

Balaguer wins in Dominican Republic

by Carlos Wesley

The official count of the Dominican Republic's electoral board, an independent body, showed that President Joaquín Balaguer defeated his chief rival, José Francisco Peña Gómez, by a margin of nearly 3% in the May 16 election.

But the same foreign interests who are out to destroy Haiti are seeking to defraud Balaguer of his victory in the nation which is Haiti's neighbor on the West Indian island of Hispaniola. Long before the votes were even counted, the BBC of London proclaimed the self-admitted voodoo devotee Peña Gómez winner, and alleged that the count was fraudulent.

A gaggle of foreign "observers" linked to the Project Democracy apparatus in Washington has been trying to deliver power to Peña Gómez. Unlike Balaguer, the latter backs moves to restore Jean-Bertrand ("The Necklacer") Aristide to power in Haiti. Peña Gómez is a vice president of the Socialist International and a member of the Inter-American Dialogue, a bankers' think tank that calls for drug legalization.

John Graham, Canada's former ambassador to Venezuela, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic, headed a delegation from the Organization of American States (OAS). He was called on the carpet by Dominican authorities, because his team was profiling voters on the Haitian crisis, instead of observing the balloting. Most brazen was former U.S. congressman Stephen Solarz, who led a delegation from the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. NDI is a U.S.-taxpayer financed organization within the Democratic Party which has been mixed up in Project Democracy's Iran-Contra affair and other dubious efforts to "foster democracy" abroad. Solarz came close to demanding that Balaguer's election be annulled. There is "the real possibility that there was a deliberate effort to tamper with the electoral process," said the NDI in a full-page advertisement in the May 19 *Listín Diario*.

Solarz's behavior caused the non-partisan Nationalist Union to write to former President Jimmy Carter, the NDI chairman, accusing the institute of "creating a dangerous atmosphere because it can unleash violent acts, which—at a moment the United States is considering an armed intervention against our neighbor Haiti—could have unpredictable consequences for our country."

Solarz is an old hand at usurping the role of another

country's legitimate electoral authorities. He was a ringleader in the maneuvers that overthrew Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos, proclaiming Corazon Aquino the winner of the 1986 elections before a single vote was officially counted. Despite his righteous posturing abroad, Solarz is so personally unsavory that an offer to make him the ambassador to India had to be withdrawn earlier this year. An investigation by the FBI failed to remove a cloud of suspicion around his attempts to obtain a U.S. visa for mob-linked Hongkong businessman Albert Yeung Shau-shing, who has a criminal record.

Haiti strategy crumbling

Balaguer said the attempts to defraud him stemmed from "an international conspiracy" promoted by the superpowers, linked to "the situation in Haiti." On May 19, the Dominican Foreign Ministry blasted meddling in the elections by "sectors of the foreign news media and the international observers, [who] are threatening national security . . . with their anti-democratic behavior." The statement charged "an international conspiracy aimed at uniting both nations, Haiti and ours, in the event that the electoral process degenerates into major disorders with the aid of powerful foreign interests."

The desperate efforts to have Peña Gómez replace Balaguer in the Dominican presidency are linked to the failure of attempts to force the surrender of the Haitian military next door. On May 13 by the Council of Hemispheric Affairs (COHA), chaired by Robert White, formerly Jimmy Carter's ambassador to Cuba, issued a statement explaining: "For Washington, its stake in the electoral outcome cannot be overstated." The document, drafted by COHA director Larry Birns, claimed: "A Balaguer victory would doom any chance of a successful U.N. embargo" of Haiti.

Except for Argentina and Uruguay, nearly every Ibero-American nation opposes an invasion of Haiti by a multilateral military force under the OAS. "Not even disguised as a collective decision would [invasion] be acceptable," said Venezuelan Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Burelli Rivas. Joao Baena Soares, the outgoing secretary general of the OAS, says an invasion would violate the OAS charter.

The May 18 jailing on corruption charges of former Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez—a close friend of Jimmy Carter and mentor of Peña Gómez—removed a strong advocate of intervention from the scene. Among the options left are for the United States to intervene unilaterally or to seal the border. U.S. forces announced that they will conduct maneuvers for an "undetermined period" in the area starting May 17.

But Balaguer says he will not permit foreign troops to monitor the border, the *Washington Post* reported. His vice-presidential running mate, Jacinto Peynado, said, "Haiti cannot be a concentration camp. Of course, we are worried about the Haitian situation. If they come, they will need health, education. What are we going to do? Would the United States want 100,000 Mexicans to come across its border?"