

HAITI NEWS ROUNDUP: OCTOBER 6 – 24, 2005

International donors half-way to fulfilling Haiti aid pledge

Caribbean Net News

Monday, October 24, 2005

BRUSSELS (AFP): International donors have given Haiti some 600 million dollars so far to see it through a transition phase and help its next government, they said in a joint declaration on Friday.

The money is half the amount of one billion dollars promised under the interim cooperation framework (CCI) aimed at meeting the priorities of the violence-scarred and impoverished island state.

"The meeting in Brussels has allowed us to underline that the engagements undertaken in respect of Haiti are confirmed and will be respected," the joint statement said.

The donors also said they would extend the cooperation framework by a year until the end of 2007 to allow the new government, due to take office in February, "the time and the means to continue reforms."

A new conference will take place at the end of next year to "mobilise the additional finances necessary for this extension."

Haiti and the donors at the two-day conference in Brussels also reaffirmed that the "transfer of power to a new elected government must happen in line with the timeframe set out in the constitution; that is February 7, 2006."

At a press conference earlier, Prime Minister Gerard Latortue promised that long-delayed general elections in Haiti, the first since the fall of president Jean Bertrand Aristide, would start in December.

"The first round of the presidential and legislative elections will take place in December, probably in the first half of the month," he said.

"The second round will take place in January, mid-January, probably at the same time as ... local elections," he said.

The date for the elections has been changed four times, most recently last week when a November 20 date was pushed back because of technical problems.

Latortue's remarks came three days after the UN Security Council stressed the need for Haiti to hold free and fair elections this year and to work with the UN mission there to organize the polls.

The council expressed concern "regarding the risk of delays in the electoral process, and underlines international expectations that the first round of national elections should take place in 2005."

It added that all efforts should be made to ensure that a democratically elected administration takes office in February.

EU humanitarian aid commissioner Louis Michel said that Brussels had earmarked 18 million euros to help organise the elections.

"The commission is preparing to send an election observer mission to follow and evaluate this process," he added.

The election delays have surprised few given the complexities of Haiti's politics since Aristide fled into exile in November 2004 under the threat of an armed rebellion.

Since then, the UN mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) -- a force of about 7,000 troops and police -- has struggled to maintain law and order.

The electoral process is daunting. Haiti is the poorest country in the Americas and election materials destined for remote villages sometimes must be carried by animals due to the lack of roads and infrastructure.

This Blatant Outrage
Bahama Journal
Oct. 24, 2005

We hope and pray that the day will come sooner rather than later when Bahamians begin to understand the power and truth in the injunction that some of us would do well to remember that many of our ancestors were once strangers in a strange land; that they were once refugees and slaves.

Granted the major role Haitians have played and continue to play in the growth and development of The Bahamas and granted their close historical and family bonds with Bahamians, it seems only fair that Bahamians, Haitians and so-called 'Haitian-Bahamians' should be getting a clearer sense of what is happening in that beleaguered country.

As that record would show, The Republic of Haiti is today being presided over by Gerard LaTortue- a United States backed strong man- who is currently overseeing a nasty horror show; replete with kidnappings, rape, imprisonment and murder.

As the record would also show, supporters of exiled president Jean-Bertrand Aristide have been terrified and terrorized by the U.S. backed LaTortue administration.

Some of these people have been killed, while others like Reverend Gerard Jean-Juste and Yvon Neptune have been locked up on trumped up charges.

We are quite certain that the name Gerard Jean-Juste would not –as they say- 'ring a bell' with most Bahamians.

The fact of the matter is that this priest - like Jean-Bertrand Aristide - is a man of the people in Haiti.

Like Aristide, he has been persecuted and reviled.

Like Aristide, Reverend Jean-Juste is paying a high price for his advocacy on behalf of the long-suffering Haitian people. Aristide is in exile; Jean-Juste is locked up in Haiti on what Amnesty International calls patently trumped up charges.

In the meanwhile, the United States of America continues with the obscene pretense that there is nothing it can do about this situation. And countries like The Bahamas and its sister countries in the region refuse to speak up more forcefully, thus lending their voices to the defense of freedom, justice, dignity and human rights for the Haitian people.

And then, there is everywhere else talks and idle chatter about elections and democracy and as to how these would put Haiti on the right path.

Unfortunately, instead of enlightenment, the Bahamian public has been fed a steady diet of nonsense, superstitious claptrap, lies, slander and xenophobic hysteria; all patently designed to sow discord between poor working people.

For the moment, these people seem to be succeeding. People are being frightened. And –unfortunately- the stage is being set for trouble between Haitians, Bahamians and Haitian-Bahamians.

But since we are ever optimistic about the human capacity for good, we are convinced that the xenophobes and malcontents in our midst will –in time-be revealed for what they are; small-minded and ignorant.

Meanwhile, we continue our commiseration with the struggles of the Haitian people. So, albeit belatedly, we join our voice to those of Rep. Maxine Waters and 28 other Members of Congress who sent a letter to President Bush urging him to take action to obtain the release of Father Gerard Jean-Juste from prison in Haiti. The letter was dated August 12th. 2005.

The letter notes, "We write to express our profound concerns about the unjust imprisonment of Father Gerard Jean-Juste in Haiti. We urge you to take action at once to seek his immediate and unconditional release from prison.

Copies of the letter were sent to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, United Nations Special Representative Juan Gabriel Valdés, and Ambassador James Foley, the U.S. Ambassador to Haiti. The text of the letter follows:

"Father Jean-Juste is a widely-respected Catholic priest and a courageous advocate for peace and human rights in Haiti. During the 1970's, he founded the Haitian Refugee Center in Miami, Florida, where he worked to provide assistance to refugees who were fleeing persecution under the Duvalier regime. He returned to Haiti in 1991 and currently serves as the pastor of Saint Claire Church in Port-au-Prince and runs a soup kitchen for impoverished children in his parish. Fr. Jean-Juste has always spoken out forcefully against all forms of violence.

"Father Jean-Juste was arrested on July 21, 2005, while attending the funeral for Jacques Roche, a Haitian journalist who was kidnapped, held for ransom and then murdered. Haitian police claimed he was arrested because a "public clamor" at the funeral accused him of murdering Jacques Roche, although he was in Miami at the time of the murder. He currently is being detained in the Haitian National Penitentiary."

All right-thinking, decent and law-abiding people in The Bahamas –inclusive of ‘born’-Bahamians; paper-Bahamians and so-called ‘Haitian-Bahamians- should vehemently condemn this blatant outrage against justice.

Waiting for justice in Haiti
By Sasha Kramer
The Stanford Daily
Tuesday, October 18, 2005

On Jan. 29, 2005, Father Gerard Jean Juste spoke to a crowded room at Stanford. Now he sits behind bars with five other inmates, entering his 90th day as an Amnesty International prisoner of conscience in the Pacot Penitentiary in Port au Prince, Haiti.

Juste, a beloved Catholic priest in Port au Prince and a close friend of exiled Haitian President Jean Bertrand Aristide, was arrested on July 21 after being assaulted by a mob at the funeral of well-known journalist Jaques Roche. After being removed from the church and taken to the police station “for his own safety,” Juste was placed behind bars and later accused of killing Roche, a baseless accusation given that the priest was in Miami at the time the journalist was murdered.

For those who know Juste, it is not the alibi that proves his innocence; it is his character. For decades, Juste has struggled alongside the Haitian poor in the tradition of liberation theology. In addition to empowering thousands of parishioners with his sermons, Juste puts his words into action. His parish of St. Claire hosts numerous community programs, from a feeding program that provides four meals per week to 1,000 children, to a vocational summer camp. Juste is one of Haiti’s most outspoken advocates for nonviolent resistance and his arrest has alarmed human rights advocates and religious leaders across the world.

Twenty months after the overthrow of Haiti’s democratically-elected government in February 2004, thousands of community organizers remain in hiding and in exile, police violence and impunity are rampant in poor neighborhoods in Port au Prince, social programs have been dismantled, the price of basic goods has skyrocketed and the prisons are overflowing with Aristide supporters.

Last Tuesday, the unelected interim government announced that the upcoming presidential elections, scheduled for Nov. 20, will be postponed for at least one month. Only 623 sites to register voters have been established throughout the country — contrast this to the 11,238 polling stations in Haiti during the elections in 2000. The base of the nation’s largest political party, Lavalas, is threatening to boycott the elections if the current climate of repression persists.

In this atmosphere of political persecution and electoral chaos, Condoleezza Rice made a surprise visit to Haiti on Sept. 27, her first trip there since becoming secretary of state. She stated repeatedly that “the most important issue here is that the elections be free and fair and inclusive.”

Meanwhile, just miles from the heavily-fortified National Palace where Rice passed most of her several hours in Haiti, Juste, Yvon Neptune, Annette Auguste (So Anne) and dozens of other political prisoners and potential candidates continue to sit behind bars, unable to participate in the upcoming elections.

Last week — in yet another blow to Haiti’s constitution — the Haitian Supreme Court ruled that Dumersais Simeus, a Haitian-born Texas businessman with close ties to the Bush administration, is eligible to run for president. This is in flagrant violation of the country’s constitution, which states that all candidates for political office must hold Haitian citizenship and have lived in the country for at least

the past five years. Simeus has lived in Texas for the past 25 years and holds an American passport; Haiti does not recognize dual citizenship.

How is it that a Texas businessman is permitted to run for president of Haiti, when the legitimate president, Aristide, is in exile in South Africa and Juste and other potential candidates are behind bars? Why are registration numbers so low, with only 2.5 of 4.5 million eligible voters registered as of mid-October? Why do tens of thousands of people continue to take to the streets calling for the return of their elected president? How can these elections possibly be considered “free and fair and inclusive”?

To learn more about the U.S. role in Haiti’s coup — from financing opposition groups to forcibly removing the elected president from the country — come see the new documentary “Aristide and the Endless Revolution,” premiering tomorrow at the United Nations Association Film Festival, held at Stanford. The film screening is at 7:30 p.m. in Cubberley Auditorium. Also, in November, Brian Concannon and Mario Joseph, two lawyers representing many of Haiti’s political prisoners, including Juste, will be speaking at Stanford about the current human rights crisis.

In a letter from prison addressed to “Brothers and sisters around the world,” Juste sends a message of hope: “I now have discovered so much support for the Haitian people and me from people all over the world. I am in awe. I add my strength to those who stand for the rights of everyone, whatever color, whatever creed, whatever nationality. Our spirits are uplifted when we hear about your work for Haiti, because we hear hope coming.” Our presence at these events will nourish this hope; I encourage people to attend.

Sasha Kramer is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Biological Sciences. If you would like more information on the aforementioned events, she can be reached at sash@stanford.edu.

Aristide Agonistes

Are U.S. officials working up to an indictment of the ex-president for alleged links to drug runners?

By Joseph Contreras

Newsweek International

Oct. 24, 2005 issue

Ever since a nationwide rebellion forced Haiti's President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to flee the impoverished island country in February 2004, federal prosecutors in Miami have systematically tracked down and imprisoned some of his top law-enforcement officials on money-laundering and drug-trafficking allegations. To date, the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Southern District of Florida has obtained the convictions of four former police officials—including the former director of the Haitian National Police and the head of security at the presidential palace under Aristide—and a onetime senator belonging to the deposed Haitian president's Lavalas party on charges that they shook down prominent Colombian and Haitian traffickers for bribes. Earlier this month, prosecutors suffered a setback when a jury acquitted Aristide's former counternarcotics czar on similar allegations. But the U.S. Attorney's Office promptly issued a statement defending what it called "an aggressive approach to these cases" and vowing to "continue to pursue them." Which raises a pointed question: will federal prosecutors now seek an indictment of Aristide himself?

Spokesmen for the U.S. Attorney's Office have consistently declined to comment on recurring press reports that Aristide is a target of the federal grand jury that returned the indictments against his underlings. That tons of U.S.-bound cocaine moved through Haiti during Aristide's second term as president from 2001 to 2004 comes as no surprise: prior to his fall from power, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) had listed Haiti among the top three drug-trafficking countries worldwide. But Aristide, exiled in South Africa, has consistently denied any personal knowledge of or involvement in narcotics trafficking or drug-related corruption. And no evidence has yet been presented in court that directly implicates him in such activity.

Still, in the trial that ended on Oct. 7, his presidential-palace security chief, Oriel Jean, appeared as a government witness and testified that Aristide personally approved issuing a palace identification badge to a Haitian businessman named Serge Edouard who was later convicted of drug trafficking. And according to a confidential DEA document, dated May 3, 1994, obtained by NEWSWEEK, allegations that Aristide accepted payments from drug traffickers date back to his first term as president in 1991.

In April 1994, DEA agents conducted a series of debriefings with a Colombian informant in the offices of the Colombian attorney general in Bogota. The informant, midlevel trafficker Juan Molina, who had abandoned the drug trade, told the DEA agents that Aristide had received two six-figure payments from representatives of the Medellin-cartel kingpin Pablo Escobar. The first payment of \$600,000 was allegedly made in December 1990 when Aristide was a candidate for the presidency of Haiti. The money was given in exchange for alleged assurances from Aristide that, should he win, the Medellin cartel could continue to use Haiti as a transshipment point for cocaine headed for the United States and other countries. A second payment of \$250,000 was allegedly delivered by Molina himself to Aristide in June 1991, four months after he took office as president and three months before he was toppled in a military coup.

At the time of the DEA document, the Clinton administration was seeking a negotiated agreement with the generals who overthrew Aristide that would have allowed the Haitian president to return home from his exile in Washington. Nothing ever came of Molina's sensational accusations. A DEA request to interview Aristide at his home in Georgetown was turned down by the Justice Department since the informant's charges were uncorroborated.

A decade later, do the Feds have more to go on? At a sentencing hearing held in Miami only days before Aristide relinquished power in the winter of 2004, the convicted Haitian trafficker Jacques Ketant claimed to have paid the president and Jean as much as \$500,000 a month for permission to land cocaine-laden planes inside the country. During his testimony in Edouard's trial earlier this year, Jean said that the defendant had donated money to Aristide's private social-welfare foundation and stated that the palace security badge issued to Edouard effectively gave the kingpin virtual immunity from arrest inside Haiti. But Jean, who acknowledged receiving bribes from Edouard himself, also testified that Aristide was unaware of Jean's collaboration with the trafficker and got wind of it only when the president confronted Jean about the issue in 2003.

Eyebrows were raised in both Haiti and the United States when looters discovered \$350,000 in cash in the basement of Aristide's private residence in Port-au-Prince on the day after the president fled the country. Aristide declined repeated requests from NEWSWEEK for an interview, but his attorney Ira Kurzban attributed all drug-related allegations implicating Aristide to what he called "a false, defamatory, disinformation campaign" by the Bush administration against his client. "President Aristide has never been involved in any illegal activity in Haiti," Kurzban said in a written statement. "The DEA's evidence against President Aristide consists solely of rumors from known or convicted drug dealers."

As Haiti prepares later this year to hold its first presidential election since Aristide's fall from power, the former president is a largely spent political force who appears likely to remain in exile for the foreseeable future. It is less certain whether he will ever wind up on the receiving end of a federal indictment.

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Haiti Elected to ECOSOC

Caribbean Media Corp.

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Haiti Democracy Project web page item #3272 (<http://www.haitipolicy.org>)

Guyana and Haiti have been elected to the United Nations' Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

They join Angola, Austria, Benin, Cuba, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Japan, Madagascar, Mauritania, Paraguay, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sri Lanka and Turkey in serving three-year terms, effective 1 January 2006.

Jamaica's three-year term on the council ends at the end of the year. Besides Guyana and Haiti, Belize will be the other Caribbean Community (Caricom) member nation on the 54-member ECOSOC.

ECOSOC is the United Nations' primary forum for discussing international economic and social issues, and for formulating policy recommendations addressed to member states and the UN system.

HAITI: UN MISSION HELPS APPREHEND SUSPECTED BANDITS IN BEL AIR

Oct. 23 2005

Press Release - U.N. News Center

Blue helmets serving with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) have apprehended seven suspected bandits who were turned over to the UN and national police.

