

HAITI NEWS ROUNDUP: MARCH 30 – APRIL 10, 2006

UN mission in Haiti calls for stronger law enforcement

Caribbean Net News

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PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AFP): The United Nations mission in Haiti Friday called on the Haitian government to strengthen law enforcement as a key building block of democracy in the impoverished country.

"Impunity is a structural flaw in Haiti, a cancer that eats away at institutions, the childhood malady of an independent Haiti," Thierry Fagart, a French lawyer who heads the human rights section of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (Minustah), told AFP.

Fagart denounced "the blockage" of Haitian justice six years ago in the assassination of celebrity journalist Jean Dominique.

"One is up against a wall of silence, a wall of inaction as if no one wanted the circumstances of the murder of Jean Dominique to come to light," he said.

He also cited the case of former prime minister Yvon Neptune, detained without trial for more than two years.

Recently, Minustah criticized overcrowding in Haitian prisons, where more than 4,000 people are locked up and only 10 percent of them have been convicted of crimes.

Fagart urged the new government, which will soon take office, to undertake reforms to put an end to the lack of punishment and reinforce the judicial system.

The international community is ready to give money to Haiti to enable these reforms but "under the condition that there is a voluntary political desire for real change," he said.

The UN force has 7,500 military troops. Its international police component was boosted to 2,000 officers for the February 7 presidential and legislative elections.

The stabilization mission was deployed after president Jean Bertrand Aristide fled on February 29, 2004 as the country plunged into chaos.

With only 5,000 ill-equipped officers, Haiti's police force is struggling to maintain order in the impoverished and often violent country of 8.5 million.

Haiti: Dominican authorities probe US flights over border zone

by Bill Weinberg

World War 4 Report

04/10/2006

Two US Black Hawk combat helicopters were observed flying over the border between the Dominican Republic and Haiti on at least two occasions in March: 4:00-4:30 AM on March 23 and 10 PM-12:00 AM on March 24. The flights, reported by Dominican military commanders in Duverge and Jimani, in the southwestern province of Independencia, alarmed the residents of several communities.

The Dominican military was not informed about the flights, army head Major Gen. Jose Ricardo Estrella Fernandez said on March 28. "Not only the [helicopters] were put at risk but also the lives of their crews and passengers, if Dominican troops had opened fire on them," an unnamed Dominican military source told the daily *El Nacional*. But Armed Forces Secretary Adm. Sigfrido Pared Perez insisted, also on Mar. 28, that there had just been a failure of communication between the US and Dominican forces and that the problem had been corrected. Dominican pilots with training in night flying accompanied the US pilots in the helicopters, he said; the flights were authorized by the Civil Aeronautics Board, and the helicopters did not fly over any restricted areas, such as military installations.

The Black Hawks are stationed in the Dominican Republic in connection with the "New Horizons 2006" joint Dominican-US military operation, based in the city of Barahona, in Barahona province, about 100 kilometers from where the flights were reported. According to the US, the operation will employ some 3,500 US soldiers—but not more than 450 at any one time—building schools and clinics in Barahona province before it ends in May. Dominican activists have repeatedly demonstrated against the presence of US troops, asking why the soldiers have brought tanks and helicopters to build clinics and charging that the US is planning to build a military base in the Dominican Republic. (*El Nacional*, March 28, 29; *Hoy*, Santo Domingo, March 28; *El Diario-La Prensa*, NY, March 29)

DEPORTATIONS CONTINUE

According to the Haiti-based Support Group for the Repatriated and Refugees (GARR), more than 3,000 immigrants were deported from the Dominican Republic to Haiti during the month of March. Just on the night of March 29-30, GARR encountered 400 deportees at Anse-a-Pitre, in the Southeast department, across the border from Pedernales. Belladere, in the Central Plateau department, received 1,726 deportees in March. People were also deported to Lascahobas (Plateau Central) and Malpasse (West department). (*AlterPresse*, April 7)

PROTESTS FOR PRISONERS, AGAINST OCCUPATION

On March 29, the 19th anniversary of the passage of the Haitian Constitution, and again on April 6, Thierry Fagart, a French attorney who heads the Human Rights Division of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), called for the release of all prisoners who have not been charged within the constitutional time limits. According to official figures, 4,034 prisoners are currently held in 17 prisons; only 450 have been convicted and sentenced. Fagart demanded that the

authorities respect the constitutional requirement for prisoners to be charged or released within 48 hours of their arrest. (Haiti Progres, NY, April 5; Agence Haitienne de Presse, April 6)

On March 18 dozens of people attended a meeting the Haitian Platform for Alternative Development (PAPDA), a non-governmental organization, convened to push for an end to the United Nations occupation. "The time has come to force the foreign soldiers to withdraw," said Ansy Vixamar of Tet Kole Ti Peyizan ("Union of Small Farmers"), calling for a common front to defend Haiti's sovereignty. (Haiti Support Group News Briefs, March 18 from AlterPresse)

On March 25, 17 human skulls were found in a vacant lot in Petionville, an upscale Port-au-Prince suburb. PNH agents and MINUSTAH soldiers removed the skulls for analysis. Another 11 were found on March 27 in Port-au-Prince's Canape-Vert neighborhood. (Agence Haitienne de Presse, March 25; Haiti Press Network, March 26)

From Weekly News Update on the Americas, April 9

Haitians calling for release of migrants
By JASMINE KRIPALANI
Miami Herald
April 10, 2006

Three days after U.S. Border Patrol detained a group of 46 Haitian migrants, several Haitian groups in South Florida are demanding equal treatment for the refugees.

Under the law, a Cuban migrant who reaches land is eligible to stay in the United States for a year and apply for residency, but Haitians and other foreign nationals are sent back.

To protest the different treatment, several Haitian supporters will gather at 11 a.m. today at the Jean Jacques Dessalines Center, 8325 NE Second Ave.

On Friday morning, a 45-foot fishing boat carrying about 46 Haitian migrants washed up along the northeastern Broward City of Hillsboro Beach.

The U.S. Border Patrol detained them.

Speakers at the conference will include Cheryl Little, executive director of the Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center; Randolph McGrorty, executive director of the Archdiocese of Miami's Catholic Charities Legal Services; and Marleine Bastien, executive director for Haitian Women of Miami.

For more information, contact Bastien at 305-756-8050

Plight of Haitians overlooked in debate over immigration law
Home News Tribune Online
By DeWayne Wickham
04/10/06

Much of the congressional debate over illegal immigration has focused on the millions of Mexicans who slip into this country looking for work and a better way of life.

That's understandable, since Mexicans make up the majority of the estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants in this country. And television has been full of images of Mexican-flag-waving demonstrators agitating for a law that would make it easier for undocumented immigrants to become citizens.

But it is the fate of Haitians trying to enter this country, not that of Mexicans, that cries out the loudest for a remedy.

If it's truly the tired, the poor and the huddled masses that this country has a special place for, then of all the people who are trying to get here from other parts of the Western Hemisphere, Haitians are most deserving of a warm reception.

Why? Because we owe them a piece of our freedom.

A unit of Haitian volunteers fought alongside members of George Washington's Revolutionary War army in the 1779 Battle of Savannah. One of those Haitians was Henri Christophe, who later became a leader of the black nation after it won its independence from France in 1804.

And we owe it to them because we played a role in Haiti's downward spiral from the hemisphere's richest colony to its poorest nation. Shortly after Haiti won its war of independence, the United States cut off all trade with the black-ruled state, an action that helped rupture its economy. This country didn't recognize Haiti until 1862.

From 1915 to 1934, the United States occupied Haiti and created the army that a succession of Haitian leaders used to brutalize their people.

Those are good reasons for Congress to give Haiti special attention, and so is this: Back in 1992, as George H.W. Bush was leaving the White House and Bill Clinton was moving in, I went to the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to see how U.S. officials were treating the Haitian refugees who had been stopped at sea by the Coast Guard before they could get to this country.

What I found was a disturbing sight.

Nearly 7,000 Haitians were housed in a sea of military tents pitched on the tarmac of an abandoned airfield. This blazing hot encampment was surrounded by a barbed wire fence and patrolled by armed guards. Imagine that.

These people were fleeing a country where the blood of dissidents flowed through the streets almost daily. But instead of allowing these "huddled masses" into this country, Bush — and for too long, Clinton — had them held like runaway slaves in Cuba.

The irony of this is that all the while, Cubans — who have experienced nothing like the kind of wholesale slaughter that has wracked Haiti for decades — are allowed to stay in the United States if they manage to make it ashore.

While most Cubans picked up at sea are returned to the communist nation, those who make it to land get to stay. This so-called "wet-foot, dry-foot" policy does not apply to people who try to steal into this country from Haiti.

Four years ago, Florida Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson revealed that the Bush administration had enacted a "secret" policy that put Haitians who entered this country — including those requesting asylum — into detention centers. Nelson called that policy "unfair and discriminatory."

Yet despite this history of bad treatment, the plight of Haitians who try to enter this country illegally has gotten virtually no notice. Most of those Haitians I've encountered were driven out of their country by political violence, not Haiti's tattered economy.

They're not rushing our borders simply to work jobs that people here won't do. They are "yearning to breathe free" like millions of others beckoned to this country by those words at the base of the Statue of Liberty.

Expatriates to hold forum in Haiti to discuss political, economic issues

By Alva James-Johnson

South Florida Sun-Sentinel

April 10 2006

When Dumarsais Simeus tried to seek Haiti's presidency in a recent election, the country's officials barred him from the race because he was a U.S. citizen.

Now the Texas multimillionaire is inviting other expatriates to a forum in Haiti to give them more say in the country's economic and political affairs. He expects many South Florida residents to attend.

"My experience heightened my sense of urgency to get the diaspora involved," said the founder of Texas-based Simeus Foods International. "Part of my running had to do with me saying we're still Haitians and we can't be excluded."

The May 12 forum will take place only two days before the inauguration of President-elect René Préval.

Daniela Henry, a Haitian-American community organizer in Delray Beach, said she is coordinating the effort among expatriates in South Florida. She expects the conference to draw about 400 people who will push for dual citizenship, representation in parliament and the right to vote and own multiple properties in Haiti.

"If we're contributing to the economy of Haiti, why can't we vote?" Henry asked Thursday. "Why can't we have people elected and have them in government positions?"

Haiti has seen its most recent spate of political upheaval since the February 2004 ouster of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Simeus launched a campaign for president leading up to the February elections. But the interim Haitian government, led by former Boca Raton retiree Gerard Latortue, disqualified him because the country doesn't allow dual citizenship.

Simeus also served on a Haiti Advisory Group that Gov. Jeb Bush formed two years ago to help rebuild the impoverished country. Rudy Moise, who also served on the task force, said he hopes the diaspora conference will help implement the committee's recommendations for economic development, disaster preparedness, security and the environment.

"We have a new president in Haiti right now," he said. "People feel maybe now is time to get actively involved and start doing things for Haiti."

Other expatriates weren't so optimistic.

"It's been done before," said Lesly Jacques, owner of Boca Raton's Radio Haiti-Amerique Internationale. "Under Aristide I remember quite well people coming from everywhere and coming to Haiti. They talk and that's it. Let's hope it's different this time."

Declassifying Canada in Haiti: Part II
Did Canada have plans to support another military coup in Haiti?
by Anthony Fenton and Dru Oja Jay
The Dominion, Canada
April 9, 2006

Documents provided by the government under the Access to Information act were heavily censored, and 25 days-worth of documents were omitted without explanation. View all the documents acquired by the Dominion. According to classified memos obtained by The Dominion through an Access to Information Act request, Canadian officials speculated about working with Haiti's dreaded former military in the weeks before the coup d'état that removed elected President Aristide and thousands of elected officials.

Eighteen days before the military intervention, Canadian Ambassador to Haiti Kenneth Cook wrote of the paramilitary groups that had entered the country days earlier from the Dominican Republic:

There is clearly a military hand in the planning of current anti-government insurrectional events but it is very difficult to say [what] the potential for bringing together a significant force based on the former armed forces [is]. To date it is not considered likely but if someone like Senator (former Major) Dany Toussaint with support of Col. Himmler Rebu were to intervene the scenario would be quite different.

The heavily censored memos acquired by The Dominion leave some doubt as to Cook's intent. In the context of Cook's other comments blaming Aristide for the crisis, however, the Ambassador seems to be suggesting that Haiti's former military, led by Dany Toussaint, could be used to put an end to the crisis. The subsequent (post-coup) integration of former military personnel and officers into the Haitian National Police under the oversight of Canada's RCMP lends further credence to this interpretation.

Variouly, Toussaint had been alleged to have involvement in narcotrafficking, ties to the CIA, and a possible role in the murder of radio journalist Jean Dominique. In the 1980s, he received training at the Fort Benning, Georgia "School of the Americas." In 2001, then Republican Congressman Porter Goss wrote to Secretary of State Colin Powell that Toussaint is "credibly linked by a number of US government agencies to narcotics trafficking in Haiti."

Interviewed two days after the coup against Aristide, Toussaint referred to paramilitary leader Guy Philippe as "a brave man who has worked for his country." Phillippe is known for his own ties to narco-trafficking, his alleged involvement in murders and at least two previous coup attempts against Aristide, as well as his affinity for former President Ronald Reagan and Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet.

Both Philippe and Toussaint would run for President in 2006, garnering few votes. Both Toussaint and Himmler Rebu agitated with the US- and European-funded "Democratic Platform," demanding the ouster of Aristide.

The former military that Cook refers to is widely acknowledged to be responsible for massive human rights violations, including murder, torture, political repression, and overthrowing a previous

democratically elected government. The Haitian military was created during an American military occupation of Haiti during WWI, and disbanded by then-President Aristide in 1994.

Again invoking the "responsibility to protect" (R2P, see part I) theme, Cook describes the situation in Northern Haiti. According to his intelligence sources, "Cap Haitien has become the scene of much violence, stores and banks are closed as are gas stations. The city is for all practical purposes isolated... A solution will have to be found to avoid a humanitarian crisis." Several paragraphs are then censored, followed by: "This is a complicating factor in any consideration of options for a stabilizing police presence here."

Extensive censorship raises as many questions as are addressed by the documents. 25 days of requested documents--from Feb 20 to March 15--were simply omitted without explanation.

Cook's references to the use of military force to remove Aristide, however, fly in the face of the official story. Nine days after Cook's memo, Canadian ministers Graham and Coderre were telling the press that Canada was seeking a peaceful settlement to the crisis, which was largely instigated by Canadian-, US- and European-funded groups within Haiti. Those countries backed the unelected government after it was imposed, and avoided acknowledging evidence of widespread political repression and human rights abuses.

The limited historical perspective available two years after the coup also raises serious questions about the use of the "responsibility to protect" doctrine. Rather than avert a crisis, foreign military intervention in Haiti became the backdrop for a major escalation of atrocities, with thousands killed, hundreds jailed for their political views, and thousands more forced into hiding after the coup.

Declassifying Canada in Haiti: Part I
Canadian officials planned military intervention weeks before Haitian coup
by Anthony Fenton and Dru Oja Jay
The Dominion, Canada
April 9, 2006

Documents provided by the government under the Access to Information act were heavily censored, and 25 days-worth of documents were omitted without explanation. View all the documents acquired by the Dominion. Classified memos obtained by The Dominion through Access to Information Act request raise new questions about the extent of Canadian participation in the 2004 coup against Haiti's democratically elected President Jean Bertrand Aristide.

