

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN HAITI

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, as we prepare to begin the debate concerning the provisions within the fiscal year 2001 foreign ops appropriations bill, I would like to call my colleagues' attention to an event scheduled to take place this Sunday, May 21, referring to the parliamentary elections of Haiti.

The openness, the fairness, the transparency of these elections that will be held on Sunday are critical to Haiti, and really place the country and its people at a crossroads. These are the elections that have been postponed, postponed, postponed, and postponed. Finally, it appears as if they will actually take place this Sunday.

The world is watching to see how Haiti conducts these elections. The international community and the United States will be judging Haiti based on these elections. I think it is a fair statement to say that future assistance, future aid from the international community, from the private sector, private organizations, as well as governments, as well as the United States, will depend certainly to some extent on how these elections are conducted. Not how they turn out but how they are conducted. The world will be looking on Sunday to see the amount of violence connected with these elections; to see whether or not the elections are fair, transparent, and open; to see what kind of participation takes place among Haitian people.

We have every right to be concerned about these elections. We have a right to be concerned because of the investment the United States has made in Haiti, which I will discuss in a moment. We have a right to be concerned because these elections have been postponed, postponed, and postponed. We have a right to be concerned because we want to see whether or not this fledgling democracy is, in fact, making progress.

So, yes, the world will be watching. We are concerned, quite candidly, about these elections because of the action and because of the inaction of Haiti's political elite, its upper class, what they have not done and what they have done during the past 5 years.

We all had high expectations for Haiti when the United States sent 20,000 U.S. troops to that island in 1995 to restore President Aristide to power. At that time, we understood it would take time for Haiti to become politically stable. We understood it would take time to establish a free and open market system in that country. We understood it would take time to invoke the rule of law and privatization of government-run-and-owned industries. And we understood it would take a while to establish a fair and impartial and functioning judicial system.

Quite tragically, time has passed and very little, if anything, has changed.

The phrase "Haitian Government" is an oxymoron, given President Preval has been ruling by decree without a democratically elected Parliament since January 1999. Political intimidation is rampant, with violence and killings increasing as the elections approach. Furthermore, the Haitian economy is, at best, stagnant. Haiti remains the poorest nation by far in our entire hemisphere, with a per capita income estimated at \$330 per year per person, where 70 percent of the people are either without jobs or certainly underemployed.

When we deal with Haiti, the statistics don't matter. We are not even sure how reliable they are. Anyone who has visited Haiti—and I have had occasion to visit Haiti nine different times in the last 5½ years—sees where that economy is and sees the years of wrenching, unbelievable poverty in Haiti, a country that is just a short trip from Miami.

Absent a stable and democratic government, Haiti has no hope of achieving real and lasting economic nor political nor judicial reforms. That is why Haiti is finding itself stuck in a vicious cycle of despair. It is a cycle in which political stalemate threatens the government and judicial reforms, which, in turn, discourages investment and privatization.

Caught in this cycle, the economy stands to shrink further and further until there is no economic investment to speak of at all. With no viable law enforcement institutions in place, and given the island's weak political and economic situation, drug traffickers operate with impunity.

I have talked about this on this floor on several different occasions in the last few years. I predicted several years ago that we would see the amount of drug transportation in Haiti, the amount of drugs flowing through that country, go up and up and our own Government has estimated today that prediction has, tragically, come true. Our Government estimates Haiti accounts for 14 percent of all cocaine entering the United States today. Haiti is now the major drug transshipment country in the entire Caribbean. We estimate 75 tons of cocaine moved through Haiti in 1999. That represents a 24-percent increase over the previous year.

Quite frankly, Haiti has become a great human tragedy. While the decade of the 1980s witnessed unbelievable changes in Central America, with countries moving from totalitarian regimes to democracies, that was the great success story of the 1980s. Many of us hoped in the 1990s, and into the next century, we would see that same progress made in Haiti. Tragically, that has not taken place. Haiti now stands as a missed opportunity for reform, a missed opportunity for progress, for growth, and for development. The true casualties, the real victims of all the turmoil and instability are the children. They are the victims

because the small band of political elite in Haiti has not moved forward and taken seriously the need for reform. They have missed their opportunity.

