



# Background

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## Executive Summary

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## HAITI: NO AID WITHOUT ACCOUNTABILITY

STEPHEN JOHNSON

Propping up faltering governments with blank aid checks invites corruption and almost certain collapse of reform and development agendas. Yet, supporters of Haiti's president Jean-Bertrand Aristide and even the Organization of American States (OAS) are seeking ways to unlock \$500 million of international economic assistance, frozen more than two years ago when Haiti's leadership proved unwilling to remedy flawed elections, establish a functioning government, and improve the country's dismal human rights record.

Since then, little has changed and Haiti's looming failure as a state could impact close neighbors such as the Dominican Republic and the United States. Armed intervention like the U.S.-led effort to restore Aristide's presidency in 1994 would not be welcome, nor would it produce much different results. Further denial of assistance with the expectation that Haiti's government will rebuild itself is unrealistic. Haiti will only improve over time with supervised support at the national level and sustained efforts to foster democratic change at the community level. To help encourage a real transformation, the United States should:

- **Promote democratic institutions**, as opposed to propping up autocratic leaders such as Aristide;
- **Direct grants to accountable non-governmental organizations** to strengthen citizenship

awareness and government beginning at the grassroots;

- **Offer targeted national-level assistance, provided Haiti's government accepts donor oversight** to organize elections, supervise the rebuilding of public institutions, and to ensure transparent utilization of resources;
- **Encourage Haiti to take advantage of trade incentives** by forming a government that can live up to trade obligations;
- **Hold Haitian officials accountable for their performance** in upholding laws and protecting human rights.

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**Haiti's Missing Consensus.** Despite Haiti's heroic struggle for independence, its early leaders based their rule largely on the way the island nation had been governed as a colony—by imposing order from above. Thus, a succession of autocrats

assumed and left power through rebellion and ousters, rather than by consent of the governed. Predatory government, instability, illiteracy, and poverty became hallmarks of Haitian society.

In 1986, these ills became so pronounced that unrest prompted the Reagan Administration to urge reigning dictator Jean Claude Duvalier to leave power. Thereafter, Haiti experienced a rapid turnover of governments leading to the election of ex-priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1990. Despite the high hopes of the international community, Aristide harassed opponents and relied on violent mobs for support. Within a year, his presidency collapsed and he was replaced by a repressive military junta, sparking an exodus of thousands of rafters.

**Misguided Intervention.** In 1994, the United States led a multinational force to Haiti to restore Aristide's presidency, intending to stanch the flight of refugees and put Haiti back on a path toward democracy. The intervention backfired, since Aristide had no intention of becoming a democrat and because the Clinton Administration pursued a quick exit without realizing the difficulty of encouraging democracy where none had existed before.

As the United States and other governments poured millions of dollars into a new national police and judiciary to take over for departing peace-keeping forces, the rest of Haiti's new government was falling apart. Aristide's crony and hand-picked presidential successor, René Préval, served most of his four-year term without a congress, thanks to flawed parliamentary elections in 1997. A new vote in May 2000 was marred by fraud, and Aristide was reelected shortly thereafter in a questionable contest boycotted by both the opposition and outside observers.

The dispute over the legitimacy of Haiti's parliament ultimately led the Clinton Administration to suspend direct assistance, a policy the Bush Administration and international institutions have followed, withholding a total of approximately \$500 million. Now Aristide is asking for support to be renewed, even though he has neglected the police and judiciary in favor of mob rule and scared off investors who could provide jobs for some of Haiti's 60 percent unemployed. Giving him the benefit of the doubt, the OAS has promised to recommend a resumption of direct assistance if the government will take steps toward limited reforms.

