

Clinton avoids Haiti trap, but serious dangers remain

by Cynthia R. Rush

President Bill Clinton's last-minute diplomacy with Haiti's military rulers, carried out by former President Jimmy Carter, Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell on Sept. 18, did more than avert a U.S.-led invasion of that impoverished nation. It also enraged the British-backed networks grouped around former President George Bush which had foisted a disastrous Haiti policy on Clinton, with the intention of wrecking his administration. The inevitable backlash ensuing from an invasion would have had devastating political consequences for the President, and for the institution of the presidency.

The agreement worked out by the Carter delegation, which calls for Haitian Armed Forces commander Gen. Raoul Cedras and Army Chief of Staff Gen. Philippe Biamby to leave office by no later than Oct. 15, in order that deposed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide can be returned to power, has defused the British scenario for the moment; but the situation is still fraught with danger and potential for upheaval. Unnerved by the fact that their goal of smashing Haiti's Armed Forces and eliminating national sovereignty was not immediately achieved, assets of British policy, especially those who control the mentally unstable Aristide, are already activated to provoke the conditions of violence inside Haiti which could force Clinton onto the more destructive policy path which the Carter delegation's diplomacy made unnecessary.

Moreover, while Haiti was spared the horror of a violent military invasion, it is nonetheless now an *occupied* nation, with the restrictions on sovereignty that this implies. As of Sept. 22, some 8,000 U.S. troops had landed, and another

7,000 are expected to serve in the force which will guarantee Haiti's "transition to democracy." Worse, the ultimate goal of the mission is to ensure the return of the pro-terrorist Aristide, whose seven-month rule in 1991 was a virtual dictatorship, characterized by mob violence as well as adherence to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) brutal free-market austerity policies.

Aristide has recommitted himself to enforcing IMF policy once he is reinstated as President. His Lavalas party also belongs to Fidel Castro's São Paulo Forum, the umbrella group of Ibero-America's narco-terrorist organizations created in 1990. In the coming months, should Clinton make concessions to Aristide's political and economic agenda, he will face both civil war in Haiti and a dangerous situation continent-wide, as Aristide's allies in the Forum are emboldened by his "success."

As of Sept. 17, it appeared that President Clinton was locked into the policy trap which the Bush crowd had set for him. Two days earlier, he had delivered a televised ultimatum to the Haitian leaders to leave, and barring any response from them, it was a foregone conclusion that a U.S. invasion force would land within hours. Although the Sept. 17 announcement that Nunn, Carter, and Powell would be leaving to meet with Haitian military leaders in Port-au-Prince raised hopes, the scope of their defined mission to only discuss the conditions of the Haitian officers' departure seemed too narrow. But after hours of intense, non-stop discussions, the Carter delegation not only obtained an agreement from the Haitian rulers, it did so with an approach and language which appalled the proponents of a United Nations-sponsored dictatorship for the country.

A 'cooperative relationship'

A seven-point statement signed on Sept. 18 calls for establishing a "cooperative relationship" between U.S. and Haitian military forces to keep the peace. It asserts that certain Haitian officers consent to an "early and honorable retirement" once a general amnesty is passed by the Parliament, but establishes an Oct. 15 deadline for their departure even if the amnesty is not approved by that date. The deal does *not* state that military leaders must leave the country, nor that Haiti must be immediately disarmed. It promises to lift the U.N.-Organization of American States sanctions and embargo imposed on the country, and expresses the hope that a "sustained and mutually beneficial relationship between the governments, people, and institutions of Haiti and the United States" can be forged.

In subsequent statements and interviews, the three members of the delegation made clear that they were not operating within the framework desired by the Bush crowd and their boy Aristide. Critics gagged at Carter's recognition of Haiti as "one of the proudest nations I have ever seen, because of their long history and because of the turmoil in which they have often lived," and his sympathy for how difficult it was for Haitian military commanders "to accept the proposition that foreign forces could come on their soil without their fighting." Speaking as a military man, General Powell appealed to General Cedras's sense of honor and what was best for the Haitian nation. Both Powell and Nunn emphasized that the destruction of Haiti's Armed Forces would have been a bad mistake.

