# Democracy Enhancement

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# Part I

May, 1994

We are approaching the five-year mark since the fall of the Berlin wall, which marked the definitive end of the Cold War. At last the United States was freed from the burden of defending the world against Russian aggression and could return to its traditional calling: to promote democracy, human rights, and free markets worldwide. Standard doctrine holds further that the promise has been fulfilled. Today "American motives are largely humanitarian," historian David Fromkin declares in the New York Times Magazine. The present danger is excess of benevolence; we might undertake yet another selfless mission of mercy, failing to understand that "there are limits to what outsiders can do" and that "the armies we dispatch to foreign soil for humanitarian reasons" may not be able "to save people from others or from themselves."

The view is shared by the leading establishment critic of Cold War policies, George Kennan, who writes that it was a historic error for the US to reject any effort to negotiate a peaceful settlement of conflicts with the Russians for 40 years; one of the benefits of the end of the Cold War is that the clouds are finally lifting on these issues. Kennan too counsels that we restrict our foreign engagements. We must bear in mind that "it is primarily by example, never by precept, that a country such as ours exerts the most useful influence beyond its border"; countries unlike ours may undertake the grubbier pursuits. We must also remember "that there are limits to what one sovereign country can do to help another," even "a country such as ours." Others question that stance on the grounds that it is unfair to deprive suffering humanity of our attention, necessarily benevolent.[1]

To qualify for membership in respectable society, one must appreciate a simple thesis: we are perfect. Therefore we need only ask what is the right course for a saintly power, how best we may proceed to "save people from others or from themselves" — not from us, surely. The tune is, in fact, a very familiar one, an interesting topic for some other time.

Like earlier angelic powers, we are able to recognize that there are some flaws and errors in the record. But the sophisticated understand that history can teach no lessons about our institutions and the ways they have functioned, surely nothing about what may lie ahead. Review of the historical record is nothing more than "sound-bites and invectives about Washington's historically evil foreign policy," Brown University professor Thomas Weiss writes with derision, hence "easy to ignore."[2] A perceptive comment, accurately discerning the most valued principles of the commissar culture.

Discussion of the fashionable topic of the moral obligation of humanitarian intervention — not a trivial question — is rarely tainted by concerns about such matters. We do not, of course, counsel that Iran should undertake humanitarian intervention in Bosnia, as it has offered to do. Why? Because of its record and the nature of its institutions. In the case of Iran — or anyone else — inquiry into these questions is appropriate. But not for us, given our necessary perfection.

It follows that any departures from the path of righteousness can only have been a reaction — perhaps excessive, though understandable — to terrible dangers from which we defended ourselves, and more recently, the entire civilized world. The Cold War provides the favored current formula: any lapse in recent years is attributable to the cosmic struggle with the Russians. Thus

[1] Fromkin, NYT Magazine, Feb. 27, 1994; Kennan, NYT, March 14, 1994.

[2] Boston Review, February/March 1994; I am flattered to be the chosen target.

if experimental subjects for radiation studies were chosen from Boston's Fernald School for mentally retarded children, not an elite prep school, that was unfortunate, but understandable in the atmosphere of the Cold War, so it is alleged — about as plausibly as in most other cases. And we have now "changed course," so that history may rest in peace.

At the critical extreme, we do find occasional notice of imperfection. "There's something troubling about the way we select our cases for intervention," Harvard historian Stanley Hoffmann observed in opening a conference at Tufts university. He noted that there has been no "international cry to intervene in ethnic bloodshed in East Timor," the Boston Globe reported. The example is instructive.[3]

Let us disregard the phrase "ethnic bloodshed," not quite the term applied to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan or Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. That aside, some obvious questions come to mind: just who might call for such intervention, and how should it proceed? By bombing Washington and London, the main supporters of Indonesia's aggression and mass slaughter? Suppose that a commentator in pre-Gorbachev Russia had found something troubling about Soviet intervention policy, wondering why Russia did not intervene to prevent the imposition of martial law in Poland or repression in Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Would we even laugh? How could Moscow intervene to bar the policies it actively supported? These questions cannot arise, however, in our case, whatever the facts, given our perfection. No one laughs.

Respectable British opinion is scarcely different. Writing in the (London) Times Higher Education Supplement, Leslie Macfarlane, emeritus politics fellow at St. John's College in Oxford, recognizes that the US and UK, "to their shame, failed to put pressure on President Suharto to refrain from invasion" of East Timor. But the 200,000 or more deaths "cannot be attributed to 'the West'," he adds, reproaching Edward Herman for his calculations of the costs of Western state terrorism which erroneously included this case: no "Western promotion or support for the invasion and pacification of East Timor in the early 1980s [sic] is laid at the West's door," Macfarlane instructs us with proper indignation.[4]

There is no need to review the facts, familiar outside of the doctrinal system, which not only suppressed them with great efficiency as the terrible story unfolded but continues to do so today. Right now, Western oil companies are plundering East Timor's oil under a treaty between Australia and Indonesia, terror and repression continue unabated, and new atrocities have been discovered from the very recent past, among them, the slaughter of many people by Indonesian doctors in hospitals after the November 1991 Dili massacre. But we must understand that the news room is a busy place, and some things inevitably seep through the cracks — in a remarkably systematic way. Who can be expected to notice prominent stories in the British and Australian press, including even the Guardian Weekly, widely circulated here? One wonders whether the news room would have been too busy to notice Libyan robbery of Kuwaiti oil under a treaty with Saddam Hussein, after he had occupied and annexed the country.[5]

In the United States, public protest has hampered government support for Indonesian atrocities, but not much. Congress cut off funds for military training, but the Clinton Administration was undeterred. On the anniversary of the US-backed Indonesian invasion, the State Depart-

[3] Anthony Flint, BG, March 4, 1994.

[4] Macfarlane, review of Alexander George, ed., Western State Terrorism, THES, June 26, 1992.

[5] On the new revelations, see various articles by John Pilger and Max Stahl, who recently returned from Timor, among them, Pilger, "Horror behind the West's big wink," Guardian Weekly, Feb. 27, 1994. A Pilger film on BBC received wide coverage in Britain and Australia.

ment announced that "Congress's action did not ban Indonesia's purchase of training with its own funds," so it can proceed despite the ban. Such training has, after all, been quite successful in the past, including the training of officers who took part in the highly praised slaughter of hundreds of thousands of people, mostly landless peasants, as the present government took power in 1965. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara took particular pride in that fact, informing LBJ that US military assistance to the Indonesian army had "encouraged it" to undertake the useful slaughter "when the opportunity was presented." Particularly valuable, McNamara said, was the program that brought Indonesian military personnel to the United States for training at universities. Congress agreed, noting the "enormous dividends" of US military training of the killers and continued communication with them. The same training expedited the war crimes in Timor, and much else.[6]

Plainly, it would be unfair to deprive the people of the region of such benefits. That is exactly the position taken by advocates of US military training, for example Senator Bennett Johnson. His evidence is a quote from the Commander of the US forces in the Pacific, Admiral Larson, who explains that "by studying in our schools," Indonesian army officers "gain an appreciation for our value system, specifically respect for human rights, adherence to democratic principles, and the rule of law." For similar reasons, we must allow arms sales to Indonesia, so that we can continue to have a constructive "dialogue" and maintain our "leverage and influence," so benignly exercised in the past, much as in Latin America, Haiti, the Philippines, and other places where US training has instilled such admirable respect for human rights.[7]

## 1. Defending Human Rights

With the support of Senate Democrats, the Administration was also able to block human rights conditions on aid to Indonesia. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor announced further that Washington would "suspend" its annual review of Indonesian labor practices. Agreeing with Senator Bennett, who is impressed by "the steps Indonesia has taken…to improve conditions for workers in Indonesia," Kantor commended Indonesia for "bringing its labor law and practice into closer conformity with international standards" — a witticism that is in particularly poor taste, though it must be conceded that Indonesia did take some steps forward, fearing that Congress might override its friends in the White House. "Reforms hastily pushed through by the Indonesian government in recent months include withdrawing the authority of the military to intervene in strikes, allowing workers to form a company union to negotiate labour contracts, and raising the minimum wage in Jakarta by 27%" to about $2 a day, the London Guardian reports. The new company unions that are magnanimously authorized must, to be sure, join the All-Indonesia Labor Union, the state-run union. To ensure that these promising advances toward international labor standards would not be misunderstood, authorities also arrested 21 labor activists.

"We have done much to change and improve," Indonesia's Foreign Minister said, "so according to us there is no reason to revoke" the trade privileges. Clinton liberals evidently agree.[8]

One effect of the activism of the 1960s was the pressure on Congress to impose human rights conditions on aid, trade, and military sales. Every Administration from Carter until today has

[6] Reuters, NYT, Dec. 8, 1993. 1965, see my Year 501 (South End), chap. 4.

[7] Bennett, letter, Nation, April 1994.

[8] Counterpunch (Institute for Policy Studies), Feb. 15, March 15; Nicholas Cumming-Bruce, Guardian, Feb. 16, 1994.

had to seek ways to evade such constraints. In the 1980s, it became a sick joke, as the Reaganites regularly assured Congress (always happy to be "deceived") that its favorite assassins and torturers were making impressive progress. Clinton is forging no new paths with his Indonesia chicanery.

Other tasks are proving harder, however, notably China, which must have its Most Favored Nation (MFN) trade status renewed by June. As I've reviewed in earlier articles, China is not giving poor Clinton much help in his endeavor to bypass the executive order that he issued imposing human rights conditions — in "fear that Congressional Democrats might otherwise have forced an even more stringent approach" through legislation, Thomas Friedman reports in the New York Times, and because Clinton "did not want to appear to be going back on another campaign promise," having "strongly criticized President Bush for 'coddling' China."[9]

The problem arose again as Warren Christopher visited Beijing in March to express Washington's concerns on human rights, which, the State Department hastened to explain, are quite limited — in fact, limited to finding means to evade Congressional pressures. John Shattuck, US assistant secretary of human rights, clarified to the Chinese leaders that Clinton's requirements for improvement are "very narrow," that pledges of progress may be enough: "What the president is looking for is an indication of direction…that is generally forward looking." Please, please, give us some straw, so that we can respond to the needs of our constituency in the corporate sector. The Chinese, however, seem to enjoy watching their partners twist in the wind.[10]

As Christopher left for China, the Administration announced that it would once again relax the sanctions on high technology transfers, this time by allowing the Hughes Aircraft Company to launch a satellite from China. This "gesture of good will toward Beijing" is one "part of the strategy to engage China rather than to isolate it," Elaine Sciolino reported in the New York Times. Asked about this decision while China is under pressure on issues of missile proliferation and human rights, Christopher responded that it "simply sends a signal of even-handed treatment." The "good will gesture," as usual, is directed towards a leading segment of the publicly subsidized "private enterprise" system, much like the "good-will gestures" announced at the Asia-Pacific summit last November, which allowed China to purchase supercomputers, nuclear power generators, and satellites despite their adaptability to weapons and missile proliferation. The Pentagon also sent high officials with Christopher "to discuss ways to upgrade the two countries' military relationship," Sciolino reported, another part of the "strategy."[11]

Christopher did not return empty-handed. At a White House session, Thomas Friedman reports, he "presented a chart…showing that on many fronts China was making some progress toward meeting the terms of the President's executive order, but that forward movement had been obscured by the confrontational atmosphere of his visit." On leaving Beijing, he had stated that his discussions with the Chinese leaders were "businesslike and productive." "The differences between China and the US are narrowing somewhat," Christopher informed the press, though he "was hard put to point to examples of specific progress on the vexed human rights issue beyond a memorandum of understanding on trade in prison labour products," the London Financial Times commented. China did (once again) agree to restrict exports from prison factories to the United States.[12]

[9] Friedman, NYT, March 24, 1994.

[10] Maggie Farley, BG, March 7, 1994.

[11] Sciolino, NYT, March 8, 1994.

[12] Friedman, NYT, March 24; Tony Walker, FT, March 15; Elaine Sciolino, NYT, March 15, 1994.

Such exports have greatly exercised Washington and the press, the sole labor rights issue to have achieved this status. "U.S. Inspections of Jail Exports Likely in China," a front-page story by Thomas Friedman was headlined in the New York Times in January. The Chinese "agreed to a demand to allow more visits by American customs inspectors to Chinese prison factories to make sure they are not producing goods for export to the United States," he reported from Beijing. US influence is having further benign effects, "forcing liberalization, factory by factory," including contract, bankruptcy, and other laws that are "critical elements of a market economy," all welcome steps towards a "virtuous circle."

Unmentioned are a few other questions about economic virtue: horrifying labor conditions, for example. Perhaps the case of 81 women burned to death locked into their factory last November, which merited a few lines in the national press in the midst of much euphoria about Clinton's grand vision of a free market future in the Asia-Pacific region. Or 60 workers killed in a fire a few weeks later in another foreign-owned factory. Or the doubling of deaths in industrial accidents last year, with over 11,000 just in the first eight months. "Chinese officials and analysts say the accidents stem from abysmal working conditions, which, combined with long hours, inadequate pay, and even physical beatings, are stirring unprecedented labor unrest among China's booming foreign joint ventures," Sheila Tefft reported in the Christian Science Monitor. That problem is a real one: "the tensions reveal the great gap between competitive foreign capitalists lured by cheap Chinese labor and workers weaned on socialist job security and the safety net of cradle-to-grave benefits." Workers do not yet understand that in the capitalist utopia we are preparing for them, they are to be "beaten for producing poor quality goods, fired for dozing on the job during long work hours" and other such misdeeds, and locked into their factories to be burned to death. But we understand all of that, so China is not called to account for violations of labor rights; only for exporting prison products to the United States.[13]

Why the distinction? Simplicity itself. Prison factories are state-owned industry, and exports to the US interfere with profits, unlike locking women into factories, beating workers, and other such means to improve the balance sheet. QED.

