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**UPHOLDING/RESTORING DEMOCRACY IN HAITI:  
DID WE ACHIEVE OUR POLICY OBJECTIVES?**

**BY**

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## ABSTRACT

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Beginning with a brief review of Haiti's historical, political and societal background, this case study analyzes the evolution of American foreign policy toward Haiti in the years following President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's 1991 overthrow and leading up to the 1994 American-led military intervention to restore him to power. Specifically, the study reviews the policy changes by the Bush and Clinton administrations and includes the effects on those changes by factors as diverse as the "boat people" phenomenon, the traumatic American combat losses in Mogadishu, the USS Harlan County incident, and the hunger strike by TransAfrica's Randall Robinson. It also looks briefly at post-intervention Haiti to determine if we achieved our stated objectives. Though highlighting the Clinton administration's frequent policy shifts and seeming indecision, while also pointing out that President Clinton "dumbed down" the objectives of the intervention to ensure its success, the study concludes that in the end the president had no better alternative than to intervene with limited objectives, particularly in light of the domestic political pressures from both the left and the right. Consequently, having kept those objectives very limited, President Clinton did achieve them. Long-term success, however, remains debatable.



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## UPHOLDING/RESTORING DEMOCRACY IN HAITI: DID WE ACHIEVE OUR POLICY OBJECTIVES?

The Haitian people have wished for democracy, they have suffered for it, they have voted for it, and now they are dying for it.

—Prime Minister Owen Arthur of Barbados

### WHY STUDY HAITI?

Early on the morning of 19 September 1994, LTG Henry Shelton, Commander of Joint Task Force 180 (JTF 180), went ashore in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, with a small military force to meet with American embassy officials and senior Haitian military officers. Thus began Operation Uphold Democracy, the culmination of months of intense diplomacy, negotiation, and military planning and rehearsals.

This paper will examine the time period prior to and since Operation Uphold Democracy, as opposed to the operation itself. Though the extensive military planning and the operation's execution would make for an interesting case study, the intent of this study is to focus on U.S. policy toward Haiti. We will ask and answer several questions related to that policy, its evolution, and the results of the intervention. Specifically, how did we get involved in the first place and what was President Bush's policy toward Haiti? Did our Haiti policy change as it transitioned between Presidents Bush and Clinton, and if so, how? How and why did the policy evolve under President Clinton? What were President Clinton's specific, stated objectives for intervening in Haiti, i.e., how did we justify our military intervention? Did we achieve our stated objectives in the short term? And, did we/will we achieve our objectives in the long term?

But why study Haiti's intervention at all? The U.S. military is no longer involved there. We long ago catalogued our lessons learned and put Operation Uphold Democracy behind us. Haiti is no longer prominent in the news, and most Americans would probably say they don't care anyway. So why study it now? We study it for at least three reasons.

As explained later in this paper and as suggested by the title of the intervention itself, Operation Uphold Democracy's principal purposes were the restoration of Haiti's democratically elected president and the establishment of an environment that would facilitate the success of the country's fledgling democratic system. The military intervention accomplished the former in less than 30 days. But the latter purpose takes more time to evaluate. Haiti has now held three presidential elections, with two since the operation itself. Therefore, we may only now begin to understand whether or not we actually succeeded in what was arguably the most noble, far-reaching, and important purpose of the intervention – promoting democracy. Thus the first

reason to review Operation Uphold Democracy from a policy and objectives standpoint six years after its initiation.

Tied to the intervention was our desire to relieve human suffering. One way to do that, of course, was to rid Haiti of its authoritarian and illegitimate military government. We did that, again in less than 30 days. In the long term, however, we would need to review aspects of the economic and security situation to see if there have been any improvements. Again, it usually takes several years to determine if such improvements exist or if indicators show that they may be forthcoming. Thus the second reason to re-look Haiti now.

Finally, Haiti is just one of four major interventions that occurred in the decade following Operation Desert Storm; the other three were Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Now that the decade is over, and we find ourselves still intimately involved in two of those, it only seems appropriate to go back and review the events and policies that led up to our involvement in Haiti. By analyzing how we got into Haiti, we may better understand the genesis of policy decisions that resulted in the interventionism of the 1990s.

## **SETTING THE STAGE – THE HISTORICAL/POLITICAL/SOCIETAL BACKGROUND**

In 1791, just 15 years after our own Continental Congress signed the Declaration of Independence, the slave population of Saint-Domingue (Haiti's French colonial name) began a violent, 13-year uprising that led to the country's formal declaration of independence on 1 January 1804. The Republic of Haiti was the first independent black republic in the world, the second independent republic in the Western Hemisphere, and the first country in the Western Hemisphere to abolish slavery and grant full citizenship to nonwhites.<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that of the first three modern era revolutions – American, French, and Haitian – the latter is the only one that freed its country's slaves.<sup>2</sup> To this day, Haiti is the only country in the world to have been formed by a successful slave revolt.

Haiti's 13-year revolution was unquestionably violent – most of the plantation economy was destroyed, as much as half of the estimated 700,000-plus population died or fled,<sup>3</sup> and Napoleon lost more than 55,000 troops to the fighting and tropical diseases.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, the revolution's violence was a precursor to Haiti's dismal future. Over the next 186 years, up through 1990, Haiti's political experience was notably unstable and violent. Of Haiti's 40-plus heads of state, at least 5 were killed in office, 16 others were overthrown, 1 committed suicide, 6 died in office, and 11 quit or resigned; only five peaceful transitions occurred, and four of those were under close American supervision. During that same 186 years, Haiti had nearly a dozen internal revolts, unsuccessful overthrow attempts, or civil wars, as well as a few violent scuffles

with external players such as Germany, the Dominican Republic, and the United States. The latter intervened militarily in 1919 and occupied the country for 15 years.<sup>5</sup>

Haiti's violent history has its principal basis in the cultural and ethnic makeup of its population. Economic factors, e.g., the classic struggle between the "haves" and the "have-nots", have certainly contributed. But even those factors can be seen as a subset of the never-ending struggle between the two principal sectors of Haitian society.

Even before the slave uprisings began in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, Saint-Domingue's nonwhite population was made up of two principal groups, the mixed-race freemen, or mulattos, and the black slaves. The former were the children of white plantation owners or managers and their slaves. The mulattos were generally well educated and "shared more cultural connections with the French than they did with the slaves."<sup>6</sup> Many of them owned their own slaves and plantations. At the time of Haiti's slave uprising, the mulatto population was almost equal to Saint-Domingue's French population, and the revolution saw fighting among and between all three groups – the French, the mulattos, and the slaves. Independence ended the formal struggle against France, but it entrenched the continuing struggle between the mulattos and the blacks.

The differences between Haiti's mulattos and blacks can be generalized, though such generalizations are not hard and fast. They do, however, provide something of a context to help understand how complex and deep-seated Haiti's problems are. Generally, the mulattos comprise somewhere around 10 - 35% of Haiti's 7 million-strong population. They are generally literate, speak French, live in the cities, and are Christian or agnostic, monogamous, prosperous, proud, and elite. The blacks comprise about 65 – 90% of Haiti's population. By contrast, they are generally illiterate, speak Creole, live in rural areas, follow Voodoo, and are polygamous, desperately poor, apathetic, and non-elite.<sup>7</sup> Taking the above into account, it is no surprise to learn that most of Haiti's economic power has traditionally rested in the hands of the mulattos. To a lesser extent, the same could be said for political power.

Still, Haiti has had some very powerful black political leaders who were able to co-opt the mulattos or otherwise keep them under control. In at least some cases, such leaders used terror as a weapon to keep the mulattos in check.<sup>8</sup> The most notorious of these, Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier, ruled with an iron hand over all Haitians, black and mulatto, from 1957 until his death in 1971. His rule was among the cruelest of any Haitian leader, as he played on the divisions within society to keep his potential enemies off balance. Just before dying, he relinquished the reins of power to the son his mulatto wife bore him – Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier. Baby Doc continued the Duvalier dynasty of corruption and terror until army officers,

both mulatto and black, became so concerned and disgusted at the excesses of corruption, continually worsening economy<sup>9</sup>, and the increasing popular demonstrations that they engineered Baby Doc's peaceful overthrow in February 1986. Thus ended 29 years of harsh Duvalier rule.