Nine days before the February 29 coup that removed Aristide and thousands of elected officials, then-minister Denis Coderre told the Canadian Press that "it is clear that we don't want Aristide's head; we believe that Aristide should stay."

In the same report, then-Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham claimed that Canada was seeking to pressure Aristide to adopt a series of measures to give the opposition more power in government.

Nine days earlier, on February 11th, Canadian Ambassador Kenneth Cook sent a memo marked "Confidential" to the Privy Council Office and Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, with a subject heading "Meeting with US Ambassador." Its contents suggest that Canada was planning for the removal of the Aristide-led government while officials publicly claimed to be attempting to reach a peaceful agreement.

Cook wrote:

The situation we face is not only one of a struggle for power, it involves a humanitarian crisis and the potential to permanently change the course of Haitian history. President Aristide is clearly a serious aggravating factor in the current crisis and unless he gives dramatic early signs that he is implementing the CARICOM road map then the OAS, CARICOM and possibly UN will have to consider the options including whether a case can be made for the duty to protect.

Large portions of the memo, which discusses specific plans for military intervention, are blacked out. Of the period requested, February 5 to March 15 2004, Feb 20 to March 15 were omitted without explanation.

The "duty to protect" is another term for the controversial Canadian-sponsored "responsibility to protect" (R2P) doctrine, which was adopted as international doctrine without a vote by the UN General Assembly at the UN World Summit in September 2005. Countries like Cuba and Venezuela have strongly opposed the doctrine, saying that it gives powerful countries freedom to intervene when they determine a state to have "failed."

Notable Canadians involved in the drafting of the R2P doctrine were Michael Ignatieff and Lloyd Axworthy. In his writings, academic-turned-politician Ignatieff has praised the US as an "Empire

Lite," and supported the US-led war on Iraq. Axworthy was Canada's foreign affairs Minister in 2000 when economic sanctions were levied against Haiti's democratically elected government.

The R2P doctrine developed a framework for "threshold criteria for military intervention," under the guise of "humanitarian intervention for human protection." Under the core principles devised in this doctrine, "the principle of non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect."

Two "precautionary principles" of R2P stand out. First, that "the primary purpose of the intervention...must be to halt or avert human suffering," and second, that military intervention must only be used as a last resort, "Military intervention can only be justified when every non-military option...has been explored."

In this case, substantial evidence suggests that the crisis that Ambassador Cook used to invoke the R2P was itself instigated by the US State Department and other US and Canadian agencies. The US, Canadian, and European Union-funded "civil society organizations" though lacking in popular support, continually demanded that Aristide step down and that their representatives be granted key positions in government. US, Canadian and French diplomats insisted on opposition support for any power-sharing agreement. Some critics claim that the three governments knew that the opposition would not accept any agreement other than one that gave them control.

According to many reports, the intervention itself, justified in memos by the R2P doctrine, had the effect of multiplying and aggravating the humanitarian crisis. An April 2004 human rights report prepared by the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) found that "the multinational force of 3,600 soldiers... was not functioning to protect supporters of President Aristide or prevent killings, kidnappings, and arsons directed at this supporters."

The NLG met with the Director of the State Morgue in Port au Prince, and reported that "The Director admitted that 800 bodies were 'dumped and buried' by morgue on Sunday, March 7, 2004, and another 200 bodies dumped on Sunday, March 28, 2004. The 'usual' amount dumped is less than 100 per month."

A March 2005 Harvard University Law School report, "Keeping the Peace in Haiti?" contended that the UN military force, MINUSTAH, "has effectively provided cover for the police to wage a campaign of terror in Port au Prince's slums." Having discovered evidence of a mass grave, the human rights delegation found MINUSTAH officials aware but unwilling to investigate the "clandestine gravesite." Canadian UN police (UNPOL) Commissioner David Beer, while acknowledging such that grave sites were "a point of contention" said that the grave found by "was not an active case being investigated."

According to other government documents acquired by The Dominion, Denis Paradis organized a January 2003 meeting "in the spirit of the responsibility to protect." The secret, high level roundtable was dubbed the Ottawa Initiative on Haiti. Details of this meeting were leaked in a March 15, 2003 edition of *l'Actualité*, by reporter Michel Vastel. Vastel wrote then that the theme of "Aristide must go," along with the possibility of a "Kosovo-model" trusteeship over Haiti, were discussed by members of the Canadian, French, and US governments, along with representatives from the Organization of American States (OAS).

In an effort to control the damage of the media leak, the Canadian government issued a release denying that regime change or a trusteeship were discussed at this meeting.

Shame and poverty haunt victims of 'water bulge' disease

By Donald G. McNeil Jr.

The New York Times

April 9, 2006

LÉOGÂNE, Haiti Like many surgeons, Dr. Yves Laurissaint is a man supremely sure of himself.

"I've trained a lot of other surgeons to do this operation," he said as he sliced open the engorged scrotum of 68-year-old Gesner Nicé, emptied more than a half-liter of clear liquid, then began trimming away with a cauterizing scalpel, filling the operating room with the acrid smell of burning skin. "But they don't do it. They say it's too complicated."

Nicé, a woodcutter, has lymphatic filariasis, a disease in which clusters of four-inch worms as fine as blond hairs nest in the lymph nodes, the body's drainage system, stretching them until lymph fluid can only drain downward.

To anyone who has visited poor tropical countries or seen pictures of the disease, the instantly recognizable symptom, which afflicts both men and women, is elephantiasis: legs so swollen that they resemble an elephant's.

But 10 times as common is the symptom that is almost never spoken of: the engorged scrotums, known as male hydrocele (Greek for water bulge). In cities like Léogâne, more than a quarter of the men are tormented by the condition, their scrotum swelling to the size of a softball, or a basketball in severe cases.

The operation that Nicé received will help alleviate his suffering.

But one great tragedy of lymphatic filariasis is that it is not curable.

Still, it is one of a handful of diseases world health experts hope to eliminate within a generation, because its spread can be prevented with deworming drugs that can even be distributed in household salt, an approach that wiped out the disease in China.

But the task is daunting, not merely because 120 million people in 80 countries have the worms, but also because of the stigma and secret shame that the affliction causes, particularly in men, turning filariasis into a disease the world hardly knows.

Even where it is endemic - 40 million people suffer its symptoms in the world's most downtrodden places - it is cloaked in ignorance and misunderstanding.

"It's tied in with grinding poverty - where you find it maps almost perfectly with the poorest of the poor," said the Reverend Thomas Streit, director of the U.S.-based University of Notre Dame's tropical disease program in Léogâne.

Imported into the United States from Africa with the slave trade, filariasis was long called "Barbados leg." It can disappear spontaneously - as it did in Barbados - when countries prosper and the poor are

able to afford window screens to block the mosquitoes that transmit the disease and local governments cover the sewers where they breed.

As common as filariasis remains, it is not easily contracted and is no threat to tourists. Unlike malaria, which can be transmitted by a single bite, it usually requires hundreds of bites from mosquitoes carrying male and female worms, which must crawl into the puncture, find each other in the victim's body and then mate.

In poor countries like Haiti and Guyana the disease hangs on. It does not kill, but it crushes people's spirits and often leaves poor farmers unable to work, which can mean starvation. The most pitiable can be spotted on rural roads, shuffling slowly along in oversize pants.

In central Nigeria, Dr. John Umaru, a worm-disease expert for the U.S.-based Carter Center, said he had seen a man "with a hydrocele down beyond his knee who made a pouch and strapped it around his neck so he could carry it." He had heard of another who needed a wheelbarrow.

"Some guys just go off in the bush and cut it open," he said. "They can't live with it anymore. But then they often die of bleeding or infection."

Nicé's hydrocele, was about the size of a grapefruit, Laurissaint said.

As for those with swollen legs, there is little relief. All they can do is to wash their legs and feet daily to forestall infections as the skin breaks and elevate them to relieve the swelling.

The limbs cannot be surgically drained because the lymph fluid swells all the tissue instead of filling a pouch. The damage is permanent, because the overstretched lymph nodes do not shrink again; the worms eventually just die inside them.

For people with elephantiasis, big pants will not hide their affliction. Funguses that erupt between toes stink and draw flies. Children can be mocking. Lovers can be cruel.

The worst known case was an Egyptian woman whose leg weighed about 60 kilograms, or 130 pounds, more than the rest of her. It literally anchored her to the floor of her sister's house.

Treating symptoms can be costly. Hydrocele operations run from \$30 to \$120 in different countries. A program to teach washing and disinfection techniques costs about \$17.

But these steps do not aid in eradication, which is complicated and costlier still, because it means treating millions of people with deworming drugs every year, drugs that do not cure the disease itself but prevent its being passed on by killing the baby worms that mosquitoes transmit.

Five years ago, the World Health Organization adopted eradication by 2020 as a goal, and progress toward this for the next five years will cost about \$1.5 billion, the Global Alliance said.

But that estimate assumes that billions of deworming pills will be donated by GlaxoSmithKline and Merck, that technical advisers will be lent by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and that U.S. graduate students and local people will work for no pay.

Even with money, eradication is tricky. When not placed in salt, deworming drugs must be handed out yearly in remote villages. Bush laboratories with microscopes and equipment to draw blood and track the effort must be set up.

Adding to the challenge, some "night bleed" tests must be done after dark, because baby worms swarm in the blood only then, when mosquitoes bite.

Léogâne, a coastal city of 150,000, has a perfect climate for the disease: As a sugar-cane area, it is full of rum distilleries. Culex mosquitoes, which carry the worms, lay their eggs in filthy water; the pools of cane squeezings and sewage are ideal nurseries.

The adult worms are hardy, too big for deworming drugs to kill and too deep in the body to remove surgically. Modern drugs aim to destroy the baby worms, called microfilariae.

Several drugs - all first developed for deworming cattle and pets - will kill the worms. They include Glaxo's Albendazole, Merck's Mectizan (sold under the name Heartgard for dogs) and diethylcarbamazine, which is made cheaply by several companies, none of which donate as Glaxo and Merck do. But they are now available in only a quarter of the villages in the world where they are needed.

U.N. Aide Criticizes Haiti
By REUTERS
New York Times
April 7, 2006

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, April 6 (Reuters) — The director of the United Nations' human rights office in Haiti accused judicial officials and the American-backed interim government on Thursday of illegally detaining most of the 4,000 people in jail.

The official, Thierry Fagart, said most of the inmates had not been formally charged or put on trial by the interim authorities who replaced President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who was ousted two years ago.

Mr. Fagart said many detainees, particularly high-profile prisoners, should be released immediately while investigations and other judicial proceedings continue.

"There are people who have been in preventive detention more time than provided by the law if they were sentenced," he said.

Spain to send more police reinforcements to Haiti peace mission
People's Daily Online
Xinhua News
April 7, 2006

Spain has agreed to send more police to Haiti to boost the UN peacekeeping mission there, the Spanish government said on Thursday.

The move is part of the nation's commitment to helping rebuild Haiti under the April 30, 2004 Security Council resolution 1542.

Spain's existing unit of 14 civil guards and 11 police officers will be boosted to as many as 50, the government said.

In addition to sending police to Haiti for long-term stabilization and reconstruction, Spain separately offered to triple its aid to the country during a recent Washington conference.

Spain also proposed to train Haitian police officers in its national guard and police schools. Courses under this program include border control, information, environmental protection and fighting against organized crime.

It was also announced that Morocco would be sending further police to Haiti.

46 migrants rounded up after landing

A group of 46 mostly Haitian migrants was found after having washed ashore in Hillsboro Beach and was quickly taken into custody.

BY DARRAN SIMON

Miami Herald

April 8, 2006

The dream of living in America was dashed Friday for 46 migrants, mostly Haitians, who came ashore at dawn in Hillsboro Beach, and were quickly rounded up by police.

Leaving a seaworthy 45-foot fishing boat beached in the sand, the men, women and two children fanned out on the streets of the small Northeast Broward city.

A Hillsboro Beach officer noticed two men walking along A1A about 6:30 a.m. They had "Haitian accents and broken English," and said they had just gotten off a boat, said Hillsboro Police Chief John Ballard.

Officers chased down the migrants on the beach and between buildings, even finding one man hiding under a truck, Ballard said.

"I don't know that we got them all," he said.

Speaking through a maintenance worker at the Hillsboro Beach Police station who translated for them, they told police they had spent four days at sea.

"They said they were thirsty. They were hungry," said translator Joseph Lodius, 47.

One woman, who said she is three months pregnant, complained of being dizzy, Lodius said, but felt better after a drink of water.

None needed medical attention.

But U.S. Border Patrol officials aren't convinced that the group -- 44 Haitians, one Cuban and one Jamaican national -- spent so much time at sea.

"It's apparent this is a smuggling venture," said Steve McDonald, a spokesman with the U.S. Border Patrol.

"Smugglers will coach the smuggled aliens to say that it took longer for them to get there . . . anything to deflect suspicion."

Under normal conditions, a boat ride from Haiti could take about 36 hours, according to the U.S. Coast Guard.

Seven Haitians came ashore on Hillsboro Beach Jan. 1 and were taken into custody, said McDonald.

In most cases, Haitians who arrive in the country illegally are sent back. The Jamaican migrant also could be sent back. The Cuban man is eligible to stay in the United States and apply for residency after a year.

After several hours at the Hillsboro Beach station Friday, the newcomers were loaded onto a bus and hauled to a Border Patrol station in Pembroke Pines for further questioning -- except for one man who was removed from the bus in handcuffs before it left the station.

The reason for his detention was unclear.

McDonald had no information on the origin of the boat, which had an expired Florida registration.

Lee Pfeiffer, a Louisville, Ky. resident vacationing in South Florida, said he saw police helicopters hovering early Friday morning.

"I put a big zoom lens on my camera and I saw this boat washed ashore," Pfeiffer told WFOR CBS-4, The Miami Herald's news partner. ``Looked like just a fishing boat."

McDonald said officials are trying to locate the boat captain.

"We don't know if he is among the group or if he is elsewhere," said McDonald, the Border Patrol spokesman.

Making our country safe for democracy in Haiti
Remarks by Brian Concannon Jr. on April 1, 2006 at the TransAfrica Forum Annual Foreign Policy Conference in Washington, DC
Posted on Haiti Action Committee website
Posted April 6, 2006

Panel: Haiti: From a Human Rights and Foreign Policy Debacle Towards a Democratic Justice and Peace

I would like to start with the excellent analogy that Danny Glover made regarding the French kidnapping of Toussaint Louverture in 1802, and the American kidnapping of President Aristide in 2004. When he was captured, Toussaint warned: "In overthrowing me, you have cut down in Saint Domingue only the trunk of the tree of liberty. It will spring up again by the roots for they are numerous."

Less than two years later the French had left Haiti, defeated. When President Aristide landed in his own exile, he invoked Toussaint's famous words. In less than two years, the Haitian people had voted his Lavalas movement back into office.

President Preval's victory on February 7, 2006 was won with the ballot, not the bullet, but like Haitian Independence in 1804, it was waged with meager resources against the most powerful empire ever seen at the time. Just as General Louverture and his successors needed to overcome the world's greatest army, that of Napoleon, so President Preval and the Haitian people needed to overcome the world's greatest election machine, that of the Bush Administration.