Accuracy requires a few qualifications. Thus, the rules allow the United States to sell prison goods — for export: they are not permitted to enter US markets. California and Oregon export prison-made clothing to Asia, including specialty jeans, shirts, and a line of shorts quaintly called "Prison Blues." The prisoners earn far less than the minimum wage, and work under "slave labor" conditions, prison rights activists allege. But their products do not interfere with the rights that count, so there is no problem here.[14]

The Clinton Administration "has been quietly signaling Beijing that if it met Washington's minimum human rights demands, the United States would consider ending the annual threat of trade sanctions to change China's behavior," Friedman reports. The reason is that the old human rights policy imposed by Congressional (ultimately popular) pressures is "outmoded and should be replaced." This is a "major shift in policy which reflects the increasing importance of trade to the American economy." The human rights policy "is also outmoded, other officials argue, because trade is now such an important instrument for opening up Chinese society, for promoting the rule of law and the freedom of movement there, and for encouraging" private property.[15]

[13] Friedman, NYT, Jan. 21, 23; Tefft, CSM, Dec. 22, 1993.

[14] Reese Erlich, CSM, Feb. 9, 1994.

[15] Friedman, NYT, March 24, 1994.

The hypocrisy is stunning, though hardly more than the "human rights" policy that is now "outmoded," which was always carefully crafted to avoid endangering profits and to somehow "not see" huge atrocities carried out by US clients under Washington's sponsorship. Human rights concerns have been a passion in the case of Nicaragua and Cuba, subjected to crushing embargoes and terror. In such cases, trade is not "an instrument" that induces good behavior. The criminals have to be restored to their service role; if cynical posturing about human rights contributes to that end, well and good. The same was true of the Soviet empire, which also had to be returned to its traditional Third World role, providing resources, investment opportunities, markets, cheap labor, and other amenities, as it had for hundreds of years (an essential feature of the Cold War since 1918, in the real world). Until that end was achieved, trade was not "an instrument" to help lift the chains. The same was true of China, until it began to open its doors to foreign investment and control, offering wonderful opportunities for profit — or in technical Newspeak, "jobs."

## 2. Promoting Democracy

Our current vocation, as everyone knows, is promoting democracy. There are many illuminating examples since the fall of the Berlin Wall freed us from the Cold War burden.

The first, and one of the most revealing, is Nicaragua. Recall that just as the Wall fell, the White House and Congress announced with great clarity that unless Nicaraguans voted as we told them, the terrorist war and the embargo that was strangling the country would continue. Washington also voted (alone with Israel) against a UN General Assembly resolution calling on it once again to observe international law and call off these illegal actions; unthinkable of course, so the press continued to observe its vow of silence. When Nicaraguans met their obligations a few months later, joy was unrestrained. At the dissident extreme, Anthony Lewis hailed Washington's "experiment in peace and democracy," which gives "fresh testimony to the power of Jefferson's idea: government with the consent of the governed.... To say so seems romantic, but then we live in a romantic age." Across the spectrum there was rejoicing over the latest of the "happy series of democratic surprises," as Time magazine expressed the uniform view while outlining the methods used to achieve our Jeffersonian ideals: to "wreck the economy and prosecute a long and deadly proxy war until the exhausted natives overthrow the unwanted government themselves," with a cost to us that is "minimal," leaving the victim "with wrecked bridges, sabotaged power stations, and ruined farms," and providing Washington's candidate with "a winning issue," ending the "impoverishment of the people of Nicaragua."

It would be hard to imagine a more conclusive demonstration of the understanding of "democracy" in the dominant political and intellectual culture. It is inconceivable that the clear and unmistakeable meaning of any of this should enter the respectable culture, or probably even history.[16]

That interesting story continues. On March 15, US assistant Secretary of State Alexander Watson announced that "With the conflicts of the past behind us, the Clinton administration accepts the Sandinistas as a legitimate political force in Nicaragua with all the rights and obligations of any party in a democracy supposing that it uses only peaceful and legitimate methods," as we did through the 1980s, setting the stage for a "fair election," by US standards. The brief Reuters report noted that "the United States financed the Contra rebels against the Soviet-backed Sandinista

[16] For details, see my Deterring Democracy (Verso-Hill & Wang, 1991–2), chap. 10.

government." Translating from Newspeak, Washington followed standard procedure, doing everything it could to compel Nicaragua to abandon its despicable efforts to maintain a nonaligned stand and balanced trade and to turn to the Russians as a last resort, so that Washington's attack could be construed as part of the Cold War conflict raging in our backyard, now to be dispatched to the category of irrelevance for understanding ourselves, or what the future holds.[17]

Washington's willingness to accept the Sandinistas as a legitimate political force, if they mind their manners, cannot claim the prize for moral cowardice and depravity. That is still held by Washington's display of magnanimity towards the Vietnamese, now permitted to enter the civilized world, their many crimes against us put to the side (though not, of course, forgiven) once US business made it clear that the pleasure of torturing our victims must give way to the more important task of enrichment of the wealthy.

The next example of our post-Cold War passion for democracy was the invasion of Panama a month after the Berlin Wall fell, the first exercise of humanitarian intervention in the post-Cold War era. Operation Just Cause may have served as a model for Saddam Hussein shortly after, the cheering section now quietly concedes. Bush's greatest fear when Iraq invaded Kuwait seems to have been that Saddam would mimic his achievement in Panama. According to the account of Washington planning by investigative reporter Bob Woodward, regarded as "generally convincing" by US government Middle East specialist William Quandt, President Bush feared that the Saudis would "bug out at the last minute and accept a puppet regime in Kuwait" after Iraqi withdrawal. His advisers expected that Iraq would withdraw, leaving behind "lots of Iraqi special forces in civilian clothes," if not armed forces as the US did in Panama, while taking over two uninhabited mudflats that had been assigned to Kuwait in the British imperial settlement to block Iraq's access to the sea (Gen. Norman Schwartzkopf). Chief of Staff Gen. Colin Powell warned that the status quo would be changed under the influence of the aggressors even after withdrawal, again as in Panama.

In a highly-praised academic study regarded as the standard current work of scholarship on this "textbook case of aggression" and the reaction to it, University of London historians Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh, who labor to present the US-UK effort in the most favorable possible light, conclude that "Saddam apparently intended neither officially to annex the tiny emirate nor to maintain a permanent military presence there. Instead, he sought to establish hegemony over Kuwait, ensuring its complete financial, political and strategic subservience to his wishes," much as intended by the US in Panama, and achieved. Saddam's scheme "turned sour," they continue, because of the international reaction; to translate to doctrinally unacceptable truth, because the US and Britain did not follow their usual practice of vetoing or otherwise nullifying the international reaction to such "textbook cases of aggression" as US-South Vietnam, Turkey-Cyprus, Indonesia-East Timor, Israel-Lebanon, US-Panama, and many others.[18]

Operation Just Cause was presented as a "textbook case" of Washington's dedication to democracy — quite accurately, as it turned out. In the latest of its annual reports on human rights (January, 1994), Panama's governmental Human Rights Commission charged that the right to self-determination and sovereignty of the Panamanian people continues to be violated by the "state of occupation by a foreign army," reviewing US army, airforce, and DEA operations in Panama, including a DEA agent's assault on a Panamanian journalist and attacks on Panamanian citizens

[17] World Briefs, BG, March 16, 1994.

[18] See my World Orders Old and New (Columbia, 1994), for sources and details.

by US military personnel. The nongovernmental Human Rights Commission, in its accompanying report "Democracy and Human Rights in Panama…Four Years Later" added that democracy has meant nothing more than formal voting while government policies "do not attend to the necessities of the most impoverished" — whose numbers have significantly increased since the "liberation." Within a year after the invasion, Latin Americanist Stephen Ropp observes, Washington was well aware "that removing the mantle of United States protection would quickly result in a civilian or military overthrow of [President] Endara and his supporters"– that is, the puppet regime of bankers, businessmen, and narcotraffickers installed by the occupying army. "Drugs and their rewards are more visible today than in General Noriega's time," the Economist reports in March, including hard drugs. A senior employee of the Panama Branch of Merrill Lynch was one of those recently caught in a DEA operation as they were laundering Colombian cocaine cash through Panama's large financial industry, the one real economic success story of the "occupation by a foreign army." "All they were doing is what almost every bank in Panama does," a local investigative reporter commented. All exactly as predicted when the troops landed to restore the mainly white oligarchy to power and ensure US control over the strategically important region and its financial institutions.

An election is scheduled for May. Far ahead in polls is Perez Balladares, the candidate of the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD), the party of populist dictator Omar Torrijos and Manuel Noriega. Balladares was Noriega's campaign manager for the 1989 election that Noriega stole, causing much outrage in the US because he was no longer following Washington's orders; when he was still a "good boy" in 1984, he was lauded by Reagan, Shultz, et al. for stealing the election with considerably greater fraud and violence. Balladares has learned his lessons and should cause no problems.[19]

Other exercises of "democracy enhancement" in the region proceed on course. In November 1993, Hondurans went to the polls for the fourth time since 1980. They voted against the neoliberal structural adjustment programs that have had the usual consequences. But the gesture is empty; the rich and powerful will permit nothing else. "The voters have no real options for improving their living standards which worsen every day," Mexico's major newspaper Excelsior reported — familiar with "economic miracles" in its own country. Three-fourths of those who went to the polls "live in misery and are disenchanted with formal democracy." Hondurans' purchasing power is lower than in the 1970s, before the gift of "democracy" was granted by the United States while turning Honduras into a military base for its war against Nicaragua and establishing more firmly the rule of the generals. There are other beneficiaries, the Honduran College of Economists points out: "a group of privileged exporters and local investors linked to financial capital and multinational corporations who have multiplied their capital" in a country where "growing economic polarization is generating ever more evident constrasts, between the rich who do not hide the ostentation of their moral misery and the every more miserable poor." "At least one of every two dollars coming to Honduras has left in the last three years [1991–93] to pay the interest on more than $3 billion foreign debt," Excelsior continues. Debt service now

[19] Central America Report (Guatemala), Feb. 4, 1994; Ropp, "Things Fall Apart: Panama after Noriega," Current History, March 1993. Economist, March 12, 1994. For more on these matters, see Deterring Democracy, chap. 5; Year 501, chap. 4.

represents 40% of exports; and though almost 20% of the debt was forgiven, it has increased by almost 10% since 1990.[20]

In March 1994, the "democracy enhancement" project reached El Salvador. The elections conducted in the 1980s to legitimize the US-backed terror state were hailed at the time as impressive steps towards democracy ("demonstration elections," as Edward Herman accurately called them). But with the policy imperatives of those days gone, the pretense has been quietly shelved. It is the 1994 elections that are to represent the triumph of Washington's dedication to democracy.

The elections are indeed an innovation in that at least the forms were maintained, pretty much. "Tens of thousands of voters who had electoral cards were unable to vote because they did not appear on electoral lists," the Financial Times reported, "while some 74,000 people, a high number of which were from areas believed to be sympathetic to the FMLN, were excluded because they did not have birth certificates." FMLN leaders alleged that more than 300,000 voters were excluded in such ways, charging "massive" fraud. The left coalition presidential candidate Ruben Zamora estimated "conservatively" that over 10% of voters were barred. The UN mission downplayed the problems, but independent observers were not convinced. "I used to give them the benefit of the doubt," the official British observer commented, "but it comes to the point when you have to say it is bad faith," referring to the "bad administration" of the election by the governing ARENA party, which received almost half the votes cast, and the UN mission reaction.[21]

But the irregularities, whatever they may have been, do not change the fact that the elections broke new ground at a formal level. There was no blatant fraud or massive terror; rather, minor fraud against the background of the successful use of terror and repression, with a narrow aspect that received some attention, and a broader and more significant one that did not.

In the 1994 elections, the US naturally supported ARENA, the party of the death squads, a fact understood throughout though denied for propaganda reasons. Partial declassification of documents has revealed that much. It also illustrates once again why documents are classified in the first place: not for security reasons, as alleged, but to undermine American democracy by protecting state power from popular scrutiny. In February 1985 the CIA reported that "behind ARENA's legitimate exterior lies a terrorist network led by D'Aubuisson and funded by wealthy Salvadoran expatriates residing in Guatemala and the United States," using "both active-duty and retired military personnel in their campaigns"; "death squads in the armed forces operate out of both urban military headquarters and rural outposts." The main death squad, the "Secret Anti-Communist Army," was described by the CIA as the "paramilitary organization" of ARENA, led by the Constituent Assembly security chief and drawing most of its members from the National Police and other security forces. The military and police themselves, of course, were the major terrorist forces, carrying out the great mass of the atrocities against the civilian population, funded directly from Washington, which was also responsible for their training and direction.[22]

As the 1994 elections approached, there was a "resurgence in death squad-style murders and death threats," Americas Watch observed, concluding that "no issue represents a greater threat to the peace process than the rise in political murders of leaders and grassroots activists" of the FMLN, assassinations that "became more frequent, brazen, and selective in the fall of 1993."

[20] Manlio Tirado, Excelsior, Nov. 27, 1993; Latin America News Update, Jan. 1994; Env!o (UCA, Managua), Feb.-March 1994.

[21] Edward Oriebar, FT, March 22; Howard French, NYT, March 22.

[22] For a review of the declassified documents, see Human Rights Watch/Americas (Americas Watch), El Salvador: Darkening Horizons, El Salvador on the eve of the March 1994 elections, VI.4, March 1994.

These "injected a level of fear, almost impossible to measure, into the campaign," enhanced by government cover-ups and refusal to investigate, part of a pattern of violation of the peace treaty, to which we return. The government's own human rights office and the UN Observer Mission reported the "grave deterioration in citizen security" made worse by "organized violence in the political arena." This proceeds against the backdrop of an "astronomical rise of crime in post-war El Salvador," Americas Watch reports, and "reliable" evidence that the army and National Police are involved in organized crime.[23]

The major political opposition, Ruben Zamora's left coalition, not only lacked resources for the campaign that was virtually monopolized by ARENA, but was "unable to convince supporters or sympathizers to appear in campaign ads because they fear retaliation from the right" (New York Times). Terror continued at a level sufficient to give substance to such fears. Among those who took the threat seriously was Jose Mar!a Mendez, named El Salvador's "Lawyer of the Century" by three prestigious legal associations. He fled the country shortly after, threatened with death unless he convinced the vice-presidential candidate of the left coalition to resign.

