

not equipped for is witnessing a genocide but being unable to protect the civilians pleading for help.

If President Bush wants to figure out whether the U.S. should stand more firmly against the genocide in Darfur, I suggest that he invite Mr. Steidle to the White House to give a briefing. Mr. Steidle, a 28-year-old former Marine captain, was one of just three American military advisers for the African Union monitoring team in Darfur—and he is bursting with frustration.

"Every single day you go out to see another burned village, and more dead bodies," he said. "And the children—you see 6-month-old babies that have been shot, and 3-year-old kids with their faces smashed in with rifle butts. And you just have to stand there and write your reports."

While journalists and aid workers are sharply limited in their movements in Darfur, Mr. Steidle and the monitors traveled around by truck and helicopter to investigate massacres by the Sudanese government and the janjaweed militia it sponsors. They have sometimes been shot at, and once his group was held hostage, but they have persisted and become witnesses to systematic crimes against humanity.

So is it really genocide?

"I have no doubt about that," Mr. Steidle said. "It's a systematic cleansing of peoples by the Arab chiefs there. And when you talk to them, that's what they tell you. They're very blunt about it. One day we met a janjaweed leader and he said, 'Unless you get back four camels that were stolen in 2003, then we're going to go to these four villages and burn the villages, rape the women, kill everyone.' And they did."

The African Union doesn't have the troops, firepower or mandate to actually stop the slaughter, just to monitor it. Mr. Steidle said his single most frustrating moment came in December when the Sudanese government and the janjaweed attacked the village of Labado, which had 25,000 inhabitants. Mr. Steidle and his unit flew to the area in helicopters, but a Sudanese general refused to let them enter the village—and also refused to stop the attack.

"It was extremely frustrating—seeing the village burn, hearing gunshots, not being able to do anything," Mr. Steidle said. "The entire village is now gone. It's a big black spot on the earth."

When Sudan's government is preparing to send bombers or helicopter gunships to attack an African village, it shuts down the cellphone system so no one can send out warnings. Thus the international monitors know when a massacre is about to unfold. But there's usually nothing they can do.

The West, led by the Bush administration, is providing food and medical care that is keeping hundreds of thousands of people alive. But we're managing the genocide, not halting it.

"The world is failing Darfur," said Jan Egeland, the U.N. under secretary general for humanitarian affairs. "We're only playing the humanitarian card, and we're just witnessing the massacres."

President Bush is pushing for sanctions, but European countries like France are disgracefully cool to the idea—and China is downright hostile, playing the same supportive role for the Darfur genocide that it did for the Khmer Rouge genocide.

Mr. Steidle has just quit his job with the African Union, but he plans to continue working in Darfur to do his part to stand up to the killers. Most of us don't have to go to that extreme of risking our lives in Darfur—we just need to get off the fence and push our government off, too.

At one level, I blame President Bush—and, even more, the leaders of European, Arab

and African nations—for their passivity. But if our leaders are acquiescing in genocide, that's because we citizens are passive, too. If American voters cared about Darfur's genocide as much as about, say, the Michael Jackson trial, then our political system would respond. One useful step would be the passage of the Darfur Accountability Act, to be introduced today by Senators Jon Corzine and Sam Brownback. The legislation calls for such desperately needed actions as expanding the African Union force and establishing a military no-fly zone to stop Sudan from bombing civilians.

As Martin Luther King Jr. put it: "Man's inhumanity to man is not only perpetrated by the vitriolic actions of those who are bad. It is also perpetrated by the vitiating inaction of those who are good."

HAITI

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2005

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for increased awareness and aid to the impoverished citizens of Haiti.

Haiti gained its independence in 1804 from France, becoming the first independent Black nation. Today, Haiti has over 8.3 million people, with 80% living in abject poverty. Haiti is one of the most impoverished nations in the Western Hemisphere. Less than 45 percent of all Haitians have access to potable water.

The life expectancy rate in Haiti is only 53 years. The unemployment rate is estimated to be around 60 percent; and the literacy rate is approximately 45 percent. Eighty out of 1,000 Haitian children never see their first birthday. Half the population of Haiti earns \$60 or less per year. The total expenditure on health per person is \$54 (compared to \$4,499 in the USA and \$483 in Mexico).

Health conditions in Haiti are very poor. Such examples include:

Haiti is one of the most impoverished nations in the Western Hemisphere and the fourth poorest country in the world.

