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Recently Confirmed Porter Goss is Still the Wrong Man for the Job as Evidenced by His Haitian Involvement

- As a CIA veteran and chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Porter Goss brings an exceedingly controversial record as CIA head and probable future intelligence czar.
- After leaving the CIA, Goss' subsequent sixteen-year career in the House of Representatives allowed him to forge connections with fellow Republicans who have used their personal hatred of ousted Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to cloud their judgment on key intelligence oversight functions regarding the impoverished island nation.
- As the spokesman for an International Republican Institute delegation of election monitors to Haiti in 1995, Goss tried to discredit the parliamentary victory of pro-Aristide candidates that far more credible foreign observers than himself had validated.
- In March, Goss refused to investigate last February's de facto coup in Haiti, further calling into question his integrity as Intelligence Chair and a likely future supreme intelligence czar.
- Democrats criticize Goss for being too partisan, as was demonstrated by his failure

to investigate the leak that exposed CIA agent Valerie Plame, and by his unwillingness to criticize the Bush Administration's many intelligence failures during his tenure as chairman of the House Intelligence Committee.

- Goss is an ideologue and not a sound analyst. He casually excuses his history of biased and unbalanced judgments by acknowledging that at times he may have been too passionate and enthusiastic during past debates. Perhaps Goss' greatest criticism was provided by the man himself in an interview conducted in the spring of 2004. After being when questioned about his ability to head the CIA, he replied, "I am not qualified."

On August 10, 2004, President Bush nominated Porter Goss, an eight-term Republican congressman from the fourteenth district in Florida, to be the new Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. The full senate confirmed his nomination on September 22, after receiving the approval of the Senate Intelligence Committee. If his experience in Haiti is any guide, his confirmation portends a new and darker chapter in the CIA's history. During his appointment, Goss was lauded by President Bush as a man who knows the CIA "inside and out...[and] the right man to lead the agency at this critical moment in our nation's history." However, despite Bush's enthusiastic support of the Goss nomination, the Florida congressman himself stated once again that he was not fit to be the director of the CIA. In a March 3, 2004 interview for Michael Moore's movie, Fahrenheit 9/11, Goss undermined Bush's statement by claiming that: "I [Goss] couldn't get a job with the CIA today. I am not qualified...I don't have the language skills...I don't have the cultural background probably. And I certainly don't have the technical skills...So, the things that you need to have, I don't have." Based on Goss' own testimony, a telling case could be made that he, in fact, is not qualified to head the CIA, let alone the entire U.S. intelligence community.

The Resume

Reading his resume, Goss appears to be qualified for the job. From the late 1950's through the early 1970's, he worked as a CIA covert operative throughout Europe and Latin America—specifically in Haiti, Mexico and the Dominican Republic during a very tumultuous period—before retiring from the agency. He gradually became involved in local state politics and eventually ran for Congress in 1988. During his sixteen years in the House of Representatives, Goss served on the House Permanent Select Intelligence Committee and has been the Committee's chairman since 1996. His resume aside, Goss' voting record exposes a rightwing ideologue who has furthered his ultra-conservative agenda by acting as a front man for a variety of extremist causes and groups.

In fact, as chairman of his intelligence committee, Goss has had relatively few ascertainable professional accomplishments with intelligence issues throughout his career. During the period that his committee oversaw America's intelligence community, the CIA consistently underestimated other nations' commitment to the "Treaty on the

Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons”, which allowed India to conduct nuclear tests in 1998. The intelligence community failed to recommend urgent action in order to protect U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, and the USS Cole, a navy destroyer at the Port of Aden, Yemen, from Al-Qaida bombings. Goss was also the committee chairman when U.S. warplanes mistakenly bombed the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, during a NATO operation in 1999, causing a marked increase in friction between the two major trading partners. In addition to his history of negligence and failure to effectively wield his authority as chair of the House committee, he has been criticized for being too partisan to head the CIA, something he also has acknowledged.

