

HAITI NEWS ROUNDUP: JULY 15 – 20, 2006

2 kidnapped missionaries freed in Haiti

By STEVENSON JACOBS

Associated Press

July 20, 2006

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Two North Carolina missionaries kidnapped on their way to church in Haiti's capital were freed Thursday after a ransom was paid, the FBI said.

Tom Barron, a minister at The Mustard Seed church, and congregation member William Eugene Seastrum were driving to church early Sunday when assailants stopped their car and dragged them out, said Leslie Dallemand, chief of the U.N. peacekeeping mission's anti-kidnapping unit. Both missionaries are from High Point, N.C.

The captors initially sought \$500,000 but lowered their demand to \$100,000 during negotiations with the FBI, Dallemand said.

The men were released Thursday after a ransom was paid, FBI spokeswoman Judy Orihuela said from Miami.

"They negotiated the amount and they were released," Orihuela said.

She declined to say how much ransom was paid and had no information about the men's conditions.

"As far as I know, they're pretty healthy," Dallemand said earlier. "The kidnapers didn't speak English. They made (one missionary) call his wife in North Carolina, and he did say he was OK."

Separately, Orihuela said another American was released Thursday after a day in captivity when an undisclosed ransom was paid.

Also, a Haitian employee of the U.S. Embassy was kidnapped Wednesday while driving in an embassy vehicle with diplomatic license plates.

Kidnappings, once relatively rare in Haiti, became a regular occurrence after a bloody revolt toppled former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004. Kidnappings leveled off following the February election of President Rene Preval, but the problem has worsened since.

U.N. officials blame much of the kidnappings and other violence on well-armed gangs _ some of which are loyal to Aristide and want Preval to allow the ousted president to return from exile in South Africa.

The United Nations, which has about 8,800 peacekeepers in the country, believes that much of the violence is aimed at destabilizing the new government. But Preval says drug traffickers, corrupt police and other criminals are behind the problems.

The special U.N. envoy to Haiti, Edmond Mulet, met with Preval on Wednesday and Thursday to discuss the deteriorating security climate, officials said.

On Wednesday, gunmen stopped dozens of cars traveling along a main road leading to the airport in the impoverished capital and tried to seize the occupants, Dallemand said. At least two Haitians were reported kidnapped.

The attacks were followed by heavy shooting that killed at least six people and injured several others in different parts of the capital, radio Kiskeya reported, suggesting a level of coordination among the gangs not seen in months.

It is unclear how long Barron and Seastrum have been in Haiti. Dallemand said the two were staying at a hotel in the Port-au-Prince neighborhood of Delmas, where many kidnappings occur.

Dallemand said the FBI is working with U.N. and Haitian authorities to free the men, the latest foreign missionaries to be kidnapped.

Last month, Canadian missionary Ed Hughes was abducted from a rural town north of Port-au-Prince where he runs an orphanage. The 72-year-old was freed a week later after an undisclosed ransom was paid.

At least 29 people have been reported kidnapped in Haiti so far in July, and about a third of them are U.S. citizens, Dallemand said.

Last year, 40 Americans were kidnapped in Haiti and three more were killed in attempted abductions, according to the U.S. State Department.

Haiti Kidnappers Seek Ransom for Americans

By STEVENSON JACOBS

The Associated Press

Washington Post

Thursday, July 20, 2006

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- Kidnappers have demanded \$100,000 for the release of two U.S. missionaries seized on their way to church in Haiti's capital, a U.N. official said Thursday. The captors initially sought \$500,000 but lowered the ransom demand during negotiations with the FBI, said Leslie Dallemand, chief of the U.N. peacekeeping mission's anti-kidnapping unit.

An FBI spokeswoman in Miami, Judy Orihuela, declined to comment on the demand, saying the U.S. law enforcement agency doesn't discuss ransom details.

Tom Barron, a minister at The Mustard Seed church, and member William Eugene Seastrum were driving to church early Sunday when assailants stopped their car and dragged them out, Dallemand said. Both missionaries are from High Point, North Carolina.

"As far as I know, they're pretty healthy," Dallemand said. "The kidnappers didn't speak English. They made (one missionary) call his wife in North Carolina, and he did say he was OK."

Once relatively rare in Haiti, kidnappings became an almost a daily occurrence after a bloody revolt toppled former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004. Kidnappings leveled off following the February election of President Rene Preval, but the problem has worsened again in recent weeks.

U.N. officials say the kidnappings and other violence are aimed at destabilizing the new government, which took power in May.

On Wednesday, gunmen stopped dozens of cars traveling along a main road leading to the capital's airport and tried to seize the occupants, Dallemand said. At least two Haitians were reported kidnapped.

