

Democracy Undone: Behind the Haiti Coup

Written by

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Democracy Undone: Behind the Haiti Coup

VPC - Haiti: Democracy Undone is a co-production by CBC News: Correspondent, The New York Times and Discovery Times Television. The film will be rebroadcast at midnight (12 am Jan 30), Thursday, February 2 at 7 pm and 10 pm, and Friday, February 3 at 1 am.

www.vicpeace.ca

Haiti: Democracy Undone:

World Premiere on CBC Newsworld

Victoria Peace Coalition

January 29 5 pm

After four postponements, voters in Haiti are once again scheduled to go to the polls. The February 7 vote follows a coup almost two years ago.

In early 2004, when the government of Haiti faced a serious threat from armed rebels who had crossed the border from the Dominican Republic, the US government made it clear they supported the elected president of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. "The policy of this Administration is not regime change," Colin Powell, then US Secretary of State, said in testimony before a Congressional committee. A few weeks later Aristide was overthrown.

Haiti: Democracy Undone presents new evidence that in fact the US played a role in the coup that overthrew Aristide; that it had one foreign policy on Haiti but secretly carried out a very different policy.

Jean-Bertrand Aristide

The very first time Haitians elected their president was 1990. Their choice: Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a former Roman Catholic priest. But Aristide would serve less than a year before being overthrown in a military coup. Under international pressure, including from the US, Aristide returned to power in 1994 and served out the rest of his term. He was elected president for a second time in 2001. His opponents had already begun to organize.

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As the rebels took more towns and cities in February 2004, Aristide turned to the international community for help. The US sent in the Marines -- to protect the US embassy. By the end of the month Aristide had fled Haiti on an airplane chartered by the US government. An interim government backed by Canada, the US and France took over in Haiti. In the months since, life has been marked by widespread violence, chaos and economic collapse.

Louis Jodel Chamblain

In Haiti: Democracy Undone, Walt Bogdanich, a reporter with The New York Times, investigates the 2004 coup and the US role. That coup was led by Louis Jodel Chamblain, a former death squad leader, and Guy Philippe, a former police chief accused of drug trafficking by the US. While the US claimed they opposed any attempt to violently overthrow the Aristide government, Bogdanich finds that elements of the US government were sending the rebels a very different message. The investigation looks at the role of the International Republican Institute, based in Washington. In 2004 the IRI, a non-profit organisation, received \$36,000,000 in federal funds to promote democracy abroad.

There have been earlier allegations of US support for the 2004 coup. This documentary presents new and overwhelming evidence that that was the case.

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PLEASE POST WIDELY

Please send this to everyone you know in Canada (times are local). This promises to be a good introduction to the US-Canada-France coup, even though it may gloss over Canada's role. Let us know what you think.

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