In looking at Haiti's history, and particularly the Duvalier years, several scholars have called Haiti a "Predatory State" as a means of categorizing its continuous and often violent contests between the state and society, between the political and economic haves and have-nots, between the mulattos and the blacks. Dr. Donald Schulz expands that thought with almost painful clarity as he describes Haiti's "dysfunctional political culture":

In Haiti, a deeply embedded culture of predation has fostered autocracy and corruption, extreme social injustice, and economic stagnation. In this sense, the Duvaliers and Duvalierism are not aberrations, but rather the culmination of a particular set of historical experiences, including those provided by traditional African culture, slavery, a bloody war of liberation, the reimposition of relations of elite dominance and mass submission, chronic cycles of tyranny and chaos, and the effects of a prolonged U.S. occupation. The upshot has been the development of an elaborate syndrome of destructive/self-destructive political behavior marked by authoritarianism, paternalism, personalism, patronage, nepotism, demagoguery, corruption, cynicism, opportunism, racism, incompetence, parasitism, rigidity, intolerance, rivalry, distrust, insecurity, vengeance, intrigue, superstition, volatility, violence, paranoia, xenophobia, exploitation, class hatred, institutional illegitimacy, and mass apathy, aversion, and submission.<sup>10</sup>

Of course, Haiti's serious political and economic problems did not go away with Baby Doc, as evidenced by the incessant political struggles he left behind. From his departure in 1986 through 1990, the government went through 6 heads of state, an average of nearly two per year. Four of those were military officers, including General Henry Namphy, who held the office twice. The principal architect of Baby Doc's departure, Namphy assumed the role of president as Baby Doc left. Voluntarily relinquishing the office to a civilian after two years, he then reclaimed it in a coup four months later, only to be overthrown himself in a coup three months after that.<sup>11</sup> During that same period, public demonstrations and protests about economic conditions increased and became more violent. On several occasions, soldiers and police officers fired on demonstrators, killing and wounding dozens. The U.S. Government (USG) went through various policies with respect to the withholding of aid monies because of human rights problems; of course, that withholding of aid only intensified Haiti's economic problems.<sup>12</sup> As the world watched these developments, a diminutive and outspoken Catholic priest who championed the needs of the poor became widely known among his fellow Haitians. Even though there were several attempts on his life, Jean-Bertrand Aristide courageously

continued leading protest marches and making anti-government statements, eventually earning his expulsion from the Catholic Church's Salesian order in 1988.<sup>13</sup>

## **ARISTIDE'S ELECTION AND OVERTHROW – THE BUSH RESPONSE**

As the various Haitian leaders succeeding Baby Doc struggled with the economic challenges and sought the renewal of foreign aid, the USG and other governments made it clear through firm diplomacy that such aid would flow only for a democratic government. Compelled by the disastrous economy to seek the foreign help, General Hérard Abraham took over the government in March 1990, and following U.S. State Department advice, installed a provisional civilian president while promising elections before the end of the year. Accordingly, with assistance from the international community, as the economic situation threatened to push the country into complete anarchy, Haiti made preparations for elections to be held in December.<sup>14</sup>

As many as 11 candidates announced their intentions to run for president. The named candidate with the best chance for a victory, rightist Marc Bazin, was considered "America's man" by many and therefore discredited by those on the left. No one expected the leading leftist candidate, Victor Benoit, to be capable of defeating Bazin. On 18 October, however, to the delight of the leftists, Jean-Bertrand Aristide unexpectedly announced his candidacy.<sup>15</sup>

On 16 December 1990, under the watchful eyes of several hundred foreign observers from the United Nations (UN), the Organization of American States (OAS), and private groups, Aristide won the election with 68% of the vote.<sup>16</sup> Two months later, on 7 February 1991, facing tremendous economic and leadership challenges, Aristide was sworn in as the first democratically elected president in Haiti's 187 years of independence. On that same day, Aristide retired several senior members of the Haitian Armed Forces (FAD'H) and named General Ráoul Cédras as the army's new chief of staff.

Over the next several months, President Aristide took several actions that ruffled feathers and caused concerns both in Haiti and in the international community. For example, rather than attempting bipartisanship by choosing his prime minister from one of the other political parties, he chose a non-politician from his own *Lavalas*<sup>17</sup> party, René Préval. Since the Haitian Constitution of 1987 gave many of the governmental powers to the prime minister, many saw Aristide's selection of his close friend Préval as a not-too-subtle way for him (Aristide) to hold onto those powers himself. To make matters worse, Aristide also refused to submit Préval's name to the legislature for the required confirmation. Additionally, Aristide decided to form his own security force separate from the FAD'H. This tactic, previously used by Papa Doc

Duvalier to protect his own interests at the expense of everyone else's,<sup>18</sup> seriously concerned the FAD'H's leadership.

Accordingly, on 30 September 1991, dissatisfied members of the FAD'H stormed the palace and took Aristide hostage. Late that night, he was taken to the airport and allowed to fly out of the country; he went first by Venezuelan Air Force plane to Venezuela, and then on to the U.S.<sup>19</sup> Haiti's first experience with true democracy had ended.

The international response came quickly, and for the next three years the U.S. and other global players would use a varied combination of the economic, diplomatic, informational, and military elements of national power to attempt to restore Aristide as Haiti's president. On 2 October, less than 48 hours after Aristide's overthrow, the OAS convened an emergency session. Secretary of State James Baker, representing the Bush administration, attended the OAS meetings and assisted the body in developing an embargo against Haiti. In a "rousing address" to the OAS, Secretary Baker clearly articulated President Bush's unequivocal support for the Aristide government, even though Aristide had not been the administration's preferred choice for Haitian president.

. . . this junta will be treated as a pariah, without friends, without support, and without a future. This coup must not succeed . . . It is imperative that we agree for the sake of Haitian democracy, and the cause of democracy throughout the hemisphere, to act collectively to defend the legitimate government of President Aristide.<sup>20</sup>

Two days later, President Bush reaffirmed the U.S. policy of support for President Aristide by saying, "We want to see President Aristide restored to power."<sup>21</sup> In his statement to the press, Bush confirmed U.S. support for the OAS embargo and also announced an American freeze on the Government of Haiti's (GOH) financial assets in the U.S.

U.S. policy, as stated, was clear. President Bush intended to see Aristide returned to Haiti as its president. However, some critics of the Bush administration point out that his policy response, while quick, was ultimately ineffective and even half-hearted. For sure, when Bush left office 15 months later Aristide was still living in the U.S. and attempting to govern in exile. Making the case against Bush, Dr. Lester Brune argues that various elements within Bush's own administration, specifically the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), did not really support Aristide because of his radical views and "personal mental failings". Consequently, according to Dr. Brune, CIA and DIA representatives spent the remaining years of the Bush administration, as well as the early years of the Clinton administration, convincing senior administration officials and Congressmen that Aristide did not really deserve American support.<sup>22</sup> Author Bob Shacochis, writing about his 18 months in Haiti

during this period, strongly supports Dr. Brune's views about the ineffectiveness of U.S. policy implementation and the internal USG battles over who to support.<sup>23</sup> Apparently, those CIA and DIA representatives may have been successful at least in muddying the waters. At one point, President Bush's own press secretary commented that "The U.S. supports the rule of democracy in Haiti . . . we don't know if President Aristide will return to power."<sup>24</sup>

The bottom line is that the Bush administration did not achieve its publicly stated objective of restoring Aristide. Throughout President Bush's remaining 15 months in office, General Cédras' military regime continued to rule Haiti amid reports of increasing violence. Dr. Brune implies that the Bush administration could have done much more, both domestically and internationally. As evidence, he points out that President Bush did not even meet with President Aristide in the White House throughout 1992. He also cites a Washington Post report that President Bush did not enforce the embargo's trade restrictions because of pressure from U.S. businessmen. Most importantly, though, he makes the points that the European Community did not recognize the embargo since we did not pressure it to do so, and that while the Haitian poor suffered under the embargo the elites could simply travel to the U.S or elsewhere to maintain their lifestyles.<sup>25</sup> One might certainly conclude that while the Bush administration's policy objectives were clearly stated, they were not clearly sought.

#### **THE "BOAT PEOPLE" AS A POLICY CONSIDERATION**

Within a month or so of Aristide's overthrow, Americans began to see the physical phenomenon that arguably was to have the single greatest impact on U.S. policy toward Haiti – the willingness of thousands of Haitians to risk their lives in rickety vessels to immigrate to the U.S. Such illegal migration was not unheard of. A wave of similar attempts occurred beginning in 1979 as a result of the worsening economy and Baby Doc's continuing ineffective rule. President Reagan had decisively resolved the visibility of the issue in September 1981 through an agreement with the GOH that allowed the U.S. to repatriate such migrants while permanently posting a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) cutter off of Haiti's coast.<sup>26</sup>

Considering the present circumstances, though, i.e., we were not formally recognizing the de-facto Haitian government, President Bush could hardly reach a similar agreement. Nevertheless, he had to do something; nearly 7,000 "boat people" had been picked up at sea within the first two months after the coup and the subsequent embargo. The issue of illegal migrants flooding south Florida was a serious security concern for the U.S., as well as a humanitarian concern since the Haitians were so willing to risk death to get away from Haiti. Therefore, President Bush reinvigorated the policy of intercepting the illegal migrants at sea,



and then expanded that policy by deciding to take them to a newly established camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.<sup>27</sup> As the camp quickly filled toward its capacity of 12,500, however, President Bush had little choice but to either process the migrants for legal immigration into the U.S., or send them back to Haiti.

