

CFPB DEVELOPED AND IS IMPLEMENTING APPROPRIATE PLANS

We found that CFPB developed and is implementing appropriate plans that support ongoing operations as well as the transfer of employees and functions that will occur on July 21, 2011. CFPB planned for mission-critical standup activities and certain Dodd-Frank Act requirements. In July 2010, Treasury officials created a document that, according to a CFPB official, served as a roadmap for implementation. Overall, CFPB's approach was to create detailed planning documents at the division level to provide input for the agency-wide strategic plan. Most CFPB divisions maintained a draft strategic plan, organizational chart, and "dashboards" that tracked implementation progress and potential risks. The division-level strategic plans generally included division-level missions, goals, deliverables, and coordination activities. We also noted that these plans included multiple phases that span beyond the designated transfer date.

CFPB also created several agency-wide documents that identified and tracked priorities and milestones for implementation. For example, one priority for CFPB was the transfer of employees from other agencies. To implement this priority, CFPB maintained a detailed recruitment schedule, developed coordination agreements with other agencies, and allocated resources from the various divisions to timely complete the employee transfer process.

In reviewing the agency's planning documents and discussing the standup status with CFPB officials, we found that the agency has completed elements of its implementation plans and is making progress on others, including its overall strategic plan. Nevertheless, CFPB's operational success will depend, in part, on its ability to effectively execute its plans.

LIBERIA CELEBRATES ITS 164TH INDEPENDENCE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PAULSEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Liberian people on 164 years of independence.

Liberia, which translates to "land of the free," shares a unique history with the United States. Founded by African Americans and emancipated slaves in the early 1820s, this small nation of close to 3.8 million people is striving to build a lasting democracy—an incredible feat in such a war-torn region.

Mr. Speaker, more than 25,000 Liberian Americans call Minnesota home, and I am proud to call them my neighbors, friends and colleagues. Liberian Americans in our communities are entrepreneurs, small business people, teachers, lawyers, and nurses. They contribute to the very fabric of our Nation and to who we are as a people.

So let us today recognize the Liberian people and the long road they have traveled as a nation, and let us always remember the bond between the United States and the Republic of Liberia.

FAMINE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, today we are witnessing a tragic humanitarian crisis in Somalia and the Horn of Africa, which is currently experiencing its worst drought in over 60 years. According to USAID, crops have failed; livestock has died, and prices in the local markets are too high for most people to buy what they need to feed their families.

On July 20, 2011, the United Nations announced that famine exists in two regions of Somalia. This crisis is affecting over 11 million people throughout the region, and USAID estimates that over 3.2 million people are in life-threatening situations and are in dire need of food, water and medical attention. Additionally, over 80 percent of those fleeing Somalia are believed to be women and children.

At Kenyan and Ethiopian refugee camps, Somali children under the age of 5 are dying at an alarming rate. I visited a camp in Kenya 2 years ago, the Dadaab camp, where many of the refugees from Somalia are going. There are five times as many people in that camp as the camp can handle. It was overcrowded 2 years ago, and with the drought, it is just becoming almost impossible to sustain life.

An alarming 60 percent of the people at risk are still in al-Shabaab-held territory. Al-Shabaab is supported by al Qaeda. They initially said there was no drought—a denial. Yet, in the part of the country of which they are in charge, the drought is very serious, especially in southern Sudan. Then they did agree that the drought was occurring and said they would allow humanitarian organizations to go to that area to distribute food and medicine. However, just last week, they changed their position again.

As we saw in the nineties with Aidid and Ali Mahdi in the original drought during which the United States became involved in Somalia, we cannot have the political warlords and that situation happen again. The World Food Programme and the United Nations are desperately trying to get the food, water and medical assistance into that area, and we are going to continue to ask the al-Shabaab people to allow the food to come in.

During a similar drought in Ethiopia during the early eighties, the international community was slow to respond, resulting in more than 1 million deaths. Then world leaders said, Never again. Now we are facing a worsening humanitarian disaster that threatens to take even more lives. We must act and support those in need.

I have to commend USAID and the work that they're doing. Yesterday, at a hearing we had on this situation, Ms. Cromer, from the USAID, talked about the fact that they had an early warning system and that they had pre-positioned food, which shows that planning has resulted in less loss of life than there would have been had it not been pre-positioned, but we still have a serious problem.

