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# STRATEGY Research Project

# **AVERTING CONTINUATION OF FAILED U.S. POLICY WITH HAITI**

## BY

MR. JONATHAN E. LOESCH Department of the Navy

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**USAWC CLASS OF 2001** 

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## AVERTING CONTINUATION OF FAILED U.S. POLICY WITH HAITI

by

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#### ABSTRACT

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TITLE: Averting Continuation of Failed U.S. Policy with Haiti

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 05 April 2001 PAGES: 36 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

U.S. policy, and indeed the world's policy, towards Haiti has not reversed that island-nation's long-term trends of abject poverty, failed economy, widespread corruption, illiteracy, unsustainable population growth, and dysfunctional law enforcement, judicial, and political systems. Past short-term solutions with limited objectives have not appreciably alleviated Haiti's long-standing problems. Both the international community and the Haitian people, have focused their expectations on quick solutions. However, the United States should develop a long-term policy toward Haiti to change long-standing and well-ingrained problems. Haiti needs increased foreign assistance to remedy the short falls in her educational, judicial, political, economic, agricultural, and environmental problems. This study analyzes past and present U.S. policy and proposes changes to policy and strategy that in the long-term will not only prove more effective, but also less costly by eliminating the necessity of periodic military involvements in Haiti. Only through such long-term commitment can a truly democratic Haiti become a self-sufficient and responsible member of the world community.

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#### AVERTING CONTINUATION OF FAILED U.S. POLICY WITH HAITI

This study explores how Haiti went from her promising beginnings to becoming the only failed state in the Western Hemisphere today. A short historical perspective will depict the political and economic developments of the country- showing how corruption, centralization of power, instability, population growth, and a poor educational system, among other issues, have contribute to her failure. A review of Haitian demographics offers insight into Haiti's current situation. Specifically, population and migration, both internal and external, are critical issues.

This study reviews U.S. interests in Haiti- past, present, and future. Geography, migration, and humanitarian problems are explored in relation to U.S. interests. U.S. policies are analyzed in a historical perspective, with emphasis on their current impact. These policies are divided into three main periods: Pre-Cold War, Cold War, Post-Cold War/Current. Post-Cold War U.S. policy towards Haiti has been based on a short-term, band-aid approach- a failed policy. The study concludes with a long-term approach to U.S. policy which addresses the most pressing Haitian issues.

#### **BACKGROUND OF HAITI**

#### HISTORICAL

Haiti became the second independent country in the Americas and the first independent Black nation in the world after having successfully fought for independence against the French Napoleonic Army. Haitian independence was won in 1804 after the only successful slave rebellion in history. Toussaint Louverture, a former slave, fought for Haitian independence starting in 1793. Though Louverture was captured and exiled to France in 1802 by a force of 18,000 of Napoleon's army, revolution had started in Haiti. A follower of Louverture, J.J.Desslines, was finally able to proclaim independence in 1804.<sup>1</sup>

During the revolution and for a period after it, Whites living in Haiti were massacred. The extreme cruelty prevalent in the Haitian plantation slavery system fueled hatred and this subsequent massacre. Desslines ordered the killing of the remaining Whites in the spring of 1804 despite protest by some of the minority Mulattoes who served in his army. This protest, and subsequent disagreements on division of land, marked the beginning of racial division among the *noir* (dark skinned) and the *clair* (light skinned - Mulatto) that has continued to this date. Desslines was killed in 1806, then the country was divided into North and South. Haiti eventually reunited in 1820.<sup>2</sup> Thus Haiti fell into severe crisis just three years after its

independence. From then on she was ruled by a procession of autocratic leaders who were later forcibly deposed: this trend continues into the present.

Between 1843 and 1915 Haiti experienced 22 changes of governments, mostly as a result of violent overthrows. As violence escalated even further in 1915, the elected government of Haiti requested the U.S. government to intervene. Subsequently, U.S. forces served continuously in Haiti until 1934. The only other time of relative stability for Haiti was the 30 years of dictatorship under the Duvalier family, which ended in 1986 with the ouster of Jean-Claude Duvalier.<sup>3</sup>

The election of 1956-57, in which Dr. Francois Duvalier was elected president, brought about new levels of violence without traditional constraints. Duvalier came to power with backing from the masses and with much hope on the part of the international community. He soon disappointed them all. With a new constitution written to solidify his power, control of the press, and a new justice system based on a military council, Duvalier systematically tightened his grip on Haiti. <sup>4</sup>

Duvalier replaced army leaders with his own loyal following. In addition, he established a new paramilitary group called the Tonton Makout- a loyal, numerous, widespread group that enjoyed many privileges beyond those enjoyed by the army. The Tonton Makout became widely known for their ruthlessness and brutality. Duvalier knew the people of Haiti well. He knew that their allegiance could be easily bought. He knew well the power of voodoo in their lives. He exploited his people through corruption and superstition, but mostly through fear. The Tonton Makout, whom Duvalier used for intelligence gathering, incorporated voodoo practices to instill fear in the populace.<sup>5</sup>

The state's total seizure of civil society polarized of the country into two camps, either for or against Duvalier. Families became so fearful that fathers and sons could not trust each other. The very mention of someone being anti-Duvalier, even in the heat of an argument or fight, would terrorize the accused with fear of death at the hands of the Tontons. <sup>6</sup>