Ninety percent of all HIV and AIDS infections in the Caribbean are in Haiti: over 300,000 infected people have been identified and deaths from HIV/AIDS have left 163,000 children orphaned.

Haiti's infant mortality rate is staggering: 74 deaths per 1,000 live births and the maternal mortality rate is approximately 1400 deaths for every 100,000.

Only 1 in every 10,000 Haitians has access to a physician, and less than 40 percent of Haitians have access to potable water.

Cases of TB in Haiti are more than ten times as high as those in other Latin American countries.

Tuberculosis remains a major cause of adult mortality; rates are thought to be the highest in the hemisphere. Cases of TB in Haiti are more than ten times as high as those in other Latin American countries.

The United States spends billions of dollars every year supporting various military and foreign operations across the globe and yet, basic human needs such as food, clothing, shelter, and education often have a lower priority in our expenditures. These basic human needs are a right of every citizen on our plan-

et. We should want for our sister and brother, what we would want for ourselves, and put this belief into action.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to reiterate my support for increased awareness and aid to the impoverished citizens of Haiti. I stand with Representative BARBARA LEE and the Congressional Black Caucus to draw attention to the plight of the Haitian people.

ON THE COUP D'ETAT IN HAITI

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2005

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, 1 year ago this week, our government was a party to a coup d'etat in Haiti, the Western Hemisphere's poorest country. President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the democratically-elected President of Haiti, was forced to leave Haiti in a regime change supported by the United States. President Aristide left the country on February 29, 2004, on board a U.S. airplane when U.S. Marines and Embassy officials came to his home in the wee hours of the morning and told him to leave immediately or he and thousands of other Haitians would be killed.

One year later, the tragic results of regime change in Haiti are clear. Haiti is in total chaos. The interim government, which was put in power by the United States and has received unprecedented support from our government, is a complete failure. Violence is widespread, and security is non-existent. Schools are shut down; hospitals are not operating; and roads and infrastructure are in disrepair. Dead bodies are found lying in the streets.

Heavily-armed gangs roam Haiti freely. Many of these gangs consist of former soldiers from the brutal Haitian army, which was disbanded 10 years ago. Residents of poor neighborhoods and members of Lavalas, President Aristide's political party, are murdered without any legal consequences. Members of Haiti's wealthy elite, including American citizen Andy Apaid, are widely suspected of financing the former soldiers and paying gangs to kill Lavalas supporters. In some neighborhoods, Lavalas supporters have taken up arms and begun to fight back against this oppression. So the violence is escalating in Haiti, and no one is safe.

The interim government has been unable to enforce the rule of law, disarm the gangs, or restore the government's authority in the cities controlled by former soldiers. When Interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue set a deadline of September 15 of last year for all groups holding illegal weapons to disarm, the deadline came and went, but nothing happened.

After the interim government failed to disarm the former soldiers, it resorted to bribing them. According to press reports in January, the interim government agreed to provide payments over a 3-month-period to all of the estimated 6,000 former members of the Haitian army. The payments will average about \$4,800 per person—in a country where most people live on less than a dollar a day. The cost of these payments was estimated to be \$29 million. The interim government never explained where the funds for these payments would be obtained, but Interim Prime Minister Latortue

has already distributed checks to dozens of armed individuals who claim to be former soldiers and who still refuse to turn in their weapons. Is this the conduct of a government that wants to disarm the thugs, or a government that supports them?

Human rights violations are commonplace throughout Haiti. Amnesty International has expressed serious concerns about arbitrary arrests, ill-treatment in detention centers, and summary executions attributed to members of the Haitian National Police. Several members of President Aristide's government and prominent supporters of Lavalas have been detained illegally, including former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune, former Interior Minister Jocelerme Privert, and Haitian singer Anne Auguste. As of February 18, there were over 700 political prisoners in Haiti's jails. Most of these prisoners have been held illegally for months without formal charges.

The incompetence of the interim government has manifested itself in other ways as well. Haiti's government was the only government in the path of Hurricane Jeanne that did not warn or evacuate its citizens when the storm came racing through the Caribbean last September. Jeanne pummeled the United States, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Barbados as a full-blown hurricane, and killed 34 people in all of those countries combined. She was only a tropical storm when she hit Haiti, but she killed over 3,000 Haitians and left thousands more hungry and homeless, because the interim government was unprepared to protect the Haitian people.