In both cases, the Haitians won without the most basic structures. The rebelling slaves lacked the training, logistics and communications considered essential to waging war. President Preval lacked almost everything we consider necessary to successful campaigning. The Fanmi Lavalas party, which had the strongest national organization, boycotted the election when the Interim Government refused to release its imprisoned leaders or stop the systematic brutality against its grassroots activists. The party Preval ran with, Espwa, or "Hope" was hastily assembled for the elections and had no experience and little local organizing capacity.

President Preval was forced to set a very limited schedule of appearances, just to survive until election day, because of attacks against him and his supporters. Even that schedule was further reduced when his opponents attacked his campaign events, in one case destroying the stage. Preval was even forced to cancel his final campaign rally. But despite all those obstacles, Preval won a landslide, with four times more votes than his nearest competitor.

We Abandoned Haiti in Its Hour of Need

When we in the progressive movement talk about Haiti work, it is important to start with the shameful recognition that two years ago we let Haiti down in its hour of need. By "we" I mean the International Community, and specifically the United States, but I also mean the progressive movement in the U.S.

As the U.S. -supported rebellion swept across Haiti in February 2004, Secretary of State Colin Powell first declared that the US "cannot buy into a proposition that says the elected President must be forced out of office by thugs and those who do not respect law and are bringing terrible violence to the Haitian people." But 12 days after that speech Powell's State Department forced President Aristide onto a plane for the Central African Republic, which allowed "thugs and those who do not respect law" to bring 2 years of "terrible violence to the Haitian people."

Secretary Powell did a shameful about face, but so did many American progressives. The response to Haiti's coup in the progressive community was, at best muted. There were a few notable exceptions, including TransAfrica, which condemned the coup both before and after it happened, and a few congressional leaders, especially representatives Maxine Waters, John Conyers and Barbara Lee. But for the most part, organizations that claim to support Haiti's poor remained silent as Haiti's poor were shot, beaten and starved. Organizations that claim to support Africa and the African diaspora remained silent as the 14 diaspora countries of the Caribbean Community and the 53 countries of the Africa Union unequivocally condemned the overthrow of a President from the diaspora. Organizations that protested the Bush administration's removal of an Iraqi dictator acquiesced in the Administration's removal of Haiti's popularly elected President.

Many of those who did not speak up for Haiti's embattled democracy talked about "confusion," or "complications." Certainly, the messages coming from the mainstream media, the "Haiti experts", and the Haitians likely to have access to Americans were confusing and complicated in early 2004. But the message from the Haitian voters was not complicated: President Aristide won 92% of the vote in the 2000 elections. Haiti's Constitution was not confusing: it provided that President Aristide should have remained in office until February 2006. Haiti's grassroots movement was clear: they recognized their elected government's imperfections, but they knew from brutal experience how much worse the unelected successor would be.

Helping Haiti Move Forward

This question about confusion or complication is absolutely vital to anyone who wants to help Haiti over the next five years, because things are going to get more complicated, and more confusing. President Preval was able to overcome the obstacles and win an overwhelming Presidential victory. But progressive candidates with less name recognition and less of a record to run on had more trouble. Although we will not know for sure until the runoff elections in 3 weeks, it looks like Parliament will be fragmented. Progressive parties, if they can make an alliance, might have a slim majority in the Senate, but probably not in the House of Deputies.

As a result, Preval's government will likely be a compromise government that will include people who do not necessarily subscribe to his progressive ideals. So there will be confusing signals from the executive branch.

There will be confusing signals from the police and the courts. The Interim government persistently infiltrated its people into the police force and onto the bench. These judges and officers were chosen for loyalty rather than competency, and many could not have cleared the bar under a democratic regime. But they are there, they will be hard to remove, and in the meantime they will do immense damage to human rights in Haiti.

There will also be confusing message from our own government, our mainstream media, and even from self-defined progressive sources. These messages will make the case for limiting Haiti's sovereignty. They will advocate transferring power over the police to the United Nations to an extent that would not be tolerated in a wealthy country. They will advocate the International Community taking control of strategic government services. Most dangerously and persistently, the messages will advocate transferring power to a predatory private sector, and limiting the Haitian government's ability to provide the basic services that the Haitian people desperately need, certainly deserve, and unequivocally voted for.

We need to respond to the attempts to sow confusion in two ways: we need to critically evaluate the information we receive, and we need to find ways to support the grassroots movement in Haiti.

Evaluating Information

The first way of evaluating information is to heed Harry Belafonte's advice- as he said yesterday, we need to stop letting the master tell us who we can trust.

The second way of evaluating information is to keep one eye on history. This history includes the manufactured acquiescence in the coup of 2004, but it also includes 300 years before that of the International Community's support of the brutal exploitation of Haiti's people and its land. The government, the press and even the religious leaders of the U.S. enthusiastically supported slavery, enthusiastically supported the 1915-1934 U.S. occupation of Haiti, which reinstated slave labor, and enthusiastically helped make the case for the bloody coup d'etats of 1991 and 2004.

Finally, the history includes a long tradition of calling Haiti a "failed state" to cover-up 300 years of racist and exploitative policies.

The third way of evaluating information is to get good information. Good information on Haiti is unlikely to be thrown onto our doorsteps or stream out of CNN, but it can be found with a little effort. The Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti was a website, www.ijdh.org, TransAfrica has a website, so does the Institute for Policy Studies. Some newspapers, especially the San Francisco Bayview, have consistently good Haiti coverage. We need to support the outlets that are covering Haiti responsibly, and encourage others to follow suit.

Supporting the Grassroots Movement in Haiti

The grassroots movement in Haiti understands the country's complexities, but it does have a clear, and simple plan of action for us to support their objectives. First, it wants us to support the leaders that the Haitian voters elected, because they elected them and not because we would or would not have voted for them. Second, it wants us to support Haiti's sovereignty.

I'll give four things that we can all do to ensure a better future for Haiti's poor: 1) stay engaged; 2) stay informed; 3) get the word out; and 4) provide direct support to the organizations of the grassroots movement.

First, we need to stay engaged, as citizens of our countries, and as members of organizations. We need to write our elected representatives, and insist that our organizations stand up for Haiti's poor.

Second, we need to stay actively informed. We need to get good information, and urge our sources of information to cover Haiti fairly. We should "Return to the Source" (the conference theme) by going down to Haiti on delegations, to meet with the grassroots groups, hear what they have to say and understand what they need from us. We should invite Haitian grassroots activists up to inform our networks- our churches, our schools and our political and social organizations.

Third, we need to get the word out. We can post messages from the grassroots movement on our websites, in our organizations' newsletters. We can write our own articles about Haiti, for our networks but also for broader distribution.

Fourth, we can provide direct support. Grassroots groups in Haiti have many needs, and we have much to offer. We can provide much-needed help with organizational development, direct action tactics and communications. We can provide things- computers, office materials, etc. And last, but not least we can provide money. Groups like Lovinsky Pierre Antoine's September 30th Foundation get by on a shoestring budget, but they need money to buy that shoestring. I saw the Foundation organize impressive demonstrations, mostly with donated labor and supplies. But if poor people give up a day's work to protest, we can at least get them the few cents' bus fare. Activists will sit all day in the hot tropical sun to stick up for their rights, but we should get them a bottle of water.

Conclusion

There is no question that Haiti's grassroots movement will make sure that the tree of liberty keeps growing. The only question is whether it will keep growing from the trunk, or will need to resprout again from the roots. The answer to this question lies as much in the U.S. as in Haiti, it lies as much with the people in this room as with the activists of the September 30th Foundation. Because until we make our country safe for democracy in Haiti, everything that they grow can be chopped down when their leaders displease ours.

Brian Concannon Jr., Esq., directs the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti, www.ijdh.org. The other participants in the panel were actor/activist Danny Glover, grassroots activist Lovinsky Pierre-Antoine, Coordinator of the September 30th Foundation in Haiti, and Nicole Lee, project manager for TransAfrica Forum's Haiti Programs.

European Union finances roads rehabilitation in Haiti

by Vario Sérant

Caribbean Net News

April 7, 2006

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: By publicly laying the foundation for the roads to be built, the provisional Haitian Prime Minister launched a road reconstruction project which will connect the capital of Haiti to the city of Mirebalais (Center).

The new section of 43 kilometers (25 miles) will cost US\$40 million and is financed by the European Development Fund of the European Union. According to Gerard Latortue, repairing this section will end the nightmare which inhabitants of the Center department endured for years.

Since downpours generally involve victims in "Morne à Cabri" (a mountainous road), the chief of the interim government announced that his dream was to see this work begin before he departed office. A new government will take charge after the upcoming legislative elections set for April 21, 2006.

The Prime Minister stressed that completion of this work will further open the Center area and positively influence the cost of living, since transporting goods will be easier with improved roads.

Expressing the same sentiment, the representative of the European Union in Haiti affirmed that completing this project will increase accessibility to agricultural products of the Center area for three million consumers from the metropolitan area of the Haitian capital.

Pointing out that a country cannot develop without road infrastructure, Marcel Van Postal believes the Center area has strong potential for agricultural and tourist development.

This project of road rehabilitation should generate at least fifteen hundred jobs according to the ambassador Van Postal. The representative of the EU foresees the possibility that the European Union and other international institutions, such as the Inter-American Bank of Development may finance additional road infrastructure programs.

The public transportation Minister talked about precautions which were taken to ensure the road is built "under good conditions". "We can not allow the luxury of this road disappearing after ten years. Therefore, studies are necessary to ensure the durability of the work."

The studies in question were carried out by the ELSAMEX construction firm. The firm is completing rehabilitation work under the supervision of BCEOM. The Public Transportation Ministry is acting as project manager for this project, which will last until April 4, 2008.

The official launch of rehabilitation work on the Port-au-Prince/Mirebalais road took place in the presence of the representative of the United Nations Program in Haiti (UNDP), Adama Guindo, and the Bishop of Hinche, Louis Kébreau

Dominican military protect ballots for Haiti's elections
The Dominican Today
April 7, 2006

SANTO DOMINGO.- The Dominican Armed Forces is providing security assistance for Haiti's transitional government, to protect the transfer of electoral ballots from Dominican territory across the Haitian border.

Armed Forces minister Sigfrido Pared Perez provided the information, affirming that members of a specialized Dominican military unit will be escorting the Haitian personnel who came to this country to retrieve the ballots for the second round of the neighboring country's parliamentary and municipal elections,

Haiti's electoral authorities called for the elections on April 21, whose ballots are being printed in various shops in this capital.

Pared Perez said that the members of the Armed Forces Intelligence will provide protection for the vehicles carrying the documents to the border crossing at Jimaní, in Dominican Republic's southwest.

This Friday morning members of Armed Forces Intelligence were set to escort the second shipment of ballots towards Haiti, as vehicles were observed along the entire south region until Jimaní, where they are handed over to the Haitian Electoral Police, which escorts them to the capital Port-au-Prince.

In addition to the Haitian police, troops of the Special Nations United Mission for the Stabilization of Haiti (MINUSTAH) take part in protecting the ballots, until their final destination.

Arrests of undocumented Haitians could reach into the hundreds
The Dominican Today
March 29, 2006

SANTIAGO. - Dominican authorities today arrested at least 190 undocumented Haitians in the this northern city for their later repatriation, said Immigration Agency sources, who also reported that many managed to escape the sweeps by hiding in alleys, fallow fields and gorges. .

A source said that an undocumented detainee who tried to escape the authorities was hit by a vehicle in one the city's most congested avenues, who was taken to a hospital emergency here.

This Wednesday operations to arrest undocumented Haitians were also conducted in the communities Moca, San Víctor, Puerto Plata, Pueblo Nuevo, Esperanza, Jaibón and others areas in the country's north and northwest, but so far the number of immigrants arrested is not known.

On Tuesday, the Immigration Agency repatriated another 200 undocumented Haitian migrants who were in Santiago.

Dominican Republic and Haiti share a more than 200 mile long border, where the trafficking of people, as well as guns and drug smuggling are frequent.

Dominican Government again requests aid for Haiti
The Dominican Today
April 6, 2006

SANTO DOMINGO.- All countries that conform the Caribbean region must work together in international forums in their efforts to request assistance for neighboring Haiti, which has been mired in years-long a socioeconomic crisis.

Vice-president Rafael Alburquerque today stated that the "countries of the Caribbean are all small but highly populated and united, in a single voice, we will have a specific weight to request that the Haitian people are helped and to the government of the Republic of Haiti to work so that they confront the great challenges that await them."

The request for aid to Haiti has also been formulated in international forums by president Leonel Fernandez and ex- president Hipólito Mejía, who consider that Dominican Republic cannot deal with the Haitian crisis alone.

The official made his statements in the opening speech in a seminar where the European Union and the CARIFORUM delineate the European cooperation in the Caribbean Region.

Participating in the event, to conclude on Saturday, are officials of the European Union, CARIFORUM and delegates fro the Caribbean countries.

Assassination of Haiti's most famous journalist still unresolved
Friday, April 7, 2006
by Vario Sérant
Caribbean Net News Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: Six years after the double assassination of renowned Haitian journalist Jean Dominique and his guard Jean Claude Louissaint, the investigation is still in deadlock.

The judge of instruction Jean Ostrict Hercule has been in charge of the affair since August 4, 2005 but withdrew his participation in the investigation, citing personal reasons. According to the chief of the civil court of Port-au-Prince, Rock Cadet, this decision constitutes a violation of the criminal instruction code.

Although Cadet refuses to speak about the investigation being blocked, he explained the law guarantees the independence of the judge of instruction on the jurisdictional level, but subjects him to the authority of the chief of the civil court.

According to Cadet, the Jean Dominique affair will be turned over to the Cabinet of Instruction. He added that administrative steps are being considered against the judge Jean Ostrict Hercule if such events occur again.

On the sixth anniversary of the disappearance of the director of Radio Haiti Inter, 'Reporters sans Frontières' ("Reporters without Borders") called the president-elect Rene Prével, to direct legal attention towards this affair.

"The scandal caused by the suppression of the Jean Dominique affair is all the more serious as the identities of the alleged assassins were known. However, the three killers are currently at large," emphasized RSF.

According to the international organization for the defence for the freedom of the press, this affair reveals the need for extensive reforms of the legal system. This responsibility will fall on the government which takes office after the second round of the legislative elections of April 21.

The National Association of the Haitian Media (ANMH) has united media directors to denounce the shameful mishandling of the assassination of Jean Dominicque and Jean Claude Louissaint.

According to the president of the ANMH, Anne-Marie Issa, such treatment sent a bad signal to delinquents and assassins.

The human rights section of the UN Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has also said, "Giving justice to Jean Dominique and to all the other victims of violence would be a good way to reassure the Haitian people, the unceasing victims of the consequences of impunity."

‘Voodoo’ Jew Finds Love, Truth in Haiti
by Sandee Brawarsky,
The Jewish Week
April 7, 2006

“Madame Dread: A Tale of Love, Voodoo and Civil Strife in Haiti” by Kathie Klarreich (Nation Books).

According to a Creole proverb, truth is like oil in water; it always comes to the surface. Kathie Klarreich’s first book, a memoir of her years in Haiti, is a tale of truths — personal, religious and political.

The title, “Madame Dread: A Tale of Love, Voodoo and Civil Strife in Haiti,” comes from the nickname given to her by the kids in her Port-au-Prince neighborhood. In Haitian tradition, women take on the first names of their husbands; in her case she was named for the dreadlocks of her boyfriend (who later became her husband). She also refers to herself as a “Voodoo Jew.”