**Back to Basics.** More aid to Haiti's government will not solve anything. In 1994, the Clinton Administration committed \$3 billion to support Aristide's return, but put less into a long-term effort to cultivate durable political institutions. Today, refugees continue to flee violence, while extreme poverty and attendant disorder make the Caribbean nation a haven for international drug traffickers, criminals, and potentially even terrorists. To help set a course for a more prosperous, secure, democratic Haiti, the United States should:

- **Deny support for demagogues** in favor of consistently nurturing democratic institutions—even though they may take a long time to develop;
- **Direct grants to accountable non-governmental organizations** to promote better community-level governance, citizenship awareness, and effective education;
- **Offer targeted, direct assistance when Haitian leadership accepts donor oversight.** A U.S.-led international commission should supervise the use of donated resources provided to hold new elections and rebuild national institutions.
- **Persuade Haiti to use trade opportunities to restore growth.** The U.S. Caribbean Basin Initiative gives Haiti access to U.S. markets, provided Haiti can comply with trade obligations, establish the rule of law, and eliminate bureaucratic uncertainties that block investment.
- **Hold Haitian officials accountable for their conduct** by revoking visas and freezing the U.S. bank accounts of those who violate laws and abuse human rights.

**Conclusion.** Despite Aristide's pleas and the OAS offer to recommend resumed aid, only a sustained commitment on the part of the international community to provide direction can help establish the necessary security umbrella to ensure that the practices of compromise and consensus can take hold in Haiti. Even then, the road to peace and prosperity will be long and difficult. Haiti's troubles did not emerge overnight and they will not be resolved tomorrow.

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## HAITI: NO AID WITHOUT ACCOUNTABILITY

STEPHEN JOHNSON

In 1994, U.S. troops helped to return Haiti's President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to office after he was ousted in a military takeover. Since that time, he has ruled through partisan mobs and rigged elections. As a result, national political consensus is fragmented, human rights abuse is rampant, and governing institutions are dysfunctional. Rather than fulfilling earlier promises to reform, Aristide has spent his country's scant resources lobbying U.S. lawmakers to restore aid directly to his administration. In the short-term, his gambit may be paying off. Some U.S. congressional supporters and newspaper commentary writers are calling for the United States and international donors to renew direct assistance, arguing that Aristide was democratically elected and that withholding donations hurts the Haitian populace.<sup>1</sup>

On September 4, 2002, the Organization of American States (OAS) passed a resolution giving Haiti a two-month "window of opportunity" to apprehend human rights abusers, improve judicial and police functions, and establish a new independent electoral council in exchange for a recommendation that international funding be restored. The Bush Administration, the European Union, and the World Bank are doubtful that Haiti's government will be able to comply with the offer. None of their big-dollar assistance programs seem to have had a

significant impact and little, if any, of the funds given to Haiti have been accounted for.

Giving Aristide a blank check would lift Haitians' hopes, only to dash them when the resources are inevitably squandered or stolen. On the other hand, sitting on the sidelines and expecting Haiti's leadership to produce reforms will only fuel the current disintegration of the state and society and accelerate the exodus of refugees. Governance in Haiti will improve only when national leaders agree to be held accountable and when a new order is cultivated, incorporating community consensus and control. To help encourage such a transformation, the United States, in coordination with other international donors, should:

- **Avoid supporting predatory regimes** and, instead, help to develop democratic institutions from the grassroots level up;

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1. See Tracy Kidder, "Why Do We Punish the Haitian People?" *The Washington Post*, August 7, 2002, p. A-21.

- **Direct grants to non-governmental organizations** with proven track records that promote better community government, citizenship awareness, more effective education, and humanitarian relief;
- **Offer targeted national-level assistance**, under the condition that Haiti's government accepts donor oversight to establish governing legitimacy by organizing free and fair elections, supervising the rebuilding of public institutions (including the judiciary and police), and ensuring transparent utilization of resources;
- **Encourage Haiti to take advantage of trade opportunities** by electing a government that can enforce laws, negotiate treaties, and live up to trade obligations; and
- **Hold Haitian officials accountable for their performance** by revoking visas and freezing the U.S. bank accounts of those who violate local and international laws and abuse human rights.

## IRON RULE FOSTERS REBELLION

Haiti gained independence in 1804 after slaves overthrew French colonists and defeated an army sent by Napoleon. Despite its heroic birth, Haiti has experienced continuous rebellion ever since. Instead of building a new state from grassroots consensus, Haitian leaders adopted the previous model of imposing order from above. Haiti's first ruler, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, declared himself emperor and was killed by a mob on his way to put down a rebellion. Over the next 190 years, a succession of autocrats assumed power and left office through ousters and violence.

