

civics education? Should children not be able to articulate those principles?

We can argue whether they are right or wrong, but we should be able to have children who can articulate them, understand who we are, where we come from and where we are going.

I know that this is a stretch for a lot of people. It is hard for a lot of people to get their hands on this because it is not an issue that you can condense into a bumper sticker, but I encourage people to think through this and think about the possibility that it is important for us and for our civilization to actually transmit these goals and ideas to the next generation. We cannot continue to teach only the negative. Doing so contributes to the balkanization of the United States into subgroups, subcategories, and hyphenated Americans.

In Numbers U.S.A., an organization that does a lot of great work and also has a great Website, Numbers U.S.A. talks about the fact that if we continue as we are in terms of population growth and the source of our population growth in this country, being 90 percent from immigrants, that by the year 2100 two-thirds of the people here in the United States will be descendants of people not yet here at the present time. Think about that. In 96 years, two-thirds of the people living in this country will be descendants of people not yet here. Think about that and then think about what we are teaching them, the folks that are coming in and the folks that are here about who we are. How can we expect this new Nation essentially that will be created by 2100 to be steeped in the same goals and principles and ideas?

Again, Madam Speaker, I hope that we will be joined by hundreds of thousands of Americans all over the country who will be willing to say that it is important for their schools, it is important for our civilization that we teach children to appreciate the value of Western civilization and there is something we all can do about it. I am going to do what I can do here, State legislators will do what they can do in their respective bodies, and then it is up to the people of this country to take this on and move it forward. It will determine whether we are a Nation at all in years to come.

PROTECT HAITIAN LIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BLACKBURN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, this Special Order is taken in a spirit of deep sadness and regret about the events that are going on in the nation of Haiti. We have come here this evening to recommit ourselves to the proposition that the United States has a responsibility to prevent the loss of life and the continued deterioration of the nation of Haiti. The present administration's inaction has undermined de-

mocracy and security in Haiti, and it is our responsibility to make sure that this does not get any worse.

So we, Members of Congress, call upon the administration to protect Haitian lives by restoring order, upholding the rule of law and disarmament across the country. The current state of affairs in Haiti is chaos. The rebels who were empowered by our inaction must be held accountable and not allowed to benefit from their violence. Humanitarian aid must flow to Haiti immediately. A humanitarian corridor with supplies of food and water and medical equipment must be established to provide assistance to the beleaguered Haitian people. Humanitarian aid must flow to Haiti immediately. We must support the formulation of a donor conference so the people of Haiti can finally get the kind of assistance that they so desperately need and so properly deserve.

This administration is misinterpreting and failing to honor the spirit of the Haitian constitution. Where is Article 149 in the transitional government talks?

So we as Members of Congress call upon this administration to follow the rule of law and the Haitian constitution. In it, Article 149 of the 1987 Haitian constitution clearly outlines the process by which the interim president is appointed and it includes the ratification of the legislature. Due to the unwillingness on the part of the political opposition party's willingness to participate in elections, there is no legislature to confirm the interim president; and, therefore, the recently sworn in president is, unfortunately, regrettably not ruling pursuant to the Haitian constitution.

On Sunday President Bush said, "The Haitian constitution is working." How does he believe just because he said it that that could make it true? The President forgets that when they fail to respond to the opposition's rejection of the U.S. brokered peace plan that they had in fact repudiated their own plan for peace. It was just on Monday of last week that Secretary of State Powell said "The United States will not support the overthrow of a democratically elected government by thugs and criminals."

For the administration to remain mute while the constitutional process was thwarted and then to pressure President Aristide, the one who was compromised to resign, is in no way in line or in accordance with Haiti's constitutional process.

Moreover, now that the administration has created this constitutional quagmire in Haiti, it is reprehensible to claim that the constitution is working.

□ 2145

Our administration is jeopardizing the lives of countless numbers of Haitian asylum seekers by enforcing immediate Coast Guard interdiction without an opportunity for a fair asylum hearing.

Members of Congress call on the Bush administration to extend temporary protected status to Haitian asylum seekers because returning to Haiti will pose a serious threat to their personal safety.

To require the Secretary of Homeland Security to designate Haiti under section 244(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act so that the nationals of Haiti present in the United States or reaching our shores may be granted temporary protected status. This would mean that both Haitians who are present in the United States and those who may be fortunate enough to make it to shore will not arbitrarily be sent back to Haiti until the country is stable.

This administration's neglect of Haiti and the intentional, systematic dismantling of the Haitian social, economic, and political circumstance which culminated in the current political instability and provided the environment for a coup d'etat.

As Members of the Congress, we call on our leaders in Congress to hold joint public hearings between the House Intelligence Committee and the International Relations Committee on the Bush administration's role in undermining a democratically elected government in, of all places, the western hemisphere. The United States should not have allowed the opposition in Haiti without a legislative popular mandate to veto the possibility for peace in Haiti. Now there is mayhem and on-the-spot executions and other atrocities which are taking place daily.

Why did the United States not send in a force to reinforce the police when a political solution was still possible? Why did the United States only act after that possibility, along with President Aristide, was removed? Why have the rebels not been arrested? Were their actions not illegal? How did the leaders of the insurgency, some of whom are the most notorious torturers and death squad members, return to power? Louis Jodel Chamberlain is a former military leader who led a brutal paramilitary group that backed the most recent of Haiti's coup d'etats in 1991. The other, Guy Philippe, is a charismatic former soldier once loyal to President Jean-Bertrand Aristide who fled Haiti 3 years ago after being accused of drug dealing and of treason.