The book is timely reading as Haitians took part in long-postponed national elections on Feb. 7, aimed at restoring democracy, two years after the ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Klarreich’s impressionistic writing goes far in explaining the ongoing political turbulence that rocks the Caribbean nation — once known as the Pearl of the Antilles, it is the poorest country in the Western hemisphere.

On the eve of the elections, Klarreich was in Haiti, reporting for Time magazine. In an e-mail she wrote, “It’s sort of bittersweet to be covering elections again, seeing how much people want change and how slow it’s been to come.”

From the time of the author’s first visit to Haiti in 1986, the place got under her skin in ways that go beyond words. Something about the warmth and graciousness of the people, the landscape, the vibrancy and color of the place and the music touched her in a profound way. A second visit in 1988, with the goal of spending three weeks researching handicrafts for her San Francisco shop, turned into a stay of more than 10 years.

The book opens in September 1988 with gunfire, when Klarreich found herself a front-row witness to a coup d’etat, the first of several she’d experience. Information was scarce, and she was not sure what had happened or where to find safety, but following her instincts she made her way to a friend’s home. She was then unsure whether to remain in Haiti, and it was her worried mother, who in a long-distance phone call advised either to “get involved or get out,” who convinced her to stay.

Another friend suggested that since she was in the midst of history being made, that she try reporting. She made contacts, wrote and rewrote, and got published in the San Francisco Chronicle and broadcast on Pacifica Radio. After a quick and determined study of what makes a good reporter, she took on more assignments and soon found that major newspapers, magazines and television networks were calling her. As years passed, she felt less the foreign journalist and more as though she were recounting the history of her own country.

Soon after the 1988 coup, she went with a friend to hear a traditional music group perform at the National Theater, and when she first saw the drummer, “it was as though someone sliced a vein from my heart into the center of his.” Several months later, she met Jean Raymond and, ever aware of their differences in culture, education and economics, fell deeply in love. Their first son was born on the same day as another coup d’etat, in 1991, while they were in San Francisco. Jean Raymond felt displaced in America, homesick for Haiti, so he returned and she joined him later on.

Klarreich writes with honesty and humility, aware of the privilege of her upper middle-class background and ability — not shared by her Haitian friends — to leave at any point if the dangers, frustrations, government corruption and violence were to become too difficult to bear. She writes of adjusting to weeks with only 10 random hours of electricity, being mistaken for a CIA agent, losing a dear friend to assassination and interviewing political leaders. The memoir is also the story of her self-discovery as she pushes herself “to pare down the clutter” of her life.

Her curiosity about all things Haitian led her to experience the voodoo tradition. She attended a five-day traditional ceremony and while dancing, was surprised at her writhing bodily reactions, as though spirits possessed her.

“I was not a nonbeliever, but at each foreign juncture with the spiritual, I had only my Jewish spiritual upbringing as a frame of reference. This didn’t fit in that box. It didn’t fit anywhere. No feelings any rabbi evoked though any sermon I’d ever heard came close to reaching this kind of religious experience,” she writes.

Her husband is a practitioner of voodoo and she is not, although she says that learning about voodoo has helped her to better understand the country and its history. In their home in Haiti, she would light Shabbat candles, with his ritual items nearby. She now lives mostly in Florida, where her 14-year-old son goes to school, and she travels frequently to their home in Haiti, where her husband is primarily based.

In a telephone interview from Key Biscayne as she was about to leave for Haiti, she explains that voodoo is very much misunderstood, promoted by Hollywood as having to do with sticking pins into dolls and some sort of black magic. She’s pleased that her openness “allowed me to just observe and take in what it was. In this post-9/11 world, we have to come to other people’s religions with open minds and not be judgmental.”

Klarreich, 50, grew up in the suburbs of Cleveland where her father served as a city councilman, and she says that one of the gifts her family gave her was travel, exposing her to many places from a young age. Her Jewish upbringing prepared her for her adventure in Haiti, and “for life in general. My parents set the stage for me to feel confident in making decisions and gave me space to do so.”

Now, when she looks at photos of her earlier self in Haiti, she sees how much her white skin makes her stand out, but she always felt accepted. Most Haitians, she says, don’t know much about Judaism, or Middle East politics.

“It’s a very isolated island, with its own language,” she said. “I’ve often thought this to be part of their larger political problem, that they’re so insular.”

Her mother suggested that she call the book “What’s a Nice Jewish Girl Like You Doing in a Place Like This?” The book took her about a decade to write, with several rewrites until she found a way to tell the story, which she does well. She begins each chapter with a Creole proverb — like “Love turns your head around” and “The lamp won’t light without a wick” — as Haitians invoke idiomatic sayings frequently.

“It’s part of Haitians’ charm; they see the world with humor, with joie de vivre,” she says. “We hear awful things about violence and poverty, but 8 million people get up and make do, often under great duress, and they do it with laughter and grace and creativity. I have tremendous respect for the way they have overcome so many difficulties.”

For Klarreich, Haiti remains a country “full of unpredictable flaws and wonders.” Each time she arrives, she’s enchanted anew.

“Haiti has taught me that there is not only one way to look at a situation, but infinite ways to create a solution, with humor and devotion, heart and determination as key ingredients.”

Bi-National Fair bolsters DR-Haiti trade and friendship
The Dominican Today
April 6, 2006

Dajabon.- Haiti and the Dominican Republic exhibited part of their cultures in the Second Bi-National Ecotourism and Production Fair that took place on the border between both countries.

The initiative, undertaken in this municipality, seeks to unite the two nations, which have seen their friendship ties shaken of late due to a series of incidents between Dominicans and Haitians.

Jean Camille Bisserelet, coordinator of the Development and Tourism Foundation in Haiti, working jointly with the Science and Art Foundation presided by ambassador Jose Serulle, explained that “the idea is to bring together the two people, after 200 years of living their separate ways.”

At the Fair, food products, attire and music reflecting the identity and way of life of Haiti and the Dominican Republic are sold.

Spain Strengthens Haiti Presence
Prensa Latina
April 6, 2006

Madrid, The Spanish government will strengthen its presence in Haitian territory with the increase of its police and Civil Guard forces to more than 50 soldiers, announced Thursday Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

The official communiqué states that the government will maintain and strengthen its commitment to Haitian stabilization and reconstruction, part of the UN Stabilization Mission and the bilateral relations.

That participation reflects defense of efficient militarism, abolition of poverty and the will to help the Haitian nation overcome the consequences of its past conflicts.

Spain also intends to improve the formation of the Haitian security forces through scholarships in specialized academies of the Civil Guard and the National Police, whose courses will consider priorities and needs set by the government and the UN.

The document reaffirms Spain's intention to maintain its financial and technical support of the UN and the Organization of American States and continue fulfilling the electoral missions assigned by the European Union.

Badly needed cops hard to find in Haiti

By JUAN PABLO TORO

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

Seattle Post Intelligencer

Monday April 3, 2006

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- Gang members, pistols tucked underneath their sport shirts, watch idly from a street corner as children walk to school and housewives carry food home from a market. Not a policeman is in sight.

If any particular place in Haiti needs police, it's the teeming streets of the Cite Soleil slum in the capital, Port-au-Prince. But all it has is the crumbling ruins of an abandoned police station.

The battered, impoverished Caribbean nation has teetered on the brink of anarchy since former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was ousted in a bloody rebellion in February 2004.

The U.N. peacekeeping mission that arrived within months of the rebellion has been training a force, but the pace is slow. Every three months, 200 more recruits complete their training and are ready to hit the streets. But Haiti needs 20,000 policemen and has only about 6,000, says Juan Gabriel Valdes, the U.N. special envoy to Haiti.

"To reach 20,000 will take several years," he said in an interview.

Meanwhile, kidnappings are alarmingly frequent in the capital. Its few foreign business executives speed through the streets in bulletproof vehicles with armed bodyguards.

Haiti is also a key transshipment point for fast boats bearing cocaine from Colombia toward the United States, according to a State Department report issued earlier this month.

While Haiti's police force is built up, security is provided mostly by about 1,750 U.N. police and 7,250 U.N. peacekeeping troops, who are generally unaccustomed to taking a police role.

In Cite Soleil, Jordanian U.N. troops hunker down in armored personnel carriers, barely interacting with the Creole-speaking public. Shanty walls are pocked with hundreds of bullet holes from U.N. troops' clashes with gang members over the past two years.

President-elect Rene Preval, whose strong backing among Haiti's poor propelled him to victory in the Feb. 7 elections, faces the challenge of bringing security and jobs to Haiti. He wants the U.N. peacekeepers to stay, but prefers a stronger police contingent.

For much of Haiti's history, the police were a repressive arm of the military that supported dictatorships or ruled outright after seizing power in coups. Aristide dismantled the military after U.S. troops restored him to power in 1994. The military had toppled the elected leader in a coup three years earlier.

The scarcity of police is also due to newly elected leaders firing police officers and hiring new ones loyal to the leaders, and the objective now is to create a professional, unpoliticized force free of corruption and criminal behavior, Valdes said.

Valdes said increasing officers' salaries - now averaging about \$100 per month - would help.

Haitian police have committed arbitrary arrests, torture and even summary executions, U.N. human rights official Thierry Fagart said last October.

Haitian National Police chief Mario Andresol has tried weed out violators, among them 15 officers arrested for their suspected role in killings last August at a soccer stadium in the capital.

The U.N. Security Council last month extended the Brazilian-led U.N. peacekeeping mission through Aug. 15, and it could be renewed again.

"There is no public agency in Haiti capable of ensuring security," said Daniel P. Erikson, an analyst with the Inter-American Dialogue think tank in Washington. "In the short term, the withdrawal of U.N. troops would be a disaster for Haiti."

Security a concern for Haiti's April election

Tue Apr 4, 2006

By Joseph Guylor Delva

Reuters

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti - Elections officials pressed Haiti's interim government and U.N. peacekeepers on Tuesday to protect legislative elections later this month from angry former candidates who have threatened to disrupt them.

Electoral council president Max Mathurin said losing candidates could resort to violence to protest their disqualification from the run-off on April 21.

"Some candidates and their supporters have already provoked a few violent incidents in the Grande Anse and the Artibonite regions," Mathurin said.

Haiti managed to hold a relatively peaceful first round of presidential and legislative elections on February 7, when voters went to the polls for the first time since former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide was deposed more than two years ago.

Another ex-president, former Aristide protege Rene Preval, won the presidential vote. But most of the 99 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and all 30 Senate seats are scheduled to be decided in balloting on April 21.

Several candidates who lost in the first round and challenged the final results have said they will not allow voting to take place in their jurisdictions if their names are not on the ballots.

"I'm still campaigning for the run-off and my name should be on the ballot. If not, elections will be held anywhere but in my jurisdiction," said Roselaure Aubourg, a candidate for the Chamber of Deputies who did not qualify for the run-off.

Some observers fear that frustration over controversial decisions on first-round winners and losers might stir violence during the run-off.

It was not likely that any single party would reach the majority needed to control parliament.

"Now that the president has been elected, the political interests at stake during the legislative vote are huge," said Mathurin.

Damian Onses-Cardona, spokesman for the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Haiti, said U.N. troops were working with Haitian police to assess security and determine where more attention should be given.

"Any additional measures would be announced at a time closer to the vote," Onses-Cardona said.

SA in no hurry to 'ship' Aristide to Haiti
Peter Fabricius
The Independent Online, South Africa
April 04, 2006

Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma says South Africa is not in a hurry to "ship" former Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide back home, but nor is he going to live here for ever.

Dlamini-Zuma was speaking on Monday after discussions in Pretoria with French Minister for Co-operation and Development Brigitte Girardin, which included Haiti.

Aristide fled Haiti just over two years ago as violent protesters closed in on his presidential palace.

The South African government granted him asylum a few months later, and he has been living in Pretoria and teaching occasionally at Unisa.

'... he's not going to be living in exile for the rest of his life'

After the Haitian elections two months ago, which were won by a former Aristide ally, René Preval, there were indications that the SA government was eager for him to go home.

Aristide said at the time he was ready to go.

Haitians deserve warmer welcome to U.S.
The Baxter Bulletin
DeWayne Wickham
April 7, 2006

Much of the congressional debate over illegal immigration has focused on the millions of Mexicans who slip into this country looking for work and a better way of life.

That's understandable, since Mexicans make up the majority of the estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants in this country. And television has been full of images of Mexican-flag-waving demonstrators agitating for a law that would make it easier for undocumented immigrants to become citizens.

But it is the fate of Haitians trying to enter this country, not that of Mexicans, that cries out the loudest for a remedy.

If it's truly the tired, the poor and the huddled masses that this country has a special place for, then of all the people who are trying to get here from other parts of the Western Hemisphere, Haitians are most deserving of a warm reception.

Why? Because we owe them a piece of our freedom.

A unit of Haitian volunteers fought alongside members of George Washington's Revolutionary War army in the 1779 Battle of Savannah. One of those Haitians was Henri Christophe, who later became a leader of the black nation after it won its independence from France in 1804.

And we owe it to them because we played a role in Haiti's downward spiral from the hemisphere's richest colony to its poorest nation. Shortly after Haiti won its war of independence, the United States cut off all trade with the black-ruled state, an action that helped rupture its economy. This country didn't recognize Haiti until 1862.

From 1915 to 1934, the United States occupied Haiti and created the army that a succession of Haitian leaders used to brutalize their people.

Those are good reasons for Congress to give Haiti special attention, and so is this: Back in 1992, as George H.W. Bush was leaving the White House and Bill Clinton was moving in, I went to the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to see how U.S. officials were treating the Haitian refugees who had been stopped at sea by the Coast Guard before they could get to this country.

What I found was a disturbing sight.

Nearly 7,000 Haitians were housed in a sea of military tents pitched on the tarmac of an abandoned airfield. This blazing hot encampment was surrounded by a barbed wire fence and patrolled by armed guards. Imagine that.

These people were fleeing a country where the blood of dissidents flowed through the streets almost daily. But instead of allowing these "huddled masses" into this country, Bush — and for too long, Clinton — had them held like runaway slaves in Cuba.

The irony of this is that all the while, Cubans — who have experienced nothing like the kind of wholesale slaughter that has wracked Haiti for decades — are allowed to stay in the United States if they manage to make it ashore.

While most Cubans picked up at sea are returned to the communist nation, those who make it to land get to stay. This so-called "wet-foot, dry-foot" policy does not apply to people who try to steal into this country from Haiti.

Four years ago, Florida Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson revealed that the Bush administration had enacted a "secret" policy that put Haitians who entered this country — including those requesting asylum — into detention centers. Nelson called that policy "unfair and discriminatory."

Yet despite this history of bad treatment, the plight of Haitians who try to enter this country illegally has gotten virtually no notice. Most of those Haitians I've encountered were driven out of their country by political violence, not Haiti's tattered economy.

They're not rushing our borders simply to work jobs that people here won't do. They are "yearning to breathe free" like millions of others beckoned to this country by those words at the base of the Statue of Liberty.