Duvalier's regime was so systematically entrenched within Haiti that even upon his death by natural causes in 1971, his regime lived on through his son Jean-Claude. The young Duvalier enjoyed better relations with the international community than had his father, since he conducted a less brutal and violent regime. However, corruption and self-serving attitudes did not change. Indeed the pervasiveness of corruption increased throughout his administration and included other family members as well. Even so, the Haitian economy improved during J.C.Duvalier's rule, primarily through the expansion of light industry – assembly of garments, sporting goods, dolls, and electronic components. Much of this expansion came from an

increasing number of U.S. firms conducting business in Haiti, attracted by low wages and a favorable tax structure. By 1985, however, in reaction to growing inflation and food shortages, there was a popular revolt against J.C. Duvalier, who was flaunting his own vast wealth, acquired through corruption. The government overreacted by shooting demonstrators, including children, in the street. So a spiral of more demonstrations erupted. Duvalier escaped aboard a U.S. military transport plane in February 1986 and went to France, with most of his accumulated \$500 million intact.<sup>7</sup>

Following the Duvalier regimes came a series of provisional governments. These governments were primarily military in nature. They ruled through the National Council of Government and promised free elections. But within a year there were numerous protests and more civilian deaths at the hands of the military than during the 15 years under J.C. Duvalier.<sup>8</sup>

After several false starts at elections, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a charismatic Catholic priest who built his own political party, called the Lavalas, was elected president in December 1990 with 67 percent of the vote. The OAS and the UN, among others in the international community, saw the election as fair. Aristide made some progress in reducing long-standing corruption, but his revolutionary rhetoric alarmed many in the army and the country's elite, as well as foreign investors. Some of the foreign-owned assembly plants closed. Aristide further alienated the mulatto ruling class by the simple fact of his being a *noir* (dark skinned). A military coup in September 1991 overthrew Aristide. He fled to the U.S. From 1991 to October 1994 two parallel governments ruled Haiti – the military leaders in Haiti and the exiled government led by Aristide. During this period there were numerous economic sanctions imposed on Haiti in an attempt to force the *de facto* government to relinquish control to president Aristide. While the porous sanctions had little effect on those in power, they created great hardships on ordinary citizens.<sup>9</sup> These sanctions proved not only ineffective as a tool of policy, but also destroyed the fledgling new industry in Haiti, which has yet to recover.

#### SOCIAL ISSUES

Overpopulation is a chronic problem in Haiti. It would be even more serious were it not for the Haitians who have emigrated abroad. Today, émigrés make up 10 percent of the total Haitian population.<sup>10</sup> Haiti is about the size of Maryland, with about 11,000 square miles of primarily mountainous terrain. Its estimated population of 7.5 million, 95 percent of African descent and 5 percent of African/European descent, gives Haiti one of the densest populations in the western hemisphere. Data from 1994 shows an average of almost 5 births per woman during childbearing years in Haiti, compared to 2.3 per woman in the Dominican Republic.

Annual population growth is 2-3 percent in Haiti. Were it not for outward migration, this growth rate would be even higher. At the present rate of growth, Haiti's population will reach 13 million by 2025. Such rapid population growth is especially problematic in an agrarian society where only 20 percent of the land is arable.<sup>11</sup>

Rural-to-urban migration has been a recent phenomenon. In 1960, the population was 16 percent urban; by 1995 this percentage had increased to 31 percent. The effects of this internal migration are especially felt in the capital, Port-au-Prince, where the population exceeds 1.6 million. That is 15 times the size of the next largest city – Cap Haitian; and over twice the size of all provincial cities combined. In 1950, the relative size difference between Port-au-Prince and Cap Haitian was only six-fold. The cause of this migration is twofold: First, 'supply push' is caused by the decrease in agricultural output thereby reducing job prospects in rural areas. Second, 'demand pull' began in the 70's to 80's when jobs were being created in the cities, primarily in the assembly industries in and around Port-au-Prince.<sup>12</sup> Now a large population dwells in huge slums without sufficient infrastructure such as water, sewage, highways, etc. This situation creates angry, unemployed crowds in the streets.

Only 35 percent of Haitian adults are literate, due primarily to limited access to public education. Even though Haiti is the poorest nation in the Americas, with a per capita income of less than \$400, private schools provide 75 percent of the educational programs offered. This paradoxical situation is mainly due to a lack of public schools. Most of the educators are unqualified-- only 4 percent can perform basic arithmetic operations at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level-- and unmotivated—earning on average \$60/month (less than 25 percent of a police officer's salary). Further, only 10 percent of the population speaks French (mostly in the cities), while all Haitians speak Creole. This dichotomy in language and literacy creates a divide between the populace and the government, since most government business is conducted in French.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>•</sup> Health issues in Haiti include the highest rates of AIDS and infant mortality in the Western Hemisphere. About 10 percent of the urban population is infected with Human Immuno Deficiency Virus (HIV), and half the women of reproductive age have some form of untreated sexually transmitted disease. Only 30 percent of the children are fully immunized against childhood diseases. Part of the health problems within Haiti can be attributed to the fact that only 60 percent of the population has access to health services. Accordingly, life expectancy in Haiti is only 49 years.<sup>14</sup>

#### POLITICAL STRUCTURE

According to Ernest Preeg (US ambassador to Haiti in 1981-83, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Finance and Development, Chief Economist and Deputy Assistant to USAID, and an acclaimed author), "Haiti has a 200-year history of consistently bad governance, ... Public service is deeply associated with self-serving power and financial gain, a cultural failing that will take many years to change." <sup>15</sup>

So there has been little stability within Haiti. The U.S. Marine occupation from 1915 to 1934 represented the first time Haiti enjoyed a period of stability and order. The occupation led to greatly improved infrastructure within Haiti, though practically all improvements were in Port-au-Prince, resulting in further concentration of commerce.<sup>16</sup> A by-product of the occupation was the formation of the first professional army in Haiti -- the Garde. The Garde was a combined army and police force, further centralizing power in the capital. It then became a government tool to control the internal population.<sup>17</sup>