Following an uprising in 1915, President Woodrow Wilson sent U.S. Marines into Haiti and the United States imposed outside rule for 19 years. While U.S. intervention improved public health,

expanded national infrastructure, and paid off Haiti's debts, local officials served as figureheads. As a result, occupation left few lasting reforms beyond the establishment of more professional security forces.

When a country doctor named Francois Duvalier was elected president in 1957, he replaced U.S.-trained troops with young followers who were less likely to challenge his authority and organized bands of vigilantes named *Tontons Macoutes* (Volunteers for National Security) to enforce loyalty in rural villages. He remained in office until his death, leaving the regime to his 19-year-old son Jean Claude in 1971. Malfeasance, epidemics, and unrest stirred up by Jean Claude's opponents prompted the Reagan Administration to ask him to step down. When he refused, riots triggered a coup that was followed by a series of interim governments. During this turbulent period, Haiti adopted its first truly democratic constitution.<sup>2</sup>

In 1990, a fiery ex-priest named Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected president with 67 percent of the vote in what foreign observers declared a fair contest. Yet Aristide soon created a partisan secret police and exhorted street gangs to eliminate his political opponents—including members of the armed forces—in a practice called “necklacing.”<sup>3</sup> In less than a year, his presidency collapsed into violent confusion and his own security chief General Raoul Cedras replaced him with a military junta. The episode triggered a huge exodus of Haitian rafters, 41,000 of whom were interdicted at sea.<sup>4</sup> Later in Washington, Aristide reportedly obtained access to frozen assets, including long-distance telephone fees due to the Haitian telephone monopoly, and spent some \$55,000 a month lobbying U.S. officials to support his return.<sup>5</sup>

2. Approved on March 10, 1987. The charter reduced the president's authority, established separation of powers, provided for electoral competition, and guaranteed basic rights. However since adoption, it has been suspended, restored, and, in practice, ignored.
3. Placing a gasoline-soaked tire around a victim's neck and lighting it. See Catherine Edwards, “Haiti Puts Hex on Clinton Policies,” *Insight Magazine*, Vol. 16, Issue 26, July 17, 2000.
4. See “Coast Guard Migrant Interdictions At Sea Calendar Year 1982–2002,” at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-o/g-opl/mle/amiostats1.htm> (October 16, 2002).
5. See “Haitian Connections: How Clinton's Cronies Cashed in on Foreign Policy,” *The Wall Street Journal*, May 29, 2001, p. A-22.

*NOTE: Nothing written here is to be construed as necessarily reflecting the views of The Heritage Foundation or as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any bill before Congress.*

## MISGUIDED INTERVENTION

When Organization of American States and United Nations efforts failed to restore Haiti's elected leader, the U.N. Security Council adopted a resolution empowering member states to use any means necessary to restore Haiti's constitutional order. Acting with good intentions, the United States led a multinational force to Haiti in September 1994 to pressure the ruling generals to step aside. By October, Aristide was back in office.

But this effort, Operation Restore Democracy, was not the success many predicted. The Clinton Administration's objectives—to restore democratic rule, to slow the exodus of Haitian rafters, and turn over peacekeeping duties to the United Nations by February 1996—were too ambitious for a country that had never known democracy or peace. Moreover, the vehicle for achieving these goals was to support a leader whom Washington barely understood.

Back in power, the former priest surrounded himself with *chimeres*—mobs that harassed and attacked opponents of his Fanmi Lavalas Party in a manner reminiscent of Duvalier's *Macoutes*. In 1995, U.S. officials even had to persuade Aristide to abandon the local tradition of staying beyond one's term of office to allow René Préval, his handpicked candidate and elected successor, to take office.

