

Haitians being starved to reimpose Aristide

by Carlos Wesley

Two weeks after the United States and the other powers of the United Nations imposed a naval blockade around Haiti to force the return to power of Pol Pot-like former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, reports are that it could soon lead to the outright disappearance of that Caribbean nation.

The blockade, which resumes a two-year embargo against Haiti after a four-month hiatus, was imposed even though senior officials in the Clinton administration now acknowledge that during his presidency, the deposed Aristide at least tolerated the murder of his political opponents. But, according to news reports on Nov. 4, the officials insisted that Aristide must be restored to office because he was “democratically” elected.

Hopes for a quick settlement under the U.N.-dictated Governor’s Island agreement—by which Aristide was supposed to return to Haiti from his exile in Washington on Oct. 30, while Army Commander Gen. Raoul Cédras and police chief Col. Michel François left the country—were dashed when, during a speech to the U.N. General Assembly on Oct. 28, Aristide also demanded the resignation of Haiti’s entire high command. Further, Aristide said that he would request that Parliament grant amnesty to the military *after* their departure, not before, as called for in the agreement.

The collapse of the accord left the Clinton administration with only two options if it intends to pursue the policy designed by the pro-drug-legalization Inter-American Dialogue, of “restoring democracy” to Haiti: a military invasion, or starving the Haitians into submission. It is currently pursuing the latter course.

‘Democratic’ genocide

Roughly 600,000 people, about 10% of the Haitian population, depends on CARE for their food. But “delivery of emergency food aid to northwestern Haiti, the poorest region of the poorest country in the western hemisphere, has slowed while the number of people relying on the service has shot up” since the U.N. imposed its oil embargo, reports Reuters. Workers for the relief agency are now considering switching to donkeys to deliver food to CARE’s 1,500 distribution centers. “Every day we wake up wondering if we are going to have fuel for delivery trucks,” said a spokeswoman. “The international community talks about embargo, embargo, em-

bargo, but we never see any benefits,” one Haitian told Reuters.

Unemployment, which in the best of times affects nearly 80% of the population, is now above 90%. According to the *New York Times*, it is estimated that about 100,000 jobs have been lost and that the GNP has dropped 15% since the Bush administration first imposed sanctions on Haiti, following Aristide’s 1991 overthrow.

The *Times* reports that the streets of Port-au-Prince, the capital, “are increasingly piled with garbage, factories are shut down, power blackouts are occurring more frequently, and armed gangs are operating more freely as they rob stores and extort money from people.” Gasoline is still available on the black market at \$14 a gallon, but “the price could go to \$20.” The oil cutoff is speeding up the disappearance of Haiti’s forests which, even before people were forced to chop down more trees for fuel, were only expected to last another seven years.

“I thought after Vietnam we had heard the last of destroying a nation in order to save it, but that is what we are doing here,” a diplomat told the *Washington Post*.

Aristide defends ‘necklacing’

Aristide, the defrocked Marxist priest on whose behalf this genocide is being committed, is patterned after Haiti’s previous dictator, François “Papa Doc” Duvalier, another creation of the Anglo-Americans. Like Aristide, Papa Doc was elected as the champion of the downtrodden poor black masses of Haiti, long oppressed by the lighter-skinned upper classes. Aristide, like Papa Doc before him, promoted the syncretic voodoo cult to increase his hold on the population. And where Papa Doc had the dreaded Ton Ton Macoutes, Aristide unleashed the Lavalas mobs and attempted to set up his own private militia, a move which precipitated his ouster.

While many of Aristide’s supporters claim that a recent CIA report stating that their leader is a manic-depressive homicidal psychopath in need of psychiatric medication, is fraudulent, it doesn’t take a degree in psychology to see that the man is not playing with a full deck. He let his blood-lust show through in his Oct. 28 speech at the U.N. when, after he described the horrible effects of the embargo on Haiti’s neediest, he nonetheless demanded “a total and complete blockade, which is necessary, nay, even essential.” And he unashamedly defended the practice of “necklacing”—burning people alive by igniting a gasoline-filled tire around their necks, after chopping off their arms. In an article in the Nov. 4 *New York Review of Books*, Mark Danner, who is writing a book about Haiti, reports that he asked Aristide how he, a priest, could countenance burning his political enemies on the street. According to Danner, Aristide replied: “One must know when to look at the acts of the people and judge them as a psychologist, not as a priest. . . . It was the people who suffered and the people themselves who decided to act; and in this they were doing God’s work.”