

crises over the years, and what could be more compelling than millions of lives endangered?

Hunger is devastating Africa, North Korea, Argentina, and has reached into all corners of the globe. One of the worst cases is the current situation in Africa. Africa is on the brink of a crisis of biblical proportions. Thirty million people, 30 million, are at risk of malnutrition and starvation in Africa alone. This is on top, Mr. Speaker, of the HIV/AIDS crisis that is consuming resources that would otherwise be devoted to famine relief.

When I traveled to Ethiopia in January and Eritrea earlier this year, I saw firsthand the bloated bellies and the weak limbs of the children, and I was reminded of the devastation I saw when I was in Ethiopia with former Congressman Tony Hall in 1984 and 1985 during that famine. African countries in particular are suffering from donor fatigue and a lack of attention. The flood of international news has kept the reality of this situation away from people in many Western countries. When I think of some of the stupid shows that some of the networks run, like Joe Millionaire, Survivor, and these things, and how little time they are actually spending on the hunger and the starvation of people in every continent, it is very, very discouraging.

North Korea and Central Asia also teeter on the brink of crisis. In North Korea there are reports that up to 80 percent of the humanitarian relief never even reaches the North Korean people. If left unchecked, thousands and millions of North Korean lives will be in jeopardy.

Even in Argentina, once a middle class Latin American country, hunger is now widespread. Hospitals are regularly treating diseases caused by lack of protein and poor nutrition. Children in Argentina are dying of malnutrition, and in some communities relief organizations have classified 90 percent of the children as undernourished. Yes, in Argentina. This is especially tragic for a country that has more livestock than people.

This, Mr. Speaker, is a global crisis and it demands a global response. No one country can meet these needs. We in the United States should be proud, for in the year 2002 the United States Government, the American people, contributed 51 percent of all the food, compared to the EC and Europe's combined contribution of only 27 percent of the donations of the U.N. World Food Programme. Many countries have the ability to give more and may just be waiting to be asked. Time, resources and attention must be devoted to mobilizing and coordinating the resources required.

The lives of millions of women and children hang in the balance. A special representative, a special envoy under the leadership of the U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan can mobilize the financial and material resources re-

quired, coordinate the international organization to achieve mutual relief and unity of effort, develop an integrated plan and provide operational direction and remove obstacles. This position is critical to reenergizing the global community, refocusing attention on this situation, and, most importantly, saving millions of lives.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to contact the U.N. directly and encourage them to adopt a strategy to save the lives of the millions of women and children that hang in the balance. Attention by this Congress will send a loud and clear message. Otherwise, many of these 30 million or more will die.

INDIANA'S NATIONAL GUARDSMEN AND RESERVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HILL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, our Reserves make up more than half of the Armed Services. Clearly, they are a key part of our national defense. As of today, more than 175,000 National Guardsmen and Reservists from all over our country have been called to active duty. Much has been demanded of our National Guardsmen and Reservists since September of 2001, and much more will surely be demanded of them as we move forward, facing new threats, new enemies, and new challenges.

These men and women are involved in military operations ranging from peacekeeping and humanitarian relief to homeland defense and active combat. Every day they work side-by-side with those on active duty around the world protecting Americans at home and abroad. It is important to remember that these men and women, in answering their call to duty, have left behind spouses, children, parents, friends and jobs. Nearly every community in every State has been affected.

One such community happens to be in my district, in Dubois County, Indiana. It is the folks of Jasper who know firsthand about the commitment of these young people to our country. Therefore, I am here on the floor today to commend the service and sacrifice of the men and women of Indiana's 1st Battalion and 152nd Infantry. These National Guardsmen, known as "Predators," come from not only Jasper but from many other towns in southern Indiana.

This battalion has a rich 150-year history. They defended the Union in the Civil War, they fought alongside our European allies in both World Wars, and now these Hoosier soldiers have once again answered the call of duty in a time of need. Nearly 650 of Jasper's finest are in Kuwait, and an additional 140 are preparing to depart.

Only one other National Guard unit in the country, also from Indiana, has sent more troops to Kuwait. The Jas-

per soldiers are also a part of one of the Nation's 15 elite reserve units. These elite units receive specialized training to ensure that they are ready to move rapidly to a war zone when needed.

I am proud that these men and women work to both protect the State of Indiana and, when asked, to defend the national security interests of the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MUSGRAVE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. TANCREDO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PENCE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IN SUPPORT OF MEDICAL MALPRACTICE AND INSURANCE REFORM ACT OF 2003

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, as you know, I am a family physician, and I rise tonight to speak about an issue that is critically important to the viability of the health care system in this country.

In addition to the impact of many millions of uninsured on the reduced viability of hospitals and quality health services for every one and our failure to make the proper investment in the health of people of color and in our rural areas, we have, for too long, allowed our doctors and other providers to be crushed by high and ever-increasing malpractice costs. If we continue this way, there will be no health care for anyone, insured or uninsured.

This evening, I want to focus on the malpractice crisis. On issues as complex as this, it is impossible to apply a single fix, yet that is what H.R. 5 attempts to do. Its only remedy is the instituting of a \$250,000 cap on non-economic damages, such as pain and suffering, regardless of the number of parties against whom the action is brought. This cap is modeled after MICRA, California's Medical Injury Compensation Reform Act, which has clearly not worked.

In addition, underserved minorities, children, and patients with low or no

income are not well served by H.R. 5. Compensation for economic damages for minorities and women is often already much less than those awarded to white males. In a case with caps on punitive damages and the calculated economic ones, if the individual is working for minimum wage, unemployed, a homemaker or a child, awards will be small and possibly not meet the real needs of the individual or their family.