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HAITI: Election result 'a blow to Haitian elite'
The Green Left Weekly, Australia
April 1, 2006

Patrick Elie has been a leading figure in the popular movement in Haiti since his youth, during the years of the Duvalier tyranny. He was a minister of the first government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, 1991-96. He helped found a political rights organisation in 2004 called Sant ObsSvasyon Sitwayen, (SOS, Citizens' Watchdog Centre). The following interview was granted by Elie in Vancouver, Canada, on March 21, to Roger Annis, co-editor of Socialist Voice. At the time of this interview, Elie was in the midst of a five-week, 20-city speaking tour across Canada, organised by the Canada Haiti Action Network.

On February 7, the Haitian people elected Rene Preval as president. He promised deep-going reforms in favour of the poor majority of Haiti. How do you view the election and its outcome?

The election is a very positive sign for Haiti's future. For despite the fact that it was rigged, held under a regime of foreign occupation, the people managed to take hold of it and use it to advance their struggle for social justice.

There were many obstacles that blocked the people's participation. They had to obtain a computerised registration card. There were only 800 polling stations, compared to 12,000 in the 2000 election that elected President Aristide. And, of course, the counting of the ballots was in the hands of those who wanted to use the election to choose a candidate of Haiti's elite.

But the people intervened at two decisive moments. First of all, they mobilised massively to get out and vote on February 7. They voted for the one candidate, Rene Preval, who represented their historic struggle for a just society. Then, six days later, they mobilised again in massive numbers to block the theft of the vote. It was this action that forced the election authorities to accept the reality — that Preval had won an overwhelming victory.

These actions by the Haitian people are a testament to their courage, their ingenuity and their deep understanding and commitment to democracy.

What are the prospects, then, for a return to the constitutional rule that was overthrown in 2004?

Well, the future is very uncertain, fraught with danger. The occupation power is still in place and shows no sign of leaving. Legislative elections, supposed to be held in March, have been postponed. Preval needs an elected legislature before he can assume the presidency, and the legislature must be composed of candidates that support his program if he is to be able to carry it out. The last time he was president, from 1996 to 2000, opponents in the legislature blocked many of the policies that he wished to implement.

What about the occupying powers? Some friends of Haiti are asking why president-elect Preval made statements recently in Brazil and Chile asking for the UN armed forces to remain in Haiti for the foreseeable future. What is your view?

I liken the situation to one where you are sitting in a boat and an uninvited guest jumps in and almost capsizes the boat. You want him out; he is not welcome. But he can't simply jump out and risk, once again, capsizing the boat. It has to be an orderly exit.

If the UN were to pull out overnight, it would leave a power vacuum that the rightist forces are better placed to fill than us at this point. This would create an extreme danger of a whole new round of violence and killing directed at the people. We demand that the UN forces cease their repressive operations and rein in the Haitian National Police. A withdrawal must be done such that the security of the people is assured.

I and other militants have the responsibility to demand that the UN withdraw its occupation of Haiti and return the country to sovereign rule. Preval and his government have the responsibility to carry this out in a timely and responsible way. The two roles are not identical.

We are approaching the 20th anniversary of the popular uprising that overthrew the Duvalier dynasty in Haiti. Since then, it has been a lengthy and difficult struggle for democracy and social improvements. How would you describe these years?

The past 20 years have been a time of constant clash between the people, the majority of whom are poor, and a tiny, wealthy elite. The people are stating very strongly their will to have a democratic system, a system where the terrible gap between rich and poor will be reduced and where social justice will prevail.

The Haitian people have shown their resolve and a peaceful character of their quest. The violence and instability in the country come from the stubbornness of the rich minority and the constant interference of foreign powers. The first time [the 1991 coup], it was the US that interfered. But the last time — and I am speaking of 2003 until the present time — a triumvirate composed of the US, France and Canada carried out another coup.

What we have learned over these years is that the resolve of the Haitian people in their quest for democracy cannot be stopped. Depending on how the elite and the foreign powers react to the latest victory of the people, we will move forward or not. They can continue to make us suffer, but they cannot stop the movement.

What are some of the lessons you draw from this experience?

We have fought against incredible odds. We have faced so much violence against the people, and suffered so many killed. The foreign powers and international financial institutions reduced the financial capacities of our governments to zero. There was no miracle solution to our problems.

Where we have perhaps come up short is in the building and strengthening of the popular organisations — trade unions, women's rights committees, neighbourhood committees working on the social services, and so on. In 1991, for example, we saw the coup against our government coming months ahead of time. We were receiving all kinds of information. But what could we do? We did not control

the army, and the popular movements were still quite weak. We did not have the relationship of forces required to stop the coup-makers, as we saw the people in Venezuela do so successfully in 2002

Is there a role for a political party in this? Lavalas seems to be more of a social movement or electoral coalition than a political party.

I think that the exact form that the people will give to their political organisation remains to be seen. Obviously, in Haiti we will not develop the kinds of political parties that are seen in countries like France or Canada. But definitely, we must move a step forward — to go from being a movement, largely unstructured, to forming a new political leadership out of the grassroots movements.

We must develop something that is attuned to our history and our culture, and that opens the door very wide to the participation of the masses. This is the challenge for the coming five years. It is a tall order, but it is indispensable and I think we can succeed.

What sort of program would you advocate for a Lavalas party?

First of all, it must be a program where every child must be able to go to school and every citizen has access to education and health care. There must be laws adopted for a better distribution of national wealth. It is intolerable that 5% of the population should control 60% of the collective wealth, and the top 1% controls 50% — while 80% of Haitians live on less than two dollars per day. These are numbers that no society can live with. We've reached the breaking point.

We do have a number of assets, the most important of which is the extraordinary resolve of the Haitian people, their creativity, their very high level of political consciousness. We must also add to this the vital contribution that the Haitian diaspora can make. It numbers 2 million.

Throughout Latin America, popular movements are gaining strength and bringing new governments to power. Does this have an impact in Haiti?

I believe so, if only indirectly at the moment. It's good that you should point out the changes in the region. What we must do in Haiti is establish stronger links these countries in the region and start learning from each other.

You will note that in countries like Venezuela and Bolivia, the changes did not come about through traditional political parties, but from vast and profound social movements. It resembles a lot what has been going on in Haiti since 1986. So, we have experience that we can share with these brothers and sisters, and they can teach us a few things that we haven't yet experienced.

What is the attitude of young Haitians to the foreign occupation and repression they have endured?

Their reaction is one of anger. They've been frustrated so much, even though they respected the rules of the democratic game. Anger, but also resolve. These people that you saw in the streets on February 7, voting at the ballot places, then one week later protesting the attempt to steal their votes, voting again with their feet — they are young people. Less than 25 years old. Truly, the young masses have an extraordinary courage and determination.

We have a very serious situation on our hands today with the threat of continued repression in the poor neighbourhoods in Port au Prince, such as Cite Soleil and Belair. The young people there have fought back. Many are armed. It is vital that we find a way to avoid further bloodshed and de-escalate the armed conflict.

These young people are called all kinds of slanderous names — “bandits”, “gangsters”, etc. But these descriptions are false. They have been forced to defend themselves over the past two years as any self-respecting people would do. They are the future of our country, and we must act to protect them.

[An extended version of the interview can be found at <<http://socialistvoice.com>>.]

From Green Left Weekly, April 5, 2006.

Giving Haiti's new president a good launch
Monday, April 3, 2006
by Seth DeLong, PhD, COHA Senior Research Fellow
Caribbean Net News

In the middle of May, after a number of electoral processes take place, Rene Preval, the only democratically-elected Haitian president to serve out his full five year presidential term and peacefully hand over power to the succeeding administration, will once again assume the presidential mantle.

Haitians are hopeful that a new Preval administration will help to alleviate the gang violence, tame an incompetent and abuse-prone police force, sanitize a completely corrupted judiciary, address questions of past instances unprofessional behavior by the UN peacekeeping force MINUSTAH, and confront the extreme polarization of society that has been intensified by the rule of the Interim Government of Haiti (IGH), headed by Gerard Latortue.

But many questions remain regarding just how effective a Preval government can be, and whether or not the international community's presence in Haiti, as woefully represented by the UN, along with the three nations most culpable for Haiti's present plight – the U.S., France and Canada – will let Preval chart his own course.

There are two central issues that will determine the extent to which the first duly elected government of Haiti after the 2004 coup – one that was legally mandated by Haitian votes and not imposed upon by them by the international community – is truly autonomous and independent.

Releasing Latortue's Victims

The first major issue that would credential Preval's insistence that he must be his own man (whether it be in his relations with Aristide or the U.S.) would be the immediate release of those illegally imprisoned by the Latortue regime and legal recourse for those already released.

Various human rights groups, including the Catholic Church's Justice and Peace Commission, have estimated that a shifting inmate population of between 700 and 1,000 political prisoners and prisoners of conscience remain in Haitian jails.

Included in that number are many whose sole crime was being identified as being a Lavalas party activist or member of the former Aristide government, among them being ex-Prime Minister Yvon Neptune.

Regarding those wrongly imprisoned, the likely reason Preval registered for the presidential election on the last day possible, held relatively few rallies, and generally ran a very low key campaign, was that he did not want to become yet another jailbird victim of the Latortue regime.

On Latortue's watch, many who wanted to contest the election on the Lavalas ticket or work for the party were summarily imprisoned, kidnapped and even murdered.

The Council of Sages – an ad-hoc, totally opaque and unaccountable governing committee of the IGH, which was formed after the coup against Aristide in February of 2004 – even went so far as to formally recommend that Lavalas be banned from the elections due to the party's alleged promotion of violence.

Of course, it should be noted that such a 'recommendation' was tantamount to informing the overwhelming majority of Haitians that the proposed election was to be a grand affair, save that they would not be permitted to back their favorite candidate because, in the view of IGH, anyone running on the Lavalas ticket was simply unacceptable and was a self-defining villain.

Gousse's Numberless Delinquencies

Just last July, the IGH imprisoned, on trumped-up charges, the popular and beloved Father Gerard Jean-Juste, who was slated to possibly run as Lavalas' candidate in the presidential election.

This detention followed the outlandish allegations that he was a participant in the murder of a well known journalist.

Even a heavily biased State Department, which tends to instinctively take the anti-Lavalas position on all Haiti-related issues, has admitted that the charges against Jean-Juste could not be substantiated.

Clearly, the state-sponsored suppression of Lavalas party activists, officials and would-be presidential candidates, belied Latortue's mendacious declaration that, "this government will not act in favor of anybody or any political candidate [nor will it] work against any candidate who will run." (italics author)

But Latortue's patently unlawful regime was not only guilty of illegally imprisoning those it perceives as its political foes, but also of circumventing justice in the cases of those legally found guilty and imprisoned under the Aristide or Preval presidency.

In one notorious example, convicted FRAPH death squad leader from the period when the military junta ruled Haiti, Jodel Chamblain, was acquitted of murder charges after the direct intercession of Latortue's infamous Justice Minister, Bernard Gousse, in August of 2004.

Latortue also committed the outrageous act of reconstituting the dreaded Haitian Army and purging the court system of Lavalas sympathizers.

Last December, he brazenly fired five members of the Supreme Court and replaced them with his own extra-constitutionally appointed cronies, and pledged that he would spend millions of dollars on compensating the Haitian military that had been disbanded by Aristide.

The corollary to releasing those unjustly imprisoned and making the legal case that would rebut Latortue's assault on the judicial system, is the need to seek justice against those who committed state-sponsored crimes under the Latortue regime.

We have yet to hear how Preval will deal with this thorny issue; whether he will press charges against Gousse and those who served him while he was Justice Minister, or whether he will appoint a truth and reconciliation commission, or issue a carte blanche amnesty for those charged with the wanton murder

and mistreatment of Lavalas supporters, as well as those guilty of the calculated murder of political enemies, in the spirit of what is best for the country.

Aristide's Return?

After dealing with the issue of prisoners jailed by Gousse in an entirely expeditious manner, Preval's administration should be able to make a decision regarding Aristide's possible return to Haiti under the best of conditions for all concerned.

It is a near certainty that the Bush administration will put every obstacle in the way in order to prevent this return. The question then becomes, will Preval push for his return anyway, in spite of U.S. opposition?

Recently, at a State Department news briefing, Deputy Spokesman Adam Ereli contributed this piece of punditry: "Our understanding is that the government of Haiti is looking forward, not looking back. They've got a democracy to build, and the future is not in the past. Aristide is from the past."

Brushing aside the broader issue of why the State Department believes it should have any say regarding Aristide's possible return, the matter of immediate concern is how Preval will deal with this potentially incendiary matter.

The new president will have to balance his dependence on U.S. economic assistance and political support, with his need to show his nation that he is his own man and that Haiti will not be submissive to Washington under his rule and that all the sacrifices made by the citizenry were somehow justified.

Whatever Preval's relationship with Aristide may be today, he was Aristide's long loyal political confederate, his former prime minister and is actively connected to many in Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party.

It's also true that although Preval ran under the banner of his own newly minted party, Lespwa (Hope), the major base of his support overwhelmingly comes from the pro-Aristide slums.

That noted, Preval never ran as a mere stand-in for Aristide, and he must harbor some resentment over the fact that the latter had purged much of his cabinet and aborted many of his reforms after again winning the presidency following the end of Preval's term in 2001.

Notwithstanding Preval's current personal opinion of Aristide, the state of their relationship, or even Preval's feelings regarding the wisdom of an Aristide return, the new president sees it as Aristide's call on the matter of his return.

Whether the incoming president's decision on Aristide is respected – or not – by the U.S. will not only be of keen interest to observers of Haitian politics, but will be seen as a key determinant of Preval's readiness, if need be, to stand his ground against Washington, and for that matter, Aristide.

Preval Feels the Heat

The new president will undoubtedly be pressured from all sides. The pro-Lavalas side, including the armed gangs in the slums (many of whom are indeed guilty of committing acts of violence, though not

with any official documented sanction from Aristide or any identifiable senior Lavalas party official) will likely press their demands for Aristide's return.

In their view, it was the Lavalas base that won the election for Preval, so it's only logical that Aristide be tempted to exercise his constitutional right of return. At the same time, Preval will most likely have to face a different kind of pressure from the pro-business community, Washington and the U.S. embassy in Port-au-Prince.

All of those forces inevitably will be opposing the Lavalas agenda at every turn and they can be counted on to be pushing Preval to apply the Bush administration's neoliberal agenda as a prescription for improving Haiti's economy.

The conservative business community of course will find Aristide's return intolerable, with such hard-line figures like Andy Apaid and his somewhat notorious Group of 184 already making it clear that their intention is to submit Preval to their own desiderata.

As reported in the Los Angeles Times, Haitian business magnate Lionel Delatour didn't mince words about him when he stated that, "If he does try to bring Aristide back, Preval will not finish his presidency. I think Mr. Preval is smart enough to do that."

The former anti-Aristide American ambassador to Haiti, Timothy M. Carney, has said that he believes the U.S. "can work with" President Preval.

But if past is prologue, "working with" Port-au-Prince will mean opposing – and even undermining – the new government, should Preval show any inclination to blaze a political path independent of Washington's.

Can Washington give up its organic conviction that its embassy in Haiti is nothing more than its southern White House? Washington's regional agenda clearly flies in the face of some of the aspirations of Preval's own political base, as well as in the growing rejection of the once celebrated but now repudiated Washington Consensus throughout the region.

Successfully juggling these polarities – defined in terms of satisfying his Lavalas base – while not tempting Washington's own chimères (gangs) to once again engage in coup-making, is the monumental challenge now facing Haiti's soon to be inaugurated president.