The arrests were carried out by members of the Brazilian battalion during a military operation in the Bel Air neighbourhood on Thursday.

The suspects were identified as members of an armed group led by the notorious "General Toutou."

The operation resulted from information provided by members of the local population and involved 220 soldiers supported by 8 armored vehicles.

Vandalism and Slavery
Common Sense
John Maxwell
Jamaica Observer
Sunday, October 23, 2005

Vandalism is the barbarian's tribute to that to which he considers himself inferior. When the Spanish conquistadors destroyed the Aztec/Maya cultures they were performing the same ritual which Napoleon's troops enacted three hundred years later when they shelled the negroid lips and nose of the Sphinx in Egypt.

John Maxwell

They didn't understand and were intimidated, so they destroyed the sources of their discomfort - the evidence of their assumed inferiority.

In the "New World", the Spaniards collided with a number of ancient civilisations, Aztec, Maya and in South Americas, the Inca, and all of them shared, among other things, a calendar which, although much older, is said to be more accurate than the Gregorian calendar in use in Europe at that time.

The New World cultures were so thoroughly ransacked and pillaged that it is extremely difficult to tell much about their origins or their level of achievement. And especially, they cannot easily be connected to the precedent Olmec civilisation which must have bequeathed some of its characteristics to the newcomers.

The Olmecs tantalise us and confound certain historians in that they appear to have been negroid people, judging from the enormous carved heads they left behind.

Of course, European Christians like the Spaniards would have found it difficult anyway to give the slightest credence to the idea that blacks, as the Olmecs at least, would have seemed to them, could possibly be of the same level of humanity as they were, especially because they (the Spaniards) were proving the moral and intellectual superiority of European civilisation by employing the Chinese invention of gunpowder.

Mayan ruins in an old civilisation.

And since the Spaniards and their fellow Europeans were about to embark on the most ambitious exercise in parasitism known to mankind - the institution of black plantation slavery- it would have been highly inconvenient for them to believe that they were enslaving civilised people. Except, of course, that they may have been taking revenge for the conquest and 6 centuries of occupation of Spain by Africans.

It isn't nice to bring up these matters, and positively indecent to suggest that there may have been civilisations antecedent to the Greeks and Romans - especially since the Ancient Egyptians have been rebranded as Honorary Whites.

The enormity of such a crime may be gauged by Mr Rumsfeld's response to the sacking of Baghdad's museums and the treasury of ancient history that was Iraq. Mr Rumsfeld's God, like General Boykins and Pizarro's, is obviously bigger than anybody else's.

These remarks are provoked by an occurrence this week in Paris, where the United States received its most decisive rebuff ever in the international arena. The UNESCO General Conference voted by more than 150 votes to two to endorse a new Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression.

The only countries to vote against the convention were the United States and Israel.

Four countries abstained: Australia, Nicaragua, Honduras and Liberia.

The United States was incensed at its defeat. It had offered 28 amendments and every one was rejected. The US Ambassador to UNESCO Louise Oliver described the convention as "a hastily drafted text which is subject to misinterpretation and abuse in ways that could undermine rather than promote cultural diversity".

UNESCO's Director General Koichiro Matsuura, says: "This Declaration, which sets against inward-looking fundamentalism the prospect of a more open, creative and democratic world, is now one of the founding tenets of the new ethics, promoted by UNESCO in the early twenty-first century. My hope is that one day it may acquire the same force as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

The Americans fear that the convention will be used to counter the globalisation of American culture. Right now the US is in a quarrel with South Korea over that country's insistence on limiting American penetration of its cultural space by legislating face time on Korean television for Korean culture.

The United States will probably not be too discommoded by this convention, and may, as in the case of the International Criminal Court, simply blackmail smaller nations into yielding to cultural rape. Most other countries support the UNESCO idea that a convention is needed to promote indigenous and other ethnic traditions and minority (that is non-English) languages, and protect national and local cultures from the negative impacts of globalisation.

In this connection I am happy to relate that the McDonald's Corporation has conceded defeat in its decade -long attempt to infiltrate the Jamaican fast-food market. Beginning last Wednesday, the McDonald's stores are up for auction. Jamaica must be the first country in the world to achieve this distinction.

Jamaica is not a lost cause for transnational fast-food chains however. Although a number of them including Shakey's Pizza, Taco Bell and Kenny Rogers' Chicken have also failed to make a dent here, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Burger King are alive and well.

But while a place like Jamaica may defend itself against fast food and perhaps American music, it can offer no real defence against language, the gun culture, or US film, video/ TV or book and magazine publishing.

Many other countries can offer no defence at all to any intrusion, and the result could well be that the arbitrament of scale will win out against good taste and cultural imperatives.

And, as I say, conventions don't mean much to the US, if one remembers for instance the Geneva and Hague Conventions and the Nuremberg precedents.

In the Caribbean we have two glaring examples of US disregard for what the rest of the world terms Justice and Law.

The Men in the Iron Masks

In Guantanamo Bay, the US has captured a sizeable piece of Cuban territory and claims it as its own, but, when convenient, the US also claims that it owes no duty to recognise US law at Guantanamo Bay, because it is not American territory.

Because of this, hundreds of people are held like medieval prisoners, without charge, without access to justice or mercy, force-fed while shackled to their beds when they have the temerity to protest by refusing to eat. If, as the Bush administration claims, the internees are being treated humanely, one wonders what the prisoners would do if the conditions were inhumane. .

If people are willing to fast unto death to get out of this humane treatment, inhumane treatment by the US must be another dimension of horror entirely.

Last week, the Ibero-American summit rebuffed the US, as I reported. But the US still insists it has a right to wage an undeclared war against Cuba while insisting that Cuba, under American attack, should behave according to the very same democratic ideals the US itself has discarded in its PATRIOT Act and similar legislation and practice. The United States is busy kidnapping people from foreign countries and shipping them off to be tortured in places like Uzbekistan and Egypt (and Guantanamo Bay) with human rights records that cannot stand comparison with Cuba's.

Next door to Cuba is Haiti where the United States and its quondam allies France and Canada, are determined to make the Haitians pay for their temerity in defining a new standard in human civilisation.

I have become convinced that the real motive for the two hundred years war against Haiti by France and the United States arises from the simple fact that the Haitians were the first people in the world to abolish slavery on their own - and then go on to proclaim universal human rights. Although France and the US in their revolutions had proclaimed the Rights of Man, it was the Haitians who first promulgated them.

The French, having been twice defeated by their former slaves, subjugated Haiti with the help of the United States by the same process of blackmail now being used against Cuba. Unless Haiti agreed to pay an indemnity of billions to the French, the newly independent republic would be denied all opportunity to trade and develop.

Thus, the French, in concert with the US, achieved by compound interest what they had not been able to achieve by war.

Haiti is the model for the new slavery by globalisation. Having been made utterly destitute by commercial exploitation and conquest, the Haitians are now thought to deserve no say in their own affairs.

The racist prescription for Haiti can be read most succinctly in a piece last week in the Washington Post by one James Harding, formerly of the Financial Times. In a piece last Sunday entitled "In Haiti, the Vote Isn't Nearly Powerful Enough" Harding writes from Port-au-Prince:

"Beyond the poverty statistics and the kidnapping numbers, the signs of Haiti's miserable failure as a country are literally littered across the capital: the rats squirming across the piles of garbage that festoon the streets; the bloated corpse of a dog lying on the roadside in an upscale neighborhood; the kids paddling through fetid green water in the slums of Cite Soleil."

"This is a country where there is nostalgia for strong, even if bloody, leadership. Many Haitians cite the corrupt and murderous Duvalier regime as the best government in living memory." As, no doubt, some in Jamaica long for Governor Eyre.

Utopia on a Dungheap

In a piece which reads like the Master Narrative for Hapless Haiti, Harding quotes, among others, Condoleezza Rice, US Secretary of State:

"Throughout history, people have fought for the right to vote. Some have indeed died for the right to vote. There is no more powerful weapon in the hands of a citizen than the vote. And so to the people of Haiti, I urge you to use that powerful weapon, the vote, in the days ahead."

Tell that to the Marines

In Harding's unintentional parody of the parachuted periodista, he stumbles across some truths

"In a country of eight million people, Haiti's paltry budget means that the next president will have about \$100 to spend on each person, dispensed through a corrupt and incapable bureaucracy, not to mention a lawless and often violent police force."

He also quotes, without explaining his role in the chaos, Andy Apaid, "one of the country's wealthiest businessmen", who, according to Harding, says simply: "We are in a very, very serious hole."

As perhaps the chief hole-digger, one would have expected Apaid to have had more to say, and that Harding would have asked him more questions. Alas, we have to accept Mr Apaid's Delphic and no doubt, deeply significant utterance.

Harding says: "Even Juan Gabriel Valdes, the top United Nations official in Haiti, takes a fatalistic view of the presidential contest that the international community is working so hard to make happen: "We will have the election, but the country will not be very different the day after. What we would like is to build a consensus around the priorities."

The problem, of course, is that that was precisely what Jean-Bertrand Aristide was attempting to do when Apatid, Colin Powell and assorted murderers and rapists, assisted by the US Marines, put an end to Haiti's democratic experiment.

As I said, Harding does stumble across some truths. He even says something that I said ten years ago, that Haiti's problems can only be solved by long-term dedicated help, but Harding doesn't think Haitians are capable of being in charge of the process. Strangely, he ends his piece thus:

"Instead, it is to say that Haiti is a case for nation-building, not mere liberation. It is a task for a development-minded administration, not one single-mindedly focused on democracy. Another Haiti crisis will not be far off. It is in America's interests to be looking well beyond the election to the less newsworthy, less Manichaean business of road construction, power generation and clean water distribution. The priority is not freedom, it's the garbage."

Somebody must have lent him one of Aristide's books. Aristide spoke of the possibility of building 'Utopia upon a Dungheap', but he was sabotaged by the United States, France and the European Union as well as by the International Financial institutions, the World Bank, the IMF and the ineffable Kofi Annan.

As I said earlier, I am convinced that it is Haiti's perceived moral superiority to her persecutors which is responsible for the mess. If they let Haitians do their own thing they may be in danger of exposing the truth: that people like us, Haitians, like the Cubans and the Venezuelans may actually expose the hollow pretensions of the 'civilised world'.

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Ending Haiti's strife gathers them here
By Amy Bracken, Globe Correspondent
Boston Globe
October 23, 2005

More than 100 self-described "Haitianists" gathered at UMass-Boston last weekend to discuss the future of Haiti. The Haitian Studies Association, a group of more than 300 academic, artist, and activist Haitians and Haiti lovers, was to have its 17th annual conference in Haiti this fall. But a rise in kidnappings, carjackings, and other violence in the besieged Caribbean nation forced the group to relocate.

Boston was a logical alternative. The association was founded by four Haitian-American Boston-area intellectuals in 1989 and is now housed at UMass-Boston. The group has held its annual conferences outside of Boston for the past 11 years in an attempt to assert its global identity, but last weekend's conference showed that Greater Boston remains a center for Haitian intellectual thought, and its Haitian community has become a cultural and political force.

Although conference participants came from as far as France and England, its stars were mostly local. Speakers included state Representative Linda Dorcena Forry, a Dorchester Democrat and one of two Haitian-American women serving as Massachusetts legislators, and Carole Berotte Joseph, president of MassBay Community College.

At Saturday night's 10th annual banquet fund-raiser for the Association of Haitian Women of Boston, held as part of the Haitian Studies Association event, non-Haitian local politicians also showed up. Boston mayoral candidate Maura Hennigan made the rounds before dinner, and City Councilor Charles Yancey and state Senator Diane Wilkerson spoke. Mayor Tom Menino's wife and daughter were present, and Governor Mitt Romney sent a letter to the group, congratulating them for community service in the areas of domestic violence, public housing, adult education, and youth development.

Greater Boston's Haitian community, which the association estimates at between 60,000 and 75,000, is the third largest in the country after metropolitan Miami and New York City, but its intellectual component and relative integration into the wider local population give it a unique influence, according to Alix Cantave, a Haitian Studies Association cofounder and campaign manager for state Representative Marie St. Fleur, who is a Haitian-American. A difference between Florida and Massachusetts is that in Florida, a Haitian politician can be elected to represent the Haitian community, whereas in Boston a Haitian candidate must appeal to the community at large to win an election, crossing racial and cultural lines. This has forced the Haitian community here, Cantave said, to establish itself more strongly in the wider community.

Haitian Studies Association members hope to foster pride among Haitians and break down stereotypes through education and cultural exchanges. In addition to annual conferences, the group has a database of thousands of international Haitianists and an academic journal. UMass-Boston's Haitian Studies Program includes summer courses in Haitian Creole and student visits to a university in Montrouis, Haiti.

How is Haiti benefiting from all this?

"The impact on Haiti is not clear," Cantave said of the conferences. Participants hope Haitianist discussions will ultimately lead to new approaches to economic and democratic reform in Haiti, but Cantave wants to see a more direct link, such as a distance learning program between US and Haitian academic institutions, allowing Haitians to receive high-quality education in Haiti and Americans to better understand the reality in Haiti. .

Gerdes Fleurant, a retired Wellesley College ethnomusicology professor and another co-founder of the association, believes it is time for Haitian-American intellectuals to give back more directly to their native land. "Now the time has come. It is incumbent upon all of us," he said of Haitian academics and intellectuals, "to look toward a solution for Haiti."

He has already built a cultural center in Mirebalais, Haiti, with his wife, Florienne Saintil, a former Somerville schoolteacher. They have shipped pianos there to teach local youths to play, and they are now waiting for the country to stabilize enough to move back for good.

"I have studied here and worked here for the last 41 years," Fleurant said. "I have taught in many colleges and universities and I feel that I have really fulfilled my quota. I have given enough, and whatever is left I want to give back to Haiti."

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Alpha brings heavy rain to Haiti, Dom Rep

AP

Jamaica Observer

Monday, October 24, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) - Tropical Storm Alpha drenched Haiti and the Dominican Republic with torrential rains Sunday, sending rivers crashing over their banks and threatening to trigger deadly flooding and mudslides in low-lying areas already saturated by days of heavy showers.

Alpha formed south of the Dominican Republic on Saturday, becoming the record-breaking 22nd named storm of the 2005 Atlantic season. It rumbled ashore near the southern Dominican town of Barahona with maximum sustained winds of 50 mph (85 kmh), dousing the region with heavy showers.

The storm was later downgraded to a tropical depression after passing over the mountainous zone near the Dominican border with Haiti. Forecasters warned it could regain strength as it moves over open water toward the Bahamas.

In Haiti, authorities closed the airport because of heavy rain, but had no immediate reports of injuries or deaths - though it was not possible to contact remote communities that are considered particularly vulnerable, said Abel Nazaire of the country's Risk and Disaster Management agency.

A tropical storm warning remained in effect for the southeast Bahamian islands and for the Turks and Caicos.

Heavy rain was reported throughout the Dominican Republic and authorities had ordered the evacuation of some 30,000 people from areas prone to flooding, said Jose Luis German, a spokesman for the country's Emergency Operations Committee. About 1,000 people were in shelters.

The danger from Alpha is particularly high in Haiti because of extensive deforestation and millions of people who live in flimsy homes on river banks and mountain sides.

Residents in Carrefour watch a river overflowed by heavy rains from Tropical storm Alpha in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Alpha Drenches Dominican Republic, Haiti
By JOSE P. MONEGRO, Associated Press Writer
San Francisco Chronicle
Sunday, October 23, 2005

(10-23) 11:07 PDT SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (AP) --

Authorities ordered about 30,000 people evacuated from their homes Sunday as rains spawned by Tropical Storm Alpha threatened to flood low-lying areas, even as the storm weakened to a depression.

Forecasters warned that deadly flash floods and mudslides were possible as rivers already were swollen and soil saturated after days of rain in the Dominican Republic and neighboring Haiti, partly due to Hurricane Wilma.