It's unclear how long Barron and Seastrum had been in Haiti. Dallemand said the two were staying at a hotel in the Port-au-Prince neighborhood of Delmas, where many kidnappings occur.

Dallemand said the FBI is working with U.N. and Haitian authorities to free the men, the latest foreign missionaries to be kidnapped.

Last month, Canadian missionary Ed Hughes was abducted from a rural town north of Port-au-Prince where he runs an orphanage. The 72-year-old was freed a week later after an undisclosed ransom was paid.

At least 29 people have been reported kidnapped in Haiti so far in July, about a third of them U.S. citizens, Dallemand said.

Last year, 43 Americans were kidnapped in Haiti, including three who were killed in attempted abductions, according to the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs.

Fierce clashes in Haitian capital
BBC News
July 20, 2006

The UN has had a presence in Haiti since 1993

Fierce clashes have broken out between UN troops and gunmen in the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince, reports say.

According to witnesses, between two and six people were killed in the clashes in the north of the city. UN officials were unable to confirm the deaths.

Reports describe gangs going on the rampage and kidnappings taking place.

An election in February brought some stability to Haiti but correspondents say there are signs the security situation could be deteriorating again.

"Two ladies who work in a nearby factory were killed by bullets," a young man who identified himself as Maxime told Reuters news agency.

"A man who was running away from the scene of the incidents was shot and fell on the ground," he said.

"It was a real war," another witness told Reuters.

UN spokesman David Wimhurst said peacekeepers had come under attack and returned fire.

A UN peacekeeping force has been in Haiti since 2004 to help restore order after former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide was forced to flee an armed coup.

The unrest follows a gang massacre in the Martissant neighbourhood of Port-au-Prince earlier this month, in which about 20 people died.

UN forces and Haiti gangs clash, two reported dead
Thursday, July 20, 2006
by Joseph Guyler Delva
Reuters

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (Reuters): At least two people were killed when U.N. troops exchanged gunfire with gangs in Haiti's capital on Wednesday, a witness said.

The clash took place near the dangerous slum of Cite Soleil, not far from the national airport in Port-au-Prince. Panicked passersby fled the heavy gunfire.

"Two ladies who work in a nearby factory were killed by bullets," said a young man who identified himself as Maxime. "A man who was running away from the scene of the incidents was shot and fell on the ground."

"It was a real war," said resident Jackson Jeudi, who took refuge in abandoned factory in the area.

U.N. officials said they could not confirm the reports of deaths. U.N. spokesman David Wimhurst said peacekeepers came under attack and returned fire.

The 9,000-strong U.N. peacekeeping force was deployed to the violence-torn Caribbean country to restore order after the ouster in February 2004 of then-president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who was ousted by a bloody rebellion.

Violence has escalated in recent weeks in Haiti's trouble slums, home to armed gangs that supported Aristide.

About 20 people died in clashes between rival gangs in the Martissant neighborhood two weeks ago.

Haiti Denounces Heritage Looting
Prensa Latina
July 19, 2006

Havana, Jul 19 (Prensa Latina) Haitian Culture Minister Daniel Elie, presently visiting Cuba, denounced the looting of treasure from a ship lying in his country's territorial waters since 1669.

The ship, belonging to Welsh pirate Henry Morgan, has remained sunken since the 17th century and is now being ransacked by modern-day pirates from the US and Europe, declared the Caribbean minister.

He added that the stolen objects are being sold through the Internet for exorbitant prices.

In relation to the objectives of his visit to Cuba, he pointed out it is to generate exchange of experience regarding the protection of underwater heritage.

According to historical information, Morgan's ship was returning to Haiti from Cartagena de Indias carrying treasures looted in that Colombian city in 1669. An explosion caused by the fire used to grill meat caused it to sink.

Dominican Immigration Department plans temporary working visas for Haitians
The Dominican Today
July 19, 2006

SANTO DOMINGO.- The Immigration Department is negotiating with agricultural producers to establish a quota for visas destined for Haitian laborers.

Carlos Amarante Baret, Immigration Department director, asserted, this way the illegal immigration from Haiti to the Dominican Republic would be regulated.

Baret said the migratory phenomenon is universal and permanent and this is the only way to look at it to be able to understand it and give it the most viable solution.

He indicated that people are always going to move from under developed to developed areas in search of improving their economic situation.

He added “is for this reason that Haitians come to the Dominican Republic and Dominican go away in makeshift boats to Puerto Rico and other places in the United States, by other routes”.