Foreign observers were struck by the lack of popular interest in the "elections of the century." "Salvadorans Ambivalent Toward Historic Poll," a headline in the Christian Science Monitor read, reporting fear and apathy, and concern that war will return unless ARENA wins. The abstention rate, about 45%, was about the same as 10 years earlier, at the peak of the violence. A "conservative political analyst" quoted by the New York Times (Hector Dada) attributed the low participation "to a deliberate disenfranchisment of voters and a sense of apathy among the electorate." As for those who voted, another analyst, Luis Cardenal, observed that "the electorate voted more than anything for tranquillity, for security." "The war-weary populace bought the ruling party's party line, which equated ARENA with security and the left with instability and violence," Christian Science Monitor reporter David Clark Scott added. That is plausible enough. Any other outcome could be expected to lead to revival of the large-scale terror and atrocities.[24]

These assessments bear on the broader aspects of the successful use of violence. Before the election, church and popular sources attributed the "climate of apathy" to the fact that "hunger and poverty reign among a population whose demands have received no attention, which makes the electoral climate difficult" (Notimex, Mexico).[25] In the 1970s, popular organizations were proliferating, in part under church auspices, seeking to articulate these demands in the political arena and to work to overcome hunger, poverty, and harsh oppression. It was that popular awakening that elicited the response of the state terror apparatus and its superpower sponsor, committed as always to a form of "democracy enhancement" that bars the threat of democracy — by extreme violence, if necessary, as in this case. Here as elsewhere, the programs of the terrorist superpower were highly successful, leading to the "climate of apathy," the search for security above all else, and the general conditions in which "free elections" become tolerable.

Recall the conclusion of Reaganite official Thomas Carothers, who recognizes that the "democracy enhancement" programs in which he was involved "inevitably sought only limited, top-down forms of democratic change that did not risk upsetting the traditional structures of power with which the United States has long been allied," maintaining "the basic order of…quite un-

[23] Ibid., for details.

[24] Howard French, NYT, March 6, March 22; Gene Palumbo, CSM, Jan. 20; David Clark Scott, CSM, March 18, 22, 1994.

[25] Notimex, El Nuevo Diario (Managua), March 20, 1994.

democratic societies" and avoiding "populist-based change" that might upset "established economic and political orders" and open "a leftist direction." Nothing has changed in this regard.

A January 1994 conference of Jesuits and lay associates in San Salvador considered both the narrow and broad aspects of the state terrorist project. Its summary report concludes that "It is important to explore to what degree terror continues to act, cloaked by the mask of common crime. Also to be explored is what weight the culture of terror has had in domesticating the expectations of the majority vis-a-vis alternatives different to those of the powerful, in a context in which many of the revolutionaries of yesterday act today with values similar to the long powerful."[26]

The latter issue, the broader one, is of particular significance. The great achievement of the massive terror operations of the past years organized by Washington and its local associates has been to destroy hope. The observation generalizes to much of the Third World and also to the growing masses of superfluous people at home, as the Third World model of sharply two-tiered societies is increasingly internationalized. These are major themes of the "New World Order" being constructed by the privileged sectors of global society, with US state and private power in the lead.

### 3. Rewarding Democracy

A particularly instructive illustration of the democracy enhancement program in the region is Colombia, which seems to have taken first place in the competition for leading terrorist state in Latin America — and, to the surprise of no one familiar with "sound-bites and invectives about Washington's historically evil foreign policy," has become the leading recipient of US military aid, accompanied by much praise for its stellar accomplishments.

In the March 1994 issue of Current History, Latin Americanist John Martz writes that "Colombia now enjoys one of the healthiest and most flourishing economies in Latin America. And in political terms its democratic structures, notwithstanding inevitable flaws, are among the most solid on the continent," a model of "well-established political stability." The Clinton Administration is particularly impressed by outgoing President Cesar Gaviria, whom it is now promoting as next Secretary General of the Organization of American States, because, as the US representative to the OAS explained, "He has been very forward looking in building democratic institutions in a country where it was sometimes dangerous to do so" and also "on economic reform in Colombia and on economic integration in the hemisphere," code words that are readily interpreted.[27]

That it has been dangerous to build democratic institutions in Colombia is true enough, thanks primarily to President Gaviria, his predecessors, and their fervent supporters in Washington.

The "inevitable flaws" are reviewed in some detail — once again — in current publications of Americas Watch and Amnesty International.[28] They find "appalling levels of violence," the worst in the hemisphere. Since 1986, more than 20,000 people have been killed for political reasons, most of them by the Colombian military and police and the paramilitary forces that are closely

[26] Juan Herna'ndez Pico, Envi'o, March 1994.

[27] Martz, "Colombia: Democracy, Development, and Drugs," CH, March 1994; Steven Greenhouse, NYT, March 15, 1994.

[28] Americas Watch, State of War: Political Violence and Counterinsurgency in Colombia (Human Rights Watch, Dec. 1993); Amnesty International, Political Violence [In Colombia]: Myth and Reality (March 1994). Deterring Democracy, chap. 4.

linked to them; for example, the private army of rancher, emerald dealer, and reputed drug dealer Victor Carranza, considered to be the largest in the country, dedicated primarily to the destruction of the leftwing political opposition Patriotic Union (UP), in alliance with police and military officers. The department in which Carranza operates (Meta) is one of the most heavily militarized, with some 35,000 troops and thousands of police. Nevertheless, paramilitary forces and hired killers operate freely, carrying out massacres and political assassinations. An official government inquiry in the early '80s found that over a third of the members of paramilitary groups engaged in political killings and other terror in Colombia were active-duty military officers; the pattern continues, including the usual alliances with private power and criminal sectors.

More than 1500 leaders, members and supporters of UP have been assassinated since the party was established in 1985. This "systematic elimination of the leadership" of UP is "the most dramatic expression of political intolerance in recent years," AI observes — one of the "inevitable flaws" that make it "dangerous to build democratic institutions," if not quite the danger that the Clinton Administration wants us to notice. Other "dangers" were illustrated at the March 1994 elections, largely bought by the powerful Cali cocaine cartel, critics allege, noting the history of vote-buying in this "stable democracy," the vast amounts of money spent by the cartel, and the low turnout.[29]

The pretext for terror operations is the war against guerrillas and narcotraffickers, the former a very partial truth, the latter "a myth," Amnesty International concludes in agreement with other investigators; the myth was concocted in large measure to replace the "Communist threat" as the Cold War was fading along with the propaganda system based on it. In reality, the official security forces and their paramilitary associates work hand in glove with the drug lords, organized crime, landowners, and other private interests in a country where avenues of social action have long been closed, and are to be kept that way by intimidation and terror. The Government's own Commission to Overcome Violence concluded that "the criminalization of social protest" is one of the "principal factors which permit and encourage violations of human rights" by the military and police authorities and their paramilitary collaborators.

The problems have become much worse in the past 10 years, particularly during President Gaviria's term, when "violence reached unprecedented levels," the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) reports, with the National Police taking over as the leading official killers while US aid shifted to them. 1992 was the most violent year in Colombia since the 1950s, WOLA reported in early 1993, which proved to be still worse.[30] Atrocities run the gamut familiar in the spheres of US influence and support: death squads, "disappearance," torture, rape, massacre of civilian populations under the doctrine of "collective responsibility," and aerial bombardment. The specially-trained counterinsurgency and mobile brigades are among the worst offenders. Targets include community leaders, human rights and health workers, union activists, students, members of religious youth organizations, and young people in shanty towns, but primarily peasants. Merely to give one example, from August 1992 to August 1993, 217 union activists were murdered, "a point that demonstrates the strong intolerance on the part of the State of union activity," the Andean Commission of Jurists comments.[31] The official concept of "terrorism"

[29] AP, BG, March 14, 1994.

[30] WOLA, The Colombian National Police, Human Rights, and U.S. Drug Policy, May 1993. For details on the last three months of 1993, see particularly Justicia y Paz, Comision Intercongregacional de Justicia y Paz, vol. 6.4, October-Dec. 1993, Bogot.

[31] Comision Andina de Juristas, Seccional Colombia, Bogot , Jan. 19, 1994.

has been extended to virtually anyone opposing government policies, the human rights reports observe.

One project of the security forces and their allies is "social cleansing" — that is, murder of vagrants and unemployed, street children, prostitutes, homosexuals, and other undesirables. The Ministry of Defense formulated the official attitude toward the matter in response to a compensation claim: "There is no case for the payment of any compensation by the nation, particularly for an individual who was neither useful nor productive, either to society or to his family."

The security forces also murder suspects, another practice familiar in US domains. It is, for example, standard operating procedure for Israeli forces in the occupied territories, passing with little notice among the paymasters, who accept it as routine. Thus, the day before the Hebron massacre of February 25, soldiers fired antitank rockets and grenades at a stone house near Jerusalem, killing one Palestinian and wounding another who were "accused by the army in the slaying of an undercover agent" and other actions, the press casually reported.[32]

The plague of murder for sale of organs, rampant through the domains of US influence, has not spared Colombia, where undesirables are killed so that their corpses "can be chopped up and sold on the black market for body parts" (AI). It is not known whether children are sold and killed for organ transplants as in El Salvador, where the practice is officially conceded; and according to extensive report, elsewhere in the region.

As Human Rights groups and others observe, the Colombian model is that of El Salvador and Guatemala. The doctrines instilled by US advisers and trainers can be traced back directly to the Nazis, as Michael McClintock documented in an important study that has been ignored. Colombia has also enjoyed the assistance of British, German, and Israeli mercenaries who train assassins and perform other services for the narco-military-landlord combine in their war against peasants and potential social activism. to my knowledge, there has been no attempt to investigate the report of Colombian intelligence that North Americans have also been engaged in these operations, or any notice of it, in the mainstream.

Other similarities to Washington's Salvador-Guatemala model abound. Consider, for example, the case of Major Luis Felipe Becerra, charged with responsibility for an army massacre by a civilian judge, who fled the country under death threats days after issuing the arrest warrant (her father was then murdered). But the warrants were not served, because Major Becerra was then in the United States undergoing a training course for promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel. Returning after his promotion, Lt.-Col. Becerra was appointed to head the army's press and public relations department, despite a recommendation by the Procurator Delegate to the Armed Forces that he be dismissed for his part in the peasant massacre. In April 1993, charges against him were dropped. In October, he was again implicated in a massacre of unarmed civilians. Under the pretext of a battle against guerrillas, troops under his command executed 13 people in a rural area; the victims were unarmed, the women were raped and tortured, according to residents of the area.[33]

But impunity prevails, as is regularly the case.

The story is that of Central America, Haiti, Brazil, indeed wherever the Monroe Doctrine extends, along with the Philippines, Iran under the Shah, and other countries that share an elusive property.[34]

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[32] AP, BG, Feb. 25, 1994.

[33] AI, Political Violence. Comision Andina, op. cit.

[34] McClintock, Instruments of Statecraft (Pantheon, 1992); see Year 501, chap. 10, for some discussion. See Deterring Democracy, chap. 4, on mercenaries.

Whatever could it be? Whatever it is, we are strictly enjoined not to see it and to learn nothing from it.

A detailed 1992 investigation by European and Latin American church and human rights organizations concludes that "state terrorism in Colombia is a reality: it has its institutions, its doctrine, its structures, its legal arrangements, its means and instruments, its victims, and above all its responsible authorities." Its goal is "systematic elimination of opposition, criminalization of large sectors of the population, massive resort to political assassination and disappearance, general use of torture, extreme powers for the security forces, exceptional legislation, etc…" (State Terror in Colombia). The modern version has its roots in the security doctrines pioneered by the Kennedy Administration, which established them officially in a crucial 1962 decision that shifted the mission of the Latin American military from "hemispheric defense" to "internal security": the war against the "internal enemy," understood in practice to be those who challenge the traditional order of domination and control.

The doctrines were expounded in US manuals of counterinsurgency and low intensity conflict, and developed further by local security authorities. They benefited from training and direction by US advisers and experts, new technologies of repression, and improved structures and methodologies to maintain "stability" and obedience. The result is a highly efficient apparatus of official terror, designed for "total war" by state power "in the political, economic, and social arenas," as the Colombian Minister of Defense articulated the standard doctrine in 1989. While officially the targets were guerrilla organizations, a high military official explained in 1987 that these were only of minor importance: "the real danger" is "what the insurgents have called the political and psychological war," the war "to control the popular elements" and "to manipulate the masses." The "subversives" hope to influence unions, universities, media, and so on. Therefore, the State Terror inquiry observes, the "internal enemy" of the state terrorist apparatus extends to "labor organizations, popular movements, indigenous organizations, opposition political parties, peasant movements, intellectual sectors, religious currents, youth and student groups, neighborhood organizations," and so on, all legitimate targets for destruction because they must be secured against undesirable influences. "Every individual who in one or another manner supports the goals of the enemy must be considered a traitor and treated in that manner," a 1963 military manual prescribed, as the Kennedy initiatives were moving into high gear.

The war against the "internal enemy" escalated in the 1980s as the Reaganites updated the Kennedy doctrines, moving from "legal" repression to "systematic employment of political assassination and disappearance, later massacres" (State Terror). Atrocities escalated. A new judicial regime in 1988 "allowed maximal criminalization of the political and social opposition" in order to implement what was officially called "total war against the internal enemy." The use of paramilitary auxiliaries for terror, explicitly authorized in military manuals, also took new and more comprehensive forms; and alliances with industrialists, ranchers and landowners, and later narcotraffickers were more firmly entrenched. The 1980s saw "the consolidation of state terror in Colombia," the inquiry concludes.[35]

In its December 1993 study, America's Watch observes that "most of the materiel used by and training provided the Colombian army and police come from the United States," mainly counterinsurgency equipment and training. A study of the "drug war" by the US General Accounting

[35] El Terrorismo de Estado en Colombia (Brussels, 1992). On the deterioration of the human rights situation in the 1980s, see also Jenny Pearce, Colombia: Inside the Labyrinth (Latin American Bureau, London, 1990).