The National Hurricane Center in Miami said Alpha could bring an additional 4 to 8 inches to the island nations — and as much as 15 inches in some places.

Alpha made landfall early Sunday as a tropical storm with sustained winds of 50 mph. The storm later weakened over land into a tropical depression.

At 11 a.m. EDT, Alpha's rough center was 175 miles west-northwest of Santo Domingo and moving toward the northwest at nearly 15 mph, according to the hurricane center. Maximum sustained winds were nearly 35 mph.

Forecasters said it could dissipate Sunday in the mountains of the Dominican Republic, or regain strength as it moves over water again.

Heavy rains were reported throughout the Dominican Republic, and authorities with megaphones walked through low-lying neighborhoods of San Juan de Maguana — which was badly damaged by Hurricane George in 1998 — to urge people to leave. Moderate flooding was reported in several low-lying communities in the south.

No deaths or injuries were immediately reported, but the country was in a high state of alert, said Jose Luis German, spokesman for the country's Emergency Operations Committee. About 1,000 people were in shelters.

In Haiti, authorities closed the airport because of heavy rains, said Abel Nazaire of the nation's Risk and Disaster Management agency. A rain-swollen river overflowed its banks in the southern town of Jacmel, flooding some areas and forcing an unknown number of residents into shelters, said civil protection director Maria Alta Jean-Baptiste.

Meteorologist Ignacio Feliz of the Dominican weather service said authorities were especially concerned about Alpha since heavy rains — in part due to Hurricane Wilma — already had drenched the island in recent days.

Both nations were vulnerable, but the danger was particularly high in Haiti because of extensive deforestation and the millions of people who live in flimsy homes on river banks and mountain sides. The storm brought rain to the city of Gonaives, where 1,900 people were killed and 900 went missing after Tropical Storm Jeanne hit last year.

A tropical storm warning was posted for the southeast Bahamian islands and for the Turks and Caicos.

Alpha formed as a tropical storm Saturday in the Caribbean and marked the first time forecasters had to turn to the Greek alphabet for names. The previous record of 21 tropical storms and hurricanes had stood since 1933. The hurricane season doesn't end until Nov. 30.

Associated Press writer Alfred de Montesquiou contributed to this report from Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Tropical Storm Alpha hits Dominican Republic, Haiti

By REUTERS

New York Times

October 23, 2005

MIAMI - Record-breaking Tropical Storm Alpha struck the Caribbean island of Hispaniola today, threatening Haiti and the Dominican Republic with deadly flash floods and mudslides.

Alpha formed in the Caribbean Sea yesterday as the 22nd tropical storm or hurricane of the Atlantic season, breaking the record for most storms set in 1933.

The center of the storm went ashore near the town of Barahona on the southwest coast of the Dominican Republic early Sunday. Forecasters said the storm could drop as much as 15 inches of rain over Hispaniola, the island shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Haiti is vulnerable to devastating floods and mudslides. Much of the impoverished country has been stripped of trees.

Last year, Hurricane Jeanne killed up to 3,000 people in and around the port city of Gonaives while it was still a tropical storm.

At 8 a.m. today, the center of Alpha was about 25 miles west-northwest of Barahona and moving toward the northwest at about 14 mph, the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said.

Sustained winds were about 50 mph but the storm was expected to weaken rapidly and could dissipate over the mountains of Hispaniola, forecasters said.

Tropical storm warnings -- alerting residents to storm conditions within 24 hours -- were in effect for Hispaniola, the Turks and Caicos and the southeastern Bahamas.

Forecasters predicted 4 inches to 8 inches of rain over much of the island with isolated mountain areas getting up to 15 inches.

The naming of Alpha Saturday marked the first time the hurricane center used the Greek alphabet since it began naming storms in 1953 because it has run out of preassigned names for this season.

The 2005 hurricane season has had so many storms that all the storm names preassigned for this year were used up with Hurricane Wilma, which pounded the Mexican resort of Cancun Saturday and was headed toward Florida Sunday.

Alpha made 2005 the most active hurricane season since records began 150 years ago, and the 2005 season still has five weeks to run. The 1933 season had 21 named storms.

Rich Texas businessman tries for Haiti presidency

By Steve Quinn

Chicago Sun-Times

October 24, 2005

DALLAS -- Dumarsais Simeus remembers running through the fields barefoot as a child while his parents, illiterate peasant farmers, worked the land in Haiti to feed him and his 11 siblings.

He left Haiti at 21 and went on to build the largest black-owned business in Texas. He became a multimillionaire, wealthy enough to bring his brothers and sisters to the United States and fund their college educations.

Now he wants to return to Haiti as president, an ambition that has landed him in a fight to keep his name on the ballot and himself out of jail.

"This is not about Dumas Simeus," he said. "This is about getting the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere out of poverty, giving people hope and taking away their misery."

In the country of about 8 million people, more than half the adults can't read and the minimum wage is about \$1.70 a day. Haiti's lawlessness and corrupt government has prompted the U.S. State Department to issue travel warnings.

Three months ago Simeus declared his candidacy, joining 33 others in the race. Critics challenged him, saying his campaign violated Haiti's constitution, which requires candidates to have citizenship. Simeus, 66, said he never renounced his citizenship after moving to the United States.

Threat of prosecution

The Haitian Supreme Court recently ruled that Simeus could place his name on the ballot, but he still faces election council challenges to his candidacy and a threat of prosecution alleging false candidacy claims.

In South Florida, where about 300,000 Haitians have settled in the past 25 years, Miami radio host Ed Lozama said Simeus' presidential pursuit has kept his station's phone lines jammed, with people divided on his candidacy.

"To build what he has, I'm sure he is a man who can do the kind of consensus building that Haiti needs; I don't doubt that," Lozama said. "But here is a Haitian who made it happen for himself, someone we held in high esteem until he decided to do this. All I'm saying is let's do it right, the way the constitution says."

Land sold to send him to U.S.

Simeus' ascent in the business world began in the early 1960s when his family sold some land so he could fly to the United States to pursue a college education.

He attended Howard University in Washington. Simeus earned an electrical engineering degree, then an MBA from the University of Chicago.

In 1984, Simeus started working for TLC Beatrice International Holdings Inc., the \$2.1 billion, black-owned food processing and distribution company. He served as president for two years before leaving in 1992 to buy and run his own business.

With \$55 million financing, Simeus bought Portion-Trol Foods and renamed it Simeus Foods. The food processing business, based south of Fort Worth, now generates \$155 million a year.

AP

The Sorrows of Haiti
by Stephen Lendman
October 20, 2005
ZNet

On February 28, 2004, in the middle of the night, the U.S. again invaded Haiti. It abducted and forcibly removed democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide by its staged coup d'etat and flew him against his will to the Central African Republic. Aristide today remains in exile in South Africa but vows to return. The Haitian people demand he be allowed back and restored as their rightful and legal president.

With the U.S. already stretched beyond its capacity in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere and currently condemned worldwide for flouting international law, inviolable Geneva Conventions it's a signatory to, and our own sacred Bill of Rights, why now Haiti. The country is very small [about 3 times the size of Los Angeles], has a population of about 7.5 million and is the poorest country in the Americas. Why did the U.S. intervene with so much else on its plate? Think back to the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 when the U.S. asserted its exclusive right to dominate the Americas. Now update to the present and a reinterpretation of that Doctrine has arrogantly expanded to cover the entire planet - and outer space. Think of it, the U.S. will tolerate no rival and has now staked its claim [an exclusive franchise] to dominate all other nations and the oceans and the heavens. In an inversion or perversion of Woody Guthrie's great song for the people - "This Land Is Your Land" - a fitting anthem for U.S. arrogance might be "This Earth is My Earth....this earth [and the outer space above it] was made and now belongs to the U.S.A." That includes Haiti, and sadly for its people that tiny, poor country lies much too close to the U.S. The lament and aphorism of Mexican dictator [from 1876 - 1910] Porfirio Diaz who said....."Poor Mexico, so far from God, so close to the U.S." is also true for Haiti and all other countries in the region as well.

The February, 2004 U.S. invasion was only its latest incursion into that poor and defenseless country. The U.S. did it before in 1915, stayed for 19 years, and caused extreme human suffering and death to the Haitian people. It also did it in 1994, stayed for 5 years, reinstated an overwhelmingly democratically elected President, and then made it impossible for him to govern effectively and be able to serve the interests of the Haitian people, especially after the 2000 parliamentary election which was contested over a handful of parliamentary seats. After the opposition cried foul, the Inter-American Development Bank froze desperately needed loans [already approved] which were never reinstated for the rest of Aristide's tenure. The IDB also forced the Haitian government to commit to the onerous burden of repaying and servicing past "odious" debt. The debt burden was so great that in 2003 Haiti was forced to send 90% of its foreign reserves to Washington to pay it.

Now the U.S. government and its military again are setting and directing policy using the fraudulent fig leaf of a so-called U.N. "peacekeeper" contingent. Who can know how long we'll now maintain control this time [through a proxy U.N. force, direct U.S. occupation or just a subservient puppet government] or how much more misery and death we'll inflict on the benighted and long-suffering Haitian people. Clearly on that February, 2004 night the U.S. again flouted international law with another illegal invasion and subversion of the rights of a sovereign state and its democratically elected president to serve its own roguish imperial interests - a shameless act but sadly hardly new for a nation that's done it repeatedly throughout its history.

It first began when the early settlers took native Indian land through force or chicanery and murdered many millions in the process. As the colonies grew, expansion spread west and south and by the 1840s became a policy called "Manifest Destiny" [first used by Jackson Democrats] to promote and justify a strategy and practice of ruthless predatory expansion to include all territory south of Canada, coast to coast, as well as the annexation of Texas and conquest and seizure of half of Mexico. In the Guadalupe-Hidalgo peace treaty with Mexico in 1848, the U.S. "graciously" allowed Mexico to keep half its country [although some U.S. officials wanted it all] - the southern half with the majority Mexican population the U.S. did not want as U.S. citizens, fearing they would pollute the white Christian ethnic North American stock [sound a little like a 19th century Nazi Aryan philosophy of racial purity and superiority?]

Presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt continued U.S. imperial adventures and expansion annexing Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Wake Island, Guam, and American Samoa after the war with Spain. The Canal Zone was taken a few years later, and after many more years of savage and bloody war, killing somewhere between 1/4 to 1/2 million or more [shades of Vietnam and Iraq], the Philippines finally succumbed and became a U.S. colony. The imperial tradition continued throughout the 20th century, especially after WW II when the U.S. was the only powerful nation left unscathed from the ravages of that brutal war. It took full advantage creating and exploiting the myth of "communist barbarians" at our gates [a post WW II version of Reagan's later "war on international terrorism" in the 80s and Bush's "war on terrorism" today - all of them shams to scare the public to allow those in charge the ability to do as they please in "defense" of the nation]. After the Soviet Union collapsed, we desperately needed a new threat but had no problem finding many - Manuel Noriega in Panama, Saddam in Iraq, the North Koreans, Columbian drug lords, Fidel, the Iranian Ayatollahs, Hugo Chavez and anyone else we choose, the only qualification being a head of state unwilling to serve U.S. interests. Jean-Bertrand Aristide tried and failed to do it both ways - to follow U.S. dictates as well as serve his own people as best he could including raising Haiti's appallingly low minimum wage, disbanding its notoriously brutal military and having the courage to sue France for reimbursement for that country's 19th century imposed indemnity Aristide now estimated to be \$21 billion adjusted for inflation and with 5% compound interest. All that and more was intolerable for the U.S., so he had to go. Before discussing events and conditions in Haiti today after the coup, let's go back to the beginning to examine the plight of the Haitian people from the time the Spanish first arrived in 1492.

Few people in all human history have suffered as much as the people of Haiti. From the arrival of Columbus to the present, the Haitian people have been victims of enslavement, genocidal slaughter [including death from smallpox and other western diseases the local inhabitants had no resistance to], and later brutal exploitation and predation. The indigenous Arawak, or Taino, population suffered near total extinction [from as many as 8 million in 1492 to only 200 50 years later], astonishing even when compared probably to the greatest overall genocide ever that occurred in all the Americas where, according to historian Ward Churchill, the indigenous population of perhaps 100 million was reduced by 97 - 98%. After the Spanish moved to the eastern two thirds of the island, now known as the Dominican Republic, in the early 1600s, the French colonized the western third [Haiti] and repopulated it with black African slaves.

The French Revolution in 1789 changed everything and inspired the Haitian people, who considered themselves French, to demand their own freedom. Led by Toussaint L'Ouverture and others they staged their own Haitian Revolution from 1791 - 1803, defeated the French, and established the first free and independent black republic anywhere on January 1, 1804. Throughout the 1800s the new nation went through intermittent periods of brief enlightened rule and considerable oppression and turmoil. The French eventually regained influence and control over the country's leadership and affairs and forced the independent nation to pay tribute to France for their freedom and independence, an amount equal to billions in today's dollars. It was an impossible burden.

>From inception the U.S. never recognized Haiti and embargoed and harassed the new nation for its first 6 decades fearing its freed slaves might inspire a similar revolt here in the south. But the U.S. intended to exercise its influence and dominance in the hemisphere and did so with the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 when it stated that the Americas were no longer open to European colonization and that the U.S. would not interfere in European affairs. Beginning in 1915, the U.S. invaded and occupied Haiti using as a pretext the incredible claim that the Germans [during WW I] sought to occupy the country. The U.S. occupation lasted 19 years until 1934 during which time it ravaged Haitian society and institutions and committed war crimes and crimes against humanity against the defenseless people. The U.S. military routinely committed atrocities, the most infamous being in 1929 when the Marines slaughtered 264 protesting peasants in the town of Les Cayes. "Corvee [or forced] labor" [de facto slavery] was also employed and enforced brutally, and for the first time, the U.S. military [just like today in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere] tested its new weapons including aerial bombing years before the Nazis did it infamously against the Spanish Republican government in Guernica in support of the eventual fascist dictator, General Franco.

When the first U.S. occupation finally ended, the war crimes against the Haitian people continued under a U.S. trained proxy army which became the Armed Forces of Haiti. Conditions got progressively worse, especially under the "Papa Doc" and then "Baby Doc" Duvalier regimes from 1957 - 1986. "Papa Doc" established a personal and repressive paramilitary group, the Ton Ton Machoute, to intimidate and terrorize the Haitian people. When the people finally overthrew the "Baby Doc" dictatorship in 1986, a series of provisional governments ruled until 1990 when Haitians in an election judged fair and free elected Jean-Bertrand Aristide president with 67% of the vote, an unexpected shock to the U.S. Aristide took office in February, 1991, but his time in office was cut short by a September coup involving the still intact and active Ton Ton Machoute and supported by the U.S. For the next 3 years the military ruled and exercised a renewed reign of terror against the Haitian people using paramilitary death squads as a favored technique. The principle terror group was called FRAPH, led by Toto Constant, an admitted CIA agent who took his orders from Washington. Constant now lives in New York, safe from prosecution for his crimes, but apparently also is involved now with the new puppet government and its savagery against the people. During this time Aristide lived in exile in the U.S.

The Clinton administration finally struck a deal with Aristide in 1994, and used a vote by the U.N. Security Council it engineered to send a U.N. [largely U.S.] international contingent to Haiti ending military dominance and restoring constitutional rule. One month later President Aristide and other elected officials returned to Haiti. The "peacekeeper" contingent entered and remained in Haiti until 1999 not to restore democracy but to insure political and economic continuity as dictated by IMF instituted neoliberal structural adjustment policies of privatizations, debt servicing and cuts in vital

domestic social programs. The U.S. struck deal allowed Aristide to return to nominal power as long as the policies of the ousted military junta remained essentially unchanged. As mentioned earlier, Aristide tried to do it both ways and failed [by U.S. standards]. He demobilized the army, pursued human rights violators, respected human rights and freedoms and tried to raise the disgracefully low minimum wage. In short, he governed like a "democrat."