Amarante Baret indicated that for the first time, last year there were no temporary visas granted to Haitians during the sugar cane harvest due to the fact that the industry was able to hire them from within the Dominican Republic, these people were not accounted for nor were they regulated in any way, he ended.

U.S. Says Haiti Airport Security Resolved
The Guardian Unlimited
AP
Tuesday July 18, 2006

WASHINGTON (AP) - Security problems at Haiti's Port-au-Prince airport have been resolved, the U.S. government said Tuesday.

On Dec. 22, 2004, the Transportation Security Administration announced that the airport's security measures didn't meet international standards.

Airlines and airports were asked to tell passengers traveling between the United States and Haiti that there were security lapses at the airport.

``Now that the government of Haiti has made the appropriate corrective actions, the Secretary of Homeland Security has notified Haitian government officials that the public notification requirements are being lifted," the agency said in a statement.

TSA spokeswoman Amy von Walter said the agency worked with Haitian authorities to bring the airport up to international security standards.

She would not discuss the nature of the problems or what was done to address them.

TSA assesses security at foreign airports. If the agency finds inadequate security, the Homeland Security secretary must tell the foreign government and recommend changes.

In late 2005, the agency determined that the airport in Bali didn't meet those standards, von Walter said.

Voodoo faithful pray for miracles at sacred waterfalls in Haiti
CNN.com
Tuesday, July 18, 2006

SAUT D'EAU, Haiti (AP) -- Bearing offerings of rum and freshly slaughtered goats, thousands of Voodoo faithful bathe in sacred waterfalls, praying for a better life and an end to the spiraling violence that threatens to destabilize Haiti's new government.

In an annual ritual that ended Monday, worshippers from across the Caribbean nation arrived for the weeklong Saut d'Eau pilgrimage.

The ritual, among Haitian Voodoo's holiest, comes amid a surge of violence in Haiti's capital that U.N. officials say is an attempt to destabilize the new government of President Rene Preval.

"The gods tell us what to do. That's why we're having so many problems: because we're not listening to the gods," said Yolette Jean, a Voodoo priestess.

Saut d'Eau's mystique owes to a 19th century legend that an image of the Virgin Mary appeared in the waterfalls. Believing the waters hold magical powers, followers strip to their underwear and scrub their bodies with aromatic mint leaves and soap.

Arms raised to the heavens, they ask the gods for help with fixing broken relationships, curing sickness and even lucky lottery tickets. Some collapse in convulsions, overcome by emotion -- or maybe spirit gods, called loas in Voodoo.

ADRA Fights Hunger in Haiti

18 Jul 2006

Source: Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) International

Nadia McGill

Reuters Alertnet

Silver Spring, Maryland—The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) office in Haiti has launched a nutritional supplemental program for children between the ages of 6 and 12 in Diquini, Carrefour, Haiti.

According to United Nations reports, Haiti has the worst daily caloric deficit per inhabitant in the world, with Haitians consuming an average of only 460 kilocalories each per day. At the nutrition program inauguration ceremony held on May 30, 2006, Fritz Bissereth, country director for the ADRA Haiti office, emphasized the importance of the program that provides each child with 1,250 kilocalories daily.

Bissereth explained that children enrolled in the program are monitored to ensure healthy weight gain. Each child also receives a personal hygiene kit, along with training in social etiquette and proper hygiene.

In addition, parents receive assistance through ADRA Haiti's credit program to open small businesses and generate income. Once parents are able to better provide for their families and meet their nutritional needs, the children "graduate" from the nutrition program. As children exit the program, other children enter. Thus, the program allows for a process that will produce continuous and far-reaching positive change in the local community.

"The parents and teachers . . . anxiously await when the children will leave the program in good health, saved from malnutrition, tuberculosis, kwashiorkor [a form of malnutrition], and all the other poverty-related diseases that have been devouring Haiti for too long now," said Bissereth. "With the financial security that our micro-credit program helps parents achieve, we are assured that in the next 10 to 20 years the beneficiaries will be proud citizens of Haiti serving their country in a wide spectrum of jobs."

More than 100 children currently benefit from the program, which is financed by the gifts of private donors through ADRA's Original Really Useful Gift Catalog. The 14-month program is valued at \$28,339.

ADRA has been working in Haiti since 1975, gaining recognition on the island nation for its food program and child survival projects. ADRA Haiti has also been active in credit programs. During 2004 and 2005, ADRA completed aid projects in Haiti totaling more than \$2,700,000, with nearly one million beneficiaries.

ADRA is present in 125 countries, providing community development and emergency management without regard to political or religious association, age, or ethnicity.

Additional information about ADRA can be found at www.adra.org.

