

invention to standardization and widespread use.

Mr. Speaker, we are now clearly in the second transition. Heavy industry is no longer the king of the American economy. Instead, businesses, large and small, are harnessing technologies and skilled workers to create an economy based more on providing better service to customers than on the specific product itself. This has been going on for 20 years now. Twenty years happens to coincide with the birth of that political urban myth where everyone ends up with a hamburger flipping job. Over those 20 years, jobs are way up, incomes are way up, and technological improvements are spreading throughout our lives. Very few Americans would take the 1984 life-style outlook that they had over the 2004 life-style, but we have had business cycles over those 20 years as well.

We have had years of booming growth, we have had years of slow growth. We have had two actual recessions when the economy shrank. We have had lean times that did not fit the academic test of a recession, but certainly felt like a weak economy.

In the midst of any one of those lean times, the fact that the economic trend over the previous decade was very good really did not matter much. Things were worse than the year before or the year before that. In addition, during the first part of the current 20-year economic growth trend, time had not passed enough to tell the difference between a trend and a cycle. The start of a trend can look a lot like the upside of a cycle.

The economic slowdown that began in 2000, the final year of the Clinton administration, was clearly the downside of the cycle that began in 1992, the final year of the Presidency of George H.W. Bush. In the past 20 years, we had at least two cycles, one ending in a recession in 1991, and the other in a recession in 2001. We are almost certainly into a third cycle with growth again picking up.

The U.S. economy has been growing strongly for the past 2 years. It grew at a staggering 8.2 percent annual rate in the third quarter of last year, surpassing even the most optimistic projections and marking the strongest pace in nearly two decades, 20 years. Unemployment claims are dropping, and workers' wages and benefits have climbed in recent months. Family incomes are up. Consumer spending is up. Inflation is low. The housing sector has been very strong, and business productivity, as we all know, has been incredibly strong.

At this point in the business cycle, the big economic issue has been jobs. Remember, in the short term, we are coming off of some years like 1999 and 2000 where unemployment reached such low levels that most economists could not imagine numbers so low. In that context when the recession and slowdown in 2001 resulted in 6 percent unemployment, it created real concern,

especially among the recently unemployed, and that is understandable.

Politics reacts far more to the short-term cycle than the long-term trend, so it is easy to see why everyone is talking about the struggles of recent years rather than the incredibly good news of the last 20 years. But as we deal with the political realities of the short term, we must not lose sight of the big picture.

The hamburger flipping job argument is not just false, it is actually a dangerous thing. Twenty years ago this kind of rhetoric did not get the chance to hurt our economy because hard-working and innovative Americans kept right on forging new technologies, revolutionizing what businesses do and how they do it, and improving the way Americans go about living their lives.

But today, thanks to the short-term business cycle we are coming out of, the hamburger flipping argument resonates with a lot of people, and it is resulting in some very misguided and dangerous proposals. It is generating calls for protectionism, calls for policies that stifle the very environment that has allowed skilled American workers to harness new technologies and bring about our booming 21st century economy.

Mr. Speaker, attempts to undermine the principles that are the foundation of this economy threaten the progress and prosperity that has come about over these two decades. That is why debunking the hamburger flipping argument once and for all is not just critical to understanding the good news of the last 20 years, it is essential to ensuring that our future remains bright as well.

HAITI NEEDS OUR HELP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS)?

There was no objection.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, Haiti today is facing an economic, political and humanitarian crisis so severe that the United States Government and the United States Congress have no choice but to immediately act. Daily, Haitians are dying as a result of the violence. These deaths are intolerable, and the United States simply cannot sit back and watch a country in our own hemisphere spiral into chaos.

Our government has voiced concern that Haitians, desperate to escape the escalating violence and poverty, will

flood American shores. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, just this evening there are reports that boats are coming towards the United States from Haiti filled with people fleeing literally for their lives.

We should be more concerned about the drastic conditions that led to the desperation and hopelessness of these Haitians refugees. The Congressional Black Caucus calls upon the President and the international community to work with the elected leadership in Haiti to bring about an end to the political turbulence and stop the attempted coup d'etat that is mounting in that country.

Mr. Speaker, let me be absolutely clear. It is imperative that the United States involve itself with an international force to create stability in Haiti before more lives are lost. We cannot afford to lose another day or another life due to our inaction. Because of the urgency of the Haitian crisis, my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus and I went to the White House and laid out our concerns today before President Bush. I must say, it was a good meeting with the President.