The economy is worse, human rights are being violated, and there is very little optimism today in Haiti. These dire conditions are every day killing children. Haiti's infant mortality rate is approximately 15 times that of the United States. Because Haiti lacks the means to produce enough food to feed its population, the children who are born suffer from malnutrition, malnourishment. They rely heavily on humanitarian food aid. Additionally, because of the lack of clean water and sanitation, only 39 percent of the population has access to clean water. It is estimated only 26 percent have access to sanitation. Diseases such as measles and tuberculosis are epidemic.

Given this human tragedy, we can't turn our backs on these children as mad as we may get at the political leaders of that country, as frustrated as we may become with the political leaders of that country. Haiti is part of our hemisphere, and what happens in our hemisphere, what happens in our own backyard, is very much our concern. If we ignore the situation, we risk another massive refugee exodus for our shores, and drug trafficking through Haiti will continue to increase and increase and increase.

We must seek ways to foster democracy building in Haiti and promote free markets in the rule of law. We also must fight drug trafficking through Haiti and expand agricultural assistance through nongovernmental organizations. Let me say there are good nongovernment organizations that are in Haiti working to make a difference in spite of the Haitian Government. I must also say I have personally seen and visited a number of Americans in church groups who are down in Haiti risking their lives, making a difference every day to save the lives of children.

Finally, most important, I believe we must ensure that humanitarian and food assistance continues to reach the Haitian people, especially the children. We cannot just sit back and let the political elite in Haiti starve these orphan children as well as the elderly and the destitute.

Ultimately, though, Haiti will not really progress until its political leaders and the elite of the country take responsibility for the situation and commit to turning things around. The tragedy of the last 5 years is that the elite in Haiti has not made a decision that it is in their interests and in the interests of their country to change things. Until the elite of Haiti decides to make these changes, it is going to be very difficult, no matter what we do, to have any significant progress made in that very poor country.

Haiti can succeed as a democracy if, and only if, the elite has the resolve to hold open elections, create free markets, reduce corruption, improve its judicial system, respect human rights,

and learn how to sustain an agricultural system that can feed its people. Nothing the United States does with regard to Haiti can provide long-term permanent solutions unless and until the Haitians take democratic and societal reforms seriously and work in earnest to create a stable political system in a free and democratic market economy. That is why the world is watching to see how these elections are conducted this Sunday.

Let me turn to another portion of the foreign operations appropriations bill. There is language, as I have just talked about, in regard to Haiti in this bill. I wanted to speak about Haiti this evening on the Senate floor because of that language in the bill but also because of the upcoming elections.

There is another provision in the foreign operations appropriations bill we hope we will be taking up shortly. This provision has to do with our neighbor to the south, Colombia.

Let me first commend the chairman and ranking member on the subcommittee, Senator MCCONNELL and Senator LEAHY, and also the chairman and ranking member of the full committee, Senator STEVENS and Senator BYRD, for working with me, for working with Senator COVERDELL, Senator GRASSLEY, Senator GRAHAM of Florida, and so many others on the Colombia/Andean emergency antidrug assistance package which is now part of this bill.

This assistance to Colombia would provide approximately \$934 million to support Colombian efforts to eliminate drugs at the source, to improve human rights programs, to improve rule of law programs, and to increase economic development—\$934 million is what is contained in this bill. Passage of this assistance package is crucial to helping keep drugs off our streets here at home and to bring stability to our hemisphere.

No one questions there is a real emergency that currently exist in Colombia. Colombia is a democratic success story that is now in crisis. Thanks largely to the growing profits from illicit drug trafficking, Colombia is embroiled in a destabilizing and brutal civil war, a civil war that has gone on for decades with a death toll that continues to rise and that we estimate is at least 35,000 people. We have seen and continue to see the tragedy of Colombia unfold in our newspapers; we see the violence that is occurring there. Members of the army, members of the police are killed on a daily basis at an unbelievably alarming rate.

Just this week we saw a graphic, horrible picture in our newspapers of a bomb necklacing, where one of the terrorist groups, one of the guerrilla groups, placed a bomb around a woman's neck, asked her family for money, locked the bomb so it could not be removed, and told the family the bomb would go off at 3 in the afternoon. The bomb squad came in, the army. For 8 hours they tried to get the bomb off. Tragically, the bomb went off. The

bomb killed the woman and killed the young man who was working to try to free her. That is just a graphic example of what is occurring, in one form or the another, in Colombia every single day.

