

## The Charlotte Post

The Voice of the Black Community

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# Haiti must move on in order to recover

By Harold J. Eustache Sr.  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

It is now more than a month since Jean-Bertrand Aristide resigned as president of Haiti. However, the internal politics, and the future of the impoverished Caribbean country of 8 million people, my country of origin, is still mired in international intrigue over Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the diminutive but charismatic figure whose shadow has loomed large over Haiti for over a dozen years.



Eustache

Something of a tug-of-war has developed between the U.S. government, which has backed the UN-sanctioned interim government of Alexandre Latortue, and CARICOM, the Caribbean Community organization headed by Jamaican Prime Minister P.J. Patterson. CARICOM has refused to recognize the new government of Haiti and is demanding that the UN launch an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the departure of Mr. Aristide. Things had gotten off to a decidedly shaky start shortly after Aristide left when the Jamaican Prime Minister agreed to allow the ex-president of Haiti to come to Jamaica for 10 weeks to visit with his daughters now residing in the U.S. Interim Haitian Prime Minister Gerard Latortue called the move an "unfriendly act" and recalled the Haitian Ambassador to Jamaica. He was understandably concerned over Aristide's well-deserved reputation as an astute politician and his ability to foment trouble and destabilize the current process from less than a hundred miles away. Prime Minister Patterson, it seems, did not quite appreciate Mr. Latortue's comment and stance, echoed by his own internal political opposition, the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP).



Waters

Indeed, in a few weeks, the ex-president of Haiti has unleashed to his defense an impressive array of influential and powerful personalities composed of U.S. politicians, legal and PR firms, lobbyists, and assorted Caribbean political buddies some of whom, over the years, have significantly benefited from his largesse and free-wheeling ways with the meager funds of Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the world. For example, Mr. Aristide generously paid millions of dollars to Miami lawyer Ira Kurzban to look after his interests here in the U.S., and hundreds of thousands of dollars for PR work to the wife of Randall Robinson, founder of TransAfrica Forum. These were among the personalities accompanying him on his chartered flight to Jamaica from the Central African Republic where he had taken refuge. Also on the flight was Congressional Black Caucus heavyweight Maxine Waters, frequent guest of Aristide at the Haitian Palace during his reign.

Amid the political wrangling at CARICOM and the Congressional Black Caucus, the long suffering Haitian people have been forgotten. Mr. Aristide has skillfully sucked up all the press attention and developed a kind of cult of personality around him, the person. Unheard in this debate is anything about the deteriorating conditions for the people of Haiti, the 70 percent unemployment rate, the lack of basic services and democratic institutions, the deplorable illiteracy and health-care. Or the HIV epidemic, the environmental disaster in the countryside, the drug trafficking implicating his top aids and perhaps Aristide directly, the intimidation of political opponents by the Lavalas thuggish groups called Chimeres.

Mr. Kofi Annan, secretary general of the UN, has been a lonely voice of reason and wisdom calling for dealing with Haiti's long term needs. In an interview, Mr. Annan said: "Haiti was a peculiar situation, but the change in leadership there was not a coup d'etat...It was a deteriorating situation. There were people bearing arms moving towards the capital of Port-au-Prince...The UN Security Council received a copy of a letter of resignation from now-ousted president Jean-Bertrand Aristide to Haiti's chief justice," he said.