At the same time, the president faced the predicament that any policy decision was a potential political bombshell in the election year because of perceived differences in the handling of migrants from Haiti versus those from Cuba. In his race for reelection President Bush needed the support of the Cuban-American vote in Florida, as well as the votes of other Floridians who may not have welcomed a massive influx of poor Haitian immigrants. At the same time, one would think that he could not afford to write off the black American vote, to include the estimated one million Haitian-Americans. Still, long-standing U.S. policy made it relatively easy for any Cuban migrant to be granted political asylum in the U.S. In a policy that seemed to many to be racist, though, the Bush administration (like the Reagan administration before it), did not envision giving Haitian migrants political asylum except in very rare cases, e.g., those Haitians closely connected with the Aristide government. Rather, the Bush administration saw Haitian migrants as *economic* refugees, not *political* refugees; the distinction was that the former were not eligible for asylum, while the latter were.<sup>28</sup>

Changing his Haitian migrant policy, President Bush declared in May 1992 that the USCG would intercept all Haitian migrant boats and repatriate the migrants back to Haiti, as opposed to taking them to Guantanamo Bay. In doing so, President Bush achieved two things. First, he virtually stopped the migrant flow, thereby achieving his policy objective. Second, however, he opened himself up to criticism from his presidential campaign opponent, Governor Bill Clinton.<sup>29</sup> Clinton almost immediately heightened criticism of Bush's Haiti policy, arguing that Bush had not been vigorous enough in his efforts to restore Haiti's democracy. He went even further by specifically attacking the repatriation policy as a violation of America's liberal values.<sup>30</sup> Supporting the Congressional Black Caucus view that the migrant policy was racist, Clinton made it one of his campaign promises to reverse the policy of repatriation.

On 3 November 1992, Governor Clinton won the election. For several reasons, Clinton's incoming administration seemed to offer more hope for Haitians than the Bush administration had. First, Clinton had promised to change the repatriation policy. Second, the Democrats seemed more in line, ideologically, with Aristide's *Lavalas* party. And third, the Congressional Black Caucus, with several members who closely monitored the Haitian situation, gained influence from Clinton's narrow victory.<sup>31</sup> Still, it would eventually take nearly two more years,

several policy shifts, and the military intervention before President Clinton would oversee Aristide's return to Haiti.

### **PRESIDENT CLINTON'S INITIAL POLICY SHIFTS**

Shortly before assuming office, President-Elect Clinton learned that as many as 150,000 potential migrants were waiting to leave Haiti's shores in expectation of the new administration's relaxed asylum requirements. Consequently, in a shift away from his campaign promises, the Clinton transition team worked closely with the outgoing administration to develop an even harsher quarantine policy than had existed before.<sup>32</sup> On 14 January 1993, six days before his inauguration, the president-elect made a radio appeal to the Haitian people, outlining his upcoming policy efforts to restore Haiti's democracy. He announced that he would increase the numbers of U.S. officials in Haiti in order to facilitate the in-country asylum application process, and thereby hopefully reduce the perceived need to flee Haiti in boats. He also announced that he would work with the UN and OAS to increase the numbers of human rights observers<sup>33</sup> and thereby decrease human rights violations. In the closing comments, however, he made it clear that while he supported the return of Haiti's democracy, he would also return Haitians departing by boat.

The practice of returning those who flee Haiti by boat will continue, for the time being, after I become President. Those who leave Haiti by boat for the United States will be intercepted and returned to Haiti by the U.S. Coast Guard. Leaving by boat is not the route to freedom. Restoring democratic government is the best hope for the people of Haiti, and I want to tell you again I am committed to working toward that goal. In the weeks and months to come, I will seek additional ways to help Haitians who fear persecution in Haiti, and to treat all of them with fairness. But whatever future actions I take, my policies will continue to promote the return of democracy to Haiti, to discourage the dangerous practice of boat departure, and to expand opportunities for the people of Haiti to make applications for refugee status from within their own country.<sup>34</sup>

Over the weeks following his inauguration, President Clinton began the implementation of the above-stated policies. Statements by Secretary of State Warren Christopher on 5 February reiterated the administration's intent to restore Haiti's democracy,<sup>35</sup> and the same day President Clinton clearly articulated his vision of "the fundamental mission, which is to restore a democratically elected government that will not abuse the human rights of ordinary Haitians."<sup>36</sup> The White House followed those comments on 2 March with the release of a formal statement specifying the administration's policies on repatriation. That statement reiterated the president's strong desire "to avert a humanitarian tragedy that could result from a large boat exodus", while

reemphasizing his efforts to energize UN/OAS negotiations and to enhance the in-country asylum application process.<sup>37</sup>

Facing severe criticism from liberal activists and the Congressional Black Caucus for the reversal of his repatriation policy, and achieving little progress on the diplomatic front by mid-1993, President Clinton pressed for tougher international economic sanctions, to include a worldwide oil embargo and an international freezing of Haitian financial assets.<sup>38</sup> Accordingly, on 16 June, the UN Security Council (UNSC) passed UNSC Resolution (UNSCR) 841 calling for a complete embargo of both oil and armaments. Even more helpful was the fact that the European nations who had been providing Haiti's oil agreed to stop their shipments.<sup>39</sup> Undoubtedly, the anticipated effects of the increased international financial pressures finally convinced General Cédras to agree to talks with Aristide.

In less than a month, following a week of intense negotiations between the two in Governor's Island, New York, they signed an accord on 3 July. Comprised of eight principal parts, the agreement essentially called for the return of Aristide to Haiti on 30 October. It also included provisions for the use of UN peacekeepers and military trainers to ease the transition and begin the process toward a more professional and apolitical FAD'H.<sup>40</sup> It certainly appeared that the Clinton administration's policies were going to achieve the desired effects.

## **THE HARLAN COUNTY DISASTER AND TOUGHER POLICY MEASURES**

Throughout the next month, though, tensions in Haiti grew and political intimidation increased; *macoutes* literally drug a key Aristide supporter, Antoine Izméry, from a church service in broad daylight and brazenly assassinated him on the street outside.<sup>41</sup> Still, in accordance with the Governor's Island accords, Aristide named a prime minister and the UN called for an end to the embargo. Oil began to flow again.

On 6 October, three days after the U.S. had suffered the tragedy of 18 soldiers killed in the streets of Mogadishu, Somalia, the first 31 American and Canadian military personnel arrived as the lead party for the peacekeeping UN Mission in Haiti (UNMIH). Five days later, in what was to become the most visible example of President Clinton's policy failure to date, the USS Harlan County and its cargo of several-hundred peacekeepers arrived in Port-au-Prince harbor. As a hundred or so protestors<sup>42</sup> loudly and physically blocked the piers, many shouting, "Somalia! Somalia!", the Clinton administration recalled the ship; the U.S. military commander in Port-au-Prince stated that the American peacekeeping troops would not deploy unless the GOH could guarantee their safety.<sup>43</sup>

On 15 October, four days after the embarrassing Harlan County debacle and the day after Haitian Justice Minister Guy Malary was assassinated, President Clinton made a strongly worded statement in a press conference. Obviously frustrated by his failure to achieve his objectives, he reiterated his support for those objectives while announcing tougher policy measures:

Ladies and gentlemen, during the past few days we have witnessed a brutal attempt by Haiti's military and police authorities to thwart the expressed desire of the Haitian people for democracy. On Monday, unruly elements, unrestrained by the Haitian military, violently prevented American and United Nations personnel from carrying out the steps toward that goal. Yesterday, gunmen assassinated Justice Malary. . . . Yesterday, the United Nations Security Council, . . . voted to reimpose stiff sanctions against Haiti, including an embargo on oil imports, . . . I will also be imposing additional unilateral sanctions, such as revoking visas and freezing the assets of those who are perpetrating the violence and their supporters. . . . I have today ordered six destroyers to patrol the water off Haiti so that they are in a position to enforce the sanctions when they come into effect Monday night.<sup>44</sup>

President Clinton's migrant policy, i.e., repatriation, remained the same.

