behalf of women's economic empowerment. The programs of the Chicago-based center are effective, successful, and benefit diverse women. These centers service an array of women and their families, including self-employment for former welfare recipients, business development, expansion and job creation.

The work of the Women's Business Development Center and other women's business assistance centers are essential to strengthening the economy of this Nation by fostering women's business development nationally.

The WBDC and women's business assistance centers are funded by the United States SBA office of Women's Business Ownership and by private and public sector support. They help support a diverse and growing population of new and emerging job-creating women entrepreneurs, including women transitioning off welfare.

These centers are unique in that they provide long-term training, involve public and private partnerships for their support, and can be measured on the basis of their economic impact. These centers have served tens of thousands of women.

The women's business assistance centers serve our constituencies by offering quality programs to effectively leverage scarce public and private resources into successful job creation, new business start-ups, and business expansion. Most of them, even after they are no longer eligible for Federal funding, continue to be sustained by the private sector.

These centers are committed to economic self-sufficiency programs that are as diverse as the women served: women of color, women on public assistance, women seeking self-employment, rural and urban women, and women starting home-based businesses. Therefore, it is appropriate that we pause to recognize the great work of the Women's Business Development Center and women's business assistance centers throughout the country.

I take special note of the work of Hedy Ratner of the Women's Development Center, Counselo Pope of the Cosmopolitan Chamber of Commerce, Jaribi Kitwana, director of the Women's Business Development Center, and Pam Bozeman, director of the Women's Self-Employment Project, all outstanding women in the City of Chicago who provide immeasurable help and support to other women seeking to go into business.

RECOGNIZING ACHIEVEMENTS OF WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to welcome the United States and the Congress to Women's History Month. As a member of the Women's Caucus, I stand to recognize the achievements and the remaining obstacles of women-owned businesses.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the co-chairs of the Women's Caucus and the women-owned business legislative team, my colleagues, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. JUANITA MILLENDER-MCDONALD) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. SUE KELLY), for organizing us to come to the floor today. They should be congratulated for their efforts on this issue, specifically for introducing legislation, House Resolution 313, which outlines the findings from last year's first-ever Women's Caucus hearing on women-owned businesses.

This legislation expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that all Federal agencies would benefit from reviewing specified recommendations for the purpose of improving equitable access for women-owned businesses to the Federal procurement market.

Women-owned businesses are important sources of economic development in my community in Miami, Florida, one of the poorest districts in the country. But low income does not mean low ambition, Mr. Speaker, nor does it mean low potential. Microcredit programs that lend small amounts to nontraditional borrowers have proven to be very promising tools for change, allowing women to build businesses, income and pride for themselves and their families.

Small loans, yes; microcredit, yes; but it does bring respect and ownership to these women who otherwise could not find work. This in itself is another remedy for getting off welfare and moving into work.

The microcredit concept has been notably developed by Working Capital Florida. That is the name of the group. It is a local nonprofit group in south Florida. This program serves approximately 350 businesses in Miami, Dade County. The loans average about $725, and they have to be paid back in less than a year. And guess what, Mr. Speaker? These loans have been coming back in and being paid and being rotated and other women are taking advantage of this money.

Many of the borrowers of the money comprise single-family mothers with not a man in the House. These are minority mothers who have children they must care for, and certainly Working Capital Florida is helping them.

Programs like Working Capital Florida provide women with the opportunity to develop their entrepreneurial talents. Working Capital Florida provides the loans necessary to launch businesses, and also provides education about business practices through workshops and training sessions, allowing women to further tune their skills for successful enterprises.

In the wake of welfare reform, this is a particularly critical time for business enterprise, and specifically business enterprise for women. There are few jobs for female welfare recipients in inner-city areas. In Miami many women have taken the giant step of employing themselves to make ends meet for their families.

In Liberty City, my own neighborhood in Miami, many women create their own private businesses. Many of them make dolls. They sell them. They make head scarves. They make ethnic clothing. They capitalize on their own personal talents in order to make ends meet. Innovative businesses run the gamut from day care and house cleaning to hair braiding and stick-on nail specialists.

These women simply could not launch these businesses without the required financial backing to bring their initiatives to fruition. Programs like Working Capital Florida enable these women to devise their own business plans and get on their feet. These are small loans, Mr. Speaker, between $500 and $5,000, and they maintain the ability to produce significant life changes. They generate economic activity in our communities and a sense of self-pride.

I believe that the community development opportunity that is provided through group lending programs is vitally important, especially during a time that long-time safety nets for the poor are unraveling. Further support from other private sources, commercial banks, and State and Federal governments, helps to further build programs like Working Capital Florida.

Mr. Speaker, thousands of poor women are responsive, creative and hard-working. They have to spark. All they need is a little leadership to turn that spark into a flame. And that is what Working Capital Florida is doing and that is what many programs throughout this country are doing to help women get on their feet. They have the skills. They have the ability.

U.S. OBSESSION WITH WORLDWIDE MILITARY OCCUPATION POLICY

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

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, last week it was Saddam Hussein and the Iraqis. This week's Hitler is Slobodon Milosevic and the Serbs. Next week, who knows? Kim Chong-il and the North Koreans? Next year, who will it be, the Ayatollah and the Iranians? Every week we must find a foreign infidel to slay; and, of course, keep the military-industrial complex humming.

Once our ally, Saddam Hussein, with encouragement from us, invaded Iran. Was it not logical that he might believe that we condone border crossings and invasions even into what Iraqis believe rightfully theirs, Kuwait, especially after getting tacit approval from U.S. Ambassador Glaspie?

Last week U.S. Special Envoy to the Balkans Robert Gelbard, while visiting Belgrade, praised Milosevic for his cooperation in Bosnia and called the separatists in Kosova ''without question a

terrorist group.'' So how should we expect a national government to treat its terrorists?