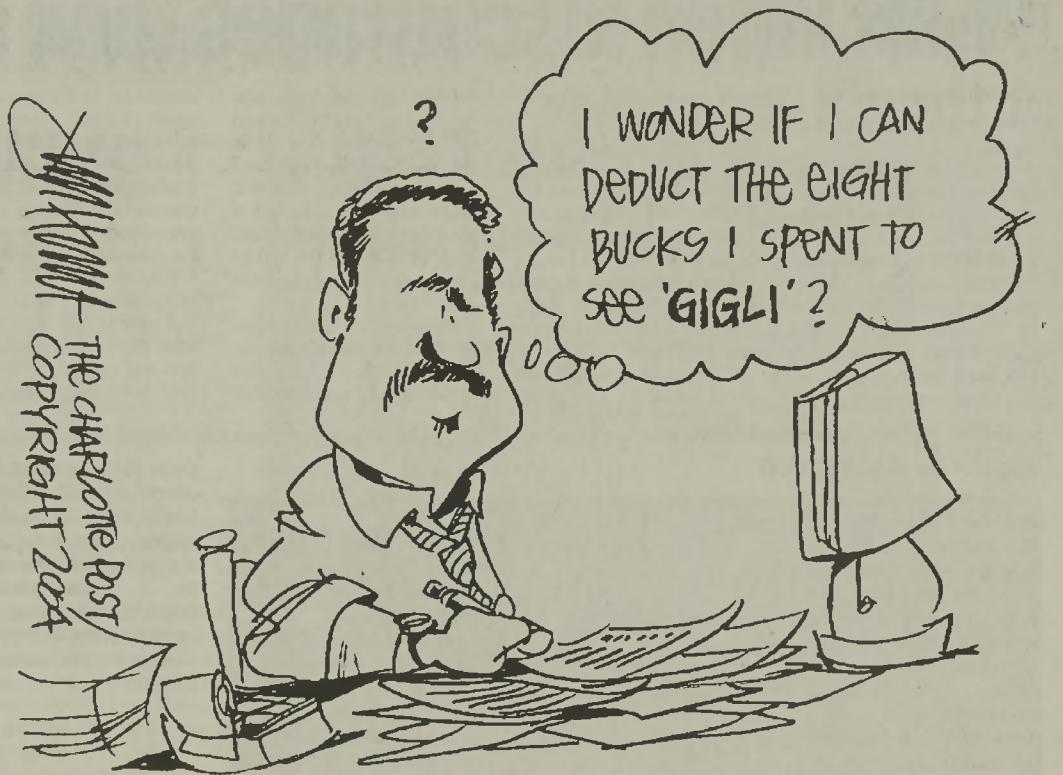
The Security Council decided to aid Haiti based on that, Annan says, adding, "I don't think anyone in the room thought they were supporting a coup d'etat."

Therefore, the UN authorized the sending of multinational troops into Haiti to establish order. He also added: "This time around, I hope we, the international community, will have the stamina and the patience to stay for the long haul, because it's going to take time, it's going to take lots of hard work. And we should not expect to do a band-aid [job] for two years or so, and then turn around and leave, only to have to return."

As the interim government goes about planning the seemingly impossible task of restoring order and hope in the once beautiful country formerly known as the "Pearl of the Antilles", the Haitian Diaspora around the world is cautiously optimistic that this time will be the last time that their native land becomes the poster country for abject poverty, unbridled corruption, and political chaos.

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## Of mice, men: Mickey vs. DuSable

By Celia Daniels  
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER  
PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Eek!

Chicago, the city of big shoulders, is about to open its arms to Mickey Mouse.

This spring, 15, 6-foot-high statutes of the mouse are going up on State Street, "that great street" singers have been paying tribute to for more than 50 years. Meanwhile, there isn't one statute honoring the real founding father of Chicago - no, not Richard J. Daley-but Jean Baptiste Pointe DuSable, the Black explorer who settled Chicago in 1779.

The Greater State Street Council, whose job it is to lure shoppers to the in-need-of-another-makeover mall, is organizing the cheesy affair to celebrate the council and the mouse turning 75.

Across this city, there is no shortage of signs, streets and tributes to the heroes of the myriad of ethnic groups. There is something for everyone, except Blacks.

There is Casimir Pulaski, the Polish general who commanded American troops in the Revolutionary War. He was rewarded with a paid

city holiday, a main thoroughfare, a park, an academy and a hymn, all named in his honor.

As for the Irish, as if holding down City Hall and the clout that comes with it isn't enough, every St. Patrick's Day they make the Chicago River their personal wading pool by dyeing it Kelly green.

There is even a bust honoring the White Sox's legendary broadcaster Jack Brickhouse a few steps from the Chicago Tribune on Michigan Avenue. Across the street in Pioneer Court, is a statue, albeit ever-so small, noting the contributions of people of Mexican heritage. Historians believe the present-day Tribune Tower and Pioneer Court are the sites where DuSable built his cabin and later a successful trading post.

Native Americans may have been ahead of their time when they came up with the name Chicago, which means the wild onion or its stench, because Chicago's treatment of DuSable stinks.

Sure, there is the DuSable Museum of African American History tucked

away in a park on the South Side far from the "Mag Mile and tourists' dollars," which didn't even merit a mention in the 10-page "special advertising feature" on "Great Museums" in the March issue of trendy Chicago magazine.

And on that not-so-great stretch of South State Street sits DuSable High School, once surrounded by public housing built to warehouse the poor. Today, the high-rise horrors have been torn down and DuSable is struggling to remain open as the greedy developers and the other Mayor Daley, prime the once-Black corridor with bronze to prepare it for its final coat of beige.

