

Failed states



Bill Clinton set down in the disaster zone and said, "The nation as a whole can be built back stronger, in a more-just society, a morally educated society." It was Haiti in 2010, but it could have been Czechoslovakia in 1990. Like the Haitian earthquake, Communism was an equal-opportunity destroyer, to use Clinton's term. It affected everyone, although the elite of both countries were clearly affected less. Like Haiti, Czechoslovakia was a failed state, if you accept the arguments of historian Mary Heimann. The main difference with Haiti is the degree of the failure, not the substance. The Czechs had a unique opportunity to start over, to build a more-just society, a morally educated society. They got some things right, but the economic crisis has highlighted what they got wrong. And as Haiti shows, the crisis that has hit the CR so far is minor compared to what remains within the realm of possibility.

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