

and all of the agencies, officers, and staff here in Washington and on the ground in Haiti, who, when faced with a Herculean task, have more than risen to the occasion. And I want to say how grateful I am for all that you have done, are doing, and will be doing in the days, weeks, and months to come. I have seen firsthand your commitment, compassion, expertise, and professionalism. I am sure that mistakes have been made, but no one wants the aid to arrive more quickly and get to those who need it more than the U.S. personnel on the ground in Haiti.

For myself, I have never been more proud of my government or more grateful for the people who serve in it.

Mr. Speaker, I will insert into the RECORD a story that appeared in *The Washington Post* entitled, "Death toll growing at Port-au-Prince's Hotel Montana, once a symbol of stability."

[From the *Washington Post*, Jan. 24, 2010]

DEATH TOLL GROWING AT PORT-AU-PRINCE'S HOTEL MONTANA, ONCE A SYMBOL OF STABILITY

(By William Booth)

Before the earthquake, the Hotel Montana was the place to be in Haiti. During coups and crises, it provided air-conditioned shelter from the political storms for the diplomats, spies and aid workers—and a few heavy-duty criminals—who gathered nightly at the News Bar under a towering mahogany tree to sip rum sours concocted by Monsieur Lauren, known as the best barman in the country.

To many foreigners, as well as the Haitian elite, the Montana stood for security and stability in a country that often lacked both. Now the Port-au-Prince landmark lies in ruins, as families of missing American, Canadian and French citizens press their embassies for any news of life at the scene of the most concentrated international search-and-rescue effort mounted since the Jan. 12 quake.

It does not look good. As body identification teams proceed with their grim assignment, the list of the dead is growing—posted on a tree in the hotel's circular drive because the reception desk is buried under rubble. Most reporters are being kept away as workers in white biohazard suits pull bodies out and then stumble off to vomit in the bushes.

"Except for miracles, hope is unfortunately fading," Elisabeth Byrs, a spokeswoman for the United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said Saturday.

Some rescue workers have said privately that too many resources have been deployed at the Montana, at the expense of searches elsewhere, and that the U.S. and other governments have focused more attention on those missing at the hotel than on Haitian survivors.

A Facebook page, Haiti Earthquake Hotel Montana, had more than 13,000 members as of Saturday evening and is filled with news, prayers, frustration—and photos of those probably lost in the quake. The posts are poignant: "Diane Cave, Room 220, may have been on way to gym" or "David Apperson last seen in lobby."

Some people post messages of support not only for the families but also for the missing. It is not as strange as it might seem. Cellphone service, disrupted at first, has improved. Someone in the rubble could have received e-mail.

The affiliations of the missing tell part of the story. Many guests at the Montana were

working for organizations such as Food for the Poor, Compassion International and the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

A dozen students from Lynn University in Boca Raton, Fla., were here volunteering with Food for the Poor. Four of them, all women, are missing, along with two faculty members who accompanied them.

Angel Aloma, executive director of Food for the Poor, stood in the driveway in the gathering darkness, hugging Gerthe Cardoso, one of the hotel's owners. The two were going through names of staff members, with Aloma asking whether they were alive and Cardoso answering—yes, no, yes.

"These were not employees, they were family," Cardoso said. "Our accountant. Our waiters. Some had been with us for 15 or 20 years. They came to weddings, birthdays, funerals."

Aloma asked after the famous bartender. "He is gone," Cardoso said, her eyes filling with tears. "Oh, Lauren!"

"Our staff member LeAnn Chong, they saved her after 17 hours of digging," Aloma said. "They had to cut off her hair to get her out."

Many survivors lost far more. Rescue teams describe the work at the Montana as "highly technical" and "medically extreme." Some rescues took 24 hours. Buried survivors subsisted on a trickle of their own urine until rescuers could get an intravenous needle into dehydrated veins. One survivor spent four days in a painful crouch. Some heard other people's last words, their last breaths.

The Rev. Clinton Rabb, in Haiti for a meeting with Methodist aid workers, was freed Jan. 15 after a French surgeon sawed through one leg at the knee and the other at the ankle. Still conscious, Rabb emerged from a tunnel dug into the rubble, like a miner being pulled from a collapsed shaft, and was whisked away in a Navy helicopter. He died last Sunday in a Florida hospital.

HELP FROM AN IPHONE APP

For nine days, an intense rescue effort took place at the Montana, with teams from Fairfax County, France, Chile, Brazil, Colombia and elsewhere working sections. Throughout Haiti, more than 50 teams had rescued 132 people by Saturday. U.S. teams took part in 47 rescues. Some of the most dramatic were at the Montana.