Centralization of both political and economic power within Port-au-Prince, especially by the Head of State, became almost absolute in Haiti during the period of the Duvaliers. Since that time, urban dwellers have become the only ones who could advance socially, even though they have been primarily non-contributors--almost parasitic in nature-- in Haiti's agrarian society. The primary means for social and economic elevation for Haitians is through government employment. By near total dominance in the job market, the government –and hence the head of state --maintain the power to influence the daily lives of most urbanites. In turn, government employees owe allegiance to the government and head of state. An over-staffed and inefficient government is one of the more immediate and visible effects of this practice; another effect is that peasants have tended to withdraw from political involvement as all power and influence are retained within the capital.<sup>18</sup> This centralization is further revealed by recent data showing that while 20 percent of the population resides within Port-au-Prince, 80 percent of state expenditures and 93 percent of all electrical consumption in Haiti occurs in the capital.<sup>19</sup>

By centralizing tax collection even more and maintaining complete controls on the redistribution of taxes to local government barons, F. Duvalier enjoyed unlimited power in Haiti. All façade of honesty was abandoned as government officials no longer concealed corruption. Violence by the government, primarily by the Tonton Makouts, increased. No effort was made to mask this violence and no one was ever punished for excessive force. A mass exodus out of Haiti of the educated elite occurred shortly after F. Duvalier's rise to power, with a resulting 'brain drain'.<sup>20</sup> Expectations in Haiti today still reflect this self-serving attitude by those in

positions of power and the acceptance of violence and corruption by the population as a way of life.

The 1990 presidential elections were the first fair elections in over 30 years. Yet, even with vast popular support for Aristide, the ruling class (military and social elite) was able to violently overthrow him. Aristide was able to return to Haiti in1994 only through international intervention.

In February 1996 Rene Garcia Preval, a close associate of Aristide, was elected president. Elections in November 2000 put Aristide back in power, and the Lavalas party has maintained control since 1991 (albeit interrupted for two years by the coup of 1991). Political corruption, this time by the Lavalas party, was most recently revealed during the senate elections in May of 2000 and also by the presidential elections in November of 2000.<sup>21</sup> Since Aristide's re-election, there has been an increase in violence within Port-au-Prince. The Democratic Convergence, an alliance of opposition leaders, has been the target of many public threats by Arisitide's supporters and subject as well to the prevailing violence in Port-au-Prince. On 9 January 2001, a death threat was read by a notorious militant supporter of Aristide to a crowd; it asserted that unless the opposition to President Aristide backed off, righteous crowds would kill 80 of Haiti's opposition politicians, turning "blood to ink, their skin to parchment and their skulls to inkwells." The government took no steps against the individual making the statement, and Aristide never disavowed the threat.<sup>22</sup>

In November 2000, Aristide was warned by a U.S. official (Don Steinber – an aid to Anthony Lake on temporary duty in Haiti) of a possible coup/assassination at the hands of individuals within the HNP, whom he named. Meanwhile, the opposition is charging that Aristide is preparing to set up a dictatorship.<sup>23</sup> Aristide has powerful enemies within Haiti, including those who overthrew him previously. Many of his enemies have joined the Democratic Convergence; they include the small, but powerful, Haitian bourgeoisie class who are prone to violence and who have old ties to the Duvaliers.<sup>24</sup> Aristide still enjoys vast popular support among the poor, especially those in the countryside; it is hard to imagine that he would not have won a majority in the November 2000 presidential elections, if fair elections had been held. The opposition party abstained from the elections, most likely because they knew Aristide's support was so strong.<sup>25</sup>

Haiti has continuing problems with Haiti's law enforcement and judicial systems. Corruption is again the largest factor. Personnel serving as law enforcement officers and those in the judicial system usually have the same self-serving attitude that encourages graft and corruption within other branches of government. Additionally, most law enforcement officers, as

well as judges, lack sufficient education and training competently perform their duties. Unnecessary and excessive violence by police officers is still commonplace, a holdover from the Duvaliers' regimes.

#### ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

First and foremost, Haiti is a country of extreme poverty: Over 80 percent of the population lives in abject poverty. The vast majority of Haitians depend on the agricultural sector for survival, primarily through subsistence farming. Coffee has been, and continues to be, the main export crop; other cash crops include mangoes, cocoa, sugarcane, and essential oils. Environmental degradation in the form of erosion and deforestation are major issues in Haiti. This situation is aggravated by Haiti's dependency on agriculture in a country where only 11 percent of the land is highly suitable for crops. Another 31 percent can be farmed, but only with restrictions to deal with erosion since Haiti is very mountainous. Only 29 percent of Haiti's terrain has a slope of less than 10 percent.<sup>26</sup>

Deforestation is extensive, caused primarily because wood, in the form of charcoal, supplies 70 percent of Haiti's energy. The charcoal industry cuts down 15-20 million trees per annum.<sup>27</sup> In addition to erosion and its direct effects on agriculture, this extreme deforestation in Haiti is causing desertification in areas, along with increased flooding, landslides, and silt problems in the rivers. Silt impacts hydroelectric capabilities (in particular the Peligre Dam which is shut down much of the year as a result of excessive silt).<sup>28</sup>

Productivity of the land has decreased substantially through the years due to ecological degradation caused by overuse/abuse of the land, erosion, and slash-and-burn farming techniques. Additionally, lack of modern farming techniques (fertilizer, pesticides, mechanization); disputed land tenure/titling and small plots of land have kept peasants from being able to invest capital—resulting in low productivity. Most farmers don't even use plows; instead they rely on hand tools such as hoes and digging sticks. With decreasing productivity of the land, and pressure by an increasing population, there is an increasing inclination to farm steep, marginal land, thereby increasing erosion problems. In the meantime, rural peasants migrate to urban areas seeking jobs and improved living standards.<sup>29</sup>

The migration of people to urban areas, where there are few jobs, creates a parasitic society in which the peasants support most of the rest of Haiti. Even with low agricultural productivity, peasants still generate most of the limited wealth within Haiti, whose exports are primarily agricultural products and are the source of most taxes.<sup>30</sup>