When the full and true story of Jean-Bertrand Aristide is finally told, it will portray a noble and humble man who gave of himself honorably to serve the interests of all the people of Haiti. His only failure was his inability to overcome the brutal and corrupt power of the U.S. and its determination to see him fail. And that determination never diminished even though, hard as it was to do, his government complied with its obligation to service its debt with its external creditors in hopes of being granted new loans by the World Bank, IMF and Inter-American Development Bank to do so. This new and earlier funding [intermittently frozen and then cut off completely after the 2000 election] led to a spiraling of Haiti's overall debt and debt servicing obligation forcing the country to cut back its already insufficient attention to basic social services for the people in desperate need of them. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western hemisphere and in 2000 had a shocking estimated unemployment rate of between 60 - 80%. Today with the extreme level of violence and turmoil it may be even higher, and the country is a total economic and social disaster. I'll return to events today shortly.

In 1995, a pro-Aristide multi-party coalition called the Lavalas Political Organization took power with an overwhelming majority in parliamentary elections. In 1996, with Aristide unable by Haitian law to succeed himself, Rene Preval, an Aristide ally and Prime Minister in 1991 won the presidential election with 88% of the vote, again shocking the U.S. After several years of political gridlock, Aristide was reelected President with 92% of the vote [representing the Lavalas Family Party which he formed in 1996] in November 2000 and took office in February 2001. Opponents immediately claimed the election process was unfair because of the calculation of percentages for the runoff election in 7 senate races. This was a minor technical matter not affecting the balance of power and finally resolved a year later when the 7 senators resigned. The opposition also claimed Lavalas failed to end corruption and was unable to improve the Haitian economy. After several years of U.S. instigated and supported opposition turmoil, late 2003 scheduled elections couldn't be held, and Aristide refused demands to step down. That fateful choice turned out to be the beginning of the end of the Aristide presidency and the Lavalas party.

Serious anti-Aristide protests began in January 2004 including violent clashes in Port-au-Prince. In February, an armed insurrection erupted in Gonaives that a local group may have instigated. A militant gang, calling itself the National Revolutionary Front for the Liberation of Haiti, then used this opportunity to join the uprising. The Revolutionary Front was a paramilitary army which was formed, heavily armed, trained and funded by the U.S. in the neighboring Dominican Republic. The so-called "National Endowment for Democracy" had been funding the civilian opposition and may have also aided the paramilitaries. In addition, the CIA, based on its 50 year history of fomenting insurrections and coups, may have been heavily involved as well. The rebel gang included former members of the hated and feared FRAPH. It was led by Guy Philippe, a former police chief involved in the 1991 coup ousting President Aristide, and FRAPH and former Ton Ton Macoute member Jodel Chamblain, guilty of years of terrorism against the Haitian people. Emmanuel "Toto" Constant, also guilty of years of terrorizing the Haitian people, may also have been involved. President Aristide had disbanded the Haitian army after replacing the military dictatorship in 1991 and only had local lightly armed police

facing a superior force it was no match for. The rebels swept across the country, first taking control of Gonaives, then Cap-Haitien [Haiti's second largest city] and finally Port-au-Prince right after the U.S. instigated coup with President Aristide already in the Central African Republic.

As a proxy force for the U.S., the rebels were serving the U.S. goal of again making Haiti a U.S. colony [like Puerto Rico], supplying wage slave or serfdom labor, enriching the local business interests and U.S. corporations, and run by a puppet regime now and henceforth behind the false facade of a nominal democratically elected government. In addition to its total of over 700 known military bases worldwide today in 38 countries and a military presence in at least 153 countries, the U.S. also is attempting to militarize the Caribbean and South American regions to control Haiti and its Central American neighbors and to intimidate and put political pressure on Venezuela, Cuba and any other Central or South American country that might elect a less than subservient leader. What's happening in the South American Andean region under "Plan Columbia" [to be pressured even more with a new base in Paraguay that has angered its neighbor, Brazil] is what's planned for Haiti, Central America and elsewhere in the region. As in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. in Haiti plans a permanent military presence in the region to assure its imperial goals succeed, and presently is minimizing its interest and presence behind the fig leaf of so-called U.N. "peacekeepers" from other countries.

In Haiti today, "peacekeeping" is Orwellian language concealing a brutal reign of terror against the Haitian people, the Lavalas party and all its members and all others seen as potential threats to U.S. policy. The Haitian people today, just like the people in Iraq, face daily cold-blooded murder, torture, rape and sexual abuse, hunger, a complete breakdown and absence of all essential social services as well as brutal crackdowns and conditions of utter depravity, all served up by the so-called "peacekeepers" [from countries including Brazil, Canada, France, the U.S. -behind the scenes but very much in charge - and others]. Lavalas party leaders and members not already murdered or imprisoned are currently in hiding and are being hunted down. Puppet U.S. installed acting "president" Gerard Latortue [brought in from Florida to assume his role] jailed at first without charge Lavalas Prime Minister Yvon Neptune [he has now been charged] and Father Gerard Jean-Juste, both seen as threats to U.S. interests because of their service to and overwhelming support by the Haitian people. They remain there under cruel and brutal conditions, and without intervention by or strong demand and pressure from the world community will probably die there. Months ago Yvon Neptune underwent a hunger strike and several times was reported to be near death. This writer does not know more about his condition today, but apparently he is still alive and still in prison.

Examples of what's happening daily are assaults and cold-blooded murder carried out against alleged Lavalas supporters by the Haitian National Police {PNH}, FRAPH thugs and UN "peacekeepers." Multiple attacks have been carried out in Cite Soleil, Bel Air, Solino and elsewhere where innocent Haitians have been shot and killed. Frequent street protests against the puppet government have been broken up violently, and known Lavalas supporters and officials are tracked down and when found either murdered or imprisoned without charge and without recourse to legal or other help. Perhaps the most blatant example of brutal violence against innocent Haitians took place on August 21, 2005 in a soccer field in Gran Ravin-Martissant in front of 5000 soccer fans. As many as 50 Haitians were massacred by the PNH and red-shirted killers. When a shot was fired, people panicked and ran and were either shot or hacked to death with machetes. Although there was a U.N. post across the street, no U.N. "peacekeepers" were there to protect the victims.

In addition to all the violence and abuses detailed above, Haitian men, women and children are victims of human trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation [of women and children for forced prostitution], forced labor [de facto slavery], debt bondage and chattel slavery. UNICEF estimates as many as 300,000 Haitian children are affected plus many thousands of women. Many additional thousands of men also have been and still are being forcibly taken to the Dominican Republic and other countries to work as "sugar slaves." Modern-day slavery is a major problem for Haitians today and also for many poor in other developing countries where the masses of impoverished people are easily exploitable while their governments {including in Haiti} do nothing to stop it. As many as 30 million people worldwide are thought to be affected.

Sometime this fall the U.S. plans to hold supposedly "democratic" elections to be run by Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council {CEP}. The process is hopelessly fraudulent and flawed, and precise information on all that's happening is unclear. What is known is that voter eligibility roles are being "electorally cleansed" of all "political dissidents" [meaning Lavalas/Aristide members and supporters], and no anti-government activity is being allowed in the streets. Any occurring is being put down violently. Also, the number of polling stations have been reduced from 12,000 in earlier elections all across the country to 800 this time, eliminating those in rural areas where most of the poor are. In addition, the puppet government designated "political dissidents" have been prohibited from running for office [again with the obvious meaning}. Furthermore, expected voter registration totals at election time range from about 7% of pre-"electorally cleansed" eligible voters to about 50% of eligible voters post "cleansing." This will be another example of what economist and media and social critic Edward Herman calls a "Demonstration Election." Professor Herman wrote a book in the 1980s documenting sham elections in Nicaragua and other countries, controlled and "rigged" by the U.S. to be sure their "acceptable" candidate won. The process has been repeated many times, most recently in Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq and soon in Haiti. Many people here in the U.S. believe, as do I, that this country also is guilty of staging "demonstration elections" as seen in 2000 when Democratic candidate Gore won Florida and was elected President, but 5 U.S. Supreme Court Justices refused to allow a total state recount to prove it, effectively annulling the Florida and true electoral college vote to chose their candidate, Republican Bush, as president. The process repeated again in 2004 in Ohio and elsewhere, this time with "rigged" electronic voting machines the main, but not only culprit, again selecting Republican Bush. The fall, 2005 election in Haiti is even more out of line as only those candidates known to be subservient to U.S. imperial interests are allowed on the ballot. The Haitian people want none of it, and it remains to be seen how many of those left unpurged from the rolls will actually turn out and vote. So much for democracy, but it certainly will be portrayed that way.

Long before the 2004 coup deposing President Aristide, the U.S. corporate media began a process of demonizing him, unjustly accusing him of corruption, conducting a fraudulent election and other crimes and abuse. Just as it always does before, during and after all U.S. incursions against other countries, the dominant corporate media unquestioningly backed the U.S. position, even with no credible evidence to support it. Instead of investigating and reporting the facts honestly as good journalists should, the media giants all lined up as dutiful and complicit flacks and acted as mere transmissions agents of state propaganda. As a result, the public was told and believes lies and has no idea what's really happening or why. Today the major media reports almost nothing about Haiti, and the public is unaware that the daily horror happening throughout Iraq is also happening in Haiti. Haiti has become a black hole, out of sight and out of mind, with little hope of relief. The U.S. public knows nothing, and the world community, except for the CARICOM nations in the region, doesn't care or act

responsibly. As a result, the long-suffering Haitian people pay a dear price. But these courageous people have endured for over 500 years, and if their past and present strength is prologue, they will never give up until they are free at last from any colonial master.

Dual Nationality and Us

Originally: Dual Nationality and Us

Ericq Pierre

October 19, 2005

Haiti Democracy Project web page item #3280 (<http://www.haitipolicy.org>)

Originally appeared in Le Matin

The candidacy of Dumarsais Siméus, which received much media attention, has brought the issue of dual nationality in Haiti to the fore. From the second half of the twentieth century onward, tens of thousands of Haitians have adopted a foreign nationality for reasons ranging from political, economic, and professional to simply for personal convenience.

Over the same period, tens of thousands of others who have lived or are still living in foreign lands have not adopted another nationality. This second category generally, but not exclusively, includes political activists forced into exile after having served a prison term or to avoid one, or who had reasons to fear for their safety and that of their families. In general, those Haitians who aspire to a leading political role at home rarely adopt another nationality. I am speaking, of course, about first-generation Haitians and not of their children.

Yet while implicitly acknowledging that the two life terms that the Duvaliers served as president may have killed any hope among exiled Haitians of playing a political role in their own country, leading them in desperation to take another nationality, the transition provisions of the 1987 Constitution make it possible for them to regain their Haitian citizenship. Many took advantage, while others apparently did not see fit to do so.

Remember that most countries, even the most democratic ones, have adopted restrictive criteria to determine who is eligible to fill such and such a position there, who is allowed to govern. In Haiti, these restrictions derive from the particular circumstances in which we became independent, among other causes.

Haiti, being the only country in the world to have won its independence following a slave revolt, its nit-picking over the issue of nationality is completely understandable. The real problem is not the restrictions imposed. Rather, it lies in the fact that the country has never established the legal means to enforce the restrictions, including possible exemptions. There are also many secondary aspects that merit clarification.

It is well known that a large number of Haitians who have acquired another nationality continue to reside in Haiti and take full part in its national life. Does this mean they are living in Haiti illegally? Do they still have a Haitian passport? When we talk about Haitians voting abroad, does this mean simply residents or naturalized citizens? Is the naturalized Haitian who continues to live in Haiti still entitled to vote? Is he breaking the law if he uses a Haitian passport? Could he be charged with “impersonation of nationality” as one can for impersonating another individual? Is one’s nationality an integral part of one’s identity? These are all questions I cannot answer personally, but that deserve to be asked. It would also be good to know if the answers are found in current Haitian legislation.

In truth, even the wording, “to have never renounced one’s citizenship” lends to confusion. Does adopting another nationality mean that you automatically renounce your original nationality? I have been told that Mr. Siméus’s lawyers have focused on this ambiguity, among other things, to promote their client’s candidacy despite his U.S. citizenship. For Mr. Siméus, to my knowledge, has never hidden his U.S. citizenship. He has simply stated that he has never renounced his Haitian nationality.

He left the rest to his public relations team and to his lawyers. The lawyers probably convinced him that it would be easy for them to play—and to win—on the wording’s ambiguity. Thus, they adopted a strategy of one-upsmanship, going so far as to dare anyone to prove that Mr. Siméus had renounced his Haitian nationality. Even though the Constitution clearly states elsewhere that dual nationality is not permitted under any circumstances, the lawyers can always argue that having dual citizenship does not imply that one has renounced either one. That stands to reason.

One can question the value of such a strategy based on “casuistry” reasoning, but it makes some sense if we factor in the ambiguity shown above. We also cannot rule out that it was inspired by the fact that other Haitians with dual nationality might have previously held positions reserved for Haitians with only one nationality under the Constitution. Unfortunately, if we are striving to achieve the rule of law, it cannot explain this situation. Certain persons have perhaps knowingly broken the law, but in Haiti it has always been acknowledged that someone who has adopted another nationality is ineligible for certain posts.

Has the time come to reconsider this provision of the Constitution, given the size of our diaspora and its contribution to Haiti’s survival? I am personally convinced that it has, but I have only one vote and, in any case, this can only come about through a constitutional amendment.

Meanwhile, more critical observers may say that the strategy of Mr. Siméus’s lawyers stems from the same specious reasoning that Haitian politicians use for never giving a straight answer to a specific question, which has caused so much harm to the country. And it would be only fair, since it is doubtful that Mr. Siméus was able to succeed in business, particularly in the United States, through such reasoning.

It is difficult to predict what impact Mr. Siméus’s electoral mishap will have on his plans in Haiti. Those , Haitians and foreigners , who have had dealings with him have always said that he is law-abiding and professes a great sense of humility. Some have even said that his high social standing does not give him altitude sickness. Not knowing him myself, I thought that it was all to his credit. When you realize that there are some who, having scarcely reached the second rung of the social ladder, are already beginning to turn up their nose, take on an air of superiority, and look down on others, if everything that they say about him is true, Mr. Siméus should be congratulated for his good behavior. It would be a real shame if, following an electoral mishap, this entrepreneur is unable to keep his good reputation intact, while the image makers portray him as a reformer and people praise his simplicity and humility.

His lawyers should be ready to assume responsibility for the strategy they have adopted, both in success as in failure. I admit, however, that the lawyers do not always have an easy job. This reminds me of the joke going around Washington D.C. in the mid-1980s. It seems that President Reagan called in his security advisor and asked him, “What should I do if I find myself in an elevator with Ayatollah

Khomeini, Saddam Hussein, and a lawyer when I have only two bullets in my revolver and I think my life is in danger?" The advisor replies without hesitation, "Mr. President, you'll have to shoot the lawyer with both bullets to make sure he is really dead." Lawyers! You can't live with them, and you can't live without them.

Although the legislation on nationality leaves many issues open, things are even more complex on the emotional level. It appears that when you change your nationality, for any reason, you somehow feel still more Haitian, still more deeply a native son, especially if you keep some roots in the country. Unfortunately, in the eyes of current laws, one is not completely so. It's unfair; it's frustrating; but that's the way it is until the rules of the game are changed.

The naturalized Haitian feels in his heart that he has never stopped being Haitian, so he generally pays little attention to the legal ramifications that his naturalized condition can have for him in Haiti itself. When he is in Haiti, he rarely wears his adopted nationality on his sleeve. He generally reveals it only when forced to do so, and only to get out of a tight situation. Some even hide it like a shameful disease.

There are several reasons for this, of which a few are rightfully linked to the uncertain status of the naturalized person who returns to live in his native country. A naturalized person is assured to stay in his adoptive country, not return to live near-permanently in his native country. That carries clear risks. These "hybrid" countrymen, who are not entirely Haitian nor entirely foreign, are more often than you would think victims of the arbitrary and high-handed behavior so common in Haiti. In addition, Haitian politicians are suspicious of a member of the diaspora who wants to go into politics. They consider him as taking the foreigner's side.