Following flawed parliamentary elections in 1997, President Préval—at Aristide's behest—blocked a new vote until most assembly seats expired and then dissolved parliament, leaving himself and a handful of unconfirmed cabinet officials to carry out Lavalas policies unopposed. When legislative, local, and municipal elections were finally held in May 2000, Aristide and Préval reportedly pressed the independent Provisional Electoral Council to exclude nearly a quarter of the votes cast, using a formula that violated two articles of Haiti's constitution.<sup>6</sup>

The dispute over the legitimacy of Haiti's parliament, dating from the Préval administration, led the Clinton Administration to suspend direct U.S. assistance, a policy the Bush Administration has continued. The European community and multilateral institutions did likewise, resulting in holds totaling about \$500 million. Subsequently, Aristide was returned to office in November 2000 in a questionable vote that the opposition and OAS observer mission boycotted, and in which the estimated turnout was between 5 to 15 percent. Instead of coming to an agreement over new elections and adopting minimal standards of accountability, Aristide again hired a Washington lobbying firm to dislodge frozen aid, calling its denial economic terrorism.<sup>7</sup>

In fact, some \$100 million donated by the United States had already been lost. None of the money spent on elections—at \$6 million to \$8 million apiece—left behind any lasting electoral infrastructure. A professional police force of 6,000, initially trained by U.S. and Canadian officers, dwindled to about 3,000—most of whom are now partisan loyalists and who do little to protect Haiti's 7.8 million people.<sup>8</sup> After a new Coast Guard was set up to help apprehend drug traffickers, transshipments through the island actually increased from 10 percent to 14 percent according to a GAO study.<sup>9</sup> In 2000, some 80 percent of those in prison were simply awaiting trial from Haiti's "reformed" judiciary.

Over the last two years, the OAS has attempted to broker an agreement with both Aristide and the opposition on more than 20 occasions, discussing formulas that ranged from removing a few senators in contested seats to holding entirely new elections. Intransigence on both sides has blocked success. On September 4, 2002, in an effort to breathe new life into what has evolved into a dialogue largely with Aristide, the OAS adopted Resolution 822. In it, the OAS promised to recommend that interna-

6. Shaheen Mozaffar, "The Dilemma of Building a Multiparty Democracy in Haiti," Georgetown University, *Haiti Papers*, July 2001, p. 2.

7. Mary Anastasia O'Grady, "Haiti's Aristide Says 'Show Me the Money,'" *The Wall Street Journal*, July 6, 2001, p. A-9.

8. By comparison, El Salvador has a population of 6.2 million and maintains a civilian police force of 19,000—which many Salvadorans consider as barely sufficient.

9. U.S. General Accounting Office, "Foreign Assistance: Any Further Aid to Haitian Justice System Should Be Linked to Performance-Related Conditions," GAO-01-24, October 2000, p. 12.

### DEALING IN BAD FAITH: ARISTIDE'S EIGHT-POINT PROMISE

In December 2000, Aristide sent outgoing U.S. President Bill Clinton a letter outlining an ambitious eight-point plan to correct Haiti's flawed parliamentary elections, establish a credible electoral council, increase cooperation on counternarcotics, revive the police and judiciary, strengthen respect for democracy and human rights, form a broad-based administration, promote free markets, and negotiate an agreement for migrant repatriation in return for recognition of his flawed November reelection. Both the Clinton and Bush Administrations acknowledged his presidency, but Aristide made no progress on those pledges.

Aristide's commitment to OAS Resolution 822—which advocates restoring financial aid if the government takes steps toward establishing a climate of security, prosecuting human rights abusers, and naming an independent electoral

council—is similarly dubious. According to U.S. Ambassador Roger Noriega, the OAS has been waiting for action on a related resolution (806) that called on Haiti's government to conduct an inquiry into a suspected staged attack on the National Palace (December 17, 2001) that inspired Aristide supporters to raid and destroy political opponents' headquarters. It also asked the government to prosecute those responsible, pay reparations, and establish public order. Beyond some arrests, little has been accomplished.<sup>1</sup>

Insights into why Aristide remains so recalcitrant may be found in his 1990 book *In the Parish of the Poor*, in which he scorned elections, Western democracy, and past Haitian dictators in equal measure. Instead, he called on Haitians to take up "Bolivar's sword," offering a vision of perpetual struggle.<sup>2</sup>

1. Ambassador Roger F. Noriega, "On the Report of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security of Haiti Concerning Events of December 17, 2001," Organization of American States, Permanent Council Document 3649/02 (Washington, D.C.), October 9, 2002.
2. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, *In the Parish of the Poor*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990).

tional donors resume loans and aid, if in two months the government would prosecute those who authored the attacks and murders of political opponents, strengthen the police and the judiciary, and name a credible electoral commission—dropping previous requirements for an electoral accord with the opposition known collectively as the Democratic Convergence. (See sidebar: Dealing in Bad Faith.)