What are we to say to history? How will we account for this tragic set of circumstances that have now surrounded this poor beleaguered nation? As of today, the United States Coast Guard has repatriated 902 Haitian refugees to Port-au-Prince despite the escalating and continuing violence there. A handful of Haitians only have met the "credible fear" standard required for asylum. They remain on Coast Guard vessels and are being assessed by asylum officers from the Department of Homeland Security's Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Officials from the Department of Homeland Security and Coast Guard

have said that Haitians picked up at sea who indicate that they are afraid of returning to Haiti are given interviews with asylum officers on Coast Guard cutters. Haitians are not individually asked if they have a fear of return, nor are they necessarily spoken to individually where they may have a chance to say why they left. Homeland security says that when people are afraid, they find a way to convey that. I do not know whether any of the Coast Guard officials who first encountered the Haitians speak French or Creole. If Haitians do not express fear somehow, then they are given an interview with asylum officers who either speak French or Creole or have interpreters. Thus far, three Haitians have been found to possibly have a credible fear of persecution. Those who are deemed to be economic migrants have been turned over to the Haitian Coast Guard and were disembarked in Port-au-Prince. The last repatriation was today when 21 refugees returned to the Haitian Coast Guard. No new refugees have been picked up by the United States Coast Guard since Friday; and as far as is known, the repatriations will be ongoing despite the terrible insecurity in Port-au-Prince.

I have been unable to get information on the current control of the Haitian Coast Guard now that the government in effect ceases to exist. It seems that the United States Government is still treating the Haitian Coast Guard as an official agency under legitimate command of the Republic of Haiti.

And so, my colleagues in the Congress, we are now called to an immediate task to make right, to correct the terrible wrong that has been visited much by our inaction upon the 8 million inhabitants of this small country. We have a duty to persist. It is not over. We will investigate, we will protest, we will evaluate, we will persuade, until the majority of the American people are convinced that we cannot leave this wrong, which is a wrong for which we must be responsible, to go uncorrected. That is the pledge I leave my colleagues with on this evening.

I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE), who serves with great effectiveness on the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and is the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Immigration.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the distinguished ranking member of the full committee for yielding.

Madam Speaker, this has been a tumultuous and trying set of days for the members of the Congressional Black Caucus and other Members of this House who have shown their leadership and concern for the Haitian people. I want to thank, particularly, the gentleman from Michigan for an untiring and unrelenting effort as the chair of the Haiti Task Force, a persistent and informed advocate for Haiti over the years, knowledgeable about issues of democracy. I join him tonight because

I believe that not only have we tainted the page of democracy but some might say that we have torn it from its book.

As I look over this last weekend and the last couple of days in the meetings that we held or had with both the Secretary of State and the National Security Adviser and, of course, the President of the United States, the Members who were present were there in good faith and they had good intentions to be able to accept or at least to make real democratic principles, and, that is, our plea was at that time to establish a humanitarian corridor, to have an international force of peacekeeping and peace maintenance, and to restore or to have a diplomatic solution once the violence had ended.

Unfortunately, I believe that the direction that was taken was maybe somewhat parallel to what we saw in Iraq. Interestingly enough, the people of Iraq did not call the United States in for a unilateral, preemptive attack against Iraq. We all acknowledge the despotic and heinous acts of Saddam Hussein, but the people did not call us. But yet the people of Haiti begged for our intervention and they asked us to intervene along with the head of state. Unfortunately, they decided to ignore them. And what we have today are the following words, in an article dated March 2, 2004, in the Houston Chronicle. U.S. officials have called for the rebels to lay down their weapons now that Aristide has surrendered power. But the rebels make it clear that disarming is not in their playbook. Philippe, 37, and we know Guy Philippe, a former police chief, has said he has no intention of becoming Haiti's next president; but in the vacuum left by Aristide's departure, Philippe and the other armed rebels have become a force that cannot be ignored.

Tippenhauer, another one of the opposition party leaders, said he and other opposition politicians were not formally cooperating with the rebels before Aristide's resignation, but they would have to deal with them now. Rebels, insurgents, individuals who have criminal records, I happen to believe that all are innocent until proven guilty; but there is a long history of their involvement in violence. And so the question is to the American people and to this government, how could you depose of and remove a duly elected democratic President in the name of Jean-Bertrand Aristide and now place as leaders of the Haitian nation those who have been called many names, rebels and thugs, opposition leaders who are in fear of their lives, and rebels who suggest that they are not about to lay their arms down.

And so, Madam Speaker, I am joining with my colleagues to ask now for full congressional hearings, not next week, not next month or next year, but immediately. President Aristide, who I believe has no reason to misrepresent how he was led away from his nation, his presidency, has indicated now in fear and apprehension that he was

swished away from his home against his will. The question is who and why and who directed it. The question is whether or not the United States will abide by the governance of international law and whether or not we will tell the American people the truth.

We now have as my colleague here on the floor of the House has so eloquently put in his statement and joined by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) those Haitians who are now in the United States who are in fear of their lives, there needs to be an immediate addressing of the question of temporary protection status. I join with my colleagues in pressing that opportunity and that emergency need. I further press the need for a complete overhaul of the treatment of Haitians in this country and will be pressing for, again, legislation to equate Haitians to Cubans, that when they touch the soil, their status will be able to be adjusted.