Office in August 1993 concluded that US military officials have not "fully implemented end-use monitoring procedures to ensure that Colombia's military is using aid primarily for counter-narcotic purposes," an oversight with few consequences, considering what falls under the rubric of "counter-narcotic purposes." Washington's own interpretation of such purposes was nicely illustrated in early 1989 when Colombia asked it to install a radar system to monitor flights from the south, the source of most of the cocaine for the drug merchants. The US government fulfilled the request — in a sense; it installed a radar system on San Andres island in the Caribbean, 500 miles from mainland Colombia and as far removed as possible on Colombian territory from the drug routes, but well-located for the intensive surveillance of Nicaragua that was a critical component of the terrorist war, then peaking as Washington sought to conclude its demolition of the "peace process" of the Central American presidents (as it did, another fact unlikely to enter history). A Costa Rican request for radar assistance in the drug war ended up the same way.[36]

From 1984 through 1992, 6,844 Colombian soldiers were trained under the US International Military Education and Training Program, over 2,000 from 1990 to 1992, as atrocities were mounting. Like their counterparts elsewhere, they were thus able to "gain an appreciation for our value system, specifically respect for human rights, adherence to democratic principles, and the rule of law," as Admiral Larson and Senator Bennett explained. The Colombian program is the largest in the hemisphere, three times that of El Salvador. US advisors are helping build military bases, officially to "increase the battlefronts against the guerrillas and narcotrafficking operations." Four have been constructed, five more are underway, according to the US Embassy. The real targets will be evident from the record elsewhere in the region, or in Colombia itself.

Washington is also supporting the "public order" courts that operate under conditions that severely undermine civil rights and due process. Again, the parallel to El Salvador is obvious. One of the requirements of the UN-brokered peace accord was that the Salvadoran government dismantle the Supreme Court, largely an appendage of the death squad apparatus run by the state and its private sector allies. The agreement was ignored, like the requirement that the National Police, noted for their brutality, be dismantled and replaced by a new National Civilan Police (PNC) that is not under army control and includes the FMLN. "Government figures…show that instead of phasing out the old national police force as called for by the peace accord, it actually has increased by about 2,000 men to 10,500," the Chicago Tribune reported. In further violation of the agreement, the ARENA government in 1992 transferred to the National Police 1,000 members of the Treasury Police and National Guard, which were to be abolished because of their notorious human rights abuses; former members were accepted to training programs for the PNC, "an explicit violation of the accord," Americas Watch notes. The expanding National Police are considered responsible for 35% of human rights violations reported to the UN observers in 1993, "a larger share than any other force," Americas Watch continues, reviewing also a series of other government violations of the accords designed to sustain the terror system, either in official or "privatized" form. "Time is on the side of the government," a UN official observed: it is only necessary to hold out until the UN Mission ends, and then the remnants of the peace accords can be completely scrapped, going the way of the Central American peace accords of 1987.[37]

[36] Deterring Democracy, chap. 4.

[37] Nathaniel Sheppard, CT, Jan. 6, 1994. Human Rights Watch/Americas, op. cit. David Clark Scott, CSM, March 23, 1994.

Since there is no interest here, El Salvador too proceeds towards a "stable democracy," though with "inevitable flaws," such as those already mentioned.

In July 1989 the State Department submitted a report entitled "Justification for Determination to Authorize Export-Import Act Guarantees and Insurance for Sales of Military Equipment to Colombia for Antinarcotics Purposes," the official cover story. The report states: "Colombia has a democratic form of government and does not exhibit a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights." Three months later, the UN Special Rapporteur on Summary Executions, Amos Wako, returned from a visit to Colombia with severe warnings about the extreme violence of the paramilitary forces in coordination with drug lords and government security forces: "There are currently over 140 paramilitary groups operating in Colombia today [which are] trained and financed by drug traffickers and possibly a few landowners. They operate very closely with elements in the armed forces and the police. Most of the killings and massacres carried out by the paramilitary groups occur in areas which are heavily militarized [where] they are able to move easily…and commit murders with impunity. In some cases, the military or police either turn a blind eye to what is being done by paramilitary groups or give suport by offering safe conduct passes to members of the paramilitary or by impeding investigation." His mandate did not extend to the direct terror of the security forces, which far outweighs the depredations of its informal allies.

A few months before the State Department praise for Colombia's humane democracy, a Jesuit-sponsored development and research organization published a report documenting atrocities in the first part of 1988, including over 3000 politically-motivated killings, 273 in "social cleansing" campaigns.[38] Excluding those killed in combat, political killings averaged 8 a day, with seven murdered in their homes or in the street and one "disappeared." "The vast majority of those who have disappeared in recent years," WOLA added, "are grassroots organizers, peasant or union leaders, leftist politicians, human rights workers and other activists," over 1500 by the time of the State Department endorsement. Perhaps the State Department had in mind the recent (1988) mayoral campaigns, in which 29 of the 87 mayoral candidates of the UP were assassinated along with over 100 of its candidates for municipal councilor. The Central Organization of Workers, a coalition of trade unions formed in 1986, had by then lost over 230 members, most of them found dead after brutal torture.

Recall also that in 1988, the more advanced forms of "maximal criminalization of the political and social opposition" were instituted for "total war against the internal enemy," as the regime of state terror consolidated. By the time the State Department report appeared, the methods of control it found praiseworthy were being still more systematically implemented. From 1988 through early 1992, 9500 people were assassinated for political reasons along with 830 disappearances and 313 massacres (between 1988 and 1990) of peasants and poor people.[39]

The primary victims of atrocities were, as usual, the poor, mainly peasants. In one southern department, grassroots organizations testified in February 1988 that a "campaign of total annihilation and scorched earth, Vietnam-style," was being conducted by the military forces "in a most criminal manner, with assassinations of men, women, elderly and children. Homes and crops are burned, obligating the peasants to leave their lands." The State Department had a plethora

[38] Justicia y Paz, cited by WOLA, Colombia Besieged: Political Violence and State Responsibility (Washington DC, 1989).

[39] For details on these and other atrocities, and the general impunity, see references cited above and in Deterring Democracy, chap. 4. 1988–1992 estimate, El Terrorismo de Estado en Colombia.

of evidence of this sort before it when it cleared Colombia of human rights violations. Its own official Human Rights reports attributed virtually all violence to the guerrillas and narcotraffickers, so that the US was "justified" in providing the mass murderers and torturers with military equipment, putting our taxes to good use.

That, of course, was the "bad old days" of 1989, when we were still defending civilization from the Russian threat. Moving to the present, matters become worse, for reasons explained by President Gaviria in May 1992. When questioned about atrocities by the military in the Colombian press, he responded that "The battle against the guerrillas must be waged on unequal terms. The defense of human rights, of democratic principles, of the separation of powers, could prove to be an obstacle for the counterinsurgency struggle."[40]

During the Bush years, the US Embassy "did not make a single public statement urging the government to curb political or military abuses," WOLA observes, while US support for the military and police increased.[41] But now that liberal Democrats have taken over, the Clinton Administration has called for a change in policy towards the Colombian killers: more active US participation. For fiscal year 1994, the Administration requested that military financing and training funds be *increased* by over 12%, reaching about half of proposed military aid for all of Latin America. Congressional budget cuts for the Pentagon interfered with these plans, so the Administration "intends to use emergency drawdown authority to bolster the Colombia account," Americas Watch reports. Congress, however, is continuing to interfere, taking note of "continuing human rights abuses on a large scale" and imposing conditions on US aid, which the Administration will have to find ways to evade, with the usual formulas and devices. The Senate also urged the Colombian Government to permit Red Cross access to police and detention facilities, which it has generally denied.

The Human Rights organizations (Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch) are committed to international conventions on human rights. Thus AI reports open by stating that the organization "works to promote all the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international standards." In practice, however, the commitment is skewed in accord with Western standards, which are significantly different. The United States, in particular, rejects the universality of the Universal Declaration, amidst much posturing about our noble defense of the sacred principle of universality and self-righteous denunciation of the "cultural relativism" of the backward peoples who fall short of our exalted standards. The United States has always flatly rejected the sections of the Universal Declaration dealing with social and economic rights, and also consistently disregards, ignores, and violates much of the remainder of the Declaration — even putting aside its massive involvement in terror, torture, and other abuses.

The Human Rights Groups say little about social and economic rights, generally adopting the highly biased Western perspective on these matters. In the case of Colombia, we have to go beyond these (in themselves, very valuable) reports to discover the roots of the extraordinary violence. They are not obscure. The president of the Colombian Permanent Committee for Human Rights, former Minister of Foreign Affairs Alfredo V squez Carrizosa, writes that it is "poverty and insufficient land reform" that "have made Colombia one of the most tragic countries of Latin America," and are the source of the violence, including the mass killings of the 1940s and early 1950s, which took hundreds of thousands of lives. Land reform was legislated in 1961, but "has

[40] WOLA, Colombia Besieged; The Paramilitary strategy imposed on Colombia's Chucuri region (Jan. 1993).
[41] WOLA, Colombian National Police.

practically been a myth," unimplemented because landowners "have had the power to stop it" in this admirable democracy with its constitutional regime, which V squez Carrizosa dismisses as a "facade," granting rights that have no relation to reality. The violence has been caused "by the dual structure of a prosperous minority and an impoverished, excluded majority, with great differences in wealth, income, and access to political participation."

And as elsewhere in Latin America, "violence has been exacerbated by external factors," primarily the initiatives of the Kennedy Administration, which "took great pains to transform our regular armies into counterinsurgency brigades, accepting the new strategy of the death squads," ushering in "what is known in Latin America as the National Security Doctrine,...not defense against an external enemy, but a way to make the military establishment the masters of the game...[with] the right to combat the internal enemy, as set forth in the Brazilian doctrine, the Argentine doctrine, the Uruguayan doctrine, and the Colombian doctrine: it is the right to fight and to exterminate social workers, trade unionists, men and women who are not supportive of the establishment, and who are assumed to be communist extremists."[42]

It is in this precise sense, no other, that the Cold War guided our policies.

The results are an income distribution that is "dramatically skewed," WOLA observes, another striking feature of the domains of longstanding US influence, from which we are, again, to learn nothing. The top three percent of Colombia's landed elite own over 70% of arable land, while 57% of the poorest farmers subsist on under 3%. 40% of Colombians live in "absolute poverty," unable to satisfy basic subsistence needs, according to a 1986 report of the National Administration Bureau of Statistics, while 18% live in "absolute misery," unable to meet nutritional needs. The Colombian Institute of Family Welfare estimates that four and a half million children under 14 are hungry: that is, one of every two children, in this triumph of capitalism, a country of enormous resources and potential, lauded as "one of the healthiest and most flourishing economies in Latin America" (Martz).[43]

The "stable democracy" does exist, but as what Jenny Pearce calls "democracy without the people," the majority of whom are excluded from the political system monopolized by elites, more so as political space has been "rapidly closing by the mid-1980s." For Colombian elites, the international funding agencies, and foreign investors, "democracy" functions. But it is not intended for the public generally, who are "marginalized economically and politically." "The state has reserved for the majority the 'state of siege' and all the exceptional repressive legislation and procedures that can guarantee order where other mechanisms fail," Pearce continues, increasingly in recent years. That is democracy, in exactly the sense of regular practice and even doctrine, if we attend closely.

No discussion of "democracy enhancement" in the current era can fail to consider Haiti, a sickening story that requires separate treatment, particularly now, when Clinton Administration efforts to undermine Haitian democracy have reached such a sordid level that even his allies are deserting the ship. As of March, the latest revelation of Clintonite deceit on "restoring democracy" to Haiti was the Congressional testimony of Lawrence Pezzullo, the Secretary of State's special adviser for Haiti. Pezzullo was questioned about a plan "portrayed as a Haitian solution spawned by weeks of tough negotiations in Washington among disparate leaders of Haitian society," Christopher Marquis reported in the Miami Herald. The Clinton Administration had

[42] Colombia Update, Colombian Human Rights Committee, Dec. 1989; see Deterring Democracy, chap. 4.

[43] WOLA, Colombia Besieged. Children, Pearce, op. cit.

strongly supported the plan as the optimal solution, representing Haitian democrats. It harshly condemned Aristide for his intransigence in rejecting the plan — which, true enough, ignored such minor matters as the return of the elected President to Haiti and the removal of the worst of the state terrorists from power. Pezzullo conceded that the plan had in fact been "spawned" in the offices of the State Department, which selected the "Haitian negotiators" who were to ratify it in Washington. Included among them were right-wing extremists with close military ties, notably Frantz-Robert Monde, a former member of Duvalier's terrorist Tontons Macoute and a close associate of police chief Lt.-Col. Joseph Michel Francois, the most brutal and powerful of the Haitian state terrorists (incidentally, another beneficiary of US training).

"In other words, the operation was a hoax" (Larry Birns, director of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs), yet another effort to ensure that democracy is "enhanced" in Haiti in the familiar way — without any "populist-based change" that might upset "established economic and political orders" and open "a leftist direction" (Carothers).[44]

I'll save until next time the Haitian illustration of the "romantic age" to which we have led suffering humanity.

## Part II: The Case of Haiti

July-August, 1994

As discussed in Part I, the Reagan-Bush Administrations reluctantly adopted "prodemocracy policies as a means of relieving pressure for more radical change," and "inevitably sought only limited, top-down forms of democratic change that did not risk upsetting the traditional structures of power with which the United States has long been allied" (Thomas Carothers of the Reagan State Department). The leading idea is revealed in the documents of USAID's democracy project, which stress that the U.S. supports "processes of democratic institutional reform that will further economic liberalization objectives" — that is, entrenchment of the service role.[45]

The reference to "the traditional structures of power with which the United States has long been allied" has to undergo the usual translation. The phrase "United States" refers to the "traditional structures of power" at home. This is among the elementary truths that are to remain unspoken, along with the fact that the policies for the service areas merely adapt a conception of democracy that is to apply to the home societies as well. Here the general public "must be put in its place," as Walter Lippmann explained in his progressive essays on democracy long ago. The "ignorant and meddlesome outsiders" are to be only "interested spectators of action," not "participants." Their sole "function" in a democracy is to choose periodically among the leadership class (elections). Also unspoken is the fact that the "responsible men" who manage the democratic society gain that status by virtue of their service to "the traditional structures of power." There is a very broad consensus in the intellectual community, and of course the business world, that the "ignorant and incapable mass of humanity" must not be allowed to disrupt policy formation (Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of State Robert Lansing), that planners must be "insulated" from politics, in World Bank lingo.