After months in which it appeared that the re-imposed and tougher sanctions were having no effect on Haiti's leaders, Randall Robinson<sup>45</sup>, the head of TransAfrica, began a hunger strike on 12 April 1994 to protest the Clinton administration's policies toward Haiti. In a statement that implied acknowledgement of his own policies' failures, President Clinton, when asked in an interview by The New York Times about Mr. Robinson, said, "I understand and respect what he's doing . . . . He ought to stay out there. We need to change our policy."<sup>46</sup> Other liberal groups actively supported Mr. Robinson's protest. Members of the Congressional Black Caucus and other congressional liberals chained themselves to the White House gates.<sup>47</sup>

### **ANOTHER POLICY SHIFT – EVEN MORE SANCTIONS AND MORE BOAT PEOPLE**

Under such pressure, and the fact that his policies were not having the desired effects on their intended targets, and reports that he said indicated increased violence in Haiti, President Clinton made the most dramatic change yet to his Haiti policies. After successfully lobbying the UNSC to pass a resolution for even tougher economic sanctions on 6 May, President Clinton announced sweeping changes to his Haitian migrant policy two days later; Mr. Robinson subsequently ended his hunger strike, then in its 27<sup>th</sup> day. The new migrant policy essentially required U.S. Immigration officials to do asylum hearings on ships at sea or in third countries, as opposed to just repatriating the migrants straight back to Haiti without hearings.

The mission for the U.S. Navy (USN) and the USCG did not change, but became more complex; two more USN ships were deployed to the area, bringing their total to eight.<sup>48</sup>

Though it certainly could not remove General Cédras from power, the new migrant policy did have one serious effect – it led to an immediate increase in the numbers of boat people. The U.S. had intercepted over 40,000 Haitians total in 1991 and 1992, the first two years of the crisis. The number fell to 2,329 total for 1993, a number that reflects the Bush and then-Clinton policy of repatriation. In the first nine months of 1994, the number jumped to 24,850.<sup>49</sup> In June 1994 alone, the month after the announcement of the new policy, the White House estimated that 2,000 migrants were intercepted each week.<sup>50</sup>

In May, June, and July, as the U.S. military was secretly planning a forcible-entry operation into Haiti and the Clinton administration gradually began to offer more hints that military intervention was an increasing likelihood,<sup>51</sup> several developments on both sides eased the U.S. closer to military action. In May, responding to the increased sanctions, the Cédras regime “formally” deposed Aristide and installed Emile Jonaissant as de-facto president. On 10 June, the U.S., joined by Canada, limited all remittances to Haiti to less than \$50 and announced a ban on all commercial flights to and from Haiti effective 25 June. The U.S. also announced that it would withdraw U.S. embassy dependents and most employees prior to the 25<sup>th</sup>. On 11 July, “President” Jonaissant expelled the remaining UN human rights observers. Since these observers were essentially the UN’s only objective reporters on the human rights situation in Haiti, the international community reacted with impressive togetherness. By 29 July, even the very reluctant Aristide saw the inevitability of military intervention and agreed to such.<sup>52</sup> Consequently, on 31 July, the UNSC passed Resolution 940, authorizing, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the use of “all necessary means to facilitate the departure” of Haiti’s military government.<sup>53</sup>

## **MILITARY INTERVENTION – WHY DO IT?**

Over the next two months, as planning for Operation Uphold Democracy intensified and expanded into various options,<sup>54</sup> the situation in Haiti continued to worsen. Refusing to accede to numerous Clinton administration warnings and suggestions to leave, General Cédras and the other key members of his regime remained intransigent. Adding to the already high tension, *macoutes* murdered Jean-Marie Vincent on 28 August. A Catholic priest and friend of Aristide’s, Vincent had narrowly escaped assassination during a peaceful anti-government demonstration in 1987.<sup>55</sup>

By mid-September, President Clinton was working hard to make his administration's case for intervention. A report and press briefing on 13 September by John Shattuck, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, helped set the stage and offer justification for the imminent operation. Reviewing some of the more significant killings attributed to the Cédras regime, such as Izméry, Malary, and Vincent, Shattuck's briefing also gave a good overall summary of the previous three years' violence:

I am joining you here today to present a report on the state of human rights in Haiti. Haiti is in the grip of a repression and terror, as the report reflects, that is marked by a level of violence comparable to what existed during the notorious regime of "Papa Doc" Duvalier. . . . By early this year, more than 3,000 Haitians had been murdered by the [Cédras] regime, and that number has increased by several hundred more, by most accounts. . . . Three hundred thousand Haitians, approximately five percent of the population, have been driven into hiding, reportedly, by this pervasive climate of fear. . . . This repression and terror is often targeted at supporters of President Aristide, yet it is random as well.<sup>56</sup>

Over the next two days, President Clinton submitted to an interview by wire service reporters and made a national television address to the nation. The two basic themes were common throughout – we have important interests in Haiti, and we have very limited objectives. Articulating those interests and objectives, President Clinton said in his television address:

Now the United States must protect our interests: to stop the brutal atrocities that threaten tens of thousands of Haitians, to secure our borders and to preserve stability and promote democracy in our hemisphere, and to uphold the reliability of the commitments we make, and the commitments others make to us. . . . Our mission in Haiti, as it was in Panama and Grenada, will be limited and specific. Our plan to remove the dictators will follow two phases. First, it will remove the dictators from power and restore Haiti's legitimate, democratically-elected government. We will train a civilian-controlled Haitian security force that will protect the people rather than repress them. . . . When this first phase is completed, the vast majority of our troops will come home, in months, not years. Then, in the second phase, a much smaller U.S. force will join forces from other members of the United Nations. And their mission will leave Haiti after elections are held next year and a new Haitian takes office in early 1996.<sup>57</sup>

In the closing paragraphs of that speech, he clearly acknowledged that the international community's responsibility to Haiti was indeed limited, that its main role was to give Haitians the chance to make their own democracy work. Having offered the "dictators" in Haiti one more chance to leave, President Clinton said, "But if they do not leave now, the international community will act to honor our commitments; to give democracy a chance, not to guarantee it; to remove stubborn and cruel dictators, not to impose a future."<sup>58</sup> This is an important point, often overlooked in heated, partisan political debates. The president did not say we would guarantee that Haiti's democracy would work, and he did not say we would impose an artificial

resolution on the Haitian people. Instead, we would simply give them the opportunity and they had to take advantage of it.

While President Clinton was articulating his position, it was important that he make a very strong case. He had little domestic support outside of his own political party. For months, the Republican-controlled Congress had been arguing the merits, or lack thereof, of the case to intervene militarily in Haiti. In a political disagreement that we have seen often before, President Clinton did not believe he was constitutionally mandated to seek congressional authorization for the intervention, even though he did apparently feel compelled to seek passage of UNSCR 940, the resolution that gave him international authorization. Critics of Clinton's actions have highlighted this point, i.e., he felt the need to get international approval, but not American approval. But, polls showed 60 to 73% of Americans opposed to an intervention, and that fact probably influenced his decision not to go before Congress for its support.<sup>59</sup> To his credit, though, he acknowledged the weak polls at his 14 September press conference and essentially said that, as president, he had the responsibility to do what he believed was best in the national security interests.<sup>60</sup> That took a measure of courage.

The larger dispute between the executive and legislative branches over who can commit the military to an intervention was not new and still goes on. Nevertheless, President Clinton had by mid-September already authorized final preparations for the forcible-entry operation, and the forces involved were already doing final rehearsals and moving toward intermediate staging bases. Accordingly, the president undoubtedly had seen a need to make his case to the American people.

### **AGGRESSIVE DIPLOMACY, BACKED BY AMERICAN FIREPOWER**

Having made a concerted effort to justify the imminent military intervention, President Clinton decided to make one last attempt to achieve a diplomatic solution to the problem. He announced to the nation in a national radio address on 17 September that he had sent former-President Jimmy Carter, Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, and former-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General (Retired) Colin Powell, to Haiti to reemphasize in no uncertain terms that the dictators had to leave immediately or else.<sup>61</sup> The intervention's H-Hour, D-Day had already been set for 0400 hours Zulu time, 19 September.<sup>62</sup>

Beginning their negotiations in Port-au-Prince less than 48 hours prior to H-hour, the American negotiating team had little time to achieve results. Nevertheless, as General Cédras clearly began to understand the serious intentions of the Americans, and having heard from his own sources that aircraft were launching from Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina, he relented.

With only a few hours to spare, General Cédras agreed to allow the unhindered arrival of the U.S. and coalition forces, to step down from power in exchange for an amnesty agreement, and to accept Aristide's return no later than 15 October<sup>63</sup>. Many details remained to be worked out, but the risk to American soldiers had been minimized. On the morning of 19 September, the day after General Cédras made his agreement, LTG Shelton came ashore with his initial troops to meet General Cédras and lay down the ground rules.

With little risk of bloodshed, American or Haitian, President Clinton had succeeded at opening the door for the predominately American Multinational Force (MNF) that would now surge into Haiti over the next few days. The intervention was not problem-free. Still, even though there were some altercations between the FAD'H and the MNF, some initial discrepancies between the rules of engagement and practicality, and the routine logistical and administrative problems one would expect from any deployment of over 20,000 troops, the military aspects of Operation Uphold Democracy were successful. Tragically, though, one U.S. soldier was killed in action when a renegade former FAD'H member shot him after running a roadblock.<sup>64</sup> And, at least two other U.S. soldiers were wounded in action.

