

right here in the Congress of the United States, both Houses who have worked against Haiti for years. But rather than talk about all of that, this time should be used to make the plea, to say to our President, move now; to say to CARICOM, it is your proposal, enforce it. If the opposition does not support it, it is time to move ahead and stabilize this little country, save the lives, avoid the blood bath and emerge as honorable in all of this, honorable people, an honorable country that reached out a helping hand and did the right thing at the right time. We cannot wait any longer, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, let me just say this: we in the Congressional Black Caucus stand very strongly behind this effort to bring peace to this land of Haiti, and we will continue to stand, and we do appreciate the meeting that we did have with the President today. But in echoing the words of the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), we want the President to act. Words are nice, but now he must act.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS UNITED ON HAITI

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by thanking the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, for calling this Special Order; and let me commend my colleagues, each of them, who gave eloquent speeches and for their involvement.

We have an issue here that the Black Caucus stands united on. We are together. This is an issue that is extremely serious, because the people of Haiti have endured more than their share of struggle, unrest, and bloodshed.

This January marks the bicentennial of the independence of Haiti in 1804, the world's first black republic and the second country in the Western Hemisphere to gain its independence, a country that defeated the mighty armies of Napoleon, where Napoleon sent his own brother to fight in Haiti and Haiti defeated the great French military. And in their defeat of the great French military, the French government became poorer. They needed funds. They expended tremendous amounts of money on the war. Secondly, Haiti produced more income for the French republic than all of the 13 Colonies in the United States put together. What they exported, what was taken out of Haiti were valuable items.

So we have a nation very strong and proud and important. We had a nation that Simon Bolivar lived in. He was a liberator of South America. He was in Haiti, and he lived there and he studied the valiance of the Haitian Army and went back and fought the Spanish and

South America and Bolivia became an independent country. We have Haiti that caused the French, as I mentioned, to lose their financial resources and, therefore, had to sell to the United States the Louisiana Purchase, the Louisiana territory which was controlled by the French. That opened up the west. The Lewis and Clarke expedition started in St. Louis and went and explored the United States of America, once again Haiti's connection to the growth and development. In the battle of Savannah, 800 Haitians fought in the Revolutionary War for our independence from Britain. As a matter of fact, the United States would not recognize Haiti for over 50 years until after the Civil War because they always had a fear that Haitians would come through Florida and then, because there were more black people in the South than whites, they thought that this Haitian Army could lead liberations through the States of the South of the United States of America, so they would not recognize Haiti because they did not want a Haitian diplomat to come to the United States. It was not until after the Emancipation Proclamation, after the Civil War, that the United States Government appointed Frederick Douglass to be the council general to Haiti. The U.S. waited until they felt comfortable that a black diplomat could come to this country.

So Haiti is involved with us. Our Marines went there in the 1900s and controlled, and we ran the country and we allowed dictators, Papa Doc and Baby Doc, to run that country.

So we have a responsibility. We should be there currently. We should be there to tell those thugs and drug dealers and the former soldiers of Generals Cedras and Biambraz and the former police chief Michel Francois who was one of the coup plotters when President Aristide was sent out of the country, those thugs and criminals and drug dealers are coming back into the country. Who could we negotiate with when we see bans of thugs running down the street and President Aristide, who speaks six languages, French and Spanish fluently, he will speak in Spanish or in English and Patois, his own language, and Latin? We are saying that he is a person that we cannot negotiate with and we are going to deal with drug dealers and thugs and gangsters and murderers and former people from the old army?

The answer is clear. We need to stand up now. We need to send resources into Haiti. We need to join with the international community, the French, the Canadians, the Venezuelans, the friends of Haiti who will come together, the Jamaicans, the South Africans. We must act; we must act now.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR ACTION IN HAITI

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

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join my colleagues in this vital discussion on Haiti. I want to first pay tribute, proper tribute to the people who are on the Haitian Task Force who have kept the caucus position going. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS), and a few others have established a firm record of negotiations and letter-writing and they have allowed us to make a paper trail and a record of consideration and compromise that brings us to the point where we are today, and all that has been done, and now it is time for action.

