

Haiti: Anatomy of a Coup D'Etat

Global Research News Hour Episode 56

By [Michael Welch](#), [Jean Saint-Vil](#), and [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)

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Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)
Theme: [GLOBAL RESEARCH NEWS HOUR](#)
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Haiti: Commemoration of February 29, 2004 Coup d'Etat

Please read and sign the Letter at www.apologytohaiti.ca

Haiti's most prominent human rights defender, Attorney Mario Joseph speaks in Ottawa

Friday, Feb. 28, 7 pm, 233 Gilmour St., one block west of Elgin.

"In many ways it was much more successful, at least in the short term, than previous imperial triumphs in Iraq (2003), Panama (1989), Grenada (1983), Chile (1973), the Congo (1960), Guatemala (1954), or Iran (1953)...Not only did the coup of 2004 topple one of the most popular governments in Latin America but it managed to topple it in a manner that wasn't widely criticized or even recognized as a coup at all." [1]

-Professor Peter Hallward, author of *Damming the Flood: Haiti, Aristide, and the Politics of Containment* [1]

"... we have an elected leader Aristide. We may not have wanted to vote for him... But the (Canadian) government makes a decision that there should be a regime change. It is a serious question that we need to address. That decision was based on what criteria? We must have this discussion...This was clearly a regime change. Whether we like to admit it or not, we took part."

-Former Conservative MP Stockwell Day, March 10, 2004 [2]

"I've heard nothing but criticism of President Aristide from every segment and sector of society. So if you say to me, "Was it an American conspiracy that got rid of Aristide?" I don't buy that. Sorry, I'm not there."

-Former Canadian Liberal Foreign Affairs Critic Bob Rae in conversation with this writer November 12, 2010.

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In the early hours February 29, 2004, Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was escorted from his home by US troops, led onto a plane and flown out of his country to the Central African Republic.

Following the removal of Aristide and the installment of the post-coup 'interim' government of Prime Minister Gérard Latortue, a human rights disaster ensued.

The Lancet Medical Journal records that in the 22 months following the departure of Aristide there were an estimated 8000 murders in the greater Port Au Prince area, with half of the identified perpetrators being government or foreign actors. About 35,000 sexual assaults of women were also indicated, with UN forces and anti-Aristide groups implicated in many of them. [3]

Haiti has since been subjected to a major earthquake and cholera outbreak, further weakening the major social indicators. Nevertheless, the events of ten years ago seem to have played a vital and important role in the current misery the people of this impoverished country must endure.

Canada played a critical role in these events. It was on January 31, and February 1 of 2003 when a historic meeting known as the Ottawa initiative on Haiti was held at the federal government's conference centre on Meech Lake near Ottawa. This initiative apparently laid down the groundwork for the forced removal of President Aristide and the government that would replace him. [4]

As the anniversary of this endeavour arrives, a variety of activists are pushing for Canadian officials to apologize for the country's role in facilitating a coup d'etat.

One is Jean Saint-Vil, a Haitian-born Ottawa resident and activist who helped found the [Canada-Haiti Action Network](#). Another is Michel Chossudovsky, Emeritus Professor of Economics at the University of Ottawa and Founder of the Centre for Research on Globalization. His article, [US Sponsored Coup d'Etat. The Destabilization of Haiti](#), which was published within hours of the actual deposing of the coup, outlines the motivations of the major Western Powers in subjugating Haiti.

Saint-Vil and Chossudovsky appear on this week's program to reflect on the Coup, its impacts, and what Canada must do to restore justice for Haiti.

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Notes:

1) Peter Hallward, "Did He Jump or Was He Pushed? Aristide and the 2004 Coup in Haiti," December 7, 2007; www.haitianalysis.com

2) Hansard 23, Parliament of Canada, Wednesday, March 10, 2004; <http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=37&Ses=3&DocId=1236794>

3) The Lancet, Volume 368, Issue 9538, Pages 864 - 873, 2 September 2006; <http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736%2806%2969211-8/fulltext>

4) Jean Saint-Vil, April 2009, What is Canada Doing in Haiti?; www.globalresearch.ca; <http://www.globalresearch.ca/what-is-canada-doing-in-haiti/13280>

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