Don't they say that there was an unwritten rule under the François Duvalier regime that allowed those exiled Haitians who wanted to go into politics to quickly be regranted their citizenship as soon as they set foot back on Haitian soil? Unfortunately, the idea behind this "generosity" was the power to throw these exiles into prison with no obligation to report to the authorities of their adopted country. Thus, more people than we think have fallen victim to their dual nationality.

In fact, not until the adoption of the legislation governing the privileges granted to native Haitians and their descendants who have acquired another nationality (Ref: Le Moniteur of August 12, 2002 and Claude Moise Editorial in Le Matin of October 7-10, 2005), it was obvious that Haitians who have adopted a foreign nationality were among the members of the universal diaspora the ones who were the most downtrodden and abused by the laws of their country of origin. But other forms of exclusion are still in force. The Haitian authorities seem to be interested in them only when they bring back awards for excellence or when they send money. Then they rush to invite them to Haiti to appear in public with them and exhibit them proudly as very special specimens of Ayiti Toma.

To be sure, several members of the diaspora recently seemed to have no other ambition than to have their picture taken in Haiti with the occupant of the presidential mansion. Former president Aristide took considerable advantage of this, even succeeding in giving the diaspora (particularly those in Canada and the United States, and thus relatively well off) a reputation for partisan and captive political patronage. In return, he popularized the idea of the "tenth département" and created a Ministry of Haitians Abroad, whose objectives are still vague, and not even artistically so. In that sense, the August 12, 2002 legislation mentioned above is a big step in the right direction.

Rumors of high officials with dual nationalities ran strongest during the Lavalas regimes. Yet for many Haitians, the line between rumor and truth gets blurred. Particularly as those who are “accused” of dual nationality do not deign to voluntarily provide proof of the contrary.

In any event, this issue of dual nationality must not be kept under wraps. It must be addressed exhaustively and transparently for the whole country’s benefit. I cannot understand why the diaspora is not able to mobilize to form a real pressure group to legally and constitutionally amend the various articles on dual nationality. Could it be because there is no internal consensus on how to proceed? Or could it be that the status quo does not affect everybody in the same fashion?

The truth be told, beyond that nationality issue, the entire 1987 Constitution must be reviewed . The next president will probably have to convene a special constituent assembly and submit the proposed amendments to a referendum.

Amending the articles on dual nationality should not be regarded as a favor to the diaspora. Fellow countrymen who live abroad or have taken a foreign nationality have displayed great solidarity with Haitians living in Haiti. They have struggled and suffered with and for Haiti. Since independence, survival has seemed to trump development as our main objective. Survival before development ! Over the past 25 to 30 years, well before international aid, our diaspora helped us to survive. Let us arrange things so that it can contribute fully to our development by removing once and for all these barriers that are no longer justified in any way. Yet, this must come about through a process, not the result of a power grab.

Haiti's Economy More Stable, Says International Monetary Fund
IMF approves \$14.7 million in aid, calls continued donor support "critical"

By Eric Green

US State Dept.

Washington File Staff Writer

21 October 2005

Washington -- The Haitian government has made progress toward restoring financial stability and carrying out structural reforms in Haiti's economy, says the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In an October 19 statement, the IMF said the Haitian government's economic program for 2005-2006 "adequately maintains the focus on preserving macroeconomic stability, enhancing governance and transparency, and increasing spending on infrastructure and social services."

The IMF cautioned, however, that continued international donor support will be critical for "supporting the improvement in security necessary for safe and fair elections and economic recovery."

Two rounds of legislative and presidential elections in Haiti tentatively are scheduled to take place on November 20 and in January of 2006, with local and municipal elections taking place December 11. The United States is providing \$15 million to support Haiti's upcoming elections; in 2004, it provided \$8.7 million to support Haiti's electoral process. (See related article.)

A number of officials from the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are participating in an October 20-21 international donors' conference for Haiti. Patrick Duddy, deputy assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs, is heading the U.S. delegation to the conference in Brussels, Belgium. (See related article.)

The European Commission, which is hosting the conference, said in an October 20 statement that participants in Brussels aim to "identify priority measures to be taken by the international community" and by the Haitian government "in order to bring about the country's long-term post-election stabilization."

Louis Michel, the European body's commissioner for development and humanitarian aid, said Haiti "has to find the stability it needs to develop and become a democratic society capable of dealing with changes without resorting to violence."

Michel added that the "significant level of commitment" of international donors and the efforts made by Haiti's transitional government, headed by Gérard Latortue, "deserve to be supported by the Haitian people."

The United Nations special representative for Haiti, Juan Gabriel Valdés, also said in an October 20 statement that he hopes the donors' conference will create an emergency fund for the troubled Caribbean country.

Valdés, who heads the peacekeeping U.N. Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), said international contributions for the country are lagging behind pledges and more money is needed to conduct successful elections in 2005.

The IMF, meanwhile, announced it has approved \$14.7 million in additional emergency "post-conflict" assistance to Haiti, adding to the \$10.24 million the IMF provided in such aid to Haiti in January. The IMF said the assistance is designed to help with urgent balance of payments, including financing needs in the wake of armed conflicts.

Haiti's ongoing turmoil led to the February 2004 resignation from office and departure from the country of its former president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. A transitional government now is running the country until February 7, 2006, when a new, democratically elected Haitian president is scheduled to take office.

The IMF statement on Haiti is available at the International Monetary Fund Web site. More about MINUSTAH is available at the United Nations Web site.

For additional information on U.S. policy, see Haiti.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

At Brussels donors' conference for Haiti, UN envoy hopes for emergency fund

Source: United Nations News Service

ReliefWeb

Date: 20 Oct 2005

The United Nations Secretary-General's representative in Haiti is in Brussels today for a two-day European Union (EU) donors' conference which he hopes will create an emergency fund for the troubled Caribbean country.

Special Representative Juan Gabriel Valdés, who heads the peacekeeping UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), said international contributions for the country were lagging behind pledges and more money was needed to conduct successful elections later this year.

The UN Security Council urged the Haitian authorities on Tuesday to work with MINUSTAH to develop a phased electoral plan as a matter of priority, with a view to finalizing a feasible electoral calendar. It also urged the Haitian authorities to publish the final list of candidates for the elections and, in consultation with MINUSTAH, agree on a list of voting centres.

In the area of criminal justice, the Council urged the Transitional Government to work with MINUSTAH to put into effect reforms of the Haitian National Police (HNP) and the judicial system. The Council voiced concern over reports that some Haitian police officers were involved in serious crimes and human rights violations and stressed the need to investigate fully any such allegations.

In a formal statement, the Council President for October, Ambassador Gheorghe Dumitru of Romania, also said that while the responsibility for Haiti's future lay with its Government and people, the international community should continue to provide support.

The European Commission hosts an international conference on Haiti
Europa, Belgium
Brussels, 20 October 2005

The European Commission hosts an international conference on Haiti

An International Conference on Haiti bringing together the main institutional players involved in the transition and stabilisation of the country, in particular the representatives of the Haitian Interim Government and the donors, is being hosted by the European Commission today and tomorrow in Brussels.

After the Washington, Cayenne and Montreal conferences, the Brussels meeting is the fourth of its kind and the last before the elections. The ministers and senior officials attending the conference will work on improving governance and restoring the credibility of the State, on the basis of the achievements of the transition period. The aim of the conference is to identify priority measures to be taken by the international community and the Haitian parties in order to bring about the country's long-term post-election stabilisation.

Louis Michel, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, stated: "Haiti has to find the stability it needs to develop and become a democratic society capable of dealing with changes without resorting to violence. The significant level of commitment of the international community, with the European Union in the lead, and the efforts made by the Transitional Government of Mr Gérard Latortue, deserve to be supported by the Haitian people."

On a proposal from the European Commission, the EU Council decided last Monday to resume cooperation and released €72 million from the ninth EDF (European Development Fund) for Haiti. The aim of this decision is to support the Haitian Government's push towards democratisation and good governance and the holding of legislative elections. The funds were frozen following the irregularities observed in the elections of 2000 and the repeated infringements of the rule of law by the previous government.

Recent development

Haiti is at a turning point in its history: elections are due to be held in December 2005. This will enable the country to return to democracy and guarantee the rule of law and better living conditions for its citizens. The main bilateral and multilateral agencies are resuming and stepping up cooperation and the international monetary institutions are resuming commitments.

Following the crisis in March 2004 and the deployment of the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the international community mobilised and an "Interim Cooperation Framework" (ICF) was set up to coordinate operations of the various donors. Half of the nearly €1 billion promised by the donors in 2004 has already been disbursed.

For its part, the EU has made commitments amounting to €94 million and is the largest contributor to the Interim Cooperation Framework in terms of grants. This amount translates into around 100 projects involving all intervention sectors and covering the entire country. It also includes substantial funding of €18 million for the electoral process, which represents a third of the total cost of the elections.

Simeus Applauds Kofi Annan and UN, Addresses Nation to Decry Prime Minister as a Threat to Free, Fair Elections in Haiti

PR Newswire

October 18, 2005

After Unanimous 5-0 Supreme Court Decision to Reinstate Simeus' Pro-Democracy Reform Campaign, Prime Minister Manipulates Law to Again Block Candidacy

PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti, Oct. 18 /PRNewswire/ -- The following was released today by Dumarsais Simeus Campaign for President of Haiti:

Dumarsais Simeus addressed the nation of Haiti today to condemn the dirty tricks of Haitian Prime Minister Gerard LaTortue and other status-quo insiders who, only two days after the Supreme Court of Haiti issued a unanimous 5-0 ruling reinstating the candidate's reform presidential campaign, selectively manipulated the law in an attempt to block the pro-democracy candidate again.

This maneuver came just days after UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that, "the credibility of the elections will depend upon the confidence of candidates and their constituencies, that the process is transparent and that a level playing field has been established," and Thierry Fagart, the U.N. chief of human rights in Haiti called the human rights situation in the country overwhelmed by violence, poverty, chaos and corruption as "catastrophic."

"Last week Haiti won a huge victory at the Supreme Court, our country's only constitutional body," said Simeus, son of illiterate peasants in the mountain village of Pont-Sonde who worked his way up from the rice paddies to found one of the world's largest black-owned businesses. According to article 178.1 of the Haitian Constitution, the SC decision is final.

"It was a victory for change, democracy and rule of law in a time of chaos and violence. Now one little group of politicians wants to take our freedom away so they can continue profiting from the misery of the Haitian people," he continued.

"It is not me they hurt, it is the mother who can no longer afford milk for her baby, the grandfather who can not find good doctors to keep himself strong and our children who are left to play their childhood games on piles of trash and disease and who have lost all hope to even dream of a better life," added Simeus who lived in Bel Air, one of the poorest slums in Haiti, where he walked over 4 miles each day for the privilege of attending school, rose each morning at 4:00 am to study by street light and paid a nickel to bathe in public showers.

"It is clear these status-quo forces are afraid. They fear strong new leadership that has actually created real jobs, built businesses in the real world, brought health care and clean water to the people of Haiti, and put food on the table for thousands of people around the planet," said the global businessman, owner of one of the world's largest black-owned companies. "They are threatened because I won't play by their games. I won't let them continue to steal from the mouths of children," added the philanthropist, whose Simeus Foundation brings clean water and health care to Haitians.

On Thursday, Haitian Prime Minister LaTortue announced the creation of a commission on nationality. This commission has no legal basis to reverse the unanimous and final decision by Haiti's Supreme Court, the final authority in election law and the country's only constitutional body, to reinstate Simeus on the ballot. In the same maneuver, the Prime Minister eliminated the Supreme Court as the constitutional body overseeing all decisions made by special courts like the CEP, forcing the candidate to possibly return to the CEP for justice, and instituting a window of delay of up to 90 days.

The Prime Minister also removed a crucial paragraph from the Haitian electoral law regarding a legal requirement to run in this election. According to this law, all political parties must provide candidates for 50% of Congress seats. With this paragraph removed, the Prime Minister's own cousin remains a candidate for the Haitian Senate without his political party fulfilling the requirement.

Not addressed in this change were any provisions barring or challenging the candidacy of convicted criminals on the ballot, who remain to this day.

"During this time of violence and uncertainty, we need all people -- especially our leaders, to respect the law. Yet this same group of failed politicians who have turned Haitian against Haitian for selfish ends think they can continue to manipulate the law at to suit their whim. They will stop at nothing to keep the lives of every Haitian in their stranglehold, content to let this country rot while they line their pockets. All while people in the world outside enjoy healthy food to eat, clean water to drink, good jobs to work, safe streets, living in free societies that respect the right of every citizen to earn a better life," said Simeus.

"Our people are suffering! I call on the entire global community to unite together and stand with us in Haiti against this tragedy. We have a chance for real reform, that will bring jobs, food for our children, good medical care and clean water into our homes, and I will not let it slip away," said Simeus.

Nominated by a broad-based coalition of political parties under the banner of Tet Ansanm, pro-democracy reformer Simeus just last week won the first round of his crusade to change the "vicious cycle of violence, poverty and corruption by the status quo." The Artibonite-born Simeus has battled against a series of election abuses by government insiders who have consistently employed a string of back-door tricks and ill-fated attempts to exclude the formidable reformer from the ballot, including actions to:

- * Deny the Haitian nationality of origin that belongs to Simeus by birth;
- * Ignore electoral laws requiring the CEP to file objections within 72 hours;
- * Falsify and forge documents which are clearly not in his handwriting;
- * Use police powers of the state to "find" immigration cards;
- * Intervene outside the Prime Minister's constitutional authority to block Simeus;
- * Register others holding French and U.S. passports while blocking Simeus;
- * Register others not holding nationality of origin (meaning at least one parents and the candidate were born in Haiti)

* Even "losing" and then "finding" the candidate's CEP registration files.

"Our reform campaign is on the side of right, democracy and the rule of law. That has carried us through to the Supreme Court victory and given us tremendous momentum toward a big victory for real change in the presidential election. I will be on this ballot for the future of every Haitian."

UN Security Council presses Haiti to hold elections this year
Caribbean Net News
Thursday, October 20, 2005

UNITED NATIONS (AFP): The UN Security Council on Tuesday stressed the need for Haiti to hold free and fair elections this year and to work with the UN mission there to organize the polls.

A presidential statement from the council expressed concern "regarding the risk of delays in the electoral process, and underlines international expectations that the first round of national elections should take place in 2005."

It added that all efforts should be made to ensure that a democratically elected administration takes office on February 7, 2006 in line with the Haitian constitution.

The Council urged Haitian authorities to work with the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) to develop a phased electoral plan as a matter of priority, with a view to finalizing a feasible electoral calendar.

It also urged Haitian authorities to publish the final list of candidates for the elections and to agree in consultation with MINUSTAH on a list of voting centres.

"National reconciliation and political dialogue should continue to be promoted as a means to ensure long-term stability and good governance," the statement said.

The Haitian government announced last week that an initial round of parliamentary elections, set for November 20, would be postponed three weeks due to technical problems.

It was the fourth time the interim government has changed the date of the general elections this year.

The new delay hardly came as a surprise, given the complexities of Haiti's politics after former president Jean Bertrand Aristide fled into exile in November 2004 under the threat of an armed rebellion.

Since then, MINUSTAH -- a force of about 7,000 troops and police -- has struggled to maintain law and order.

The electoral process is daunting in Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas, where election materials destined for remote villages sometimes must be carried on the backs of animals due to the lack of roads and infrastructure.

The country of eight million people has 3.1 million registered voters in an eligible population of 4.5 million.

