

hear from him again, nor should we. He went through our regular court system.

Those who want to close off our regular court system to the prosecution of terrorists ignore the obvious: that has been the most successful way to prosecute and to incarcerate and keep those who are accused of terrorism and to keep America safe. Let's not have an automatic, visceral reaction that every time terrorists are somehow arrested, they need to be tried in a military commission. Let's give this administration the option. Let them decide which forum works best to bring justice and to protect America. In some cases, it may be military commissions. We recently had Attorney General Holder testify that he sent five suspected terrorists to be tried through military commissions and five through the courts of our land. Give the Department of Justice and the Department of Defense that latitude to pick the best place to achieve this type of prosecution.

I understand that in this case, the so-called Christmas bomber, there was a fumbling in terms of which direction the case should go. There is no excuse for that. We have to learn from that mistake, and we have to make certain it does not happen again. But to say that automatically every suspected terrorist has to go to a military commission is to send them into a venue, a court venue, with rules that are currently being developed and tested and are likely to be challenged by courts all over the land. To send them into our regular court system is to bring them into a system with an established set of laws, established precedent, where we have successfully prosecuted over 190 alleged terrorists since 9/11, while in military commissions only 3—190 to 3. The score is overwhelming. I think we ought to take some consolation in the fact that our court systems have worked so well.

Let me make one other point. The administration has asked, in my State of Illinois, if our Governor and general assembly will accept the creation of a new Federal prison in Thomson, IL, which will be used for both Bureau of Prisons regular detainees and those who are incarcerated, as well as a section where fewer than 100 of the remaining Guantanamo detainees will be held under military supervision. Our State has considered it. We recently, in December, had a commission decide that this surplus prison, which is 8 years old—a state-of-the-art, modern, super-max prison—will be sold to the Federal Government. We are now negotiating between the State of Illinois and the Federal Government about the price of that facility. I hope that negotiation is resolved soon. I look forward to its completion.

The critics of opening the Thomson Federal prison in Illinois argue that it is unsafe for us to detain any of the Guantanamo prisoners in the continental United States. Those critics overlook the obvious. As I mentioned

earlier, 350 convicted terrorists are being held in Federal prisons across America today, including other prisons in Illinois. Second, this Christmas bomber, who was caught on the Northwest Airlines plane, is being held in Milan, MI, a Federal prison 60 miles west of Detroit, without incident or concern. It is an indication to me that our Federal prison system is fully capable of incarcerating suspected terrorists and those who have been convicted. Those who would spread fear that somehow bringing them to the continental United States is going to compromise our security have yet to point to one single instance where a prisoner detained in a super-max facility has ever escaped.

This Thomson prison, incidentally, is going to build a new perimeter fence which will make it the safest, most secure prison, not only in the United States but perhaps in the world.

The people in this community, with the prospect of 3,000 new jobs in this weak economy, are anxious for this prison to get up and running.

They have come out politically, both political parties, those who have been elected to office at every level, supporting this Thomson prison. I think what has happened to this alleged terrorist from the Northwest Airlines flight in Milan, MI, is proof positive that we can continue to hold these terrorists. We do not have to stand in awe or fear. We should stand without quaking and trembling and understand that we can look these terrorists in the eye and say: We can put you in this prison, and you are going nowhere, buddy. That is what has happened to this person and will happen to those who are detained in Thomson, IL.

I see my colleague from Louisiana is here. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Louisiana.

HAITIAN ADOPTIONS

Ms. LANDRIEU. I thank my colleague from Illinois for his passionate and coherent and convincing arguments about the issue of how to detain terrorists and knowing that we can do that very well in the United States, and also his explanations about the financial situation and some of the things the President is doing to correct that situation.

But I came to the floor this morning in morning business to talk about a different subject, and one that is quite troubling to Americans as we watch the unfolding horror in Haiti. As we stand ready and willing to do everything we can, not only as leaders in the Senate and Congress, our constituents are leaning forward wanting in every corner of this country to do everything they can to help.

