

# Haiti rejects demand to restore dictator

by Carlos Wesley

The government of Haiti has rejected an attempt by the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) to ram down its throat a settlement similar to the one by which the U.N. forced the government of El Salvador to share power with the FMLN communist guerrillas. The U.N. plan for Haiti was presented by Dante Caputo, the former Argentine foreign minister appointed by U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali as special envoy to restore ousted dictator Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power in Haiti. The plan includes a non-negotiable demand for up to 500 international civilian observers and their military escorts, to “freely go anywhere and into any establishment without prior notice” to monitor “human rights,” and to facilitate Jean-Bertrand Aristide’s return from his luxury exile in Washington, where he has resided since his ouster in September 1991. When it was noted that this would violate Haiti’s Constitution, the U.N.’s would-be proconsul, Caputo, retorted: “We are not going to negotiate conditions. We are not going to negotiate the number,” reported the Jan. 22 *New York Times*.

“As a true Haitian, I will not sign this agreement, and nobody in my government will sign it,” said Haiti’s Prime Minister Marc Bazin in a speech to his countrymen on Jan. 27. It will place Haiti under “international tutelage,” he said. “They are going to come, they are going to give us orders, they are going to verify that the orders are carried out properly, and if they are not respected, they will enforce them,” he said, according to the Jan. 29 *Washington Post*.

On Feb. 1, the rejection brought Caputo back to Haiti, where he was greeted by protesters chanting “down with Caputo.” After being forced to cool his heels for awhile at the Port-au-Prince airport, he went into town to meet with government officials—presumably to deliver an ultimatum—and departed on Feb. 2 without comment.

In a statement published on Feb. 3 by the Dominican Republic’s *El Nuevo Diario*, the Haitian government blasted Caputo for “shamelessly plagiarizing” an accord drafted for El Salvador by U.N. special envoy Alvaro de Soto. “It must be noted that the names of these two U.N. diplomats produce a marvelous rhyme—Caputo, de Soto—which fatally lead to the claws of the tutelage of a foreign occupation or an embargo,” it said. An earlier attempt to solve the crisis by the United States and the OAS last year, also demanded that

Haiti accept a Communist, René Theodore, as a “compromise” prime minister, to pave Aristide’s return to power.

## A U.S. invasion?

While the diplomatic to-and-fro was going on, nearly two dozen U.S. Coast Guard and Navy warships continued the blockade against Haiti that was initiated on Jan. 15, Martin Luther King’s birthday. This “floating Berlin Wall”—which has depleted the forces available for drug interdiction—is the excuse for Clinton to break the promise he made during the presidential campaign, when he vowed to reverse what he called George Bush’s “cruel” policy of denying dark-skinned Haitians asylum in the United States, while rolling out the red carpet for skyjackers escaping Fidel Castro’s Cuba. Although the blockade is supposed to be temporary, columnists Evans and Novak noted on Feb. 3 that “as long as the United States continues the economic embargo imposed on Haiti when Aristide was overthrown . . . desire to leave the unhappy island will mount.” Clinton, who retained Bush’s assistant secretary of state for Latin America, Bernard Aronson, to handle Haiti, may be pushed into using the blockade to interdict the meager shipments of medicine and food that have managed to get past the embargo.

There is also the danger of an outright military invasion, which is being pushed for by Jesse Jackson. “Clinton will soon confront unpalatable alternatives: Use the U.S. Marines or drop Aristide,” said Evans and Novak, who suggest the latter course. While an invasion would meet virtually no resistance, “U.S. forces might have to stay on for years,” they wrote, recalling that when President Woodrow Wilson sent the Marines into Haiti in 1915, they occupied the country for 19 years.

Reaching a conclusion similar to that presented by *EIR* since the start of the crisis, Evans and Novak noted that Bush imposed the “devastating” embargo against Haiti “for the sake of ‘democracy.’ Accepting military overthrow of an elected President, the State Department worried, would encourage neighboring copycats, particularly in Venezuela.”

Aristide’s human rights record is truly abysmal. A leftist version of the late dictator François “Papa Doc” Duvalier, Aristide is notorious for his penchant for mob rule and for “necklacing” his opponents—a method of murder in which the victim’s arms are chopped off, and a tire filled with gasoline is placed around his neck and set ablaze. Writing in the Jan. 24 *Washington Post*, columnist Lally Weymouth quoted Aristide praising the practice. “It is nice, it is chic, it is classy, elegant and snappy. It smells good.” This Haitian Pol Pot, she reported, covered up the murder of five teenagers in July 1991, and backers of Aristide—who is a defrocked priest—targeted the Roman Catholic Church in January 1991, destroying the home of the papal nuncio in Haiti, breaking his secretary’s legs, stripping the papal envoy naked, parading him through the streets, and burning the Old Cathedral in Port-au-Prince to the ground.