The Council on Hemispheric Affairs, founded in 1975, is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan, tax-exempt research and information organization. It has been described on the Senate floor as being "one of the nation's most respected bodies of scholars and policy makers." For more information, visit www.coha.org or email coha@coha.org.

CPJ urges Haiti's Préval to make Dominique case a priority
Committee to Protect Journalists
April 3, 2006

New York, April 3, 2006—The Committee to Protect Journalists remembers Jean-Léopold Dominique, owner and director of Radio Haïti-Inter and one of the country's most renowned journalists, who was gunned down six years ago today in a still-unpunished assassination.

CPJ called on Haiti's president-elect, René Préval, to make the murder investigation a priority of his administration after he takes office on May 14.

“President-elect Préval faces enormous problems when he takes office, one of the most significant being Haiti's overburdened and dysfunctional judicial system,” CPJ Executive Director Ann Cooper said. “The Dominique case is emblematic of those shortcomings. President-elect Préval would go a long way toward restoring faith in his country's judicial system by thoroughly investigating this murder and bringing the perpetrators to justice.”

The long-stalled case has been characterized by incompetence and a lack of political will, CPJ research shows. No progress has been reported in the investigation since the case was assigned to Judge Peres Paul a year ago, but problems emerged from the beginning. Some of those difficulties:

- Authorities made only made sluggish headway when Claudy Gassant, the first examining judge, was in charge of the investigation during Préval's first term.
- Gassant left Haiti for the United States in January 2002, after Jean-Bertrand Aristide's election as president. Gassant said he had been threatened and had received inadequate protection. Gassant had questioned Sen. Dany Toussaint, a member of Aristide's Famni Lavalas party, in connection with the slaying. Toussaint was angered by an October 1999 Radio Haïti Inter editorial that had sharply criticized him.
- In 2003, Judge Bernard Saint-Vil, who replaced Gassant, sent a 33-page indictment to prosecutors accusing purported gang members Dymsley Millien, Jeudi-Jean Daniel, Philippe Markington, Ralph Léger, Ralph Joseph, and Freud Junior Desmarattes of the killing. Dominique's wife, Michèle Montas, claimed that the authorities had “failed to charge the
- In August 2003, charges against Desmarattes, Léher, and Joseph were dropped after the accusers appealed the indictment. The other three suspects escaped from the Port-au-Prince Penitentiary—Markington in January 2004, and Daniel and Millien in March 2005. The three remain at large.

Dominique was shot seven times by two unknown gunmen on April 3, 2000, outside the entrance to his Port-au-Prince station. The gunmen then shot the station's security guard, Jean Claude Louissaint, two times and escaped in a waiting Jeep Cherokee. Dominique's wife, Michèle Montas, arrived at the station minutes later in a separate car. Both men died in the Haitian Community Hospital in Pétionville.

Radio Haïti-Inter stopped broadcasting indefinitely in February 2003 due to constant threats and harassment. The closing came shortly after a Christmas 2002 assassination attempt against Montas that claimed the life of a bodyguard. She left Haiti and now lives in the United States.

A number of other Radio Haïti-Inter journalists went into exile after being threatened. They include Jean Roland Chery, Immacula Placide, Guerlande Eloi, Pierre Emmanuel, and Gigi Dominique.

Haiti's constitutional stakes and prospects for the future

Tuesday, April 4, 2006

by Vario Sérant

Caribbean Net News Haiti Correspondent

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: The atmosphere during the recent anniversary of the Haitian constitution differed considerably from the peaceful nineteenth anniversary of the constitution on March 29, 1987.

Although no large-scale activity marked the March 29, 2006 event, Necker Dessable of the Office of the Protection of Citizen (OPC) seized this opportunity to plead with the public to respect and abide by the constitution. This climate also contrasted with the heavy shootings that prevailed in Port-au-Prince during the Constitution's anniversary last year.

As in previous years, the anniversary of the Haitian constitution provoked debates in the mass-media about whether to uphold the current constitution, create new amendments or adopt a new one altogether.

On February 22, the president-elect Rene Préval announced that the creation and consolidation of institutions envisaged by the constitution is a priority of the future government.

In front of the Security Council of the United Nations on the same day, Provisional Prime Minister Gerard Latortue stated that the international assistance must concentrate on the reinforcement of the capacities of the democratic institutions such as the Parliament, the municipalities and the other local authorities, as well as the consolidation of the legal system and increased professionalism among the Haitian police force.

On March 13, the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR) called upon the Haitian president-elect to reform the judicial system, which is considered to be "very defective almost on all the levels".

Several reported scandals plagued the constitution's anniversary, as the Haitian legal system wallows in difficulties. The latest incident involves the mysterious disappearance of files to the Instruction Cabinet.

No explanation has been provided concerning the files in question and multiple cases of prolonged custody worry human rights organizations. According to OPC, there is currently a rate of 92.2 % of prisoners who are awaiting a determination of their cases by the courts.

In a report covering the time span from November 2005 through March 2006, OPC reveals that the prison population in the National Penitentiary (the principal prison of Haiti) reached two thousand prisoners, despite its capacity to hold between 800 and 1,000 prisoners.

The scandal involving the missing files was preceded by another event which brought the Justice Minister to "temporarily unattach" the judge of instruction and three members of the Public Prosecutor's Office in Port-au-Prince. These magistrates are suspected of having manipulated decisions in favor of supposed kidnappers.

In an opened letter addressed to the president-elect mid-March 2006, the "Citizen Forum for the reform of the Justice", which gathers lawyers and human rights organizations, drew the attention of Rene Préval to crucial problems facing Haitian justice.

These difficulties relate to the strong dependence of Haitian justice on government, the fact that the judicial enquiries do not come to an end, the absence of legal aid for the ordinary citizens, the lack of timely justice, and the corruption which afflicts the system so that there is no legal safeguard.

The Citizen Forum reminded the future leader of Haiti that "the process of the Justice reform should not concentrate exclusively on partial reforms, starting from the Justice Ministry through decrees". But "it takes part in the reform of the State and the social transformation by the establishment of new democratic and institutional practices".

On March 23, a former minister, Jean Joseph Exumé, also a member of "Citizen Justice Forum", considered that "there never were efforts of the State and the society so that we can have a real judicial power in Haiti".

According to Exumé, the various Haitian constitutions, from the first to the one of 1987, never provided the tools to equip the country with judicial power.

Instead, the lawyer insists they created conditions for a kind of symbiosis between the government and legislature. Jean Joseph Exumé stressed that the emergence of strong judicial power would break the impunity criminals currently enjoy, especially those responsible for economic crimes.

Written after the fall of the dynasty of Duvalier and massively voted for by the Haitian population on March 29, 1987, the constitution was to mark a rupture with a rejected past and to engage the country on the way of democracy.

This report produces a contradictory standpoint. Some specialists plead for a new constitution and others ask for a simple amendment. According to the historian Claude Moïse, the methods of revision established by the constitution make it necessary to wait at least nine years before being able to remove a comma of the text.

In Moïse's opinion, the only way of circumventing these inherent political and technical difficulties would be "to entrust to the 48th legislature the responsibility to supplement the institutional standardization of the State, while carrying out the necessary amendments, notwithstanding the constitutional times, which would require a national agreement between the newly elected officials, the political parties and the civil society organizations, on the recognition of the urgency of the amendments".

In spite of its various fortunes since its approval, some specialists remain favorable to the maintenance of the current constitution. For example, lawyer Fritzo Canton feels the laws are not bad in fact. They are rather "our leaders who did not recognize their value yet" and who refuse to respect them.

As the historian George Michel recalled, "The Constitution of 1987 is the third Haitian Constitution which has lasted longest after two constitutions of the 19th century, the constitution of 1889 (known as the immortal one) and the constitution of 1816 which lasted 29 and 27 years respectively".

Noam Chomsky on Iraq Troop Withdrawal, Haiti, Democracy in Latin America and the Israeli Elections

Monday, April 3, 2006

Democracy Now!

Part II of our interview with world-renowned linguist and political analyst Noam Chomsky on Iraq troop withdrawal, Haiti, democracy in Latin America and the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Chomsky's latest book is titled "Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy." [includes rush transcript]

We turn now to Part II of our interview with Noam Chomsky. The world-renowned linguist and political analyst has just come out with a new book. It's called "Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy." In his first broadcast interview upon the book's publication, Chomsky spoke to us from our Boston studio Friday. In this second part of our conversation, Chomsky discusses a wide range of issues that are making headlines today -- including troop withdrawal from Iraq; the growing rejection of US policies in Latin America; the upheaval in Haiti; and last week's elections in Israel. We began by talking about dissent and media control in the United States today.

Noam Chomsky, world renowned political analyst and professor of linguistics and philosophy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is author of dozens of books, his latest is "Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy."

RUSH TRANSCRIPT

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AMY GOODMAN: In his first broadcast interview upon the book's publication, Chomsky spoke to us from our Boston studio on Friday.

JUAN GONZALEZ: With public opposition to the Bush administration's policies at record highs, I asked Professor Chomsky to talk about how it is that so much discontent with the government has not translated into larger political mobilization.

NOAM CHOMSKY: First of all, on the fact that advertising is designed to undermine free markets, that everybody knows, anyone who's ever looked at a television ad. According to what you're taught in economics courses, our system is based on free markets with entrepreneurial initiative and rational choices by informed consumers. Well, the reality is radically different. A tremendous amount of the entrepreneurial initiative, if you want to call it that, comes from the dynamic state sector on which most of the economy relies to socialize costs and risks and privatize eventual profit. And that's achieved by, if you like, advertising. So, it's presented under the rubric of defense or some other pretext, but it's essentially a way for the public to pay the costs of research and development, take the risks and eventually hand over the profit. There's some entrepreneurial initiative, but not all that much, mostly at the marketing end.

As far as consumers are concerned, I mean, when you look at a television ad, it is not trying to create an informed consumer who's going to make a rational choice. We all know that. If they were going to do that, General Motors would just list the characteristics of its models and, you know, you're over, you're done. The purpose is to delude and deceive by imagery -- it's transparent -- meaning to ensure that uninformed consumers will make irrational choices.

And that goes straight to the democratic deficit. The U.S. does not have elections in a serious sense. It has advertising campaigns, run by the same industries that sell toothpaste: public relations industry. When they're selling candidates, they don't tell you -- provide you with information about them, any more than they do about lifestyle drugs or cars. What they do is create imagery to delude and deceive. That's what's called an electoral campaign. The result is that people are just unaware of the stands of candidates on issues.

So to take one critical example, take, say, the Kyoto Protocols. I mean, they're not the be all and end all, but environmental catastrophe is a serious matter. The public is strongly in favor of the Kyoto Protocols, so strongly in favor that a majority of Bush voters -- Bush voters -- thought that he was in favor of it. They are simply unaware. And it's not because of mental incapacity or a lack of interest. It's because that's the way campaigns are presented. They're presented to keep issues off the agenda. Striking cases.

Take, say, healthcare, one of the worst domestic problem -- most serious domestic problems; for most people, a major problem. I mean, it's the most inefficient healthcare system in the world, double the per capita cost of other comparable countries, some of the worst health outcomes, mainly because it is privatized. The public is strongly against it. For a long period the public has been in favor of some kind of national healthcare system.

Well, you know, Kerry is supposed to be the candidate of, you know -- speaking for whose constituency calls for social spending, and so on and so forth. The last presidential debate, a couple days before the election, was on domestic issues. And the New York Times had an accurate account of it. It described it as -- it pointed out that Kerry made no mention of any government involvement in any healthcare system. And the reason, according to the Times reporter, is that the idea lacks political support, meaning it only has the support of the overwhelming majority of the population, but it's opposed by the pharmaceutical corporations, the insurance industry, and so on. That's what counts as political support. So Kerry didn't mention it, and the public didn't know his stand on these issues. And so it goes issue after issue. So, these are not real elections. We'd laugh at them, and they were some third world country.

Now, take the war in Iraq. When you talk about the government propaganda system we have to recognize that that includes the media. It includes the media, the journalists and so on. That's all part of the propaganda system, very closely linked. There is virtually no criticism of the war in Iraq. Now, that will surprise journalists, I suppose. They think they're being very critical, but they're not. I mean, the kinds of criticism of the war in Iraq that are allowed in the doctrinal system, media and so on, are the kind of criticisms you heard about, say, in the German general staff after Stalingrad: it's not working; it's costing too much; we made a mistake, we should get a different general; something like that. In fact, it's about at the level of a high school newspaper cheering the local football team. You

don't ask, "Should they win?" You ask, "How are we doing?" You know, "Did the coaches make a mistake? Should we try something else?" That's called criticism.

But there's a critical question: What right does the U.S. have to invade another country, in gross violation of international law, understanding that it's probably going to increase the threat of terror and nuclear proliferation? But just, you know, it's a supreme international crime, in the words of the Nuremberg Tribunal, for which German leaders were hanged. You know, the issue isn't how they are going to win, it's "What are they doing there in the first place?"

AMY GOODMAN: Do you believe, Noam Chomsky, in immediate withdrawal, that the troops should withdraw immediately?

NOAM CHOMSKY: I think we should estab-- there is a certain principle that we should adhere to. The principle is that invading armies have no rights whatsoever. They have responsibilities. The prime responsibility is to heed the will of the victims and to pay massive reparations to the victims for the crimes they've committed. In this case, the crimes go back through the sanctions which were a monstrous crime, through the support for Saddam Hussein, right through his worst atrocities, but particularly, those of the invasion. Those are the two responsibilities of an occupying army.

Well, you know, the population has made it pretty clear. Even U.S. and British polls make that clear. Overwhelming majorities want the U.S. to set a timetable to withdraw and adhere to it. Britain and the United States refuse. Reparations, we can't even talk about; that's so far from consciousness in the doctrinal system. Well, I think that answers the question. Doesn't really matter what I think. What matters is what Iraqis think, and I think we know that pretty well. The reason the U.S. and Britain aren't withdrawing are those I mentioned. You know, the consequences of independence for Iraq would be an ultimate nightmare for them. And they're going to try to do anything they can to prevent Iraqi democracy, as they've been trying in the past.

AMY GOODMAN: And the argument that they will just descend into civil war and that the sectarian violence will increase, and the U.S. went in and now has a responsibility not to leave a mess?

NOAM CHOMSKY: Yeah, I mean, the Germans could have given the same argument in occupied Europe, the Russians in the satellites, the Japanese in Asia, and so on. Yeah, they could have all given the same argument: well, we went in, and now we have a responsibility to ensure that terrible things don't happen, and so on. And the argument had some validity. So, when the Germans were driven out of France, let's say, there were thousands, maybe tens of thousands of people killed by -- as collaborators, and in Asia, even more so. But is that an argument for them? No. It's none of their business.

We don't know what will happen, and it's not our decision to make. It's the decision of the victims to make, not our decision. Occupying armies have no right to make the decision. We could have an academic seminar about it, in which we could discuss the likely consequences. But the point is it's not for us to say. Well, until that enters into the discussion, and the critical issues of the war, like what right do we have to invade in the first place, enter into the discussion, the media and the journalism and so on are simply part of the government propaganda system, as I say, like a high school newspaper or like Pravda during the Afghanistan war.

JUAN GONZALEZ: And what of the role of the American people in this process? Clearly, it seems to me that so much of the antiwar sentiments quickly gets channeled into one or another political candidates, rather than into continuing to build a mass movement that, regardless of the political folks in office, will move to extricate the United States from this invasion.