In accordance with details worked out by U.S. Ambassador William Swing and LTG Shelton, General Cédras left Haiti for Panama on 12 October. Three days later, Aristide returned to Haiti as its democratically elected president. Nine days after that, JTF – 180 relinquished control to JTF – 190, a smaller multinational force manned principally by the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division.<sup>65</sup> Many of the American troops were now on their way home. After three years of diplomacy, economic sanctions, and threats, the U.S. had finally completed the reinstatement of President Aristide.

### **WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?**

In a situation as complex as Haiti's has always been, determining success is no small endeavor. We can easily assess the outcome of Operation Uphold Democracy from a military standpoint just to see if we accomplished our military tasks. President Clinton had enough foresight and political wisdom to understand that he could not afford to commit America's sons and daughters to a long mission in Haiti, particularly since his political support just prior to the intervention was so weak. Consequently, he wisely set very specific objectives for Operation Uphold Democracy and the U.S. effort in general: 1) get the dictators out; 2) reinstate President Aristide, 3) assist the GOH in creating a civilian-controlled security force [this was a civilian mission, not military]; and, 4) protect U.S. citizens and facilities.<sup>66</sup> President Clinton also set a



fairly rigid exit strategy for the U.S; he did not want to have significant American forces in Haiti more than 18 months.

As mentioned in the introduction, Operation Uphold Democracy accomplished the first two of the president's objectives in less than 30 days. Certainly, it was also successful at protecting American citizens and facilities; there were no reports of any significant damage to American property, and no Americans, except the soldiers mentioned previously, were injured. Part of that success was probably attributable to the fact that President Clinton's last-minute stab at diplomacy, the Carter/Nunn/Powell meetings, enabled Operation Uphold Democracy to unfold in a permissive environment. Finally, though not an objective per se, the operation was also overwhelmingly successful with respect to President Clinton's exit strategy. Over the 18 months following D-Day, the size of the U.S. military contingent declined from a peak of more than 20,000 in October 1994 to 5,300 in March 1995, 2,660 in September 1995, and 493 in March 1996.<sup>67</sup> There was no significant U.S. military involvement in the security arena after early 1996, just as President Clinton had intended. Certainly, there was still a small U.S. military force involved in humanitarian activities<sup>68</sup> as late as 1998, but they were separate and distinct from the security aspects of the UN mission in Haiti.

So what about the third objective, the one that was really the responsibility of the U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) and international community, i.e., that objective about creating a civilian-controlled security force? During the same 18 months in which the U.S military force in Haiti was declining in numbers, the UN employed nearly a thousand International Police Monitors (IPM), and the DoJ-run International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) trained more than 5,000 new Haitian National Police (HNP) officers.<sup>69</sup> Certainly, President Clinton was true to his intent, working aggressively to try to give the Haitians the opportunity to make their own democracy work in a secure environment.

Still, a serious debate can ensue over the subject of how we can measure the long-term success of our involvement in Haiti. From a military standpoint, with respect to Operation Uphold Democracy's stated objectives, we did exactly what we said we would do, and we did it well. The Cédras regime was removed. President Aristide was reinstated. President Clinton achieved success.

As mentioned previously, it might be too difficult, or probably even too early to tell if our implied long-range objectives can and will be met. At least, though, we can look at some indicators to comment on Haiti's progress to this point. To do that, we will briefly examine a few key areas, i.e., economics, security, and politics. Undoubtedly, no one would say that the economic, security, or political situation in Haiti during the past several years has been perfect.

Far from it. Poverty is still rampant. Crime, of course, still occurs. Democracy is still in its infancy and not very healthy. But that does not mean there is no hope.

In the arena of economics, we must understand that Haiti's economy has not progressed in a manner that has kept up with the rest of the world. Just before the slave uprising in 1791, Saint-Domingue was France's richest colony, providing 75% of the world's sugar and much of its coffee from the 792 sugar and 2,180 coffee plantations. Now Haiti imports sugar, is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, and is one of the poorest in the world.<sup>70</sup> In 1960, Haiti had a similar per capita income as the Dominican Republic, Thailand, and Korea. By 1994, due to the fact that its basic services had been worse at the beginning, and it experienced more governance problems in the ensuing 34 years, Haiti had fallen far behind the others.

	1960 GDP per Capita	1994 GDP per capita
Haiti	386	226
Dominican Republic	386	839
Thailand	300	1703
Korea	520	5210

TABLE 1. ECONOMIC GROWTH<sup>71</sup>

GDP per capita in 1987 constant dollars. Source: The World Bank

But, some World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) reports offer a few indicators that Haiti's economy may at least not have gotten much worse after Aristide's return, and in fact may have improved slightly in some areas. Undoubtedly, part of any credit goes to the many international debt-relief and grant programs that Haiti has enjoyed, with varying regularity, since Operation Uphold Democracy.

During the Cédras regime, of course, the Haitian economy was heavily affected by the embargoes. Haitian exports immediately fell off from \$187.6m in 1991 to \$41.3m in 1992, to a low of \$14.3m in 1994. They have very slowly but consistently moved upward since Operation Uphold Democracy, reaching \$60.7m in 1997, the last year for which records are available.<sup>72</sup> Additionally, though Haiti's real gross domestic product (GDP) had fallen almost 30% between 1992 and 1994, it did increase by 4.5% in 1995, 3.1% in 1998, and 2.2% in 1999. In 1995, inflation fell from 43 to 17%; it was steady at about 12% for 2000.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, neither the World Bank, nor the IMF, nor the IADB offers any tremendous optimism for Haiti's economic

future. The World Bank's report, as an example, highlights the international community's concerted efforts to help while also emphasizing that there are several economic policy issues that the GOH needs to address. Those issues range from privatizing unprofitable state enterprises to developing Haiti's human capital through literacy programs, health programs, etc.<sup>74</sup> The bottom line is that there are indicators of some improvement, but the economic problems are so serious that it will take selfless dedication on the part of the GOH, with the international community's help, to resolve them.

Haiti's security arena has certainly seen great improvement in the sense that everyday oppression has dwindled drastically. To his own credit, President Aristide took what was arguably the single most important step toward removing direct threats to the democratic government and the populace, and it was a step that the U.S. initially disagreed with. By rapidly decreasing the size of the FAD'H, and then completely deactivating it in April 1995<sup>75</sup>, President Aristide removed from society the principal element that had enough force and the requisite organization to overthrow the presidency and take control nationwide. Undoubtedly recognizing that Haiti had no territorial enemies, and remembering who had caused his three-year exile, President Aristide simply did away with his most immediate security problem.

But the security situation is far from being problem-free. To replace the vital security and policing functions of the FAD'H, ICITAP and the IPM helped train and mentor several thousand HNP officers. Though these officers all had to pass fairly restrictive selection and vetting procedures, they were still a group of young people with absolutely no policing experience. Still, their inexperience itself was not the major problem. The principal "missing link" in the HNP program was the fact that there were none of the "old desk sergeant" types who could pass along their leadership and experience while mentoring the younger officers. We in the developed world take such experience for granted; we know our police rookies are mentored and carried along by older officers who "know the ropes". In Haiti, with a completely brand new police force, no Haitians were qualified to serve as the mentors. On the positive side, though, the international community recognized that deficiency up front, so the UN employed the IPM officers as part of its civilian mission. Additionally, the U.S. sought and obtained several dozen Haitian-American police officers who were willing to spend time (as much as six months per tour) in Haiti to assist and mentor. These individuals and the IPM greatly contributed to the development of the HNP during its first years of existence. The UN finally scheduled the end of its police mentoring and monitoring functions for 6 February 2001.<sup>76</sup>

Though the HNP has begun to grow a little older in the job now, since some officers have almost five years of experience, it is still challenged beyond its capabilities and it makes

mistakes. Many Clinton critics like to point out that the HNP has been accused of corruption, mistreatment and even killing of prisoners, drug dealing, etc. And, there is some truth to all those allegations, much like there would be for any police department, whether experienced or not. We see that in frequent high-visibility stories about American police departments. With respect to the mistreatment and murdering of prisoners, there are documented cases of such events, but those cases are relatively few and far between. And, the HNP has made a concerted effort to investigate such cases and at least remove the officers involved.<sup>77</sup>

There is no question that drug trafficking through Haiti is a serious business; the country serves as a transshipment point for about 14% of all cocaine entering the U.S., and the amount going through there in 1999 represented a 24% increase over the amount in 1998. In their defense, however, the HNP has fired more than 100 police officers for suspected drug involvement.<sup>78</sup> And, Mr. Pierre Denizé, HNP Director, points out that he's very willing to take action, but he does not have the capability to collect intelligence, intercept boats or aircraft, cover the sea with radar, etc.; he needs help from someone, such as the U.S., who has those capabilities.<sup>79</sup> Sadly, we all know that drugs are a U.S. demand problem, so we can hardly blame Haiti for the problem itself. We can, of course, blame corrupted Haitians for their own ethical weaknesses, but we need to help Haiti resolve the problem since it is more our problem than theirs. The real downside to that is the fact that our internal drug problem is just adding more fuel to the many fires that threaten Haiti's democratic success.

