



**REMEMBERING RESISTANCE AND REVOLUTION:  
NO CORPORATE CORNER OF HISTORY FOR HAITI**

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Dr. Maulana Karenga

The life-and-freedom-affirming spirit of the Haitian Revolution still haunts the historical memory and current mind of those whose imperial lust for monopolized wealth and racial domination has not diminished over the centuries, but rather has found varied forms in which to clothe, camouflage and express itself. They are determined to make the Haitian people pay for having the audacity to dare and win freedom, to boldly assume and exercise the right to be free without consent, especially from one's oppressor, and to defeat four European armies using instruments of daily work and life, and weapons they seized from the enemy's own hands and armories.

In doing this, they placed a signature event in the history of the human struggle for freedom, an enslaved people defeating their enslavers and establishing a republic in the name of Haitian and human freedom. And for this the imperial powers and their allies conclude, they cannot be forgiven. Thus, taking up the imperial gauntlet for White supremacy, as it has done repeatedly throughout history when European empires are overthrown, the U.S. invaded and occupied Haiti (first in 1915-1934) imposed sanctions, propped up political and military dictators, and overthrew the legitimate democratically-elected government of President Jean Bertrand Aristide, kidnapped him, forced him into exile and blocks the exercise of his constitutional right to return to Haiti without conditions of any kind.

Today, it is clear that the U.S. is the dominant power in Haiti and plays a role similar to that it played in the first occupation, restructuring the country to its advantage, clearing space for greater corporate exploitation, sidelining the government and denying it the resources, monies and capacity to rebuild its institutions to serve the people. France and Canada co-sign these arrangements for their

own historical and current imperial fantasies and faulty rationales. But again, it is the U.S. and U.S. corporations that are in control and benefit most.

In the year since the massive earthquake of January 12, 2010, in which up to 300,000 people lost their lives, and countless homes, livelihoods, businesses and government buildings were destroyed, the U.S. has been the major decision-maker for the reconstruction and recovery of Haiti, constantly dismissing and excluding Haiti's meaningful participation. Moreover, in terms of profit, a recent AP investigation found that American corporations received a \$98.40 return from every \$100 of Haitian reconstruction contracts given out by the U.S. government.

Furthermore, the Interim Haitian Reconstruction Commission, which decides how and where to spend monies donated to Haiti for reconstruction, is controlled by the U.S. and has met only four times. Also, there are only 12 Haitian members out of 26 of the IHRS, co-chaired by Bill Clinton. And they recently registered a complaint of their marginalization in the process with the real decisions being made by the executive committee composed of Clinton, the PM Jean-Max Bellerive and U.S. State Department employee for USAID, Gabriel Verret. From the beginning of the response to the disaster, the U.S. took control of the country, directed resources to international non-governmental organizations rather than the Haitian government and thus, structured its weakness and incapacity to rebuild its institutions and serve the people.

The promised aid of billions of dollars have not arrived and that which has arrived has gone to corporations and international relief organizations, not to the government for institutional building and rebuilding. The NGOs and corporations with their lucrative

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contracts have decided to hold the money and use the interest on the money to invest in Haiti. Their aim is for long-term organizational advantage not immediate and urgent service to the people. Thus, approximately one million people still remain in temporary camps and an estimated 170,000 people are infected with cholera and 4,000 killed when a strong program of health care, clean water and sanitary conditions could have checked the epidemic early.

The recent election in Haiti which was endorsed, financed and monitored by the U.S. and its international allies, associates and representatives, was rightfully denounced and rejected as illegitimate and rife with fraud. And indeed, how could it be otherwise with its tacit acceptance of the coup d'état by the U.S., France and Canada; its exclusion of the largest party in Haiti, Parti Lavalas; its fraudulent lists; the thuggery against the people; the non-participation of 3/4 of the voting population; and the rejection of the election by the majority of candidates themselves.

Clearly, the return of Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier can only add chaos and confusion, harm to the people, and damage to the country and democratic prospect. It is certainly a classic case of U.S. hypocrisy, contradiction and cold-blooded disregard for the will of the Haitian people to allow its former client-dictator to return and at the same time block the constitutionally guaranteed right to return of the democratically-elected President of Haiti, Jean Bertrand Aristide.

The imperial powers thrive on division, confusion and vulnerabilities of all kinds. There is no fear of a divided and confused people; that is why division and confusion

must be fostered among them. There is no fear of the hireling who is ever-ready to be rented, bought or leased for life; that is why the incorruptible and committed must be captured, killed, discredited and done away with by the oppressor in various ways. And there is no fear of the willingly enslaved and oppressed who assume a servile posture and position during the fight for freedom and even after its achievement; that is why the enslaver and oppressor must control the mind, break the will and make the enslaved and oppressed see freedom in oppression, liberation in enslavement, and usefulness to the dominant group as the best and only way forward.

Whatever use the U.S. has for Duvalier, it suggests desperation to import a discredited dependent with such a history of blood, brutality and horror on his hands. But the people of Haiti will not be bamboozled or coerced into a corner of corporate history to which the U.S. would assign them. They will continue to demand self-determination, decisive participation in the reconstruction of their own country and the restoration of democracy, the return of their democratically-elected President, Pres. Aristide, and the rightful and full participation of Lavalas.

And we must support them in these struggles and the struggles to hold accountable the NGOs, international governments and funding institutions; to remove the occupation forces under UN and U.S. auspices; establish security, governmental capacity, economic development, agriculture, health care, water and reforestation projects; and to frame and foster a new society in the interest of the Haitian people and human history on a whole new level.

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