

HAITI'S FUTURE: THE TASK OF REBUILDING A SHATTERED NATION

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge that many challenges lie ahead for President Rene Preval as he embarks on the task of rebuilding and developing the country of Haiti. I am in full support of Rene Preval and I wish him well as he strives to reconcile his countrymen through better communications and commitments for peace and progress.

Haiti is a country plagued with trouble and instability. Preval's successors, the interim administration, were not able to unite the country. A rebellion that led to the ouster of the former president, Jean Bertrand Aristide, also set the country on a path of violence, crime and bloodshed from which it may take years to recover. Rene Preval's election is clearly the best thing that could have happened to the country as it has served to give hope to its population of eight million-plus people.

While President Preval pledges to lead the country in unity he continues to cite that the solution to Haiti's problems is in the hands of the Haitians. Needless to say, the country could benefit greatly with assistance from the United States, Canada and France.

I strongly urge my colleagues to be generous with U.S. assistance to Haiti at this time when they need it most. None of us want to see Haiti revert to its previous political and security conditions. Contributions of aid and finances must be followed through and the Caribbean region must also re-engage with Haiti to help them on the course to peace and development.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD an editorial by Tony Best from the May 23, 2006 edition of the New York CaribNews entitled *Haiti's Future—The Task of Rebuilding a Shattered Nation*. This article sheds light on Haiti's plight.

HAITI'S FUTURE, THE TASK OF REBUILDING A SHATTERED NATION

(Editorial by Tony Best)

"If we don't talk, then we will only fight."

Rene Preval, Haiti's newly installed President, struck an important and positive note for reconciliation, peace and development in his nation as he began the second, but not successive, term as his country's leader.

His return to the Presidential palace in Port au Prince is being widely hailed as an opportunity step forward if the country is follow a growth path, recognizing that his is an unenviable task. Preval needs the co-operation and active involvement of Haitians of all stripes and social class, whether at home or abroad if their shattered country is to serve its eight million-plus people. It goes without saying that the international community, especially the United States, Canada and France must help lead the way towards reconstruction and unity.

Caribbean nations too, especially those in Caricom must also do their part. But as Preval himself said on Sunday as he took the oath of office, "the solution to our problems is in our hands." Outside economic and political forces can help drive the engines of progress but in the end, Haitians must be responsible for their future.

When Preval ran the country for the first time between 1996–2001, he sought to unite

the fractured society. But with Haiti polarized between his mentor and predecessor in office, Jean Bertrand Aristide, and those who opposed Lavalas and the former Roman Catholic priest Preval's record fell far short of the high expectations. Now he has a chance to redeem himself.

Fortunately, he was not viewed as a corrupt politician, interested only in himself and the interest of his cronies. Preval has succeed an interim administration that lost its way from the get-go and was never able to unite the country as Haiti had to grapple with more than its share of trouble, insurrection and instability.

A rebellion set in motion by the machinations of people in Washington and carried out by Haitians in the Dominican Republic and elsewhere, not only led to the ouster or abduction of President Aristide but set the country on a path of violence, crime and bloodshed from which it may take years to recover. The recent presidential election, which Preval won fair and square, was perhaps the best thing that could have happened to the country.

The Republications in Washington, who played a key role in Aristide's ouster and in the instability that followed, must see itself as a part of the solution, having helped to create some of the problems.

Preval, a former ally of the ousted former President who is cooling his heels in South Africa, must battle some formidable obstacles and challenges that run the gamut from weak judicial institutions, an inept and corrupt bureaucracy and a devastated economy to rising crime and lawlessness, not to mention the lack of a democratic tradition needed to prevent political forces from turning on each other and prolonging the agony.

As if to send a strong message to the new head of state about the enormity of the task ahead of him, inmates of the national penitentiary went on a rampage, demanding their freedom and calling for better treatment. Shots were fired and when the inmates appeared on the roof they help up two bodies, apparently those of inmates, according to a news agency account, Haitian police and United Nations armed personnel were quickly able to restore order.

If Preval and his administration needed a reminder of the troubles ahead that brief incident showed them that whether on the streets of the urban centers or behind bars, chaos could erupt at any time.

It also underscored the need to address the ills facing the awful justice system and the inhumane conditions in prison, something the U.N. Envoy in Haiti, Juan Gabriel Valdes, urged Preval to do something about. After all, hundreds of prisons have been languishing in prison for extended period of time under the most wretched of conditions.

Preval must break with the past, especially the past two years during which the interim Prime Minister, Gerard LaTortue and his ministers ignored human rights issues and the need for the prompt delivery of justice. Instead, they preferred to spend much of their time attacking Aristide's supporters.