Goss' Enmity toward Haiti's President Aristide

Goss has had a profound, though less publicized, influence on some of the murkier and more controversial aspects of U.S. policy towards Haiti. Most consistently, Goss has combined his classic odium towards democratic President Aristide with his Republican Party's unabated anti-Aristide agenda, to undermine democratic practices on the island. Superficially, it seems that Goss's immediate hostility toward the former president of Haiti stems from their interactions throughout the 1990s.

Aristide was first forced into exile in 1991 by an armed military uprising less than a year after his inauguration. The beleaguered leader eventually moved to Washington, where he won considerable support from Democratic legislators, particularly from members of the Congressional Black Caucus. These relationships with prominent Congressional Democrats also made him many important enemies in Washington, including Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina, former Congressman Ben Gilman from New York and of course Goss from Florida. Senator Helms was so ardently anti-Aristide that he once described the Haitian president as “psychotic” during a hearing on the Senate floor. Gilman and Goss, while less flamboyant, nonetheless had assiduously worked behind the scenes to undermine American support for Aristide.

So why does the Republican Party and the International Republican Institute (IRI)—an organization with which Goss has been heavily involved—so intensely loathe Aristide? To begin, Aristide was a threat to these institutions because of his social agenda of mobilizing the poor. With him in power, it was much harder to take advantage of Haiti's poverty and to exploit the cheap labor for foreign assembly plants moving to the island. Throughout his time in office, Aristide worked towards improving the quality of life of the poor by supporting labor unions and eventually doubling the minimum wage. He also prioritized reforms in the educational and healthcare sectors. In a December 1999 article, author Nirit Ben-Ari quotes Wesleyan University professor Alex Dupuy, explaining why Aristide's objectives were so problematic for the U.S. and the Republican Party: “In Haiti, the problem for Washington was how to compel its traditional allies—the bourgeoisie and the military establishment—to accept minimal democracy, sever their ties with the system of corruption, and abandon their age-old practice of treating the masses like slaves, while at the same time preserving Haiti as a source of cheap labor who accept the new game plan and whom the local oligarchies and the United States

supported. Unfortunately, the Haitian masses who had been excluded from this new schema, spoiled it (in the opinion of U.S. strategists) by voting for their own unexpected and unpredictable candidate." That candidate was Aristide and with ostensibly radical social programs and transforming vision, he proved himself to be a thorn in the Republican Party's side.

It is not a coincidence that Andy Apaid Jr., a self-serving millionaire, businessman and coup plotter, coordinated one of the two main opposition groups to Aristide, Group of 184. Apaid illegally holds both U.S. and Haitian passports and reportedly owns 15 textile and other assembly plant factories in Haiti. With these factories, he has made huge profits by supplying U.S. contractors with assembled goods that are produced at sweatshop wages. Apaid and Goss each held the other in high esteem.

Goss and the GOP v. Aristide

The campaign to oust Aristide is just one example of a longstanding Republican tradition of supporting pro-U.S. dictators in Haiti, rather than those political figures who champion a strong social agenda for their own people. In 1971, the Nixon administration restored U.S. military aid to the oppressive regime of Jean-Claude Duvalier under the pretext that he would serve as a counterweight to communism in the region. When the Duvalier regime eventually collapsed in 1986, the Regan Administration ferried the despised dictator to safety. After Duvalier, U.S. author Max Blumenthal contends that Washington supported a "procession of GOP-backed puppets and military dictators... until the charismatic Aristide won Haiti's first democratic election in 1990." Aristide's presidency did not last long. In 1991, only nine months after Aristide's inauguration, he was deposed by a military junta led by Colonel Raoul Cedras, and together with the FRAPH—a paramilitary group founded by CIA agent Emmanuel 'Toto' Constant—the nation came to be terrorized for years during the military's rule that siphoned off millions of dollars from illicit drug money. Cedras, a U.S. trained Haitian army officer, enjoyed enthusiastic support from well-known Washington conservatives like Senator Helms. From his powerful position as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Helms has been one of Porter Goss' strongest congressional allies when it came to Haitian policies.