Media Contact: Nadia McGill ADRA International 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring, MD
20904 Phone: 301.680.5145 E-mail: Media.Inquiries@adra.org

Hope dims for new Haiti leader as gangs run wild

Caribbean Net News

Monday, July 17, 2006

by Clarens Renois

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AFP): Hope is dimming two months into Haitian President Rene Preval's term that new blood can revive the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation as gang violence retakes the hard-pressed island in its violent grip.

More than 20 people have been confirmed killed over the past week and some 2,000 UN peacekeepers forced to rush back into the island's ravaged capital to try to retake control.

The violence has injured a half-dozen in the United Nations contingent. It was initially blamed on gangs trying to divvy up territory in the city where they could peddle drugs and oversee common trade in the face of meek government authority.

Kidnappings -- including those of the few foreigners still remaining in this Caribbean nation -- that had made the nation notorious but which slowly started to fade back again en force.

The United Nations team for one believes someone is out to discredit Preval's name.

"We are here to keep those who want to destabilize the country and the government from doing so," UN peacekeeping force spokesman David Wimhurst told AFP.

His 7,500-strong MINUSTAH team has soldiers ranging from Brazil to Sri Lanka. Troops from both countries had to be hospitalized this week from gun battle wounds.

The Brazilians were injured in the Cite shantytown, an area that has been all but ceded to armed gangs.

"There are clear indications that someone wants to disturb the climate," Wimhurst said.

Preval, 63, filled a leadership void this year left by Jean Bertrand Aristide, the leader most closely associated with this unstable nation who fled an uprising after a second stint in power in February 2004.

Preval, an agricultural engineer by training, was sworn in May 14 on the back of strong support from the country's frustrated poor.

The new president also won a pledge in a five-minute meeting with President George W. Bush for a US "commitment to stay engaged in helping Haitians build their institutions and economy."

Preval however refuses to say the new violence is aimed at his leadership, just as it was aimed two years earlier against Aristide's. He instead blames the unrest on drug gangs, and claims the political system is holding.

"The political insecurity is mainly under control," Preval told a recent forum of business leaders from the Haitian diaspora.

"The instability that the country is seeing is the result of drug trafficking and the release from prison of kidnappers" that happened in the two years of mayhem before his election, Preval said.

He called for the police force to be combed for criminals and the court system reformed of corruption.

Preval has also introduced a new cabinet official for internal security authorized to introduce a raft of new public safety measures.

But the president is hearing impatient voices from Haitian civic groups and nervous comments from foreign diplomats.

"It is clear that the safety situation is alarming," US Ambassador Janet Sanderson told reporters. Her office has introduced an evening curfew for all personnel.

Human rights groups are calling on authorities to take back control of Haitian streets. They have also verbally assaulted the UN team for failing to stamp out crime flash points.

"We cannot be everywhere at once," replies one frustrated commander with the UN force, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Thousands demand Aristide return
BBC News
July 16, 2006

Thousands of people have demonstrated in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, demanding the return of exiled former President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Supporters chanted "Aristide or death!" and "Aristide's blood is our blood!" as they marched to the National Palace on the ex-leader's 53rd birthday.

Mr Aristide fled an armed revolt two years ago and is in South Africa.

President Rene Preval had said during this year's election campaign he would consider allowing him to return home.

However, the US has warned this could destabilise the country.

Political prisoners

Saturday's march was largely peaceful although there were some stand-offs with riot police.

The protest was largely peaceful but there were some stand-offs

One of the rally's organisers, Andre Michelet, said: "We voted for Rene Preval to obtain the return of our leader."

Mr Preval won the presidential poll in February to become the first elected leader since Mr Aristide.

Demonstrator Harold Lafaliese told Associated Press news agency: "The international community doesn't want Aristide to come back, so they're pressuring Preval to keep him out."

The demonstration has added to the pressure on Mr Preval, who has also faced a resurgence of gang violence that left 20 people dead in the past week.

Saturday's protesters demanded the release of political prisoners held under the regime of Prime Minister Gerard Latortue, who took over after Mr Aristide fled.

Thousands of Haitians rally for Aristide's return
Caribbean Net News
AFP
Monday, July 17, 2006

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AFP): Several thousand Haitian demonstrated peacefully Saturday under armed United Nations escort for the return of their deposed leader Jean Bertrand Aristide from South African exile.

The demonstration delivered a warning shot to the two-month rule of President Rene Preval, which has already been shaken by an resurgence of gang violence that claimed some 20 lives over the past week.

Preval ran for office on the premise that he was open to the return of Aristide, who fled Haiti in February 2004 as an armed uprising bore down on the capital.