I join the gentleman from Michigan in asking the question, how can you interrogate a boatload of Haitians by a global question, looking at them, asking either the leader or whoever is the senior person on board and then determining whether or not there is a credible claim of fear? I believe that the Homeland Security Department has to immediately revise its policies to retrain inspectors and immediately send out a directive that says each individual Haitian and family member must be questioned separately as to whether or not their life has been threatened and that they are in jeopardy upon returning. I have joined my colleagues in sending letters to the Speaker of the House and the leader of the House to ensure that we have these immediate investigations. It is imperative that they be the International Relations Committee, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and I would offer to say the Select Committee on Homeland Security and the Judiciary Committee. Questions of the violation of law have been raised.

Allow me just to read these words as I come to a close. In 1825, France forced Haiti to assume a debt of \$90 million to compensate French plantation slave owners for their financial losses in exchange for France's recognition of Haiti's independence.

My friends, Haiti paid back that debt. It took them 100 years, to 1925, to pay back \$90 million. President Aristide, duly restored to power in the 1990s and then stepping down from power, having a duly democratic election for a new president who served 5 years, and then the people of Haiti re-elected him, came back and asked France, one of the nations who early on had asked for him to leave or to be deposed, if you will, or to step down and resign, a few years later President Aristide asked for that debt to be repaid to the Haitian people, totaling about \$21.7 billion in today's currency.

□ 2200

That amount of money would have restored Haiti to its prominence, would

have provided them with the ability to rebuild its crumbling economy. Restitution, reparations, fair reparations, that this should have occurred. Is it not interesting that as President Aristide tried to hold his nation together, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the leadership of this Nation refused to release funds that would have helped the agrieconomy and other aspects of its economy be rebuilt, and yet we blame President Aristide in totality for the condition of this nation?

I join the gentleman in asking and demanding an immediate response by this administration that international forces be maintained in Haiti to keep the peace and to hold the peace, that immediate infusion of funds come into that Nation in order to provide a safety net for the people who are now starving without water and good food, and as well that the constitutional premise be adhered to and that is that the transition of government be adhered to under Article 149 where it speaks to the transfer of government. The present leader now admits he is not a politician. I do not even know if he will have the wherewithal to lead Haiti in this time, but what I will say is that the hand of the United States is very much involved in this process. Thugs have said that they are not going to lay their weapons down. What I actually say tonight is that we have a crisis, and I believe, along with the United Nations, this government has a responsibility to stand up and be counted. I am asking the administration now to be counted in this effort to rebuild Haiti. I am also asking for this administration to be accountable for what has happened to President Aristide, a duly-elected President, and I am asking for this Congress to abide by the Constitution for the fact that this Congress is an oversight body and ask the hard questions as to why freedom has seemingly been jeopardized and seemingly been undermined in the last 48 hours.

I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) for allowing us to have an opportunity to be able to challenge both our government and the international arena for what has occurred to an independent people who have sought nothing but freedom in this 200th year of their independence. I will continue to join with the voices of those who will join and stand up with them and be reminded of words heard earlier this evening: Someone said how does one change this government? They said by agitation, agitation, agitation. And I hope tonight will be the beginning of our agitation of change.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to once again ask the Administration to take leadership and responsibility to bring peace and stability to Haiti. We read and hear in all media sources information that suggests that the CIA may have been involved with or had knowledge of the alleged kidnapping of Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. I have reached out to our leadership to request that

they schedule congressional hearings immediately to investigate this matter. One government was supposed to be in Haiti for the specific purpose of helping restore peace, give humanitarian aid, and to uphold the principles of democracy and the rule of law. Apparently, the Administration had another agenda in mind. If the allegations are true, it will be an atrocity, an embarrassment, and a hypocrisy for this Administration to facilitate the commission of a crime against international law and an act that is completely adverse to the principles of democracy.

His Excellency, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, P.J. Patterson, chairman of the Caribbean regional group, CARICOM, has verbally supported the allegations that Aristide had been removed illegally. I question the authority that guided the CIA and the military's involvement in the removal of President Aristide—especially since he has been duly elected under a recognized democracy.

Because there is uncertainty as to what caused President Aristide to depart from or to be removed from Haiti, it is imperative that we hold immediate Congressional hearings to ensure that there has not been a violation of international law. Allowing or facilitating the removal of a democratically elected president in a manner that violates international law sets a dangerous precedent for other established democracies and tarnishes our reputation in the international community.

I rise this evening to once again revisit the escalating political crisis in Haiti. I, along with Members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) met with President George Bush, Secretary of State Colin Powell, and National Security Advisor Dr. Condoleezza Rice to discuss the immediate need for the establishment of a humanitarian zone with foresight in Haiti.

When I, along with my colleagues of the Congressional Black Caucus met with President Bush concerning this situation, we stressed that the United States must support democracy and that the rule of law is paramount. Instead of political ideologies, we need to preserve the innocent lives in the region where over 70 have been killed and dozens wounded to date. Violence, chaos, and anarchy cannot be allowed to oust the democratic government.

The deadly uprisings in this war-torn nation came at the hands of the same factions that ravaged Haiti several years ago. Reports show that two of the rebel leaders are the most notorious torturers of the death squads, having already earned a reputation of infamy in a massacre that took place before Jean-Bertrand Aristide returned to power.