We explained to the President that we were tired of turning on our televisions every day and hearing about the slaughter of Haitian people. We explained to him that we believed with all the sincerity in our hearts that this was an urgent situation, and that the President of the United States was facing a very critical moment in his Presidency, and that he could do so much to turn this situation around.

We explained to him that there are so many people throughout the world who for various reasons had gotten or created within their minds a very negative view about the United States of America, but this was a time when he could act and turn some of those views around and show that not only was he a concerned President, but he was indeed a compassionate President.

So we had an opportunity, a rare opportunity I must admit, to meet with the President of the United States today, the Congressional Black Caucus did. Twenty Members were there, and we were very pleased to also have an opportunity at the same time to meet with Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell.

Let me just pause here to say that we expressed to Colin Powell, the Secretary of State, our gratitude for all of the hard work he had been doing over the past several weeks. It was Colin Powell that stayed in contact with many Caucus members. It was Colin Powell that tried to find ways to diplomatically resolve this matter, and at the same time we felt that things had not moved to the degree that we wanted them to; and so, therefore, we had asked to meet with the President.

Now, when we met with the President today, when the Congressional Black Caucus met with the President, there were several things that we wanted him to do, and to his credit he gave the

utmost consideration to these things. Number one, we asked that he immediately make a statement to the world about his concern for the Haitian people, for his concern towards President Aristide, and his concern about this wonderful democracy that we have in Haiti that is under attack.

When I say wonderful democracy, Mr. Speaker, I do not mean to say that Haiti does not have its problems, it does. But our point was that there is a democracy in the sense that President Aristide was duly elected, and just as we have gone around the world to protect democracies wherever we felt the need to do so, it was our belief that because he was elected, no matter what one's views might be towards the way he governs his country, that the United States should make sure that this democracy, which is only 650 miles from our shore, should be sustained.

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So basically we were asking him for three things and our goals were very simple. One, we wanted to make sure that there would be a laying down of weapons so that we might find some peace. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the rebels have all kinds of ammunition and all kinds of weapons. We realize that in order for us to move to any kind of resolution, one of the first things that has to happen, there has to be a laying down of arms. Number two, we said that we wanted the rule of law to be restored. The rule of law, of course, is very important. It is almost impossible to have any kind of peace when people are in chaos and they are not obeying the rule of law. We can see that very clearly just here recently as we looked at our televisions and saw the looting that was taking place and we saw some of the human harm that had been taking place. Clearly, a major problem with the rule of law. And, number three, we asked the President to make sure that there was some diplomatic resolution with regard to Haiti.

As we went into more detail, we asked the President to make a statement as soon as possible, and he said he would, making it clear that the United States stands for this democracy and that we have a major concern about the fact that so many people are being harmed and that it was our hope that a peaceful resolution would come to that land. Number two, we also asked the President to create a humanitarian corridor. He expressed great interest in this. What we mean by a humanitarian corridor, Mr. Speaker, is create a way by which humanitarian assistance such as food and medicine and water, because one of the major problems in Haiti right now is that there is insufficient water and food for so many, and these are the people that we do not hear so much about. These are the people who are suffering and dying, but the fact is that all we hear is about the rebels and the harm that they have done.

So the number two thing that we asked for was this humanitarian corridor; and we asked that the President, if he deemed it appropriate, and we think that it is almost necessary, to send troops in and work with our allies to make sure that organizations like the Red Cross and others have a way to get that humanitarian aid to the people that need it and so that they would be protected. The President said that he would indeed consider this.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we asked him to consider sending in from 300 to 400 troops to maintain the peace. As we keep up with the news with regard to Haiti, it is clear that there is a steady march by the rebels towards Port-au-Prince. As you know, Mr. Speaker, that is the capital of Haiti. That is where President Aristide lives, and we were concerned that if President Aristide, if the rebels come into Port-au-Prince, that the death of President Aristide would be imminent. I think the President understood that, that is, President Bush understood that. He understands clearly that we are dealing with an urgent situation, and he said that he would take that into consideration and would get back to us as soon as possible.

So we have faith that the President will do the right thing. We have faith that, as he looked into our eyes and we looked into his, he understood that this was not about politics, but this was about life. He understood, we do believe, that this was not about simply trying to save a President, but it was about saving the President of Haiti and also making sure that we save many, many lives. I think that as he looked into our eyes, he could see the sincerity and could see that we realize clearly that if we did not take action and that he did not take action, that the blood of the people of Haiti would be on all of our hands. And so we had a very good meeting, but it is only a beginning. We have vowed to try to work with the President, with Secretary Powell, and Condoleezza Rice to make sure that a peaceful resolution comes to Haiti as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, so often as we look around the world and look at the difficult problems that face so many people and countries across the world, it must be difficult at times to try to figure out for a President and for his advisers as to where you intervene and where you do not. But one thing has been clear with regard to United States policy and that is that we have consistently done everything in our power to hold up democracies that are in trouble.