In for the Kill

In 1994, after much political pressure, the Clinton Administration modified its political freeze on Aristide, arranging to fly him back to the island and return to the presidency. Prior to the reinstatement of Aristide, Cedras had agreed with the U.S. ultimatum to relinquish power and flee into exile in Panama. Not surprisingly, these efforts to support Aristide were strongly contested by Republican legislators, most of whom loathed the former president for his left-of-center politics. Just one year after Aristide's return, Goss began to systematically undermine him in an effort to score political points against the Democrats. When the Republicans gained control of Congress in 1995, Helms, Gilman and Goss sponsored a number of restrictive bills against Aristide, such as ordering U.S. troops out of Haiti.

The premature departure of U.S. forces, including various categories of specialists, meant that Aristide's enemies were never disarmed and a professional police force and justice system were never established. It also meant that a U.S. embargo against weapons consigned to the Haitian police was initiated. Many projects aimed at building Haiti's infrastructure were also halted or scaled back. Furthermore, the Republicans pushed legislators to cancel all U.S. aid to the nation and to finance Aristide's opposition by earmarking federal funds into non-governmental Haitian organizations hostile to the president.

In addition to successfully severing U.S. military and economic support, Rep. Goss sought to depict Aristide and his supporters as leftwing radicals. For instance, he insinuated that Aristide's recognition of Havana, something that almost every nation in the world had done, was a sign of his intent to do "mischief against America's interests" and "a clear signal of the collaboration of Cuba and Haiti." Effectively linking Haiti to Washington's communist pariah by ballooning a modest association into a fictional alliance, Goss managed to stoke House conservatives' worst fears that Aristide would become the second Castro of the Caribbean. These statements served to enflame anti-Aristide sentiments amongst the public and members of Congress.

During the 2000 Haitian parliamentary elections, Goss headed an International Republican Institute (IRI) delegation to monitor the ballot. This organization surreptitiously described its mission as aiming to "advance democracy, freedom, self government and the rule of law worldwide." In reality, the IRI is a back-door, hard-right relic from the Reagan era, which receives almost all of its government funds through the National Endowment of Democracy. Because the IRI is a relatively well-funded division of the ultra-conservative wing of the U.S. Republican party, it still surges with the spit and polish of the Cold War.

The Institute dedicated itself to exacerbating Clinton's already anti-Aristide strategy in Haiti by using U.S. taxpayer's funds to back the opposition. In an obvious attempt to challenge the legitimacy of Aristide-backed Rene Preval's 1996 electoral victory, Goss launched allegations of fraud and voter tampering. Even though Preval won 88 percent of the vote and his Lavalas party won a "landslide victory in the Senate and Lower House," Goss still tried to discredit the election. After the State Department's Agency for International Development (USAID) verified the legitimacy of Preval's victory, Goss, with no evidence to back his claims, stated that, "this raises the question of political manipulation of this election." Meanwhile, the chief of USAID claimed that the elections were a "very significant breakthrough for democracy," and that there was no detected evidence of "any systematic effort to commit fraud." The number of registered voters in Haiti also reached about 90 percent of those eligible and it was the first election be virtually free of violence and fraud. Despite all this, Goss was undoubtedly upset because Preval's election raised the unpleasant prospect for the IRI's Republican patrons and corporate donors of a unified and legal leftwing Haitian government.

