



Drugs, Weapons and Death Squads in Haiti

by Kevin Pina and Dennis Bernstein; Flashpoints Interviews ; April 12, 2005

Dennis Bernstein: Two weeks ago Flashpoints Radio broke the story of the United States government secretly and illegally arming the U.S. installed coup government of Haiti. Since that time more details have surfaced in terms of the extent of the illegal arms flow, and how these back door deals are working. Indeed, as we reported, the United States has quietly begun to ship these arms to Haiti's interim government, despite a 13-year arms embargo on the Caribbean nation. The new arms are meant to brace up a shaky security force, so they say, but the reality is that they could actually undermine security and fuel the actions by the death squad national police and a whole bunch of drug dealers running around the streets....[Kevin Pina,] first of all bring it back to where it started and then give us some more information.

Kevin Pina: Last week we reported that the U.S. installed Prime Minister, Mr. Gerard Latortue, was making noises inside of Haiti, asking that the 13-year old arms embargo against Haiti be lifted. What we pointed out last week was that there had already been deals made, had already been cut, that arms had already been delivered to Haiti. So his calling for the U.S. embargo to be lifted was actually just a cover for the fact that there had already been arms sent into Haiti, that there had already been deals made.

What we have learned, and several names have surfaced that have made this story even more interesting for us...we understand that almost six months ago there was a cheque for \$1 million that was cut from the Prime Minister's office, that brokered one of the first shipments of arms that went into Haiti. The arms shipment was [allegedly] brokered by a figure associated with the Republican Party in Florida, a Haitian-American woman named **Lucy**>http://auto_sol.tao.ca/node/view/1302>Lucy Orlando.

Apparently, one of the other brokers is a man named Joel Deeb. Now Joel Deeb is a very interesting figure because Joel Deeb, of course, was arrested by the Duvalier dictatorship (the son, Jean-claude Duvalier), because he was involved in **several**>http://auto_sol.tao.ca/node/view/1298>**several** bombings in the capital, and the illegal importation of arms. Mr. Deeb is also interesting because his name surfaced with regard to Pablo Escobar and the fact that Pablo Escobar may have been **hiding**>http://auto_sol.tao.ca/node/view/1300>**hiding** in Haiti at one time. Apparently, Mr. Deeb had participated in a ruse with Pablo Escobar in order to mislead the DEA into thinking that Escobar was in Haiti when actually he was trying to change his location within Columbia itself.

DB: And Escobar, of course, was head of the Medellin Cartel.

KP: Exactly. So we've got this person who is attached to the Republican Party in Florida, this Haitian-American woman Lucy Orlando; we have Joel Deeb, a nefarious figure who was helping to broker the arms deal. And, apparently, Condoleeza Rice was well aware that this arms deal was happening six months ago; she was well aware that the Haitian government had cut a \$1 million check from its treasury in order to pay for this arms shipment, and apparently that deal was brokered for arms that were held by the Pentagon in Panama, in what they call refurbished, recycled arms.

These are arms that apparently had been captured by so-called "enemy forces," which we can only assume would be people like al-Qaeda, other armies, possibly the FARC in Columbia,

captured armaments that were then shipped to Panama and now apparently are up for sale by the Pentagon to so-called "friendly nations" within Latin America and the Caribbean.

DB: Say a little bit more about the Florida connection and Condoleeza Rice. How do you know that there's an official from the Republican Party in Florida involved, and how do you know Condoleeza Rice was involved?

KP: She [Orlando] is not an official as much as she is a darling of the Republican Party in Florida; she is [apparently], very close to Jeb Bush.

Lucy Orlando is a woman who worked for George Bush's re-election campaign; she's a woman who is well-known in those circles and this information is coming from someone else within those circles, who said that Lucy Orlando is very close to Youri Latortue, who of course is the nephew of Gerard Latortue, the U.S. installed Prime Minister of Haiti, and that it's Youri Latortue along with Lucy Orlando who are working on the Haitian side along with Joel Deeb actually acting as the intermediary with the Pentagon. And, apparently, there was a conversation that someone who was in Florida had heard, where there was a conference call where Condoleeza Rice had participated and that she has been well-aware for quite some time, since before becoming Secretary of State - when she was National Security Advisor for the Bush administration - that the Pentagon was selling arms to the U.S. installed government in violation of that 13-year arms embargo.

DB: And of course it's not easy to get these arms that have been seized by so-called terrorist countries and anti-terrorist operations by the United States Government. These are arms that are controlled by the U.S. government so it would take a high official in the Pentagon or in the NSC to make these weapons available. Now let's be clear: this is in violation of a 13 year arms embargo. Why was that embargo first put on?

KP: That came after the 1991 coup, when the former brutal military, which we know is now being transformed into the brutal Haitian police force, PNH...after that coup the United States instituted this embargo and it's been in place ever since. It's a remnant of the Clinton Administration, basically.

