

racked by civil war into a stable multiparty democracy. The country has attained a balance of power among the Executive, Judicial and Legislative Branches. It has enacted measures to guarantee the full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and has adopted policies that strengthen municipal governments and provide much-needed social services to local communities.

The country has also undergone an equally dramatic economic transformation. Its economy, which suffered decades of decline, has become one of the fastest growing economies in the region. For the past eight years, the GDP in El Salvador has averaged 5.3 percent. Inflation, which averaged above 20 percent prior to 1992, now tops at 1.5 percent. El Salvador's privatization program is one of the most successful in the region. Moreover, it is considered today one of the best sovereign credit risks in Latin America.

All of these accomplishments are testament to the will of the Salvadoran people to put their past behind them and focus on creating a future of social stability and economic prosperity. It is also a testament to the political leadership of the Salvadoran government. When President Calderon Sol took office five years ago, he had the responsibility to assure full compliance with the peace accords, as well as keep the economy of El Salvador on the path of economic reform. He deserves today to be applauded by this body of Congress for his accomplishments and for leading his country successfully into the 21st century.

El Salvador's dramatic transformation is not unlike the changes that have taken place across Central America. Today marks the first time in the history of the region that all of Central America is at peace, implementing free market reforms and led by Democratic governments. For those of us who were in Congress during the 1980s, we know what a remarkable feat this is and how significant it is that we can today, in a bipartisan fashion, applaud the consolidation of democracy in El Salvador.

We should not take the strides that the region has taken for granted. The devastation brought by Hurricane Mitch has dealt a severe blow to the fortunes of the region. History has shown that natural disasters can be the breeding grounds for civil and political unrest and the erosion of civil liberties. I urge my colleagues to support the emergency aid package to the region that is currently on the Senate floor for debate. In addition, I ask that we also pass the CBI enhancement bill so that these countries also have the opportunity to help themselves.

Mr. President, I congratulate and commend the people of El Salvador for continuing to move forward in a way that will bring our hemisphere to-

gether—and increase the likelihood that for all of us, the 21st century will be a time of peace, freedom, and prosperity.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 21—AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO CONDUCT MILITARY AIR OPERATIONS AND MISSILE STRIKES AGAINST THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA (SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO)

Mr. BIDEN (for himself, Mr. WARNER, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. BYRD, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. LIEBERMAN, and Mr. ROBB) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. CON. RES. 21

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That the President of the United States is authorized to conduct military air operations and missile strikes in cooperation with our NATO allies against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 22—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS WITH RESPECT TO PROMOTING COVERAGE OF INDIVIDUALS UNDER LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE

Mr. DODD (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

S. RES. 22

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. PROMOTION OF COVERAGE OF INDIVIDUALS UNDER LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) As the baby boom generation begins to retire, funding social security and medicare will put a strain on the financial resources of younger Americans.

(2) Medicaid was designed as a program for the poor, but in many States Medicaid is being used for middle income elderly people to fund long-term care expenses.

(3) In the coming decade, people over age 65 will represent 20 percent or more of the population, and the proportion of the population composed of individuals who are over age 85, and most likely to need long-term care, may double or triple.

(4) With nursing home care now costing an average of \$40,000 to \$50,000 per year, long-term care expenses can have a catastrophic effect on families, wiping out a lifetime of savings before a spouse, parent, or grandparent becomes eligible for Medicaid.

(5) Many people are unaware that most long-term care costs are not covered by Medicare and that Medicaid covers long-term care only after the person's assets have been exhausted.

(6) Widespread use of private long-term care insurance has the potential to protect families from the catastrophic costs of long-term care services while, at the same time, easing the burden on Medicaid as the baby boom generation ages.

(7) The Federal Government has endorsed the concept of private long-term care insurance by establishing Federal tax rules for tax-qualified policies in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996.

(8) The Federal Government has ensured the availability of quality long-term care insurance products and sales practices by adopting strict consumer protections in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) The Federal Government should take all appropriate steps to inform the public about the financial risks posed by rapidly increasing long-term care costs and about the need for families to plan for their long-term care needs;

(2) The Federal Government should take all appropriate steps to inform the public that Medicare does not cover most long-term care costs and that Medicaid covers long-term care costs only when the beneficiary has exhausted his or her assets;

(3) The Federal Government should take all appropriate steps not only to encourage employers to offer private long-term care insurance coverage to employees, but also to encourage both working-aged people and older citizens to obtain long-term care insurance either through their employers or on their own;

(4) appropriate committees of Congress, together with the Department of Health and Human Services and other appropriate executive branch agencies, should develop specific ideas for encouraging Americans to plan for their own long-term care needs; and

(5) the congressional tax-writing committees, together with the Department of the Treasury, should determine whether modification of the tax rules for long-term care insurance is necessary to ensure that the rules adequately facilitate the affordability of long-term care insurance.

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSION

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I would like to announce for information of the Senate and the public that a hearing of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, Subcommittee on Public Health will be held on, March 25, 1999, 9:30 a.m., in SD-430 of the Senate Dirksen Building. The subject of the hearing is Bioterrorism. For further information, please call the committee, 202/224-5375.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities be authorized to meet at 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 23, 1999, in open session, to receive testimony on the proliferation threat and the Department of Defense's program and policies to counter it.

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