CANPOL to Haiti
Embassy, Canada
October 19, 2005

Yesterday morning 25 former Canadian police officers set off for Port-au-Prince to take part in a five month assignment with MINUSTAH, the UN Mission in Haiti. These 25 officers, organized by CANADEM, Canada's civilian reserve, will be attached to the UN Mission to serve as Police Technical Advisors, linking MINUSTAH and the Haitian National Police (HNP) on planning and emergency response to implement the Haiti Elections Security Operational Plan. CANADEM received \$2 million from the Canadian government to hire, equip, brief and deploy the officers. This past summer, MINUSTAH indicated a need for more police experts to work with its Civilian Police to train and mentor the HNP during the upcoming election period, which is ongoing until Feb. 2006.

Haiti Urged To Stick to Elections Schedule

By Judy Aita, Washington File

US State Department

NewsBlaze, CA

October 18, 2005

U.S. Under Secretary Burns meets Haitian prime minister

United Nations -- The United States wants Haitian officials to work with much greater speed and efficiency in organizing general elections now scheduled for November, U.S. Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns said October 18.

Speaking with journalists after meeting with Haitian interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue, Burns said that "the message from my government to the Haitian government is that they need to work with much greater speed and much greater efficiency in organizing these elections."

"They are very important elections for the Haitian people and, frankly, the organization of the elections to date has not been sufficient," the under secretary said.

"Our sense is the elections can no longer be postponed," Burns said.

"There have been so many postponements, so many delays in some of the major organizing efforts that, frankly, everything must go right every day for these elections to be held in an efficient and fair way," he said.

Elections for president and parliament, which will be supervised by the United Nations, were originally scheduled for October and then postponed to November 20.

Local and municipal elections are planned for December 11 and a second round of legislative and presidential elections in Haiti is tentatively scheduled to take place in January 2006. The United States is providing \$15 million to support Haiti's upcoming elections; in 2004, it provided \$8.7 million to support Haiti's electoral process. (See related article.)

U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL ISSUES STATEMENT

Also on October 18, the Security Council emphasized the importance of Haiti holding the elections in 2005.

In a formal presidential statement, the council urged Haitian authorities to undertake a series of measures to ensure that the elections are held. Specifically, the council urged Haitian authorities to work with the U.N. Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) to develop a phased electoral plan as a matter of priority, publish the final list of candidates for the elections, and agree on a list of voting centers.

Reading the statement on behalf of the 15 members, Council President Gheorghe Dumitru of Romania said, "Haiti is at a critical juncture. While ultimately, the responsibility for Haiti's future lies with its government and people, the international community must continue to provide support.

"National reconciliation and political dialogue should continue to be promoted as a means to ensure long-term stability and good governance," Dumitru said.

Burns said that during his meeting with the Haitian prime minister, Latortue said that he had appointed a new, experienced director of elections who could set up polling centers and get ballots printed.

The under secretary said that with close to 3 million people already registered, registration was not the problem. "What we're talking about is the administration of the elections," he said.

Latortue said that more than 40 political parties and 30 presidential candidates have registered for the vote and promised that the transfer of power would take place on February 7, 2006, in accordance with the Haitian Constitution.

"I recognize the right of people who don't know about Haiti to believe it might not be the case," the prime minister told journalists after the council meeting, "this is a personal opinion, but I give you the guarantee it (the election) will take place."

Source: U.S. Department of State

10/19 Americas Watch Haiti: Continue Oppression and Killings in Haiti+Video!

by Lee Siu Hin Friday, Oct. 21, 2005 at 10:55 AM

info@PeaceNoWar.net (213)403-0131 Los Angeles, CA USA

San Francisco Bay Area Indymedia

On Friday, September 23, 2005, the Director General of the Haiti National Police Leon Charles, UN Force Commander Lieutenant General Augusto Heleno Ribiero Pereira of Brazil, and the Special Representative of the United Nations Juan Valdes of Chile were convicted of violations of Haitian law and international law including crimes against humanity. This verdict was delivered by the jury of the First Session of the International Tribunal on Haiti. The Tribunal was held in Washington, DC at George Washington University at the Elliott School of International Affairs.

Americas Watch Haiti

Continue Oppression and Killings in Haiti+Video!

October 19, 2005

Americas Watch is the Project of ActionLA Coalition and Peace No War Network

URL: <http://www.ActionLA.org>

<http://www.PeaceNoWar.net>

Important Video about the July 6, 2005 U.N. Killings in Haiti

[Real MPEG]

Americas Watch's Haiti Updates

<http://www.peacenowar.net/Americas/News/Oct%2019%2005--Haiti.htm>

The First Session of the International Tribunal on Haiti: Report

By: Joe DeRaymond

September 23, 2005

Washington D.C.

On Friday, September 23, 2005, the Director General of the Haiti National Police Leon Charles, UN Force Commander Lieutenant General Augusto Heleno Ribiero Pereira of Brazil, and the Special Representative of the United Nations Juan Valdes of Chile were convicted of violations of Haitian law and international law including crimes against humanity. This verdict was delivered by the jury of the First Session of the International Tribunal on Haiti. The Tribunal was held in Washington, DC at George Washington University at the Elliott School of International Affairs.

The International Tribunal on Haiti has been organized by a coalition of Haiti solidarity groups, including the Haiti Support Network, and supported by the Latin America Solidarity Coalition (LASC – lasolidarity.org), which sponsored and funded the Tribunal. The Tribunal will continue for several sessions over the next seven months, to investigate reports of human rights violations and seek accountability for crimes against humanity. Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark is the lead member of the Commission of Inquiry that will investigate charges generated by the Tribunal. The Commission will conduct fact-finding inquiries in Haiti, the United States and other countries. The verdicts of the Tribunal will be used to generate a case that will be referred to the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

Haiti screams for your attention. It is a killing field in its structural poverty, and in the constant violence visited upon the impoverished population by rogue police forces aided, horribly, by United Nations "peace-keeping" troops. The Tribunal brought together a distinguished group of experts and eyewitnesses to expose the crimes being committed against the people of Haiti.

The Tribunal is structured in a fashion similar to United Nations Tribunals, a procedural conflation of European and Anglo legal traditions. The presiding Judges are former Haitian Ambassador Ben Dupuy, Attorney Brian Concannon, and Attorney Lucie Tondreau. The Investigating Judge is Attorney Tom Griffin, assisted by Attorney Lionel Jean-Baptiste. The Chief Prosecutor is Attorney Desiree Wayne, assisted by Attorneys Kim Ives and Ray LaForest. The Jury is an international panel of citizens chosen for their interest, knowledge and ability to assess the testimony.

The indictment charges 21 individuals with violations of Haitian and international law. It delineates the justification for assigning criminal responsibility to those individuals, specifically, "No distinction has been made based on official capacity. Official capacity...shall not exempt a person from criminal responsibility." This is a crucial point to be made in this era of State repression, a point made at Nuremberg, and a necessary recognition that a person cannot commit atrocities in the name of a State or institution and then use the uniform or position as a justification for the crime.

The defendants are UN personnel, US military personnel, Canadian military personnel, French personnel, members and former members of the Police Nationale d'Haiti (PNH), and members and former members of the former "rebel" force that assaulted Haitian society in 2004.

The initial charges list 15 counts of attacks, executions and massacres that occurred between March of 2004 and August of 2005. Each count includes the killing of civilians and each describes an act of terror against the civil population. These violent crimes occur within a social and political context that has been stripped of democracy by the governing powers, namely, the United States, Canada and France. The Prosecution began with an exposition of the history of Haiti, and the events that led up to the coup of February, 2004, which removed the elected government of President Jean Bertrand Aristide and ushered in the wave of violence addressed in the Indictment.

The first witness was Jeb Sprague, an expert on the destabilization of Haitian society prior to the coup, representing the Latin America Solidarity Coalition. He charted the web of organizations funded by the National Endowment for Democracy, the United States Agency for International Development, the National Democracy Institute, and the Chamber of Commerce that created an "unnatural" opposition to Aristide. The programs of such groups as the International Republican Institute, funded by the NED, were called "democratic enhancement", but were really a means to create discord in a nation weakened by harsh economic sanctions imposed by the United States.

Canadian journalist Ives Engler then presented his testimony on the roles of Canada, the United States and France in the destabilization of Haiti. He spoke of "The Ottawa Initiative on Haiti", held in Ottawa on January 31 – February 1, 2003, at which Otto Reich, OAS representatives, and Canadian officials decided the fate of Haiti, with no Haitians present. His findings were submitted to the Tribunal. (See "Canada in Haiti, Waging War on the Poor Majority", 2005, by Ives Engler and Anthony Fenton, Red Publishing, Fernwood Publishing.)

The next witness, Attorney Ira Kurzban, represented the government of Haiti during the government of Aristide in its attempts to collect monies stolen by the Duvalier family, and to recover reparations from France. He noted the 13 years of opposition that Aristide faced upon his initial electoral victory in 1991, which included the advice of Jimmy Carter, that he not take the office that he had won so convincingly. Mr. Kurzban testified to the kidnapping of Aristide by US Special Forces, and to the corrupt nature of the US-installed government after the Feb. 29, 2004 coup.

The last witness in this phase of the inquiry was Lovinsky Pierre-Antoine, the Minister of Migration in the Aristide government, who testified to his kidnapping and expulsion from Haiti under threat of death during the coup.

At this point, the Tribunal had been presented with the background to the period of crisis faced by Haiti at the time of the coup of February 2004. A government of rebel thugs armed and trained by the United States was in control of the streets of Haiti. It should be noted that this initial exposition of the context of Haiti today was presented in thumbnail fashion, and was treated with some skepticism by the Judges, for good reason, as it did not address directly crimes against humanity. The Prosecution argued that the testimony was important to understand the intentional subversion of civil society and Haitian democracy in Haiti by the United States, Canada and France. Therefore, there exists today an inability for existing institutions in Haiti to deal with the crimes in the Indictment. The Judges allowed the testimony after argument, with the admonition to the jury that they had discretion as to the weight granted the evidence.

The testimony of any one of the witnesses at this session could have consumed the night's work. Each had extensive oral, video or written evidence to present to the Tribunal, and much of it had to be submitted rather than presented in full. The appearance in one place of so many powerful testimonies to crimes in Haiti was very effective to prove the case for the Prosecution. The necessarily truncated presentations were also a reminder that a Tribunal or court scenario is not always the best venue for creating drama. There is ground to be covered, much to be done in a limited time.

The next witness was Kevin Pina, a US journalist freshly released from a Haitian jail. He testified about his arrest on September 10, when he uncovered a marauding group of Haitian National Police in the house of the imprisoned priest Jean Juste. He then provided personal and video testimony of the events he has witnessed during his years in Haiti. The video clip he showed of the massacres in Cite Soleil on July 6, 2005 was a powerful exposition of the poverty and terror that are daily life for Haiti. He testified to the participation of the UN occupation forces in the indiscriminate slaughter in poor neighborhoods. He has recently completed a video documentary, "Haiti: the Untold Story".

Pina was followed by Tom Griffin, who gave a capsulized version of his Human Rights Investigation of November, 2004. This report is available from EPICA, www.epica.org. It is an indispensable resource to understand Haiti 2005. It covers all aspects of the current situation, with photos and interviews of the key players in the struggle, not least the people of the barrios. It documents the incompetent, criminal occupation of the UN, as well as the sinister actions of the HNP and irregular Haitian forces.

Seth Donnelly was the final witness. He had been a participant in a human rights delegation in July of this year, sponsored by the San Francisco Labor Council. He was a witness to events in Cite Soleil

surrounding the July 6 massacre. He had interviewed UN officials, and had produced a video of the events he witnessed. His video and testimony corroborated the statements of Kevin Pina.

The Prosecution chose to ask the jury for a verdict on the guilt or innocence of three of the defendants; Leon Charles, the former Director General of the Haiti National Police, Lieutenant General Augusto Heleno Ribiero Pereira of Brazil, UN Force Commander, and Juan Valdes of Chile, the Special Representative of the United Nations. Eleven of the jury of 12 voted guilty, one abstained. Thus, the Tribunal started with a judgment against the managers of the massacres, the architects of the policy of terror. The verdicts and the cases of all defendants were referred to the Commission of Inquiry for further investigation.

Ramsey Clark addressed the group at the close of the session. He sketched the history of Haiti, the perfidy of George W. Bush's attitude toward an elected government: "'Aristide must go', Bush said". He noted the value of the recent Tribunal on the War in Iraq, and the need for such mechanisms by which people could hold governments accountable. Clark will lead a Commission of Inquiry to Haiti in October to gather further evidence and eyewitness testimony. The coming sessions of the International Tribunal on Haiti will further expose the reality of Haiti to the world, and will solidify a case to present to the International Criminal Court at The Hague for criminal prosecution.

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Haiti struggles with justice as congressional delegation visits
Jennifer Van Bergen
The Raw Story, MA

Father Jean-Juste, a priest and human rights activist, was arrested July 21, 2005 for the second time in the past year. After his first arrest in 2004, no charges were brought against him and he was eventually released on a judge's order. The judge, Judge Senate Fleury, was subsequently fired.

Jean-Juste was arrested the second time after attending a funeral. He was chased out of the church where the funeral was held and beaten by opponents. He was subsequently charged with having guns in his church. Those who beat him were never arrested. The UN and Organization of American States is considering whether to intervene and take over his case, as Haitian law allows for international tribunals to adjudicate claims.

Last week, a bipartisan congressional delegation visited Haiti last week following a grassroots outcry over human rights abuses and delays in the national elections.

Representatives John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI), Pete Hoekstra (R-MI), Charles Rangel (D-NY) and Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX) met with human rights activist Father Gerard Jean-Juste and former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune, both in jail, and with various officials to discuss the postponed elections. Conyers and Rangel spoke with RAW STORY about their trip.

Conyers is waiting for a report from Amnesty International on the possibility of fair trials before he decides whether to take issue with Haiti's handling of the two cases. Amnesty has already declared Jean-Juste a "prisoner of conscience."

Haiti's current Prime Minister, Gerard La Tortue, agreed to attend a meeting in New York Tuesday about administration of the elections, Conyers said.

Others say the congressmembers aren't doing enough.

"Conyers is not doing all that can be done," Brian Concannon, director of the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, said. "Is he saying the right thing? He didn't say Jean-Juste's detention is illegal."

"They're letting the system off the hook," he added.

Concannon points out that to bring charges against an individual under Haitian law, some evidence must be presented. To date, no evidence has been presented against Jean-Juste.

Jean-Juste Stripped of Priestly Duties by Church

While Jean-Juste was in jail, his supporters tried unsuccessfully to register him as a candidate in the election. They were told the candidate had to register in person. Subsequently, the Catholic Church decided to strip Jean-Juste of his priestly duties because he was a candidate.

According to attorney Bill Quigley, who represents the county's incarcerated former prime minister, this grieves Jean-Juste more than anything.

"He always says the rosary for about an hour every night," Quigley said. "He's very hurt that the church has not stood behind him during this time."

Is Justice Possible?

Lavarice Gaudin, executive director of "Veye Yo," a grassroots group based in Miami that fights for democracy and justice in Haiti, agrees that Congress isn't doing enough.

"It's been almost two years since they overthrew elected government," Gaudin declared. "It's about time for them to fix the mess!"

"How can there be a fair election if Lavalas members are in prison?" he asks. "People who massacred people should be in prison. The government is illegal. The government cannot give us justice."

Congressional delegates are hopeful.

Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) told RAW STORY that his delegation had convinced former Prime Minister Neptune, who has been in jail since June 2004, to agree to move to his home. Neptune had previously refused to leave until he was cleared of all claims against him.

Neptune's present agreement with authorities, facilitated with the delegation's assistance, will follow a court declaration that he was wrongfully detained and will not require him to admit any wrongdoing, Rangel said. It will not, however, prevent the Haitian authorities from bringing future charges against him. Neptune spent much of his time in prison without charges.

Rangel said he was a good friend of former President Jean Bertrand Aristide, who he believes was a victim of a coup backed by the United States. Rangel said that the best course now for Haiti is to move forward with democratic processes, since he feels that there is nothing Aristide can do about what happened.

"He's not coming back," Rangel remarked.