It also failed miserably to come to grips with the day-to-day economic and social difficulties that plague the average Haitian. And as the poorest people in the Western Hemisphere, Haitians who suffered the most numbered in the millions.

That hard fact of life may explain why the UN envoy urged President Preval to show Haitians that he means business.

"It is critical for him to be able in the first year . . . to show Haitians that he can produce some change in their lives," Valdes told the Associated Press. "It would be frankly intolerable to see that for lack of international assistance at this point in time

the country goes back to previous political and security conditions."

The depth of the financial and development crunch is there for all to see. So far, the rich nations have pledged \$1.2 billion in aid but only \$200 million of that amount has been invested in development projects.

The World Bank, International Monetary Fund and others can and must do better, much better than that.

Clearly, much of the trouble isn't at Haiti's doorsteps. Its roots are in the complicated and unfathomable rules imposed by the international financial institutions on how the money must be spent.

We agree with Valdes when he said, "A country in this situation cannot be forced to follow rules that will bring it political catastrophe."

For its part, the Caribbean region, which largely stood on the sidelines during the chaos of the past two years, must become re-engaged with Haiti again. It must welcome the country and its president back into the regional fold and while it may not have the financial resources to help get the job done, it certainly possesses the human capital and the experience to set the French-speaking nation on the right course to peace and development.

In his inaugural address President Preval stressed the value of better communications, telling Haitians, "we need to make peace through dialogue and talking to each other so we can decide where we want to go together. If we don't talk, then we will only fight and there will be no peace." Well said.

PRAISE FOR U.S. COAST GUARD IN TEXAS

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2006

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to place in the RECORD, the following report submitted by Anthony Marcos, Command Senior Chief, Air Station Houston, Texas in recognition of the men and women of the United States Coast Guard in Texas who performed with great courage and made 723 rescues under very adverse circumstances during hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005.

On the morning of 29 August, two HH65B helicopters from Air Station Houston arrived at Air Station New Orleans for post Hurricane Katrina operations. The arrival of these crews marked the beginning of an unprecedented period of search and rescue operations, and aviation engineering and logistical support by Air Station Houston.

For nearly two weeks, Air Station Houston provided a continuous complement of three HH65B's affording uninterrupted support of Katrina's rescue/response operations. This support culminated in more than 164 flight hours, 106 sorties, and most importantly, 691 saved lives by Air Station Houston-based aircraft and crews.

Recognizing a critical need by rescue personnel for water, energy drinks, MRE's and comfort items, Air Station Houston collected and shipped over 170,000 pounds of donated items on Coast Guard and DOD logistics flights for response personnel and the victims of Katrina.

Air Station Houston utilized valuable Coast Guard Auxiliary and other volunteer personnel in a vital information gathering effort by serving as a conduit between the Red Cross and Search and Rescue controllers for the forwarding of time-critical information on missing or evacuated Katrina victims and refugees stranded or relocated

somewhere in the New Orleans area or out of state.

In addition to its legacy area of responsibility (AOR) Air Station Houston instituted a plan to relieve Air Station New Orleans of its non-Katrina SAR responsibilities west of the Mississippi River throughout the Katrina response effort, thereby increasing Houston's AOR by more than 18,000 square miles. With two aircraft and crews deployed to New Orleans, Air Station Houston crews responded to a report on 6 September of a civilian helicopter missing 20 miles south of Sabine, Texas. Although already engaged in nearly around-the-clock operations in New Orleans, Air Station Houston's outstanding readiness posture permitted two unit helicopters, manned by crews recently returned from Hurricane Katrina, to be launched in a search for the 12 persons reported aboard the overdue helicopter. All 12 persons were quickly located and then successfully recovered during this multi-unit case by the two Air Station Houston helicopters in a daring nighttime offshore rescue.

The possibility of a category five hurricane hitting the Houston-Galveston metropolitan area set in motion a massive response effort from the Coast Guard Area Commanders. Within 48 hours of Rita's early morning land-fall on 24 September, over 125 contingency aircrew personnel along with 15 additional Coast Guard aircraft arrived at Air Station Houston to commence operations.

During the Houston-based response operation for Hurricane Rita, the Air Station coordinated over 61 missions and 123 sorties resulting in 205 mishap-free flight hours and the saving of 32 lives in a one week period. During this time, Air Station Houston also provided invaluable support to Gulf Coast based cutters including CGC Cypress, which allowed them to quickly fix the position of displaced waterway buoys, enabling the re-opening of vital waterways and the free-flow of commerce in and out of the Gulf.