DB: Now, the other part of this that is so troubling is, we have seen in recent days and weeks, we've reported extensively with you Kevin, on the attacks, the open attacks on peaceful demonstrations, on Father Gerard Jean Juste, on pro-democracy activists by the so-called "new" National Police of Haiti. If you put weapons in their hands, and more heavily arm...you're arming death squads, and aren't you also arming in a way, the drug trafficking structure there?

KP: With the Haitian National Police, there's very little difference between them and those people who are involved in drug trafficking today in Haiti. But one thing I also want to add is that this question of the arms shipment and the U.S. violating the 13-year old embargo also came out on the 7th, yesterday, by Robert Muggah, who wrote an article that came out in the **Globe** >http://auto_sol.iao.ca/node/view/1303> **Globe** and Mail in Canada, in which he has said that the United States and the Pentagon have actually sold the U.S. regime \$7 million worth of arms recently. What we're talking about [with] this first \$1 million arms shipment is what opened up the pipelines six months ago, and apparently according to Robert Muggah and his organization, called the **Small** ><http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/publications/occasional.htm>> **Small Arms Survey**, in the **Globe** and Mail yesterday, that the Pentagon and the Bush administration have sold at least \$7 million worth of arms to the current U.S. installed regime in Haiti.

DB: And where are they getting the money to pay for these weapons when the amount of poverty, the extraordinary malnutrition, the AIDS pandemic, where does this \$7 million come from?

KP: Well, it's as good a question to ask, where does the \$26 million that they're using to buy off the former military in order to get them to lay down their arms to join the Haitian police force, where is that \$26 million coming from? Nobody knows. Nobody knows where this \$7 million for these arms shipments is coming from either.

DB: What else do we need to know about this illegal support of this weapons operation by the U.S. Government and the Pentagon?

KP: Well of course it's not just disgusting given the current situation, that this amount of money is being spent on these arms, but we've also got to remember what these arms are being used for. These arms are being used to arm a repressive police apparatus that today is involved in a systematic campaign to physically eliminate the majority political party, Jean Bertrand Aristide's Lavalas party. At the same time we know that this must be happening with the collusion, certainly with the knowledge of the United Nations, who, after all, is being put in place and being told that they have to deal with the outcome of all of this, of these arms coming in. It's got to be the United Nations. So we have to also ask, are they in the loop? Are they aware that these arms shipments have happened? If they are, given that it's already been shown that they cannot control the Haitian police; we know that they've fired on unarmed demonstrators several times, we know that they've been involved in massacres in poor neighbourhoods where calls continue for the return of Jean Bertrand Aristide. What is the UN's relationship to these arms deals? What is their position about this since, again, they are the ones on the ground who are going to have to deal with the outcome?

DB: Kevin, this came out in the Associated Press on Monday, it's called <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=638634>> "Fiery Priest May Seek Haiti's Presidency," it's from Port au Prijnce, Stevenson Jacobs. Now listen to this, this is how it starts:

"Supporters call him Haiti's Martin Luther King Jr., a fiery Roman Catholic priest who electrifies the masses with populist sermons urging social equality and non-violent protest. The U.S.-backed interim government recently accused him of inciting violence and hiding gunmen loyal to ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, jailing him for weeks before freeing him because of a lack of evidence."

This article seems rather provocative and a set-up. You want to talk about it Kevin?

KP: This seems to be another one of AP's disinformation pieces for the State Department. I don't exactly know who Stevenson Jacobs believes he's working for but this, to me, seems like an absolute set up. On the one hand there is this sort of sensationalist approach to describing Jean Juste, but really where the article goes is in saying that there is the possibility that Father Jean Juste will run for the presidency. Of course, as soon as you give that impression, that makes him vulnerable to attacks again, that makes him fair game to his enemies within the Haitian National Police force, within the United Nations, and certainly within the former brutal military who already see him as a threat because Jean-Juste has already made it clear, he's not interested in running for the Presidency, he has already made it clear that Lavalas will not participate in those October elections; he's also made it clear that before there can be any real negotiations, about elections and the participation of Lavalas, that, one, President Jean Bertrand Aristide must be returned to Haiti, allowed to return to Haiti, and that, two, political prisoners be released, the thousands of political prisoners in Haiti be released from the jails, and that, third, and most important of all that there be freedom of expression and freedom to campaign, freedom of speech, because obviously no one could participate or call those elections free or fair without those three prerequisites. So this article really is a set up in a lot of ways because what its doing is portraying Father Jean Juste as someone who might be willing to participate in this set of elections despite the fact that he has categorically rejected any sort of rumour that says he is planning a run for the presidency. This is a set-up, a classic disinformation set-up, by the Associated Press.