Departures of key ministers reflect on Aristide's ability to meet these conditions—at least concerning human rights and the rule of law. On September 20, 2002, Haiti's minister for electoral negotiations Marc Bazin resigned, faulting the president on human rights and economic policy. And on September 29, Justice Minister Jean Baptiste Brown stepped down, complaining that he found himself "unable to substantively address serious issues such

as professionalization of the Haitian police and fighting against impunity."<sup>10</sup>

### BASKET-CASE ECONOMY

If Haiti was pillaged by the Duvalier family, it has been battered by political turmoil ever since. According to the World Bank, real per-capita gross domestic product (GDP) declined about two percent per year during the 1980s. During the 1990s, it fell 2.5 percent per year. The lack of a functioning, transparent government and widespread corruption deserve much of the blame. The World Bank's 1998 Poverty Report put it more bluntly: "Haiti has never had a tradition of governance aimed at providing services to the population or creating an environment conducive to sustainable growth."

10. Michael Deibert, "Haiti Justice Minister Resigned Citing Obstacles to His Reforms," Reuters, September 29, 2002.

Last year, according to The Heritage Foundation's *2002 Index of Economic Freedom*, Haiti, with nearly 8 million people, generated little more than a \$2.9 billion gross domestic product, which amounts to \$371 per capita—one of the lowest figures in the hemisphere.<sup>11</sup> In 1999, it imported \$800 million worth of goods and services (half from the United States) while its exports only totaled \$359 million. Adult literacy is now estimated at 48 percent, while unemployment stands at about 60 percent. Millions of adult Haitians eke out a living in subsistence agriculture in one of the most environmentally degraded places in the world, while only about 30,000 reportedly have jobs in manufacturing or assembly industries. Electricity is available for only a few hours a day and 80 percent of the nation's water supply is contaminated.

Thus far, direct assistance to Haiti has failed because the current government has followed the extra-institutional governing patterns of previous regimes: intimidating opponents, coercing entrepreneurs, and making empty promises to the nation's majority poor. While some Haitian elites view the situation with alarm, most remain largely silent, fearing retribution and attacks on their businesses. Sensing little momentum for change among the country's leaders, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan recommended curtailing the United Nations International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH) in November 2000.<sup>12</sup> In 2001, he stressed that any resumption of aid could not take place without a resolution to the political crisis.

Grants channeled solely to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been more effectively spent to the point that the country probably could not function without them. NGOs maintain public

health clinics, run schools, support grassroots civic organizations, and operate needed agricultural extension services. In FY 2000, the U.S. Agency for International Development disbursed \$79.8 million in such assistance and, in FY 2001, \$67 million—making the United States Haiti's largest donor.<sup>13</sup> But according to the World Bank, such programs are "short-term solutions" that do best at providing humanitarian relief and building minor infrastructure while leaving national institutions largely untouched.<sup>14</sup> More to the point, excessive reliance on them removes incentives to develop effective homegrown services.

## HUMAN RIGHTS WOES

Since returning to power, Aristide has used violence to intimidate opponents and enforce political discipline, resulting in death for some and exile for others. During the parliamentary, municipal, and local elections held May 21, 2000, President Préval and Aristide reportedly pressured 84-year-old Provisional Electoral Council chief Leon Manus to confirm a fraudulent vote count in favor of Lavalas candidates. "At the top governmental level, unequivocal messages were transmitted to me on the consequences that would follow if I refused to publish the false final results," he declared. Refusing to do so, he resigned and fled to the United States.<sup>15</sup>

Established in 1995, the Haitian National Police (HNP) was intended to be a non-partisan security force to replace the pro-junta military. Yet, in his second term of office, President Aristide politicized it, filling key positions with Lavalas party loyalists.<sup>16</sup> Although the police are not always abusive, they often stand by while partisan gangs commit crimes. A typical example of this occurred in May

11. Gerald P. O'Driscoll, Jr., Kim R. Holmes, and Mary Anastasia O'Grady, *2002 Index of Economic Freedom* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 2002), p. 217.