[44] Marquis, MH, March 9; Birns, COHA Washington Report on the Hemisphere, March 7; Amy Wilentz, NYT op-ed, March 24, 1994.

[45] Cited by Robert Vitalis, "Dreams of Markets, Nightmares of Democracy," ms. 1994; Middle East Report, Spring 1994.

The "prodemocracy policies" in the service areas long antedate the Reaganites, and have little to do with the Cold War, apart from ideological cover. Accordingly, they should be expected to persist, as they do. Among the cases reviewed in Part I, the most striking is Colombia, which has become the leading human rights violator in the hemisphere and the recipient of more than half of total U.S. military aid and training, sent on its way with the usual acclaim for Colombia's democratic achievements as state terror mounts — all rising to new heights under Clinton.

"Human Rights enhancement" marches on in parallel. In Part I, I reviewed Clinton's steps to evade congressional efforts to impose human rights conditions on military aid and trade privileges for Indonesia and China, and the concept of "human rights" itself, crafted to evade atrocities that contribute to profit. In the weeks since, the China story took its predictable course. "President Clinton's decision to renew China's trade benefits was the culmination of a titanic clash between America's global economic interests and its self-image as the world's leading advocate of human rights," Thomas Friedman's lead article opened in the New York Times, reporting the surprising outcome. Clinton did not merely endorse the Bush Administration policies that he had caustically denounced during the presidential campaign, but went well beyond them, deciding "to delink human rights" completely from trade privileges.[46]

The Indonesia case sheds further light on the "titanic clash." As discussed in Part I, Clinton joined his predecessors and colleagues abroad in ensuring the welfare of the Indonesian tyrants and murderers and the foreign corporations that benefit from their rule, blocking and evading congressional restrictions on military assistance. The issue was quite narrow: whether to refrain from direct participation in Indonesian atrocities at home and abroad. There was no thought of proceeding beyond, to some action to deter some of the worst crimes of the modern era.

The review in Part I was perhaps unfair in not mentioning that world leaders do recognize some limits, and have indeed considered sanctions against Indonesia. In November 1993, on behalf of the nonaligned movement and the World Health Organization (WHO), Indonesia submitted to the UN a resolution requesting an opinion from the World Court on the legality of the use of nuclear weapons. In the face of this atrocity, the guardians of international morality leaped into action. The U.S., U.K., and France threatened Indonesia with trade sanctions and termination of aid unless it withdrew the resolution, as it did. Traditional clients understand very well when a message from the powerful is to be heeded.

Citizens of the free world were again fortunate to have the information readily available to them; in this case, in the Catholic Church press in Canada.[47]

Freedom of information can go only so far, however. On June 10, the World Court was scheduled to take up the WHO request for an opinion, despite a furious campaign by the U.S., U.K., and their allies to prevent this outrage. The matter is of some importance. Even consideration of the issue by the Court would be a contribution to the cause of nonproliferation; even more so a decision that use of nuclear weapons is a crime under international law — hence by implication, possession as well. As of mid-June, I have found no word on the matter, though the nonproliferation treaty is a topic of lead headlines, particularly the threat posed to its renewal in 1995 by North Korea's alleged nuclear weapons program.

I barely mentioned one of the clearest tests of the Clinton vision on "democracy enhancement": Haiti. The case serves well to illustrate the "prodemocracy policies" of the Reagan-Bush

[46] NYT, May 27, 1994.

[47] Catholic New Times, 9 Jan. 1994; John Pilger, New Statesman and Nation, June 3, 1994.

years, as Carothers accurately describes them. We may ask, then, how things changed as the New Democrats took command.[48]

## 1. The Legacy of History

Even the briefest glimpse of Haiti's torment leaves impressions that do not easily fade, beginning with the scene of desolation on approaching the international airport. It is hard to remember that through the 18th century the island was the richest and most profitable of the Western colonies, and like today's Bangladesh, had struck the European conquerors as a virtual paradise. The Presidential Palace in Port-au-Prince, dominating a large square, is flanked by the headquarters of the military command and, at a slight remove, the equally-dreaded police. The symbols of authority and violence stand in impudent mockery of the misery that lies below them — "confirming the permanence of power, a reminder to the people of their smallness in regard to the state, a reminder to the executioners of the omnipotence of their chief," in the worlds of Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot, expressing the logic of the Duvalierists, Papa Doc and Baby Doc, who ruled with brutal violence for 30 years.[49]

In the markets and slums below, it is barely possible to make one's way down alleys of mud and filth through teeming masses of people clad in rags. Women struggle past with huge burdens on their heads, children try to sell any miserable object, an occasional cart is dragged through mud that is inches deep and puddles left by recent rains. Flies swarm over a handful of vegetables and what might pass for fish. Peasants who have trudged down from the mountains on ancient trails sit by their paltry offerings, sleeping in the relics of shacks that line the alleys. In the depths of Third World poverty, one rarely finds a scene so noxious and depressing.

When I visited briefly a year ago, before the renewed terror, some people in the marketplace were willing to speak in the presence of a translator who was known and trusted, but only in circumlocution. The eyes of the security forces are everywhere, they intimated by their gestures more than their words. These were uniform: hunger, no work, no hope — unless, somehow, President Aristide returns, though few dare to articulate the phrase beyond hints and nods. Some do, with remarkable courage, even after police torture and the threat of worse. It is not easy to believe that such courage can long survive, even if the people do.

U.S. relations with Haiti are not a thing of yesterday, and show no sign of fundamental change. They go back 200 years, to the days when the Republic that had just won its independence from Britain joined the imperial powers in their campaign to quell Haiti's slave rebellion by violence. When the rebellion nevertheless succeeded, the U.S. exceeded all others in the harshness of its reaction, refusing to recognize Haiti until 1862, in the context of the American civil war. At that moment, Haiti was important for its strategic location and as a possible dumping ground for freed slaves; Liberia was recognized in the same year, for the same reasons. Haiti then became a plaything for U.S.-European power politics, with numerous U.S. interventions culminating in Woodrow Wilson's invasion of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, where his warriors — as viciously racist as the Administration in Washington — murdered and destroyed, reinstituted virtual slavery, dismantled the constitutional system because the backward Haitians could not see

[48] Much of what follows appears in my introduction to Paul Farmer, The Uses of Haiti (Common Courage, 1994), a rich and informative analysis of what is happening and its backgrounds. For further discussion and sources, see also my Year 501, chaps. 8–9.

[49] Haiti: State against Nation (Monthly Review, 1990).

the merits of turning their country into a U.S. plantation, and established the National Guards that held both countries in their grip after the Marines finally left.

Wilson's thuggery has entered history in two different versions: here and there. In the U.S., the events figure in the amusing reconstructions entitled "history" as an illustration of U.S. "humanitarian intervention" and its difficulties (for us). Haitians have somewhat different memories. "Most observers agree that the achievements of the occupation were minor; they disagree only as to the amount of damage it inflicted," Trouillot writes under the heading "unhealed sores." The damage included the acceleration of Haiti's economic, military, and political centralization, its economic dependence and sharp class divisions, the vicious exploitation of the peasantry, the internal racial conflicts much intensified by the extreme racism of the occupying forces, and perhaps worst of all, the establishment of "an army to fight the people." "The 1915–1934 U.S. occupation of Haiti," he writes, "left the country with two poisoned gifts: a weaker civil society and a solidified state apparatus.[50]

A year ago, after enduring almost two years of renewed state violence, grassroots organizations, priests in hiding, tortured labor leaders, and others suffering bitterly from the violence of the security forces expressed marked opposition to the plan to dispatch 500 UN police to the terrorized country, seeing them as a cover for a U.S. intervention that evokes bitter memories of the Marine occupation. If ever noted, such reactions may be attributed to the fact that "even a benevolent occupation creates resistance…among the beneficiaries" (Harvard historian David Landes, writing about the Marine occupation). Or to the deficiencies of people who need only a new culture and more kind tutelage of the kind he provided as director of the USAID mission in 1977–79, Lawrence Harrison writes in a "think piece" on Haiti's problems in which the U.S. military occupation merits only the words: "And some of the Marines abused their power."[51]

Poor and suffering people do not have the luxury of indulging in fairy tales. Not uncommonly, their own experience gives them a grasp of realities that are well concealed by the intellectual culture. The usual victims can not so easily dismiss the record of U.S. power, which leaves little doubt that U.S. military intervention in Haiti would be the death knell for any form of democracy that "risks upsetting the traditional structures of power with which the United States has long been allied." Haitians who have lost all hope for restoration of democracy might support a military intervention that could, perhaps, reduce terror and torture. But that is the most that can be realistically expected.

The military occupation left the island under U.S. control and largely U.S.-owned. The killer and torturer Trujillo took over the Dominican Republic, remaining a great friend until he began to get out of hand in the 1950s. In Haiti, Washington reacted with some ambivalence to the murderous and brutal dictatorship of "Papa Doc" Francois Duvalier, finding him a bit too independent for its taste. Nevertheless, Kennedy provided him with military assistance, in line with his general program of establishing firm U.S. control over the hemisphere's military and police as they undertook the task of "internal security" that he assigned them in a historic 1962 decision. Kennedy also provided aid for the Francois Duvalier International Airport in exchange for the Haitian vote to expel Cuba from the OAS. When "Baby Doc" Jean-Claude took over in 1971, relations rapidly improved, and Haiti became another "darling" of the business community, along

[50] Ibid.; NACLA Report on the Americas, Jan/Feb. 1994.

[51] Haiti Info, May 23, 1993. Personal interviews, Port-au-Prince, June 1993. Harrison, "Voodoo Politics," Atlantic Monthly, June 1993. For some comments, see Farmer, op. cit.; his letter in response was refused publication.

with Brazil under the neo-Nazi generals and other right-thinking folk. USAID undertook to turn Haiti into the "Taiwan of the Caribbean," forecasting "a historic change toward deeper market interdependence with the United States," Trouillot observes. U.S. taxpayers funded projects to establish assembly plants that would exploit such advantages as enormous unemployment (thanks in part to USAID policies emphasizing agroexport) and a workforce — mainly women, as elsewhere considered more docile — with wages of 14 cents an hour, no unions, ample terror, and the other usual amenities. The consequences were profits for U.S. corporations and their Haitian associates, and a decline of 56% in wages in the 1980s. In short, if not Taiwan exactly, Haiti was an "economic miracle" of the usual sort.

Haiti offered the Reaganites yet another opportunity to reveal their understanding of democracy enhancement in June 1985, when its legislature unanimously adopted a new law requiring that every political party must recognize President-for-Life Jean-Claude Duvalier as the supreme arbiter of the nation, outlawing the Christian Democrats, and granting the government the right to suspend the rights of any party without reasons. The law was ratified by a majority of 99.98%. Washington was deeply impressed, as much so as it was when Mussolini won 99% of the vote in the March 1934 election, leading Roosevelt's State Department to conclude that the results "demonstrate incontestably the popularity of the Fascist regime" and of "that admirable Italian gentleman" who ran it, as Roosevelt described the dictator. These are among the many interesting facts that might be recalled as neo-Fascists now take their place openly in the political system that was reconstructed with their interests in mind as Italy was liberated by American forces 50 years ago. Curiously, all this escaped attention during the D-Day anniversary extravaganza, along with much else that is too enlightening.

The 1985 steps to enhance democracy in Haiti were "an encouraging step forward," the U.S. Ambassador informed his guests at a July 4 celebration. The Reagan Administration certified to Congress that "democratic development" was progressing, so that military and economic aid could continue to flow — mainly into the pockets of Baby Doc and his entourage. It also informed Congress that the human rights situation was improving, as it was at the time in El Salvador and Guatemala, and today in Colombia, and quite generally when some client regime requires military aid for "internal security." The House Foreign Affairs Committee, controlled by Democrats, had given its approval in advance, calling on Reagan "to maintain friendly relations with Duvalier's non-Communist government."

To justify their perception of an "encouraging step forward" in "democratic development," the Reaganites could have recalled the vote held under Woodrow Wilson's rule after he had disbanded the Haitian parliament in punishment for its refusal to turn Haiti over to American corporations under a new U.S.-designed Constitution. Wilson's Marines organized a plebiscite in which the Constitution was ratified by a 99.9% vote, with 5% of the population participating, using "rather high handed methods to get the Constitution adopted by the people of Haiti," the State Department conceded a decade later. Baby Doc, in contrast, allowed a much broader franchise, though it is true that he demanded a slightly higher degree of acquiescence than Wilsonian idealists, Mussolini, and New Dealers. A case could be made, then, that the lessons in democracy that Washington had been laboring to impart were finally sinking in.

These gratifying developments were short-lived, however. By December 1985, popular protests were straining the resources of state terror. What happened next was described by the Wall Street Journal with engaging frankness: after "huge demonstrations," the White House concluded "that the regime was unraveling" and that "Haiti's ruling inner circle had lost faith in" its favored

democrat, Baby Doc. "As a result, U.S. officials, including Secretary of State George Shultz, began openly calling for a 'democratic process' in Haiti." Small wonder that Shultz is so praised for his commitment to democracy and other noble traits.

The meaning of this call for democracy was underscored by the scenario then unfolding in the Philippines, where the army and elite made it clear they would no longer support another gangster for whom Reagan and Bush had expressed their admiration, even "love," not long before, so that the White House "began openly calling for a 'democratic process'" there as well. Both events accordingly enter the canon as a demonstration of how we "served as inspiration for the triumph of democracy in our time" in those wondrous years (New Republic).

Washington lent its support to the post-Duvalier National Council of Government (CNG), providing $2.8 million in military aid in its first year, while the CNG, "generously helped by the U.S. taxpayer's money, had openly gunned down more civilians than Jean-Claude Duvalier's government had done in fifteen years" (Trouillot). After a series of coups and massacres, Reagan's Ambassador explained to Human Rights investigators that "I don't see any evidence of a policy against human rights"; there may be violence, it is true, but it is just "part of the culture." We can only watch in dismay and incomprehension.