Clearly, the democracy in Haiti is in trouble. And so the President has made it clear that he will issue a statement sometime this evening, and we look forward to that statement. He assured us that he would address the issues after consulting with Ms. Rice and Secretary Powell, would address the issues with regard to the humanitarian corridor and with regard to sending troops

in to quell the violence and make sure that there was a diplomatic resolution taking place.

And so it was a very proud moment for the Congressional Black Caucus. It was a moment that shall definitely live in the DNA of our brains forever. Because one of the things that I guess hit me as we were sitting there is that 100 years ago, none of us were here. One hundred years from now none of us will be here. The question is what do we do now for our fellow human beings? And although they may be 700 miles from our shore and although we may not feel a relationship with them, not all Americans may feel a relationship with them, the fact is that they are our brothers and they are our sisters. I am always reminded in these situations, Mr. Speaker, of the song that says:

No man is an island
No man stands alone.
Each man's joy is joy to me
And each man's grief is my own.
We need one another, so I will defend
Each man as my brother and each man as my friend.

And so the Congressional Black Caucus has decided to stand, to stand for people who are going through great difficulties, to stand for children who as we speak find themselves in boats heading for a land of opportunity. Stand. We decided to stand for a President that finds himself in great difficulty. Stand. We decided to stand for democracy, democracy that this country hails as being one of the greatest forms of government that ever existed. We continue to stand.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield now to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK).

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I am glad to be here to not only address the House but also the American people. I think what is so very, very important and proud to be a Member of the U.S. Congress on this day, of making sure that we do the right thing under the circumstances. Right now, Mr. Speaker, we have not only one but two carriers with Haitians that are being interdicted by the U.S. Coast Guard right now. I do not think that there needs to be a mountain of evidence to even show that there are individuals in Haiti that are being persecuted as we speak, that are losing their lives, that are being beaten for either being for the pro-government or anti-government forces that are there. And then you have innocent individuals that are in the middle of all of this gunfire and violence that is taking place, children, women, people, young men, older men that are there just trying to be citizens of a country. A democracy as shaky as it may be, it is still a democracy.

We recently met with the President, just today, and I am glad that members of this caucus and Members of this United States Congress shared with the President the importance, the fact that we are America and that we wear the breastplate of righteousness as it relates to standing and fighting for democracies. If we support or we are

against President Aristide, that is not the issue here. The issue is that a democracy is being overthrown by a gun as we stand idly by and make tough talk about Haitians leaving Haiti. To not do anything about the killing and the fighting that is going on right now in Haiti and in the same breath say Haitians stay in Haiti, don't take to the sea, it does not work toward logic to a diplomatic solution or a political solution of what is taking place now in Haiti.

I have said it before, and I will say it again tonight, our policy should not be driven on how many Haitians are face down in Haiti on the ground or are floating face down in the waters around Haiti and the United States. I will tell you that it is not healthy for our hemisphere; it is not healthy for our policy of making sure that we put forth democracies in the Caribbean and in this hemisphere, and it works against logic. So I urge the President, though we urged him earlier today, let individuals that are carrying guns know in Haiti, as they are getting more and more equipped as the hours go by.

Just a week and a half ago, there were 1960-style rifles that these rebels, thugs, whatever we want to call them or they identify themselves as, 1960-style rifles that can shoot maybe three or four bullets. Now they are almost up to par with U.S. troops. They are wearing full body armor, armored helmets, AR-15s, M-16s, American made, I must add, carrying a magazine of bullets of 40 to 50 rounds, banana clips, radio capabilities; and they are holding press conferences. If we expect for the people of Haiti, a human being, to keep their family in that kind of environment, thinking that they are just going to suck it up and take the bullets, then we are in for a rude awakening.

I want to talk about U.S. taxpayers. If we play defense of having our Coast Guard out there waiting in a 5-mile radius from each other, planes flying over to detect boats and things of that nature, all those resources focused on Haiti, what is happening to some of the other countries where we know we have a footprint of terrorism in the Caribbean? It is not Haiti, but I think it is important that we understand that and take that under heavy consideration.