12. In doing so, Secretary-General Annan condemned Aristide's missteps and decried the tug-of-war between the Lavalas Party and its political opponents. See United Nations, "United Nations International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti," Report of the Secretary-General, A/55/618, November 9, 2000.

13. U.S. Agency for International Development, "Country Overview: Haiti," at <http://www.usaid.gov/country/lac/ht> (October 8, 2002).

14. World Bank, *Haiti Country Assistance Evaluation*, February 2002, p. 13.

15. The two-round election reportedly cost the United States \$23 million to help set up. See Mark Fineman, "Haiti Election Offers Voters No Choices," *The Los Angeles Times*, July 10, 2000. Manus also claimed that Lavalas only won five of the 17 contested seats in the Senate outright, as opposed to 16 claimed by the government. See also "Haiti Defies Critics, Lets Elections Stand," Associated Press, July 20, 2000.

2001, when a pro-government mob surrounded a house where the opposition Democratic Convergence was meeting in the city of Les Cayes. The mob threw rocks and fired weapons. Nearby police took more than an hour to respond. When they arrived, they arrested the Convergence leader inside, at first claiming they were protecting him, and then later stating that a complaint had been filed against him.<sup>17</sup>

Now Aristide turns to mobs to do what the police cannot. His “zero tolerance” policy announced in June 2001 made it unnecessary to bring suspects to court if citizens or police caught them in a criminal act. According to Human Rights Watch in its *2002 World Report*, “his words were widely interpreted by Haitians as an invitation to vigilante justice and police violence. Human rights groups reported that in the months following the speech, dozens of suspected thieves were killed by mobs.”

Sadly, gang attacks have claimed the lives of others as well. Last December, Brignol Lindor, news director of Radio Echo 2000 in Petit-Goâve, was hacked to death by a partisan group. A few days before, the town’s deputy mayor Dubay Bony reportedly called for “zero tolerance” to be enforced against a list of political opponents that included Lindor. An inquiry carried out by the Haitian Press Federation found that members from the popular organization, “Domi Nan Bwa,” close to Lavalas, admitted committing the murder. In 2001 alone, 40 journalists were attacked or threatened and a dozen were forced into exile, according to the French-based Reporters Without Borders.<sup>18</sup>

Ironically, the same mobs that Aristide unleashed on opponents are now involved in internecine

power struggles. Some are competing for supremacy as Lavalas supporters. In others, discontent over unfulfilled promises and fears that Aristide may be purging some followers have created rebellion. Last August, street thugs in Gonaïves broke a former Lavalas militant out of jail and simultaneously released 158 prisoners, sparking riots that lasted more than two weeks.<sup>19</sup>

## CHOOSING A NEW COURSE

Propping up Haiti’s faltering government with blank checks will only deepen the country’s misery, inviting funds to be pocketed by self-serving leaders and paid out to violent supporters. Another armed intervention would only impose a new fix at great cost, possibly with similarly disappointing results. After all, the Clinton Administration did both in backing a little understood politician in his bid to reclaim a lost presidency—committing \$3 billion and 20,000 troops. It then compounded its difficulties by pursuing a quick-exit strategy that encouraged a subsequent multilateral pullout before functional institutions could be established. Now is not the moment to repeat those mistakes.

Denying aid while expecting Haiti’s leadership to produce reforms by themselves only encourages the current disintegration of the state and the accelerated flight of refugees—impacting Caribbean neighbors, such as the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas, as well as the United States. Last year, the Dominican Republic deported some 12,000 Haitian migrants and the rising tide of drug smuggling from Haiti prompted President Hipólito Mejía to double his military forces across the Dominican-Haitian border.<sup>20</sup> The Bahamas and the United States also receive asylum seekers, but more worrisome is the

