

and risk being overwhelmed by the sheer size of the disaster. Doctors are struggling to combat outbreaks of malaria and dengue, and the New York Times reports that aid workers were using mules for transportation, since the U.S. military is no longer airlifting aid to isolated communities. The U.S. Agency for International Development has pledged \$50,000 in emergency aid, but we ought to do much more.

I wish I could say that the devastation was solely an act of nature, but it was not. Had these same rains fallen over Florida, the damage would have been much less severe and the death toll would be in the single digits instead of the thousands.

As my esteemed colleague from Ohio, Senator DEWINE, described in his statement on June 1st, Haiti's economic underdevelopment exacerbated the effects of the flooding. Widespread deforestation of hillsides meant that, when the rains came, there was nothing to hold the soil in place. The subsequent landslides devastated many of the villages. And without roads and emergency services, there was no way to evacuate the Haitians who were caught in the path of the floods.

Yet the devastation is not over. For the tens of thousands of Haitians who were left homeless, whose crops were destroyed, and whose communities were razed by the floodwaters, the next few months will be a struggle between life and death.

It pains me to say that the floods are only the most recent setback for a country already struggling to overcome economic and social crises. Haiti, by most measures, is the poorest country in the hemisphere with nearly 80 percent of its population living in abject poverty. The life expectancy has fallen to 52 years and more than 6 percent of Haitians are infected with the HIV virus.

In recent years Haiti has become a major trans-shipment point for cocaine trafficking. The State Department, in its annual Narcotics Control Strategy Report, describes Haiti as, "a key conduit for drug traffickers transporting cocaine from South America to the United States." Sadly, more than half of all Haitians are unable to participate in the formal economy, and, as a consequence, many of these people turn to the illegal drug trade as a source of income.

This influx of drug money into Haiti has further eroded the rule-of-law. Corruption now seems endemic in even the highest levels of government and private enterprise.

Not all the news from Haiti is bad, however. Recently, I had the opportunity to meet with Prime Minister [Gerard] Latortue while he was visiting Washington. I was impressed by his vision for Haiti, and encouraged by the efforts he has made since his appointment to stabilize the country. During our meeting, Prime Minister Latortue emphasized the need for major improvements in infrastructure, particu-

larly in the power sector. He also stressed to me the urgent need for capacity-building amongst government institutions which cannot carry out their responsibilities without the trained personnel and resources to do so.

Unfortunately the Bush Administration has been extremely slow to respond to Prime Minister Latortue's requests for aid. President Aristide was deposed in late February, but it wasn't until late May—nearly 3 months later—that the Administration finally cobbled together a \$160 million aid package for Haiti—\$60 million of which was already in the pipeline before the February departure of President Aristide. I'm afraid that the amount they have allotted, about \$20 per Haitian, is too little, too late.

This lukewarm response only continues a trend in the Bush administration's policy toward Haiti. Since 2000, the U.S. Government has taken a shameful, hands-off approach to Haiti, turning its back on a growing crisis. After the Bush administration facilitated President Aristide's removal, citing his incompetence as the justification for supporting the involuntary departure of an elected president, one would have hoped that there was some sense of obligation on the part of the administration to do right by the Haitian people. Sadly, that sense of obligation is minimal at best, even in the face of the natural disaster that has recently befallen the Haitian people.

So what should the U.S. response be to the political, economic, and social crises in Haiti? Should we continue the hands-off approach of the Bush administration? Or, should we offer Haiti a hand up? I believe that we have a special obligation to help Haiti, and I'm offering three proposals for how we can do that.

First, we should halt the removal of the 1,900 U.S. troops currently stationed in Haiti. Prime Minister Latortue has asked that we extend the U.S. military presence, fearing that U.S. troops are the only ones capable of dissuading further violence. The original decision to depart upon the arrival of the Brazilian-led UN Peacekeeping force was made before last month's flooding—and before the destabilizing effects of the current humanitarian crisis.

Let me take a moment here to talk about the security situation. Many have speculated about the re-establishment of the Haitian Army. Because this is ultimately a question for the Haitian people to answer—especially in light of the Haitian Army's history of abuses—I believe that the decision should be left for the next elected government to address. Given the scarcity of resources and the absence of a specific national security mission, I for one believe that reestablishing the army is a luxury that Haiti can ill afford. In any event, the current caretaker government should concern itself with establishing domestic stability

and security, preparing for elections, and, most critical of all, working to end the current humanitarian crisis.