NOAM CHOMSKY: Yeah, you're absolutely right. But that's our problem. I mean, you cannot expect power centers, whether in the government or in the economic system or in the media, which are all closely linked. I mean, they aren't going to try to stimulate popular movements that will be critical of power and try to erode power. In fact, their task is the opposite. So, yes, this has to be done by a popular movement. I mean, that's the way every constructive change has taken place in the past. I mean, how did we get civil rights to the extent that they exist, minority rights, women's rights, the benefits system that does exist, and so on? I mean, these things are not gifts from above; they are won from below. And it's going to be the same on this.

AMY GOODMAN: Noam Chomsky, I was going to say, as you talk about popular movements, right now we are in the midst of a kind of groundswell that the -- certainly the U.S. English-speaking media has not dealt with before. And that is this massive level of grassroots protest against immigration policy in this country, some of them not just the largest protests on immigration, but some of the largest protests in the history of this country are taking place, with upwards of a million people protesting in the streets of Los Angeles, tens of thousands in Atlanta and Arizona, the biggest protest perhaps in the history of Chicago. What about this? The walkout of 40,000 high school students?

NOAM CHOMSKY: Well, these protests did have an effect. The bill that went through the Senate Judiciary Committee, to some extent, reflected them. Power centers cannot ignore public protests and, even worse from their point of view, continuing organization. You know, a demonstration now and then, okay, you can live with it. If it continues and becomes real grassroots organization, developing a functioning political system, in which people actually participate in forming and shaping policy and electing their own candidates, if it gets to that stage, they're in trouble. And we're far from that.

In fact, it's kind of -- it's terrible irony. We ought to be ashamed of it. But if you want to look for democratic elections in the Western hemisphere these days, you have to look at countries like Bolivia, not the United States. I mean, in Bolivia, they had a real election. It's the poorest country in South America. Last December, they had an election in which organized -- well-organized masses of the population -- poor people, indigenous people and others -- managed to elect a candidate from their own ranks. There were real serious issues, and people knew the issues. And they voted on the issues. That's dramatically different from here. That's real democracy. You want to talk about democracy promotion, we need it here, and we can learn lessons from them.

Actually, the same is true in Venezuela. Venezuela is bitterly denounced here by the government media propaganda system as totalitarian dictatorship, and so on and so forth. Well, you know, you can think what you like about Chavez -- not our business -- but the question is what do Venezuelans think about him. That's the question, if you believe in democracy. Well, we know the answer. During the Chavez years, support for the elected government has risen very sharply. It is now the highest in Latin America by a considerable margin. He's managed to win poll after -- election and referendum after

election, one after another, about half a dozen, despite intense media opposition of a kind that you can't imagine here, and subversion by the superpower. After all, the U.S. supported a military coup to try to overthrow him, had to back down, partly because it was quickly reversed by popular action, but partly because of a swell of protest throughout Latin America, where they just don't have the same contempt for democracy as the leadership and the media do here and don't like the idea of democratically elected governments being overthrown by the military.

Since then, the U.S. has been dedicated to subversion. It's very probable that -- the last poll that I saw, a North American poll a couple of weeks ago, asked people who are they going to vote for in the next election. And I think it was about two-thirds said they'd vote for Chavez, and I think 4% for the next highest candidate. Well, in those circumstances, the U.S. is almost certain to turn to the standard operating procedure when you know you're going to lose an election: try to discredit it, by getting the opposition to boycott it.

JUAN GONZALEZ: Well, you'll be glad to know that when -- you mentioned Hugo Chavez -- when Amy and I interviewed him several months ago, he mentioned that his favorite American writer was Noam Chomsky, and he cited actually some of your books. So, I guess that we -- there ought to be a poll taken of how many leaders in the third world are reading Noam Chomsky, because you're obviously having an effect on many of these leaders.

NOAM CHOMSKY: I don't want to be self-serving, but I actually know quite a few examples.

AMY GOODMAN: What are the other ones, Noam?

NOAM CHOMSKY: Well, it's unfair to mention them.

AMY GOODMAN: Well, let me ask you --

NOAM CHOMSKY: They've got their own problems with the U.S. government.

AMY GOODMAN: Let me ask you about Haiti. How does this fit the picture that you're talking about?

NOAM CHOMSKY: Well, I won't run through the whole story, but Haiti actually also had a democratic election, of a kind that should put us to shame. They had a real democratic election in 1990, again, like Bolivia. You know, massive grassroots organizations, poor people that nobody was paying any attention to, succeeded in electing their own candidate, to everyone's astonishment. Everyone assumed the U.S.-backed candidate representing the elites and the power centers would easily win. Well, he didn't. He got 14% of the vote. Very quickly, instantly, the U.S. moved to subvert the election -- instantly -- by what are called democracy promotion measures, meaning supporting the opposition. That's what U.S. Aid did, and so on, try to support anyone opposed to the government.

Other measures were taken. Pretty soon there's a military coup, led to years of vicious terror. Contrary to what people believe, the U.S. supported the coup. It continued to trade with the junta and rich elite increasingly under Clinton. Clinton actually authorized the Texaco Oil Company to provide oil to the junta and the elite, overriding formal presidential directives blocking it. Finally, the Clinton

administration decided that the public had been tortured enough, sent in the Marines. That was called democracy promotion. However, as Allan Nairn right away pointed out, and others, Aristide was restored on the condition that he accept the policies of the defeated U.S. candidate in the 1990 election, harsh neo-liberal policies, which were bound to destroy the economy, as they did, led to turmoil, disaster, continuing U.S. subversion. Finally, the Bush administration blocked aid. More turmoil and confusion then came the -- by now, the country is kind of falling apart. You can go into the details.

But, finally, the U.S. and France simply intervened and removed the President. France was particularly infuriated, because Aristide had politely called upon France to do something about the crushing debt that had been imposed on Haiti back in 1825 as punishment for their having them -- for liberating themselves from France. They had been bearing this ever since, and naturally that infuriated France. How can the Haitians dare to say this? So, the U.S. and France basically kicked him out. Horrible atrocity since. Now, they're trying to reconstruct somehow. Again, we owe them enormous reparations, as does France, for the atrocities we have been carrying out there actually for over a century, after we took over the project of torturing Haitians from France. Is there any -- it's hard to know what the possibilities are. I mean, it's just -- I mean, the society has been really devastated. It's one of the poorest in the world.

AMY GOODMAN: And the latest of Aristide being taken out of Haiti, after he was re-elected -- this, of course, February 29, 2004, on a U.S. plane with U.S. military and security and sent to the Central African Republic?

NOAM CHOMSKY: Yeah, not only that, but the U.S. won't even allow him back into the region. I mean, it's essentially imprison-- insisted that he be imprisoned in South Africa. There was tremendous protest by the Caribbean countries over this. The candidate who won the election is the one who was closest to him; probably if he had been running, he would have won, but the U.S. would never allow that, and, as I say, won't even allow him into the region. Well, that's just another illustration of the near passionate hatred of democracy, which is consistent and is indeed recognized.

It's even recognized by the scholarship, of the most prestigious scholarship, by advocates of democracy promotion. They advocated, like Thomas Carothers, head of the Carnegie Endowment Project -- was the most respected -- he advocates it and says it's wonderful. But he also points out that the U.S. consistently had been opposed to it. There is what he calls a strong line of continuity in all administrations, namely, democracy is promoted if and only if it supports U.S. strategic and economic objectives. In Central America, for example, where he was particularly -- he was involved in the Reagan State Department. He says, yeah, the U.S. opposed democracy and the reason he says is the U.S. would tolerate only top-down forms of democratic structures, in which traditional elites allied to the United States would remain in power in highly undemocratic societies. Yeah, that's a kind of democracy promotion that we promote, that the administration preaches and that the press and journalists hail as magnificent. Again, this is kind of North Korea.

AMY GOODMAN: And another region, of course, back to Israel, the election of Kadima, the media characterizing Kadima as the centrist party that is going to do away with many of the settlements in the West Bank, and then the election of Hamas in the Occupied Territories. Your response?

NOAM CHOMSKY: Well, I would just urge anyone who wants to look into this to compare the lead editorial in the New York Times yesterday with the lead editorial yesterday in the world's leading business journal, the London Financial Times. They're diametrically opposed. The New York Times says it's wonderful Israelis agreed to withdraw from the West Bank. Of course, there is the little matter of borders, but they say that's of no importance. You know, minor issue, where the borders are. Yeah, no issue, except for the people who live there. That's the New York Times.

They do -- the Times reported the anguish of the settlers that'll have to leave. I mean, it's kind of as if the reporting has been -- as if, say, you know, I broke into your house, took over the whole house, finally agreed -- tortured you, you know, stole everything from you and so on, and then agreed to leave you the attic and the cellar, but keep the rest of the house. And it's -- I do that with great anguish, because I don't want to leave the attic. I kind of liked it. I mean, that's the way it's being reported. It's scandalous.

AMY GOODMAN: Noam Chomsky, world renowned linguist, political analyst, on the publication of his new book, Failed States.

UN concerned about overcrowded prisons in Haiti
Monday, April 3, 2006
Caribbean Net News

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AFP): The United Nations mission in Haiti on Friday expressed concern about overcrowding in the country's prisons, where the majority of inmates have not been convicted and are being held in preventive detention.

The spokesman for the UN Stabilization Mission, David Wimhurst, denounced the fact that of the 4,034 people imprisoned nationwide only 450 had been convicted.

"We have seen a very worrisome development at detention facilities in Port-au-Prince where detainees who have not been convicted are being held because of prison overcrowding," Wimhurst said.

He said Haitian authorities have been urged to address the problem but have taken no measures.

Thierry Faggard, the head of the human rights section of the UN mission, said one way to rectify the situation would be to set up special commissions to study individual cases at the country's prisons and thus ease overcrowding.

"Some of the people being held in preventive detention have been in prison for longer than the maximum sentence they faced and others have never had their case looked at by a judge," Faggard said.

He said the Haitian judicial system was failing at all levels.

Haiti's Eternal Crisis
By William Easterly
The Globalist
Monday, April 03, 2006

The tragedy of Haiti is that the West has inflicted on it just about every variant of the new and old versions of the “White Man’s Burden.” There are also plenty of domestic reasons for Haiti’s plight, but Western intervention arguably made it even worse, argues William Easterly, the author of “The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good.”

Today’s dysfunctional state in Haiti reflects, in part, the legacy of minority European settlement — and of the worst kind. Back in 1789, Haiti (then known as Saint-Domingue) was one of the richest places. Much of Haiti’s history consists of struggles between mulatto elite and the black military elite, who originated in the war of independence.

A population of 40,000 whites, 30,000 freed mulattoes (the offspring of slave-owners) and 450,000 slaves produced \$800 million in exports in today’s dollars.

Exports included sugarcane, coffee, cotton, indigo and cocoa. At the time, Saint-Domingue provided 60% of the world’s coffee and 40% of the sugar imports of France and England.

An export nation

The value of production per worker was far higher than in the United States.

Today, Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere — and ranks in the poorest tenth of countries worldwide.

The legacy of slavery

Haiti’s 8.3 million citizens produce \$463 million in exports — a little more than half the amount 200 years ago when the population was 500,000.

And measured on a per person basis, exports were 31 times higher in 1789 than in 2002. A slave regime generated the 1789 export performance.

The legacy of slavery evidently has something to do with Haiti’s failure at political and economic development. The exports of 1789 showed just how much potential the land of Haiti had.

Moving away from potential

The exports of 2002 show how two centuries have passed moving the country and its people ever further away from their potential.

The Haitian revolution of 1791-1804 overthrew the hated slave-owners. However, the mulattoes and their descendants took the whites' place as the oligarchy dominating to this day.

A bloody past

Throughout the 19th century, blacks and mulattoes alternated in power. Of the 34 signers of The World Bank in 2002 ranked Haiti as the world's second-most corrupt country out of 195 countries.

Haiti's Declaration of Independence, only five died a natural death.

Only one Haitian ruler finished his constitutional term alive. In the second half of the century, political life polarized itself between a mulatto Liberal Party and a black National party.

For example, the mulatto leader Jean-Pierre Boyer ruled from 1820 to 1843, with all important political posts filled by mulattoes.

Polarized political life

Emulating French colonial policy, he founded schools for mulattoes — but none for blacks.

An Englishman observed at the time, "The present government seems to consider the poverty and ignorance of the people as the best safeguards of the security and permanence of their own property and power."

Nation-building in the Americas: The Haitian version

Beyond the European roots in Haiti's ongoing failure are the
Haiti has known some degree of democracy for five years out of its 200-year history.

American ones.

In fact, Haiti can be considered a previous incarnation of the utopian internationalism of military intervention around the world today as shown in the U.S. effort to stabilize unruly republics in the Americas.

The United States did direct military interventions in Mexico, the Caribbean and Central America to spread democracy and free markets in the late 19th and early 20th century.

U.S. military intervention

After bombarding Veracruz during the Mexican revolution in 1916, Woodrow Wilson said "the United States had gone to Mexico to serve mankind."

Meanwhile, as historian Hans Schmidt noted "U.S. Navy ships visited Haitian ports to 'protect American lives and property' in 1857, 1859, 1868, 1869, 1876, 1888, 1889, 1892, 1902, 1903, 1904,

1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1911, 1912 and 1913.” Finally tired of all those round trips, the United States occupied Haiti from 1915 to 1934.

A resistance against foreign invaders

Haiti’s second colonial masters, according to Gendarmerie Commandant Smedley Butler, The U.S. effort to stabilize republics in the Americas is a previous incarnation of the utopian internationalism of worldwide military intervention.

were “trustees of a huge estate ...the Haitians were our wards and we were endeavoring to develop and make for them a rich and productive property.”

Even though this patronizing attitude was only rarely contradicted, Haitians united again in resistance against the foreign invaders — and the Americans left in 1934.

The Americans left behind a newly trained Haitian army, the Garde, with black soldiers and mostly mulatto officers.

In the wake of the U.S. exit

Mulattoes dominated political office until 1946, when the black majority of the Garde revolted with a new vision of black pride and power, the noiriste movement.

After further political instability, a leading noiriste, Francois Duvalier, defeated his mulatto opponent in the elections of 1957.

The IMF and the gangsters

Papa Doc Duvalier would rule until his death in 1971, after which his son Baby Doc Haiti got the most stand-by financial support agreements from the IMF over the last half century.

Enter the IMF. The IMF’s charter bans it from considering domestic politics. Sometimes, this approach leads to happy outcomes.

Mexico over the last decade has made a transition to democracy and pursued pro-market reforms and macroeconomic stabilization.

No possible apolitical approach

It did this with the support of IMF lending (short-term crisis loans called stand-bys), although corruption, drug trafficking and violence remain problems. The IMF tactfully overlooked Mexico’s previous autocratic government.

But the problem with an apolitical approach is that it is not apolitical. Supporting a sitting government with funds is unavoidably a political act.

Enabling poor rulers

Such an approach does not have much of a safeguard against the IMF enabling some really awful rulers.

The illiteracy and powerlessness of the population condemned Haiti to underdevelopment long before the IMF arrived.

To see some of the consequences, answer the following trivia question: Who got the most stand-by financial support agreements from the IMF over the last half century?

