

LOS ANGELES TIMES Letters to The Ti

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Letters to the Editor, Los Angeles Times,
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Haiti

My heart goes out to Amy Wilentz, whose moving account of the Haitian people's suffering at the hands of yet another dictator reads as from one who can no longer shed tears ("Once Again, We Noticed Too Late," Op-Ed Page, Jan. 24.) If she were less kind, she would have rendered a harsher judgment on our government than the restrained "benefit of the doubt" she accorded it.

The truth is that few of our leaders give a damn about Haiti. Besides having no resources that we need, Haiti is less than 60 miles from Castro's Cuba. Can the same dirt-poor, but spirited Haitians who finally toppled the degenerate Duvalier be counted upon to adopt the rigid anti-Castroism that we demand of our back-yard friends?

Why risk it? Better for Washington to feign helplessness while Duvalier's largely intact Tonton Macoutes massacred courageous Haitian peasants as they lined up to vote in the election of 1987. Better to simply let the dictator of the hour act in his own best interest, which includes an uninterrupted flow of arms (for use in drug interdiction, of course) so long as he promises free elections someday.

It was all foreseen, and all preventable with some firm moral leadership from the U.S. Washington's failure to support Haiti's post-Duvalier democratic movement reveals a cynicism and hypocrisy that should bring tears of shame to us all.

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