Dan Woolley was in Haiti with Compassion International making a video about poor children. He had just returned to the hotel that Tuesday afternoon when the 7.0-magnitude quake brought the 145-room hotel crashing down. Woolley was trapped in a space by an elevator shaft. It was pitch black, but he used his iPhone first-aid app to treat his leg fracture. He lost his glasses but used his digital single-lens reflex camera to focus and both devices to create a weak glow.

"He used the little light he had to write letters to his wife and his kids," said Raul Perla of the Fairfax team that helped French rescuers pull him out 60 hours later. "Can you imagine?"

Other people, just a few feet away, have not been rescued. A colleague of Woolley's, David Hames, was last seen 20 feet from the elevator shaft where Woolley was found. "David is an amazing family man, the host and creator of the kids' show 'Cranium's Ark,' much loved by hundreds, maybe thousands," a friend, Melanie Dobson, said by e-mail.

The family-owned Montana, built in 1946 in the hills of Port-au-Prince with just 12 rooms, had grown into a sprawling compound with shops, a swimming pool and conference facilities.

Now rescue workers store oxygen tanks in the half-empty pool. On the lawn is a make-

shift shower. Piles of rotting meal rations sit by the fabled News Bar. Beside the conference room stairs, a man in a light-blue shirt, pressed flat by the roof, lies like a flower between the pages of a book.

The place reeks.

'IT'S A LITTLE MIRACLE'

The president of Lynn University, Kevin M. Ross, pressed this week for the return of remains, including those of the four Lynn students missing in the Montana. "This is needed for every grieving father, son, mother, daughter, friend and neighbor who is aching at this very moment for a phone call," Ross said. "A missing family member, whether alive or dead, must be returned to his or her loved ones."

Last week, rumors spread in Port-au-Prince that a popular Montana co-owner, Nadine Cardoso-Riedl, had been killed in her office. Then, just as suddenly, word spread that she was alive.

"We had a little dog, a beagle, that was up on the roof by the terrace, and he alerted, he picked up a scent, but when we brought other dogs to confirm, they couldn't smell her," said Camilo Monroy of the Colombian Civil Defense rescue squad. "We went back the next day, and the same beagle smelled her, and we called, and someone answered. We brought over her son, and he said, 'I think that is my mother down there.'"

The Colombians and other teams dug one tunnel, then a second. Cardoso-Riedl responded, saying two other people were near her. One was perhaps a boy. Sometimes she was lucid, sometimes she appeared to lose consciousness and could not assist the rescuers when they asked: "Are we close? Can you hear us?"

More than 100 hours after her hotel fell down on her, she was pulled out. "It's a little miracle," her husband, Reinhard Riedl, told reporters. "She's one tough cookie. She is indestructible."

Her sister, Gerthe, said Nadine had been kidnapped in Haiti a few years ago and held captive for 15 days. "You have no idea what it takes to survive here," she said.

AN APPEAL TO THE COMMON SENSE OF THE SENATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. I rise today in the hopes of appealing to the common sense of my colleagues in the United States Senate. In a few days, they will vote on whether or not Ben Bernanke will serve a second term as Federal Reserve Chairman. For the good of American taxpayers and the greater economy, his nomination should be rejected.

As Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Mr. Bernanke has intervened in the financial marketplace in an unprecedented way. He has instituted un-American policies that have distorted our free market economy, such as picking winners and losers, and the creation of "too big to fail." Both Republicans and Democrats alike have argued that the Fed itself was a significant factor in creating the worst economic and financial crisis our Nation has faced in a generation.

Where is the justification in reconfirming Ben Bernanke? Under him, interest rates were kept too low for too

long, as the Fed simultaneously increased the money supply and economic bubbles were created. In 2006, financial experts throughout the Nation pointed out that the housing bubble was collapsing, yet the Fed took no action until it was too late, and tens of thousands of families found themselves in foreclosure.

Another major factor in the economic meltdown was the questionable financial transactions by the holding companies of the largest banks and Wall Street firms, which are regulated by the Federal Reserve. It is clear now that the Fed abdicated its role as a regulator of these entities. Just last month, Mr. Bernanke admitted in front of the Senate Banking Committee that, "In the area where we had responsibility, the bank holding companies, we should have done more."

The irony of his comments are that the Fed has plenty of power and authority to deal with the kinds of abuses we have seen in the financial industry and within the housing market, but they refused to act. Under the leadership of Mr. Bernanke, the Fed chose to ignore the abuses going on in the mortgage industry, particularly with subprime loans.

The Fed also chose to ignore Wall Street's risky off-balance-sheet transactions that created a domino effect that rippled through our economy. Bloomberg reported that the Fed itself entered into trillions in off-balance-sheet transactions last year, but the Fed's own Inspector General has not even attempted to audit or to investigate these transactions. Astoundingly, Mr. Bernanke is now advocating that Congress grant the Fed even greater regulatory power. We need to audit the Federal Reserve now.