I know that the American people are compassionate people. And if we are in Iraq justifying our presence of being there, of saying that we stand for democracy and we stand for the lives of the Iraqi people, then definitely 650 miles off the coast of the continental United States, we should stand for a democracy if we had an international force there to be able to stop the violence and start diplomatic talks.

I want to thank the gentleman for allowing me to address the House tonight. I know that we have to continue to follow this situation, but I would also like to add before I close that the Haitians that are on boats now, we

have to remember international law and our own laws, if they can prove persecution, if they fear persecution, if returning back to Haiti, what the President said earlier today cannot stand. It is almost like we are sending them back to be murdered. So it is important that we set up the opportunity for them to receive the due process that they deserve. If we agree or not with illegal immigration, it is important that we ask other countries to do the same, that we do things by the book and by the law.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I want to thank the gentleman for his statement.

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Question: I know the gentleman has been very concerned about this issue because one of the reasons I know he has an extraordinary sensitivity, as there are many Haitians that live in his district. Is that right?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. That is correct; and, Mr. Speaker, it is the highest concentration of Haitians in the United States. And I will tell the gentleman this: the Haitian people have been so involved in this country's history. They fought with us for our independence, and they are major, major contributors to not only our economy. We have a positive trade relationship with Haiti, and they create many U.S. jobs. Because of that positive relationship that is very important, Mr. Speaker, whichever side that people may fall on this issue, we cannot allow democracies to be taken over by gun and violence, and that is the bottom line.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, not only are the Haitian people going through what they are going to in Haiti, but one of the things I think a lot of people do not realize is that some 75 to 80 percent of people in Haiti live in pure poverty, and I know that when one combines the need for humanitarian assistance such as clean water with the violence, it has got to be painful just as it is painful to us. I would imagine for many of the gentleman's constituents, it is very painful, too, knowing that they have relatives that are going through all that, and then the violence makes it even more difficult for them to live any semblance of a normal life and definitely almost precludes any kind of assistance for going in; and I think that is one of the reasons why we talked today with the President about this humanitarian corridor.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, that is 110 percent right. We have to look at the stage the way it is set. I think it is important for us to understand the U.S. has asked U.S. citizens and mission workers to leave Haiti for their own safety. The French have advised their own citizens, which is justified. Canadians have done the same and other representatives from other countries that are there.

There are a number of U.S. citizens still in Haiti. That is still something for us to take into account. Because 97

percent of social services in Haiti, including schools and educating the children, are by missions. They are privatized. I mean, it is not like the government has the ability to be able to put forth an education system. So when that breaks down, that means that the elderly are not receiving the care that they have received before in the past. Children are not receiving the kind of care that they need, prenatal care for women that are pregnant, some of the very things that are there. The AIDS and HIV work that this country is invested in, should invest more but has invested in, is all going to go for naught and having to rebuild all of that if we do not stop the violence.

We have people that are pro-Aristide and that are against Aristide; but one thing they have in common, Mr. Speaker, is that we must, yesterday, stop the violence. They know that has to happen. And unless we stop that from happening, we are not going to be able to come up with a diplomatic or political solution to this situation.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that Members of this Congress should continue to press on, and I am glad that we met with the President and Secretary Powell and also Dr. Rice, National Security Adviser; and the President's Chief of Staff, Mr. Andy Card. We have taken it to the highest levels that it can be taken to in this country and in the international community. Very little has to be done by us to prevent drowning of Haitians and Haitians face down in the streets of Haiti and very little, very little of a presence and leadership.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), who will be coming up next, for being a part of that meeting today because it was indeed a very historic meeting. So while there is very little to be done, it must be done immediately.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Yes, sir.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Because the longer we wait, the worse it gets. And so I really appreciate the gentleman's participation in the meeting today with the President.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the distinguished gentlewoman from Northern California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, first let me thank our chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus once again for his leadership not only in unifying the Congressional Black Caucus around such an important issue but also in terms of insisting that we move forward not only in terms of our position but in terms of trying to make sure that we are actively involved in trying to help save lives, and that is really what we are doing. So I thank the chairman very much for his leadership.