In 1999, Goss again attacked Aristide's regime in a Washington Post op-ed, stating that living conditions in Haiti were worse during his presidency than when the country was ruled by the ruthless military dictatorship of Raoul Cedras. Never mind the fact that Cedras was a master human rights' violator and was closely associated with the paramilitary group responsible for the death of three thousand Haitian civilians, he was also a senior member of the nation's thriving drug trafficking scene. Goss' statement comparing Aristide to Cedras served two strategic purposes: to speciously turn U.S. public opinion against Aristide, and to buttress and abet the opposition forces' determination to sabotage efforts being made by Aristide to seek a negotiated settlement with the island's most extreme opposition members. The opposition refused to negotiate with Aristide representatives because it knew that it had the professed backing from a master U.S. Republican politician, as well as his all-powerful Senate ally, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Jesse Helms.

Perhaps the most sober indictment of the IRI inadvertently came out during a radio interview with Stanley Lucas, once the IRI's senior program officers for Haiti, whose Haitian relatives were linked to a major massacre of pro-Aristide Lavalas Party members. Lucas, who had consistently undermined any effort by other U.S. agencies to build democratic institutions in Haiti, also worked to subvert peace drafts and to pressure IRI-funded opposition groups to turn down the power-sharing agreements being offered by Aristide. As Max Blumenthal reports, on February 8, 2001, Lucas appeared on the virulently anti-Aristide Haitian station Radio Tropicale to suggest strategies for removing Aristide from power. The people could force Aristide to accept early elections and be voted out, or they could charge Aristide with corruption and arrest him. The final alternative offered by Lucas suggested that Aristide be dealt with like the Congolese had dealt with President Laurent Kabila. Lucas then asked the audience, "You did see what happened to Kabila?" (Kabila was assassinated in January of 2001).

The IRI and Bush Administration have done more than publicly threaten Aristide with various forms of political reprisals. Blumenthal has detailed how \$3 million in U.S. funds have been channeled through the IRI to Haiti's opposition groups for the past six years. Despite the Institute's pro-democratic rhetoric, the real purpose of these funds was to destabilize Aristide and his constitutionally-elected government. The money went to train, unite, and finance Aristide's opponents, which the IRI single-mindedly achieved.

Coincidentally, just three days before Aristide was forced from office, Goss issued several statements strongly suggesting that Aristide step down from power. On February 26, 2004, the Florida Congressman called Haiti a "gathering storm of bloodbath." He continued, "Aristide can end this turmoil at any time by resigning as the head of government... If he truly wants to save his nation, the best outcome for Mr. Aristide right now would be to step down at once." Goss was in favor of replacing Aristide, preferably with someone whose political agenda was more inline with the Republican and IRI member's policies.

Unfortunately, since the former president's departure, conditions in Haiti have worsened. Lydia Polgreen of the New York Times reported that Haiti now faces "an exhausted treasury, a vast corrupt and demoralized state work force, wary international donors and lingering doubts about the manner in which Mr. Aristide left the country," as well as widespread reports detailing the persecution of officials and former supporters of the Lavalas Party. Aristide's removal, although positive for Goss and his Party, has been discernibly less so for most Haitian civilians.

In the same statement, Goss declared that, "Haitians need true, decent, democratic leadership elected fairly and freely by the people." Ironically, this is exactly what Haitians were receiving before Aristide was ousted. Polgreen claimed that Haitians are very suspicious of the new unelected government and its foreign support, and to the majority, Aristide continues to be their only legitimate leader. As Alix Jean, a Lavalas partisan, stated, "we believe in democracy, and we have a democratically elected leader. His name is Jean-Bertrand Aristide." But Republicans, like Goss, had a decidedly different future for Haiti in mind.

Aristide Forced From Office

On February 29, 2004, according to official U.S. sources, Aristide requested transport to an undisclosed location where he signed a letter of resignation. He was then accompanied to an airport by U.S. Marines and was firmly assisted aboard the plane. However, Aristide's version of what transpired on February 29 is somewhat different. The former president claims that he was awoken in the middle of the night, and forced to sign a letter of resignation "if he wanted to be protected against his enemies." He was then transported by armed guards to the airport, forced onto a plane, and flown to the Central African Republic. Aristide's claim that this was a stage-mounted affair is lent some credibility by the speculations of Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA.). Waters observed that "clearly the United States government has been very much involved in orchestrating this coup d'etat...Not only did diplomats from the embassy go to President Aristide's home, the Marines were there also. And Mr. Moreno, who is the chief of staff at the embassy, said to him, 'You have to leave, and you have to leave now, or you will be killed.'"