It is very frustrating to see, again, some of the similar, almost eerily similar scenes from having lived through Katrina and Rita, Gustav, and Ike along the gulf coast. Whether those

scenes were from New Orleans, as we remember, or Plaquemines Parish or St. Bernard or Galveston or Gulfport or Biloxi, those scenes are still quite fresh in the minds of Americans.

I think people are thinking the same way I am, which is, when will we ever get this right? We know sometimes things happen that are unpredictable, but this is not one of those cases either. Just like some parts of the Katrina disaster were quite known and predictable, this too, and that is a story for another day.

But as we struggle through this situation, I want to thank the administration, not only ours but administrations around the world, for what they are trying to do, and say I know we can do better and everybody watching this knows we can do better and one day we will. We are going to do what we can as quickly as we can. I am going to stay focused, with many of my colleagues here, on one aspect of this response and recovery; that is, the aspect of children and particularly orphan children.

I have been very proud to be the leader of the coalition in this Congress of over 220 Members. We are completely united and completely nonpartisan in our advocacy for orphans in America and around the world. This is a moment where I would like to spend, although my time is short, saying this is a good time for us as a country and as Members of Congress to try to understand the magnitude of the challenge before us.

Let me begin, before I go into the situation, to personally and by name thank the Members of the Senate who have stepped up to date quickly and forcefully to join this effort. Your name, Madam President, is at the top of the list, the junior Senator from New York. We thank you for your extraordinary leadership. I also thank the Senator from Colorado, MARK UDALL; the Senator from Massachusetts, JOHN KERRY; the Senator from Michigan, CARL LEVIN; CHRIS BOND from Missouri; ARLEN SPECTER from Pennsylvania; BOB CASEY from Pennsylvania; HERB KOHL from Wisconsin; MARK WARNER from Virginia; Senator BARRASSO; Senator JOHNSON; Senator BENNETT; Senator STABENOW; Senator BILL NELSON from Florida; Senator LAUTENBERG; Senator THUNE; Senator MCCAIN; Senator MENENDEZ; and Senator HUTCHISON; and my cochair in all of this, obviously, Senator INHOFE.

We are a bipartisan group. Our numbers are growing every day, numbers of Senators who say we want to focus on the welfare of children and particularly orphans and come up with a better plan to respond to this humanitarian disaster as it relates to them. We are committed to the fundamental—almost a concept that I do not know how anyone could argue, but people do, that all of us understand that children actually belong in families. I know this is a difficult concept for some people in our country and the international community to grasp. But children do not do

well alone. Children do not do well in orphanages, no matter how well they are run. Children do not want to grow up in group homes of which we have thousands of children in our own country in group homes.

Actually, children want to grow up in families. This may be a startling concept for some but not for us. That is why we advocate for child welfare policies that at its beginning, middle, and end advocate the basic fundamental truth that children are best raised in a family with one responsible parent if not two. We do not think there should be any argument about that. So we are puzzled as to why we have so many difficulties sometimes explaining that in situations like Haiti or in America or in places in Africa or Central America around the world. There are so many barriers to adoption. It breaks our hearts. It just breaks our heart. One barrier after another.

We think this is quite simple. We think these barriers have to come down, and we are determined to pull this out.

I want to give some numbers to you that will be startling to you because they are to me.

In America we have 320 million people approximately. We have 100,000 orphans. There are a lot of orphans in our own country. They are invisible to people. We try to bring their pictures to the Senate floor sometimes and tell people there are 100,000 magnificent children of all races, shapes, and sizes who are in need of a family right here at home. We do our best to promote domestic adoptions and have been doing a much better job.

Americans adopt about 120,000 children a year, mostly from our foster care system, some infant adoptions in America, and, happily, 20,000 international adoptions. But when you hear this number, you would fall down if you were not sitting down. Haiti has 9 million people. Remember, we have 320 million, they have 9 million. They had 380,000 orphans before the earthquake struck.

I am going to repeat that. They have 9 million people. They had 380,000 orphans before the earthquake struck. We cannot begin to estimate how many orphans there are today, but I promise you that number has at least doubled.

Now, I am not going to be part of a system that says, with those numbers and that truth, our job is to find those children, dust them off, fix their broken limbs, heal them physically, try to help them emotionally, and then stick them in orphanages for the rest of their lives. I am not going to support that. I am hoping the Members on this side will not support that either.