Louis-Jodel Chamblain is a former military leader who once orchestrated the most recent coup d'etat in Haiti in 1991 with a brutal paramilitary group. Guy Phillippe, a charismatic former soldier and loyalist to President Aristide, fled Haiti three years ago in exile to the Dominican Republic to escape charges of drug-dealing and treason. Phillippe and Chamblain crossed the Dominican border back into Haiti a week ago to join their gang of former police and soldiers.

We cannot allow innocent Haitians to die at the hands of thugs who want to thwart the establishment of democracy. We hope that, after our meeting, the President will call for an affirmative plan to respond to the Opposition Party's rejection of peace proposals offered by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and

the Organization of American States (OAS). Our acquiescence and inaction will soon suggest support of the opposition; therefore, it is time that we acted to demonstrate our strong commitment to democracy, constitutional government, peace, and the rule of law.

Humanitarian aid and military assistance are critical needs for the Haitians given the threat that demonstrators may thwart the delivery of food and other relief items. There has already been a cry for assistance by President Aristide. Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with only 4,000 police officers for 8 million citizens has formally requested humanitarian aid and security forces.

As we work with the government of Haiti to explore the role of the international community in averting civil war, we must also begin to look beyond the current crisis. For example, Haiti continues to be in dire need of food aid and medical assistance. The current unrest could set off an exodus of refugees. Furthermore, there is an uncertainty as to the timing and fairness of the next elections is promoting suspicions and instability. We must anticipate the work that will have to be done in order to effectively and humanely process the imminent influx of refugees by improving our immigration screening and detention processes.

I do not believe that Haitian refugees receive a fair chance to satisfy the requirements for entitlement to an asylum hearing. Also, I am disturbed by the lack of parity between the Haitian refugees and the Cuban refugees. While Haitian refugees are detained and then removed from the United States, Cuban refugees who reach American soil are welcomed. They are admitted or paroled into the United States, and a year later they are eligible for adjustment of status to that of lawful permanent residents. This difference in treatment is unfair and unjustifiable.

I will support a bill sponsored by our colleague Mr. MEEK of Florida to designate Haiti under Section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to allow Haitian refugees to obtain Temporary Protective Status (TPS). I have signed on to join my brother today in fact to take leadership in this crisis.

Furthermore, I will introduce a piece of legislation, the "Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2003." Section 502 of this bill responds to Attorney General Ashcroft's decision in *Matter of D-J-*, 23 I&N Dec. 572 (AG 2003), in which he denied bond release to a Haitian on the ground that giving bond to undocumented refugees who come to the United States by sea would cause adverse consequences for national security and sound immigration policy.

This legislation would permit the adjustment of status for Haitians who meet the following categories:

- (1) The individual would have to be a native or citizen of Haiti;
- (2) The individual would have to have been inspected and admitted or paroled into the United States; and
- (3) The individual would have to have been physically present in the United States for at least one year.

The Caucus advocates positive action by the U.S. Government to support peaceful and democratic efforts to alleviate the violent and unsanitary conditions to prevent the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Collaboration by and assistance from the United Nations will be key in the effort to stimulate the participation

of the international community. The Haitian people must implement the organic constitutional and democratic principles to indicate its contrition and willingness to effect change. With the plan to institute a democratic form of governance must accompany maintenance of the rule of law so as to ensure the development of a framework of fundamental rights. Violence will not bring about peace, but fair and transparent electoral processes will.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that our words are heard and that this nation will move to end this problem before a full-scale civil war results. Action today will translate into an investment that will benefit innocent Haitian lives and the immigration challenges that do not diminish. I urge this Administration to do the right thing and to provide the humanitarian aid and security provisions necessary to save these lives.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from Texas for her analysis and her contributions to this discussion.

I yield to, if he desires, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK).

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the chairman for holding this special order on Haiti tonight. I believe all through the week and next week and the week after that and the month after that that we will continue to raise the issue of the policy decision that the Bush administration has put forth as it relates to Haiti. I must say that it is sad today in this democracy that we celebrate that we are now in the position and seen by the world community as being a country to decide who will lead in a democracy and who will leave a democracy.

Madam Speaker, I just wanted to come down here for a minute. This is the front page of the Washington Post. Mr. Guy Philippe, the rebel leader who went through Haiti, taking cities over and left about 70 people dead in the path of that. Here is the cover of the New York Times. This is Mr. Philippe again, with two armed individuals with AK-47 fully automatic weapons, going through the streets of Port-au-Prince. Mr. Philippe called a meeting today and he said if police chiefs throughout Haiti and also the prime minister, if they did not show up, that he would place them under arrest. He has declared himself as the leader of the Haitian army. He said that he respects democracy and that he would respect the wishes of the now president, who was the supreme court justice, if he asked him to lay his weapons down.

Madam Speaker, I am no great cheerleader, I must add, of President Aristide or the opposition forces, but I am a cheerleader for democracy, and I will tell the Members, regardless of what anyone may say or what they feel, representing south Florida where we have several Haitian Americans, I must add that it is a disappointing day on behalf of democracy. The fact that the President of the United States, along with the Secretary of State, along with Mr. Noriega, who is Assistant Secretary of State, made the singular decision to go visit President

Aristide on a Saturday night to give him two options: One, board a plane to save his life or, two, die. I do not consider that an easy and nonpersuasive discussion. I will take that as a very persuasive discussion if someone, just any American, just think about it, if military forces came to one's house representing the United States of America and said they have two options, one, leave with us and live, two, die, we will not stop them from killing them.