"We vote for Rene Preval to obtain the return of our leader" Aristide, said one of the march's organizers Andre Michelet.

The demonstrators, some wearing t-shirts with Aristide's image, gathered in the capital's poorest district before moving through other parts of the city and finally dispersing in front of the presidential palace amid a heavy presence of UN peacekeepers, some driving tanks.

"Everything passed off well. There were no incidents," a police spokesman said.

The demonstrators also demanded the return of all exiled Haitians and the release of "political prisoners."

Aristide, 52, had long maintained that he had been forced to step down under pressure from the United States and France and had urged the African Union to take up his claims of a coup.

**Aristide backers march to demand ex-leader's return
Violence avoided in Port-au-Prince demonstration.**

By Stevenson Jacobs

The Associated Press

The South Florida Sun Sentinel

July 16 2006

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti · Thousands of demonstrators demanding the return of ousted president Jean-Bertrand Aristide marched to Haiti's National Palace on Saturday, pushing past riot police in a dramatic show of support for the exiled former leader.

Chants of "Aristide or death!" and "Aristide's blood is our blood!" rang out as a crush of demonstrators pressed against a line of national police, who eventually allowed some 3,000 protesters to fill the street outside the palace.

The march coincided with Aristide's 53rd birthday and marked the largest display of support in months for the deposed leader, who fled Haiti in February 2004 amid a violent uprising and has been living in South Africa.

Helmeted police wielding batons and riot shields formed a human chain to keep protesters from approaching the whitewashed National Palace, President Rene Preval's official residence, which was guarded by dozens of United Nations peacekeepers in armored cars.

Police pushed back several protesters but the confrontation did not escalate to violence. Still, the show of force prompted many to turn back, fearful of a clash.

"If there's blood it will be on your hands!" a man yelled at police before they yielded.

"We voted for Preval on the condition that he bring back Aristide. That's the will of the people," said Bruce Pierre Richard, 21.

Preval, a champion of Haiti's poor who took power in May, has said Haiti's constitution allows Aristide to return but has not said whether he would welcome him home. Preval was prime minister under Aristide but the two grew apart and Preval has said little since his election about his former political mentor, frustrating Aristide supporters.

The United States has warned Aristide's return could destabilize the Caribbean country.

"The international community doesn't want Aristide to come back, so they're pressuring Preval to keep him out," said demonstrator Harold Lafaliese, 40.

The protest came amid a surge of bloodshed that U.N. officials say is aimed at undermining Preval's new government.

Most of the violence is blamed on warring street gangs, including last week's massacre of 22 civilians in Port-au-Prince's Martissant slum. Militants in recent days have also spread rumors that Preval had

died, cut telephone lines at Port-au-Prince's international airport and staged other disturbances to stir unrest, U.N. officials say.

U.N. officials have doubled patrols in the capital in a bid to crack down on the gangs, which operate with virtual impunity in Port-au-Prince's densely populated, maze-like slums.

Steps announced to reduce crime in Haiti

Monday, July 17, 2006

by Vario Serant

Caribbean Net News

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: Haitian president, Rene Préval, announced the appointment last week of Luc-Eucher Joseph as the official Public Security State Secretary.

Joseph, a former Haitian police inspector, will occupy the post which has remained vacant since Prime Minister Jacques Alexis was nominated by the government.

At the opening of a two day forum involving Haitians living abroad, Préval made a public appearance in Pétion-Ville, refuting persistent rumours about his death that were circulated throughout Port-au-Prince during recent days.

In recent weeks, security threats in the Haitian capital have increased which caused Préval to reiterate previous sentiments on the issue. "Today, we have largely reached political security. The insecurity which currently prevails, in my opinion, it is a bandit phenomenon related to misery, drugs and the repatriation of some gangsters."

Préval described ongoing activities to purge the Haitian Police Force (HPF) as a significant step to reducing violence. This effort, initiated by the HPF commander, Mario Andrésol, is part of an attempt to reform the Haitian justice system.

"The general manager of the PNH has complained many times about the fact that gangsters arrested are quickly released due to corrupt judges," Préval added.

Préval indicated that Andrésol's position as HPF commander-in-chief, along with appointing a Public Security State Secretary, are necessary parts of the strategy to restore peace in Haiti.

The Haitian capital and surrounding areas have exploded in violence in recent weeks. On July 6 and 7, at least twenty people witnessed their children perish at the hands of armed gangs in the district of Martissant, just south of Port-au-Prince.

On Thursday, the Mission of the United Nations for the Stabilization of Haiti (MINUSTAH) revealed a security plan intended to prevent recurrences of such incidents.