The New York congressman says the United Nations is doing a "fantastic job" at registration, with 80 percent of the population registered. He points out, however, that people need the registration cards for other purposes as well, so the registration may not reflect voter turnout in elections.

Until Haiti has a democratically-elected government, substantial monetary donations to the country are unlikely, he said.

A Unique Moment in History for Haiti

Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee told RAW STORY this was "a unique moment in history for Haiti." She too expressed displeasure with Aristide's removal, and believes Neptune's incarceration is "outrageous."

"He should be released immediately," she remarked.

But like Rangel, Jackson-Lee feels that this transition time is crucial for Haiti to become part of the international community and that Haitians should take advantage of the opportunities.

Conyers' office points out difficulties with the election commission. At present, the commission has no director. It is a fairly autonomous group that is trying to work as a committee of the whole, which is not working, according to Conyers' staff. But a director would have almost complete unilateral power, so the group is reluctant to appoint anyone. The last director was fired.

However, Jackson-Lee noted that the meetings the delegation had with Haitian officials went very well.

"I think they heard us," she said.

The delegation emphasized that they will be monitoring Haiti during the December elections. They expect the elections to be transparent and all to be given access to the election process. Conyers intends to personally return to Haiti.

Concannon feels that in order for Haiti to move forward, political persecutions would have to stop, Jean-Juste and Neptune would have to be unconditionally released, and democratic processes would have to be allowed to move forward.

He maintains the U.S. was behind a "coup" to oust Aristide.

"They are the principal supporter of the illegal current government," he said, "and the new people are merely doing what they're told to do."

jvb@rawstory.com

Jennifer Van Bergen is a journalist with a law degree and the author of "The Twilight of Democracy: The Bush Plan for America" (Common Courage Press, 2004).

Wilma pummels Mexico with winds of up to 145 mph

By Catherine Elsworth

Oct. 22, 2005

The Telegraph, UK

Palm trees buckle under heavy rains and strong winds

More than 30,000 tourists were evacuated from Cancun and Isla Cancun, the skinny spit of Caribbean-fronted hotels popular with European and Americans. Palm trees bent double in winds that threw waves across streets, with flooding up to three feet deep. "God protect us!" ran the headline in one local newspaper.

The island of Cozumel felt the full force of the category four hurricane as the core of the storm reached land, wiping out power. Hundreds of residents and nearly 1,000 tourists remained on the coral island, a popular diving destination some 45 miles south of Cancun.

Briefly registered as the most powerful Atlantic storm ever recorded, a monster category 5 hurricane with wind speeds of 175 mph, Wilma has already claimed at least 13 lives in Haiti and Jamaica.

Houston Artist Joins the Affordable Art Movement Sweeping America and Celebrates Her Haitian Heritage in Art Showcase to Benefit Children Victims of the Hurricanes
Emediawire, WA
October 22, 2005

Everyone from Art Connoisseurs to the Curious will Get a chance to Select from Reasonably Priced Original Selections from painter Sacha Lazarre. The self-taught prodigy hails from the Houston Area's growing pool of talented artists and is a member of the city's diverse and celebrated immigrant population.

Houston, TX (PRWEB) October 22, 2005 -- The product of the Haitian migration of the past decades are settled throughout the world. They include Houston-based Sacha Lazarre, who has chosen to use her artwork as a medium for expressing the spirit and diversity of a group she calls "Generation D", the American children of the massive Diaspora experienced by Haiti and other Caribbean and African nations during the 1960s. Lazarre will display her collection Generation D/Migration: Flights of Fancy at the StarvArt Gallery on Thursday, October 27. A portion of the proceeds from the event will be donated to benefit the children displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita enrolled in Neighborhood Centers Inc. after-school programs.

Lazarre herself is a well-traveled example of Generation D, born in New York, but having lived in Haiti, and intimate enclaves of Haitian populations in Zaire and Miami before planting roots in Houston. She has grown a collection of artwork marked by blended mediums, vibrant colors and potent brushstrokes that includes handsome characters with stark strong features.

"Members of 'Generation D' wear their culture and heritage with subdued, yet strong pride, being both assimilated and apart," said Lazarre. "This series is my attempt to dialogue with audiences my version of this experience. It is very ethnic, primal and evocative, and at the same time modern, urban and American."

Lazarre's show will also replicate the growing trend of so-called "affordable art" shows and fairs, a concept that originates with UK and Australian-based Affordable Art Fair series. These shows, first held in Melbourne, Sydney and London and later New York and San Francisco, attempt to strip down the pretentious world of art by giving buyers an opportunity to purchase original top-quality art at reasonable prices. The concept is catching on in the United States. Lazarre offers pieces for as low as \$400, and most of the collection is traditional showcase pieces that can be shown in a home.

StarvArt Gallery is located at 2602 Persa Street in Houston and is near River Oaks/ Montrose, two blocks west from the intersection of Westheimer and Shepherd streets, near the popular Restaurant, Cafe Adobe. The exhibit will be open 6-11pm.

Wilma upgraded to Category 5 storm
October 19, 2005
The Age, Australia

Hurricane Wilma, which triggered mudslides that killed up to 10 people in Haiti, has strengthened to an extremely dangerous Category 5 storm as it approaches western Cuba and Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula.

The season's record-tying 21st storm, fuelled by the warm waters of the northwest Caribbean Sea, strengthened rapidly as it headed into the Gulf of Mexico on a path expected to lead across storm-weary southern Florida by Saturday.

An Air Force plane has measured maximum sustained winds of near 240kph from the vicious storm, the hurricane centre reported at 2.30am (1630 AEST) on Wednesday.

The reconnaissance aircraft measured an estimated minimum air pressure of 892 MB, the lowest pressure observed in 2005 and equivalent to the minimum pressure of the 1935 Labour Day hurricane in the Florida Keys, the centre reported.

As of 1am EDT (1500 AEST), the centre of the storm was near latitude 16.9 north, longitude 82.0 west, or about 280km south-southwest of Grand Cayman and about 655km southeast of Cozumel, Mexico, according to the centre's web site at www.nhc.noaa.gov.

Advertisement

A hurricane watch was in effect for the east coast of Mexico's Yucatan peninsula from Cabo Catoche to Punta Gruesa and for the provinces of Matanzas westward through Pinar del Rio in Cuba, the hurricane centre reported.

Wilma was the 21st tropical cyclone of the Atlantic hurricane season, tying the record for most storms set in 1933.

It was also the 12th hurricane and tied the record for most hurricanes in a season, set in 1969. The season still has six weeks to run.

The storm was moving west-northwest at 13kph. A turn toward the northwest was expected in the next 24 hours.

Wilma was not expected to threaten New Orleans or Mississippi, where Hurricane Katrina killed more than 1,200 people and caused more than \$US30 billion (\$A39.42 billion) of insured damage in August. Katrina was followed in September by Hurricane Rita.

Wilma was also expected to miss the Gulf of Mexico oil and gas facilities that are still reeling from Katrina and Rita.

But frozen orange juice futures closed at a six-year high on Tuesday amid fears Wilma could ravage Florida groves that had just begun to rebound from the hurricanes that destroyed 40 per cent of last year's crop.

IMF approves additional aid of \$14.7 million for Haiti

AP

Jamaica Observer

Friday, October 21, 2005

WASHINGTON (AP) - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Wednesday approved roughly \$14.7 million (euro12.3 million) in new aid to Haiti.

The money is designed to help the country pay its bills. The aid comes as Haiti tries to overcome decades of widespread political violence.

The country is preparing for its first elections since a violent rebellion forced President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to flee in February 2004. Aristide and several Caribbean governments blamed the Bush administration for the fall of Aristide's elected government.

Agustin Carstens, the IMF's deputy managing director, said, "Haitian authorities have made progress toward restoring macroeconomic stability and implementing structural reforms."

The approved aid comes on top of assistance provided to Haiti in January.

Haiti Candidate Could Face Charges

By ALFRED de MONTESQUIOU,

Associated Press Writer

Boston Globe

Wed Oct 19, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti - A wealthy U.S. businessman who is seeking to run for president of his native Haiti could face criminal charges for allegedly making false claims when he filed candidacy papers, electoral officials said Wednesday.

Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council has submitted a criminal complaint to the country's chief prosecutor alleging that businessman Dumarsais Simeus falsely claimed to have met residency, citizenship and property requirements in his long-shot bid for president of the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation, said Andre Joel Petithomme, a lawyer for the election agency.

The charges carry a potential sentence of three to five years in prison, but Haiti's chief prosecutor said he had not yet decided whether to pursue the case.

Simeus, who has pledged to use his business skills to help rebuild the shattered economy of his native land, said he would continue to seek the presidency in the first elections since a violent rebellion forced President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to flee the country in February 2004.

"I'm very surprised and disappointed by these maneuvers," Simeus said.

The electoral council had previously said Simeus could not be a candidate because he holds U.S. citizenship and Haiti's constitution prohibits anyone with dual nationality from being president.

But the Texas businessman appealed to the Supreme Court, which ruled that the council, which is charged with managing the election, had failed to prove he has U.S. citizenship.

Two days after that decision, interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue said he had formed a commission to evaluate the nationality of all 34 presidential candidates — and that the Supreme Court would no longer be allowed to intervene in electoral issues.

The elections, which have been postponed twice, are now expected to be held in mid-December to replace the interim government imposed after Aristide's ouster.

Simeus, the 65-year-old owner of a food services company in Mansfield, Texas, said he would not cooperate with the commission reviewing the citizenship claims of the presidential candidates and that the opposition to his candidacy is simply a fear of the "radical change" that he offers the troubled nation.

Texas businessman returns to Haiti for presidential run
By DAVID ADAMS, Times Latin America Correspondent
St. Petersburg Times
October 20, 2005

MIAMI - As if Haiti wasn't democratically challenged enough, elections due to be held later this year have hit another unexpected obstacle - a wealthy Texan.

A legal battle over the candidacy of a naturalized U.S. citizen, Dumarsais Simeus, has thrown the Nov. 22 election date into confusion after contradictory rulings on whether the 66-year-old businessman is eligible to run for president.

Almost 20 months after the violent ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the country remains in the hands of a weak caretaker government backed by United Nations peacekeepers.

Simeus, who was born in Haiti, is the former president and CEO of Beatrice, one of the largest food companies in the United States. His candidacy was originally ruled out by the Electoral Council on the grounds of his U.S. citizenship.

A unanimous Supreme Court ruling last week put his name back on the ballot. But the government later stripped the Supreme Court of authority in electoral disputes. Instead, it named a commission to investigate the nationality of all 34 presidential candidates - a process that could take weeks.

"What we're interested in knowing is whether all the candidates are Haitian. We are going to screen them," said Haiti's justice minister, Henri Dorlean.

Haiti's constitution states a presidential candidate must "be a native-born Haitian and never have renounced Haitian nationality," and have resided in the country for five consecutive years before the election.

Although Simeus has lived in the United States for 45 years, he said he has never given up his Haitian passport. "I am a Haitian. I go all the way back to slavery," he said by phone Tuesday from Haiti.

Adding to Simeus' woes, this week the Electoral Council submitted a criminal complaint to Haiti's chief prosecutor alleging that he falsely claimed to have met residency and citizenship requirements.

"Who cares if someone has dual nationality?" said Simeus. "The country is broken and the people want someone who can fix it and put food on the table."

He said electoral officials had already overlooked or violated a host of rules and were making a special case to exclude him. Several other candidates are believed to hold French, U.S. or Canadian passports, but so far only Simeus has been singled out.

The election was already a politically volatile smorgasbord of candidates before Simeus threw his unlikely hat in the ring. Other candidates include former loyalists of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, as well as a leader of the armed rebellion that toppled him on Feb. 29, 2004.

Aristide is in exile in South Africa and has not endorsed any candidate. A former Miami priest, Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste, who was expected to run for Aristide's Lavalas Family party, was excluded after he was jailed.

Simeus' candidacy is widely seen as a threat to Haiti's traditional political elites: the country's wealthy private sector and the left-wing popular movement that claims to represent the country's poor majority.

"He's a new factor; a Haitian tycoon who made his fortune outside the country," said Dan Erikson, a Haiti analyst at the Washington-based Inter-American Dialogue. "At a time when Haiti is looking for new solutions he cuts an interesting figure."

Simeus' Texas roots and ties to the Republican Party have opened him to accusations that he is Washington's candidate in a race that previously had no obvious U.S. ally. He also sits on Florida Gov. Jeb Bush's Haiti Task Force.

Born to illiterate peasant rice farmers in Haiti's Artibonite Valley, he grew up in a two-room hut with 11 siblings. At the age of 21 he left Haiti with the help of several benefactors to study at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, before transferring to Howard University, the prestigious black college in Washington, D.C. After earning a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering he went on to the University of Chicago to study finance.

He has held management positions in companies such as Atari and Rockwell International, as well as setting up Haiti's first investment banking firm. After leaving Beatrice Foods, a \$2-billion multinational, he set up his own food processing business, Simeus Foods, based in Mansfield, Texas. His customers include Denny's, T.G.I. Friday's and Burger King.

Seven years ago he created the Simeus Foundation, which runs a medical clinic in his hometown of Pont Sonde and provides clean drinking water to 200 local families.

Exactly when Haiti's election will be held remains unclear. Last week, the government said the Nov. 20 vote would have to be delayed and likely would be held in the second half of December.

Simeus says he is determined to fight for his candidacy with the same determination that got him to the top of the corporate world. "My parents taught me at an early age there was nothing I couldn't do if I put my mind to it," he said.

DUMARSAIS "DUMAS" SIMEUS

AGE: 66. **Home:** Southlake, Texas, in the Fort Worth/Dallas area.

BORN: In Pont Sonde in Haiti's Artibonite Valley to illiterate Haitian rice farmers; eldest of 12 children.

EDUCATION: Attended parochial school in Haiti. At 21, came to the United States with the help of benefactors and the sale of family land to study at Florida A&M University. Transferred to Howard

University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. Earned a master's of business administration from the University of Chicago.

EXPERIENCE: Held management positions at Atari, Rockwell International, Bendix, KB Homes and PromoCapital, the first investment banking firm in Haiti. President and CEO of TLC Beatrice Foods, a \$2-billion multinational conglomerate. In 1996, founded Simeus Foods - based in Mansfield, Texas - a food processing operation with customers in the United States and Canada. Has lived in: Paris; Caracas, Venezuela; Barcelona, Spain; and Brussels.

PERSONAL: Naturalized U.S. citizen. Has brought 40 relatives to the United States but parents remain in Haiti. Married, with three children.

Sources: Boston Globe, Associated Press, USA Today, Christian Science Monitor, Miami Herald, Dumarsais Simeus Campaign for President of Haiti, Who's Who in America.

BE100s CEO Back on Haiti's Presidential Ballot
Dumas Siméus is counting on passion to lead him to victory
By Cliff Hocker
Black Enterprise
October 18, 2005

BE's Exclusive Interview with Siméus

A n émigré black businessman is hoping to be elected leader of his impoverished Caribbean birthplace. Dumarsais “Dumas” Siméus, 65, chairman and founder of Mansfield, Texas-based Siméus Foods International Inc. (No. 24 on the BE INDUSTRIAL/SERVICE 100 list with \$160 million in sales), has returned to Haiti to run for president.

A naturalized U.S. citizen, Siméus has earned the admiration of fellow Haitians as a success story among the thousands who've left their homeland. In the 1990s, as president of \$2 billion TLC Beatrice Foods International, Siméus was the premier Haitian corporate executive.

Siméus' world-class business skills could very well revitalize the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Haiti's economy has been ruined by corruption and political unrest: in 1986, dictator, Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier was overthrown, and ex-president Jean-Bertrand Aristide was ousted twice, most recently in 2004.

This native son may be uniquely positioned to rally the resources of Haiti's expatriates and inhabitants alike. “Haiti's strength is not just in the people there, but in its diaspora,” says James Morrell, director of the Haiti Democracy Project in Washington, D.C. Despite constitutional roadblocks and election postponements, Siméus' stop-and-go presidential bid pushes forward.