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16. Following President Aristide’s inauguration for a second term in February 2001, Haiti’s internationally regarded Judiciary Police director Mario Andrésol was replaced by a man described as the president’s chauffeur, then pursued by gunmen who turned out to be fellow officers, and detained on suspicion of inciting a coup—all presumably on Aristide’s orders. During his tenure, Andrésol uncovered money-laundering plots and confiscated drugs from persons close to Aristide. Mark Fineman, “Haitian Lawman Released,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 17, 2001, p. A-3.
17. U.S. Department of State, “Haiti,” *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2001*, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, March 4, 2002.
18. “Haiti: Annual Report 2002,” Reporters Sans Frontiers, at [http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=1402](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=1402) (October 21, 2002).
19. Amiot Metayer, head of a Lavalas support group called the “Cannibal Army,” charged that Aristide was treating his supporters like criminals and called for his ouster. After the prison break and riots that rocked Gonaïves, Metayer and his followers resolved their differences with Aristide and declared renewed allegiance to the president. See “Metayer Calls for Aristide Overthrow,” Radio Signal (Haiti), August 6, 2002 on the Haiti Democracy Project website at <http://haiti.cjb.net> (October 16, 2002); and “Latest from Gonaïves,” Signal FM (Haiti), August 13, 2002, also at <http://haiti.cjb.net> (October 16, 2002).



erosion of public security, extreme poverty, and attendant disorder that make Haiti a potential playground for international drug traffickers, criminals, and even terrorists.

Haiti's only hope for improvement is through targeted, supervised assistance to build institutions at the national level and sustained efforts to promote accountable, democratic governance at the community level. The challenge is to check authoritarian impulses of those who would unfairly impose their will on others and create space for democratic leaders and budding entrepreneurs. Some of the foundation has already been laid. In 1987, Haiti adopted a workable democratic constitution. Opposition parties exist and might eventually gain a foothold if they are permitted to reach out to a grassroots constituency. Independent media continue to broadcast and print, despite government and partisan intimidation. Moreover, Haitians are hardworking and their cities feature vibrant marketplaces where free choice is practiced on a daily basis.

To help build on those strengths, the United States and other international donors should pursue a coordinated policy to:

- **Avoid supporting dictatorial leaders in favor of promoting democratic institutions from the grassroots up.** The Clinton Administration's support for Aristide mistakenly placed hopes in a demagogue, from whom Haitians traditionally would expect nothing but exploitation.<sup>21</sup> Consensus is better cultivated at the neighborhood level where trust between individuals is typically the highest. Building democracy from the bottom up not only encourages broader citizen understanding of government as public service, but also promotes the idea of a social contract and provides training opportunities for new leaders.
- **Direct grants to non-governmental organizations that promote better community-level governance, citizenship awareness, more effective education, and humanitarian relief.** Existing U.S. international broadcasting and public diplomacy programs that provide information on civic responsibility and how democracies function should be fine-tuned to support such efforts. This kind of assistance is less susceptible to misuse and can be easily adapted to the needs of the moment as long as its purpose is to promote self-determination and self-sufficiency. While it might not directly address large-scale reforms in national institutions, it maintains momentum.
- **Offer to resume targeted direct assistance, provided Haitian leadership accepts donor oversight.** A U.S.-led multilateral donor commission should provide on-site approval and supervision of any resources used to reform national institutions. Priorities should be to: (1) hold internationally supervised elections<sup>22</sup> to establish the legitimacy of the government and insure that Haitians may freely determine their own leaders; (2) rebuild the judiciary and police to create a climate of order and encourage investor confidence; and, (3) reestablish other national and municipal agencies and help them develop planning and coordination capabilities. Making a conditioned offer rather than withholding assistance avoids the stigma of sanctions and places the burden on the current leadership to take action.<sup>23</sup> It could also be a way to help Haiti qualify someday for assistance under such programs as the Bush Administra-

20. Máximo Manuel Pérez, "Mej'a: Hait' Es Centro de Drogas en el Caribe," *Listin Diario* (Santo Domingo), September 27, 2002.

21. For an incisive critique of this strategy, see Georges A. Fauriol, "Haiti Alert—Searching for Haiti Policy: The Next Ninety Days," Center for Strategic and International Studies, *Hemisphere Focus*, Volume IX, Issue 3, June 19, 2001, at <http://www.csis.org/americas/pubs/h010619.htm> (December 18, 2001).