In many ways, the area of politics has seen both the most and least improvement. On the positive side, and these are important developments when considering Haiti's history, President Aristide did hold the promised presidential election in 1995. Though the turnout was small (only 28%), Aristide's handpicked successor and previous prime minister, René Préval, won 88% of the vote.<sup>80</sup> On 7 February 1996, for the first time ever in Haiti's history, one democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, peacefully relinquished the position to another democratically elected president, René Préval.<sup>81</sup> Though President Aristide's final year in office was somewhat contentious from an American foreign policy perspective, and President Préval's years in office have been similar, Haiti did hold its third straight presidential election on 26 November 2000. Unsurprisingly, former-President Aristide, running for his *Lavalas* party, easily won with about 92% of the vote.<sup>82</sup> He was inaugurated on 7 February 2001. The good news, then, is that Haiti has held two free presidential elections since Operation Uphold Democracy.

The downside, however, is that Haiti's political systems are immature and fractured at best. Long downtrodden by either mulattos, or *macoutes*, or the FAD'H, or whoever, the

leaders of *Lavalas* appear so determined to ensure their own survival that they will violate Haiti's democratic rules to stay in power. Essentially, every non-presidential election since 1995 has been contested or at least questioned, some with very serious irregularities; *Lavalas* has won them all. But even though many elections have been contested, diplomats and Aristide's critics alike admit that *Lavalas* enjoys such a popular majority that it would probably win such elections no matter what, i.e., whether run fairly or not.<sup>83</sup> Still, we Americans do not like to see fixed elections, even if the fixing was irrelevant to the outcome.

In addition to the allegations that *Lavalas* was illegally influencing elections through its biased manning of the national election council, President Préval had some difficult times of his own during his last two years in office. So difficult, in fact, that he illegally announced that he was dissolving Parliament. Unable to agree with the legislative body on economic reform issues that were holding up international aid disbursements, he decided to dissolve it, launching the country into what the international community perceived as another political crisis on top of the already-broiling election disputes tension. On 8 April 2000, the International Herald Tribune said about Haiti, "the political system in that country has collapsed", and the Clinton administration was conceding as much. The paper quoted Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Peter Romero, as telling a House committee that René Préval "has attempted to walk away from the commitments he made to us, and more importantly, to the Haitian people."<sup>84</sup>

There are other disconcerting aspects about Haiti's political situation, and these are closely related to the security arena. Specifically, there have been some brutal crimes against *Lavalas*' former oppressors that many critics believe could be traced to the party if Haiti had a functioning criminal investigative and justice system. An example of one of these crimes was the brutal daylight murder of Mireille Durocher-Bertin in early 1995 (just a few months after Aristide had returned to Haiti). A U.S.-trained lawyer, Ms. Durocher-Bertin had been a spokesperson for the Cédras regime. FBI agents brought in from the U.S. believed the criminal trail led back to the office of Aristide's interior minister, but Aristide did nothing.<sup>85</sup> At least one Aristide critic writing in mid-1996 said that as many as two dozen of Aristide's opponents, including Durocher-Bertin, had perished.<sup>86</sup> At a funeral for his cousin Jean-Hubert Feuillé, murdered in November 1995, President Aristide delivered a passionate eulogy in which he urged followers to "go to the neighborhoods where there are big houses and heavy weapons to disarm [the occupants] . . . Do not sit idly by, do not wait."<sup>87</sup> Not surprisingly, his remarks did not sit well with the international community, especially after several perceived opponents of Aristide had their homes burned.

Where does that leave us? Obviously, Haiti has serious problems with the effectiveness of its democracy. Much of that can undoubtedly be traced to Haiti's tragic history and its societal makeup. But there are clear positive developments as well. The simple fact that Haiti has had three democratic presidential elections in the last 11 years is historic and noteworthy. Though there are certainly less optimistic signs, we should remember that the institutions of democracy do not solidify overnight, as evidenced by experiences in Panama, Nicaragua, and elsewhere. We also should recognize that the Haitian people seem to want democracy since more than 4 million of them, more than 50% of the population, had registered to vote by April 2000.<sup>88</sup> And, on a final positive note, President-elect Aristide did pledge in a letter to President Clinton this past December that he is committed to making a number of important governmental and political reforms.<sup>89</sup> We will have to wait and see if he carries through on his pledge, but for now at least he seems to be willing to make the effort.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

So, did we accomplish our policy objectives in Haiti? Yes, we did. Operation Uphold Democracy facilitated the departure of Haiti's military government and restored President Aristide to office. We stopped the flow of boat people to south Florida. We secured American citizens and property in Haiti. We dramatically reduced the numbers of our troops on the ground in less than 18 months. And, we trained a young Haitian police force with the intent that it will provide security to enable Haiti's democracy to mature. Regardless of the partisan bickering we often see over foreign policy failures versus successes, almost anyone would have to admit that we did get in and out of Haiti very quickly, while accomplishing all stated objectives. We have to remember that President Clinton very wisely limited those objectives. He did not guarantee that we could make Haiti's democracy work. He did promise the Haitians a chance to do so, and Operation Uphold Democracy has given them that.

Still, it might be appropriate to ask one more question – did President Clinton intentionally “dumb down” our objectives in order to ensure success even though that success could be short-lived? The answer is that he probably did. In the context of his espousal of the national strategy of “promoting democracy”, President Clinton almost certainly wanted to see Haiti succeed as a country with a viable democracy, even if his only real motivation for wanting that was to minimize the potential for more boat people. More likely, though, he expected that a viable democracy in Haiti could help the country move forward in its badly needed development.

As described earlier in this study, President Clinton did not have the congressional support for an overly aggressive and well-resourced comprehensive program toward Haiti. He

also had not completely convinced the American public that Haiti was an interest that justified military intervention or even much American attention (unless one happened to live in South Florida). Bowing to the political pressure from the left, though, and having increasingly elevated the rhetoric about the “thugs” in the de facto government, he must have felt the need to take some definitive action. How better to do so than to intervene with very limited, easily attainable objectives?

Essentially, by mid-1994, President Clinton had about four possible alternatives. Those alternatives follow, listed by their increasing “severity” and/or potential military and economic cost in the near term (five to ten years). First, President Clinton could maintain the status quo, i.e., continue to rattle sabers and focus on diplomatic and economic pressures – an alternative that had crawled along for three years with no significant effect. Second, he could reach some sort of agreement with the “thugs” and inform President Aristide that, unfortunately, the USG would no longer pursue aggressive methods for his reinstatement. In other words, Aristide would be on his own. Third, President Clinton could establish limited, achievable objectives and intervene as he did. Fourth, he could establish more comprehensive objectives designed and resourced to ensure democratic and economic success, and then intervene to attain those objectives.

Theoretically, President Clinton could continue with the status quo indefinitely. Certainly, the flow of boat people was under control, albeit at some cost in terms of USN and USCG activity. Though under increasing pressure from his own party and the Congressional Black Caucus, there was no other real imperative for action as long as the “migrant problem” stayed off the front pages and CNN. But, how much political pressure could President Clinton stand, and for how long? And, could he ever have achieved a diplomatic solution that included Aristide’s reinstatement?

The second alternative, reach an agreement with the “thugs” while excluding Aristide, had major problems, the most glaring of which would be the loss of American credibility resulting from such a significant policy about-face. After three years of strong American and international (UN and OAS) language against the Cédras regime, President Clinton could hardly agree to any solution that would accept the de facto government as “legitimate”. Though doing so might please some people in President Clinton’s own executive branch, the international impact could be significant for a long time. And again, President Clinton had to at least consider the political pressures that pushed him toward action, i.e., the pressure from congressional Democrats, the Congressional Black Caucus, the million-plus Haitian-Americans, groups such

as TransAfrica, and others. No one in those groups would sit quietly if this alternative were enacted.

The fourth alternative, intervene with more comprehensive objectives in mind, had four major obstacles that made it unfeasible. First, it could or would raise Haitian expectations to a level that very probably would not be met. A raising of expectations was inevitable in any intervention, but would be more exaggerated if we had set specific objectives too high. Second, this alternative would unquestionably have cost much more, in terms of personnel and dollars, over a much longer time. It would have necessitated a much deeper involvement in Haitian government functions such as election processes, budgetary and fiscal policy development and implementation, justice system establishment/rebuild, as well as many others. Third, in order to affect such a deep involvement we would need the willing agreement of the legitimate GOH, and such agreement to international or U.S. "supervision" of GOH processes would almost surely not be forthcoming. Finally, this alternative would require a much higher level of support and commitment by Congress and the American people. Based on President Clinton's poor success at obtaining such support by mid-1994, it would seem to be questionable at best that he could drum up the support required to "guarantee" Haiti's future as a viable democracy.