According to the UN military spokesman, this new plan will mobilize 2,250 blue helmets and international police along with 350 Haitian police officers.

This security plan envisages the deployment of fixed and mobile patrols in forty zones known for criminal activity in or around the Haitian capital.

Haitian Diaspora Reconnection Forum: Expectations and prospects
Tuesday, July 18, 2006
by Vario Serant
Caribbean Net News

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: While meeting in Paris with President Rene Garcia Préval, the French leader Jacques Chirac revealed plans to begin a co-development program in Haiti.

Haitians learned of the plans on July 12 at the Diaspora Reconnection Forum in Port-au-Prince. At this time, the French ambassador in Haiti described the concept of co-development as a method of showing how training efforts can enhance the capacity of migrants to contribute towards developing their native country.

Several foreign diplomats who participated in the two day forum, including US ambassador Janet A. Sanderson, congratulated the Diaspora for continued progress in developing the country. She also encouraged greater visibility of the Diaspora, which constitutes a positive and critical force in favour of progress in Haiti.

Showing support, the Canadian ambassador said, "At the time where Haiti must face new challenges, the Diaspora has perhaps a responsibility more considerable than others."

Claude Boucher emphasized, "People of the Diaspora undoubtedly have better living conditions and access to more resources than those of the fellow-citizens of the country."

Approximately three hundred delegates from the United States, Canada and France gathered for the Diaspora Connection Forum along with select representatives from other nations.

Participants urged authorities to clarify ambiguity within the Haitian Constitution regarding dual nationality. The businessman Samir Mourra was especially interested in this topic, as the former presidential candidate was ousted due to his American nationality.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Diaspora's representatives, the Minister for Haitians living abroad announced the impending creation of a commission focused on dual nationality.

Jean Génés advised the commission to circumvent the current constitutional obstacles to achieve its goal within a faster time frame.

According to article 284-2 of the Constitution, an amendment obtained by a legislature "can come into effect only after the installation of the next elected president".

The same article stipulates that "the president under the government of which the amendment took place cannot profit from the advantages which result from this".

In addition to the commission on dual nationality, the Minister for Haitians living abroad announced development of an investment forum to assist with effective integration as a provision within the framework for Diaspora members.

The Haitian Diaspora, predominantly in North America, is estimated at more than one million people. Money transfers between Haitians in the U.S. and loved ones in Haiti exceed one billion U.S. dollars annually.

U.S. Says Haiti Airport Security Resolved
By Associated Press
Los Angeles Times
July 18, 2006

WASHINGTON -- Security problems at Haiti's Port-au-Prince airport have been resolved, the U.S. government said Tuesday.

On Dec. 22, 2004, the Transportation Security Administration announced that the airport's security measures didn't meet international standards.

Airlines and airports were asked to tell passengers traveling between the United States and Haiti that there were security lapses at the airport.

"Now that the government of Haiti has made the appropriate corrective actions, the Secretary of Homeland Security has notified Haitian government officials that the public notification requirements are being lifted," the agency said in a statement.

TSA spokeswoman Amy von Walter said the agency worked with Haitian authorities to bring the airport up to international security standards.

She would not discuss the nature of the problems or what was done to address them.

TSA assesses security at foreign airports. If the agency finds inadequate security, the Homeland Security secretary must tell the foreign government and recommend changes.

In late 2005, the agency determined that the airport in Bali didn't meet those standards, von Walter said.

Busha Blockhead
Common Sense
John Maxwell
The Jamaica Observer
Sunday, July 16, 2006

There are one or two important things in this life of which we must always be aware. One is that you can kill as many Haitians as you like, you can rape as many Haitians as you like, you can chop off the faces of as many Haitians as satisfies your blood lust, and you can still live like a king in Queens, New York, as long as you remember that you mustn't mess with Uncle Sam's financial system.

Not even a teensy weensy bit.

You don't have to rob Fort Knox or deprive 50,000 people of their pensions and life savings, or like Al Capone, avoid income tax. All you need to get into real trouble is to work a simple little scheme to relieve a bank of some of its surplus cash. That will get you the attention of New York's finest. You will go to jail, be fingerprinted, mug-shotted and become a person of interest to the FBI.

Cocaine trafficking? Rape? Murder? Terrorism? Crimes against humanity ? Bagatelles!!! Who remembers them? But making a banker look stupid? Now that's really serious. You're gonna swing for that. That is a crime against the Holy Greenback itself.