The answer is Haiti, with 22 stand-bys. And not just Haiti, but the Duvalier family — Papa Doc and Baby Doc — under whom Haiti got 20 of the 22 stand-bys from 1957 to 1986.

Bad politics, worst economics

The politics were bad, but the Duvaliers made up for it with even worse economics. The income of the average Haitian was lower at the end of the Duvalier era than at the beginning.

Half of children did not go to elementary school when Papa Doc came to power. And half of the country's children were still out of school when Baby Doc left power.

Democracy?

Haiti has known some degree of democracy for five recent years (1990, 1994-98) out of its 200-year history. For most of that history, it had the worst possible democratic rating on a scale of 0 to 10.

The income of the average Haitian was lower at the end of the Duvalier era than at the beginning.

After almost 200 coups, revolutions, insurrections and civil wars since independence, Haiti today still has one of the world's most undemocratic, corrupt, violent and unstable governments.

However, the illiteracy and powerlessness of the majority of the population had condemned Haiti to underdevelopment long before the Duvaliers and the IMF arrived.

A dysfunctional state

The IMF giving Haiti credit after credit did nothing to address the centuries-old political roots of macroeconomic instability, not to mention underdevelopment.

The IMF did not reverse the country's history: How much could it help a state that has been dysfunctional for two centuries?

Military intervention and foreign aid today

After the fall of the Duvalier family, a mixture of military regimes tried to
The problem with an apolitical approach to economic development is that it is not apolitical.

stave off the coming to power of the populist Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who was finally elected President
in 1990.

Another United States military intervention in 1994 restored Aristide to power after a coup.

The second U.S. occupation was less ambitious than the first, obsessed above all else with avoiding
American casualties.

After the United States spent \$2 billion to restore Aristide to power, U.S. support weakened in
Aristide's democratically-challenged second term.

Aristide government ministers diverted aid money into corrupt takings — just like their many
predecessors.

The World Bank in 2002 ranked Haiti as the world's second-most corrupt country out of 195 countries
rated. After an armed rebellion in February 2004, Aristide took the traditional Haitian path into exile.

A meeting of donors

The IMF giving Haiti credit after credit did nothing to address the centuries-old roots of
macroeconomic instability.

The Bank announced “a joint government/multi-donor Interim Cooperation Framework (Cadre de
Coopération Intérimaire, CCI).” The CCI believed Haiti was now “primed to tackle many urgent and
medium term development needs.”

If only it had been so. But the real news about Haiti — and the strategy of the United States is even
more disillusioning.

An elusive prosperity and peace

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace scholars Minxin Pei and Sara Kasper analyzed 16 U.S.
nation-building efforts over the past century.

Only few were democracies ten years after the U.S. military left – Japan and Germany after resounding
defeat and occupation in World War II, and tiny Panama (1989) and Grenada (1983).

Besides those countries already mentioned, the long list of 20th century intervention disasters includes
Cuba (1898-1902, 1906-1909, 1917-1922), the Dominican Republic (1916-24, 1965-66), Nicaragua
(1909-1933), and Panama (1903-1936).

At last report, Haitians had elected an Aristide protégé as president, and prosperity and peace remain as elusive as ever.

An eye and heart for Haiti
Wednesday, April 05, 2006
By BOB DATZ
The Republican, MA

WILBRAHAM - Dr. Peter J. Kelly's been eyeball-to-eyeball and heart-to-heart with Haiti for many years.

Whenever he can break free from his Palmer and Ludlow offices, he delivers ophthalmologic services on a volunteer basis at a nonprofit hospital in the hemisphere's poorest place.

His rise in January to the presidency of the nonprofit organization that runs Hospital Sacré Coeur is a singular achievement, but it represents an experience he shares gladly. He has also given friends, family and associates the opportunity to pay their own way and contribute their labor - medically skilled or unskilled - to the hospital and other services in the area of Milot, a town of 30,000 in the impoverished island's mountainous north.

When he travels there each January at his own expense, he virtually airlifts his eye doctor's office by taking along many staff members willing to pitch in. Six Wilbraham volunteers from St. Cecilia's Church recently returned from a weeklong stint they described as revealing and, in its own way, spiritual.

There is no time to preach, although the CRUDEM Foundation that runs the hospital is Catholic-based in origin. Each day the hospital's lobby is wall-to-wall with waiting patients by 9 a.m. Many have walked for miles, rising early to come through the mountains despite ailments and injuries - from malaria to malnutrition - that could easily immobilize them.

After serving 30,000 outpatients and admitting 2,129 inpatients in 2002, the hospital last year treated 60,000 outpatients and had 3,700 inpatient admissions, Kelly said at a recent program of the Women's Evening Fellowship at Wilbraham United Church.

Medical volunteers from all over the United States shuttle down to back up a Haitian medical staff of 70, including 15 physicians and surgeons. In the single week in January this year, Kelly, who lives in Wilbraham, and his crew, performed 30 operations and 70 laser procedures.

Volunteers who accompanied Kelly both to Haiti and to the church presentation provided services ranging from simply shooing flies to washing garments. But they agreed that the hope and warmth in Haiti, represented by the bright pastels of the island artworks that decorated the church hall, was amazing.

Early riser John Gilbertie saw it on his pre-dawn walks through Milot neighborhoods, as children lit cooking fires and another day of simple survival began. "You could see a candle burning through the cloth curtain or the cloth door, and you could hear the prayers in Creole (the native language)," he said. "And it was such a spiritual experience for me."

Retired nurse Susan T. Manseau was propelled: "The mother in you takes over. The grandmother in you takes over. The nurse in you takes over," she said in an interview.

"The symbol of the Haitian people is the bamboo tree, and they are bent," said Sister Mary McCue of St. Cecilia's. "But they believe that they will rise in time, and it is our hope that we live long enough to see them rise."

Kelly, 55, has seen the relentless bend of poverty in Haiti for decades, beginning with a summer volunteer experience in college. But after 13 years with CRUDEM, he said he is not discouraged. "The hard thing for Americans is you can't fix it all. You can help one person at a time, and if you have that attitude, look what you can do - look how it's grown."

The CRUDEM Foundation stands for Center for the Rural Development of Milot and has run Hospital Sacré Coeur (Sacred Heart) for 20 years. Its administrative headquarters has moved with its presidency to this area. Receiving no ongoing support, it depends on contributions, and those may be sent to CRUDEM Foundation, P.O. Box 804, Ludlow, MA 01056.

Kelly quoted a Haitian proverb alluding to the in-person contributions that also keep the hospital on its feet: "What the eye does not see, does not move the heart."

Journalists urge reopening probe into reporter's death
Miami Herald
April 1, 2006

PORT-AU-PRINCE - An international journalism organization urged President-elect René Préval to reopen a stalled investigation into the slaying of Haiti's most prominent journalist, saying Friday that efforts to solve the case have been a ``scandal."

Jean Dominique, a radio journalist who was increasingly critical of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's government, was gunned down with an employee in daylight in the radio station's courtyard on April 3, 2000.

The probe into the killing has been plagued with problems, including the deaths of two suspects and the resignation of two investigating judges who received death threats. Some documents in the case have vanished, thwarting investigators and angering press-freedom groups.

"We call on Préval to pledge to reopen the case," Reporters Without Borders said in a statement marking the sixth anniversary of Dominique's murder. ``The victory of justice over impunity is at stake."

Préval, a former Aristide ally and a friend of Dominique, is to take power May 14. His representatives did not return telephone calls Friday.

Haiti's U.S.-backed interim government, which replaced Aristide after he fled amid a revolt two years ago, has pledged to investigate Dominique's killing but has struggled to rebuild a police force and judiciary sorely depleted of personnel and equipment.

Three suspects in the killing -- including one who reportedly said he was paid \$10,000 to carry out the murder -- were charged and arrested but escaped from Haiti's national penitentiary during a February 2005 jailbreak, Reporters Without Borders said.

UPDATE 2-New Haiti leader seeks boost in \$1 bln aid plan

Thu Mar 30, 2006

Reuters

By Gilbert Le Gras

NEW YORK, March 30 (Reuters) - Haitian President-elect Rene Preval will host a meeting of 26 foreign aid bodies this summer to extend a \$1 billion aid program and seek new funds to help his country, the most impoverished in the Americas, sources familiar with the talks said on Thursday.

The sources spoke after Preval's whirlwind U.S. tour this week of donors, which kicked off Monday with an appeal to governments at the United Nations to step up development aid to his impoverished Caribbean nation or put democracy at risk.

Preval, elected in February and due to take office next month, seeks to press for additional funds to meet goals ranging from primary education for all students, restoring electricity services and expanding health care.

The sources said the meeting of the aid umbrella group for Haiti -- known as the International Cooperation Framework -- is scheduled for early this summer in Port-au-Prince.

So far the ICF aid program has paid out more than \$700 million of the \$1.08 billion pledged in July 2004.

The sources spoke to Reuters Thursday after Preval, a one-time ally of ousted former Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, met this week in Washington with President George W. Bush and top officials at the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and the Organization of American States.

These international bodies, as well as foreign governments including major donors like the United States, Canada and France, are coordinating their assistance through the ICF aid program, drafted two years ago to address Haiti's many needs.

\$390 A YEAR PER CAPITA INCOME

The World Bank estimates annual per capita income in Haiti around \$390 while the United Nations puts an average Haitian's life expectancy in the early 50s.

The International Monetary Fund said this week that it could begin the process of approving low-interest loans to Haiti, if the country meets the terms of global debt relief program for the world's poorest countries.

Other items on multilateral lenders' agenda before the donors' conference in Haiti include territorial and transportation development, electrification, and technical assistance.

The new aid conference set for mid-year should also discuss extending the ICF program through to December 2007 from its original expiration date in September, the sources said.

The ICF has involved more than 200 national and international experts from 26 bilateral and multilateral donors.

UPDATE 1-New Haiti leader to host major aid meeting-sources
Thu Mar 30, 2006
Reuters

NEW YORK, March 30 (Reuters) - Haiti is set to host a new donors' conference in early summer to discuss extending its nearly \$1.1 billion Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF) aid program through December 2007, sources familiar with the talks said on Thursday.

The preparations came three days after President-elect Rene Preval appealed to world governments at the United Nations on Monday to step up long-term development aid to his impoverished Caribbean nation or risk undermining democracy.

So far the ICF has disbursed more than \$700 million of the \$1.08 billion pledged in 2004 and plans are to reassess the program with a view to committing additional funding for future projects, the sources said.

Preval, a one-time ally of ousted former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, also met briefly earlier this week with President George W. Bush and top officials at the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and Organization of American States.

Focusing on his education goals, Preval told development aid officials he aims to enroll all primary-aged children in schools and provide them with a hot meal, one source said.

Aid programs by the multilateral lenders that are up for approval by June include territorial and transportation development, electrification, and technical assistance.

Torture lawsuit halts Lotto winnings

The human rights case of a former Haitian army colonel, dismissed two years ago, is back in federal court in Miami as those who accuse him of torture seek the ex-officer's Lotto winnings.

BY ALFONSO CHARDY

Miami Herald

March 31, 2006

Every year Carl Dorelien looked forward to May 15.

That's when the Florida Lottery paid his annual \$159,000 installment from a \$3.2 million Lotto jackpot he won in 1997.

But he's no longer getting the money. A state judge has frozen Dorelien's winnings in connection with a lawsuit from the Center for Justice & Accountability, a San Francisco-based human rights organization that targets foreign-born torture suspects who live or have lived in the United States.

Dorelien, a former Haitian army colonel, was deported in 2003 after an immigration judge found him to be a human rights violator. He was the highest-ranking military officer expelled from the United States since former Argentine Gen. Carlos Guillermo Suárez Masón was extradited in 1988.

Now the Dorelien case is back in federal court in Miami, which will determine later this year whether he's liable for the 1994 murder of Michel Pierre, and the torture in 1993 of Lexiuste Cajuste, a former labor leader who now lives in Jacksonville. The justice center is suing on behalf of Pierre's widow and Cajuste.

Cajuste told The Miami Herald last week that he was tortured at a police station in Port-au-Prince, where tormentors put him in a fetal-like position next to a bed -- his legs and head under the bed frame with his back and buttocks exposed. Then, he said, torturers jumped from the bed onto his back while others took turns beating his buttocks with wooden batons.

"They beat me until I lost consciousness," Cajuste, 58, said.

Cajuste was arrested after he went to a radio station to deliver a news release calling for a general strike.

A COUP LEADER

The Dorelien case hinges on whether the former colonel is responsible for Cajuste's torture and an April 1994 rampage when soldiers and paramilitary allies stormed Raboteau, a poor seaside neighborhood of Gonaves known as a stronghold of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who had been overthrown in a military coup three years earlier. Dorelien was among coup leaders and served as chief of personnel for the armed forces.

At least 26 unarmed men, women and children were killed during the two-day rampage, among them Pierre.

The case is a labyrinth of legal maneuvers in state and federal courts and changing political winds in Haiti.

The federal appellate court in Atlanta reinstated the case in December, after a federal judge in Miami had dismissed it. A separate case on the Lotto winnings, which have been frozen since September 2004 when a state judge put the money into an escrow account beyond Dorelien's reach, remains pending.

At one point, Dorelien attempted to sell his rights to the annual lottery payments to a Baltimore firm in exchange for a lump sum.

Complicating the case further was Haiti's Supreme Court ruling in May overturning the convictions of some defendants in the Raboteau massacre. It's unclear if Dorelien was among those exonerated.

CONVICTED IN ABSENTIA

In 2000, a Haitian court convicted Dorelien in absentia on charges of conspiracy and complicity in the Raboteau massacre. He was sentenced to hard labor for life, but spent only about a year behind bars in Haiti after his deportation from the United States.

"We are thrilled that the Eleventh Circuit reinstated the case against Col. Dorelien," said Moira Feeney, an attorney with the justice center, which is pursuing the case alongside pro-bono attorneys from Miami's Holland & Knight office. "Now, hopefully, we can turn the injustice of Dorelien winning the lottery into justice for the many that suffered atrocities committed under his watch."

Dorelien's Miami attorney, Kurt Klaus, said his client is not responsible for the deaths or torture.

"He had no direct control of the troops," said Klaus. "The only reason they went after him is because he is Haitian, won the Lotto and had been in the Haitian army at the time of the massacre."

After U.S. forces landed in Haiti and restored Aristide to power in 1994, Dorelien left for South Florida. He sought asylum and settled in Port St. Lucie.

In 1997 he bought a Lotto ticket and on June 28 that year won half of a \$6.3-million jackpot. The winning numbers: 5-7-10-15-25-47.

Dorelien did not collect his \$3.2-million jackpot in one payment because the Florida Lottery did not begin offering lump sum payments until 1999. Dorelien was to receive 20 annual installments of \$159,000.

Feeney said Dorelien's overturned Haitian conviction should have no effect on the two cases before U.S. courts. Feeney said it was the center's interpretation that the overturned conviction affects defendants who were present at trial. Klaus said his client was covered by the high court's decision.

After being convicted in Haiti, Dorelien was ordered to pay Raboteau victims one billion Haitian gourdes or about \$28 million. Michel Pierre's wife was a party to that judgment, according to the justice center. Klaus maintains the \$28 million judgment was voided as well. Feeney said it stands.

For now, at least, Dorelien's winnings remain locked up by a judge, waiting for state and federal courts to mete out justice.

To view the Center for Justice & Accountability website, link to www.cja.org.