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Chilean Exports to Haiti

Macoutes and Opportunists

José Antonio Gutiérrez D.

January 23, 2006

We in Chile knew that this “Socialists” and Pinochetistas thugs could work smoothly, hand in hand in Haiti. After all, they’ve been doing it for 15 years in Chile, when in 1990 the transition to democracy marked this wedding of the Chilean macoutes and the opportunists politicians trained in Europe. Why couldn’t they do it in Haiti?

Almost a year and a half after the arrival of MINUSTAH troops to Haiti, with the explicit mission of bringing stability to the country and to protect its citizens from political violence, thus paving the way to a return to democratic rule, it seems that things are really going the opposite direction they should be: insecurity has increased, the number of people killed in political violence has increased to scandalous levels and certainly, the MINUSTAH troops are not doing much to protect Haitian people. Instead, the troops have been reported to have taken an active role in serious violations of Human Rights. Having a quick glimpse to the list of countries sending troops, there’s hardly any reason to be surprised: countries like Pakistan, Nepal and Morocco aren’t known, particularly, for their respect to Human Rights, let alone Civil Liberties. And the armies

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of these and other countries, like Argentina, Brazil and Chile have serious records of Human Rights violations and have observed a traditional contempt for democratic values –the history of military interventions in those republics stands as an unequivocal proof for the skeptical. Still, many people were really shocked to know that Eduardo Aldunate, second in command of the Chilean troops in Haiti was a torturer under Pinochet and member of the sinister CNI, the political police of the dictator, the tontons macoutes of our southern republic.

This revelation, lead quite naturally to another question: Could it be possible for a former agent of the Chilean CIA-backed dictatorship to be working, hand in hand, with the Chilean “socialist” Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés, head of the UN Mission in Haiti? It doesn’t seem to bother that much either of them, in honor to the truth.

Funnily enough, considering the dubious elements in the MINUSTAH and the frequent denunciations by International Human Rights groups regarding to the situation in Haiti, on the 11th of June Mr. Valdés, said that in Haiti there was no political persecution like the one that existed in Chile during Pinochet years. He knows well that the Chilean army in Haiti is the same army that persecuted the popular movement a bit more than a decade ago in Chile, so it wouldn’t be hard to believe they are behaving in a similar fashion in a different country. We were struck though, by the facility he talks about the repression during Pinochet regime and the knowledge he boasts of it. Surprising knowledge, indeed, as for most of Pinochet dictatorship –and certainly, for the hardest years of repression-, Mr. Valdés was in the USA, Mexico and England, doing postgraduate studies. An efficient man, he got to be quite well educated while his political partisans, militants of the Socialist Party, were shot dead on the streets of Santiago and in the concentration camps of the terrorist regime of Pinochet. With a diploma under his arm, he came back to Chile, this time “renewed” in ideas by the refreshing winds of the European left, to negotiate the pacific and democratic way out for the dictatorship.

These negotiations were blessed by the US; the CIA put the dictator in power as a last resort to keep a tight grip over Chile, and when social unrest threatened to topple him, thus leaving open doors for a radical and grassroots democratic project, they decided it was time to remove him. Just like a chess piece. So the Uncle Sam welcomed the return of the repentant to their homeland, if they gave him a hand to make sure that the “return to democracy” was smooth and didn’t threaten the interest of the ruling clique and their allies in Washington. And voilà! The brand new democracy left untouched Pinochet Constitution, so as his neo liberal anti-popular economic model and the interests of those businessmen that made huge profit when the public enterprises were auctioned as bargains, leaving, as well, open doors for the multinationals to keep looting our resources. That was the key to Chile’s return to democracy. And Mr. Valdés, as a good acolyte of the IMF and the White House, was there to make sure that everything kept going on as planned. And he and his “Socialist” party were the perfect facade for the new front of the elite: these “converts” were socialists in brand, but deeply right wing in their politics –their hostile attitude towards Venezuela nowadays stands as the clearest example of this.

And there, firmly stuck to the new “democratic” institutions, where the putshcist and the offsprings of Pinochet shared power and office with these converts, through one job to another, Mr. Valdés made himself a name: as one of the negotiators of Chile for the NAFTA (1996), in different diplomatic missions, in different State departments, as ambassador in Spain (1990–1994) and Argentina (2003). In 1998, when the dictator Pinochet was arrested in London, to the joy of many in Chile, as the Minister for Foreign affairs of Chile, he became the loudest voice demanding to “bring citizen Pinochet back to Chile”. Yes, the Socialist militant, the old advocate for democracy ended up protecting the dictator –using all sorts of shameless excuses, though. After all, it was thanks to Pinochet dictatorship that he has the job and the position he has

now. He's one of the winners with Pinochet social model, that turned Chile into the 7th country in the world ranking of social inequality, according to the World Bank. And the Socialists are having now their share of the cake with the Chilean macoutes. After all, discipline and obedience to the master has always been well rewarded...

From that moment, he started going to more ambitious posts: representing Chile in the UN (2000) and finally, making his entry into the Security Council of the UN, where Chile got temporary representation (2003). From there, the leap to Haiti was quite natural given his political opportunism and his skills as a diplomatic mercenary.

We in Chile knew that this "Socialists" and Pinochetistas thugs could work smoothly, hand in hand in Haiti. After all, they've been doing it for 15 years in Chile, when in 1990 the transition to democracy marked this wedding of the Chilean macoutes and the opportunists politicians trained in Europe. Why couldn't they do it in Haiti? The army, brings the repression necessary to tame the unrest, and the politicians bring the recipes for a transition to "democracy" Chilean style. This formula has been well known to be a success.

We, therefore, were not surprised when we heard the story of Eduardo Aldunate, or the declarations of Mr. Valdés on the 11th of June. We turned off the radio, and thought to ourselves "Yes Mr. Valdés, no political persecution in Haiti"...