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Today, we decided to take action after being frustrated in numerous meetings where nothing was accomplished. We asked for a meeting with the President of the United States. We asked for a meeting with the President of the United States, and I stand here as a member of the Congressional Black Caucus who must admit I was more surprised than anybody else that we finally got the meeting with the President of the United States. It took some drama. We were sitting there talking to two of the President's representatives for an hour before finally he agreed to meet with us, and I will not go into all of that. I will not also go into the background of what is happening presently in Haiti unnecessarily.

I have two items I will submit for the RECORD at this point. One is a press release that I issued today, February 25, and also a letter to Colin Powell which I sent on February 19.

OWENS PLEADS FOR FRENCH EMERGENCY ACTION TO SAVE DEMOCRACY IN HAITI

In response to the dangerous escalation of the violence driven by a thug army in Haiti Congressman Major Owens offered the following motion at a Wednesday (February 25th) meeting of the Congressional Black Caucus: "To halt the escalating violence and the possible assassination of democracy in Haiti all of the members of the Congressional Black Caucus should immediately go to the French Embassy in Washington to plead for the dispatch of French forces to protect the government and the democratically elected President of Haiti."

"This White House and its agents are like Pontius Pilate pretending to wash their hands while the democratic nation of Haiti is assassinated," proclaimed Owens in a speech on the floor of the House of Representatives on February 24, 2004.

The Congressman from Brooklyn, which has a large community of Haitian Americans further charged: "At least one former CIA asset has been identified as a leader of the band of savage guerrillas. The people of the United States must turn their backs on this conspiracy and demand that the democratic nation of Haiti, the democratic government, the duly-elected President of Haiti be supported by the United States Government and that Aristide be allowed to serve out his next 2 years without any compromise with bands of thugs in the street."

In a letter sent last week to Secretary of State, Colin Powell, Owens insisted that: "History will hold the United States accountable for the situation in Haiti! Years of

hostile U.S. policy with regard to Haiti has brought about the current political crisis and deteriorating economic and social conditions there."

The Congressman, who from 1991 to 1995, served as Chairman of the CBC Task Force on Haiti, is applauding other current actions being taken by the CBC: A demand for a meeting with President Bush; a CBC Delegation trip on Haiti on Friday, February 27th; a demand for a second meeting with CIA and U.S. State Department representatives; and united actions with students and other Haitian support groups.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 19, 2004.

Hon. COLIN POWELL,
Secretary of State, Department of State, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY POWELL: I am disturbed by the failure of your office to take immediate steps to stop the mass murder in Haiti. Haiti is on the brink of civil war and the Bush Administration stands in the shadows waiting for the destruction of Aristide.

I call on you and the Bush Administration to take immediate steps to defend the democratically elected government of Haiti. Advisory from the United States must be dispatched at once to reinforce the police in Haiti and restore law and order.

History will hold the United States accountable for the situation in Haiti! Years of hostile U.S. policy with regard to Haiti has brought about the current political crisis and deteriorating economic and social conditions there. In addition to placing an economic stranglehold on Haiti the Bush Administration has emboldened the political opposition in its quest to topple the democratically elected President of Haiti. President Aristide must be allowed to serve out the remainder of his term without interference from the United States. There must be no regime change in Haiti! President Aristide was democratically elected by the people of Haiti and the United States is obligated to respect the will of the Haitian people.

The United States and the international community must act in collaboration to resolve the political impasse in Haiti. The United Nations must begin meeting immediately in order to prepare for a long-term peaceful resolution to Haiti's political and economic situation. Immediate action must begin now to avert more violence and mass exodus of Haitians. The French are considering sending peacekeepers and the Canadians have offered nearly \$1 million in medical and food aid. The United States can not shirk its responsibility to the Haitian people. The U.S. must cooperate with the international community to restore law and order and provide humanitarian aid to Haiti now! Your lack of resolve in discouraging anarchy and restoring democracy in Haiti is unconscionable.

What is the Administration waiting for? How many more Haitians must die before the international community led by the United States takes the necessary steps to guarantee the maintenance of democracy in Haiti. Send police advisors to restore democracy in Haiti now!

MAJOR R. OWENS,
Member of Congress.