So, President Clinton took what was arguably the easy way out, but was also the most politically feasible. By limiting the objectives as he did, he effectively halted the political pressure from the left while also minimizing the right's basis for complaint.

In the long run, will Haiti's democracy succeed? Again, based on democratic experiences elsewhere in the developing world, and Haiti's particularly difficult political history, it is probably much too soon to tell. The Haitians have an uphill battle ahead of them, but for the first time since their independence, the majority of the people have been able to select their own president, and they have done it three times in a row now. Maybe the most important question for the U.S. is whether or not it will accept democracy "not in its own image", i.e., democracies where the electorate legitimately chooses someone we find incompatible with our own expectations. If we are not willing to accept that, then we need to re-look our intent when we claim to promote democracy around the world.

WORD COUNT = 10,354.





## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Africana: the Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 1999), 904.

<sup>2</sup> Sidney W. Mintz, "Can Haiti Change?" Foreign Affairs 74 (January 1995): [database on line]; available from ProQuest, Bell & Howell, publication no. 00157120.

<sup>3</sup> Appiah and Gates, 913.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Debs Heinl, Jr., Nancy Gordon Heinl, and Michael Heinl, Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People, 1492 – 1995 (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1996), 114.

<sup>5</sup> Data for these three sentences compiled from the Heinls' Chronology, 788 – 794.

<sup>6</sup> Appiah and Gates, 904.

<sup>7</sup> Comprised from the table in Heinls, 6.

<sup>8</sup> Note that some of Haiti's mulatto leaders also used terror as a controlling weapon; this was not just a tool of the blacks. See the Heinls for more extensive and well-researched information about Haiti's violent political history.

<sup>9</sup> One of the major causes of Haiti's widespread and worsening economic troubles was the wholesale slaughter of Haitian pigs necessitated by the threat of a deadly African swine virus entering Haiti via the Dominican Republic starting in 1978. Since pigs were a form of wealth and savings, many poor Haitians were devastated by their loss. Even though the international community replaced many of the animals, it did so with a less-hardy pig that Haitians could not afford to feed and house. See the Heinls, 670, 672, 681. Another major factor adversely affecting Haiti's economy was the final death of an already-declining tourist industry after AIDS became closely associated with Haiti in a few highly publicized articles in 1981 and 1982. Total numbers of tourist visitors in the 1982 – 1983 season was down to 10,000 from over 200,000 just a few years earlier. See the Heinls, 685.

<sup>10</sup> Donald E. Schulz, Whither Haiti? (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1 April 1996), 2 – 3.

<sup>11</sup> The World Bank Group, "Haiti: The Challenges of Poverty Reduction," August 1998; available from <<http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/External/lac/lac.nsf/3af04372e7f23ef6852567d6006b38a3/8479e9126e3537f0852567ea000fa239?OpenDocument>>; Internet; accessed 21 January 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Haiti: The Challenge of Poverty Reduction (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank Group, Report No. 17242-HA, August 1998), 15. Also, Heinls, 793.

<sup>13</sup> Amy Wilentz, The Rainy Season: Haiti Since Duvalier (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 326, 343, 401. Amy Wilentz' book is a journalistic and generally pro-Aristide look at the developments in Haiti during the years just after the Duvalier dynasty ended. On pages 322 – 324 and 344 – 357, she offers some good examples of the terrible and increasing violence. The

latter set of pages describes the daylight attack on Aristide's church, Saint-Jean-Bosco, during a church service; at least 13 people died and at least 77 were wounded. Aristide was almost killed. On pages 226 – 228, she tells of two other attempts on Aristide's life.

<sup>14</sup> Lester H. Brune, The United States and Post-Cold War Interventions: Bush and Clinton in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia, 1992 – 1998 (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 1998), 42.

<sup>15</sup> Heinls, 732.

<sup>16</sup> Brune, 44.

<sup>17</sup> *Lavalas* is the Haitian-Creole word meaning flood, torrent, or torrential rain. Aristide had chosen this name for his political party, apparently to signify that his many poor supporters were like a flood with overwhelming power that could wash away obstacles. See Jean Targète and Raphael G. Urciolo, Haitian Creole-English Dictionary (Kensington, MD: Dunwoody Press, 1993), 113.

<sup>18</sup> Papa Doc organized his dreaded *Tonton Macoutes* as a counter to the FAD'H's and elite's power. Composed of dedicated Duvalierists, the *macoutes* were essentially state-authorized terrorists and informants who did Duvalier's "dirty work". They were his principal force to control, through threats and actual violence (to include murder), Papa Doc's potential Haitian enemies, whether mulatto, black, military, etc. In a few cases, they also intimidated foreigners in Haiti.

<sup>19</sup> Heinls, 738.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 739.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> See Dr. Brune's CIA/DIA arguments throughout his chapter on Haiti, but especially pages 37, 40 – 42, 45 – 46, 51 – 52, and 59 – 60. Stretching his argument further than he probably should, Dr. Brune goes so far as to imply that the CIA and DIA were so enamored with the authoritarian military regime of General Cédras that they intentionally and directly undermined U.S. policy toward Haiti. While it is certainly true that various members of the executive branch strongly differed with respect to their impressions of President Aristide's worthiness, it is questionable that they would knowingly and blatantly undermine President Bush's, and later President Clinton's, publicly stated policies. Granted, intelligence analysts did offer negative reports about Aristide's mental stability (or instability), and some of those reports made news headlines and undoubtedly affected Congressional and policymaker attitudes, but Dr. Brune's implications go much further than that.

<sup>23</sup> Bob Shacochis, The Immaculate Invasion (New York: Viking Penguin, 1999), 25 – 34. These pages offer some interesting material that, if true, provide evidence strengthening Dr. Brune's argument about CIA and DIA members undermining U.S. policy.

<sup>24</sup> Heinls, 741. Like Dr Brune and other critics of Bush's policy implementation, the Heinls also address the Bush administration's apparent wavering or lack of true dedication toward the person of Aristide. They quote Aristide as having once described capitalism as a "mortal sin", a

comment that certainly would have disturbed an American administration, even if said years earlier. But, the Heinls also point out that even if the Bush administration did not fully support Aristide's election, it had tried to work with him while he was in office.

<sup>25</sup> Brune, 47. In making his point about the European Community's non-recognition of the embargo, he also points out that 90% of Haiti's oil came from Europe, as well as countless luxury items that would have supported the wealthy. The net effect, of course, was that the embargo was working great against the poor Haitians who had no political power, but it had minimal effect on those with the power.

<sup>26</sup> Heinls, 680.

<sup>27</sup> Adam B. Siegel, The Intervasion of Haiti (Alexandria, VA: The Center for Naval Analyses, Professional Paper 539, August 1996), 4.

<sup>28</sup> Brune, 47.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>30</sup> Mark Peceny, "The Democratic Peace and Contemporary U.S. Military Interventions," 14 – 18 March 2000; available from <<https://www.cc.columbia.edu/sec/dlc/ciao/isa/pem01/pem01.html>>; Internet; accessed 3 January 2001, 6.

<sup>31</sup> Heini, 746.

<sup>32</sup> Peceny, 6.

<sup>33</sup> In early 1992, in an attempt to relieve some of the international pressure directed against his regime, General Cédras had agreed to allow the OAS and UN to post some human rights observers in Haiti. Initially, these observers numbered 18, but the number shifted over time, reaching as many as 350 at one point.

<sup>34</sup> William J. Clinton, "President-Elect Clinton's Radio Broadcast to the Haitian People, January 14, 1993," Foreign Policy Bulletin 3 (January – April 1993): 133.

<sup>35</sup> Warren Christopher, "Remarks by Secretary Christopher Prior to Meeting with Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, February 5, 1993," Foreign Policy Bulletin 3 (May/June 1993): 64.

<sup>36</sup> William J. Clinton, "President Clinton's Press Conference Comment, February 5, 1993," Foreign Policy Bulletin 3 (May/June 1993): 64.

<sup>37</sup> The White House, "White House Statement on Repatriation Policy, March 2, 1993," Foreign Policy Bulletin 3 (May/June 1993): 64 - 65.

<sup>38</sup> Siegel, 5.

<sup>39</sup> Brune, 48 – 49.

<sup>40</sup> Siegel, 5.

<sup>41</sup> Heinls, 748.

<sup>42</sup> The protestors were predominately members of FRAPH (the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti), a sort of pseudo-military violent group that was anti-Aristide. Many of the members were undoubtedly *macoutes*. Exceptionally well-versed in the power of intimidation and information operations, FRAPH made a point of holding loud, boisterous rallies to which they invited the press, especially the American media. See the Heinls, 749, for a more detailed discussion of FRAPH.

<sup>43</sup> Siegel, 6.

