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From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
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To: H
Subject: Fw: Postscript to Meeting
Attachments: ole0.bmp

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From: Reynoso, Julissa
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Sent: Tue Feb 23 23:26:18 2010
Subject: Postscript to Meeting

Cheryl;

As a postscript to what you mentioned about Haiti efforts being the prime example of a new form of shared responsibility in the region and how Haiti reconstruction going forward can serve as the basis for this organizing principle, I want to share some additional thoughts to support your point with the hope that Haiti becomes a major theme of S's trip. To my knowledge, all the countries in the region (from richest to poorest) have contributed in some form or another to the relief efforts. This is unprecedented in this region. And given that this effort relates to Haiti in particular, it is even more remarkable. As you know, Haiti since its independence in 1804 has often been seen by the rest of the region as a second class nation. As the Spanish-speaking nations of South America gained independence in the 1820s, they excluded Haiti from their designs for regional union – mostly out of fear by the Latins of slave revolts and uprisings by their own black and indigenous populations. (Of course, we have had our own complex and unfortunate relationship with Haiti.) As has been demonstrated by the recent UNASUR and Grupo Rio sessions, the same cannot be said of the region today. And of the countries S is visiting, Chile is the richest and Guatemala is by the far the poorest but each of these countries – and all in between - has been contributing in its own way to Haiti's recovery: Chile with significant MINUSTAH forces, a portable hospital, supplies, and monetary pledge; Guatemala with food, a rescue unit and a MINUSTAH pledge (and the fact that UN ASG Edmond Mulet is Guatemalan!). In the context of the relief response, each country in the region has given, more or less, relative to their means. Through this process of cooperation in Haiti's recovery, we as a region can collectively turn around Haiti's history of isolation. This is a very significant historic moment and we need to run with it.

Sorry about the long email but wanted to share these thoughts – as one who has a particular relationship with the island of Hispaniola. In this context, I want to share a 1994 *Washington Post* below which, although covering a different type of crisis, is demonstrative of how times have changed.

Thanks. Julissa



Haiti's History of Isolation Makes U.S. Task Harder

Article from:

The Washington Post

Article date:

July 25, 1994

Author:

Roberto Suro

More results for:

haiti history of isolation

The United States finds itself virtually alone struggling with the Haitian crisis.

A handful of tiny Caribbean nations have agreed to shelter a few thousand refugees. But not one major political ally or trading partner in the Western Hemisphere has stepped up to help. In a joint statement yesterday, three of six Central American countries said they might take in Haitians. The other three said they would not.

Slippery promises are all that President Clinton gets when he seeks recruits for a peacekeeping force; none seems willing to join an invasion to oust the military leaders who seized power in 1991.

Panama's president-elect, Ernesto Perez Balladares, explained the lack of support in a recent interview: "It is for the very simple reason that in Latin America Haiti is not recognized as a Latin American country. Haitians speak a different language. They have different ethnic roots, a different culture. They are very different altogether."

Overwhelmingly black, speaking Creole French, practicing voodoo, a nation of liberated slaves long locked in deep poverty, Haiti has a history of isolation within the hemisphere. It doesn't fit with the big countries of South America. It is not part of Central America. It has no real kinship with the other island-nations of the Caribbean.

"Haitians are strangers even among the other black nations of the Caribbean," said Jocelyn McCalla, executive director of the National Coalition for Haitian Refugees, a New York-based advocacy group. Haitians are "just as strange to someone from Grenada or Jamaica as they would be to someone from Iowa or Montana."

When Suriname agreed to take in 2,000 Haitian boat people, neighboring French Guiana announced it would tighten border security in case any Haitians escaped.

In recent years, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations have worked to compel elections in Haiti, to put sanctions on its military regime and to monitor human rights abuses. Now, Clinton is asking for much more as he tries to create a network of refugee camps around the region and to assemble multinational backing for the forcible removal of Haiti's military regime.

Finding partners for either sheltering refugees or invading would be a challenge no matter what country was involved. Petitioning on behalf of Haiti makes it much harder.

"Unsympathetic perceptions of Haiti as a hopeless case work against the kind of cooperation that the administration is seeking, and those perceptions are deeply ingrained," said Wayne Smith, a senior fellow at the Center for International Policy.

Haiti's isolation goes back to its 1804 independence. "Here was a nation born of a slave revolt. It raised fears of another slave revolt in many other nations which then simply shunned Haiti for decades to come," Smith said.

As the Spanish-speaking nations of South America gained independence in the 1820s, they excluded Haiti from their designs for regional union. U.S. recognition did not come until 1862, when the Civil War made it politically expedient.

Haiti's chronic poverty, its chaotic succession of despots and its conflicts with the Dominican Republic have deepened its isolation.

Is racism a factor in the shunning of Haiti? Perhaps not: Black and mixed-race nations have sometimes demonstrated biases against Haiti.

But allegations of racism have often beset U.S. policy toward Haiti and are a major factor in the evolution of the current crisis.

The U.S. invasion of Haiti in 1915 produced a 19-year occupation that included the imposition of racial segregation and the use of forced labor.

Randall Robinson, head of the TransAfrica lobbying organization, said, "For almost 200 years U.S. policies have treated Haiti differently than other nations with the painful consequences always visited on Haitians who happen to be black."

This history, Robinson said, combined with the fact that the slave revolt earned Haiti "a place of pride for people in the African diaspora," has made U.S. policy toward Haiti a logical target for U.S. blacks. The activism has focused on what Robinson called "the despicable practice of repatriation."

Since 1991 the United States has tried to intercept Haitian boat people fleeing the military regime before they could reach U.S. shores; most have been taken back to Haiti. No other nationality has suffered that form of rejection.

As Robinson went into the 27th day of a hunger strike on May 8, Clinton announced he would end the repatriation policy and begin more aggressive efforts to remove the Haitian military regime.

But Haiti's isolation has contributed to Clinton's setbacks trying to deal with the intertwined problems of the generals and the refugees fleeing them.

On July 7, Panama backed out of an agreement to accept 10,000 Haitians, citing technicalities in the Panama Canal Treaty. Balladares, who has promised to consider a more limited safe haven for Haitians after he takes office Sept. 1, said the decision had nothing to do with the 1978 treaty and everything to do with the way ordinary Panamanians view Haitians.

"People were very afraid of having the Haitians in the country and justifiably so," he said. "They were afraid of competing for scarce resources, afraid of people whose culture is different in many ways, afraid of the AIDS problem. That is why the government backed out and everything else is excuses."

Piero Gleijeses, a professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, said: "Even if the Latin Americans felt some kinship to the Haitians, they would not be anxious to take in refugees under these circumstances. They see the big, rich United States, a traditional nation of resettlement, turning away the Haitians and they ask why they should have to take up the burden."

Nearly all nations of the hemisphere have rallied around the idea of restoring democracy to Haiti, but they are as reluctant to pursue that goal with force as they are to shelter Haitian refugees. Both fundamental trends and the peculiarities of the Haitian case are at work.

Among Latin American governments the traditional distaste for U.S. military intervention has been growing more explicit in recent years. For example, an OAS resolution censuring the United States for the 1989 invasion of Panama marked the first time since the founding of the organization 42 years earlier that it had formally criticized the United States.

In addition, the absence of a functioning political infrastructure and the prospects for lingering violence in Haiti have made many Latin American countries leery of joining a peacekeeping force.

Chile, which in early July said it would support the restoration of democracy through a multinational effort, has since insisted that it would offer "technical assistance" only after a democratic government was operating in Haiti and could specifically request such help.

Summing up the attitudes across the region, Balladares said, "Everyone just wishes that this problem would go away."