

Will Clinton evade Bush's Haitian trap?

by Nancy Spannaus

From the drumbeat being sounded in the U.S. press on the horrors of the Haitian situation, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that a U.S. invasion and subsequent international occupation of that impoverished nation are inevitable. If that is the case, President Clinton is walking into a disaster for his presidency and the nation, as well as for Haiti itself.

Before someone insists that opposition to such an invasion is simply "pragmatic," let us deal with the real issue. The hideous suffering of the Haitian population is the direct result of an economic looting system which has kept the per capita living standard at the lowest point in the world for decades. Little Jean-Bertrand "Pol Pot" Aristide, who was ousted from power, was doing nothing to reverse that situation after his election—he in fact signed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) right before being overthrown—and the actions to return him to power over the past nearly three years have dramatically worsened the conditions of life for the Haitian people. An invasion and occupation would only make the situation more grisly, leading to a racial guerrilla war that could last for decades.

Who, then, is lyingly pushing for President Clinton to restore "honor" to the United States by sending U.S. Marines into Haiti? Certainly not the nations of Ibero-America, or the Haitian people, or the U.S. military. Not even the entire Congressional Black Caucus, which has received so much publicity. The reality is that the campaign for invasion is being promoted from two major sources, the Bush-Kissinger crowd on the one hand, and the Inter-American Dialogue on the other.

The reasons for this treachery are not hard to divine. The Bush-Kissinger crowd was pleased to leave a whole panoply of foreign policy messes for President Clinton when Bush left office, the Haitian mess included. This crowd wants to see the bombs blow up in Clinton's face, destroying his credibility with the military and with the American popula-

tion. This is part of the same operation launched by the British Hollinger Corp., on whose board Henry Kissinger sits, to try to bring down the Clinton presidency. The Inter-American Dialogue crowd, the more "liberal" voice of the same financial grouping, wants a precedent for violating national sovereignty throughout the hemisphere, and they find Haiti a convenient pretext to get it.

Having so far successfully avoided the trap set by the same saboteurs in North Korea, President Clinton now has to figure out this one.

The saboteurs

The most consistent and open advocates of invasion of Haiti come from the Inter-American Dialogue, the group of bankers, politicians, and think-tankers which has become increasingly powerful on issues of Ibero-American policy over the last 10 years. The IAD was founded in 1982 by Chase Manhattan Bank president David Rockefeller, best known as British agent Kissinger's piggy bank. Indicative of the level of the group's "brains" is the membership of Eastern Establishment leader McGeorge Bundy, former World Bank head Robert S. McNamara, former World Bank head A. W. Clausen, and banker Sally Shelton-Colby.

IAD president Peter Hakim took the lead in backing Aristide after the coup against him, in imposing the genocidal embargo, and in promoting invasion. Former IAD president Richard Feinberg is now ensconced as head of the Latin America desk at the National Security Council.

It was George Bush's presidency which elevated the role of the IAD in policymaking toward the western hemisphere. The key concept was to eliminate national sovereignty in favor of supranational institutions that would demand demilitarization and IMF economic destruction in the name of democracy.

One of the major press outlets for the IAD is the *Christian Science Monitor*, which prints a monthly column by Hakim. Not surprisingly, the *Monitor* is one of the few major daily newspapers in the United States which is advocating invasion of Haiti at this time. The *Miami Herald* is another.

Bush personally and his friends among the neo-conservatives are publicly opposing invasion, while viciously attacking the President for “fumbling.” It is crucial to recall that it was the Bush administration which launched the embargo against Haiti, back in October 1991. This crowd’s own racist taunts—with such arguments as that the condition of the black Haitian population is of no vital interest to Americans—serve the function of egging the President on. It is also likely that the Bush crowd has worked behind the scenes to inflame the situation. Could Bush’s friends, perhaps, have convinced Bush administration puppet Guillermo Endara of Panama, to reject the Clinton administration’s plan to place Haitian refugees in Panama?

The Hollywood angle

Pressures on the Clinton administration to invade Haiti are also coming from prominent African-American personalities—from Hollywood! A lot of money and publicity has been put behind the Aristide crowd and a propaganda campaign for intervention from a lobbying group by the name of Artists for Democracy in Haiti. The group’s organizer is Jonathan Demme, a film director famous for his Academy Award-winning movie, “Silence of the Lambs.”

This Hollywood crowd was involved in pushing Aristide into office as far back as 1987, when Demme produced a documentary called “Haiti Dreams of Democracy,” financed by Great Britain’s Channel 4 television.

The pressures on President Clinton to either starve the Haitians into submission, or invade, really built up in April, with the hunger strike by TransAfrica director Randall Robinson. Robinson, who is linked with the pro-drug and pro-terrorist wing of the U.S. intelligence community gathered around the Institute for Policy Studies, worked in parallel with Demme’s group of artists, which include Harry Belafonte and Danny Glover. Working out of a small New York office where Demme’s film company is headquartered, Artists for Democracy has orchestrated a massive publicity campaign.

Demme has worked closely with the British and the FBI’s Behavioral Sciences unit in his movie making, which has celebrated satanism, cannibalism, and insanity. Since he took up the Haiti issue, he has avoided the spotlight, but personally lobbied President Clinton and the National Security Council.

Considerable international opposition

Despite the overwhelming propaganda for U.S. intervention against its tiny, helpless neighbor, there remains considerable opposition to invasion.

First, the nations of Ibero-America have all refused to take part in an invasion. The widely publicized commitment of some of these nations to “help” with Haiti, is to help with a “peacekeeping” force after the United States carries out the military dirty work—and there is opposition among most nations to even this.

Second, many of the nations of Ibero-America have denounced, or refused to support, a plan for invasion. This includes Venezuelan President Rafael Caldera, who made an unequivocal statement to this effect on July 10. This is especially important because Venezuela is one of the members of the “Friends of Haiti” group, who initiated the campaign to force Aristide back into power. Even the Caricom group, which speaks for the tiny island Caribbean nations, refused to go along with a proposal to support an invasion at its recent meeting.

Thirdly, there is the Vatican, which has a unique understanding of Aristide’s perverted character, and a moral stance against killing a nation in the name of “saving” it.

Also of note is the opposition of African-American leaders such as National Association for the Advancement of Colored People President Benjamin Chavis. A source close to Chavis was reported in the July 9 *Richmond Times-Dispatch* to have said that Chavis, who has good access to Clinton, opposed invasion. Many of the 40 members of the Congressional Black Caucus oppose an invasion. Senior member Rep. Ron Dellums (D-Calif.), who chairs the House Committee on Armed Services, is adamant against invasion, as are many others. Unfortunately, most have been roped into the “starve them into submission” tactic, or even crazier options like “surgical air strikes,” proposed by Black Caucus head Kweisi Mfume (D-Md.) on June 3.

Practicalities

The word around Washington is that President Clinton has to reimpose Aristide because he needs the votes of the Black Caucus to pass his health care package. It’s simply a matter of practical politics, they say, but it has to be done soon, so that there is no spillover into the immediate period before the November elections, or into the period of the Ibero-American summit planned for December.

But, as the U.S. military is trying to quietly tell the President, there is no way to carry out such a surgical operation, even if it were the right thing to do. The opposition of the Somalis to foreign intervention would look like a picnic compared to the guerrilla warfare launched by large sections of the Haitian population.

The only people who would benefit from U.S. military action would be those who have been contriving to destroy Clinton’s administration. Those who care for Haitians and Americans will fight instead for lifting the embargo, and a concentration on fashioning a U.S. economic and foreign policy that will put national sovereignty and agro-industrial progress back at the top of the agenda.