020. That is a good thing. That is the right thing.

The administration also has said NASA is one of the few civilian agencies it is recommending, to the Congress, get additional funding, and it is no small amount. It is an additional \$6 billion the President is recommending over the next 5 years. That is substantial, given the fact that the NASA budget is a very small budget compared to the rest of the Federal agencies. However, that amount is only half of what was recommended by the Obama-appointed blue ribbon panel, called the Norman Augustine Commission, looking at the future of spaceflight—only

half but it is substantial. I should note that is a step in the right direction.

The Obama administration has also recommended a substantial increase in research and development and particularly with regard to a heavy-lift vehicle that will change NASA's mission from just going to and from low-Earth orbit, where we have done all our work in the last three decades with the space shuttle—to and from low-Earth orbit, either to the space station or certain projects such as the Hubble space telescope, which has been miraculous, and the refurbishing missions that have kept that space telescope alive and has opened our understanding and knowledge of the heavens and is peering back into the beginning of time. That has been extraordinary.

The President has said: Let's get out of low-Earth orbit and explore the heavens. That is all a good thing. But here is where the President, in his roll-out of his recommended budget, made the mistake and has given the perception that he has killed the manned space program. He just said we are going to cancel Constellation. They did not explain: But we have to do an aggressive effort toward building the new heavy-lift vehicle to take us out into the heavens. They put all their eggs in the basket to say we are going to let these commercial companies develop rockets that are going to take us to and from the space station, first with cargo, and then we are going to human rate them for human crews.

But the first commercial rocket, Space X, is supposed to have flown six times by now. They have not flown that Falcon 9 rocket yet. They are saying they are going to fly it this spring. Let's hope they do, and let's hope it is successful.

But what if it isn't? There is another one, a much smaller rocket called Orbital Sciences. They want to take cargo. Ultimately, they would like to take humans. But they have not gotten off the ground with the first test rocket.

For us, where safety ought to be primacy—and one of the key fundamentals for the Constellation Program was to create a rocket and a follow-on heavy-lift rocket that was going to increase, by a factor of 10, the safety for astronauts because the space shuttle has 1,500 parts, any one of which, if it malfunctions, that is it. It is tube city. It is a catastrophic loss.

The idea is to have a rocket that builds in a lot more safety for the humans going to and from the space station and ultimately a heavy-lift rocket that gets us out of low-Earth orbit.

What I think the President needs to do, he has to repair the image because the perception is he has killed the manned space program. He does not want to do that. I know the President. The Presiding Officer knows the President. He is a great space aficionado. But the perception is there, and it has to be corrected.

The first thing he should do is set a goal. Presidents are the only ones who

can lead America's space program. A Senate committee cannot do it. The Administrator of NASA cannot do it. Only Presidents can set the vision and the goal, and that goal ought to be what we all know is where we want to go and that is to the planet Mars.

If you think I am reaching too far, no less than one of the most critical editorial pages of NASA in America this morning endorsed the goal of going to Mars. That is the New York Times editorial page. This is what a bunch of us have been saying for years: The goal is Mars. We have to develop the technology, the vehicles, the safety systems, the life support systems to get there. But the President needs to set the goal and set the vision that this is where we are going.

If the President would do this, and then if he would turn the architecture over to his science adviser and to his Administrator of NASA and that great team, and if they would continue with the testing of the rocket that has already flown successfully, that will be a precursor to building the heavy-lift vehicle—if they will continue that testing, then the President will be well on the way of doing what he wants to do, which is for America to be the leader in space exploration and combined with other countries, where it is appropriate, in international exploration, as we have on the International Space Station.

I urge the White House to start listening to some of their most vigorous supporters in the Congress. I can tell you other Members on both sides of the aisle are not pleased with the way the President's message about the future of human spaceflight has been received. If we can work together, we can get the perception of our space exploration back on track.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Madam President, I wish to say, in conclusion, I am hopeful that as we have seen over the last couple days, as we have been in this blizzard and we have had time to reflect and read and sometimes hear the commentary on the radio and TV, all the shrillness we have seen on display over the last several months is going to subside and, in a bipartisan way, the country can start healing.

For the country to heal, we must change the discourse in the public square. Civility, not savagery, is the only way a democracy can proceed and succeed. Politics cannot be the blood sport that takes people down on a personal basis, where the attitude is that I am all right and you are all wrong because that leaves little room for consensus building, and consensus building is so essential to the functioning of a democracy.

As we get into more of the discussion with regard to health care, health insurance reform, it is my prayer that we have much more conciliation and mediation and moderation in our views so we can build consensus. Consensus building is the finest hour of a democracy in representing all the people.

(Mr. UDALL of Colorado assumed the Chair.)

HAITI EARTHQUAKE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in 2003 I joined my friend, then-Senator Mike DeWine, in visiting Haiti. While no longer in the Senate, Mike remains a tireless advocate for Haiti. Also joining us were Senator BILL NELSON and Representative KENDRICK MEEK.

At the time, the country was trapped in a political and economic slump. Yet, amid the country's grinding poverty and broken political system, the Haitian people maintained an incredible vibrancy and kindness. It is a warmth one notices among the many Haitians living in the United States, including the more than 7,000 who call Chicago their home.

I have never forgotten that experience, and over the years I have worked to support development and economic programs to help the Haitian people. Last year I introduced a bill with Senator BROWNBACK to help reforest Haiti with techniques proven in other nations.