Madam Speaker, we have a lot of distinguished Members that are ready to address the House here tonight, but I want to say regardless of how one may feel toward Haiti, the administration, as far as I am concerned, the Bush administration had something personally against President Aristide. It was personal. This was not, well, he is not a great guy, he is not this, that, and the other. Guy Philippe is a murderer. He is a murderer and a thug and still carrying out thuggery on the streets of Haiti. He is willing to arrest the prime minister? He is going to arrest any police chief who did not show up at a meeting, and he is parading around the streets with armed individuals? This does not look like security for Haiti. What this looks like is more difficulty for Haiti. And he says he is interested in politics; so, Madam Speaker, I will say to the other Members the next leader of Haiti is going to be the person with the biggest guns and the most guns and who are willing to do what they have to do. I will tell the Members also as it relates to U.S. forces on the ground, what the Bush administration did on that Saturday night, Sunday morning have endangered the lives of American troops that are there that are trying to restore peace and security there, and international force troops, the President himself has placed their lives in jeopardy. As a member of the Committee on Armed Services, I am very upset about that. We do not go and do this kind of Saturday night visit giving people an ultimatum.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to the hearings that will be hopefully held in the coming days here in this Congress because if we allow this to happen as a U.S. Congress, we are in for a rude awakening from the international community about our integrity as it relates to democracy. I thank the chairman so very much.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, may I just thank the gentleman for his leadership. He has just heightened the drama and the fear and the crisis that we are in. Coming from south Florida, does it make any sense for this administration not to immediately grant, as the gentleman has requested, temporary protective status to present to those who may be in fear of their lives? When we have just read that we have Guy Philippe who is not laying down his arms, he indicated that he is going to arrest leadership of government if we even have a govern-

ment, is there any reason for this not to be granted in the next 24 hours to protect the people that the gentleman represents and others around the Nation?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, that answer is yes. I just want to say that the President and the Department of Homeland Security can grant temporary protective status as they have done in similar situations in Nicaragua and other places where they had disruption and danger on the streets. But, Madam Speaker, I must say the repatriating of 900-plus individuals seeking safety and refuge and to get a true asylum hearing of being returned back to Haiti, 12 executions, 12, took place on Monday. These are pro-Aristide supporters. Twelve individuals died execution style. So I am going to tell the Members right now that our country, and I will not even say our country, I would say our leadership has placed us in that position. So, once again, we have other Members here. We will be hitting the floor in the coming days and coming hours. It is important that we have leadership in this House that is willing to schedule congressional hearings immediately based on the actions of the executive branch on a Saturday evening to go to a democratically elected president's home and tell him either he gets on a plane or he loses his life.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I want to tell the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) that as usual his perception about this problem is remarkable. I know that he has not an awful lot of seniority, but he worked on this problem for many years before he became a Member of Congress. He worked in his State legislature as a State senator. He worked alongside with his mother, Ms. Carrie Meek, who held a seat before he did. So it is very important that we seriously analyze the contribution that he has made tonight, and I thank him for it.

I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON).

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman so much in this late hour.

The die has been cast. Our country's leap year contribution to Haiti's bicentennial celebration is another example of the support of violence over democracy when it suits our national political interests.

There is no doubt that this administration empowered the so-called opposition which consisted of no more than a coterie of wealthy Haitians, CIA operatives, neo-Duvalierists, and drug merchants to inflame a struggling populace. We did this by denying a democratically elected president the support and the resources needed and promised for his people's development.

This rebel opposition is no more than a retreat of the same elements traditionally militating against the people's interest ever since the African slaves soundly thrashed the finest of the French and other European legions to reclaim their freedom 200 years ago.

The United States State Department, which "never negotiates with terrorists," had sufficient cozy contact with the Haitian rebels to convince them to delay their onslaught on Port-au-Prince. Even after the rebels rejected terms of settlement acceptable to President Aristide, in a matter of hours the State Department acceded to the rebels' demand, the removal of President Aristide.

There is a distressing school of thought that subscribes to the new official spin that President Aristide has no one but himself to blame for this sordid state of affairs. Maybe Aristide is to blame for not realizing that there was no way that the Haitian elite and their U.S. conservative supporters would allow a government of black ex-slaves to succeed in this hemisphere.

□ 2215

Maybe the priest-turned-politician was too naive in committing his faith and the fate of his people to the tender mercies of the U.S. State Department.

Maybe Father Aristide was so consumed in doing good that he could not recognize the need to play ball with the powers that be, making himself a conduit through which the millions of international aid funds would flow into the greedy hands of the elite who would keep Haiti impoverished while they pranced on the ritzy edges of society.

But whatever the cause, the deed has been done. Regime change has again trumped sovereignty. The first democratically elected president of the first black nation in this hemisphere has, on the last day of Black History Month, 2004, been removed from office and escorted into exile.

Whether Aristide's removal was voluntary, that is, by free will, or voluntary, as in eagerly handing over your wallet to a gunman in the alley, will be resolved, I hope, in time. The question is, where do we go from here?

As legislators, we have a duty to attempt, wherever possible, to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. So far, the United States has spearheaded the drive to commit peacekeepers on the Haitian scene, to bring back stability to the political environment and to set the stage for prosperity and development. Keeping the peace is the simplest of these missions. You can keep the peace by totally suppressing disorder with overwhelming force, or you can rely on the natural establishment of peace emanating from the application of social justice and economic prosperity.

In Haiti's case, building a solid social and economic structure is more important than building our concept of democratic institutions, and military forces and police law and other actions are only applicable if required in the pursuit of social and economic goals.

