

DRAFT

HAITI 2. TSM

Extension of Remarks

*Karen - When you have  
the time, let's discuss this.  
Adelle*

WILLIAM LEHMAN, M.C.  
October 16, 1991

**RETURN HAITI TO DEMOCRACY**

Mr. Speaker, Haiti's first freely, democratically elected President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was illegally and brutally removed from power on September 29, 1991. I represent the 17th District of Florida, an area which, like most of southern Florida, has over the years been inundated by Haitians fleeing the devastation which was the Duvalier heritage of their country. This economic, social and political ruin were the conditions which Mr. Aristide was elected to redress. Tragically, Haitians in greater numbers now are fleeing the political repression rampant under the freewheeling violence spawned by the coup and its concomitant lawlessness.

I fully support the cut-off of all U.S. assistance to Haiti, and urge President Bush to work vigorously for the restoration of democracy and President Aristide's reinstatement. We must send the strongest message possible that no aid will be forthcoming without the restoration of democratic government in Haiti. I am pleased to note that President Aristide has officially eschewed the use of violence to restore him to power, has agreed to replace his unpopular prime minister Rene Preval, and has recommitted himself to observing the political rights and duties spelled out in the 1987 Constitution.

I also fully support the implementation of the trade embargo voted by the Organization of American States. Venezuela and Mexico have now announced their cut-off of oil to Haiti. The U.S. --

which comprises 77% of Haiti's trade -- and Panama have frozen all Haitian bank assets. Other governments are currently identifying and implementing an embargo of their various trade links with Haiti. While no one wishes hardship on the Haitian people, only the determined efforts by a Hemisphere united against oppression and lawlessness will convince the military junta to respect the human rights of the people and restore to them the government they freely and duly elected.

Finally, I urge the suspension of the U.S. Government's policy of interdiction and the forcible deportation and repatriation of these unfortunate victims of Haiti's chronic political, economic and social dysfunctions. Like the Cuban immigrants who seek respite in the United States, these Haitian refugees should be allowed to remain in this country as legitimate seekers of sanctuary from a chaotic and dangerous homeland.