<sup>44</sup> William J. Clinton, "President Clinton's Press Conference, October 15, 1993," Foreign Policy Bulletin 4 (November/December 1993): 81.

<sup>45</sup> Well-known as an influential and respected member of Washington's liberal establishment, Mr. Robinson's work with TransAfrica in the 1980s led to the economic sanctions against South Africa – sanctions that many believe were significant in ending *apartheid*.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in "Haiti Policy: To Die For," The Economist 331 (May 7, 1994): 26.

<sup>47</sup> Peceny, 7.

<sup>48</sup> Siegel, 6.

<sup>49</sup> Siegel, note 29 at bottom of page 9.

<sup>50</sup> Brune, 52.

<sup>51</sup> See comments by Special Advisor to the President on Haiti, William Gray, III, at a briefing on 5 July 1994; by President Clinton at press conferences on 8 and 12 July 1994 and 3 August 1994; and by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in a statement to the UNSC on 31 July 1994. All are found in Foreign Policy Bulletin 5 (September/October 1994): 11 – 23.

<sup>52</sup> Heinls, 752 – 753.

<sup>53</sup> "U.N. Security Council Resolution 940, July 31, 1994," Foreign Policy Bulletin 5 (September/October 1994): 19 – 20.

<sup>54</sup> See "JTF – 180 Uphold Democracy Oral History Interviews" for extensive information about the planning for Operation Uphold Democracy. The document, though not published per se, was printed by XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg Training Support Center, Ft Bragg, NC. For a more accessible summary of the various plans for the operation, see Lt.Col. James L. Dunn and Maj. Jon M. Custer, "Operation Uphold Democracy: The Role of the SOCOORD as Part of a Joint Task Force," Special Warfare 8 (July 1995): 28 – 32. Though focused on the special operations aspects of the planning, it still provides a good overall summary of the two basic OPLANs and the two variants.

<sup>55</sup> Heins, 754.

<sup>56</sup> John Shattuck, "Press Briefing by Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor John Shattuck, September 13, 1994 (Opening Statement)," Foreign Policy Bulletin 5 (November/December 1994): 5.

<sup>57</sup> William J. Clinton, "President's Television Address, September 15, 1994," Foreign Policy Bulletin 5 (November/December 1994): 11 – 12.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>59</sup> Gene Healy, "Arrogance of Power Reborn: The Imperial Presidency and Foreign Policy in the Clinton Years," Cato Policy Analysis No. 389, 13 December, 2000; available from <<http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa-389es.html>>; Internet; accessed 26 December 2000, 12. Healy's article is very critical of President Clinton's interpretation of the war power as vested by the U.S. Constitution. He discusses Clinton's "abuses" in entering Haiti and the Balkans. Though politically slanted against Clinton, the article gives a good view of both the ongoing debate about the constitutional "war power" and the word games politicians play to avoid saying what they really mean.

<sup>60</sup> William J. Clinton, "President's Interview by Wire Service Reporters, September 14, 1994," Foreign Policy Bulletin 5 (November/December 1994): 9.

<sup>61</sup> William J. Clinton, "President's Radio Address to the Nation, September 17, 1994," Foreign Policy Bulletin 5 (November/December 1994): 18.

<sup>62</sup> Dunn and Custer, 31 – 32.

<sup>63</sup> William J. Clinton, "President's Television Address to the Nation, September 18, 1994," Foreign Policy Bulletin 5 (November/December 1994): 18 – 19. See also the 18 September briefing by Secretary of State Christopher, Secretary of Defense Perry, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Shalikashvili, same source, pages 19 – 22.

<sup>64</sup> William J. Clinton, "An Update of Events in Haiti (Operation "Uphold Democracy") Consistent With the War Powers Resolution to Ensure That the Congress Is Kept Fully Informed Regarding Events In Haiti," 21 March 1995; 104<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, House Document 105-50, available from <[http://www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/legislative.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/legislative.html)>; Internet; accessed 7 September 2000.

<sup>65</sup> Dunn and Custer, 29.

<sup>66</sup> William J. Clinton, "President's Letter to Congress, September 18, 1994," Foreign Policy Bulletin 5 (November/December 1994): 22.

<sup>67</sup> William J. Clinton, "An Update of Events in Haiti (Operation "Uphold Democracy") Consistent With the War Powers Resolution to Ensure That The Congress Is Kept Fully Informed Regarding Events In Haiti," 21 March 1995, 104<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, House Document 105-50. "An Update On the Deployment of Combat-Equipped U.S. Armed Forces to Haiti As Part of the Multinational Force (MNF)," 21 September 1995, 104<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup>

Session, House Document 104-119. "The Fourth Report on the Continuing Deployment of United States Armed Forces to Haiti," 21 March 1996, 104<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, House Document 104-190. All available from <[http://www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/legislative.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/legislative.html)>; Internet; accessed 7 September 2000.

<sup>68</sup> As the U.S. Defense Attaché in 1996 and 1997, the author worked closely with the U.S. Support Group – Haiti, a small joint group of no more than 350 to 400 military engineers, doctors, nurses, etc., with a small dedicated security force. This outfit was composed of short-term (90- to 179-day) temporary duty personnel and units that rotated in strictly to do small construction or medical projects (school classrooms, wells, one-lane bridges, inoculation projects, etc.) in the areas around Port-au-Prince. By agreement with the U.S. Embassy and the UN, the U.S. Support Group – Haiti also maintained a small hospital that provided medical support to the UN mission's personnel.

<sup>69</sup> Clinton, "The Fourth Report . . . Forces to Haiti."

<sup>70</sup> Heins, 3, 31.

<sup>71</sup> The World Bank Group, 17.

<sup>72</sup> Inter-American Development Bank, "Haiti: Basic Socio-Economic Data," 21 December 2000; available from <<http://www.iadb.org/int/sta/ENGLISH/brptnet/english/htibrpt.htm>>; Internet; accessed 21 January 2001.

<sup>73</sup> The World Bank Group, "Haiti Country Brief," June 2000; available from <<http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/External/>>; Internet; accessed 21 January 2001.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Heins, 761.

<sup>76</sup> David Gonzalez, "Aristide Victorious In Haiti", The New York Times, 30 November 2000; available from <<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/11/30/world/30HAIT.html>>; Internet; accessed 22 December 2000.

<sup>77</sup> The author developed this and the preceding paragraph based on his experience as the U.S. Defense Attaché. He dealt on a daily basis with HNP officers, to include senior officials such as Precinct Chiefs and the national HNP Director. He also dealt closely with UN security forces and several of the Haitian-American police officers who had come from the U.S. The author was personally involved in reviewing several of the most high profile and visible cases involving allegations of corruption, improper treatment of prisoners, security lapses, etc. Though some cases clearly involved serious abuses of police power, they were also apparently isolated and did not, in the author's professional opinion, clearly evidence any sort of large-scale conspiracy to corrupt the HNP. Undoubtedly, there are some individuals who are or were attempting to corrupt the force, and they probably have some success. But the HNP seemed generally to be trying to find and fire those officers that clearly violated ethical standards.

<sup>78</sup> Michelle Faul, "Desperately Poor, Haiti Gets Another Label: Drug State," The Associated Press, International News (1058 words) [database on-line]; available from Lexis-Nexis.

<sup>79</sup> David Gonzalez, "Drug Runners Are Finding the Going Easy in Haiti," The New York Times, 30 July 2000, sec. 1, p. 3 (1434 words) [database on-line]; available from Lexis-Nexis.

<sup>80</sup> Heinls, 763.

<sup>81</sup> Clinton, "The Fourth Report . . . Forces to Haiti."

<sup>82</sup> Gonzalez, "Aristide Victorious in Haiti."

<sup>83</sup> David Gonzalez, "Democracy in Haiti Where Votes Are Just a Start", The New York Times, 3 December 2000; available from <<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/12/03/weekinreview/03GONZ.html>>; Internet; accessed 3 December 2000.

<sup>84</sup> Washington Post Service, "Haiti, Again," International Herald Tribune, 8 April 2000, Opinion, p. 6 (432 words) [database on-line]; available from Lexis-Nexis.

<sup>85</sup> Heinls, 761.

<sup>86</sup> Jonathan G. Clarke, "Instinct for the Capillary: The Clinton Administration's Foreign Policy 'Successes'", Cato Foreign Policy Briefing No. 40, 5 April 1996; available from <<http://www.cato.org//pubs/fpbriefs/fpb-040.html>>; Internet; accessed 20 January 2001.

<sup>87</sup> Heinls, 762.

<sup>88</sup> Washington Post Service, "Haiti, Again."

<sup>89</sup> David Gonzalez, "Haiti's President-Elect Pledges Reforms in a Letter to Clinton", The New York Times, 29 December 2000; available from <<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/12/29/world/29HAIT.html>>; Internet; accessed 1 January 2001.





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