Emanuel Toto Constant, like Baron Savimbi of Angola, was a friend of the CIA and various Higher Powers. He had not, as far as is known, yet been invited to the White House like Savimbi, but he was doing very well, thank you, as long as he confined his depredations to the Haitians, as long as his attachés with machetes, machine guns and murder in their hearts carved their bloody way through Haitian democracy with lavish fascism.

Toto, living the life in Queens, New York, just didn't know the rules.

While he danced, his president was in exile 5,000 miles away, his country's prime minister languishing in jail for no good reason, along with Haiti's foremost folklorist, a sexagenarian lady named Anne August, and thousands more like them are dead, or in prison, or in exile, because of the machinations and macheteros of Good Ol' Toto, friend of the CIA and Mr (Deadeye) Dick Cheney.

And other friends, like Louis Jodel Chamblain and other assassins, walk freely in Haiti, shooting and chopping up as they please. One of them ran for president a few months ago. They even have anniversary Massacres! They had one last week.

Israeli gunners cover their ears as an artillery piece fires into southern Lebanon from a position near Kiryat Shmona, northern Israel on Friday. (Photo: AP)

It all goes to show that, contrary to what some people believe, some of us don't have to await the Rapture; Heaven is right here on earth as long as you don't mess with the Feds.

In Haiti itself, God has at long last deigned to speak - through the American ambassador, one Ms Sanderson. This oracle has delivered herself of the message that perhaps Prime Minister Yvon Neptun

has been in jail long enough. She thought it was because of Haiti's "flawed judicial system" that he was still there, after two years without charge or trial.

Which is strange, since it was her government which elevated the head of that same judicial system to the post of "President" of Haiti, from which eyrie he and another American carpetbagger, one Gerard Latortue, dispatched Mr Neptun to jail.

The charade now taking place in Haiti is not a Haitian production, it is an American production, like "The Emperor Jones". In this American version of Grand Guignol theatre, an important walk-on part is played by black people who have the temerity not only to speak French but to anticipate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by 144 years.

The real actors are Americans - a whole panoply of eminent fellows, steel-jawed and gimlet-eyed, full of 'resolve' - from Thomas Jefferson to Woodrow Wilson, to George (the least) Bush, from William Jennings Bryan, a failed Presidential candidate, to Colin Powell, a failed Jamaican.

In their polished diplomatic phrases they all express themselves satisfied when the Haitians, the first and only people to abolish the servitude which chained them, are reduced to their proper status as less-than-people, undeserving of even as much democracy as Iraqis or Palestinians. The Nanny-in-Chief, a failed African-American named Condoleezza Rice, was quite within her rights to inform them last year that their vote was all-important. It was the most important thing they could do.

Because, no matter which way they voted, they were not going to get the leader they wanted. He would have to stay in South Africa while Uncle Dick scouted the waters round Haiti for oil.

There must be oil in Haiti. Just read the CV of the latest prophetess, Ms Sanderson. Her minor qualifications seem to have been her alleged intimate involvement in the illegal detention of two dozen Algerian nationals at the US Naval base in Guantanamo Bay in 2002.

She completed an honours thesis, "The Arab Oil Weapon", the year before joining the State Department as a career diplomat in August 1977. She later served as the petroleum attaché to Kuwait. During the first Gulf War, Sanderson was working as economic counsellor at the US Embassy in Jordan.

As ambassador to Algeria she was most famous for her attitude to the arrest of 24 Algerians working for aid organisations in occupied Bosnia. They were accused of "planning terrorist attacks on the American and UK embassies in Sarajevo". Two of the men are computer programmers, while the other 22 held administrative positions in several different NGOs.

The men were detained without bail for three months before the Bosnian Supreme Court acquitted them. However, in the early morning hours on the day they were to be released, the men were hooded, shackled and taken away to an unknown destination. They wouldn't be located for over a month. Eventually they were found to be in Guantanamo Bay.

After a year in custody, all 24 Algerian aid workers were released. Strangely, Miss Sanderson refused to lift a finger to help their families locate them, referring them to the Algerian authorities although she must have known they were in American custody. (Thanks to Lynn Duff for this info).

During a Senate hearing in 2000, Sanderson was gung-ho about the so-called drawdown programme, under which favoured US allies are allowed to receive, free of cost, unused US weaponry to control unruly trade unionists and pesky journalists, for example. "The drawdown programme, like the rest of our foreign assistance programmes, underscores the importance we attach to [the country we give weapons to] and to our ongoing political, military and security relationship."

That connection, and her little noticed expertise in petroleum matters, suggests to me that Mr Cheney knows that there is oil off the coast of Haiti and that he wants Halliburton to retrieve it for its rightful owner, the USA. Sanderson's human rights and petroleum background would seem to fit her perfectly for this critical mission.