Many of us on the floor were in Congress in the 1980s when we worked so hard to give assistance to the countries in this hemisphere, particularly in Central America, to drive communism out to allow these countries to become democratic. The 1980s are a true success story for this hemisphere. We paid a very heavy price, but I think most of us believe that was a price worth paying. We brought democracy, we brought opportunity to our hemisphere.

Today the drug trade has emerged as the dominant threat to peace and freedom in the Americas. Communism was the threat in the 1980s. Today the drug trade is the threat. It threatens the sovereignty of the Colombian democracy and the continued prosperity and security of our hemisphere.

We have devoted a good portion of this week to discussing the threat that is involved in the whole situation in the Balkans, specifically in regard to Kosovo. I think we should have; it is very important. But I believe what we are seeing right here in our own hemisphere, what is happening in Colombia, is certainly equally important and maybe more important than what is going on in the Balkans.

Tragically, it is America's own drug habit that is fueling this threat in our hemisphere. It is our own drug habit that is causing the instability and violence in Colombia and in the region. Let's just look at what is happening in my own home State of Ohio, in Cincinnati, OH. In 1990, there were 19 heroin-related arrests in Cincinnati—1990, 19 heroin-related arrests. Last year, there were 464 arrests. Law enforcement officers in Cincinnati understand the reason for this surge. Colombia produces low-cost, high-purity heroin, making it more and more the drug of choice. And because of our Government's inadequate emphasis on drug interdiction and eradication efforts, that Colombian heroin is making its way across our borders and in my case, to the State of Ohio.

We may say, sure, Cincinnati is just one urban area, one metropolitan area. But if there is a heroin problem in Cincinnati, you can bet there is a heroin problem in New York City and Chicago and Los Angeles and throughout our country. The fact is that drugs from Colombia are cheap and plentiful in this country, so our children across America are using them. In fact, more children today are using and experimenting with drugs than 10 years ago—many more than did 10 years ago. The facts and statistics are startling. According to the 1999 Monitoring the Future Study, since 1992 overall drug use among tenth graders has increased 55 percent, heroin use among tenth graders has increased 92 percent, and cocaine use among tenth graders has increased 133 percent.

The ability of our law enforcement officers to succeed in keeping drugs off our streets and away from our children is clearly, directly linked to our ability to keep drugs produced in places such as Colombia from ever reaching our shores. To be effective, our drug control strategy needs to be a coordinated effort that directs and balances resources and support among three key areas: Domestic law enforcement, international eradication and interdiction efforts, and demand reduction. This means we must balance the allocation of resources towards efforts to stop those who produce drugs, those who transport illegal drugs into this country, and those who deal drugs on our streets and in our schools.

The sad fact is, the cultivation of coca in Colombia has skyrocketed, doubling from over 126,000 acres in 1995 to 300,000 in 1999. Poppy cultivation has grown to such an extent that it is now the source of the majority of heroin consumed in the United States. Not surprisingly, as drug availability has increased in the United States, drug use among adolescents also has increased.

To make matters worse, these Colombian insurgents see the drug traffic as a financial partner to sustain their illicit cause, only making the FARC and ELN grow stronger. The sale of drugs today not only fuels the drug business, but also the antidemocratic insurgents in Colombia.

Why does Colombia matter? It matters to us, first of all, because of what I just talked about, and that is the drugs Colombia ships into the United States.

Why else does it matter? The drug trade in Colombia is a source of rampant lawlessness and violence in Colombia. It has destabilized that country and stands to threaten the entire Andean region. Fortunately, in the last few years, Congress has had the foresight to recognize the escalating threats, and we have taken the lead to restore our drug-fighting capability beyond our borders off our shores.

Many of my colleagues who have worked so hard on this Colombia assistance package also worked with me just a few short years ago to pass the Western Hemisphere Drug Elimination Act, a \$2.7 billion, 3-year authorization initiative aimed at restoring international eradication, interdiction, and crop alternative development funding.