From the late 1970s to the early 1980s Haiti managed to attract foreign capital to grow light industry based on the availability of cheap labor, import privileges, and a favorable tax structure. This industry was mainly in the form of assembly plants, principally in the garment, sporting goods, electronic, toys, and doll industries. Increased corruption, expensive and unreliable energy/ electrical supplies, and increased competition from more stable nations caused this industry to decline.<sup>31</sup> As a result of the UN embargo from 1991-94, the industry collapsed and has not recovered.<sup>32</sup> After some initial progress in the economy, assisted primarily by international aid, the Haitian economy has been imploding since the last half of 2000. The national currency has lost 50 percent of its value, and there has been a drastic increase in inflation. Foreign aid makes up over 50 percent of Haiti's budget.<sup>33</sup>

#### **U.S. INTERESTS**

#### PRE COLD WAR

U.S. interests in Haiti during this period centered on access to secure shipping lanes, in particular the approach to the Panama Canal, which is of great strategic importance to the U.S. A related concern was any intrusion by a European nation attempting to influence a nation within the Western Hemisphere, particularly in the Caribbean area.

#### COLD WAR

During the Cold War period, U.S. interests in Haiti were consistent with the overarching policy of containment of communism. This period coincided with the Duvaliers' regimes. Those dictators took drastic measures against the small communist party in Haiti. In return, the U.S. supported these dictatorships to limit the spread of communism, which was a concern at the time, especially considering the proximity of Cuba to both Haiti and the U.S.<sup>34</sup> Economic interests were not of great significance, since there were few economic ties between the U.S. and Haiti.

#### POST COLD WAR/ CURRENT

With the end of the Cold War, U.S. interests no longer focused on containment of communism in the Western Hemisphere. Instead, U.S. interests in Haiti came to focus on such issues as illegal migration, humanitarian concerns, and infectious diseases. A bipartisan group sponsored by the Belfer Center, the Commission on America's National Interests, lists five 'vital' US interests. One of these vital interests is to "prevent the emergence of hostile major powers or failed states on US borders".<sup>35</sup> Haiti, for all practical purposes, could be considered on the

U.S. border due to a combination of proximity and ease of Haitians' access via small boats to Florida. Few would argue against listing Haiti as a 'failed' state.

While it can be argued whether or not these issues in Haiti constitute 'vital' or 'important' national interests, the fact remains that the U.S. has deployed troops twice to Haiti, most recently in 1994. However, widespread political views in the U.S. would most likely judge our interests in Haiti in the 'important' category.

The U.S. has no significant commercial or national security interests in Haiti.<sup>36</sup>

Of primary concern to the U.S. today is migration. There have been periods of mass illegal migration from Haiti to Florida via small boats. From a trickle in the 1950s, to a high of 20,000 Haitians in 1970, illegal immigration has played an increasing role in U.S. interest in Haiti. During periods of unrest and hardships in Haiti, and depending on U.S. policy, the illegal migration flow can increase dramatically. For example, in May 1992, 1500 Haitians per week were intercepted en-route to Florida.<sup>37</sup> Most of these migrants had poor labor skills and were not generally perceived as being potential contributors to either the economy or the society of the U.S. Further, these new immigrants pose a health hazard threat: Haiti's high incidence of communicable diseases, in particular HIV/AIDs, represents a threat to U.S. interests.

If human conditions in Haiti again deteriorate to the point where a mass exodus would start anew, the U.S. will very likely become involved in another military intervention. A strong proponent of intervention would likely be the Florida State Government, whose governor is Jeb Bush, brother to President Bush. This situation, especially from a populous and politically important state such as Florida, would play a significant role in how the U.S. would react to new wave of illegal Haitian immigrants landing on Florida's shores.

Humanitarian interests and respect for human rights in Haiti represent another U.S. interest. The American public is not apt to stand by idly while people starve and are murdered, especially in a country as close as Haiti. Humanitarian issues in Haiti are of special interest to the more than one million Haitian-American citizens living in the U.S. Most of these citizens are recent immigrants and maintain close family contacts in Haiti. Haitian-Americans, in conjunction with many sympathetic African-Americans as well as other recent immigrants, exert significant political influence in U.S. politics.<sup>38</sup>

Proximity has another effect as well. Ease of travel allows journalists easier access to Haiti than to other, more distant, failed states. Easier access leads, then, to a more pronounced 'CNN' effect (where events from around the world are more readily and rapidly transmitted to people's living rooms via instant news coverage).<sup>39</sup>

Another U.S. interest is Haiti's role in the drug trade. Though Haiti is not a large producer of illicit drugs, she does serve an increasing role in the transshipment of drugs. A corrupt and weak law enforcement system, mountainous terrain, and large coastline attract illegal drug traffickers. Haiti has numerous uncontrolled points of entry for aircraft and vessels. They are ideal sites for Columbian, Panamanian, and Venezuelan traffickers staging drugs for shipment into the U.S. and Europe. An estimated 15 percent of all drugs entering the U.S. are transshipped through Haiti and neighboring Dominican Republic.<sup>40</sup>

### **U.S. POLICY**

#### PRE COLD WAR

Pre-Cold War policy centered on the principles of the Monroe Doctrine. This doctrine declared that the U.S. would assume responsibility for all of the Americas, and more specifically, would keep European powers from interfering in the Western Hemisphere. The U.S. became involved in Haiti in July 1915 when, after quick successions of presidents, an uprising occurred in Port-au-Prince. The Haitian president was extracted from the French embassy by a mob and literally torn to pieces in the streets.<sup>41</sup>

U.S. marines landed in Haiti within the month to establish order. They remained for 20 years. During this occupation, the U.S. maintained veto power over any government decisions within Haiti. Marines improved Haiti's infrastructure during this period, primarily in Port-au-Prince, further concentrating commercial power in the capital.<sup>42</sup> This effect of increasing concentration of commercial power within Port-au-Prince resulted in facilitating the eventual establishment of an autocratic government by Duvalier years later.