Therefore, the size and national composition and duration of deployment of the peacekeeping force should be determined by the extent and the progress

of the nation-building force, and not by proposed election schedules. Rather, the question of political elections in Haiti from now on should be determined by the stability and the economic progress achieved and sustained by an interim government replacing the deposed Aristide regime.

This situation proposes that the international community, possibly through the United Nations Development Program, deploy a Haitian Reconstruction Commission, a nation-building force charged with the responsibility for reconstructing the economic and social fabric of Haitian society, and with the employment of the peacekeeping force, constitute the interim government of Haiti.

Any intervention that fails to establish an interim regime strong enough to assert a humane face on the Haitian nation and that lacks the sustained commitment of the U.S. and the international community to Haiti's future well-being can only condemn the millions of that country to the future of neo-slavery from which Dr. Jean-Bertrand Aristide tried to save them.

Madam Speaker, we have much work to do to right an egregious wrong that has been committed by our so-called democratic administration. We must act.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I want to express my appreciation to the gentlewoman from Los Angeles, California, for the work and steadfast commitment she has had to make democracy work in a tiny, impoverished nation, now celebrating its 200th anniversary. I thank the gentlewoman deeply.

I yield now to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS), who has worked in this as long as anyone I know.

(Mr. OWENS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OWENS. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for having this Special Order at this critical moment in the history of Haiti and world relations.

First, I would like to salute Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the Father of Democracy in Haiti. In all the years Haiti has existed, it has never had a democracy. Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected democratically in 1991. He was deposed by a coup d'etat by the army. He was here in this capital for 3 years.

He went back after the Congressional Black Caucus urged President Clinton and worked very closely with President Clinton to restore democracy to Haiti. He went back, and he gave up the fact that he had missed 3 years. He did not insist on serving 5 years, he just completed the term, 2 years. Like George Washington, he stepped down in order to guarantee there would be a constitutional process going on, just as George Washington stepped down. He stepped down and there was another president for 5 years, and then Aristide came back. He was reelected later on for another 5-year term.

It is important for people to know that Jean-Bertrand Aristide was not in charge of Haiti for all these years that you hear talked about, especially the year that the parliamentary elections were questioned. The parliamentary elections that were questioned were held and the irregularities that were charged, which involved six out of 100-some people elected, those irregularities were charged during a period when Jean-Bertrand Aristide was not in power. It is important to get the chronology straight.

There are many people who say that Jean-Bertrand Aristide has only one fault, and some of us might have a tendency to want to agree with that, and the fault is he is not a seasoned politician. He came out of the priesthood. He was a priest. He was almost murdered three times before he was elected president.

This priest, who some say is an inept politician, also was able to maintain influence, to maintain a following for all the years that have gone on since he was first elected. While he was out of office, he had influence and had a following. Does that sound like somebody who is inept and not a person who knows how to organize people?

He has been accused of being a ruthless dictator. I have been trying to find out what the basis of that charge is. What ruthless dictator do we know who would disband his army? What ruthless dictator would not want an army?

One of the most important things that Jean-Bertrand Aristide did when he went back after being deposed by the army was to abolish the army. The army of Haiti has been in charge ever since the United States created the army.

Most people do not know the United States Marines created the army of Haiti. In their long occupation of more than 30 years, they built the Haitian army. After they left, whenever there was somebody not liked by the rich governing families, the oligarchy of Haiti, whenever there was somebody not liked by the United States, the army was used to remove them. He got rid of the army. What ruthless dictator would get rid of the army?

I just want to say that this democratically elected president, this very unusual person of a magnitude you do not see in politics usually, who is accused of so many crimes in general, but when you start asking people specifically what he did, nobody ever has an answer.

Did he go all over the world shopping, like Baby Doc Duvalier and his wife, spending \$1 million on a weekend? Did he have palaces built like Saddam Hussein while the population starved? Where is the personal use of government funds to be seen? Nobody can tell me specifically any of that.

But what I do know is because of his antipathy toward violence, because he understood the long history of Haiti and did not have an army, he has been taken advantage of by terrorists. Terrorists. If you look at the fact, this is

a group of terrorists that has taken over Haiti. Terrorists.

Now, we have varying degrees of suspicion about to what degree our own government was involved. We do know certain individuals well known to our government who have cooperated with the CIA in the past have shown up among these terrorists. We do know that they had modern weapons, United States weapons, machine guns, grenade launchers and so forth, that are not made in Haiti.

We do know that our government said to Aristide, we will not accept your agreement. Aristide agreed to the CARICOM agreement, and our government would not support the legitimate government of Haiti, and say, well, you agreed, therefore we will step in and protect you from the violence until there is some kind of settlement. No. They said to Aristide as long as the opposition, as they called it, do not agree, we will not get involved in trying to guarantee the safety of your government.

They empowered the terrorists. Whatever else they did not do, whatever other lack of complicity there is, there is the open complicity of the United States Government in empowering the terrorists, making them equal to Aristide, saying unless they agree, you have a doomed government.

Beyond our own United States of America, the international community went along with all that, unfortunately.

There is a lesson, unfortunately, here, for all the Caribbean nations of this hemisphere and for small nations throughout the world. There is no more gunboat diplomacy. There will not be any obvious takeover that the United Nations can object to, but look forward to a new kind of takeover process; and that is the process with the use of terrorists.