It was in part due to Goss that the events of that evening are likely to never be certain; the House Chairman completely ignored demands calling for an investigation of the extent of U.S. involvement surrounding Aristide's abrupt departure from Haiti. Given his party's strong anti-Aristide sentiments and its goal of ousting the leader, the former president's dire fate comes as no surprise. Goss needs to be held accountable by critics since his actions did little to advance democratic processes in Haiti or elsewhere in Latin America. As author Yifat Susskind writes, "the current crisis is not about supporting or opposing Aristide the man, but about defending constitutional democracy in Haiti. In a democracy, elections—and not vigilante violence—should be the measure of the 'will of the people'." Aristide has repeatedly invited the opposition to participate in elections and they have refused, knowing that they cannot win at the polls." The fact that Goss refused to

investigate the events of February 29 convincingly demonstrates that Aristide's flight into exile and his present residence in South Africa was exactly what Goss, the IRI, and the Republican Party wanted.

Goss at the Emergency Hearing on Haiti

After Aristide's forced departure from the island, the House Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere called an emergency open hearing to address concerns over his resignation. Members of the Congressional Black Caucus as well as Congressman Goss participated in the hearing. Several Democratic members raised allegations that U.S. forces had kidnapped Aristide, characterizing the events of February 29 as a coup d'etat and not a legitimate resignation. Roger Noriega was a main target of the CBC's ire during the hearing. Noriega, the hapless Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere, was previously a protégé of both Senator Helms and Congressman Gilman—Goss's strongest congressional allies on Haiti. He also was very familiar with one of the leaders of the rebel coup, Guy Philippe, known to be a close friend of Stanley Lucas'. Noriega was not only a virulent opponent of Aristide's, but also the least likely to defend the Haitian president or the constitutionalism he represented in the event of a coup. According to former U.S. ambassador to El Salvador and Paraguay Robert White, "Noriega has been dedicated to Aristide's ouster for many, many years, and now he is [prior to the ousting on February 29] in a singularly powerful position to accomplish it." During the hearing, Noriega vociferously denied any coercive U.S. role in Aristide's fall from power. As the Assistant Secretary began to feel the pressure, Goss played a central role as his savior by diffusing Democratic criticisms and describing Aristide's departure as "the results that are the best that we can hope for."

As chairman of the House Select Permanent Committee on Intelligence, Goss had a specific obligation under its mandate to investigate the controversial U.S. role in the Haitian uprising. The Hughes Ryan Act requires both the Senate and House Committees on Intelligence to be notified of all covert activity; any failure to notify House or Senate chairs should itself be grounds for an independent investigation and subsequent punishment. By failing to investigate the role of the intelligence agency in Aristide's ouster, Goss indicated that he was not interested in discovering why a democratically-elected head of state was removed from power with the avid support of key Republicans on the Hill. This occurred only hours after Secretary of State Colin Powell reiterated that the U.S. would not permit the removal of a constitutionally-elected leader by a "gang of thugs," which lamentably was precisely what occurred.

Congressional Democrats were quick to rebuke the administration, saying that U.S. inaction on this matter sent a "chilling signal" to democratically-elected governments in Latin America. Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-NY) went as far as to ascertain that the administration and its foot soldiers—including Porter Goss, "didn't want a diplomatic solution to this problem. [They] wanted to get rid of Aristide." It is evident that very conservative Republicans like Goss will stop at nothing to promote their ultra-conservative agenda—even going so far as to undermine the democratic processes upon

which their government relies.