#### COLD WAR

Haiti's location near Cuba brought about a new U.S. policy toward Haiti after Castro declared his ties with Moscow. Initially, Francois Duvalier had problems with the Kennedy administration due to Duvalier's authoritarian and oppressive form of government.<sup>43</sup>

Duvalier managed to ease concerns about his dictatorship by convincing U.S. officials that the only guarantee against communism was a totalitarian government in Haiti. Washington's support for Duvalier's regime grew after Kennedy's death, as concern about Cuba and the spread of communism increased. By 1971, U.S. support for the Duvalier regime even included the presence of U.S. naval vessels patrolling off the coast of Haiti to ensure the smooth transition of presidency from F. Duvalier to his son, Jean-Claude, after the former's death. U.S. support increased along with U.S. aid, partially in response to a decrease in government-

sponsored violence in Haiti under Jean-Claude Duvalier.<sup>44</sup> After a widespread revolt against J.C. Duvalier in 1985, the U.S. assisted in his departure to France via a C-141 military transport plane on 30 January 1986.<sup>45</sup>

The National Council of Government was supported by the Reagan administration with increased military aid of \$2.8 million. However, this government was short-lived, and Haiti fell into a chaotic period prior to the elections in December 1990.

#### POST COLD WAR

Coinciding with the end of the Cold War was the democratic election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide as president of Haiti in December 1990, but he was quickly toppled by a military coup in September 1991.

The U.S. responded to the coup by taking the lead in implementing an international UN embargo that took effect in November 1991 and lasted until October 1994. This embargo had bipartisan support in the U.S. and spanned the administrations of U.S. presidents Bush and Clinton. The embargo was designed to force the de-facto government to allow the return of President Aristide to power. Even with a progressively tighter embargo, the desired outcome did not occur. The embargo proved porous, and Haiti's military and political elite were merely inconvenienced by it, certainly not routed from office by it.<sup>46</sup>

After the coup in 1991, political persecutions against Aristide's supporters (reportedly hundreds of Aristide's supporters were killed by the 'illegal' government) along with worsening economic conditions as a result of the embargo caused a dramatic increase in illegal migration of Haitians bound for U.S. shores aboard un-seaworthy boats. Initial U.S. policy was to treat these Haitian boat people as refugees seeking political asylum as Aristide supporters. Camps were set up to house them at the U.S. Naval Base Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. This U.S. policy encouraged other Haitians to follow. By May 1992, with Guantanamo near capacity at 13,000 refugees, and an additional 1,500 arriving per week, President Bush issued an executive order to return all interdicted Haitians to Haiti, which caused an immediate cessation of new refugees. But this policy provoked a political outcry both internationally and within the U.S. From the international side -- in accordance to the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees -- no country shall expel or return a refugee "in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories wherein his life or freedom would be threatened."47 Within the U.S., the Haitian American community, human rights groups, and certain democratic members of Congress objected to the new policy. Bill Clinton, while campaigning for president, condemned the Bush policy. Once Clinton was elected in November 1992, boat-building in Haiti increased

in anticipation of a change of policy by the new administration. However, political advisors to Clinton convinced him to continue the Bush policy, at least temporarily. As it turned out, the policy remained in effect until Aristide's return two years later. So the expected tide of refugees never started.

President Aristide and General Cedras, the senior Haitian Army officer, signed a UNbrokered agreement in July 1993 which would return Aristide as president. This agreement was not honored by the Haitian military. Consequently the UN and the U.S. reacted by tightening economic sanctions (UN Resolution 917) in an attempt to force the de-facto Haitian government to comply with the terms of the UN agreement. When the embargo did not achieve its objective, the UN passed Resolution 940 in July 1994. Resolution 940 authorized member states to use necessary means to restore Haitian constitutional rule and Aristide's presidency. The U.S. led a multinational force to carry out the UN's mandate by use of military intervention.<sup>48</sup>

The USS Harlan County, under UN flag and loaded with U.S. and Canadian special forces, was turned away at the dock in Haiti in October 1993 by a small band of shouting FRAPH (a quasi-governmental paramilitary group) members carrying small arms. The USS Harlan County's mission was to ensure that the UN agreement, signed by both Aristide and General Cedras, would take effect as planned. Cedras was to resign on 15 October and Aristide was to return on 30 October. The USS County was supposed to spearhead the way for a peaceful insertion of thousands of U.S. and Canadian troops.<sup>49</sup>

After the failure of the USS Harlan County, Operation Restore Democracy was launched in September 1994 to intervene, by force if necessary, to restore Haiti to constitutional rule with the return of the presidency to Aristide. The assembled Multinational Force (MNF) was led by, and primarily consisted of, U.S. troops. While the MNF was en-route, President Clinton dispatched ex-President Jimmy Carter, retired General Collin Powell, and Senator Sam Nunn to broker a deal with General Cedras. Facing imminent invasion by a vastly superior force, Gen. Cedras conceded and departed to Panama, allowing an un-opposed landing by the MNF. Initial policy was for U.S. forces to work with the Haitian Armed Forces (FADH). This changed shortly thereafter to disarming the FADH as well as the FRAPH (which was a quasi-governmental paramilitary group who supported the FADH). During the later stages of the intervention, U.S. policy changed once again, this time to treat the FRAPH as the "loyal opposition party" to the Lavalas party.<sup>50</sup>