But who knows what a young person's potential might be, or even that of an adult. There are Members serving in this body who were once on welfare. If they had filed for malpractice under what is proposed in H.R. 5, their award would not have reflected the potential they have now realized. I say that to say that we cannot project what a person's earning potential might be.

Then H.R. 5 also caps HMOs. That and politics is what the provisions of that bill are really about, protecting the corporations, as has been offered time and time again in different ways for different businesses in just about every committee, all under the guise of helping the consumer or the little guy.

Medical providers do not want to bear the brunt of political battles. They need real help. Their patients need their doctors and other health care providers. That is why I support the Conyers-Dingell substitute, and I hope they are given a fair rule today so that we can put the two bills side by side. There is no way H.R. 5 can measure up to it.

The Democratic bill includes measures that have been proven to work at reducing malpractice insurance rates. If one thing is clear from States' experience, it is that caps alone do not work. The Medical Malpractice and Insurance Reform Act of 2003, the Conyers-Dingell bill, does not cap damages for corporations. It does not apply caps at all, and it only applies to physicians and other health professionals. It also has a better statute of limitations provision, which especially protects injured children.

The Democratic substitute has several provisions that would cut down frivolous claims, including sanctions for attorneys and physicians, and it provides for alternate dispute resolution that could enable patients to avoid litigation costs altogether.

In addition to creating an advisory commission on medical malpractice insurance, it brings insurance companies under antitrust laws that prevent price fixing and requires savings realized through the provisions of the bill to go toward reducing premium costs, and there are several other great provisions that time does not permit me to list this evening.

Madam Speaker, I came to the floor this evening because there are a lot of misconceptions about H.R. 5 which have caused medical organizations and many of my colleagues to support it. In my opinion, the situation for health care providers is so bad that we are grasping at any straw to save the practices we have dedicated our lives to. But our health care providers and their

patients need more than the weak straw offered by H.R. 5. We need real reform, real help.

The Democratic substitute would provide that help and help get us started on the kind of reform that will bring long-term relief to providers and be fair to all parties concerned. I hope this bill will be on the floor tomorrow, and I hope that all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will support and pass it. And then let us move on to fix all of the other problems in our health care system and provide health insurance coverage for everyone.

THE BREAKDOWN OF CYPRUS PEACE TALKS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, it is with a profound sense of disappointment that I rise today to speak about the breakdown of the United Nations-sponsored Cyprus peace talks at the Hague this week.

Responsibility for this unfortunate setback in the peace process rests largely with one man, Mr. Rauf Denktaş, the Turkish Cypriot leader who rejected U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's plan to end the 29-year division of Cyprus. A large share of the blame also rests with the Turkish military and hard-line nationalists in Ankara, who have maintained the illegal Turkish military occupation of Cyprus since Turkish troops invaded the island in 1974. If the government of Turkey were sincere about settling the Cyprus problem, they could have put the necessary pressure on Mr. Denktaş to say yes to the U.N. plan.

In sharp contrast to Mr. Denktaş, the newly-elected President of the Republic of Cyprus, Tassos Papadopoulos, said yes to a public referendum on the Secretary General's plan. His response is consistent with years of efforts by the government of Cyprus to try to negotiate in good faith to reunify the country, efforts that have been consistently rebuffed by the separatist Turkish Cypriot regime.

The U.N. peace process, which is strongly supported by the United States and the international community has sought to reunite Cyprus as a single sovereign bicomunal federation. With Cyprus poised to join the European Union in May 2004, Secretary General Annan chose to get personally involved in bringing the two sides together, asking the two leaders to put the U.N. plan before their people in a referendum. President Papadopoulos said he was prepared to do so. But, unfortunately, Mr. Denktaş was not prepared to agree to put the plan to a referendum. It is a shame that the Secretary General's personal diplomacy was met by this kind of flat-out rejection.

In fact, it is the Turkish-Cypriot community which has held unprecedented public demonstrations in favor of the U.N. plan who will be the major

victims of Mr. Denktaş's intransigence, cut off from benefits of the EU membership that the rest of the island will enjoy.

Despite this failure, Madam Speaker, I praise President Papadopoulos for stressing that the Greek-Cypriot side will continue the efforts for reaching a solution to the Cyprus question both before and after Cyprus joins the EU.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS), who has just been fantastic on this issue.

Mr. ANDREWS. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Florida, for his enduring leadership in this very important cause. I join him in his expression of dismay that this very hopeful effort has apparently been sidetracked, and I would hope this Congress could urge Mr. Denktaş and his Turkish military sponsors to reconsider this decision.

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Madam Speaker, I believe that the principal division between the enlightened view of the Greek Cypriots and the regressive view of Mr. Denktaş is their willingness to let the people decide their own fate.

In the set of principles articulated by Kofi Annan and the United Nations, there were many concessions made by the Greek Cypriots. There were many difficult decisions that the Greek Cypriot government would have to endure. That regime, because it is democratic, was willing to put that question to the people in the Greek part of Cyprus.

On the other hand, Mr. Denktaş and his Turkish military sponsors were unwilling to let the voice of the Turkish Cypriot people determine their own fate. They have raised their voices on the streets and expressed overwhelming popular sentiment for a lawful and humane reunification of Cyprus. It is a tragedy that the voices of the Turkish Cypriots have been silenced by the short-term decision by Mr. Denktaş and by his Turkish military sponsors.

Madam Speaker, I join the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), who has led us for so many years in this effort in urging Mr. Denktaş and the Turkish Government to let the people of the Turkish part of Cyprus speak. Let them act for peace; and I believe we will, in fact, achieve peace.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MUSGRAVE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HOLT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS) is recognized for 5 minutes.