

Different views on non-intervention as foreign policy: monroe doctrine, good neig...

[History](#)



The Monroe Doctrine was a policy introduced by United States President James Monroe in 1823. It laid down ground rules for the Americas, warning European powers that the Americas are off limits to their influence, intervention, and colonization. 1 The Good Neighbor Policy was the nonintervention foreign policy introduced by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933. The FDR administration committed to a nonintervention foreign policy directed at the nations of the Western Hemisphere. During the Montevideo Conference in 1933, FDR's Secretary of State Cordell Hull declared, " No state has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another." 2 The Good Neighbor Policy was an initiative deployed by the Kennedy administration in 1961 to improve relations with Latin America by offering economic assistance and cooperation. 3 The Obama Doctrine may be characterized by nonintervention with inaction in regards to Syria, Egypt, the ending of the Iraq War, and the considerations of pulling all troops out of Afghanistan in 2014. Critics of the US drone/targeted killing program may disagree and might refer to the Obama Doctrine as low-key rather than noninterventionist. These descriptions are adequate in describing Obama's foreign policy stance as it recently lines up with FDR's Good Neighbor Policy with Secretary of State Kerry recently declaring that, " The era of the Monroe Doctrine is over...It's about all of our countries viewing one another as equals, sharing responsibilities, cooperating on security issues, and adhering not to doctrine..." 4

The film *Aristide and the Endless Revolution* was released in 2005; a year after Jean Bertrand Aristide was ousted for the second time in the 2004 Haitian coup d'état. It also features older footage going back to Aristide's

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time as a Roman Catholic priest at the Saint-Jean Bosco church in Port-au-Prince. The film begins with footage of a church service led by Aristide in 1987. This was shortly after Jean-Claude Duvalier was removed from power in 1986. The Duvalier regime had ruled Haiti with an iron fist for 30 years, and was known for their brutality and corruption. 5 The film centers on the 2004 coup d'état where Haitian rebels opposed to Aristide were approaching the capital in pursuit of Aristide. He was forced to flee and was taken out of the country in a US military plane. Military groups and the Haitian National Police, who are suspected of killing numerous political opponents, filled the power vacuum left in the wake of the ousting of Aristide. Human rights violations and violence became commonplace. Large numbers of Aristide supporters and Lavalas party members have been assassinated or jailed without cause. No government in Haiti was officially recognized until the election Rene Preval, a former ally of Aristide.

Aristide is a former Catholic priest and twice elected president of Haiti. After his victory in the 1990 presidential election, he was deposed in 1991 and restored to the Haitian presidency by United States President Bill Clinton. Aristide was re-elected in 2000 and was deposed once again in 2004. He was granted asylum by South Africa. After years in exile, Aristide returned to Haiti on March 18, 2011. 6

I knew next to nothing about Haiti and its history, but I came away from watching the film with a decent understanding of Haiti's recent tumultuous history. I had never heard about Aristide before and was able to learn about the first democratically elected president in Haiti's history, the two coups

d'état that unseated him, and the Duvalier years that preceded the Aristide years. On the surface, it appeared the film was skewed to favor of Aristide's position. Though, I felt it was not that way in the sense of it being a pro-Aristide propaganda film, but the result of the very clear and damning evidence presented in the film of foreign intervention in Haiti. The best piece of evidence being the documented blocking of foreign aid to Aristide's government that crippled Haiti's economy and ability to build the infrastructure of the country, and the foreign backing of Aristide's opponents. This was discussed in the footage of a congressional hearing with U. S. Representatives Maxine Waters and Charles Rangel, and economist Jeffrey Sachs.

Actor, activist, goodwill ambassador to the UN, and friend of Aristide, Danny Glover was interviewed in the film and defended Aristide's government.

Noam Chomsky, a scientist, professor at MIT, and political commentator that has written extensively on Haiti, described the United States disapproval of Aristide's victory in the election. Chomsky was featured in a discussion about US-Latin American relations with Otto Reich in the learning modules.

Economist Jeffrey Sachs was the author of the article about the need for investment in sustainability and centering foreign policy around it in the Prelude module. Former US Special Envoy to Haiti James Dobbins commented that the cutting of aid to Haiti in 2000 is directly responsible for the turmoil Haiti has experienced thereafter. I was familiar with Glover, Chomsky, Rangel, and Sachs.

It appeared foreign influences conspired to remove Aristide from power in 2004 because of economic interests and the prospect of having a charismatic populist president, who openly criticized the elites. The kidnapping allegation was less certain. Certainly, the evidence suggests the United States was part of the foreign conglomerate that backed Aristide's opponents, which included the rebels that were on their way to the capital to forcibly remove Aristide from power. With that in mind, it appeared to me the US forces were there to facilitate his removal from the country, as opposed to being the primary ground participants in the coup, as the film might suggest with the kidnapping allegation.