President Aristide returned to Haiti on 15 October 1994. The 20,000 MNF troops in Haiti were gradually reduced and replaced by a UN peacekeeping mission by March 1995. Following the transitions to a new mission, by the end of 1996 no U.S. troops remained in Haiti.<sup>51</sup> Three

hundred UN civilian police, of which 30 were U.S. police officers, assisted in training and also. served as mentors for the Haitian National Police (HNP). The U.S. police officers were withdrawn in July 2000.<sup>52</sup> International donors continue the effort to improve the Haitian judicial system; key among these donors is USAID. The USAID package offers provisions for training judges, making administrative improvements, establishing tracking systems, and setting up an office to investigate complaints against police officers. However, after irregularities in recent elections and escalating violence against the opposition parties, much of this aid risks being withdrawn.<sup>53</sup>

U.S. costs for the intervention and subsequent peacekeeping operations in Haiti, as reported by the GAO, were \$1,616 million for the period from 1992-95. While this figure does not include the cost of aiding Haitian migrants in the U.S., it does include costs associated with Operation Uphold Democracy, costs of Guantanamo refugee operations and follow-on operations, including the training of police forces and judicial courts.<sup>54</sup> Since that time, Senator Strom Thurmond has cited the additional figure of \$20 million per year from 1995 through 1999. Thurmond's figure includes 'training' missions conducted in Haiti by the DoD.<sup>55</sup> The Carnegie Commission on Prevention of Deadly Conflict provides a figure of \$3 billion for total U.S. costs in the intervention. This commission concluded that the government's figure is under-reported due to political pressures.<sup>56</sup>

#### CURRENT U.S. POLICY

As a result of concerns over the fairness of the Haitian parliamentary elections in May 2000, Congress suspended most U.S. assistance to the Haitian police in September 2000, and U.S. observers -- in Haiti since Aristide's first election in 1990 -- were withdrawn.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, the U.S. provided no observers for the Haitian presidential election held in November 2000.<sup>58</sup>

USAID spending on Haiti has dropped significantly over the past three years (see Illustration 1). The State Department's Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 2001, shows that the actual obligation in FY99 was \$74.0 M, the estimated budget for FY00 was \$67.3, and the requested budget for FY01 is \$54.7.<sup>59</sup> This represents a 26 percent decrease in funding from 1999 to 2001. Additionally, the requested budgets are often decreased prior to execution (for instance: the State Department's FY00 report for the FY99 estimate was \$112M, while the FY01 report shows actual FY99 obligations as only \$74M -- a 34 percent decrease). Therefore, actual decreases in the future are likely to be significantly larger than depicted in the current budget estimates.



ILLUSTRATION 1. USAID FUNDING FOR FY99 - FY01

The U.S. attempts to influence Haiti's government by using USAID funding as leverage. This has resulted in large cuts in USAID funding across all programs, but has caused especially severe funding cuts in a program entitled "More Genuine Inclusive Democratic Governance Attained". This program's goal is to increase Haitian citizens' involvement in governance: elections, justice, government; and civil society.<sup>60</sup>

Haiti's location and weak law enforcement currently provides a base for drug traffickers in the business of transshipment of illicit drugs en-route to the U.S. The Drug Enforcement Agency increased its manpower in April of 2000 in Haiti by six agents (from one) in an attempt to work with the Haitian National Police.<sup>61</sup>.

# EVALUATION OF U.S. POLICY - POST COLD WAR

U.S. policy toward Haiti has been tentative, yet always seeking immediate results. A longterm approach has been lacking. Additionally, the U.S. has tried to impose democracy on a nation that has yet to provided the basic necessities, such as food and lodging, for its citizens. Higher ideals, such as democracy and human rights have little meaning in a society that has remained so long in a survival mode.

The UN embargo of 1991-94, sponsored by the U.S., did not achieve its goals. However, the embargo did destroy what little Haitian light industry existed prior to its enforcement and thereby increased economic hardship on the populace. To date, attempts at an economic recovery from the embargo have failed.<sup>62</sup>

U.S. reaction to the 1990 coup was slow and tentative. This was evident when the USS Harlan County was turned away at a dock in Port-au-Prince. U.S. embassy personnel waiting at the dock were surprised when the ship decided not to dock as a result of the small group of lightly armed FRAPH members shouting at the ship. The decision not to dock the ship was not discussed with embassy personnel as would be the normal procedure. A factor that may have influenced this decision was the recent tragedy involving the U.S. Rangers in Somalia just 18 days prior to the USS Harlan County's aborted docking.<sup>63</sup> A casualty aversion atmosphere, resulting from the Somalia incident may well have led to failure to observe normal procedures, which should have been followed. At any rate, the aborted docking of the USS Harlan County may have ensured the requirement of eventual intervention one year later at a much greater level of effort and involvement. Surely the FRAPH and General Cedras were encouraged and emboldened by the apparent effectiveness of their small demonstration on the dock. U.S. vacillation then required the U.S. and the international commitment to return Aristide to power.

The strategy of sending a strong MNF, in combination with a diplomatic group of respected negotiators, to Haiti served to demonstrate a real commitment, which became necessary after the USS Harlan County debacle. There was no resistance to the landing force and hence minimal casualties. Additionally, the multi-national operation provided legitimacy in an area of the world where an invading U.S.-only force had become an all-too-common event, recalling the 'gun boat' diplomacy of the past. Recent unilateral U.S. military actions during the 1980s, such as in Panama and Grenada, have been widely criticized in Latin America.<sup>64</sup>

Treatment of the FRAPH as an opposition party to the Lavalas lessened U.S. support within Haiti. Also, this equal recognition of the FRAPH and the Lavalas was not in keeping with the humanitarian aspects of the operation, since the FRAPH were well known for their atrocities. In conducting research for <u>The Immaculate Invasion</u>, Bob Shacochis tracks down who he believes was the source of the turnabout in U.S. policy with regard to the FRAPH—namely Sandy Berger, U.S. National Security Advisor at the time. Berger gave a brief at the U.S. embassy in Port-au-Prince depicting the FRAPH as an opposition party to the Lavalas, despite objections by the embassy and military personnel who were present. Additionally, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff were pressured by Berger not only to ease pressure on the FRAPH, but also to attempt to cooperate with them during the later stages of the operation. Shacochis details the

conflicting policy among the White House, CIA, State Department, and Defense Department prior to the intervention, noting disagreements on Aristide as well as on the FRAPH.<sup>65</sup> Obviously, a single coherent U.S. national policy would have better served both the U.S. and Haiti.