Likewise, our Secretary of State in 1991 gave a signal to Milosevic by saying, ''All Yugoslavia should remain a monolithic state.'' What followed was to be expected: Serb oppression of the Croats and the Muslims.

All our wise counsel so freely given to so many in this region fails to recognize that the country of Yugoslavia was an artificial country created by the Soviet masters, just as the borders of most Middle Eastern countries were concocted by the British and U.N. resolutions.

The centuries old ethnic rivalries inherent in this region, and aggravated by persistent Western influence as far back as the Crusades, will never be resolved by arbitrary threats and use of force from the United States or the United Nations. All that is being accomplished is to further alienate the factions, festering hate and pushing the region into a war of which we need no part.

Planning any military involvement in Kosova is senseless. Our security is not threatened, and no one has the foggiest notion of whether Kofi Annan or Bill Clinton is in charge of our foreign policy. The two certainly do not speak in unison on Iraq.

But we cannot maintain two loyalties, one to a world government under the United Nations and the other to U.S. sovereignty protected by an American Congress. If we try, only chaos can result and we are moving rapidly in that direction.

Instead of bringing our troops home from Bosnia, as many Members of Congress have expressed an interest in doing, over the President's objection, we are rapidly preparing for sending more troops into Kosova. This obsession with worldwide military occupation by U.S. troops is occurring at the very time our troops lack adequate training and preparation.

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This is not a result of too little money by a misdirected role for our military, a role that contradicts the policy of neutrality, friendship, trade and nonintervention in the affairs of other nations. The question we should ask is: are we entitled to, wealthy enough, or even wise enough to assume the role of world policemen and protector of the world's natural resources?

Under the Constitution, there is no such authority. Under rules of morality, we have no authority to force others to behave as we believe they should, and force American citizens to pay for it not only with dollars, but with life and limb as well. And by the rules of common sense, the role of world policemen is a dangerous game and not worth playing.

Acting as an honest broker, the U.S. may help bring warring factions to the peace table, but never with threats of war or bribes paid for by the American taxpayers. We should stop sending money and weapons to all factions. Too often our support finds its way into the hands of both warring factions and we never know how long it will be for our friends and allies of today to become our enemy and targets of tomorrow.

Concern for American security is a proper and necessary function of the U.S. Congress. The current policy, and one pursued for decades, threatens our security, drains our wallets, and worst of all, threatens the lives of young Americans to stand tall for Americans' defense, but not for Kofi Annan and the United Nations.

PLANNING THE 2000 CENSUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, earlier today one of my colleagues came to the floor of the House and complained about the Census Bureau and the Department of Commerce not providing information about the 2000 Census.

I am here to put the facts of the matter before the Members of the House so that they can make up their own minds about the openness of the planning for the 2000 Census.

First, let me remind my colleagues that the process of planning the 2000 Census has been the most open planning process of any census in history. The only thing that is closed in this process is the minds of those who are opposed to sampling.

First, a few of the facts. As I have pointed out before, the planning for the 2000 Census has involved an Advisory Committee of over 50 organizations, including House and Senate members who sit on the authorizing and appropriations committees and subcommittees.

In the 102nd and 103rd Congresses, there were several hearings on the 2000 Census. Unfortunately, there have been very few since then. The Census Bureau Director and the Secretary of Commerce have held dozens of town hall meetings to involve the public in the planning of the 2000 Census. There have been no secrets in the past about planning the census and there are no secrets today.

Last week, there was much ado about the plans for a nonsampling census and some Members have complained because one has not been produced. Mr. Speaker, there is a plan for the 2000 Census and it is a good one. Here it is: The Congress has asked for yet a second plan to be developed and that is being done. But there was no staff at the Census Bureau to develop a second plan for a census when that request was made. Every available staff member of the Census Bureau was hard at work trying to get the 2000 dress rehearsal under way, or working on the Economic Census, or working on one of the many current population programs the Census Bureau is responsible for. To develop a second plan for the 2000 Census means that they have to hire new staff. That takes time.

Once that staff has been hired, they have to be trained before they can be turned loose to design a census. If Members think that plan should be ready today, they either badly misunderstand the complexity of the task, or do not care about the quality of the product. I for one, want to make sure that the next census is the best possible. I fear that some of my colleagues will settle for a census that leaves out millions of Americans, as long as it suits their own political purposes.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest that there is inappropriate and appropriate oversight. The opponents of sampling have repeatedly claimed that the use of sampling left the census open to political manipulation by the political officials at the Commerce Department. Now, it is my understanding that the Census Subcommittee staff has requested to interrogate the staff at the Census Bureau doing some of the most sensitive statistical work, before that work is completed.

Why I ask? The Census Bureau offered to give the subcommittee staff full access to any documents or individuals once the research was completed. Why is the subcommittee insisting that they must have access during the research process?

Congressional staff has no more reason to interfere with this statistical process than do officials at the Department of Commerce. If the political officials at Commerce asked for the kind of access requested by the subcommittee's staff, they would be turned down. That is as it should be. The subcommittee staff needs to learn the difference between oversight and interference.

The Census Bureau is an agency of impeccable integrity. I, for one, stand here ready to defend their integrity against any who attack it, be they Congresspersons, Congressional staff, or officials in the administration. The subcommittee staff are not being stonewalled, they are being told that there should be no political interference with the statistics of the census. That is correct, and I will defend it to the end.

CONGRESSIONAL CHILDREN'S CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I come today on the floor of the House for two issues that I think are extremely important. First of all, I would like to thank all of the participants who joined the Congressional Children's Caucus today in a hearing on emotional disorders of children.