This has been, as it relates to Haiti, in some respects a very sad time for many of us. Just last night we were here again talking about the fact that

we wanted our government to actively engage in attempting to forge a cease-fire, to insist that the rule of law be adhered to, and to insist that the Haitian constitution be complied with. We were told again last evening at about 5 o'clock that we needed another extension, that the opposition was not going to comply with any political agreement. And here we are again tonight. Still the opposition has not agreed to a political settlement. More lives are being lost. The thugs are moving into Port-au-Prince. And at least tonight, however, under our chairman's leadership, we have had a chance to talk to the President directly and to Dr. Rice and to Secretary Powell to convey our sense of urgency, which I hope they understood and felt during our meeting. Because we are witnessing right next door the world's oldest black nation deteriorate. We are witnessing right next door in our own hemisphere thugs carrying M-16s and M-50s, weapons, I understand, that probably are made in the United States of America. Where they are getting these weapons from, who knows. Here we are witnessing once again tonight, as we felt last night and witnessed last night, the lack of action by our government to stop and to prevent a violent overthrow, a violent coup d'etat of a duly-elected, democratically elected President. We would not tolerate that anywhere else in the world. We just would not tolerate it.

So today I believe our meeting put forth the Congressional Black Caucus's sense of urgency to the President, and also I believe, Mr. Speaker, what it did was convey to him that we understand that saving lives and not allowing a violent overthrow of a government that is duly elected is not a Democratic issue, and it is not a Republican issue, but this is a bipartisan issue. It should be nonpartisan. It should be nonpartisan. We are talking about saving lives and preventing bloodshed, preventing a possible civil war from erupting. This is serious business, and there is no way we should sleep, really, and I am very glad that my colleague, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), has called for a Haiti watch, 24 hours. As co-chair with the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) of the Haiti task force, I cannot think of anything that is more important right now.

We have written to the President. We have communicated with Secretary Powell. Not just this week, but the Congressional Black Caucus has been sounding the alarm for months really with regard to this unfortunate moment with which we are faced. And so now is the time that our great country can step up to the plate and can say to both sides that peace is the only option. There are no other options. Again, as I said earlier, how does one negotiate a political settlement with thugs carrying M-16s and M-50s? So we do not need any more extensions with regard to the political settlement that

President Aristide has embraced, that CARICOM has embraced, that the international community has embraced. I mean, this is useless at this point.

Tomorrow, I understand, the Security Council will meet. They may consider a resolution calling for international security forces; and if that happens, I sure hope that our government does not block that. In fact, I wish and I hope that we support that effort. But minimally we should allow the world community to come together to say no to this violence and insist on a cease-fire and insist on upholding a democratically elected government.

Eight million Haitian lives are at stake, Mr. Speaker. There is no way that any of us should allow any of these people to die on our watch, on our watch. History will record whether or not we just stood there and said, so be it. We did not especially like this policy of the Aristide government or that policy and hands off at this point. History is going to record if we took that position and did nothing that the lives of these 8 million people are in our hands and the blood will be on our hands if, in fact, the bloodbath occurs, which is what we tonight are trying to prevent.

So let me just say to the Speaker, to the chairman, that I think the President, and I know Secretary Powell and Dr. Rice, got it. I know they got it. But what is important is what are they going to do with what they got. They cannot just say we abhor the violence and it is bad and it is wrong for folks to kill each other. We are the most powerful country in the world. So the question is, what are they going to do tonight? What are they going to do?

So I want to thank again the Congressional Black Caucus for stepping up to the plate. Hopefully, the rest of the House of Representatives at least will step up to the plate tomorrow and join us in our efforts. I think we need to make sure that every Republican and every Democrat in this House stands for democracy in our own hemisphere, stands for an end to the violence, and stands for United States support for a cease-fire and an end to this carnage that is taking place in Haiti.

I thank the chairman for his leadership, and let us hope that we are waking up America.

Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to call on the Bush administration to lead the international community in supporting efforts to pass a U.N. Security Council resolution, provide international forces, and do everything possible to prevent violence and save Haitian lives.

At any moment, the democratically elected President of Haiti could be overthrown any minute and at risk is the safety of over 8 million lives in Haiti.

Time is of the essence, and the Bush administration has failed to adequately address the dire need for a solution.

Far too many lives have been lost, too many children have been orphaned and fear has begun to set in.

Nevertheless, our administration has minimized their involvement to diplomacy—which to date has been inadequate.

The Bush administration has done nothing to help Haiti since coming into office except embargo economic, social, and most importantly now political assistance to Haiti.

Even if we look directly at the support the administration has given since January, I believe they have done nothing to save one Haitian life.

The administration was well aware of the political stalemate facing the country and the need for elections, yet they did nothing to bring the opposition to the table and on January 12, the term of the 47th legislature came to a close with the departure of 83 Deputies and 4 senators left.