In many statements, all three stressed the "dignity" and "honor" of the Haitian leaders. In a rather pointed swipe at Aristide, Senator Nunn said in a Sept. 19 press conference, "I will repeat the point that I made over and over again to the Haitian leadership, and that is that returning one man, even though elected and even though he certainly should and will be returned, is not democracy. Democracy involves institutions. . . . I hope that the focal point of our foreign policy can be, in addition to returning President Aristide, free and fair elections of a parliament." Carter also emphasized that Haitian President Emile Jonassaint was not a mere figurehead, as the press depicted him, but the civilian leader who made the final decision to accept the U.S. agreement.

One-worldists go berzerk

There was an immediate, enraged response from those who had hoped for the quick annihilation of Haiti's Armed Forces. Aristide himself said nothing until Sept. 20, and then issued only a terse, 15-line statement which did not even mention the Sept. 18 agreement. However, his aides and lawyers minced no words in attacking the deal, focusing particularly on the need to immediately disarm the Haitian military. On Sept. 20, Aristide's general counsel Ira Kurzban demanded that "the first and foremost goal must be to disarm the Haitian Army. Those are the people who have committed

the atrocities over the years." The Trans-Africa Institute's Randall Robinson, tied to the homosexual Hollywood caucus which had attacked Clinton's Haiti policy as racist, called for immediate "disarmament and downsizing of the military."

When these and other remarks prompted anger from Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill over Aristide's "lack of gratitude," he quickly made a second statement on Sept. 21, effusively thanking the American people for their support and extending thanks to Carter, Nunn, and Powell. However, he again emphasized that "the success of this mission is directly tied to the process of disarmament."

It is also clear that the success of the Carter delegation in Haiti, and Clinton's decision to send his own personal emissaries rather than rely on the State Department, did not sit well with some top-level officials at State, chief among them Secretary of State Warren Christopher. In an interview in the Sept. 21 *New York Times*, Carter revealed that in the case of both North Korea and Haiti, he had been given the go-ahead to negotiate directly by the White House and President Clinton "but obviously . . . over the planning and vehement opposition of many of his top advisers." The former President has said that he would remain in contact with General Cedras and other Haitian leaders "because no one in our State Department, no one in our embassy will even communicate with the acting President or the foreign minister or the minister of defense."

The biggest danger for Clinton implied by the presence of U.S. troops on Haitian soil is that the one-worldists are going to try to force him into fully accepting the policy agenda of the British and the United Nations which his diplomacy had sought to avoid. One ominous sign is that, contrary to the clause in the Sept. 18 seven-point statement, the United States is now apparently bowing to the United Nations in agreeing not to call for the lifting of sanctions and the economic embargo until Aristide is actually back in Haiti.

Aristide is not in too much of a hurry to return to Port-au-Prince, and apparently intends to use his time in Washington to plan provocations that would change the nature of the U.S. Haiti mission. On Sept. 20, his backers in Port-au-Prince threw stones at policemen and provoked a riot in which one demonstrator and one policeman were killed. This caused an immediate hue and cry from pro-British networks and media in the United States who complained that Haitian "thugs" were being allowed to violate human rights while U.S. troops stood by and did nothing. There was immediate pressure for U.S. troops to be given a broader mandate to intervene—something which Gen. John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said should be avoided at all cost. Peter Hakim, a rabid demilitarizer who runs the Inter-American Dialogue, a bankers' think-tank, demanded on Sept. 22 that the United States commit "greater resources" to its Haiti mission. Defying Clinton's description of the "limited objectives" of the U.S. mission, the London *Financial Times* on the same date demanded "more U.S. involvement."