□ 1030

Last week I introduced H. Res. 361, calling attention to this crisis, and we have already over 50 cosponsors.

Indeed, Congress is taking notice. My colleagues, JIM McGOVERN, JO ANN EMERSON, members of the Hunger Caucus, along with myself and BARBARA LEE and MAXINE WATERS and GWEN MOORE and others have been very vocal on this issue. Ms. McCOLLUM also has added her voice, from Minnesota.

The crisis is worsening, though. The Famine Early Warning Systems Network believes that within the next 1 or 2 months, the famine will spread throughout all of southern Somalia. As the situation has grown more dire, over 600,000 Somalis have fled to neighboring countries, some walking hundreds of miles to refugee camps. The roads to these camps in northern Kenya and eastern Ethiopia have been described by The Washington Post just yesterday and others as "roads of death." Thousands of women, children, and elderly are left on the side of the road weak from malnutrition, unable to continue. They are resting on those who have already died.

So I ask all of you to respond to this very serious situation.

BALANCED BUDGET CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, March 2, 1995, was a pivotal day in the history of our country. On that day, the United States Senate failed by one vote to send a balanced budget amendment to the States for ratification. The amendment had passed the House by the required two-thirds majority previously, and the Senate vote was the last legislative hurdle before ratification by the States.

If that amendment had passed, then we would not be dealing with the fiscal crisis we now face. If that amendment had passed, then balancing the budget would have been the norm rather than the exception over the past decade and we would have nothing like the annual deficits and skyrocketing debt that we must address today.

The good news is that, like 1995, this Congress is again standing at a crossroads at this very moment. The decisions we make this week could steer the direction of the country for many years to come. We have an opportunity now to take action to ensure that our children will face a much brighter fiscal picture. We must not allow ourselves to miss this opportunity.

And while, yes, we definitely need to deal with the debt limit squarely in front of us and take the opportunity to make significant cuts in government spending, we also must have a long-term solution to this problem. And that long-term solution is a balanced

budget amendment to the United States Constitution. We will, I hope, have the opportunity to vote on such an amendment this week.

Experience has proven time and again that Congress cannot, for any significant length of time, rein in excessive spending. The annual deficits and the resulting debt continue to grow due to political pressures and dependency on government programs. In order for Congress to be able to consistently make the very tough decisions necessary to sustain fiscal responsibility over the long term, Congress must have an external pressure to force it to do so. The most realistic chance we have today to enact this type of institutional reform is through a balanced budget amendment to our Constitution.

Many Members of Congress have introduced balanced budget amendments in this Congress. I introduced two versions on the first day of the 112th Congress. H.J. Res. 2 is the exact text that passed the House in 1995 and failed in the Senate by one vote. This amendment requires that total annual outlays not exceed total annual receipts. It also requires a three-fifths majority to raise the debt limit, and, in addition, this legislation has limited exceptions for times of war.

H.J. Res. 1, which I also introduced, goes much further. In addition to the provisions of H.J. Res. 2, it requires a two-thirds majority to raise taxes and imposes an annual spending cap that prohibits spending from exceeding 18 percent of GDP.

In the United States Senate, 47 Republican Senators have cosponsored a balanced budget amendment, which is a strong sign that the Senate is ready to engage in debate on this subject.

Our extraordinary fiscal crisis demands an extraordinary solution. So we simply cannot afford to succumb to political posturing on this issue at a point in time so critical to our Nation's future. We must rise above that and move forward with a strategy that includes legislation that will get at least 290 bipartisan votes on the House floor.

So as we consider a balanced budget amendment, I encourage the Members of this body on both sides of the aisle to devote our effort to passing this strongest balanced budget amendment that can garner two-thirds of the House of Representatives.

We are at a crossroads in America. We can make the tough choices and control spending paving the way for a return to surpluses and ultimately paying down the national debt, or we can allow big spenders to lead us further down the road of chronic deficits and leave our children and grandchildren saddled with debt that is not our own.

The choice is ours. The stakes are high. Failure is not an option.

FAMINE IN AFRICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I had breakfast this morning. I had granola and yogurt, a little fruit, an egg and bacon sandwich, and I'm feeling irritable because I didn't have my coffee. I'm looking forward to a delicious lunch that I've planned at about noon-time.