The Provisional Electoral Council, which is responsible for organizing elections, has been discredited by corruption. Roselor Julien, the former president of the Council, resigned last November, warning that other panel members were trying to rig the ballot and the council was not capable of ensuring the elections would be free and fair. The council also does not include any representatives of Lavalas, which continues to enjoy widespread support among the Haitian people despite the imprisonment of its leaders. It is abundantly clear that the council is incapable of organizing free and fair elections. If the current council does manage to organize elections, only the winners will accept the result.

The people of Haiti have suffered tremendously over the past year. They deserve better. They deserve to live in peace and security. They deserve to be warned when hurricanes are headed for their homes. They deserve to know that they can walk to work or buy groceries without having gangs kill them for the food they carry. And they deserve free, fair and democratic elections in which all political parties can participate.

When President Aristide was forced to leave Haiti a year ago, he was told that if he refused to leave, thousands of Haitians would die. Yet, in the 12 months that followed his departure, thousands of Haitians have died, and as long as the interim government continues to fail, there will be no end to the suffering and violence facing the Haitian people.

It is time for the United States Government to accept the fact that regime change has failed in Haiti. The United States must ensure that Haiti disarms the thugs, immediately frees political prisoners, and organizes free and fair elections in order to restore security and democracy to the Haitian people. The United States must also provide the necessary assistance to enable Haiti to reopen schools and hospitals and rebuild Haiti's infrastructure. It is time for the United States to clean up its mess.

SOCIAL SECURITY IS IMPORTANT
FOR WOMEN

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 02, 2005

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, today's debate is an extremely important conversation on the future of Social Security. The simple facts of the matter are that Social Security is not in a state of crisis, it will not go bankrupt and it will always be there for those who contribute to it. Unfortunately, the plans promoted by this Administration and my Republican colleagues do nothing to address the core issues related to the Trust Fund's solvency. Instead, the issue has been draped in rhetoric in pursuit of an ideological agenda that will not save Social Security but in fact will put it at greater risk. Americans across the country, from Kansas to California and from New Hampshire to New Mexico, whether black or white, man or woman, will have their benefits cut and the financial safety net removed from their retirement. While Republican proposals will hurt everyone, women are particularly at risk. As Republicans regale us with misleading statements and flowery predictions, the cold hard facts of reality reveals a somber picture.

More than 24 million women receive Social Security benefits. They make up 58 percent of seniors who receive Social Security and without it, 53 percent of all senior women would be poor. In 2000, Social Security saved seven million women from poverty. More than seven million women receive disability or survivor benefits. These numbers deserve our undivided attention. The current proposal would

cut these benefits by more than 40 percent over the coming decades. If the President's plan were put in to effect, trillions of dollars would be taken out of Social Security, endangering the benefits of current retirees and people with disabilities. These are Americans who have contributed to the Trust Fund their entire working lives and now their guaranteed benefits are endangered. For years we have looked out for our fellow Americans, to lift them up and prove to them that no man, woman or child, regardless of race, religion, or socioeconomic status, will be left behind. Never in my 24 years in Congress have I seen such disregard for our countrymen and women. In a time when we are asking so many to sacrifice so much, this Administration appears ready to dismantle an incredibly successful and equitable program. At the same time, the President's tax policy will cost 3 to 5 times as much as the shortfall predicted by the Social Security Administration (SSA). The Medicare Program is already running a shortfall that is almost 8 times as much as Social Security.

This effort will do nothing to address the real problems facing the Social Security Trust Fund. Social Security plays a unique role in the lives of women. We know women live longer than men and make less in the workplace. Rather than ensure that the Social Security Trust Fund can provide for these women and their families, the Administration wants to cut benefits and create a risky privatization plan that does not guarantee a livable rate of return.

Social Security is truly one of our greatest success stories, virtually eliminating poverty for the aged. While we all agree that important concerns about Social Security should be effectively addressed, I do not believe turning this matter into a crisis should force us to accept what would otherwise be unacceptable. I am concerned that the scenarios suggested by the Administration do not serve us well as we conduct this domestic policy debate. Manufacturing a crisis with an ideological agenda is unacceptable.

Social Security is the core of old-age support and was intended as an income supplement and a crucial safety net for seniors, not a money making scheme. We must preserve Social Security through sound fiscal discipline and legitimate policy adjustments to meet the demands of future generations. Instead of weakening Social Security I believe that it should be strengthened and made more secure ensuring its success for generations to come. We cannot turn Social Security into Social Insecurity.