Just what would be a fitting tribute to DuSable?

Since 1928, civic groups have been trying to get the city to do the right thing. In 1988, the late Harold Washington, Chicago's first Black mayor, dedicated a tiny 3-acre, waterfront spot as the future home of DuSable Park. After much delay, plans were put on hold again, when in 2000, it was discovered that the EPA needed to remove radioac-

tive thorium from the site.

The Chicago Park District recently allocated \$200,000 toward a design plan for DuSable Park, which it estimates will cost \$5 million when completed. Already some residents of the chichi Streeterville area - who probably don't know or care who DuSable is - are campaigning for boat slips, dog parks and other uses be included in the plan more associated with country clubs than with public parks.

The people circulating petitions and demanding a place in DuSable Park for their dogs to poop are probably the same people who think the history of Chicago began in 1871 with the ridiculous tale of Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicking over a lantern and starting the fire that destroyed the town nearly 100 years after DuSable arrived.

What is with this city's fascination with animals? Is it because the cow was Irish? I think we've had enough of the mouse droppings. The statute of expectations hasn't run out on righting this wrong.

CELIA DANIELS is a Chicago-based journalist.

## Just like Roman Empire? Not quite

D.G. MARTIN



"Aren't we just like the Roman Empire, headed for the same kind of fall?"

We hear this question sometimes when someone wants to make the point that the United States is doing something that will lead to its ultimate decline.

For instance, I recently heard some people talk about going the way of Rome when they were worrying about the terrible consequences of "military expansionism."

Others said we were doing "just like Rome" by giving up "our traditional family values." Oftentimes, the Roman Empire comparison is just a simple way to emphasize the speaker's negative feelings about a particular American condition or course of action.

But the comparison between Rome and America is an intriguing one. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill history professor Lloyd Cramer has been thinking about some of the parallels and discussed them at a church school class on a recent Sunday morning.

Here are some of the similarities between Rome and America.

1. Both began as small republics without much influence. Then they expanded "to the sea," by conquering or coercing the peoples who occupied the heartlands. Both continued that expansion beyond the seas.

The Romans spread throughout the Mediterranean and beyond. The U.S. took over Alaska, Hawaii, the Philippines and parts of the Caribbean.

2. Both claimed important political traditions such as the rule of law and fair government. Both believe that they were providing a much better government to those they conquered.

3. Both established transnational trading systems. In the areas of the Roman imposed peace, they established road networks, a postal system, and commercial stability. Similarly, the U.S. has led the way in bringing about a global system of commerce and trade.

4. Both had long conflicts with major rivals, ending in triumph and unrivaled power. Roman won its long war with Carthage; the U.S. over Nazi Germany and the U.S.S.R..

5. Both borrowed their

basic culture from predecessors. Rome from Greece. The U.S. from Britain and Western Europe.

6. Both dominated the rest of the world with military superiority.

7. Both took advantage of advanced technology to improve the lives of their peoples.

8. Both attracted substantial numbers of immigrants from other parts of the world.

9. Rome often used local leaders to manage the local populations. The U.S. does the same.

10. Both are responsible for a "transnational language." Latin in the case of Rome. English in the case of the U.S.

11. Both experienced a movement to centralize political power. This centralization has been accompanied by a decline in the politics of participation and an increase in the politics of the spectacle. Games and pleasure took the place of a civic life. A few elite families tended to dominate the national political life.

12. Both developed an increased reliance on a professional military, depending less and less upon the citizen soldier.

13. Finally, both experienced growing opposition at

the boundaries. The resulting conflicts increased dependence on the military. The costs of military preparedness and defense strained the basic economic systems.

Cramer recognizes that there are some important differences between Rome and America, including:

1. The U.S. has relatively few colonies compared to Rome.

2. The U.S. has an expanding human rights agenda.

3. The U.S. has maintained a democratic form of government, unlike the Romans whose republic was transformed into rule by an emperor.

4. While Romans took pride in their empire, Americans generally reject the term as it applies to them.

With all of these similarities on the table, Professor Cramer asked us if we thought the American people still have control over how our country is evolving. Or, he continued, are we like Romans at the time of the end of their republic when events were out of control of the people?

D.G. MARTIN hosts UNC-TV'S "North Carolina Bookwatch, which will return to the air later this year.