The Bush administration can help the LaTortue government move forward with its stated agenda by working with the international community and the Haitian National Police to establish the rule of law. Clearly reestablishing security requires that we step up efforts to disarm all the various illegal armed groups. So far less than 200 arms have been rounded up. And the focus seems to be solely on Aristide supporters, not the armed thugs who have perpetrated a reign of terror throughout the countryside for the last nine months.

Next, in accordance with the resolution agreed upon by the Organization of American States, we must undertake to foster full restoration of democracy in Haiti. Our first obligation is to get to the bottom of allegations that the United States participated in the ouster of President Aristide. The OAS has just begun an investigation into the matter, and we should cooperate fully to dispel any myths or redress any errors.

My last proposal is for a \$1 billion emergency aid package for Haiti over the next 4 years. If we are willing to devote hundreds of billions of dollars for the endeavors in Afghanistan and Iraq—half a world away—doesn't it make sense for us to devote a fraction of that amount to assist one of our nearest and most impoverished neighbors? Announcing a multiyear aid package, we demonstrate our commitment to the Haitian people and also serve as an example for others in the international community to offer up multiyear assistance packages as well. As UN Secretary General Kofi Annan stated in March, getting it right in Haiti this time, "means keeping international attention and resources engaged for the long haul."

It is long past time for the United States to address the mounting crisis in Haiti. It is time for us to offer the Haitian people a hand up. Toward that end, I believe that this body should give serious consideration to making a down payment on the \$1 billion aid proposal for Haiti in the FY 2005 Appropriations process when the Senate deals with this legislation. Only through concrete and meaningful U.S. assistance on a scale commensurate with Haiti's needs can we ever hope to reverse the misery, suffering, and hopelessness that have become commonplace in the lives of close neighbors—8 million of them.

IN MEMORY OF RAY CHARLES

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I take this moment to reflect on the life of Ray Charles. I feel lucky to have grown up with the innovative and passionate sounds of Ray Charles unique mix of gospel and blues. His work took listeners from the depths of his profound sadness to cathartic heights in his love

and performance of music. Ray Charles will be deeply missed by fans and fellow musicians alike.

Ray Charles Robinson was born September 23, 1930, in Albany, GA. The child of a mechanic, Bailey Robinson, and a saw-mill worker, Aretha, Ray Charles' life was a lesson in triumph over adversity. A young Charles began losing his sight at infancy and was clinically blind by the age of 7. Two years prior his brother had accidentally drowned, and by age 15, Charles lost both parents and had no immediate family. Alone, sad, and orphaned, Ray Charles went to live with friends of his mother, nearly 200 miles away from home, in Jacksonville, FL.

Charles lived in Jacksonville for a year developing his talent as a musician before moving to Orlando, supporting himself, a 16 year-old orphan, with only his seemingly dauntless optimism to help him along. Work was sparse, and income was never guaranteed. He left Florida, looking for a new city with potential for new challenges, took what little money he had and made a five-day bus trip to Seattle, WA. It was here that Charles formed his first group, a small jazz group called the McSon Trio.

Emulating the vocal styles of his musical idol, Nat King Cole, Ray Charles formed a rhythm and blues group led by vocalist Ruth Brown. The band played night after night in smoky back-alley clubs throughout Seattle's red light district. As Charles reflected in his autobiography, these clubs consisted of little more than a big room with a band in one corner, liquor in the other, and a shoulder to shoulder audience. Playing in Seattle, Ray Charles met Quincy Jones, showing the young future producer how to write and compose music. It was the beginning of a lifelong friendship.

It was on the West Coast that Ray Charles' famous career truly began to develop. Swingtime Records signed Charles in Seattle, giving him his first break in the music business. And in 1950, the company flew him to Los Angeles to record. In 1952 his contract was purchased by Atlantic Records, and by 1954, Charles had formed his own band recording his unique raw and tortured mix of gospel and rhythm n' blues a style that would later be known as soul music—with songs like "I Got A Woman," and the later "Georgia on my Mind," with ABC-Paramount. Ray Charles, the innovator and musical provocateur was being called "The Genius" by contemporaries and playing at such famous venues as Carnegie Hall and the Newport Jazz Festival.