SAN CARLOS PTA CELEBRATES THE 34TH BIENNIAL CHICKENS' BALL 2006

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2006

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to honor the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) of the San Carlos School District, located in my Congressional District, as well as the 34th Anniversary of its historic and infamous Chickens' Ball. This biennial event has helped to raise money for San Carlos' public schools as well as create ties within the community for the past 66 years.

This creative means of raising funds was first proposed by middle school teacher and PTA member, Howard J. Demeke, in 1939. Mr. Demeke himself was a regular patron of the historic San Francisco Barbary Coast Chickens' Ball, a live-entertainment show performed by women of a certain reputation in various saloons. This philanthropy-oriented event had been around since the early 1900s and included a contest of various colorful and riotous acts. The winner of the best act was awarded amounts of gold to then be donated to a designated charity.

Under Mr. Demeke's request to the San Carlos PTA, the Chickens' Ball left the swanky scene of the saloon and was reborn in San

Carlos for the purpose of raising money for the school district's milk funds. Members of the PTA, local clubs and members of the community joined together to plan comedy and entertainment skits, each competing for a large sum of donated money. The ball was an enormous success and has continued to be for the past six decades with all proceeds directly benefiting the schools of San Carlos.

I personally had the pleasure of attending the 34th Biennial San Carlos Chickens' Ball this year, with my lovely wife Annette. As we discovered, the Chickens' Ball requires the attention and participation of the audience, making each second at the show memorable. I congratulate each act unequivocally for the brave hilarity exhibited on stage by each performer.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in saluting and congratulating the outstanding Parent-Teacher Association of the San Carlos School District, for their dedication to our community and the quality of education for our children, through the most creative Chickens' Ball.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CATHY McMORRIS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2006

Miss McMORRIS. Mr. Speaker, during the second series of votes on amendments to H.R. 5384 the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2007, I was avoidably detained and missed two votes on amendments by Representative JEFF FLAKE.

Had I been present I would have voted in favor of H. Amdt. 904 to prohibit any of the funds made available in the Act from being used to fund dairy education in Iowa and H. Amdt. 909 to prohibit use of funds in the bill for the Hydroponic Tomato Production, Ohio grant.

IN RECOGNITION OF KEN STEWART

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2006

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ken Stewart, recipient of the 2005 National Language Teacher of the Year Award, which is given by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Ken is the very first teacher ever to receive this award.

Señor Stewart, as he is known by his students, has taught Spanish at Chapel Hill High School for nearly 20 years. A National Board Certified Spanish teacher, he has been successful in sharing his passion for language learning in the classroom because of his foreign language teaching philosophy, education, and extensive travel experience.

As the ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year, Señor Stewart competed for this award with five other regional winners from across the country. His award dossier included video segments demonstrating his skill as a classroom teacher and documentation of his

teaching practices, as well as testimonials from his students, their parents, and his school administrators. This award, sponsored by ACTFL and publisher McDougal Littell, was created to recognize foreign language teachers at the K-12 level who exhibit excellence in classroom language teaching. As part of this honor, Señor Stewart is now involved in serving as a spokesperson for language educators and making appearances and giving presentations that promote language education through the "Discover Languages" national public awareness campaign.

The shortage of qualified language professionals across the United States underscores the importance of Señor Stewart's work: only 9 percent of students enrolled in college study a foreign language. We need to introduce language study at an earlier age and do more to encourage pursuing real proficiency.

Foreign language needs have significantly increased due to the presence of a wider range of security threats, the emergence of new nation states, and the globalization of the United States economy. Outstanding teachers who instill critical skills of language competence and cultural understanding in our students are indeed worthy of recognition and gratitude.

I call on my colleagues to seek out the 2006 Language Teacher of the Year in their own states and to encourage that teacher as he or she competes this year at the regional and national levels. It is important that we support these educators who do so much to provide our students with the foreign language skills and cultural understanding that are essential to a world class education and that will prepare them for living and working in the 21st century.

I ask my colleagues to join me in commending Señor Stewart for his years of dedicated service and his commitment to foreign language instruction.

TRIBUTE TO CHAIRMAN HENRY HYDE

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2006

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I have had the honor of serving under Chairman HYDE on the House International Relations Committee since I came to Congress in 2001. From my very first day on the Committee I have witnessed firsthand the wit, humor and brilliance that are trademarks of my party's elder statesman.

Henry has succeeded in bringing sensibility and strength to one of the House's most important and internationally scrutinized committees in the wake of September 11. While my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have occasionally attempted to use the International Relations Committee as a venue to push forward partisan ideology; Chairman HYDE and his fine staff have worked hard to ensure that resolutions that leave his committee are based on fairness, the promotion of our democratic ideals, the protection of human rights, and American interests throughout the world.

I appreciate the guidance and mentorship that HENRY provided to me when I first came to Congress. As a freshman member I had