22. Supervision should be maintained until a climate exists that ensures the independence and safety of electoral officials and poll workers. The United Nations provided such oversight for elections in Mozambique in October 1994.

23. According to James R. Morrell, Director of the Washington-based Haiti Democracy Project, the current aid cutoff may not hold up to Aristide's calculated strategy to exploit "natural sympathy for the hemisphere's poorest nation." He also concludes that the policy of aid denial, although principled, may be too passive to keep Haiti's problems at bay. See Morrell's report "U.S. Policy Options Toward Haiti," Haiti Democracy Project, September 10, 2002, at <http://www.inxil.com/~haiti/beta/beta2/page.php?cat=art&articleID=158> (October 9, 2002).

tion's Millennium Challenge Account—intended to “reward nations that root out corruption, respect human rights, and adhere to the rule of law.”<sup>24</sup>

- **Persuade Haitian leaders to take advantage of trade opportunities to restore growth.** Haitian leaders, entrepreneurs, and workers need incentives for reforms as well as a market for their goods if they are to achieve prosperity on the basis of their own efforts. One such incentive already exists with the U.S. Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) that allows Haiti and other member countries duty-free access to the United States for most goods, with some limits placed on apparel. Bills sponsored by Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH) and Representative Ben Gilman (R-NY) would lift some of those limitations.<sup>25</sup> But all of these benefits depend on Haiti's ability to comply with existing trade obligations, establish the rule of law, and eliminate bureaucratic uncertainties that block foreign and local investment.
- **Hold Haitian officials accountable for their conduct by revoking visas and freezing the U.S. bank accounts of those who violate local and international laws, including those who engage in human rights abuse.** U.S. federal law enforcement agencies should investigate all credible allegations against leaders accused of malfeasance, money laundering, involvement in drug or arms trafficking, or human rights abuse. The United States should urge other regional allies and organizations such as the European Union to do the same.

## CONCLUSION

In 2004, Haiti will celebrate its bicentennial as an independent republic. It would be nice if it could achieve some measure of progress by then. However, promoting a level playing field to enable democracy and transparency to flower could take decades. Unsupervised aid to the regime will not solve any problems, but rather will make them worse by putting money into the wrong hands. Assistance through NGOs buys time, but leaves no lasting solution. Only a sustained and coordinated commitment by the international community to provide direction will help establish the security umbrella necessary to ensure that the practices of compromise and consensus can take hold.

In the interim, disaffected officials from the current government, dissidents, and the unemployed poor will continue to flee to the United States, the Dominican Republic, and the Bahamas—wherever they think their chances of survival and earning a living are better. They will be competing with hundreds of thousands of migrants fleeing violence in Colombia, misrule in Venezuela, economic meltdown in Argentina, and other American states with troubled economies or simmering disaffection. Helping all of these hemispheric neighbors resolve their difficulties is a daunting task and U.S. policymakers will face hard choices in deciding how and where to employ scarce resources.

If Haiti's government accepts targeted assistance with supervision, the road to peace and prosperity will still be long. For one thing, the tradition of winner-take-all politics and economic predation hangs like a pall over any outcome. For another, the countryside is an environmental disaster; and depleted resources are forcing what was once a

24. “President Proposes \$5 Billion Plan to Help Developing Nations,” Remarks by President George W. Bush of Global Development at the Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, D.C., March 14, 2002.

25. The Haiti Economic Recovery Opportunity Act of 2002 was introduced October 16, 2002, in both the U.S. Senate (S. 3123) and the House of Representatives (H.R. 5560). It would amend the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act to allow Haiti additional trade preferences, provided its government makes continual progress toward establishing a market economy, the rule of law, and policies to reduce poverty and improve education. Moreover, the bill implores Haiti to combat bribery and corruption, protect human rights, and deny support for terrorists.

rural society into cities where there are few jobs, promoting social fragmentation. But if Haiti's leaders do not accept conditions and instead choose to go on ruling with impunity, the road will also be steeply uphill. Existing businesses may pull out of Haiti's turbulent economy and the state could dissolve amid worse violence and chaos. In that case, Haiti's progress will depend almost entirely on

small steps at the local level to encourage the kind of consensus that one day would allow ordinary Haitians to determine their own future.

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