

Aristide towers over potential alternatives and has worked hard to cooperate with Washington's often arrogant demands.

In December, the Clinton administration agreed to restore aid once the Haitian leader adopted eight conditions that addressed electoral and economic reforms along with narcotics smuggling, illegal migration and human-rights violations. Later, Aristide agreed to all of them.

After several requests by Haiti for help in addressing the election issue, the Organization of American States belatedly decided to dispatch a delegation to discuss election reforms. Since Washington largely determines OAS Haiti policy, its initiative's bona fides will require scrutiny.

LITTLE SUPPORT

There is a danger here, which comes far less from the fact that relatively few Haitians have any respect for the opposition coalition. Any outside imposed government and revitalized military, as hinted by Gourgue, could destroy the country's fragile human-rights situation, its enfeebled judicial system and its lame democratization process.

The Bush administration would do well to honor the commitments made by President Clinton.

Failing to display some basic amity to Haiti's population will only add more yellowed pages to the profoundly jaundiced and mean-spirited links to Port-au-Prince, which historically have been characterized by condescension rather than respect.

[From the Columbia, Missouri, Tribune Online, July 8, 2000]

CITIZENS OF PERU LEFT TO FIGHT FOR NATION'S DEMOCRACY

Editor, the Tribune: Scores of women, clad in black and carrying coffins symbolizing the death of democracy in Peru, Marched through the streets of Lima on June 28m demanding new balloting in protest of President Alberto Fujimori's scandal-ridden reelection. As the march headed toward the hotel hosting the Organization of American States delegation, the women faced a barrage of tear gas from the security forces. The OAS, much like the United States, has been largely ineffective in trying to promote democracy in what has become Fujimori country. Like a couple of ill-whelped dogs, the OAS and the United States have skulked away from the indignant attitude of "El Chino" and left the Peruvian people to be the sole defenders of the nation's democracy.

Even with the recent OAS proposal to reform the system, there are no guarantees that the government will follow the guidelines. In fact, Fujimori has amply shown that he has nothing but contempt for both OAS secretary-general César Gaviria and the Clinton administration, but as the police attack on the women's march reveals—and as Bastille Day approaches—he does indeed have good grounds to fear the citizenry who will no longer tolerate his false claims to power. Where else can change begin but at home? Hopefully, the recent mass demonstrations will spark positive change toward democratic reforms even if a feckless OAS is unable to mandate new elections.

HOLOCAUST VICTIMS INSURANCE RELIEF ACT

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2001

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing H.R. 2693, the Holocaust Victims Insurance Relief Act, a bill to require all companies operating in the United States to disclose the names on Holocaust-era insurance policies. The legislation would also enable survivors to access to this information by establishing a Holocaust Insurance Registry at the National Archives.

At its core, this is a moral issue. Insurance companies holding Holocaust-era policies have a responsibility to disclose any information that will help survivors finally reclaim their policies with dignity and equity. In many cases, company archives contain the only existing files related to the countless policies that were stolen from victims of Nazi ghettos and death camps.

Just one year ago, on July 17, 2000, the United States and Germany signed an Executive Agreement establishing the German Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility, and the Future," a \$5 billion fund to settle all Holocaust-era claims, including slave and forced labor, banking, and insurance. During the preceding ceremony, U.S. Holocaust Envoy Stuart Eizenstat said, "It is critically important that all German insurance companies cooperate with the process established by the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims, or ICHEIC. This includes publishing lists of unpaid insurance policies and subjecting themselves to audit. Unless German insurance companies make these lists available through ICHEIC, potential claimants cannot know their eligibility, and the insurance companies will have failed to assume their moral responsibility."

Unfortunately, little progress has been made since then and the urgency of this issue grows as Holocaust survivors are dying every day. Although the ICHEIC was established in 1998 to expeditiously resolve unpaid Holocaust-era claims, more than 84% of the over 72,675 claims inquiries filed remain unresolved because the claimants cannot identify the company holding their assets.

Furthermore, it is outrageous that regardless of their level of compliance with ICHEIC rules insurance companies that contribute to the Foundation fund are given a minimal \$150 million cap on all liabilities, virtual legal immunity in U.S. courts, and an arbitrary January 31, 2002 expiration of their obligation to accept claims.

The insurance companies must be held accountable. H.R. 2693 will ensure that Congress will not stand by and allow them to shirk their obligation.

This bill also expresses congressional support for states seeking to adopt and enforce their own laws to address the issue of unpaid Holocaust-era policies, and recognizes the efforts of legislatures in California, New York, Florida, Washington, and Minnesota. I also understand that similar efforts are underway in the legislatures of Texas, Illinois, and Massachusetts.

California led the nation in enacting a Holocaust insurance reporting statute at the state level, and it has provided the insurance companies with a powerful incentive to comply with the law. It is time for us to extend this relief to survivors across the country.

I would also like to thank my colleague Representative ENGEL, who is an original cosponsor of this bill and who was instrumental in introducing similar legislation in the 105th and 106th Congresses.

Less than six months from today, the ICHEIC deadline for accepting claims will expire. We must act swiftly to make sure that survivors have the necessary information to file their rightful claims. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and I hope we can bring it to the floor for a vote in the near future.

TRIBUTE TO GITTA NAGEL

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2001

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me today in paying tribute to a dedicated champion of Jewish affairs and public service, Mrs. Gitta Nagel of California, who will soon be receiving an Honorary Doctorate degree from Bar-Ilan University in Israel. Mrs. Nagel has continually strived to ensure a brighter, more cohesive future for the Jewish community by encouraging stronger academic programs and an everlasting remembrance of the Holocaust.

As a young child living in Amsterdam during the Holocaust, Gitta saw first hand the destructive force and brutality of the Nazi regime, an experience that would continue to drive her throughout her life as a philanthropist. After the war, she emigrated to the United States where she attended UCLA and met her future husband, Jack Nagel.

Through her efforts to promote a stronger Jewish community, Gitta Nagel has held leadership roles in numerous organizations including the United Jewish Communities, the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, and Israel Bonds. In addition, she was a founding member of the Golda Meir Club, an organization that supports the State of Israel through her annual purchase of \$5,000 worth of Israeli government bonds. Gitta also started a chapter of Bnei Akiva, a testament to her unwavering support for Zionism and the State of Israel.

She has also shown a perpetual commitment to a prosperous future through her support of education. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is no surprise that Gitta is an original founder of Yeshiva Yavneh of Los Angeles High Schools. She had lent her support to Bar-Ilan University through an endowment for immigrant students, doctoral fellowships, research grants, and numerous other academic programs.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to Gitta Nagel's unwavering support for Jewish organizations, I would like to both emphasize and commend her work to preserve the memory of the Holocaust. Gitta has selflessly worked to secure a special place in history for Holocaust victims. She has given incredible amounts of time, energy and resources to make sure that the atrocity of the Holocaust is never forgotten.