That is what we have had for the last 50 and 100 years in terms of policy all around the world, even in Haiti. We cannot have that anymore. The international treaty that we have all been a part of trying to help says this: It says every child should stay in the family to which they were born with the parents

who brought them into the world. When they are separated from those parents, through death or disease or famine or war, they are then to be placed, as quickly as possible, with a relative who is willing and able to raise them.

If I passed away, the Presiding Officer knows my sisters or one of my brothers would step in. If my husband and I died, my sisters and brothers would step in to raise our children. That is normally what is done all over the world. It is no surprise. But when there is no family member to take in a child, then the treaty says you shall find a home for that child somewhere in their country, in their community, which makes sense. Culturally, that makes sense.

While I am a big believer in cross-cultural adoption and biracial adoption—I am a huge supporter of that—but I understand we want to try to place children as close to their initial beginnings as possible. When that becomes impossible, it is our job to find them a home somewhere else in the human family because, after all, we are one human family. If anybody would like to come to the Senate floor to disagree with me, I look forward to debating that with them. I do not think I will find any arguments here among Senators, from the very conservative to the most liberal. It is just a basic moral tenet that we are one human family. So it makes me so angry when I see governments, sometimes even our own, sometimes even our own bureaucracy, sometimes even our own embassy fighting that concept. They throw up their hands and say: We just cannot. It is overwhelming. We cannot find a way to do it. Every excuse in the world to keep these children from the one thing they need most, which is a parent, someone to love them.

If anyone thinks that just feeding children and clothing children is what God is calling us to do, I would beg to differ. Yes, we have to keep them alive. Yes, we have to give them care. But what most importantly little human beings need are bigger human beings to raise them. If they do not get that, they end up not growing up in a strong way. They end up in our prison systems. They end up in homes. They end up sick. Not that every child that is in a family in America, even with the most loving parents ends up always wonderfully, but they most certainly have a better opportunity.

So I am just putting a line in the sand here and saying to my colleagues that I am proud of the 40 Members of Congress, House and Senate Members, who sent a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who all of her life has been a leader on this subject. We are so grateful she is there as Secretary of State. We sent this letter to Secretary Napolitano. I am going to put this letter in the RECORD.

I am pleased the letter we just sent 3 days ago has already been responded to. The Departments have issued hu-

manitarian parole for the orphans who were in the process of being adopted, and there were a couple hundred. Parents here have been desperate. They have already been matched with their children. They have pictures of their children. They were in the process of adopting those children. You can imagine how desperate they are. That process is underway.

We are going to continue to press to make sure that not just the green light was held up, but that our government at every level, from Defense to Homeland Security to Transportation, is doing everything they can to execute the swift and safe removal of these children in Haiti to American families who will nurture them and support them.

Then the next step—I see my colleague from Utah here—I am going to end in just a moment. The next step will be to work with a broad coalition of faith-based communities in our country and around the world, with private sector corporations, large and small, with individual Americans who want to contribute and be a part of this effort.

I intend to lead and set up a framework so that thousands and thousands, hundreds of thousands of orphans in Haiti can find the family to which they were born. We are going to try very hard. If not, a relative in Haiti, if not someplace in Haiti for them to live in the joy and comfort of a supporting and loving family, and then if not here, then somewhere in the world where these hundreds of thousands of orphans—and I hope not to say this, but potentially 1 million; but let's hope that number does not ever reach this—find families.

This is not going to happen in the next 24 hours or 48 hours. But with our concerted help and vision and leadership, it can happen not just in Haiti but around the world, including right here in the United States of America.

So I want to thank my colleague, JIM INHOFE, who is the cochair of the Adoption Caucus. I want to thank the Members of the Senate and the House, particularly JIM COOPER, MICHELE BACHMANN, and others who have stepped up so quickly.

We will be speaking on this floor quite a few times in the future as we get updates about this issue. I thank Americans for the outpouring of support for children in Haiti, for all people of Haiti, but particularly the children and particularly the orphans who need our help.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, morning business is closed.

INCREASING THE STATUTORY LIMIT ON THE PUBLIC DEBT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the