In discussing Mr. Bernanke's failings as Fed Chairman, it is important to point out that he served on the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve from 2002 to 2005 before becoming Chairman. He is no novice, yet he ignored distress calls about our imminent financial meltdown.

And Mr. Bernanke has not been forthcoming in explaining to Congress and the American people who in the private sector the Fed has chosen to subsidize with American taxpayers' dollars and for what reason and for what amounts. Mr. Bernanke has also been unable to fully explain and account for the \$500 billion the Fed has lent to central banks in Europe. Instead, he continues to hide behind the longstanding premise that monetary policy should be free from political pressure, coupled with the convenience of the Fed not being a public agency and, thus, not being obligated to publicly account for its actions.

Mr. Speaker, it is not his money. It belongs to the American taxpayers. Under Mr. Bernanke's leadership, the Fed even strove to keep the details of AIG's overpayments to its counterparties secret, as recently revealed by a newly disclosed e-mail from a New

York Fed official. The e-mail clearly demonstrates the kind of culture that Bernanke oversaw at the Fed, one of secrecy and willingness to stifle important public disclosure pertaining to the financial crisis. But again, it is not his money.

After the difficult financial year we have had, common sense dictates a change in leadership at the Federal Reserve. Reconfirming Mr. Bernanke to a second term is like putting a stamp of approval on the health of our unstable economy while guaranteeing more of the same failed policies. More of the same is not the solution to our economic downturn and crisis in the financial markets. We need a complete departure from the failed policies of the past.

Mr. Bernanke steered our financial system directly onto the rocks. Should we really put him at the helm again? No.

BANK BAILOUTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. KIRKPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express outrage, outrage at the information that has recently come to light about the AIG bailout. Though it may not be clear yet who should be held accountable, one thing is clear: The American people will not tolerate the use of taxpayer dollars for use in backdoor bailouts where the details are treated as classified, using methods typically reserved for matters of national security.

Though some financial matters may require protection as a matter of national security, it does not appear that the AIG bailout rises to that standard. At a time when our Nation is actively engaged in wars on two fronts, and terrorists and traffickers are always looking for means to breach our defenses, such treatment should be reserved for documents pertaining to actual security threats.

I opposed the Troubled Asset Relief Program from the very beginning because it focused too much on Wall Street and its executives and not enough on the problems that face working Arizona families. It does too little to hold accountable the banks and corporations that have benefited from billions in taxpayer dollars. The House Oversight Committee and the GAO are now investigating the entire AIG bailout. They should complete their work as quickly as possible so the results can be released to the American taxpayers.

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BREAKING THE UNEMPLOYMENT BARRIER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask how we can break the national 10 percent unemployment barrier which has now hit my home State of Florida hard with a totally unacceptable 11.8 percent unemployment rate.

The congressional leadership has created a cloud of uncertainty over the economy, with support for more oppressive regulations, skyrocketing deficits, tax increases, and trade barriers. The administration's spending policies, including the nearly \$1 trillion stimulus bill, have drastically increased the national debt by 23 percent, while unemployment has increased by more than 3 million. And today the CBO announced that the U.S. deficit for the current fiscal year will come in at \$1.3 trillion, which means that in the 1 year in which the party controlling the White House and Congress has been entrenched, the annual deficit has increased by over 300 percent.

We need to do everything we can to encourage entrepreneurs and small businesses to once again create jobs through sensible regulation, through reduced government spending, lower taxes and greater investment in education.

I am looking forward to the President's State of the Union message to see what course he has set for this year and will look forward to working with Members in a bipartisan manner to help bring our economy to full employment as soon as possible.

NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Later on, Mr. Speaker, we will be discussing an important resolution which designates the week of February 1 as National School Counseling Week on behalf of each and every child that these counselors have helped. As a mother, as a grandmother, and as a former Florida certified teacher, I recognize just how important it is to fully support our children at every turn. School counselors across the Nation share the same commendable goal to meet the needs of every child. They work each and every day to offer our children their expert guidance and compassionate care. Whether at home or in school, every child will face new and sometimes difficult situations as they develop into young adults. Through a strong family, many children are able to navigate potentially difficult situations, emotions and decisions from a positive base. But even with the most cohesive and supportive of families, there are times when a growing child needs outside counsel.

Our school counselors can offer children this vital resource: trusted and impartial guides in times of uncertainty as well as thoughtful friends for uncomfortable questions. And they willingly work with all children, regardless of their background or history, and are often the last lifeline for our troubled children.

We all recognize that children go through tremendous social, personal