Haitian violence thus falls into the same category as the atrocities in El Salvador at the same time, for example, the massacre at El Mozote, one of the many conducted by U.S.-trained elite battalions — and one of the few to be admitted to History, after exposure by the UN Truth Commission. Given their origins in U.S. planning, these routine atrocities must also be "part of the culture." Or perhaps "There is no one to blame except the gods of war," as Christopher Lehmann-Haupt of the New York Times observed, reviewing the "fair-minded" account by Mark Danner which "aptly denotes" the "horrifying incident" as "a central parable of the cold war" for which blame is shared equally by Salvadorans on all sides, murderers and victims alike. In contrast, atrocities organized and directed by the Soviet Union always seemed to have more determinable origins, for some reason.[52]

## 2. The Democratic Interlude

Haiti's happy ascent towards Taiwan was deflected unexpectedly in December 1990, when a real problem arose, unlike the terror and virtual enslavement of workers that are just "part of the culture." Washington made a serious error, allowing a free election in expectation of an easy victory for its candidate, Marc Bazin, a former World Bank official. To the surprise of outside observers, Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected with two-thirds of the vote (Bazin was second with 14%), backed by a popular movement, Lavalas, which had escaped the notice of the rich folk. Outside of properly educated circles, one question came to the fore at once: What would the U.S. and its clients do to remove this cancer?

President Aristide held office from February to September, when his government was overthrown by a military coup, plunging the country into even deeper barbarism than before. There are two versions of what happened in the interim. One is given by various extremists who see Aristide as the representative of a "remarkably advanced" array of grass-roots organizations (Lavalas) that gave the large majority of the population a "considerable voice in local affairs" and even in national politics (Americas Watch); and who were impressed by Aristide's domestic

[52] NYT, May 9, 1994.

policies as he "acted quickly to restore order to the government's finances" after taking power when "the economy was in an unprecedented state of disintegration" (Inter-American Development Bank). Other international lending agencies agreed, offering aid and endorsing Aristide's investment program. They were particularly impressed by the steps he took to reduce foreign debt and inflation, to raise foreign exchange reserves from near zero to $12 million, to increase government revenues with successful tax collection measures (reaching into the kleptocracy), to streamline the bloated government bureaucracy and eliminate fictitious positions in an anti-corruption campaign, to cut back contraband trade and improve customs, and to establish a responsible fiscal system.

These actions were "welcomed by the international financial community," the IADB noted, leading to "a substantial increase in assistance." Atrocities and flight of refugees also virtually ended; indeed the refugee flow reversed, as Haitians began to return to their country in its moment of hope. The U.S. Embassy in Haiti secretly acknowledged the facts. In a February 1991 State Department cable, declassified in 1994, the number two person in the Embassy, Vicky Huddleston, reported to Washington on "the surprisingly successful efforts of the Aristide government,…quickly reversed after the coup" (reported by Dennis Bernstein for Pacific News Service).[53]

Sophisticates in Washington and New York could understand that all of this is illusion. As Secretary of State Lansing had explained: "The experience of Liberia and Haiti show that the African race are devoid of any capacity for political organization and lack genius for government. Unquestionably there is an inherent tendency to revert to savagery and to cast aside the shackles of civilization which are irksome to their physical nature. Of course, there are many exceptions to this racial weakness, but it is true of the mass, as we know from experience in this country. It is that which makes the negro problem practically unsolvable."

A more acceptable version of Aristide's months in offices is offered by New York Times Haiti correspondent Howard French. He reported after the coup that Aristide had governed "with the aid of fear," leaning "heavily on Lavalas, an unstructured movement of affluent idealists and long-exiled leftists" whose model was China's Cultural Revolution. Aristide's power hunger led to "troubles with civil society." Furthermore, "Haitian political leaders and diplomats say, the growing climate of vigilantism as well as increasingly strident statements by Father Aristide blaming the wealthier classes for the poverty of the masses encouraged" the coup. "Although he retains much of the popular support that enabled him to win 67% of the popular vote in the country's December 1990 elections, Father Aristide was overthrown in part because of concerns among politically active people over his commitment to the Constitution, and growing fears of political and class-based violence, which many believe the President endorsed.[54]

Relation to fact aside, the analysis provides some lessons in Political Correctness. Two-thirds of the population and their organizations fall outside of "civil society." Those involved in the popular organizations and in local and national politics are not among the "politically active people." It is scandalous to tell the plain truth about the responsibility of the kleptocracy for "the poverty of the masses." "Fears of political and class-based violence" are limited to the months when such

[53] For extensive discussion, see Haiti After the Coup: Sweatshop or Real Development," National Labor Committee Education Fund (New York), April 1993, a report based on visits and research by U.S. labor union factfinders, entirely ignored in the mainstream. Bernstein, Pacific News Service, April 4–8, 1994.

[54] French, NYT, Oct. 22, 1991; Jan. 12, 1992.

violence sharply declined, its traditional perpetrators being unable, temporarily, to pursue their vocation.

These lessons should be remembered as Washington moves to construct a "civil society" and "democratic political order" for this "failed state" with its degenerate culture and people, quite incapable of governing themselves.

In reality, the two versions of what happened during the democratic interlude are closer than it may seem on the surface. The "remarkably advanced" array of popular organizations that brought the large majority of the population into the political arena is precisely what frightened Washington and the mainstream generally. They have a different understanding of "democracy" and "civil society," one that offers no place to popular organizations that allow the overwhelming majority a voice in managing their own affairs. By definition, the "political leaders" of such popular organizations have only "meager" democratic credentials, and can therefore be granted only symbolic participation in the "democratic institutions" that we will construct in accord with our traditional "prodemocracy policies." So the government and media have been instructing us since the coup removed the radical extremist Aristide and his Maoist clique.

These simple truths account for much of what has happened in Haiti since Aristide's election. Trouillot concludes his study by observing that "In Haiti, the peasantry is the nation." But for policymakers, the peasantry are worthless objects except insofar as they can advance corporate profits. They may produce food for export and enrich local affiliates of U.S. agribusiness, or flock to the city to provide super-cheap labor for assembly plants, but they have no further function. It is therefore entirely natural that USAID, while providing $100 million in assistance to the private sector, should never have provided a penny to the leading popular peasant organization, the Peasant Movement of Papaye (MPP); and that former USAID director Harrison should see no special problem when MPP members are massacred by the military forces and should dismiss with contempt its call for moves to reinstitute the popularly elected President who was committed to "bottom-up" rather than "top-down" democracy.

Similarly, it is hardly surprising that USAID should have denounced the labor reforms Aristide sought to institute and opposed his efforts to raise the minimum wage to a princely 37 cents an hour. Nor should we find it odd that USAID invested massively in the low wage assembly sector while wages sharply declined and working conditions fell to abysmal levels, but terminated all efforts to promote investment as the democratically elected government took office. Rather, USAID reacted to this catastrophe by dedicating itself still more firmly to providing the Haitian business community with what it called "technical assistance in labor relations, development of a business oriented public relations campaign, and intensified efforts to attract U.S. products assembly operations to Haiti." Given the unfortunate democratic deviation, USAID's task, in its own words, was to "work to develop sustainable dialogue between the government and the business community"; no comparable efforts for workers and peasants were needed when Haiti was run by U.S.-backed killers and torturers. All of this conforms well to USAID's conception of "processes of democratic institutional reform" as those that "further economic liberalization objectives.[55]

Similarly, there is no reason to be surprised that U.S. elites suddenly began to show a sensitive concern for human rights and democracy just as human rights violations precipitously declined and democracy (though not in the preferred "top-down" sense) began to flourish. Amy Wilentz observes that during Aristide's brief term, Washington suddenly became concerned with "hu-

[55] Haiti After the Coup.

man rights and the rule of law in Haiti." "During the four regimes that preceded Aristide," she writes, "international human-rights advocates and democratic observers had begged the State Department to consider helping the democratic opposition in Haiti. But no steps were taken by the United States to strengthen anything but the executive and the military until Aristide won the presidency. Then, all of a sudden, the United States began to think about how it could help those Haitians eager to limit the powers of the executive or to replace the government constitutionally." The State Department "Democracy Enhancement" project was "specifically designed to fund those sectors of the Haitian political spectrum where opposition to the Aristide government could be encouraged," precisely as "prodemocracy policies" dictate. The institutions and leaders that merited such support are just the ones that survived the military coup, also no surprise.[56]

### 3. After the Coup

Wilentz reports further that immediately after the September 30 coup, the State Department apparently "circulated a thick notebook filled with alleged human rights violations" under Aristide — "something it had not done under the previous rulers, Duvalierists and military men," who were deemed proper recipients for aid, including military aid, "based on unsubstantiated human-rights improvements." Toronto Star reporter Linda Diebel adds details. A "thick, bound dossier" on Aristide's alleged crimes was presented by the coup leader, General Cedras, to OAS negotiators. On October 3, U.S. Ambassador Alvin Adams summoned reporters from the New York Times, Washington Post, and other major U.S. journals to private meetings where he briefed them on these alleged crimes, reportedly presenting them with the "dossier" — which, we may learn some day, was compiled by U.S. intelligence and provided to its favorite generals. The Ambassador and his helpers began leaking the tales that have been used since to demonstrate Aristide's meager democratic credentials and his psychological disorders.[57]

The approved version is reflected by coverage of human rights abuses after the coup. As shown in a study by Boston Media Action, while the military were rampaging, the press focussed on abuses attributed to Aristide supporters, less than 1% of the total but the topic of 60% of the coverage in major journals during the two weeks following the coup, and over half of coverage in the New York Times through mid-1992. During the two-week period after the coup, Catherine Orenstein reports, the Times "spent over three times as many column inches discussing Aristide's alleged transgressions [as] it spent reporting on the ongoing military repression. Mass murders, executions, and tortures that were reported in human rights publications earned less than 4% of the space that the Times devoted to Haiti in those weeks." A week after the coup, the Washington Post accused Aristide of having organized his followers into "an instrument of real terror," ignoring the 75% reduction in human rights abuses during his term reported by human rights groups.[58]

While attention was directed to the really important topic of the "class-based violence" of Aristide and the popular movements, the U.S.-trained military and police were conducting their reign of terror, "ruthlessly suppressing Haiti's once diverse and vibrant civil society," Americas Watch reported. Though "Washington's capacity to curb attacks on civil society was tremendous, this

[56] Wilentz, Reconstruction, vol. 1.4 (1992).

[57] Diebel, Star, Oct. 10, 1991; Nov. 14, 1993.

[58] Boston Media Action report, distributed by Haiti Communications Project (Cambridge); Z magazine, March 1993. Orenstein, NACLA Report on the Americas, July/August 1993.

power was largely unexercised by the Bush administration," which "sought to convey an image of normalcy" while forcefully returning refugees. The terror is functional: it ensures that even if Aristide is permitted to return, "he would have difficulty transforming his personal popularity into the organized support needed to exert civilian authority," Americas Watch observed in early 1993, quoting priests and others who feared that the destruction of the popular social organizations that "gave people hope" had already undermined the great promise of Haiti's first democratic experiment.[59]

The coup and ensuing terror revived the flow of refugees that had lapsed under Aristide. The Bush Administration ordered the Coast Guard and Navy to force them back, or to imprison them in the U.S. military base in Guantanamo until a court order terminated the shocking practices there. During the presidential campaign, Clinton bitterly condemned these cruel policies. On taking over in January 1993, he at once tightened the noose, imposing a still harsher blockade. Forceful return of refugees continued in violation of international law and human rights conventions. Clinton's increased brutality proved to be a grand success. Refugee flow, which had reached over 30,000 in 1992, sharply declined under Clinton's ministrations, to about the level of 1989, before the sharp decline under Aristide.[60]

The official story is that these are "economic refugees," not victims of political persecution who would be eligible for asylum. The onset of poverty can be quite precisely dated: to the date of the coup. During Aristide's term, refugee flow was slight, skyrocketing after the coup though economic sanctions were minimal. These oddities are noted by the indispensable journal Haiti Info published in Port-au-Prince, in a discussion of a cable circulated to high officials by U.S. Ambassador William Swing. The 11-page cable, full of racist slanders, alleges that "the Haitian left manipulates and fabricates human rights abuses as a propaganda tool" and is "wittingly or unwittingly assisted in this effort" by human rights organizations and the civilian monitors of the UN and OAS missions; all "comsymps" in the terminology of an earlier day. The Embassy dismissed with a sneer the reports of "the sudden epidemic of rapes" on the grounds that "For a range of cultural reasons (not pleasant to contemplate), rape has never been considered or reported as a serious crime here." The testimony of a man that his wife was raped and that he was badly beaten under police custody, corroborated by a foreign nurse, is dismissed because he chose asylum in Canada (granted at once), avoiding the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) — a transparent admission of iniquity. Clinton's Embassy attributes problems in Haiti to "a high level of structural, or endemic, violence," which, again, is just "part of the culture." Like the poverty that causes refugee flight, the "structural" factors causing violence had an unexplained 8-month gap: during Aristide's tenure even his most vehement opponents, the USAID-supported "human rights" advocates who moved quickly into power after the coup, could compile only 25 cases of "mob violence" and four crimes that could be considered political, a tiny fraction of the terror before, not to speak of the atrocities that followed the coup.