Meanwhile, in the Middle East, the slaughter goes on. It is a fair fight, with the Palestinians using their concrete schools, hospitals and power stations to damage Israeli bombs and tank-shells and employing their formidable skulls against Israeli bullets. Children's sleep patterns repel sonic booms at 4 o'clock in the morning, no doubt damaging the Israeli F16s.

Mr George Bush, recognising a championship fight when he sees one, has called on both sides for restraint. He has vetoed a Security Council resolution encouraging Israel to behave herself. Not evenhanded enough.

As I have said, ad nauseam, the ruling classes of the world, but especially in Jamaica, have no class and cannot rule. Just as the Israeli rockets and shells are powerless against Palestinian civilians, so are our own rulers powerless against the public they say they serve.

If this were not so we would not have people like Mr Dennis Morrison whining about the all-powerful Jamaican NGOs, some of them intimidating entities boasting two women and a WMD fax machine.

These are dangerous adversaries indeed, which is why such powerless bureaucracies as the Ultimate Degradation Conglomerate (UDC) and various ministries are forced to do good by stealth.

In the all-important race to curtain Jamaica off from its seacoast, the poor, helpless Cyclops-like JAMPRO, the Ministry of Production, the Ministry of Transport, the UDC and various other enervated entities must find ways round the law, ways to evade the public's due diligence, ways to diddle the public out of its beaches, its national parks and its sadly neglected cultural assets.

The government entities are giving privileged positions on the seaside to such as the RIU hotels, who, if all goes according to form, will soon produce in Jamaica a massive scandal which will tarnish the image of the entire Jamaican hotel industry. The RIU chain owns two hotels in Jamaica, forcing-houses in which tourists are processed for a few days and sent back whence they fled with nothing to show that they have been in a faraway country of which they knew nothing before coming and about which they remain blissfully ignorant after having been.

In the Dominican Republic RIU owns at least three hotels and since last year, according to several firms of English lawyers, the Financial Times and the Daily Mail, droves of English guests in RIU hotels have come down with serious and debilitating gastric afflictions.

According to Financial Times information services, quoted in the Daily Mail:
"Hundreds of British holidaymakers have been struck down by a severe vomiting bug at a luxury Caribbean resort - a year after an identical outbreak.

More than 200 guests have fallen ill at a five-star hotel in the Dominican Republic, which closed for five weeks in June last year to eradicate the highly contagious virus.
Many of the sick, including dozens of children, had intravenous drips hooked up in their rooms and one 18-month-old baby was hospitalised for a fortnight.

Some of the guests asked to be transferred to another hotel, but say their requests were rejected. Others were simply too ill to be moved."

But the story, judging from travelblogs, is not new: "29 year-old Nicola Piercy from Mansfield was affected by the outbreak of the virus at the same resort in 2005 and says, "I think it's absolutely disgraceful that this has happened again. I travelled to the resort in March 2005 for what I hoped would be my dream wedding, and instead had to endure seeing my fiancé placed on a drip on our wedding day and most of our family, including myself, suffering from severe gastric symptoms".

The personal injury law firm of Pannone in Manchester, England, says, "Hotels in the Dominican Republic have suffered similar problems over recent years with the Riu chain featuring in newspaper articles last year regarding complaints of poor standards of hygiene. Identical complaints are surfacing again this year as well as reports of vermin in hotel bars and restaurants, tour operator reps denying there were problems, unsupervised groups of Puerto Rican teenagers, some of whom were seen urinating in the swimming pool and medical staff treating patients without washing their hands."

If anything like this were to happen in Jamaica, you know that the entire hotel industry would be shut down within a week or two. The US Press would roast us, the British Press would trot out its favourite template about Trouble in Paradise and the dollar would probably be devalued.

Have the Jamaican government agencies done their due diligence? Do they really understand what is at stake?

I have my doubts.

God Speaks, Again

The founding prophetess of the Church Dayton Diamond Ridge has lashed out at those people in her church who informed the Press and others about the case of the violated teenager. And, before we go any further, a child cannot consent to sexual intercourse, and sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

I don't want to say too much about this strange and increasingly noxious case, except to point out that it is an offence to conceal knowledge of a felony, which carnal abuse is. The founder of the church should have sought legal advice before making a fool of herself in public.

But she had legal advice available; her pastor is a Queen's Counsel, a former Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions, former High Court Judge and former Justice of the Court of Appeal.
He is a bona fide member of the ruling classes.

Copyright ©2006 John Maxwell

jankunnu [at] yahoo.com