Evidently, some people think there are good terrorists and bad terrorists; there are terrorists you can use and terrorists you have to worry about. But I say that Haiti is a victim of terrorism, and we should bear that in mind as we start sifting out the facts. As we go to our hearings, as we call into account our own elected officials and our appointed officials connected with this, let us remember to ask the question, have we acted in complicity with terrorists?

I thank the gentleman very much for yielding to me, and again congratulate him on this Special Order.

Mr. CONYERS. How profoundly we are in the debt of the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) for his contribution tonight and from across the years around the people and the country and the idea of a democratic process.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN), a strong and dedicated leader and fighter in seeking justice for Haiti.

(Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Madam Speaker, let me just say that I am sick and tired of being sick and tired.

I think everything goes back for me to the 2000 election when we had our own form of coup d'etat; when in my district alone, over 27,000 votes were stolen, 27,000 votes. So when we think about the domestic issues, I go back and blame that election. But what happened this weekend and last week is just unacceptable.

This administration, the Bush administration, it is clear, if you do not go along with them lockstep, then they will take you out.

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Look at Venezuela, look at Iraq, and now Haiti. For the past 3 years, this administration, the Bush administration, along with its leadership have blocked humanitarian assistance to Haiti. And, yes, the Haitian people are suffering. And the words "corrupt government," what do you have to be corrupt with? We block any funds from the international community. The majority of the money that the Haitian people receive is for those people that are working abroad in the United States and sending it back.

I am on the Committee on Transportation and the Infrastructure. I understand something about infrastructure, roads, bridges. They do not have food, water. The people are suffering. But we are responsible for the crumbling of that poor island. And I want to thank the chairman because I have been there on numerous occasions with him. And, of course, he and I and others in the Congressional Black Caucus attended their election. And I can tell you that the people were excited about voting. And I can also tell you that 27,000 votes were not thrown out in Haiti like it was thrown out in Duvall County.

But I have four questions that I would like to just ask the chairman and other Members. The first one, to what extent do you think the role of the United States played in a Haitian coup d'etat? What part did we play?

Mr. CONYERS. Well, apparently there was an American role. The details have not been forthcoming because what actually happened has been covered up with a series of misrepresentations that are clearly not accurate, and that is a challenge that remains for us to uncover. That is our job as legislators. And I think that the gentlewoman's fierce determination to get to the bottom of this will lead this country, this Congress, to an honest evaluation of what has gone down.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Madam Speaker, in talking to other international leaders and, of course, we have to be careful not to call any names because then they will also be put on the hit list, but they were very disappointed with the leadership of the Bush administration. They were willing to act but not only would this Bush administration and its leadership not

act; they blocked other nations from acting. So do you think that the State Department has been honest to the American people in regard to Haiti?

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, it is very clear that what has happened and what has been explained as what has happened are both totally inconsistent and have yet to be reconciled and that this is another responsibility that has added to our duties.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Chairman, do you believe that if the United States had acted earlier in a more humane way that this crisis could have been averted?

Mr. CONYERS. Now, on that I firmly believe that had we not taken the incredible diplomatic position that we had to resolve a political dispute before security could be brought to the people, that we would not be in the position that we are in.

Just consider, how can you tell people that when the rebels do not want to compromise, do not want to negotiate, do not want to resolve the violence, that unless President Aristide can reach a conclusion with them, they did not even listen to representatives of the United States, much less their own government, because they were determined not to reach a political accord, something that was patently obvious from the very beginning?

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank our troops for preventing further chaos and killing in Haiti. But I would like to know what in the world does the future hold for the Haitian people.

Mr. CONYERS. That is precisely what we are in the process of determining. And I would like to say that my optimism is still on the side of justice, that my conviction that there are enough people in this Federal legislature and in this country to right the terrible wrong that has been visited upon the poor beleaguered citizens of that little tiny nation only miles away from our shore. We can make Haiti better. We can still create a humanitarian corridor to bring in the life-giving supplies without which they will not only perish but the violence will continue.

I again thank the gentlewoman for her perseverance and commitment across the years on this subject.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. I once again want to thank the chairman for his leadership. But my mind goes back to our meeting that we had Wednesday at the White House with the Congressional Black Caucus members, with Colin Powell, Secretary of State, and with Condoleezza Rice and with later the President; and I guess I have a little Haitian or a little African in me because I knew then that our government under the leadership of the Bush administration and those Cabinet members were not going to lift their hands to help the poor people of Haiti. They were not going to do one single thing.

We have spent \$200 billion of American dollars in Iraq to build up a democracy there, but we deny people less

than 600 miles from our shore any assistance, any intervention. And not only do we deny them; we are prohibiting, prohibiting other countries from going in and assist them.

Shame on this administration. And hopefully we can have a regime change or a change in our government come November.

Ever since I was elected to office, I have advocated on behalf of the Haitian people, and it simply enrages me that Haiti has been nothing more than a stepchild to policymakers in the State Department. While Cubans gain access to U.S. citizenship by merely stepping on land in Florida, Haitian immigrants are not just detained indefinitely when they try to come to the United States, but they are mercilessly sent back to the island.

These groups that refer to themselves as "the opposition," are in reality nothing more than armed gangs often funded by drug lords, that are on the verge of taking power through undemocratic means. I repeat: these are not legitimate political opposition groups, many of them are the same criminals that were in power before Aristide, the same thugs we removed from office just a decade ago. Ex military, ex death squad members, drug and gang members, and members of the wealthy business elite that dislike representative government are their leaders. It is more than ironic that just as the Bush administration admonishes Haiti and other nations for being "undemocratic," they led the way for these armed gangs (the same gangs they criticize in the press) to usurp power.