With this law, we already have made an \$800 million downpayment. We have appropriated and spent \$800 million, \$200 million of which represented the first substantial investment in Colombia to counternarcotics activities.

I stress to my colleagues that the emergency assistance package before us is based on a blueprint that Senator COVERDELL and I developed and introduced last October, 3 months before the administration unveiled its proposal.

Like our plan, the emergency assistance package before us this evening goes beyond counternarcotics assistance and crop alternative development

programs in Colombia. This plan targets Latin American countries, including Bolivia, Peru, Panama, and Ecuador.

This is a regional approach, and a regional approach is crucial. Peru and Bolivia have made enormous progress to reduce drug cultivation in their countries, and they have done it with our assistance. What has taken place in those two countries has been a success story.

An emphasis only on the Colombian drug problems risks the spillover effect of Colombia's drug trade shifting to other countries in the region. That is why resources are needed and provided in this bill for countries such as Bolivia, Panama, Ecuador, and Peru.

I also note the positive contributions to our antidrug activities made by the chairman and ranking member, Senator BURNS and Senator MURRAY, of the Military Construction Subcommittee. We passed today the military construction bill which includes investments in equipment and support activities as part of our Colombia-Andean region antidrug strategy.

That bill also includes funding for the Coast Guard to provide supplies, reduce the maintenance backlog, and for pay and benefits for Coast Guard personnel.

Funding in that bill also was provided for six C-130J aircraft, which give critical support to our counter-narcotics efforts.

That bill also contains funding for forward operating locations which will provide the logistic support needed for our aircraft to conduct detection and monitoring flights over the source countries. The closure of Howard Air Force Base in Panama, as part of the Panama Canal transfer treaty, severely diminished this capability. That is why we need these forward operating locations, and that is why the money provided in this bill is so important.

As I stated a moment ago, a balanced approach is critical to the success of our counterdrug policy. We must continue to invest resources in our law enforcement agencies—Coast Guard, Customs, and the Drug Enforcement Agency. They are our front line of defense against drugs coming into the United States. They also work with law enforcement agencies of other countries to eradicate and interdict drugs. These agencies need additional resources to ensure the increase in illicit drug production in Colombia does not result in a corresponding increase in drugs on the streets and in the schools of our country.

Addressing the crisis in Colombia is timely and necessary. It is in the national security interest of Colombia and the United States to work together and with our other partners in the hemisphere to curb the corroding effects of illicit drug trafficking. The bottom line is that an investment in the Andean region to help stop the drug trade and preserve democracy is a direct investment in the peaceful fu-

ture of our entire hemisphere. It is in our national interest.

I know there are some of my colleagues on this side of the aisle who have expressed some hesitancy and reluctance about the provision in this bill concerning Colombia. I want to take a moment to direct my comments specifically to them.

The Western Hemisphere Drug Elimination Act that Congress passed several years ago was an attempt to change the direction of our drug policy. What do I mean? I consistently said during this speech and other speeches on the floor that we need a balanced drug policy. We have to have treatment, education, domestic law enforcement, and we have to have international law enforcement and interdiction. We have to do all these things. We have to have a balanced approach.

We found 3 years ago when we looked at what had happened in our antidrug effort over the last decade that beginning with the Clinton administration, that administration began to reduce the percentage of the money we were spending on international drug interdiction.

When George Bush left the White House, we were spending approximately one-third of our total Federal antidrug budget on international drug interdiction, basically on stopping drugs from ever getting inside the United States—spending it either on law enforcement in other countries, on Customs, on DEA, on crop eradication, stopping drugs from ever reaching our shores. That was about one-third of our budget. That is what we were spending when George Bush left the White House.

As of 2 years ago, after 6 years of the Clinton administration, that one-third has been reduced to approximately 8 to 10 percent, a dramatic reduction in the amount of money we were spending on international drug interdiction.

Some of us in this body—Senator COVERDELL, myself, and others—decided we had to change that, so we introduced the Western Hemisphere Drug Elimination Act. A corresponding bill was introduced in the House of Representatives. Then Congressman HASTERT, now Speaker HASTERT, played a major role in working on that bill, as did others.