Later that week, on January 15, the CARICOM community came out and said, "We are all committed to free and fair elections, dedicating resources from our respective countries, with the help of other countries in the hemisphere, to create a framework from which we are able to guarantee free and fair elections."

CARICOM held talks on Haiti in an effort to end the political impasse and unrest and developed the CARICOM proposal that we are still asking the opposition to accept an agreement which was endorsed by the president over a month ago.

The administration still bided its time, and allowed the opposition to impede the democratic process.

The administration allowed the Organization of American States to do its diplomatic duties toward Haiti, and the OAS convened an emergency meeting to discuss Haiti. OAS endorses the CARICOM proposal, condemns the escalating violence in Haiti, and adopts Resolution 861.

After allowing even more time to pass, the Bush administration finally felt pressure from the international community and this Congress to act.

A team of international diplomats from the United States, Canada, France, CARICOM, and the OAS traveled to Haiti on February 21 in an attempt to broker the same peace plan that the opposition parties had rejected over a month ago.

Why was it a surprise that they would reject is again on February 23.

Why did our administration allow the opposition another 24 hours to say no—again?

Many have speculated that the additional 24 hours to accept the CARICOM plan was necessary because the opposition was in a position to accept it, but the ultimate outcome was: More violence, more lives lost, more cities burned, and more fear spread throughout the country.

President Aristide accepts the peace plan and opposition are given until February 23 to accept or reject it.

Any legitimacy that the opposition had is gone.

They have repeatedly refused to support the democratic process by continually rejecting any offer to resolve the conflict peacefully.

Now is the time to move toward averting a disaster and stop the violence by pushing our administration to lead the international community in protecting the dually elected President, the people of Haiti, and upholding the Haitian Constitution.

If we allow this coup to occur, we will be responsible for the deaths of thousands because

we sat on our hands and refused to bring light on the real criminals, killers, and antidemocracy forces involved in this coup d'etat.

We, the members of the Congressional Black Caucus, friends of Haiti, and supporters of democracy will not allow the current crisis in Haiti to be ignored.

We marched up to the White House today, and refused to leave until our urgent message was heard.

We met with Secretary Powell, Dr. Rice and ultimately President Bush.

We told them that the time is now to enforce a cease fire, laying down arms, honoring the rule of law, and honoring the Haitian Constitution.

Bush must show some leadership and speak out against the violence and disregard for the rule of law in Haiti.

President Bush should speak out in support of the democratically elected President of Haiti and provide President Aristide the assistance he needs to promote peace on the ground, allow free and fair elections to take place, and uphold the Haitian Constitution.

Democracy in Haiti is in grave danger. Turmoil rages on the ground, in the streets, at the university, through the halls of the government, and in the homes of Haitians.

Haitians are dying, and it is apparent that the hope for peace is diminishing.

If we believe in the power of democracy and the potential for global peace we must not turn a blind eye to our neighbor and long-time ally.

The United States must stop dragging its feet, lead the charge at the United Nations' Security Council meeting tomorrow, and answer the call for assistance from President Aristide.

The United States of America cannot give more time for more people to get killed.

Haiti, our neighbor and a sovereign democracy, has stood by us through thick and thin.

Haiti remains the world's oldest independent Black nation.

We must work with our neighbor, to secure peace in our region, and uplift Haiti's proud history.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for her statement. And as she was speaking, I could not help but think about the book entitled "Seize the Time." And that is what this is all about, seizing this moment and doing what needs to be done to save a lot of lives. So I really do appreciate what she has done. I thank her for being at the meeting today too.

Ms. LEE. I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS). We must seize the time. We cannot wait any longer.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), the dean of the Congressional Black Caucus and one who has been very strongly involved in this issue.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS). I am delighted to participate in this Special Order. And we have all agreed that the original objective of this was to discuss black history, and that has been postponed until next week; and it will be given thorough consideration here.

What we are talking about tonight is world history, and the events that I just want to comment on turn around the meeting with Senator DODD last evening, with Senator DEWINE, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK), the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN), the Canadian ambassador, and the French ambassador. The French ambassador to the U.S., the Canadian ambassador to the U.S. And what we were talking about there was the importance of getting our international bodies committed, CARICOM, the Organization of American States, the Security Council and the United Nations and how that could be gone about.

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I was encouraged by the positions taken by both ambassadors, particularly the French Ambassador. Our colleague, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS), points out that in South Africa there is a readiness to intervene. It was a very positive meeting.