A year ago I had the chance to return to Haiti—this time with Senator JEFF BINGAMAN, Congressman MEEK, and an Illinois State Senator whose parents are from Haiti, Kwame Raoul. While the country still faced terrible poverty, much had improved since my earlier visit. The government and political system had stabilized.

A multination U.N. peacekeeping force had brought an end to most of the gang violence, kidnappings, and lawlessness. Special trade programs with the United States had sparked a rebirth of the garment industry, providing thousands of Haitians with jobs. Groups such as Partners in Health and Hands Together were making progress in building health care capacity and educating children from the poorest slums of Port-au-Prince. The country had even rebounded from a series of devastating hurricanes and tropical storms.

And most recently, former President Bill Clinton had become the U.N. Special Envoy to Haiti, bringing his skill and energy,—along with Secretary Clinton's leadership in the State Department,—to help improve the lives of the Haitian people. While still desperately poor, many had sensed the country was turning a corner.

Then tragedy struck. On January 12, the largest earthquake in this hemisphere in 200 years devastated Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, and several surrounding towns. The Haitian Government estimates that 200,000 people died. Sadly, that number is almost certain to grow. A staggering number of houses and buildings simply collapsed. It is estimated that 1 million people may now be homeless. Hospitals and government buildings were heavily damaged or destroyed. The U.N. headquarters crumbled to the ground, killing hundreds of international staff who

had dedicated their lives to helping the people of Haiti. Only a short 90-minute plane ride from our shores, a small, poor nation has suffered an almost unimaginable catastrophe.

President Obama immediately did the right thing. He mobilized the whole of the U.S. Government to help our neighbors in Haiti. Less than 36 hours after the earthquake struck, President Obama pledged to the Haitian people that America would not forget them or forsake them in their time of need. He pledged \$100 million in emergency aid for Haiti. This aid is in addition to the regular development assistance the United States provides to Haiti, which totaled at least \$287 million last year and was planned to reach at least \$340 million this year.

In addition, over 17,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines—including 17 members of the Illinois Guard—have been dispatched to assist in Haiti recovery and relief efforts. We have all seen their heroic efforts: medical treatment provided in the most challenging of conditions, survivors pulled from the rubble of collapsed buildings.

American leadership is helping to coordinate the largest international relief effort since the cataclysmic Asian tsunami in 2004, with governments throughout the world joining in. In Europe, the 18 member nations of the European Union have pledged a total of \$575 million in emergency aid to Haiti. The E.U. has also sent security forces to help strengthen security in the devastated nation. Planeloads of rescue teams and relief supplies have been dispatched from nations including Britain, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Russia, and Spain. Other countries—in South America, the Middle East, and Asia—have pledged to help. And government help is only the beginning.

In typical American fashion, people and organizations from all over our country have donated money, organized shipments of medicine, food and water, and traveled to Haiti as emergency relief workers to help rescue and treat the earthquake victims.

The Chronicle of Philanthropy conducted a survey. It found that in the first 13 days after the earthquake struck Haiti, individuals and groups donated \$470 million to 39 U.S. nonprofit organizations for Haiti relief. Despite the economic pain and anxiety so many American families are feeling, Americans are once again demonstrating great generosity when it is so desperately needed. The American people have responded generously.

According to the Chronicle of Philanthropy survey, the pace of giving for Haiti is running ahead of the amount donated in the same period after the September 11 attacks in 2001 and the Asian tsunami in 2004, and nearly as fast as the unprecedented outpouring of donations that followed Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Never before have so many Americans donated so much, so fast, to the

people of another nation in need. And they have done so in large and small ways, including a novel approach that has made a significant mark for the first time—using their cell phones to “text” donations—a method that didn't even exist a few years ago.

The American Red Cross has received more than \$33 million through text-messaged gifts of \$10 each. Other organizations have also tapped into the “mobile giving” movement to raise funds for Haiti.

A global telethon last week has raised \$66 million so far, with money still coming in from music downloads and other sources.

Corporations are also stepping up. The Business Civic Leadership Center, a nonprofit group affiliated with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, reports that 265 companies have contributed more than \$122 million for Haiti relief.

Families around the world, including many in Illinois, have found that the Haitian orphans they were in the process of adopting are caught in the earthquake's uncertain aftermath.

My heart goes out to these families and these children. We have been contacted by a number of Illinois families who are asking for help locating or reconnecting with a loved one who was caught in the quake. We have been working to minimize the redtape and put the families directly in contact with the U.S. Government task force and other groups who are on the ground in Haiti working on locating people and getting them to safety.

With loving families waiting anxiously for news, we are doing all we can, in coordination with the Haitian Government, to help these children. We are also working to find and move to safety newly orphaned children.

That is why I was heartened by the announcement by Department of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano that her agency and the Department of State have implemented a humanitarian parole policy that allows Haitian children already identified as orphans before the earthquake to enter the United States temporarily under certain circumstances.

We will continue to address the most immediate needs in Haiti: rescuing survivors; providing shelter, food, water, and medical treatment; and avoiding the spread of disease. And we must commit to working with the Haitian people and international partners to help get Haiti back on its feet over the long term.

The United States should join in the upcoming international donor conference that will shape a long-term plan to help put Haiti back on its feet in a way that is sustainable in the years ahead. We cannot undo the terrible loss Haiti has suffered, but we can show the best of American compassion, generosity, and ingenuity in helping the Haitian people rebuild their nation. I urge my colleagues to support these efforts.

I yield the floor.