The important thing is why are we so reluctant to protect the democratically elected government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in Haiti? What has Aristide done wrong? Why do we continually hear that Aristide is no better than the thugs and killers and drug dealers who are opposed to him? Why

do we continually hear that he is to blame? What are the charges against Jean-Bertrand Aristide? Does he build palaces like Saddam Hussein all over the place using the money of the taxpayers of Haiti in a profligate manner? Is he himself in some way a debaucher? Has he traveled around the world and shopped and spent the money of his government? What are the charges against Jean-Bertrand Aristide? Why is he considered to be equal with the thugs and the drug dealers and killers who are now forming the opposition against him?

The truth of the matter is Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected by the people of Haiti not once, but twice. They seem to lose sight of the chronology. Aristide was elected in 1991. The Army of Haiti deposed him. He was driven out of the country. He spent a large amount of time here in Washington in an apartment while he was exiled.

We finally convinced President Clinton to use armed intervention to restore the Government of Haiti. Aristide went back to Haiti, and although he had spent 3 years away from his government and had only 2 remaining, our government says, well, you ought to just only serve out your remaining 2 years, do not stay any longer. He complied with that. This is a man who is not obstinate or stubborn. He complied. He stepped down after 2 years, and another President took over, Mr. Preval, for 5 years, and then Aristide was reelected overwhelmingly after Mr. Preval had finished his 5 years.

Now we have an orderly transition in Haiti for the first time in history, orderly transition under the Constitution of Haiti. What is Aristide guilty of? If he has obeyed, like George Washington as a leader, very popular, he could have gotten a mandate from the people to stay in for life and all these kinds of things dictators do. He has not done that. We have not accused Aristide of having weapons of mass destruction. So why are we equating Aristide with the opposition, a band of rebels and violent people who want to overthrow the government that is duly elected?

I tell you why. There is a band of families, some say 6, some say 10, a band of rich families who have run Haiti the last 100 years. The rich have always been able to pick the governments. They have always been able to control the governments through the army. Aristide disbanded the army, and he cannot be thrown out by an army. So they have thugs and killers and drug dealers organized to throw out Aristide so they can work their will on the people.

Aristide is a great man. He should not be left to a fate of assassination. Our government should act to protect this democratically elected Government of Haiti.

HAITI CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). Under a previous

order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to rise to join my colleagues of the Congressional Black Caucus for what I think is one of the more important presentations to this House and to our colleagues and to the Nation, and that is, what is the role of the most powerful democracy in the world if it is not to look just a few miles to the south to be able to engage with a long-standing ally, in fact an ally that stood shoulder to shoulder with the Founding Fathers of this Nation and bled on our behalf so that we might be free. Today we find ourselves standing alongside of our Haitian brothers and sisters seeking justice and freedom for them.

I want to thank the Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus for his leadership and my many colleagues who have spent hours upon hours working to secure the freedom of the Haitians. As mentioned, those Members, from the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) to the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS), to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS), working with all of us in our respective responsibilities, have stood for the cause of justice, but also for saving lives.

Mr. Speaker, this is no time for silence because silence will only render a death sentence to every Haitian who seeks freedom in this century.

I am saddened by the fact that it seems there are inner workings in the State Department and other places that, rather than promote the democratization and the existence of the democracy of Haiti, there seems to be an undermining of a duly elected democratic government. The meeting today, as called by the Congressional Black Caucus because of the emergency crisis in Haiti, first with the Secretary of State and Dr. Rice, was certainly a door opener, but it was clear that we needed to meet with the President of the United States. Tonight I thank the President for this meeting, and I hope that out of the meeting and what was presented to the President in seriousness and in the backdrop of the impending crisis and bloodshed in Haiti, in Port-au-Prince, that he will act now in the next 24 hours.

Mr. Speaker, we are only 650 miles away from Haiti off the coast of Florida. Right now in those waters is a boat of refugees, more expected to come. The Congressional Black Caucus, with its expertise, gave to the President the instructions, and it should not be viewed as dominance. It should be viewed as collaboration.

It is imperative that military assistance go to Haiti now because what the people in Port-au-Prince are facing is