But in the meantime, on the Horn of Africa, 11 million people are facing starvation. And not because they're lazy people or unworthy people, but because they're suffering from the biggest drought that they have seen in 60 years, because they're experiencing flooding, because there are people who have stepped away from the loving care that we usually extend to others of our brothers and sisters, others who are human beings on this planet. Tens of thousands of people will die.

There is an official famine that has been called by the United Nations. And for those of you who know what a famine is, it's not when you don't have a particular thing like me—I didn't have my coffee this morning. Famine exists when at least 20 percent of the population has extremely limited access to basic food requirements, global acute malnutrition exceeds 30 percent, and the death rate exceeds 2 out of 10,000 per day for the entire population.

An example that was in the news recently is of a 7-month-old Somali boy who weighed the same amount as any one of our newborns—weighed 7 pounds. A 7-month-old boy weighed 7 pounds. That is an example of what happens in a drought.

And what are we doing here in the United States of America, the world's largest humanitarian donor, when the United Nations has called for, on July 20, has asked for more than \$1.6 billion to support the humanitarian response in the next 12 months urgently, desperately needed to address and abet this burgeoning humanitarian crisis that is unfolding? We are in the midst of cutting funding of our foreign aid and peace food budget.

The fiscal year 2012 Agricultural appropriations budget bill that passed a few weeks ago, over my opposition, cut this program by \$200 million. It was heartbreaking to see amendment after amendment after amendment come forward to cut it further, and even amendments to eliminate it completely.

□ 1040

The United States, as the world's largest humanitarian donor, we need to do more. We talk about balanced budgets here; and there are people in this world, our brothers and sisters, who don't even have a balanced meal on a day-to-day basis.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that we not become numb to the conditions of peoples around the world. Less than 1 percent of our budget goes toward foreign aid, and that includes operations of the

State Department and everything, Mr. Speaker. I'm asking that in these discussions of debt and deficits that we do not turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to those people who are starving.

In closing, I just want to mention, Mr. Speaker, that of course we know who suffers disproportionately among the poor, the usual suspects. Women and children are disproportionately represented among those who are food insecure, those who are starving, and those who die.

I thank my colleague for yielding and for his continued leadership to make sure that we do not forget or overlook this tragedy that is currently occurring in the Horn of Africa. I know that as chairman, and now, ranking member of the Africa Subcommittee, he has been a true leader in working to empower the people and nations of Africa.

The United Nations has declared a famine in parts of Somalia and an emergency humanitarian crisis throughout the Horn of Africa—including Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somalia.

In Somalia alone, tens of thousands of people have died in the past three months because they cannot get enough food to keep themselves alive.

Tens of thousands will surely die in the coming months if the international community, led by the U.S., does not respond quickly and comprehensively. Famine exists when at least 20 percent of the population has extremely limited access to basic food requirements, global acute malnutrition exceeds 30 percent, and the death rate exceeds 2 out of 10,000 per day for the entire population.

The lives of over 11 million people in East Africa are at risk. That is twice the population of my state of Wisconsin. And as usual, those most vulnerable women and children are suffering disproportionately. One in every three children in southern Somalia is malnourished (some 550,000 total). UNICEF estimates that 2.3 million children are suffering from acute malnutrition in the region.

These numbers don't include those who are dying on literal "roads of death" as they attempt to flee famine in Somalia to neighboring countries (Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea) that are struggling with drought themselves.

There was a news report recently about a 7-month old Somali boy who weighed the same as a newborn, some 7 pounds. At this stage in his life, he should weight three times as much. A nurse at the refugee camp his family made it to recently puts the little boy's odds of survival at 50-50, a flip of a coin.

The U.N. has asked for some \$1.6 billion to support the humanitarian response in the next 12 months.

Yet, as the humanitarian crisis unfolds, this Congress is in the midst of cutting funding our foreign food aid budget. The FY 2012 Agricultural Appropriations bill that passed a few weeks ago over my opposition, would cut Food for Peace programs by some \$200 million. During that debate, some of my colleagues offered amendments to even make deeper cuts and even eliminate funding for that program all together. It's as if we are telling the men, women, and children desperately searching for food, to "keep warm and well fed."

I hope that my colleagues on the House Foreign Operations Committee will not make that same mistake and will in fact boost funding for our global humanitarian aid programs which will be needed as this crisis unfolds.