

HAITI'S FUTURE: THE TASK OF  
REBUILDING A SHATTERED NA-  
TION

**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