The bottom line is, we passed the bill, it became law, and we have begun to change that direction. The initiative for that came from this side of the aisle. We saw what the administration was doing. We said the policy has to change; we need to put more money into interdiction, and we need to begin to do that. We did do that.

Fast forward a couple more years as the crisis in Colombia continued to get worse and worse. Again, Senator COVERDELL, Senator GRASSLEY, myself, and others put together a new package. It was a package aimed specifically at dealing with the crisis in Colombia. We introduced that package last October. After we introduced that package, a

few months later the administration finally came forward and said: Yes, we have to do something about Colombia. But it was our initiative that started it.

It brings us now to where we are today. The initiative that Senator COVERDELL, Senator GRASSLEY, and others introduced has now been wrapped into this bill. The good news is that the administration is on board.

The administration also came forward with a proposal to deal with Colombia and has stated their understanding of the severity of this problem. So that is where we are today.

I ask my colleagues to look at the big picture and to think about what is in the best interests of the United States. This package is not put together for Colombia. It is not put together for the Colombians. It is put together for us. It is put together because Colombia is our neighbor, and what happens to our neighbor, in our neighbor's country, affects us.

Why? Trade. Colombia is a major trading partner of the United States. What happens in that country affects our trade. The drugs that come into this country, as I have already demonstrated in this speech, come from Colombia to a great extent. The drugs that are killing our young people come from Colombia.

So we have a very real interest in stabilizing that country, keeping that country democratic, keeping that country a trading partner of the United States, and to help that democratically elected government in Colombia help themselves to beat back the drug dealers, to beat back the guerrillas.

They face a crisis that is different than any crisis that any other country has probably ever faced. Many countries have faced guerrilla movements throughout history. But I do not know any other country that ever faced a guerrilla movement that was fueled with so much money. There is this synergistic relationship now that has been created between the drug dealers and the guerrillas. Each one benefits the other. Each one takes care of the other. The end result is that the guerrillas are emboldened and enriched by the drug dealers' money. So it is a crisis that Colombia faces, but it is a crisis that directly impacts the United States.

I ask my colleagues to remember how we got here, to remember what role this side of the aisle played in trying to deal with the Colombia problem and deal with the problem in Central America, South America, what role we played in trying to increase the money that we are spending and resources we are spending on stopping drugs from coming into this country.

If we recall that history, and recall what the situation is in Colombia today, we will be persuaded that this is the right thing to do and that this provision in this bill that deals with an aid package for the Colombia-Andean region is clearly in the best interests of

the United States and is something that we have to do.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SESSIONS). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF JUDGE RHESA HAWKINS BARKSDALE'S TEN YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS, FIFTH CIRCUIT

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate my good friend, Rhesa Hawkins Barksdale. Last month marked the tenth anniversary of Judge Barksdale's investiture as a United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit. On April 1, 1990, Judge Barksdale was sworn into office by Justice Byron White, for whom Judge Barksdale clerked following his graduation from the University of Mississippi School of Law. Throughout the past ten years Judge Barksdale has faithfully fulfilled his sworn duty to enforce the Constitution and laws of the United States. Needless to say, his service to the Fifth Circuit has brought distinction to his family, our State, and the Nation.

I might add that this country is indebted to Judge Barksdale for more than his zealous commitment to justice. His service as a Circuit Judge continues a lifetime of dedication and sacrifice to protect the freedoms and liberties of all Americans, as exemplified by his valiant and decorated service to his country during the Vietnam War. Judge Barksdale served in combat in Vietnam as an officer in the United States Army, and he was awarded a number of medals, including the Silver Star, Purple Heart, Bronze Star for Valor, and Bronze Star for Meritorious Service.

Mr. President, Mississippians and Americans are grateful for Judge Barksdale's public service, and I congratulate and honor him on the tenth anniversary of his service on the bench.

READING THE NAMES OF GUN VICTIMS

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, it has been more than a year since the Columbine tragedy, but still this Republican Congress refuses to act on sensible gun legislation.

Since Columbine, thousands of Americans have been killed by gunfire. Until we act, Democrats in the Senate will read some of the names of those who lost their lives to gun violence in the past year, and we will continue to do so every day that the Senate is session.