With increased U.S. assistance, Haiti's economy has improved and Haiti's government has been more civil. However, the economy and welfare of the people regressed considerably during the year 2000. Political unrest and instability increased significantly starting in the summer of 2000, with escalating violence between the various political parties.

#### PROPOSALS

With little improvement to show for all its efforts, the temptation is for the U.S. government to walk away in exasperation. However, this would prove disastrous to Haiti and would likely lead to a total failure of Haitian society and government. This scenario would likely lead to another military intervention by the U.S., given its underlying national interests in Haiti.

The new U.S. administration must acknowledge that a long-term commitment to Haiti is needed in order to allow this Caribbean neighbor to become a self-sufficient and responsible member of the world community. By keeping initial aid out of the hands of the Haitian government, the U.S. can ensure that corruption is minimized, while limiting the power of the Government of Haiti (GOH). Reduced corruption could be accomplished by bypassing the GOH in handling any USAID funds, working instead directly with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) to provide needed aid. Not only would this reduce corruption, but it would also demonstrate to the Haitian population that the power of the GOH is limited.

USAID efforts should be segregated into conditional and un-conditional categories of assistance. Those programs having a direct impact on individual Haitians and are provided without going through the GOH should be placed in the unconditional category. Funding for conditional assistance, rendered through coordination by the GOH and not immediately and directly impacting individuals, could be withdrawn if the GOH's acted inappropriately.

The U.S. cost in assisting Haiti to become a more civil society and an economically viable nation is small when compared to the costs of our past military involvements in Haiti. The USAID package for FY2001 is budgeted at only \$54.7 million.<sup>66</sup> This figure could be doubled and still represent only 7 percent of what was spent during the Haitian crisis from 1992-1995 by the U.S. government. Due to the non-hostile nature of the intervention in 1994, the cost in human lives was very small. In the future, if the U.S. intervenes again, it is possible that U.S.

forces could face hostile actions. The cost in human lives, as well as fiscal costs, would likely be significantly greater than those experienced during the intervention in 1994.

#### Economy

A democratic government depends on the support of the populace, which in turn depends on a viable economy. Therefore, the economy is critical to a democratic government and is the foundation of good governance. Since Haiti is largely dependent on direct foreign investment for its economic growth, the following initiatives should be taken to encourage foreign investments:

Haiti has a foreign debt of about \$1 billion and spends \$5-7 million per month serving that debt.<sup>67</sup> However, the World Bank's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) program has determined that Haiti does not meet its criteria for debt relief.<sup>68</sup> The U.S. should use its considerable influence with the World Bank in support of relieving Haiti's debt. Also, the U.S. should lobby the Paris Club and the London Club for their assistance as well.

Haiti is not able to provide sufficient food for its own population. Unresolved land tenure/titling, along with ownership of only small land plots, exacerbates problems in obtaining the private investment necessary to increase production through the use of modern farming methods.

Planned cuts within the USAID program entitled "Sustainable Increased Income for the Poor" scheduled in FY2001 will reduce this program by 12 percent-- to less than \$12M.<sup>69</sup> With its proven results, this program needs to be expanded, not cut back. This program has enabled small hillside farmers to increase income, which, in conjunction with progress made by the GOH in land titling and land reform, has improved farmers' access to credit. Credit enables farmers to increase productivity by practicing modern farming techniques to produce high-value crops for export (i.e. coffee, cocoa, mangoes). Another benefit of this program is its contribution to the environmental recovery resulting from the erosion control provided by these sustainable crops. USAID should increase its support to Haitian farmers.

Foreign direct investment is inhibited partially by the threat of potential future embargoes. The U.S.-led embargo of Haiti in 1991, which was supported by a UN resolution, devastated Haiti's developing assembly and light manufacturing industries. The political uncertainty which exists in Haiti, in conjunction with the continuing threat of future embargoes, has created an environment which discourages investments. A U.S. pledge that an embargo will not be implemented against Haiti could increase foreign direct investment. While neither a given administration nor Congress can guarantee no U.S. embargo, limited U.S. government backing

of foreign investments in Haiti could encourage foreign investments. Haiti will have a difficult time increasing employment opportunity in its cities, as well as expanding the tax base needed for government operations, without a substantial increase of foreign direct investment.

#### Infrastructure

Haiti's current infrastructure cannot support a healthy economy. Little effort or funding has been provided to assist Haiti in developing expanded transportation, electrical supply, and telecommunication systems, all of which are pre-requisites for economic development. While there are a few programs -- such as the International Development Bank's low interests loans of \$55M for water and sanitation programs in place <sup>70</sup> -- most programs seek to restore the existing, dilapidated infrastructure to a pre-embargo status. Haiti's pre-embargo infrastructure was not able to support a healthy economy, so restoration of the same old infrastructure will not support a more robust economy.

A concerted effort is needed to develop critical infrastructure in order to sustain economic development and attract foreign capital. To that end, the U.S. should use its influence and assist Haiti in obtaining loans through international organizations, such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank). Of particular importance is the development of new transportation systems to and from ports and provincial capitals to relieve pressure on Port-au-Prince. Additionally, expansion of electrical, water, sewage, and telecommunication systems is needed in Haiti's 'secondary' cities to support new manufacturing plants.

