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PRESS RELEASE

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BUSH REBUILDING CZAR WRONG FOR PLAYING PARTISAN GAMES

Powell's Comments Inappropriate and Insulting

BATON ROUGE - Bush-appointee Don Powell crossed the line by openly “supporting” Charles Boustany for Congress, according to Chris Whittington, Louisiana Democratic Party Chairman.

Powell was in Louisiana under the guise of marking the anniversary of Hurricane Rita when his real intention was to peddle once again the partisan rhetoric being replayed over and over for the past several weeks, according to Whittington.

“It is completely inappropriate as an appointed public official for Powell to take a stand to support Boustany in his race for Congress. He needs to work with both parties in helping Louisiana’s people recover from these disasters. It’s clear he used this anniversary visit as another attempt to try and sell the Bush message. I take it as an insult, not just as a Democrat, but as a citizen of this state,” Whittington said.

Bush has dragged his feet in getting the federal rebuilding money to Louisiana. One has to wonder why Mississippi, a state led by a Republican governor, has already received some of its funding and has begun dispersing that money to the hurricane victims, Whittington said.

“Our people are being victimized all over again – first by the hurricanes and now by Bush and his own people who come here claiming to help us, but only on their terms. If we were talking about more money needed in Iraq, do you think they’d study it for a year? Bush’s priorities are not with the people of Louisiana and we are tired of being lied to,” Whittington said.

In an Aug. 22 White House press briefing, Powell dodged specific questions about the federal funds earmarked for hurricane recovery. He laid the blame on state and local officials for the delay in dispersing the funds. However, when pressed, Powell acknowledged that Mississippi received preferential treatment.

He is quoted as saying that Mississippi's plan submitted to HUD for use of the funds was approved in one day; after which funds were sent to the state for disbursement. Louisiana's plan to HUD was only approved after 10 days; and only a small amount of those funds have been dispersed. Again, Powell diverted blame from Bush and said Louisiana's state and local officials are causing the hold up.

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