They did not like the idea of a government that is trying to redistribute money to the poor and provide Haitians with proper education and health care, because they feel threatened that their previous absolute hold on power will dissolve. And since they can't defeat Aristide in a fair election, they resorted to overthrow him militarily.

I have traveled to Haiti numerous times with Members of the Congressional Black Caucus, met with Haitian government officials, opposition groups, and leaders of NGOs, and served the Nation as an election observer, and I will tell you that Aristide won by a landslide. This cannot be denied by anyone. Yet for whatever reason, the Bush administration has been anything but a friend to the Aristide government, and insists ironically that Haiti does not deserve our monetary assistance because their elections were "unfair." It simply mystifies me how President Bush, a President who was selected by the Supreme Court under more than questionable circumstances (in my district alone 27,000 votes were thrown out), is telling another country that their elections were not fair and that they are therefore undeserving of aid or international recognition.

Haiti is a nation that is still in the incipient stages of democracy and is in desperate need of foreign aid, and the Bush administration's economic stranglehold on the island has exacerbated Haiti's already crippled economy. The economic situation in Haiti is dire, yet the Bush administration's State Department apparently does not lend help to nations for humanitarian reasons, only when a precious natural resource such as oil is at stake.

Moreover, I remain outraged that Attorney General John Ashcroft and the Miami INS office is explicitly going after the Haitian refugees. In December, the INS routinely released

refugees who passed credible-fear interviews—unless they were deemed special security risks connected to September 11. That is still the case for asylum seekers from Colombia, Venezuela, Cuba and almost any other country—except Haiti. The Miami INS, under orders from the Department of Justice, imprisons Haitians seeking to prove they deserve asylum, while asylum seekers from other countries roam freely within American borders. This unfair discrimination against Haiti has become a common practice under the current administration, and the Congressional Black Caucus is one of the few voices fighting against this outrageous policy.

To conclude: I reiterate my utter disappointment in the events that occurred in Haiti, and my outrage at the Bush administration's contribution to the fall of a democratically elected government.

Mr. CONYERS. I thank all of the Members that have participated in the Special Order.

HELP HAITI

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

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, first, let me thank Members of Congress tonight, the Congressional Black Caucus, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) for our focus and for leading this effort not only tonight but over the years with regard to Haiti.

Of course, Haiti tonight is on the minds and in the hearts of the international community, of many of us here in Congress and throughout the country. And tonight I want to first ask and raise concern for the safety and for the security of President Aristide and Mrs. Aristide and for their family. Given the circumstances of their departure, I think it is appropriate that we be concerned about their safety and insist that our government ensure that they not be put in harm's way.

For many years now we have consistently attempted to increase the Congress's role, the administration's role with regard to engagement with Haiti. We have asked over and over again for immediate humanitarian assistance, development assistance, infrastructure assistance. Really, all of those efforts to allow the Haitian people to live, to survive, and to move forward. Yet, repeatedly, over and over again, this administration has blocked any type of assistance, has embargoed efforts to ensure that the Haitian people receive the funding that they have negotiated, every single time. This administration went to the international community and blocked from the world the type of aid and assistance and economic development that Haiti needs.

It is unbelievable the type of circling of the wagons that we have seen as it relates to Haiti. Now, unfortunately, our country has helped to ensure that democratically elected president of

Haiti was overthrown and this is totally unacceptable. What I have seen in the last few years is that really this country was setting up the situation which has occurred over the last few weeks. It really has helped democracy fail in Haiti, and that to me is a shame and it is a disgrace. Over and over again this administration has undermined and undercut President Aristide's attempts at social and economic development and the political challenges that have devastated his country. Over and over again I witnessed President Aristide comply with all of the requirements of the United States. One month it was this. The next month it was that. The next month it was something else. The Haitian government continually complied, continually stepped up to the plate even when it caused some discussions and some turmoil in their own country as a result of, for instance, having to raise the price of gasoline so that the international banks would be satisfied so that they could get the money that then negotiated for their loans. Outrageous kinds of requirements this country put on the Haitian government. Yet, still President Aristide responded and complied.

So what we have witnessed over the last couple of weeks really was the march to a coup d'etat. We witnessed the execution of a plan that I believe was really developed by, of course, those; and we are having hearings tomorrow so we will begin to expose and at least ask the questions, but it was the execution of a plan that we saw, I remember I think during the 1980s around Nicaragua, around some of the attempts to overthrow governments in Latin America, the U.S. ambassador, Negroponte, and Noriega who then was Senator Helm's person. We see many of the same kinds of players in place. And so, unfortunately, I am seeing an updated repeated performance of what we saw in the 1980s in Latin America. And, yes, this country has said that central to its foreign policy is regime change. That is a public kind of policy. And regime change manifests itself in many, many ways.

If I were Venezuela or Brazil, not to mention Cuba, I would be a bit concerned with what we know now and what we see taking place in terms of how the execution of a regime change, foreign policy takes place.

Finally, let me just say, when Secretary Powell says, it is nonsense and we are engaged in conspiracy theories, I would ask people to look at the "U.S. War Against Haiti, Hidden From the Headlines." These are the facts. We will begin to expose it tomorrow.

AMERICAN REGIME CHANGE IN NOVEMBER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, there is a president in the western