#### **Micro-financing**

The Micro-Financing program, within the USAID program, has been a success. Under the Micro-Financing program, commercial banks--mostly small village banks in rural areas--are offered a guarantee when making micro loans to individuals meeting a prescribed set of criteria. Borrowers, a vast majority of whom are women and cooperatives, are provided technical assistance in addition to loans for commercial ventures. However, for FY2000 Haitians received only a total of \$1.65 million in loans.<sup>71</sup> This proven program has vast potential for growth and should be greatly expanded and better funded.

#### Secondary Cities- Dispersal from Port-au-Prince

Haiti's "secondary cities" should be particularly targeted for economic development. Development of the seaport at Cap Haitian, along with better transportation systems, would allow for economic growth in the northern provinces. Previously mentioned infrastructure

improvements, in concert with a focus on economic growth in 'secondary' cities, should provide better results than the traditional focus on the capital. To that end, most of the additional assistance provided to Haiti should be focused on secondary cities and rural areas.

#### Education

USAID has restrictions imposed by the Helms/Dole Amendment, which explicitly prohibits funding in the public education sector—such as programs of the Haitian Minister of Education. USAID is therefore forced to work through NGOs exclusively.<sup>72</sup> This policy is reasonable in view of the current situation of widespread corruption within the government. However, the eventual goal should be to work with the GOH to provide more and better public education. In a country as poor as Haiti, universal access to public education is necessary in order to substantially increase the level of literacy. The current system, wherein most education is provided by private schools, is not affordable to the vast majority of citizens. It simply does not meet the needs of most Haitian families.

In the near term, a new program to 'Train the Trainers' is needed to bring about a minimum level of competence within various governmental agencies. With U.S. assistance, this program could send a selected group of mid-and upper-level managers from a wide variety of governmental agencies (mix of male and female), to a French-speaking area, possibly France or Canada (Quebec) for a 30 to 60 day period. These selected individuals would attend workshops to learn basic office skills and work with a counterpart, under close supervision, within the host government. This learn/work program would remove individuals from the corruption and fear of Haiti. In a better learning environment, they could acquire basic office skills in an environment of good, honest work habits. These individuals, upon their return to Haiti, would serve as the trainers for their offices. Additionally, a core group of teachers should be included in this new program to incorporate office skills training into the educational curriculums of Haitian schools.

#### Health and Family Planning

The average woman in Haiti, if given the choice, would bear no more than three children, down from the current rate of 4.8. The difference in actual and desired fertility rate is due primarily to the fact that only 25 percent of the population currently has access to family planning services.<sup>73</sup> USAID's budget in FY2001 for the "Healthier Families of Desired Size" program has been reduced to \$15.8 million, down 21 percent from FY2000.<sup>74</sup> Funding for health issues of the magnitude found in Haiti needs to increase, not be reduced. Contained in

this program are family planning and other health issues; of particular significance are HIV/AIDs, sexually transmitted infections, and infant mortality. The spread of these diseases is a threat to U.S. interests.

Of significant importance, though less costly, is that portion dedicated toward family planning. Family planning is an area where real returns are possible. Increases in population density not only cause additional strains on the Haitian economy and environment, but also hastens outward migration.

#### **Environmental Degradation**

The proposed FY2001 budget allotted only \$3.55 million for the Environmental Degradation Slowed program, a 21 percent reduction from FY2000.<sup>75</sup> What is really needed is a substantial increase in this program, given the gravity of the situation in Haiti. By introducing new plant varieties to help farmers increase yields, to reverse deforestation by planting trees and establishing tree nurseries for fruit and wood species, to re-establish coffee plantations, and to introduce soil and water conservation measures via public education, this environmental program has slowed environmental degradation. Additionally, this program provides for increased jobs and income desperately needed by rural peasants.

Haiti's energy requirements cannot be sustained by wood alone due to the high population density, no matter how many trees are planted. Haiti needs other energy sources —solar ovens as well as kerosene and propane stoves. Subsidies can help establish a petroleum-based fuel industry (such as bottled propane). Currently, Haiti has no marketing and distribution infrastructure for either propane or kerosene. Establishment of this infrastructure is necessary for efficiency and affordability of these products.

Haiti is fast becoming the "eco-catastrophe" in the Western Hemisphere, in large part because of deforestation and the resultant desertification, soil erosion, and excessive siltation of rivers/estuary systems. As a result, Haiti is prone to major devastation from hurricanes. The next major hurricane that hits Haiti could wreck disaster. The same conditions causing extreme soil erosion – few established trees to hold the soil and absorb water – likewise favor landslides in mountainous country. The devastation in 1999 caused by Hurricane Mitch in Honduras and Nicaragua serves as recent examples. But environmental conditions in these two countries were not nearly as bad as what exists in Haiti today, so the potential catastrophe is much greater. In addition, Haiti's population density is much greater than that of Honduras or Nicaragua.

#### CONCLUSION

The U.S. cannot turn its back on Haiti, not because of humanitarian interests but from selfinterests—principally in the form of illegal Haitian immigrants. National interests will not allow for the continuation of a failed state that, for all practical purposes, is on the U.S. border. The U.S. can only ignore the continuing degradation of the political and economical situation in Haiti for so long. Without assistance to improve Haiti's economy and to reduce Haitian violence, the Haitian populace will be forced to seek survival by migrating -- primarily to Florida. Once conditions prove to be beyond the capacity for the Haitian people to withstand, a flood of refugees similar to that of 1991 will commence to migrate north. At that time the U.S. will be forced to take action at a much greater price, in financial as well as human terms, than had preemptive action been taken.

The U.S. government must seek popular support from U.S. citizens to increase U.S. assistance to Haiti. A long-term commitment is necessary to bring Haiti to the level where its population does not exist strictly in a survival mode. Only then can Haiti be expected to establish good governance and possibly build a democracy. The U.S. has twice proven that it can expend huge amounts of money to intervene in Haiti in a reactive mode. It must now prove its commitment and patience in support of a deliberate plan that promises long-term success.

WORD COUNT = 8,499

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