Today we had nearly two dozen Members of Congress, including the Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS), the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT), the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS), the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK), the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN), at least a couple gentlewomen from California, maybe all three, and the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands were with us.

Now, we asked to see the President. We were greeted by the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, and the Chief Security Adviser, Dr. Condoleezza Rice, and Mr. Andy Card, and we had a very intense, frank exchange that led to the reconsideration of whether we were going to meet with the President of the United States.

I suppose in the course of history it may not be considered important that there was a reconsideration that led us to meet with the President of the United States, and it was on the basis of our collective arguments to the two Cabinet members that we were at a precipice, that this was so immediate that continued political negotiations were really not appropriate. After all, many parts of the north have been taken by rebels, drug lords, gangsters, ne'er-do-wells and a legitimate political opposition. The second largest city in Haiti has already been captured.

Yesterday, at 5 o'clock p.m., the final offer that Secretary of State Powell had worked so hard on was rejected. It is not hard to interpret from that that the decision had been made to move forward and to take over the country; that they did not want to negotiate, even though President Aristide had quickly agreed to every condition in

the proposal that was being brokered by the Secretary of State.

So the question that remains now is what are the steps that we ought to take, and we expect to hear from the President to speak about our opposition to any violent overthrow of any nation in the Western Hemisphere less than an hour away from our shores. So this is quite important.

I should mention that our colleague, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY), was with us, and she was with us at the press conference earlier, and that our colleague the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE), was likewise at both events.

Now, there are several ways that we can approach this matter. One is to assume that we can still negotiate politically toward a settlement, which some had argued was a precondition to us sending in support. The only problem with that is that if the rebels and the assorted groups that are demanding now to oust the President with no agreement whatsoever, that there would be nobody left for us to negotiate with if that were to occur. In addition, the country would be in ruin.

Furthermore, it is not hard to perceive that if there was an outbreak of violence between these two groups, Lavalas and the citizens loyal to their government and those who want Aristide's ouster, that it would be the largest bloodbath in recent Haitian history, and that it could result in the assassination of the President of Haiti.

It was out of that concern that we wanted to make sure that we insulate the Government of Haiti, as well as the President. That was based on the simple premise that if we cannot protect the head of the government, then we cannot protect any of the other 8 million people there. So it was important that we have this meeting.

Now, I want to take this moment to praise the President of the United States for agreeing to see us and agreeing to consider the proposal laid out by the Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus and others that were present. This constitutes a reconsideration of immense proportions, because I do not think that the President has been looking at this from the point of view of the members of the caucus and our contacts in Haiti.

We do have a member of the caucus that has personally visited this country on three occasions. It now turns out, thanks to a Senator in the other body, that a plane will be provided for us to make sure everyone in the Caribbean, that all the millions of occupants and citizens of this independent nation struggling economically and socially to survive will know that the Congressional Black Caucus, 39 men and women strong, are completely behind the order and the legal process that requires that under no circumstance can violence be used to resolve internal political differences, not just in the Western Hemisphere, but anywhere in the world, for that matter.

That is what we stand for. That is why we helped create the United Nations. That is why we have worked on issue after issue on the planet, whether it be in Eastern Europe, the Middle East or anywhere else.

So I join proudly the members of the caucus, who comported themselves extremely properly. They were duly aware of the circumstances between the Congress and the White House, and I think this was, as the gentleman from Maryland (Chairman CUMMINGS) has said, an important, and, yes, I believe a turning point in the destiny of this small, but great, nation.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for his statement. I want to thank him also for his leadership and thank him for his participation today in our meeting.

I now yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS).

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding. I, too, want to join with the others in thanking him for his leadership for the past year and a half, but particularly on today, on this day where crisis and time is of the essence.

I want to thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) for their leadership on the Haiti Task Force. One always has to thank the great gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) for simply being Maxine Waters.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed again another one of those times where it is true that the Congressional Black Caucus is indeed the conscience of the Congress, and I would hope that with today's meeting we have awakened the conscience of those individuals that are currently at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, that we must not stand idly by as a Nation, a Nation that believes in democracy, and allow a people to die and a democracy to be wiped out.

We are indeed the world's only superpower, and just off our shores, in our hemisphere, is a case of democracy being dismantled by individuals who, by every account that I have heard, are violent, are thugs and criminals. In fact, the opposition is supposed to be peaceful, though they will not get to the negotiating table or agree to anything that has been put on the table so that this can be resolved in a peaceful way.

