

devastated country, we see one of the worst international crises of the last decade. It is a bloody and brutal conflict, one that has drawn country after country into an un-winnable struggle, one that has cost the lives of thousands of civilians and has displaced hundreds of thousands more, and one about which this body has been strangely quiet.

Congo's conflict is as complex as it is destructive. It is born of the long absence of any semblance of political legitimacy in the government of that battered state, it is fed by the horrifying legacy of the Rwandan genocide, and it is intensified by the constant struggle for resources and wealth in the region. The litany of the causes of the war in Congo is a catalogue of the problems that plague the heart of Africa. Its outcome will likely determine the course of the region's future.

Mr. President, we need to wake up and realize that the U.S. has a stake in that future. Our interests in global peace and stability, the rule of law, and respect for basic human rights are bound up in Congo's future. Africans and their potential American trading partners can have no hope of realizing Africa's vast economic potential until the region's cycles of violence come to an end. And America urgently needs to stop the spread of infectious disease, to address environmental degradation, and to build a global coalition to fight international crime—but these needs cannot be met without stability in central Africa.

And Mr. President, global forces of instability will thrive, and their insidious influence will grow, when parties to the conflict in Congo turn to them, in desperation, for support.

Mr. President, central Africa's leaders know that the region cannot prosper while the war in the D.R.C. continues. For that reason, last summer the parties to the conflict signed a blueprint for ending the conflict—the Lusaka Agreement. That Agreement calls for an end to the fighting, for a free political dialogue within Congo, and lays out the path to the withdrawal of foreign forces.

Mr. President, I traveled to many of the countries involved in the crisis at the end of last year. In Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia, in Uganda and Rwanda, and in the D.R.C. itself, I personally heard heads of state acknowledge the importance of making the Lusaka Agreement work. They understand the challenge before them, the precious opportunity embodied by Lusaka.

Last week the parties to the Congo conflict renewed their commitment to the Lusaka Agreement in a series of extraordinary meetings at the United Nations in New York. They have all agreed to a facilitator, former President Masire of Botswana, to move the inter-Congolese dialogue forward. And all parties have called for a strengthening of the Joint Military Commission that is at the heart of the framework for peace.

Mr. President, just as the U.S. has a stake in the outcome, the United States also has a role to play in supporting these efforts. The U.N. has already deployed a small team of liaison officers to the scene. Now, the United Nations Secretary General has issued a report laying out the next phase of U.N. involvement. It calls for the deployment of 500 monitors, with a 5,000-strong force providing security and logistical support to their mission. They will have a robust mandate that ensures their ability to protect themselves.

Mr. President, none of the troops would be American, and that is as it should be. In fact, in my meetings with heads of state in the region, I explicitly asked about their expectations with regard to American troops, and I can report that no one has visions of a large American presence on the ground in Congo. But by creating the breathing room necessary to allow the belligerents to move toward peace, these troops will serve American interests.

The U.N. Secretary-General has endorsed a good plan. Its value comes, in part, from what it does not do. The U.N. does not plan to send tens of thousands of troops into Congo to impose peace on hostile parties. Nor does the U.N. intend to stand by while the most brutal elements in Congo seize power through violence and impose their will on civilians.

Instead, the plan that has emerged in New York harnesses international support to the commitment of the parties to the conflict. It recognizes that the only viable peace to be found in Congo is a peace created by the belligerent parties themselves. It acknowledges African responsibility for this African war, and strengthens the Joint Military Commission created by combatants when they signed the Lusaka accords. At the same time, this plan ensures that the international community does not turn its back on Africa.

There can be no double-standard, whereby African conflicts are measured by a different scale than that used for conflicts in Europe or Asia. The plan for the deployment of the monitors and their supporting team has been vetted as thoroughly as any U.N. project. The stakes—in terms of human life and regional stability—are unquestionably high enough to meet the threshold for international action. Now, the U.N. has an opportunity to get it right in Congo.

Supporting this U.N. mission is the least we should do to secure our interests and fulfill our responsibilities as responsible members of the international community. Should we fail to support it, should we ignore this terrible conflict any longer, we will weaken the international community's mechanisms for burden-sharing at the dawn of this new century. And we will lose an opportunity to reinforce a model for ending conflict and embracing a better future.

I want to say, because obviously this has to be true and I am concerned

about it, that the plan is not guaranteed to succeed.

Little worth attempting ever is. Zambian President Frederick Chiluba was right when he said, last week, that no peacekeeping operation anywhere in the world is risk-free. But Mr. President, this is the best chance for shoring up the Lusaka Agreement and helping African states to end the conflict that we are likely to see.

I strongly urge my colleagues to look at this program that is being suggested and to give it their support.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday, February 1, 2000, the Federal debt stood at \$5,702,651,446,667.03 (Five trillion, seven hundred two billion, six hundred fifty-one million, four hundred forty-six thousand, six hundred sixty-seven dollars and three cents).

One year ago, February 1, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,588,099,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred eighty-eight billion, ninety-nine million).

Five years ago, February 1, 1995, the Federal debt stood at \$4,810,860,000,000 (Four trillion, eight hundred ten billion, eight hundred sixty million).

Ten years ago, February 1, 1990, the Federal debt stood at \$2,994,932,000,000 (Two trillion, nine hundred ninety-four billion, nine hundred thirty-two million).

Fifteen years ago, February 1, 1985, the Federal debt stood at \$1,672,555,000,000 (One trillion, six hundred seventy-two billion, five hundred fifty-five million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$4 trillion—\$4,030,096,446,667.03 (Four trillion, thirty billion, ninety-six million, four hundred forty-six thousand, six hundred sixty-seven dollars and three cents) during the past 15 years.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting a treaty and sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:09 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1023. An act for the relief of Richard W. Schaffert.