In the 1960s, Ray Charles would truly come to call Los Angeles home. He had his own studio designed and built by long time friend and business manager Joe Adams, and recorded his first album, "Country and Western Meets Rhythm and Blues," at the studio in 1965. Charles would continue his recording career here for nearly 40 years until his death, and once said of the

studio, "I love this place. It's the only home I've truly had for most of my professional career, and I would never leave it." Charles would go on to produce numerous hits in his Los Angeles location, continuing an impressive career that would later earn him 12 Grammy Awards between 1960 and 1966, including best R&B recording for three consecutive years. The Ray Charles Studio was designated a Los Angeles historical landmark on April 30, 2004 thanks to the hard work of Councilman Martin Ludlow and City Council President Alex Padilla. Ray Charles made his last public appearance in Los Angeles at his studio as the site was designated a city historic landmark, a living testament to Charles' 40 years living and working in the city of Los Angeles.

The music of Ray Charles was a deep and powerful reflection of the American musical tradition. From troubled origins in the south that would characterize the blues aspect of Charles' lyrical style to the gospel influences present in so many of Charles' hits, soul music encapsulates so much of the American story. From racism, to heartache, to loneliness, to redemption, Ray Charles was writing the songs that could only come from an American artist and influencing a generation of musicians. He was at once expert composer, rock and roller, long-sufferer, genius, and poet. He was, to say the least, one of America's greatest artists, and will be deeply missed.

TRIBUTE TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY JESSE ROBERSON

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, on Tuesday, June 15, I received some very sad news, that Jessie Roberson had announced her resignation as the Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management at the Department of Energy effective July 15.

I have known Jessie since I was first elected to the Senate in 1996. At the time she was the site manager for the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology site in my State of Colorado. Through our common interest at Rocky Flats, I got to know her quite well. She not only impressed me with her depth of knowledge but here innovation and determination in making sure that Rocky Flats would be one of the first major DOE sites to close. Under her watch from 1996 to 1999, the Rocky Flats closure date went from 2015 to 2006. I know it was her leadership that moved this ambitious plan forward.

When President Bush was elected in 2000, it was that same leadership and determination that convinced me to put her name forward knowing that she would be the best person for the job of Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management at the Department. And I can say, unequivocally, that she has not disappointed.

When I met with her shortly after being confirmed, I told her that the en-

vironmental management program was broken and in need of major reforms. I added that this would not be easy and that some people would not like the changes which are necessary to make the program work. She agreed and she promised that she would work hard to effect change. While she later told me that it has not been easy, she kept the course and has transformed the program from one of just motion to true action. The Department has made tremendous progress in getting sites closer to closure. I can honestly say that what some people did not think possible 3 years ago is closer to happening; and that is that sites will be closing. I can only attribute this to the leadership of this extraordinary woman.

During her confirmation hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on May 16, I inserted into the RECORD a Denver Post editorial entitled "Roberson a Top Flight Pick" and quoted one line from the editorial. It said:

The Department's environmental management job is in fact one of the toughest positions in the Federal Government. There likely is not a better person around to tackle the task, than Jessie Roberson.

I believed that statement then, and after 3 years on the job, she proved that statement to be true.

She has done a tremendous job not just for President Bush and Secretary Abraham, but for the entire country. She has made our country safer by accelerating the cleanup of some of the world's most dangerous places. She is making sure that our children and grandchildren are not going to have to bear the burden of these contaminated sites.

While I am saddened to see her leave her post at the Department, I know that she has nothing but the brightest future ahead of her. I am proud to call her my friend and I wish Jessie and her daughter Jessica all the best. Thank you, Jessie Roberson, for your service.

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF GI BILL

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the 60th anniversary of one of the most important bills to ever be passed by this body, the GI bill. Just like the recent remembrance of D-Day and the unveiling of the World War II memorial, the passage of this landmark legislation is another part of the World War II legacy.

Sixty years ago today, President Roosevelt signed into law the "Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944." That bill created unprecedented access to education and training for tens of thousands of military members returning home after World War II.

Even before the War ended, Congress and the Administration were preparing for the return of over 15 million men and women serving in the armed services. Without intervention, those 15 million would have no jobs or opportunities when they returned home. To