



Haiti's Century of US Coups, Invasions & Puppets

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Abby Martin (AM): Major demonstrations continue to rock Haiti as protesters demand that US backed President Jovenel Moise step down from office. On February 7th, his constitutional mandate to rule ended. But instead of holding new elections or stepping down, he's just staying put. For almost two years now, there have been daily mass protests demanding Moise step down over extreme corruption, including the embezzlement of billions of dollars for social programs. These demonstrations have been met with severe violence many times with the assistance of occupying United Nations troops. But while Haiti has drawn the attention of the world, it's a good time to revisit the history of not just how Moise ended up in power, but how the American empire has determined the destiny of the Haitian people for generations.

Haiti, once known as the crown jewel of the French Empire, was a center of the slave trade. But in 1791, an unprecedented slave revolution swept the island, driving out the French and then defeating the Spanish and British empires. During this war for liberation, America's noble founding fathers jumped into the fray. People like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and other slave owning politicians rushed to financial and political support to their slave owning counterparts in Haiti. Against all empires the Haitian people were victorious and in 1804 established the first ever free black republic. In those early years of Haitian independence, the United States had barely started to become an empire. In the late 19th and 20th century after completing the vicious colonization of native land from coast to coast, this baby empire took its first steps as a territorial empire. In 1915, U.S. Marines invaded Haiti. The first act of the invading Marines was to seize all the gold from Haitian banks and transfer it to the National City Bank of New York. All of Haiti's banks were put under the control of American banks. The United States announced that Haiti was now under the rule of a new constitution, a constitution written by Franklin D. Roosevelt, who, of course, was not Haitian. This new constitution allowed the purchase of Haitian land by foreign capitalists, which began immediately. But with revolution in their blood, the Haitian masses fought back against this new colonial rule. The most famous and beloved leader in the anti occupation movement was Charlamagne Peralte. To the U.S. Marine Corps. Hunted down Peralte, executed him, tied his dead body to a door and paraded it through the streets of Haiti for all to see. They had a photographer capture an image of the national hero's mutilated corpse, put it on a leaflet and dropped thousands of them from airplanes all across the island. American rule of Haiti began with acts of sheer terrorism like this.

The U.S. military occupied Haiti and ruled it as an outright colony for 20 years. A colonial rule gave way to neocolonialism, where the United States installed total puppets but with rigged elections so they could pretend to be supporters of democracy. But even that was short

lived. In the 1950s and the 30 years that followed, the United States gave up on the veneer of democracy and backed the brutal dictatorship of the Duvalier dynasty. This was total fascist rule, suspension of elections, suspension of all political rights, no free press, thousands of political prisoners subject to brutal torture, and the use of assassinations and executions against activists and organizers, including massacres of entire villages identified as anti Duvalier. That entire time, the United States supported the dictatorship with aid and protection from U.S. Marines. In exchange, U.S. corporations were able to use Haiti as a sweatshop with slave-like labor laws and free reign over its resources.

Following the end of the U.S. backed Duvalier dictatorship in 1986, the Haitian people have twice elected left wing liberation theologian Jean-Bertrand Aristide as president. The first time was in 1990, but just eight months after he took office and committed the crimes of things like raising the minimum wage from 1\$ a day to 2.5\$ A day, the CIA orchestrated a coup that removed him from power. During the coup, U.S. backed forces massacred hundreds of unarmed Aristide supporters protesting the regime change operation. Washington installed a World Bank stooge in his place, but Aristide would return and win the presidential election again in the year 2000. He continued social reforms that made it harder for American corporations to use Haiti as the most destitute, hyper exploited sweatshop possible. So in 2004, the CIA planned and executed another coup. U.S. Marines again invaded Haiti, kidnaped Aristide from his home and took him out of the country.

George Bush: Hold on a second please. President Aristide resigned. He has left his country. The constitution of Haiti is working. It's the beginning of a new chapter in the country's history. I would urge the people of Haiti to reject violence. To give this break from the past, a chance to work in the United States is prepared to help. Thank you.

AM: U.N. troops replaced American forces as political cover, and they remain until this day under the guise of providing aid. When I went to Haiti as a journalist in 2012, there were U.N. troops everywhere patrolling streets and manning security towers. And for a country that's so rich in resources and receives billions of dollars in aid, the level of extreme poverty was shocking. Both the U.N. occupation and the economic catastrophe fuel the protest movement today, Aristide's ouster in 2004 began another era of rotating U.S. puppets ruling Haiti. In 2011, U.S. backed candidate Michel Martelly came in third place in the election. But the United States, using its tool, the Organization of American States, installed him as president anyway. Current besieged President Jovenel Moise is Michel Martelly's predecessor and close ally, appointed by him to be the presidential candidate in 2015. In an election with only 20 percent voter turnout, Moise supposedly received 32 percent of the vote. However, an investigation by journalists at the Haiti Sentinel found that Moise likely received just 6 percent of the vote. But despite clear evidence of fraud, he was declared president anyway. Today, he remains in office despite his term ending given protection from Biden and the U.S. empire. And it seems Biden actually made the situation worse with a statement of support. Just 24 hours after Biden made the official declaration that Moise should be in power at least another year, the regime began a crackdown on opponents, even illegally jailing a Supreme Court justice who disagreed with his claim to power and rounded up dozens of other dissidents, including journalists. With Washington's backing, the violent repression of demonstrations went into full swing.

Ever since the U.S. empire invaded and occupied Haiti more than a century ago, it's had its boot on the neck of the Haitian people. Today, they're fighting for the right to stand up and

the world needs to stand with them, especially here in the U.S., which has been robbing them of the future they want for far too long.

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