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## Haiti

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# Bush, OAS insist communist be premier

by Carlos Wesley

Ousted Haitian dictator Jean-Bertrand Aristide agreed to demands from the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United States, that Haiti's Communist Party chief René Theodore be appointed compromise prime minister. The agreement was announced by OAS special negotiator Augusto Ramírez Ocampo in a Jan. 8 radio interview with Colombia's Radio Caracol, following three days of talks between Aristide and a delegation of Haitian parliamentarians headed by the leader of Haiti's Senate Dejean Belizaire and by House leader Duly Brutus. The talks were held in Caracas, Venezuela where Aristide has been living in exile since he was ousted from Haiti's presidency in a coup on Sept. 30. The appointment of a compromise prime minister, agreeable both to Aristide and to the majority of Haiti's Parliament, was demanded by the OAS as a precondition to pave the way for the suspended priest's return to power in Haiti.

The selection of the communist Theodore was dictated by the Bush administration, which deployed U.S. envoy to the OAS Luigi Einaudi to personally supervise the talks. Einaudi, known as "Henry Kissinger's Kissinger for Latin America," was flown to Caracas aboard a special plane sent by Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez, a member of the Socialist International, who has been demanding Aristide's restoration, even if it takes a foreign military invasion. There were also reports that U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Thomas Pickering, the rabid malthusian who just helped negotiate the agreement to hand power over to the El Salvador's Marxist FMLN guerrillas, was tapped for the Haitian negotiations. Theodore's selection was hailed by the U.S. State Department, which called on Haiti's Parliament to immediately ratify the appointment of the communist prime minister.

Critical of Aristide's use of mob rule and his other dictatorial methods, Communist Party boss Theodore had earlier indicated he would only take the job if he was backed by all factions in Haiti, including the majority of Parliament and the Armed Forces, and if the international community lifted the embargo, unfroze Haiti's assets abroad, and provided economic assistance. In fact, the talks in Caracas were almost canceled, because Theodore pulled out at the last minute saying he did not have sufficient support. His two rivals for the post—former World Bank official Marc Bazim, who is

close to U.S. intelligence circles, and socialist Victor Benoit, said to be Aristide's preferred choice—also stayed away. According to Reuter, just before Theodore was named, Jean-Claude Bajeux, an Aristide backer, said, "It is up to [U.S. Ambassador] Alvin Adams to decide" who would be prime minister.

In order to force the Haitians to accept the restoration of Aristide, on Oct. 29 the Bush administration imposed an economic blockade that will cause widespread starvation among Haiti's population, the poorest in the western hemisphere. Haiti's parliamentarians agreed to the talks because they both seek to end the embargo, and they wish to avoid a threatened military invasion by the U.S. and others.

Among those calling for an invasion to restore Aristide is Guillermo "Porky" Endara, who was installed as President of Panama by the December 1989 U.S. invasion. Similarly, former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, a critic of the Panama invasion and of the use of military force against Grenada, Libya, and Iraq, on Dec. 30 called in New York for the U.N. to "immediately create a force to conduct Aristide back to Haiti to resume the government." Others pushing for an invasion include Rev. Jesse Jackson, Harlem's Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.), and Argentina's President Carlos Menem.

At the time he was deposed, Aristide, a suspended priest of the Theology of Liberation cult, was recruiting former members of the Tontons Macoutes, the death squads organized by the late dictator François "Papa Doc" Duvalier, into his own private militias. In a telephone interview on Jan 9, a spokesman for the Apostolic Nuncio, the Vatican's diplomatic representative in Haiti, said that they are still housed in provisional quarters exactly a year after a mob of Aristide supporters destroyed the Nunciature. In that rampage, which Aristide has never condemned, Msgr. Leone Galenga of Zaire, the Nuncio's secretary, was beaten to within an inch of his life, Nuncio Giuseppe Leanza was assaulted and forced to leave Haiti, and the Old Cathedral in Port-au-Prince was burned to the ground by the Aristide mob, said the Vatican spokesman.

The deal in Venezuela will not necessarily solve the crisis. Aristide is insisting on the ouster of Army Commander Gen. Raoul Cedras, whose removal, say diplomatic sources, would increase the country's instability. Most objective observers admit that the return of Aristide, a self-avowed follower of Mao's methods of political "control," will lead to uncontrollable civil war and bloodshed.

Officials loyal to Joseph Nerette, who succeeded Aristide as President, say Nerette remains the legitimate President in accordance with the Constitution. Just before departing for Caracas, Senate leader Belizaire and House leader Brutus ratified Nerette. One Haitian official said that Aristide no longer has any authority to negotiate the appointment of a prime minister to replace incumbent Jean-Jacques Honorat, Haiti's best-known human rights activist. Honorat is calling for new elections.