Kenneth Roth, the director of Human Rights Watch, comments that the cable reveals the "extreme antipathy for Aristide" in the Embassy and its "willingness to play down human rights abuses to prevent a political momentum to build for [Aristide's] return." It "reflects a dislike and distrust of Aristide that has been widely felt in the Administration — though voiced only privately," Times correspondent Elaine Sciolino adds. In reality, the dislike is quite public and

[59] Americas Watch and National Coalition for Haitian Refugees, Silencing a People (Human Rights Watch, 1993).
[60] USA Today, March 2, 1994.

widely reported, along with the fact that it has sent a very clear message to the Haitian rulers, military and civilian.[61]

As the Embassy cable was released, an experienced INS asylum officer in Haiti went public with his charges that thousands of "egregious cases of persecution" were rejected by the Haitian INS office, where the "entire process" of asylum review "had been politicized" and under 1% of legitimate petitions were accepted by racist and contemptuous officials; similar accounts have been documented by human rights organizations, who have also denounced the very idea that petitioners should have to identify themselves to the murderers by appearing at the INS office. At the same time, a "Top Secret" memo of the U.S. Interests Section in Cuba was leaked. Addressed to the Secretary of State, the CIA, and the INS, the document complains about the lack of genuine claims of political persecution in Cuba, contrary to policy needs. The usual silence prevailed.[62]

Meanwhile refugees from Cuba receive royal treatment while Haitians are returned to terror. That is nothing new. Of the more than 24,000 Haitians intercepted by U.S. forces from 1981 to Aristide's takeover in 1991, 11 were granted asylum as victims of political persecution, in comparison with 75,000 out of 75,000 Cubans. In these years of terror, Washington allowed 28 asylum claims. During Aristide's tenure, with violence and repression radically reduced, 20 were allowed from a refugee pool perhaps 1/50$^{th}$ the scale. Practice returned to normal after the military coup and the renewed terror. As always, human rights are understood in purely instrumental terms: as a weapon to be selectively deployed for power interests, nothing more.

The democratically elected President will be acceptable to Washington and elite opinion generally only if he abandons his popular mandate, ceding effective power to the "moderates" in the business world. The "moderates" are those who do not favor slaughter and mutilation, preferring to see the population driven to agroexport and the low-wage assembly sector. They constitute "civil society," in the technical sense. Since the coup, the U.S. has demanded that Aristide agree to "broaden the government" in such a way as to place the "moderates" in power. Insofar as he refuses to transfer power into these proper hands, he is an "extremist" whom we can hardly support.

While these are the basic terms of respectable discourse, the spectrum is not entirely uniform. It ranges from the far right, which is honest and outspoken in its call for dismantling Haitian democracy, to the more nuanced versions of the liberal Democrats. Taking a stand in the middle, George Bush calls for abandoning Aristide because "he has become unreliable" and even "turned on our president the other day" (May 1994). Aristide should be dumped because his "undemocratic behavior…included fostering violence against his opponents," according to another noted pacifist who has distinguished himself particularly for his dedication to legality and democratic principle (Elliott Abrams).

Moving toward the liberal end, a Clinton official explained in the last days of 1993 that "We're not talking about dumping Aristide or about military power-sharing. But we have two adversaries who don't want to compromise and we have to find enough of a middle to make a functioning democracy," marginalizing the extremists on both sides. The elected President should be "restored to power, at least nominally," World Peace Foundation president and historian Robert Rotberg added; but also at most nominally, as all understand. The Washington director of the Inter-American Dialogue, Peter Hakim, urged in May 1994 that "the US ought to separate out

[61] Haiti Info, May 21; Sciolino, May 9, 1994.

[62] Dennis Bernstein, Pacific News Service, April 4; Cuba Action, Spring 1994.

the notion of protecting human rights, and reestablishing some semblance of society in Haiti, from restoring Aristide to power." "So it is only honest for the United States to tell Father Aristide that he has little hope of returning to power without making large political compromises," as the Times editors phrased the common understanding a few weeks later. In short, the traditional "prodemocracy policies."[63] The basic idea was outlined by Secretary of State Warren Christopher during his confirmation hearings. Christopher "expressed support for Father Aristide," Elaine Sciolino reported, "but stopped short of calling for his reinstatement as President. 'There is no question in my mind that because of the election, he has to be part of the solution to this,' Mr. Christopher said. 'I don't have a precise system worked out in my mind as to how he would be part of the solution, but certainly he cannot be ignored in the matter'.[64] With this ringing endorsement of democracy, the Clinton Administration took charge.

Across the spectrum, it is taken for granted that we have both the right and the competence to "establish some semblance of society" in Haiti, whose people are so retrograde as to have developed a "remarkably advanced" array of grass-roots organizations that gave the majority of the population a place in the public arena. Plainly, they desperately need our tutelage.

## 4. The Clinton Compromise

To much acclaim, Washington finally succeeded in compelling Aristide to transfer authority to the "moderates." Under severe pressure, in July 1993 the Haitian President accepted the U.S.-UN terms for settlement, which were to allow him to return four months later in a "compromise" with the gangsters and killers. He agreed to appoint as Prime Minister a businessman from the traditional mulatto elite, Robert Malval, who is "known to be opposed to the populist policies during Aristide's seven months in power," the press announced with relief, noting that he is "generally well regarded by the business community," "respected by many businessmen who supported the coup that ousted the President," and seen as "a reassuring choice" by coup-supporters.

Shortly after these happy developments took place, UN/OAS observers reported, with little notice, that they were "very concerned that there is no perceptible lessening of human rights violations," and a few weeks later, reported an increase in "arbitrary executions and suspicious deaths" in the weeks following the UN-brokered accord, over one a day in the Port-au-Prince area alone; "the mission said that many of the victims were members of popular organizations and neighborhood associations and that some of the killers were police," wire services reported.[65]

Expected to be a transitional figure, Malval resigned at the year's end. His presence did, however, serve a useful role for Washington and its media, diverting attention to a "political settlement" while attacks on the popular organizations and general terror mounted, Aristide's promised return was blocked, and new initiatives were put forth to transfer power to traditional power centers ("broadening the government"). Malval's presence also offered the press a great method to bring out Aristide's unreasonable intransigence. He couldn't even come to terms with "his handpicked Prime Minister," a phrase that ritually accompanied the name "Robert Malval." In a typical exercise, Howard French opened a report of Malval's resignation by writing: "Three days after formally resigning, the handpicked Prime Minister of Haiti's exiled President

[63] Bush, John Laidler, BG, May 13; Abrams, WSJ, May 6, 1994. Pamela Constable, BG, Dec. 25; Rotberg, BG, Dec. 29, 1993. Peter Grier, CSM, May 6; NYT, Feb. 21, 1994.

[64] NYT, Jan. 15, 1993.

[65] AP, BG, July 18, 27; NYT, July 26; Reuters, BG, July 27; Reuters, BG, Aug. 12, 1993.

lashed out this weekend at the man who appointed him" — hammering home the message in the fashion that became so routine as to be comical. Malval described Aristide as an "erratic figure" with a "serious ego problem," French continued, referring to his commitment to restore the democratically-elected government.[66]

As the date for Aristide's scheduled October 30 return approached, atrocities mounted high enough to gain some attention, though no action. Amidst reports of "terrifying stories" of terror, murder, and threats to exterminate all members of the popular organizations, the Clinton Administration announced that the UN Mission "will rely on the Haitian military and police to maintain order" — that is, on the killers. "It is not a peacekeeping role," Secretary of Defense Aspin explained: "We are doing something other than peacekeeping here." Meanwhile, the press emphasized the concerns of U.S. officials that Aristide "isn't moving strongly to restore democratic rights," from his exile in Washington. "Even as the situation has grown worse, foreign diplomats have increasingly blamed Father Aristide for what they say is his failure to take constructive initiatives," Howard French wrote, using the standard device to disguise propaganda as reporting.[67]

The stage was set for ignoring the October deadline, as the U.S. stood helplessly by, unable to bring the uncompromising and violent extremists on both sides to accept "democracy."

Reviewing these mid-1993 developments, Ian Martin, who directed the OAS/UN mission from April through December 1993, writes that one basic problem was U.S. insistence on adding "a mostly American military component to the negotiators' proposals." Aristide's call for reducing the Haitian army to 1000 men was rejected. "The Haitian high command, for its part, sought U.S. assistance to ensure the army's future." The generals trusted the U.S. and "mistrusted the U.N. and the proposal for the Canadians and French, both more committed supporters of Aristide than the United States, to take the lead in the police contingent. The U.S. hoped to preserve the military — an institution it had often assisted and in fact had created for purposes of internal control during the American occupation of 1915–34." Haitian army "resistance was encouraged whenever they perceived that the United States, despite its rhetoric of democracy, was ambivalent about that power shift" to the popular elements represented by Aristide. There was no shortage of such occasions.

The crucial signal, Martin and others agree, came on October 11, when the USS Harlan County was scheduled to disembark U.S. and Canadian troops at Port-au-Prince. The military organized "a hostile demonstration of armed thugs," Martin observes, and "instead of waiting in the harbor while the Haitian military was pressured to ensure a safe landing, the Harlan County turned tail for Guantanamo Bay," leaving officials of the UN/OAS mission "aghast"; they "had been neither consulted nor informed of the decision by President Bill Clinton's National Security Council to retreat." "The organizers of the Haitian protest could hardly believe their success," Martin continues. The leader of the paramilitary organization FRAPH, responsible for much of the terror, said that "My people kept wanting to run away, but I took the gamble and urged them to stay. Then the Americans pulled out! We were astonished. That was the day FRAPH was actually born. Before, everyone said we were crazy, suicidal, that we would all be burned if Aristide returned. But now we know he is never going to return." The military got the message too, loud and clear.

[66] NYT, Dec. 20, 1993.

[67] Pamela Constable, BG, Oct. 1; Steven Holmes, NYT, Oct. 1; WSJ, Oct. 1; Howard French, NYT, Sept. 22, 1993.

Perhaps they were even notified in advance. New York Daily News correspondent Juan Gonzalez learned of the October 11 port demonstration the day before at a Duvalierist meeting attended by U.S. Embassy personnel. The following day, he asked in print: "How can two Daily News reporters who have only visited Haiti on a few occasions learn beforehand of secret plans to sabotage the landing of our troops, while our vaunted officialdom claims it was caught flat-footed?" How indeed.

Another possible line of communication is suggested in a report by Father Antoine Adrien, former head of Aristide's religious order in Haiti and a close associate. Just before the ship "turned tail," he informed the Catholic Church press that Haitian military officers had not only attended training school in Fort Benning, Ga., in 1992, but that "some were there as recently as the previous week" — October 1993. "How are you going to tell those people they have no backing in the United States?," Father Adrien asked. That Haitian army officers received training in the U.S. after the coup was confirmed in an internal Pentagon document, including eight officers who started courses in early 1992. The program they joined is designed to expose "future leaders of foreign defense establishments" to "American values, regard for human rights and democratic institutions," according to the Defense Secretary's report to the President for 1993. Earlier graduates include the leading killers in Haiti, Central America, and elsewhere.

What lay behind the decision to turn tail was explained by Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Walter Slocombe, who "boasted at a cocktail party that by turning back the U.S.S. Harlan County, he had helped save the United States from a 'small war'," the Times reported six months later: "He vowed that the Pentagon would not risk American soldiers' lives to put 'that psychopath' back in power."[68]

While messages were coming through to the military, the Haitian people were deprived of the one voice they longed to hear. "Senior Clinton administration officials are embroiled in a fight over whether to allow…Aristide to broadcast into the junta-ruled country using airborne U.S. military transmitters," Paul Quinn-Judge reported in May 1994. The USIA is opposed, fearing that "the plan may violate international law," always a prime concern in Washington. USIA was also concerned that such broadcasts "would provide Aristide with an uncomfortably direct means to communicate with Haitians, who elected him by an overwhelming margin in 1990." His oratory has been known to "create problems," a classifed USIA memorandum of May 23 noted, asking whether "we wish to have the responsibility for having given him the means to broadcast whatever he chooses to Haiti." He might even challenge the U.S. publicly "the first time we refuse to air something." It wouldn't even suffice to have him submit his scripts in advance, because of the "highly nuanced language and context" of a radio broadcast; who knows what thoughts this devious creature might convey by his tone of voice? "Debate over the idea…underscores the continuing ambivalence and nervousness with which some senior officials view Aristide," Quinn-Judge observed.[69]

After the military coup, the OAS instituted a toothless embargo, which the Bush Administration reluctantly joined, while making clear that it was not to be taken seriously. The reasons were explained a year later by Howard French: "Washington's deep-seated ambivalence about a leftward-tilting nationalist whose style diplomats say has sometimes been disquietingly erratic"

[68] Martin, Foreign Policy, Summer 1994. Gonzalez, NYDN, Oct. 12, cited by Kim Ives, NACLA Report on the Americas, Jan./Feb., 1994. Patricia Zapor, Birmingham Catholic Press, Oct. 15, 1993; Paul Quinn-Judge, BG, Dec. 6, 1993. Elaine Sciolino, et al., NYT, April 29, 1994.

[69] BG, May 28, 1994.

precludes any meaningful support for sanctions against the military rulers. "Despite much blood on the army's hands, United States diplomats consider it a vital counterweight to Father Aristide, whose class-struggle rhetoric…threatened or antagonized traditional power centers at home and abroad." Aristide's "call for punishment of the military leadership" that had slaughtered and tortured thousands of people "reinforced a view of him as an inflexible and vindictive crusader," and heightened Washington's "antipathy" towards the "clumsy" and "erratic" extremist who has aroused great "anger" because of "his tendency toward ingratitude."[70]

The "vital counterweight" is therefore to hold total power while the "leftward tilting nationalist" remains in exile, awaiting the "eventual return" that Bill Clinton promised on the eve of his inauguration. Meanwhile, the "traditional power centers" in Haiti and the U.S. will carry on with class struggle as usual, employing such terror as may be needed in order for plunder to proceed unhampered. And as the London Financial Times added at the same time, Washington was proving oddly ineffective in detecting the "lucrative use of the country in the transhipment of narcotics" by which "the military is funding its oil and other necessary imports," financing the necessary terror and rapacity — though U.S. forces seem able to find every fishing boat carrying miserable refugees. Nor had Washington figured out a way to freeze the assets of "civil society" or to hinder their shopping trips to Miami and New York, or to induce its Dominican clients to monitor the border to impede the flow of goods that takes care of the wants of "civil society" while the embargo remains "at best, sieve-like."[71]

Meanwhile Washington continued to provide Haitian military leaders with intelligence on narcotics trafficking — which they naturally used to expedite their activities and tighten their grip on power. It is not easy to intercept narcotraffickers, the press explained, because "Haiti has no radar," and evidently the U.S. Navy and Air Force lack the means to remedy this deficiency.[72]

Under Clinton, matters only got worse. An April 1994 report of Human Rights Watch/Americas documents the increasing terror and State Department apologetics and evasions, condemning the Administration for having "embraced a murderous armed force as a counterweight to a populist president it distrusts."

