

HAÏTI

The Miami Herald

Action called for on Haiti

11 June 2005

Ten Democratic lawmakers urged Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to take immediate action on Haiti.

Ten members of Congress signed a letter calling Haiti "a failed state" and the U.S.-backed interim government "an instrument of repression," while urging Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to take quick measures to prevent further chaos.

In the letter sent to Rice on Friday, the Democratic lawmakers, led by William Delahunt of Massachusetts, said the judicial system has become so politicized against supporters of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide that it's "a sham."

"Although the unelected interim government was supposed to be composed of nonpolitical technocrats, it has proven itself to be as fiercely partisan as previous Haitian regimes," they wrote.

The group urged Rice to push for the immediate removal of Haitian Minister of Justice Bernard Gousse, who has refused to free Aristide's former prime minister despite requests to do so from the U.N. Mission in Haiti — and even the U.S. Embassy.

Former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune has been in prison for 11 months on charges that he orchestrated a massacre of Aristide opponents, but

Gousse is yet to publicly present any evidence.

"Put simply, his attitude and his actions have actually increased Haiti's instability and have guaranteed that Haiti will remain volatile even after elections," the lawmakers wrote. Gousse declined to comment about the letter.

The lawmakers noted that Haitian judges have exonerated dozens of military and paramilitary officers accused of killing his supporters during the 1991 military coup.

"The fact is that the Haitian interim government is widely perceived as a U.S. puppet regime. So its failings are our failings," the group wrote.

Signing the letter were Reps. Alcee L. Hastings of Miramar, Sherrod Brown and Dennis J. Kucinich from Ohio, Major J. Owens from New York, Neil Abercrombie from Hawaii, Michael E. Capuano from Massachusetts, Zoe Lofgren from California, Julia Carson from Indiana and Danny K. Davis from Illinois.

They concluded that if the international community does not take over the administration of justice, "Haiti will continue to be a failed state. And U.S. Marines will eventually have to return to Haiti."

A spokesman for the State Department could not be reached Friday evening.

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