The GOP's Right-Hand Man

Before Goss was confirmed as the CIA director, Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) declared that "the selection of a politician, any politician from either party, is a mistake... Having independent, objective intelligence going to the president and the Congress is fundamental to America's national security." House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), agreed with Rockefeller saying, "you must keep the politics out of intelligence." Goss' nomination worried many, for he has consistently been unable to abandon his partisanship even on a domestic scale. For example, over the past few months Goss has publicly criticized Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry, while being fawningly supportive of the Bush administration. Earlier this year, Goss attacked Kerry's support of budget cuts for the country's intelligence services. Yet, an August 24, 2004 Washington Post article reported that Goss had endorsed even larger budget cuts for the CIA.

Goss' partisanship is also made evident by his attempts to cover up several embarrassing failures of the Bush administration, such as his inaction regarding the Valerie Plame affair. Plame is an ex-CIA agent and wife of the former U.S. ambassador to Iraq, Joseph Wilson. A strong critic of the Bush administration's prewar estimate of Saddam Hussein's stockpile of weapons of mass destruction, Wilson was especially suspicious of Bush's assertion that Saddam Hussein had attempted to buy uranium from the African republic of Niger. Democrats were outraged when the right-wing columnist, Robert Novak, publicly revealed Plame's identity, placing her personal security in grave danger. Wilson blamed White House officials for their underhanded actions, while many members of Congress demanded an investigation by the House Intelligence Committee. Goss ignored these critics, mockingly stating that, "[If] somebody sends me a blue dress and some DNA, I'll have an investigation." He did nothing further to investigate this matter.

Other incidents showed Goss' unremitting partisan conduct during his tenure as Chairman of the Intelligence Committee. He succeeded in suppressing a press brief, entitled "Bin Laden determined to strike in the U.S.," that was prepared for the President on August 6, 2001. When questioned before the 9/11 Commission, Goss unwaveringly supported the White House and the CIA's position, arguing that all the administration's intelligence prior to the attacks should not be reported to the public on the grounds that it was "classified." As a result, the press brief was exempted from the 9/11 report, leaving millions of Americans uninformed about the whole truth regarding the terrorist attacks.

Not surprisingly, Goss staunchly supported Bush and Vice President Cheney's thesis that an independent investigation into the terrorist attacks of September 11 was unnecessary. The 9/11 commission contested Goss' record as Intelligence Chair, stating that he had paid little attention to al-Qaida and failed to prioritize terrorism as a key threat to the nation. In fact, under Goss' leadership, the Intelligence Committee held only two hearings on terrorism in the three years prior to the September 11 attacks, compared to

seven by the Senate Intelligence Committee and eight by the Armed Services Committee.

Furthermore, Rep. Silvestre Reyes (D-Tex.), a member of Goss' House Intelligence committee, accused the chair of refusing to investigate the administration's various intelligence failures. For instance, the committee never questioned the administration about its failure to produce any evidence of WMDs in Iraq, nor did it investigate the abuse of Iraqi prisoners. Goss' unwillingness to act prompted Reyes to state that, "we [the Intelligence Committee] have not done our job; we have not had the kind of oversight we should have had in those areas." Because Goss has had a history of ignoring major intelligence failures, particularly when those failures implicate the derelictions of the Republican leadership, future breakdowns in urgent intelligence issues may be unavoidable under his watch.

An Appointment that the Nation Will Come to Rue

Goss' markedly partisan history during his congressional career does not bode well for the integrity of the nation's future intelligence gathering prospects. As the new director of the U.S. intelligence community, he will likely continue to use his political ties in pursuit of a neo-Conservative agenda to the detriment of the nation's intelligence needs and long term interests. If Haiti is an example, Goss will surely work to sanction regime change efforts against other populist presidents to be found heading a number of South American countries, as well as elsewhere in the hemisphere. Goss' personal vendetta and clouded judgment, as exhibited in his consistent hostile treatment of Aristide, is most certainly a matter that Congress should have seriously considered when it came time to confirm the nation's new CIA head and soon-to-be first intelligence czar.

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