

U.S. tells Haiti to accept communist ruler

by Carlos Wesley

Now that the communist system is crumbling worldwide, the Bush administration is trying to keep it alive. According to eyewitnesses, the U.S. envoy to the Organization of American States (OAS), Luigi Einaudi, "was sitting right next to" ousted Haitian dictator Jean-Bertrand Aristide when it was decided that the boss of Haiti's Communist Party, René Theodore, be made Haiti's prime minister.

Theodore's designation was announced Jan. 8 after talks in Caracas, Venezuela between a delegation from Haiti's Parliament and Aristide. "When we got there the decision was already made," said Haitian Senate leader and delegation head Dejean Belizaire, according to the Venezuelan daily *El Nacional*. "It was not a negotiation. It was an imposition."

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Thomas Pickering, who was scheduled to meet in Caracas on Jan. 17 with Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez, the pro-Cuban Socialist who is Aristide's leading supporter in Ibero-America, also had a hand in picking Theodore. The designation of the communist boss, which must be ratified by the Haitian Parliament, is supposedly the first step toward the restoration of Aristide, who was ousted from Haiti's presidency by a coup on Sept. 30.

The U.S., acting through the OAS, has been starving Haiti to death with a crippling embargo, and threatening a foreign military invasion to "restore democracy." Such is the commitment to democracy that if Theodore is ratified, the U.S. embassy will recommend lifting the embargo, the Jan. 10 *Los Angeles Times* reported. "But if Theodore is turned down, the economic punishment will continue."

Theodore's designation is seen as a favorable signal from the Bush administration for the deal being cut with Cuba's Fidel Castro. The deal was confirmed by former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara at a Jan. 12 news conference in Havana (see page 47).

Bush needs a settlement before other Ibero-American militaries follow the Haitian example. Also, more than 8,000 people have fled Haiti because of the embargo. According to the Jan. 13 *Wall Street Journal*, "Refugees could flood into Florida, creating new tensions and economic burdens in that state, which holds a presidential primary in March."

Fraud of the century

Theodore's designation is "the great fraud of the century," said a participant in the talks, Frantz Robert Monde, the

vice chairman of the House of Representatives who resigned in protest, according to the Jan. 13 Dominican Republic newspaper *El Nacional*.

Provisional President Joseph Nerette, elected by Parliament to replace Aristide, said that he would only hand over power to a new President after new elections, and warned that "all negotiated solutions" with Aristide for a new prime minister violate Haiti's Constitution and are doomed to fail. In his state of the nation address Jan. 13, Nerette added that Haiti would not bend to the dictates of powers who are "still nostalgic for the bygone days of colonialism." Repeating what he said in a message to the Schiller Institute last December and in an interview in *EIR* Jan. 10, Nerette told Parliament that the embargo against Haiti constitutes genocide.

Speaking before the same opening session of Parliament, Prime Minister Jean-Jacques Honorat, Haiti's best-known human rights activist, noted that a Liberian vessel off-loaded a supply of fuel on Jan. 10, the second time in 10 days that the embargo was breached. The OAS has been shown, he said, that "no one can bring the Haitian people to its knees."

The Foreign Ministry sent a circular to all embassies, warning foreign governments to stay out of Haiti's internal affairs. The message was believed to be particularly intended for U.S. Ambassador Alvin Adams, reported the Dominican Republic's *El Nacional* on Jan. 13. Adams and his staff were openly lobbying for Theodore's confirmation in the Haitian Parliament.

But Theodore himself said on Jan. 14 that he would take the post only if the embargo were lifted first. He rejected Aristide's call for Armed Forces commander Gen. Raoul Cedras to be exiled. Apparently in exchange for Cedras's backing, Theodore promised the military more funds, respect for their autonomy, and that no officer who participated in the coup would be punished. He proclaimed himself a supporter of "modern capitalism" and said he was ready to renounce communism if he were ratified.

Theodore hinted that it will not be long before Aristide is let back into Haiti, where he is hated by many for his use of mob rule, his alliances with the Tontons Macoutes death squads, and his advocacy of "necklacing"—burning victims alive by placing a gasoline-filled tire around their neck. In a recent interview with the Catholic publication *30 Days*, Aristide characterized his earlier call for necklacing his enemies as "an insignificant detail."

In Caracas, where he lives in exile, Aristide told supporters Jan. 14 that he is grateful for the "solidarity" of George Bush, Venezuela's Pérez, and the OAS. He said he has shown his own flexibility by agreeing to Theodore's designation, "a man I personally would never have selected." He did not repeat his demand for General Cedras's ouster. This would tend to confirm reports that Aristide, if he returns to Haiti, would be a figurehead, with the country placed under OAS receivership.