These names come from a report prepared by the United States Conference of Mayors. The report includes data from 100 U.S. cities between April 20, 1999 and March 20, 2000. The 100 cities covered range in size from Chicago, Illinois, which has a population of more than 2.7 million to Bedford Heights, Ohio with a population of about 11,800. But the list does not include gun deaths from some major cities like New York and Los Angeles.

The following are the names of some of the people who were killed by gunfire one year ago today—on May 18th, 1999: Gregory Babb, 24, Philadelphia, PA; Clifford Clark, 54, Detroit, MI; James Courtney, 20, Providence, RI; Julius Ford, 32, San Antonio, TX; Derrick Hall, 24, Chicago, IL; Jason Horsley, 25, Denver, CO; Keith Mitchell, 21, Detroit, MI; Laredo Schetop, 48, Dallas, TX; Jamaar Wynn, 15, Nashville, TN.

In the name of those who died, we will continue the fight to pass gun safety measures.

THE MILLION MOM MARCH

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, on Mother's Day 2000, half a million mothers and others marched on Washington to demonstrate their fury at the number of children killed by gun violence last year. Their goal: to convince Congress to pass even more laws restricting citizen access to handguns. All in all, it was quite a spectacle. But while it reflects the modern American view that every ill can be remedied through the power of law, it seems to me the real—and only—question to be answered is will more laws actually produce the result we all seek?

Before we can answer that question, Mr. President, we must examine this one: is the recent spate of gun violence involving children the result of rising levels of crime and escalating gun ownership, or something else?

Let's look at the facts:

During the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, gun violence increased dramatically. During the 1990s, however, the numbers actually began to decline, with school violence of the type exhibited at Columbine falling precipitously to the point where kids today are probably the safest they've been in decades.

In 1996 (the last year for which statistics are available), 1,134 Americans died in accidental shootings—the lowest level ever recorded. Only 42 were under the age of 10. Yet more than 2,400 10-year-olds died that year in motor vehicle accidents, another 800 were drowned, and well over 700 died from fire. As for the danger of guns in homes, only about 30 people each year are accidentally killed by homeowners

who believe they are shooting an intruder, as opposed to 330 who are accidentally killed by police.

So why are the numbers declining? While there could be lots of reasons—tougher judges, stiffer penalties, and little mercy for repeat offenders—it's also interesting to note that the decline in murder and violent crime has paralleled an increase in gun ownership.

Mr. President, today about 80 million Americans, or 40 percent of the population, own almost 250 million firearms, as compared with about 27 percent in 1988. And in states like Texas where citizens are allowed to carry concealed weapons, the number of murders, assaults, and burglaries has dropped dramatically. Significantly, in 15 states with tough gun control measures including the trigger locks and "safe storage" laws moms on the Mall were rallying for, there were—accordingly to Mr. LOTT—3,600 more rapes, 22,500 more robberies, and 64,000 more burglaries. Could it be that criminals are smart enough to know where they're likely to encounter resistance and where it's easiest to operate?

Mr. President, there is nothing more tragic than losing a child. And nothing more wonderful than mothers fighting to keep their children safe from harm. But before any war can be won, we must understand the enemy and develop a strategy to defeat him. In the war against gun violence, the enemy is not the weapon, but the criminal who uses it. Making it easier for him to win by restricting those who could thwart his evil act, or deter it in the first place, is not the answer.

Marching on the Mall is stirring spectacle, but ending the tragedy of gun violence requires a much more serious solution.

Mr. President, I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to bring to the Senate's attention an excellent report on the state of child care in the U.S. military and the implications for improving civilian child care. "Be All That We Can Be: Lessons from the Military for Improving Our Nation's Child Care System" documents the Department of Defense's impressive turn-around of its troubled child care system and its emergence as a model of affordable and quality child care for the civilian world. As recently as ten years ago, military child care was in crisis—changing demographics in the military workforce had led to a surge in demand for child care that the Department was unprepared to meet. Child care waiting lists soared and quality plummeted. Prodded by a GAO report, Congressional hearings, and the recognition that child care is a fundamental issue for military readiness, the Department of Defense turned its child care system the gold standard for the Nation.

The experience of the Department of Defense offers important lessons for the civilian world and offers great hope