

# Bankers threaten Haiti, Dominican Rep.

by Carlos Wesley

The Dominican Republic will be given the Haiti treatment—i.e., invaded—unless President Joaquín Balaguer abides by the terms of the so-called Pact for Democracy and leaves office next year, threatened Michael Skol, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, in a July 10 interview on CNN Spanish-language news service. The United States is fully behind the pact and Dominicans should reflect on what happened to Haiti, said Skol. “What the international community, particularly the inter-American community, did against the Haitian generals and colonels, should be a lesson for everyone.”

The pact forced the Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti, to amend its Constitution overnight. It halved the term for which Balaguer was elected, from four years to two, barred him from running again, and forced the holding of new elections on May 16 of next year. Skol helped to ram the accord down the throats of the Dominicans last year, claiming that the defeat in the Presidential elections of José Francisco Peña Gómez was due to fraud.

The plan is for Peña Gómez, a member of the pro-drug-legalization bankers’ think-tank the Inter-American Dialogue (IAD), to win this time. Once in power, Peña Gómez, who is also a vice president of the Socialist International and an ally of the São Paulo Forum, the Cuban-spawned narco-terrorist umbrella grouping, is expected to implement the IAD agenda of British free trade economics, destruction of the armed forces, and drug legalization in the Dominican Republic, just as is happening on the other side of the island, in Haiti, under the defrocked priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

## Haiti: Aristide makes power grab

The overwhelming victory claimed by Aristide’s Lavalas party in the parliamentary and municipal elections held on June 25, was seen by Haitians and Dominicans alike as the first step by Aristide to remain in power past next year, when his term expires. Nearly every political party in Haiti has called for annulling the elections, charging fraud, and even Jimmy Carter’s Carter Center representative, Robert Pastor, asked the Clinton administration to withhold its approval because of the widespread irregularities. Most of Haiti’s top political leaders have announced that they will not participate

in supplemental elections nor in a second electoral round that is scheduled for Aug. 13.

Those joining the boycott include the Haitian Nationalist Progressive Revolutionary Party (Panpra), whose leader Duly Brutus, former speaker of Haiti’s Chamber of Deputies, was jailed after the June 25 elections by the Aristide regime and charged with torching an electoral office. The National Front for Change and Democracy also joined the boycott; its leader Evans Paul had been seen as Washington’s preferred successor to Aristide, but lost the mayoralty of the capital, Port-au-Prince, to pop singer Charlemagne Peralte.

Reports that Suzie Castol—the wife of Lavalas’s chief and campaign manager, hard-line communist Gerard Pierre Charles—is in line to be the next prime minister, and moves by Aristide’s supporters to extend his mandate three more years, to make up for the time he spent in exile following his overthrow by Haiti’s now-dissolved Armed Forces, are also contributing to the Dominicans’ reluctance to carry out the Pact for Democracy.

Dominicans historically have feared domination by Haiti, the country from which they gained their independence. Aristide is seen as particularly threatening, and with good reason. He engaged in hostile behavior toward their country before his overthrow, and his mental stability is questionable. After all, this is the man who in his autobiography declared himself an admirer of Robespierre and the other leaders of the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution.

Dominicans particularly fear that if Peña Gómez comes to power in their country while Haiti is under Aristide (also a member of the São Paulo Forum, whose restoration to power last year was championed by the IAD), it will lead to the fusion of the two countries, a plot hatched in Great Britain, as President Balaguer charged in his inaugural speech last year.

A high-level Dominican source said recently, “The only reason Balaguer would scuttle the Pact for Democracy is if Aristide remains in office. In that case, Balaguer will not leave power.”

What is happening in Haiti ought to cause the Clinton administration to stop permitting the IAD to set U.S. policy for the Dominican Republic, before both sides of the island are plunged into civil wars. Also at stake are Bill Clinton’s reelection chances. As the *Financial Times* of London noted, not without glee, on July 17, “Mr. Clinton would be politically embarrassed if Mr. Aristide were to stay on now.”

When the Clinton administration has removed the IAD from the driver’s seat in the past, there have been marked benefits to the best interests of the United States. Such is the case with Peru, where the United States has been collaborating in the war on drugs with President Alberto Fujimori (see p. 48), despite the IAD’s protestations about his “authoritarian” rule. Also in Colombia, where pragmatic collaboration has won some significant victories against the Cali cocaine cartel this year.