On February 4, 1992, the Bush Administration lifted the embargo for assembly plants, "under heavy pressure from American businesses with interests in Haiti," the Washington Post reported, with its editorial endorsement; the lobbying effort was assisted by Elliott Abrams, Human Rights Watch noted. For January-October 1992, U.S. trade with Haiti came to $265 million, according to the Department of Commerce.[73]

As Clinton took over, the embargo became still more porous. The Dominican border was left wide open. Meanwhile, U.S. companies continued to be exempted from the embargo — so as to ease its effects on the population, the Administration announced with a straight face; only exemptions for U.S. firms have this curious feature. There were many heartfelt laments about the suffering of poor Haitians under the embargo, but one had to turn to the underground press in Haiti, the alternative media here, or an occasional letter to learn that the major peasant orga-

[70] French, NYT, Sept. 27; Oct. 8, 1992.

[71] Canute James, FT, Dec. 10, 1992.

[72] Douglas Farah, WP weekly, Nov. 1–7, 1993.

[73] HRW and National Coalition for Haitian Refugees, Terror Prevails in Haiti, April 1994. WP weekly, Feb. 17, 10, 1992 (Lee Hockstader, editorial). See my "Class Struggle as Usual," Letters from Lexington (Common Courage, 1993); reprinted from Lies of Our Times, March 1993.

nization (MPP), church coalitions, labor organizations, and the National Federation of Haitian Students continued to call for a real embargo.[74]

Curiously, some of those most distressed by the impact of the embargo on the Haitian poor were the most forceful advocates of a still harsher embargo on Cuba, notably liberal Democrat Robert Torricelli, author of the stepped-up embargo that the Bush Administration accepted under pressure from the Clintonites. Evidently, hunger causes no pain to Cuban children, another oddity that passed unnoticed, along with the U.S.-Haiti trade figures.

Clinton's tinkering with the embargo also passed without comment here, though the facts are known, and occasionally even leak through, as in a tiny Feb. 13 Reuters dispatch in the New York Times reporting efforts of human rights advocates to convince the President to observe the embargo. "US imports from Haiti rose by more than half last year [1993]," the Financial Times reported in London, "thanks in part to an exemption granted by the US Treasury for imports of goods assembled in Haiti from US parts." U.S. exports to Haiti also rose in 1993. Exports from Haiti to the United States included food (fruits and nuts, citrus fruit or melons) from the starving country, which increased by a factor of 35 from January-July 1992 to January-July 1993. The federal government was among the purchasers of the baseballs imported from Haiti (duty free), stitched by women who work 11 hour days with a half-hour break in unbearable heat without running water or a working toilet, for 10 cents an hour if they can meet the quota (few can), using toxic materials without protection so that the U.S. importer can advertise proudly that their softballs are "hand-dipped for maximum bonding." The manufacturers are the wealthy Haitian families who supported the coup and have gained new riches during the embargo, along with others profiting handsomely from the black market, such as the fuel supplier for the U.S. embassy. The "assembly zone" loophole, criticized by U.S. labor unions and at the UN Security Council by France and Canada in January, was extended by the Clinton Administration on April 25, 1994, four days after announcing that it would seek to tighten UN sanctions; the latter announcement was reported. On the same day, the U.S. Coast Guard returned 98 refugees to military authorities, 18 of them at once arrested.

"The Clinton administration still formally declares its support for Mr Aristide, but scarcely disguises its wish for a leader more accommodating to the military," the Financial Times reported, while "European diplomats in Washington are scathing in their comments on what they see as the US's abdication of leadership over Haiti."[75]

In his January 1994 testimony to Congress on "Threats to the U.S. and Its Interests Abroad," the Director of the CIA predicted that Haiti "probably will be out of fuel and power very shortly." "Our intelligence efforts are focused on detecting attempts to circumvent the embargo and monitoring its impact," and "any indication of an imminent exodus." The "Threats to the U.S." were contained with the usual selectivity and skill. "Exodus" from the charnel house was effectively blocked, while the press reported an "oil boom" as "diplomats expressed amazement at the extent of the

[74] Eyal Press and Jennifer Washburn, letters, NYT, March 3, 1994.

[75] Reuters, NYT, Feb. 14; George Graham, FT, Feb. 20, 1994. Report of National Labor Committee Education Fund, Feb. 15; April 1994. See Charles Kernaghan, Multinational Monitor, March 1994; Counterpunch (IPS), April 1, 1994. Haiti Progres, April 27-May 3, 1994. Oil, Douglas Farah, WP weekly, May 30, 1994. Note that the trade increases are not attributable to the rescinding of the embargo from July to October 1993.

trafficking" organized by the Haitian and Dominican armies, and the former assured reporters that "The military is not concerned about fuel shortages; it has plenty.[76]

The Clinton Administration has scarcely departed from the prescriptions outlined by the Washington Post and New York Times as it came into office.[77] The preferred solution, John Goshko explained in the Post, would "delay indefinitely" the return to Haiti of the "radical priest with anti-American leanings" whose "strident populism led the Haitian armed forces to seize power," and would "allow Bazin or some other prime minister to govern in his place." Bazin was then prime minister under army rule, but was having problems, because although "well-known and well-regarded in the United States," unfortunately "the masses in Haiti consider him a front man for military and business interests." A replacement would therefore be needed to represent the interests of the moderates. In the Times, Howard French indicated the scale of the required delay: "In the past, diplomats have said the Haitian President could return only after a substantial interim period during which the country's economy was revived and all its institutions, from the army itself to the judiciary to health care and education, were stabilized." That should overcome the danger of Aristide's "personalist and electoralist politics." But unfortunately, the troublesome priest has been recalcitrant: "Father Aristide and many of his supporters have held out for a quick return," undermining the moderate course.

As understood on all sides, the "delay" need not be too long. Aristide's term ends in 1996, and he is barred from running again. By then military terror should have sufficiently intimidated the population and demolished popular organizations so that "free elections" can be tolerated, as in the Central American terror states, without too much fear of any threat to "civil society" from the rabble.

## 5. The May 1994 Reversal

Plans proceeded on course into early 1994. By then, the cynicism and brutality of U.S. policy had become too blatant for the usual cover-up, particularly after Clinton's point man Lawrence Pezzullo revealed in congressional testimony that the plan that the Administration had touted as the product of negotiations among Haitian democrats, denouncing Aristide for his intransigence in rejecting it (it made no provision for his return), had in fact been produced by the State Department, which brought to Washington selected Haitians to ratify it, among them Duvalierist collaborators of the murderous police chief Col. Francois. Something new was needed.

Pezzullo was replaced by William Gray, a more credible voice. In May Clinton instituted a new and more humane refugee policy, which "will mean the forcible return of 95 percent of boat people instead of 100 percent," a Human Rights Watch Haiti analyst observed, pointing out that "The US policy excludes people who are not high profile but are persecuted nonetheless." The new policy is just "window dressing," the national refugee coordinator of Amnesty International added.

But 5% of the boat people fleeing persecution is beyond what the United States can be expected to handle. It will "devastate Florida," a Republican congressional staff member complained. Explaining a few days later why the U.S. might have to invade, "Mr. Clinton saved his strongest warning for what he described as 'the continuous possibility' that Haitians left poor and desper-

[76] Opening Statement, Director of Central Intelligence, U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Jan. 25, 1994. Howard French, NYT, Feb. 14, March 13, 1994.

[77] WP, Dec. 20, 1992; NYT, Jan. 9, 1993.

ate under military rule would join in a 'massive outflow' and seek refuge in the United States," the Times reported; the terms "poor and desperate" convey the doctrine that these are economic refugees. Overcrowded and destitute, the United States plainly cannot bear the burden of accepting refugees or even housing them until their claims of persecution are rejected; and surely it has no historical responsibilities in the matter. The President piteously pleaded with other countries to help us in our plight.[78]

Curiously, the anguished debate over this issue missed the obvious candidate: Tanzania, which had just then accommodated hundreds of thousands of Rwandans, and could surely come to the rescue of the beleaguered United States by accepting a few thousand more black faces.

On May 21, an embargo was announced which, for the first time, may have some serious intent. The "assembly plant" exemption was quietly removed, and the Dominican border was (at least briefly) closed. The long-known involvement of the Haitian military in narcotrafficking was also officially reported. "We're not going to say, 'Let the masses and the middle class suffer, but the very wealthy don't have to pay a price," a senior Administration official stated. "Even Wealthy Haitians Starting to Feel Pinched," a Times headline read, again letting out the real story of the efforts to "restore democracy" during the 2 1/2 years since the coup. Government statements and press reports tacitly conceded what had always been clear: that the U.S. has the means, far short of military intervention, to restore democracy in Haiti, but had no intention of doing so, and still does not. What has always been required is a clear declaration of intent to restore democracy, but that cannot be given, because there is no such intent. The military and their civilian allies understand that perfectly well.

In the following weeks, the U.S. banned commercial air flights and financial transactions, while leaving crucial loopholes open. Personal assets of the coup supporters were not frozen, so they can withdraw funds from U.S. bank accounts at will and transfer money to banks abroad, Administration officials acknowledged — a matter that may be academic, the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Kweisi Mfume, observed, since "the dictators of Haiti have long ago moved their assets in anticipation of this." The sanctions also permit the families that have long dominated the economy to hold on to the monopoly of the food trade that is a major source of their wealth, including the Mevs family, which is building "a huge new oil depot here to help the army defy the embargo," French reported, adding that "Washington's hesitancy in taking firm action against the business elite and the army is a result of a long history of close ties and perceived common interests," if not fear of "a spate of embarrassing revelations made by Haitians in reprisal for a crackdown."

After sanctions were finally imposed in May 1994, a U.S. diplomat conceded that the continuing failure to move against the richest families has left "a perception out there of sending mixed messages and having double agendas." Other diplomats and Haitian experts agree that the decision not to target key civilian supporters of the coup is yet another mixed signal, noting particularly the relief granted the Mev, Brandt, Acra and Madsen families, who "still have a role to play," a U.S. Embassy source informed the press, though they have made no effort to disguise their support for the coup. Washington is "imposing sanctions designed to strangle the country into restoring Aristide at the same time they are telling the people who backed the coup and are in business with the military in keeping Aristide out that they are free to lead their privileged lives," another diplomat said. Haitian Senators who lead the anti-Aristide movement were not denied their per-

[78] Peter Grier, CSM, May 16; Douglas Jehl, NYT, 1994.

manent U.S. resident status, including Bernard Sansaricq, who played a leading role in installing the puppet civilian government with its new "president" Emile Jonassaint, appointed to replace Aristide.[79]

Meanwhile, the serious work of undermining the basis for democracy continues unhampered. By the time Clinton took office, as Americas Watch reported, the terror had already decimated the popular organizations that would allow Aristide "to exert civilian authority," even if he were eventually permitted to return. As Clinton finally agreed to sanctions 16 months later, Douglas Farah reported in the Washington Post that "the army and its allies have damaged democratic institutions and grass-roots organizations that had begun to grow in Haiti to such an extent that they would take years to rebuild even if Haiti's military leaders surrendered power, according to diplomats and human rights monitors." "The Duvalierist system will continue, with or without the return of Aristide," the leader of a now-clandestine pro-Aristide group said, a judgment endorsed by "a veteran human rights worker" who prefers anonymity "because of numerous threats against his life." "The Duvialierists have many fine days ahead of them in this country," he said: "People are losing their ability to make things happen here, and it will take many years to reverse that under the best of circumstances." Even nonpolitical community organizations have been repressed, thousands of community leaders have been driven into hiding along with hundreds of thousands of others, while over 4000 have been murdered outright. The "massive terrorism," Farah reports, is "aimed at dismantling the last vestiges of organized support" for Aristide, while the civilian allies of the army and police in FRAPH have "become a very efficient machine of repression," which will remain the only authority even if Aristide were to return, the same human rights worker comments. Members of the popular organizations interviewed in hiding have "applied for political asylum at the U.S. Embassy and been denied.[80]

To ensure a smooth transition to the intended post-coup system, with the "moderates" in charge and the Duvalierists preserving order, FRAPH and USAID-funded groups linked to it are establishing a monopoly of social services, so that "the poor who are compliant and docile get health services," a Haitian doctor explains. This is the "soft side" of counterinsurgency, on the model of Guatemala and other terror states. Meanwhile we are to ponder the question of whether Haitians "can muster the maturity and cohesiveness to forge a working democracy" (Howard French), or whether we must labor for decades in a (perhaps vain) effort to overcome the defects — cultural, if not genetic — that had been discerned by Wilson's Secretary of State and Carter's USAID director in Haiti.[81]

As the Bush Administration prepared to hand over the reins, a senior UN official observed that its dislike of Aristide was an open secret: "Two lines about Haiti co-existed at the time. There was the line about 'return to democracy,' which was for public consumption. And then there was a second line, spoken privately within the administration. And the Haitian military knew it perfectly well." A year later, after the Harlan County affair gave birth to FRAPH, a French military adviser updated the picture: "Do you know what the real problem is? The Americans don't want

[79] Drugs, Tim Weiner, NYT, April 22; Howard French, NYT, June 8, 1994. Stephen Greenhouse, French, NYT, June 11, May 25; Pamela Constable, BG, June 11; Kenneth Freed, LA Times, May 25, 1994.

[80] WP weekly, April 25, May 16, 1994.

[81] NACLA, Observers Delegation report, Jan. 1994; Report on the Americas, Mar/April 1994; Haiti News Digest (Haiti Communications Project, Boston), May 1994. French, NYT, June 6, 1994.

Aristide back, and they want the rest of us out" — "the rest of us" being Canada, France and Venezuela, the other three of "Aristide's so-called Four Friends."[82]

That this judgment is exactly right has been apparent throughout. It should be clear, however, that the issue is not Aristide personally. The problem is the forces he represents: the lively and vibrant popular movements that swept him into office, greatly alarming the rich and powerful in Haiti and their American counterparts, and teaching lessons in democracy that have to be silenced, for who can tell what minds they might reach?

[82] Kate Doyle, World Policy Journal, Spring 1994; Linda Diebel, Toronto Star, Nov. 14, 1993.

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