

# Haiti accord sets stage for civil war

by Ana M. Phau

The agreement signed on July 3 by Haitian Army Commander Gen. Raoul Cedras, engineered by the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) to permit the return from exile of the communist and terrorist former President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, ensures the explosion of that country into civil war. Aristide was ousted in a popular military coup in 1991.

General Cedras was forced to sign the accord since, as he said, the U.N.-imposed oil embargo, along with the embargo already in force by the OAS, was slowly killing the nation, just as similar so-called U.N. peace accords are doing in Somalia and the Balkans. On June 26, before leaving for Governors Island, New York, where the talks were held, General Cedras explained why he was making the trip: "Food will run out, children will die," and the country will be ruined. "I will return with good news, no matter what," he said.

Under the accord, the killer sanctions are not to be lifted until the Haitian Parliament approves a prime minister to be named by Aristide. Since 13 parliamentarians now in office were elected in the Jan. 18 elections held under General Cedras's rule, the U.N., the OAS, the United States, and Aristide are demanding that they be purged, for fear that they will oppose whomever Aristide chooses. In other words, there is only one kind of democracy for Haiti: Do what the U.N. says.

## Angry response in Haiti

These demands will not be accepted easily by the Haitian population. "No one on this earth, with the exception of someone armed with a machine gun, will get me to quit—and even then it would be my dead body they would drag from here," said a Haitian senator on television. There will be a meeting of Haitian political party representatives the third week of July at U.N. headquarters in New York, to overcome the "political logjam," as *New York Times* reporter Howard French put it.

The accord, signed on July 3, stipulates that Aristide will return to Haiti on Oct. 30, after the Haitian Parliament has voted for the prime minister selected by him, at which time the embargo is to be lifted, and U.S. and U.N. aid will begin flowing in. Aristide would then grant an amnesty to all the military leaders of the coup. The Parliament then must adopt a law creating a new police force, whose commander will be

nominated by Aristide, and which the U.N. will train.

Immediately after the deal was signed, President Clinton congratulated Aristide, calling the accord "a historic moment for the Haitian people, for the hemisphere, and for the principle of democratic rule," and promised that the United States would back the deal "to the fullest." U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher told NBC's "Meet the Press" that he expected the United States would be sending somewhere under 1,000 troops to help enforce the accord. Aside from the troops, foreign "experts" are to be sent in to reorganize the country's civil service, police, and military.

The accord has not been received very well by many people in Haiti, who fear that it is an excuse to recolonize them. Sen. Thomas Eddy Dupiton has strongly rejected the demand for a purge, saying, "If Father Aristide persists in questioning the right of the parliamentarians in saving the country, we must understand that he wishes for the explosion of the state."

"I don't have a bit of confidence in this accord," said peasant leader Chavannes Jean-Baptiste in an interview with *Newsweek*. Jean-Baptiste leads the Peasant Movement of Papay, Haiti's oldest and largest non-governmental organization, and is a supporter of Aristide. "The question of an international police force—which the Haitian people, the military putschists and President Aristide himself have rejected—has a chance of being interjected into the process," he said. "We have nothing against relations with the United States or any other country, so long as they respect our independence. . . . What we don't want is recolonization. And we fear that this is something that could happen."

## Economic devastation

Meanwhile, Haitians are dying as a result of the U.N.-OAS policies. This brutal economic warfare was what forced Cedras to sign the deal that he did. Even the *New York Times* reports that as a result of the sanctions, "Haiti has been turned into an economic wasteland," where unemployment is 40%. Once-thriving industrial parks are now idle. Downtown streets, once very busy, are quiet. People are leaving the cities to return to the countryside and try to grow their own food. Because of the oil embargo, gasoline is almost impossible to buy, and electricity in the capital is off more than 12 hours a day. For anyone who can see beyond what the U.S. media want to show, the only "peace" the U.N.-OAS agreement will bring, is that of the grave.

This, however, is the model for "conflict resolution" in Ibero-America. The conclusion drawn by the U.N. mediator, Argentinian Dante Caputo, in discussing the agreement, was that it "would have been practically impossible" without the intervention of the U.N. Security Council. "The success of the cooperation in the Haiti situation can be used as a model for the future," said Caputo, who is being considered for the post of OAS secretary general. This could be the model for such cases as Guatemala and Peru.