But because we are the only world superpower, it seems to me that we would have the ability to drive to get people to the table, to make that kind of difference, to save the lives, so that we can never see people dying in the streets, as we did just a short time ago in Rwanda.

In fact, I appeal to Americans that even in being selfish about this, when you think about what is going on in the world, if you want to be selfish about this, you know, if you have instability in Haiti, there could be instability here. In fact, people are coming now. The President says, "Don't

come." But they are going to come if their lives are on the line. They are going to go somewhere, and they are going to try to come here.

I think it is in our best interests to make sure that we intercede and have peaceful negotiations take place, and those negotiations are obviously not going to take place unless there is something affirmatively done to cause it to happen. We have the strength and the ability to do that.

Now, we do not have to do it alone. Clearly there are others that have agreed that they will come. They are just looking for a word; they are looking for some kind of indication to say, "Go do this," so we can bring Canada, we can bring France, and we can bring CARICOM along with us.

□ 2045

Now, I will start wrapping it up, because I know that we have a lot of Members who want to say something in regards to this. I will conclude by saying that without military intervention, be it the United States, not just by ourselves, or an international military intervention at this point, I fear that the leaders of Haiti with the most guns will feel that they can rule Haiti. It becomes the law of the jungle. And I seriously cannot see how those who would kill and destroy the institutions that currently exist, such as hospitals and other institutions that are being burned, will bring this great country back up. Let us act now, because the camera of history is roaming. Let it not be on our time that we say that we stood by and did nothing, allowing democracy to topple and people and bloodshed to fill the streets.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the President of the United States to do something to act, to lead, to save lives and save democracy in the country of Haiti.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his statement and his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS), my friend and colleague, who has just spent a phenomenal amount of time in Haiti and has been just a tremendous adviser to all of us in the caucus and has given so much blood, sweat, and tears and passion to this cause. I yield to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS).

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to first thank the gentleman from Maryland (Chairman CUMMINGS) for the tremendous leadership he has provided to the members of the Congressional Black Caucus and ultimately to this House. Today he organized the members and we took the extraordinary step of going to the White House to present our case. I would like to thank the chairman for the leadership that he provided in the room with the President, with Secretary Powell, with Dr. Condoleezza Rice, and others. He presented our case and he presented it well. It was supported by other members of the Congressional Black Caucus

as we added to the presentation. In the final analysis, Mr. Speaker, we were able to paint the picture to lay out the case of what is going on in Haiti at this moment.

What we have is this, Mr. Speaker. We have the President of Haiti whose back is up against the wall. We have the President who signed on to a peace agreement that was presented by the international community, led by the United States of America. We have the President with a dwindling police force; and members of his police force are being killed every hour, not simply by the opposition, but by thugs and ex-military folks who have been in exile and who have come back into Haiti to join in this mayhem. He is sitting there asking for help. He has reached out to the United States. He has done everything that we have asked him to do, and he is waiting for some help.

In this coalition that we have, the United States, France, Canada, the OAS, the U.N., and CARICOM, it is time for somebody to step forward. We made our case to the President tonight because we want this great Nation to step forward and to lend a helping hand to this small, poor country in this hemisphere. We think it is the right thing to do. We want our country to lead. But as we stand on this floor tonight, we are saying to France, we are saying to Canada, we are saying to CARICOM, the U.N., OAS, all of them, somebody please step forward and avoid the blood bath that we feel could happen at any time.

We believe that not only should the United States provide some leadership, but this peace proposal was based on a presentation by CARICOM. This is the CARICOM proposal that was put on the table. Our friends in Jamaica and in the Bahamas and other states of the Caribbean who are so intricately involved in this must step forward. As I stand here, it is necessary for Jamaica to be in contact with South Africa in order for South Africa to be able to respond under the banner of CARICOM.

And so our message is not only to the President. We think he should lead, we think we should lead, but to all of the others who are in this coalition. Those friends of ours in the Caribbean, in CARICOM, who put this proposal together know what happens to small nation states. They understand what has been happening to Haiti for years. They too have to receive immigrants from Haiti who have been escaping Haiti for years. Finally, we thought they were settled under Aristide and this presidency. We know that we had the problems of people who did not want Aristide, who was responsible for the coup d'etat, the same people are involved that did not want him in the first place; the same folks who have enriched themselves on the backs of the poor people there and do not want change.

But I suppose we could stand here all night and discuss the history of Haiti and talk about how Haiti has been undermined, how we have had people

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.

□ 2100

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