

American Paratroopers Land In Haiti: And on the Eighth Day...

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The Americans have landed, or as they used to say of the GIs in the UK during WWII, 'they're overfed, over sexed and over here'. So now, in spite of protestations that air-dropping supplies would cause a riot, on the eighth day of this catastrophe (one that the BBC still continues to call a "humanitarian catastrophe") the US has decided to act.

Four days ago I came across this email reproduced in the excellent Military Resistance:

15 January, 2010 — From: Mike Howells [New Orleans] via [Military Resistance](#)

"The White House Ruled Out Direct Air Drops Today In An Announcement Because 'It Would Cause Riots And Looting'"

Dwelling upon the horror now unfolding in Haiti I feel compelled to ask the question of why those forces in a position to do so refrain from conducting mass air drops of food, water and basic medicines in the most devastated areas of the country?

It's abundantly clear that the devastation wrought by the earthquake has produced many obstacles to providing emergency supplies by way of truck, car or foot.

So, why not airdrop emergency supplies en masse in areas of Haiti rendered largely inaccessible except by air? True some supplies would be damaged falling to the ground and some supplies would be monopolized by unscrupulous hoarders.

Still I can't help but feel that many earthquake survivors would benefit enormously from food and medicine airdrops.

As a Katrina Survivor in New Orleans after the storm I often wondered why authorities refused to conduct food and air drops here at the height of the crisis.

Air drops of food and water would have given me and surely many other survivors on the ground a boost both materially and emotionally.

But then again the welfare of those in crisis zones doesn't seem to be a matter of much concern to the people who run this country.

So what's changed? Well nothing, the US would like us to believe that it's purely for safety

reasons and the media has slavishly echoed the 'line', that it's all about 'security', or in this benighted land, what they choose to call Health and Safety:

"Parachuting bundles of food and water into Haiti became viable for the first time Monday in part because there are enough troops there to identify a safe place to drop them, according to Air Force officers involved in planning the mission." — ['U.S. airdrops 14,000 meals into Haiti'](#), USA Today, 19 January, 2010

Identify places to land supplies without flattening someone? Gimme a break, what a ludicrous idea! So for eight days, the US held back the biggest and handiest source of aid the world possessed for want of a flat field with nobody on it.

It's Katrina all over again! It was clear from the first day that the earthquake affected Haiti unlike any other country including those that had experienced even bigger earthquakes. To start with it destroyed an already ineffectual state, so it had no means to mobilize what resources were left to it. Moreover, with literally one-third of its entire population of ten million directly affected, concentrated as they are in one location, it was as if the entire country, including its port, had been wiped out. The image comes to mind of three million people in an instant finding themselves surrounded by rubble and corpses, everything wiped out in the blink of an eye. Horrific.

It doesn't take eight days to figure this out.

It's clear from day one that Western concerns have been almost fanatically and single-mindedly occupied with 'security'. This means getting bodies on the ground (not up in the air looking for a field), and now they've got that, the Marines have landed and not for the first time. It's ludicrous to suggest that the US military don't know their way around as the USA Today suggests.

And the US are very conscious of not wanting to present the appearance of being an armed invasion (what? with an enormous aircraft carrier, the Vinson anchored off the coast and all kinds of helicopters buzzing around?), but that's what they are. It echoes the US government's response to Katrina, where its first act was to send in the troops, not aid.

"Haiti earthquake: US paratroopers sensitive of phrases like 'occupying force'

"Wear your guns on your back not your front, the American paratroopers waiting around at Port-au-Prince airport said they had been told." — [Daily Telegraph](#), 19 January, 2010

The United Nations too has been directly complicit in criminal neglect, not only because it has gone along with all the excuses being peddled by the US and others, as to why it has taken so long to mobilize aid, they too, have thousands of troops already occupying the place.

If there was ever country better placed to receive aid, it's Haiti. But of course those in charge of supplying aid are not interested in how things are on the ground.

The reality is that there is food and water available on the ground, but nobody has any

money to buy it. So for want of some cash, people whose lives are now even more shattered than they were before are faced with exactly the same problem, how to stay alive?

Thus wouldn't it have made sense to shower the place with money if the West is so concerned with the 'plight' of the Haitian people?

So it shouldn't come as a surprise to us that what those who've been exploiting the island and its people, and left them in such dire straights, the same people allegedly coming to its rescue, should care anymore about the people of Haiti now than they did before.

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