On Sept. 26, Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council declared Siméus' ineligible to run, but on Oct. 11, Haiti's Supreme Court unanimously overturned that ruling. The show-stopper had been Article 135 of Haiti's constitution, which requires presidential candidates to be native-born, to have never renounced their Haitian nationality, and to have been a resident of Haiti during the five years preceding the election. Siméus has lived in the U.S. for 44 years and is a naturalized U.S. citizen. Perhaps Siméus will further surprise onlookers in upcoming weeks. His next hurdle is to grab the attention of voters amid some contenders who are more visible than him and were leaders of the rebel group that exiled Aristide.

Jocelyn McCalla, executive director of the National Coalition for Haitian Rights in New York, says election success will depend on links to local power holders who can generate voter support. McCalla doubts the success of Siméus' candidacy. “It will get him much publicity, and it will perhaps enamor him to the Haitian expatriates abroad who believe that they should play a much bigger role in the country's future. But this candidacy is going nowhere,” says McCalla. Time will tell.

Coincidentally, poll delays are providing Siméus with getting extra time to build campaign momentum. The election was originally scheduled for Oct. 9, postponed to Nov. 6, then Nov. 20, and is now scheduled for mid-December. Raymond A. Joseph, Ambassador of the Republic of Haiti in Washington, D.C., says “one thing that this government is not going to negotiate is that on Feb. 7, 2006, the government will be transferred to an elected government.”

**The Embassy,
October 19th, 2005
LETTERS**

So Much for Democracy in Haiti

Unfortunately, Mr. Tuppenhauer's comments contain an irreconcilable contradiction (Re: "'Human Capitalism' Can Ease Haiti's Woes, says Ambassador" Embassy Oct. 12, 2005). On the one hand he states that, in order for Haiti to succeed as a nation, it needs to be run like a business; that is, utmost attention needs given to "the bottom line." On the other hand, he says that this bottom line is synonymous with improving Haiti's standard of living.

While this is a noble sentiment, it is far from what is traditionally designated as the bottom line by those who work within the capitalist system, regardless of whether such system be designated "humane" or not. Contrary to Mr. Tuppenhauer's understanding of it, the bottom line is more commonly understood to mean the practice of only taking fiscal factors into consideration when making business decisions, in order to best maximize profits. Furthermore, in the capitalist system, companies that do attempt to take "outside factors" (such as quality of life) into consideration often risk losing the ability to remain competitive in the face of other businesses that have no such scruples, or even of being sued by their own shareholders for engaging in practices detrimental to their legally protected right to maximum profit.

Another way by which businesses traditionally keep their eye on the bottom line is by keeping labour costs to a minimum, thus further impoverishing the poor and working classes, not helping them. Therefore, Mr. Tuppenhauer's proposal of what are essentially neo-liberal reforms as the means by which to improve the quality of life of the poor majority of Haitians is somewhat contradictory.

Haiti had a real opportunity to improve the life of its poor majority a few years after the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship with the election of President Aristide. This is because Aristide, a product of Haitian grassroots movements himself (the West tends to prefer U.S.-trained heads of state) understood that the only way to improve life for Haitians was to

free them from, not further enslave them to, the dictates of the bottom line -- historically imposed upon the Haitian majority by foreign corporations and the local business elite that serve them.

President Aristide's policies proved to be intolerable to the U.S. and Canadian governments (and the companies in whose interests they act) and he was forcibly removed from office in Feb. 2004 in a U.S.-Canadian sponsored coup d'état. Since that time, those involved in this illegal overthrow of a democratically elected head of state have been scrambling to organize sham elections in Haiti, thereby hoping to give a veneer of legitimacy to the coup as well as their planned imposition of neo-liberal reforms upon a people who over the last decade and half have clearly and emphatically rejected them. Furthermore, these are the same business interests Mr. Tuppenhauer exhorts in the article as being deserving of given the "first shot" when the time comes for the newly "elected" Haitian government to dole out fat contracts to its foreign backers. So much for democracy.

I therefore find it hypocritical of Mr. Tippenhauer and the Canadian government to claim to be working to obviate the plight of the poor majority in Haiti, all the while deliberately and cynically engaging in and supporting actions designed to allow the West to continue its historic exploitation of both the people and the resources of Haiti, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere.

Scott Inniss
Vancouver, B.C.

Brothers in Blood and Liberty
America's undeniable links to Haiti.
By Brian Dean
The Valley Star
Wednesday, October 19, 2005

As proud of our liberty as Americans tend to be, most are unaware of the extent to which other people contributed to making the country what it is today. This general ignorance compounds the plight of African-Americans whose closest connection to their ancestry lies unrecognized, just a few hundred miles from the tip of Florida. Haiti, the poorest nation in our hemisphere, deserves much more respect from her American neighbors.

During Haiti's final years as the French colony of St. Domingue, nearly 70 percent of the slaves there were African-born. Taken from the same areas, including most of the West African coast from Senegal to Angola, blacks in eighteenth century St. Domingue and eighteenth century America might have been brothers, sisters and cousins. Torn apart by slavery, these familial bonds were never to be repaired, but for African-Americans researching their heritage, it would be worthwhile to include Haiti when tracing steps back through time.

In October 1779, American forces accompanied by thousands of black volunteers from St. Domingue fought to take Savannah back from British control. They were unsuccessful, but these volunteers were fighting for America's freedom from British colonial rule even while their own friends and families were still enslaved. Would Americans today give thanks to the descendants of their black freedom fighters? Maybe, if they were taught the whole truth about their fight for liberty.

Eight years after Americans had finally won their independence, slaves in St. Domingue began the largest revolt in history. The Haitian Revolution, as history calls it, further legitimized the American Revolution as another struggle to end colonial rule. It set the stage for future revolutions throughout the Americas. It was also a contributing factor to the Louisiana Purchase. Defeated in the Caribbean, Napoleon was forced to abandon his ambitions for a French presence on the continent of North America.

But the Southern states didn't think highly of an entire nation of free blacks in their backyard, and thus began America's cold shoulder to the Haitians. To this day, the American people just haven't cared that much. The irony is that at the time, the South was deeply concerned about Haiti. For fear of revolutionary ideas spreading, they watched events in Haiti very closely until it became useless after the Civil War.

When President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was forced from power in February 2004, American attention waned within a few weeks. The U.S. State Department claims its policy toward the nation is to "foster and strengthen democracy" but indicates no intention of restoring the democratically elected leader.

Sadly, the inescapable bonds that tie America to Haiti continue to go unappreciated. American apathy toward all things foreign will ensure that. It's just a shame it has to happen to a nation so crucial to our existence. Perhaps if more Americans traveled abroad empathy for other nations would take hold.

State: Haitians Target of Scam
OAKLAND PARK
The Ledger, FL
Friday, October 21, 2005

The owner of a Broward County nursing school allegedly lured Haitian women with advertising in Creole to pay thousands of dollars to attend bogus classes, state authorities said.

The Florida Attorney General's Office filed a consumer protection lawsuit Wednesday against the Eval School of Nursing and its owner, Evaless Cena.

The lawsuit seeks restitution for the school's former students and a \$10,000 fine per student.

Students paid up to \$5,000 in tuition to become licensed practical or registered nurses, but the school was not accredited, according to the lawsuit.

The school, which opened in May 2002, has been closed.

Haiti's Biometric Elections
A High-Tech Experiment in Exclusion
by Andréa Schmidt
The Dominion, Canada's Grassroots Newspaper
October 19, 2005

Top: biometrics are used at Disney World to prevent people from sharing multi-day passes.

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI--A lot of people agree that the upcoming elections in Haiti--the first since Aristide and his government were expelled in the February 29, 2004 coup d'état--are important. Members of the international community who supported the coup agree: Canada's special advisor to Haiti, Denis Coderre, has called them "a crossroads," and "a historical turning point." The Haitian business elite who orchestrated the coup--and who are referred to here without irony as "civil society"--also agree. They see the election as a process through which their people can consolidate power. And many Lavalas activists in both rural and urban parts of the country believe that now that plans for an election are underway, it is a critical moment to demonstrate that they are still the party that represents the poor majority in this country. (Lavalas is the political party of Jean Bertrand Aristide, which held the presidency the majority of Parliament before it was removed from power in a coup led by the US, Canada and France.)

But there is another reason this election process is a significant one--a reason made all the more important because almost no one seems to be talking about it. Haiti is about to experience its first biometric elections.

In order to vote, every Haitian over the age of eighteen must register for a new national identification card, which will replace previous forms of identification. After the elections, the card will become mandatory for all Haitians, linking them to government services and financial records.

Each new card includes both a digital photo and digital fingerprints. At this point, about 2.9 million voters of a possible 4 million have gone to register for their cards at registration offices set up around the country by the Conseil Électoral Provisoire (CEP), with substantial logistical support from the Organization of American States (OAS).

The question of whether or not biometric national ID cards are desirable has not been publicly debated in the Haitian press, by the interim government, or by Haitian society at large. Most discussion on the registration process has focused on its accessibility to the rural and urban poor. One registration office serves all of Cité Soley, and it is positioned on the outskirts of the area. Peasants in some areas of the country have to walk for four or five hours in order just to reach the registration centers. They will have to make the trip again in order to pick up the card once it is ready.

No one seems to be concerned or particularly aware of the ramifications--threats to privacy, government and intergovernmental surveillance--that accompany biometric identification. People look amused when I relate how a biometric national ID card for Canadians was rejected by parliament in 2003 after much outcry about citizens' right to privacy. The card was proposed by Denis Coderre, Canada's immigration minister at the time, who cited its importance for national security after 9/11. Immigration Canada ended up instituting a mandatory national ID card only for immigrants with

permanent resident status. The card has not yet become biometric, though it carries a digitized strip that contains a range of information that helps the Canadian government track permanent residents.

Patrick Féquiere is a member of the CEP, the temporary administrative body that decided to use this election process to institute national biometric identification. He sees the new system as a victory for a country where 450,000 people--primarily the rural poor--are effectively disenfranchised because they do not have any form of state identification at all. These people will finally "exist in the eyes of the state."

It makes sense that in a post-coup elections context characterized by massive unemployment, paramilitary violence and reorganization, police impunity, social violence, and heavy international intervention at all levels of governance, a national debate over biometrics is low on Haiti's list of priorities.

But in spite of the rhetoric of inclusion used by the cards' promoters, the biometric IDs threaten to inaugurate a new and high-tech form of national and hemispheric exclusion for many Haitians.

Biometric identification relies on a computer-driven system that collects unique biological identifiers like fingerprints, retina scans, or digital photos, digitizes them, and stores them in a central database. Each time you present your ID, the computer system checks the identifying data against that which is contained in the database under your name. Other information, such as your date of birth, address, medical history, credit rating, political history, or information collected through surveillance agencies, can also be collected in the database and linked to your identifiers. The information can be shared between governments, which are able cross-reference the data held in different country databases, used to track people entering their country, and to flag people they consider "security risks" or potential terrorists.

A biometric identification system is supposed to make identification more secure by making identity theft--the fraudulent use of someone else's identification to vote, access social services, or cross borders--more difficult.

Critics of such systems cite concerns about the privacy and security of the data collected, and its possible uses by the state to profile, track, and exclude individuals or groups based on their identifiers.

Féquiere claims that the Haitian government does not plan to open its databases to other countries in the hemisphere. But he does say that post-9/11 security considerations influenced the CEP's choice of a high-tech registration system. Moreover, he foresees that when Haitians travel to the US, their biometric ID will be checked against the U.S.'s own biometric registries. (Submitting to digitalized fingerprinting is currently the condition of most foreigners' entry to the US.)

Used in this way, biometric identification on a mandatory identification card could prove dangerous because of the efficiency with which it institutionalizes and exacerbates the double standards and exclusions that stratify not only Haitian society but the globe. Haiti is a country in which people fighting to survive in the poorest slums are profiled as terrorist "chimères", while ex-military commanders responsible for massacres--Jodel Chamblain, for example--move about freely. It is also a trafficking port through which much cocaine enters the United States. As in Colombia, the rhetoric of a

war against drugs is easily employed to profile, terrorize and kill poor people and progressive activists, while notorious members of the cartels, like Guy Philippe, are allowed to run for the presidency, with the silent blessing of international "protectors" like Canada and the United States.

In a global political context in which people like Maher Arar, a Canadian citizen, are already being deported to torture in Syria when they are racially profiled and labeled "terrorist" on a US Flight Watch list, the potential dangers of hemispheric biometric profiling are high.

Haiti's ID cards are being manufactured and digitized out of country, by the Mexican branch of Digimarc, an Oregon-based company that is on the International Foundation for Elections Systems' (IFES) list of suppliers. (IFES works with such organizations as USAID, the National Democratic Institute, and Elections Canada, to provide "targeted technical assistance to strengthen transitional democracies.") Digimarc signed the 1.5 million dollar contract with the OAS, and the company's systems are used throughout the hemisphere. It has produced or is producing biometric voter registration cards for a number of Latin American countries, including Colombia, Honduras, Brazil, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. Additionally, it has created biometric drivers licensing systems for thirty-two states in the U.S.

The collaboration of IFES, Digimarc, and the OAS suggest that "democracy strengthening" programs in countries like Haiti are being used to facilitate the implementation of an integrated hemispheric tracking and surveillance program.

What better way to integrate an entire country into a biometric surveillance program than to sponsor a coup and take advantage of the silence as political repression, human rights abuses, falling revenues and fear of perpetual political instability preoccupy those who might question such a process?

US tells Haiti elections plans late and inadequate

Tue Oct 18, 2005

By Evelyn Leopold

Reuters

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) - The United States urged Haiti on Tuesday to accelerate its organization of general elections, now delayed until mid-December, saying preparations so far had been insufficient.

U.S. Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns told reporters that "the message from my government to the Haitian government is that they need to work with much greater speed and much greater efficiency in organizing these elections."

Burns was speaking after meeting Gerard Latortue, Haiti's interim prime minister, who announced to U.N. ambassadors that elections were now planned between December 11 and 18.

"They are very important elections for the Haitian people and frankly the organization of the elections to date has not been sufficient," Burns said.

Later, the U.N. Security Council in a public meeting, stressed elections should take place this year so a new government could be installed on February 7, 2006.

It too expressed concern "that important challenges to the preparations of the elections remain yet to be overcome" and noted Haitian authorities had not yet published a final list of candidates.

The balloting for president and 129 parliamentary seats was first scheduled for October, then postponed until November 20. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice went to Haiti last month in an effort to urge Haitians to stick to that date.

The elections, to be held under U.N. supervision, will be the first since President Jean-Bertrand Aristide fled into exile in February 2004, faced with an armed revolt and U.S. and French pressure to quit.

An interim government was installed and U.N. peacekeepers were sent to the impoverished Caribbean nation. Political and criminal violence has scarred the country since Aristide's ouster, and instability, a lack of resources and poor planning by the electoral council have delayed the vote.

Burns said Latortue just appointed a new director of elections, who was experienced in organization and management and could set up polling centers and get ballots printed.

Juan Valdes, the top U.N. official in Haiti, told reporters Haiti had made substantial progress in the past 10 days in organizing elections. Diplomats said he was more critical in a closed session with council members, especially on the lack of candidate lists. Continued ...

Border Patrol detains 2 Haitians, U.S. man after boat found in Sea Ranch Lakes

By Robert Nolin

Staff Writer

South Florida Sun-Sentinel

October 18 2005

Federal authorities detained a Haitian couple and a U.S. citizen suspected of smuggling them ashore early Monday morning in Sea Ranch Lakes.

About 7:45 a.m., a condo resident reported that a 1979 22-foot white unmarked Boston Whaler outboard, with center console and oversized fuel tanks, had been abandoned on the beach next to the 4700 block of North Ocean Drive. Sheriff's deputies and officers with the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission investigated.

"We started looking for any people that might be connected to the boat," Sheriff's Office spokesman Hugh Graf said.

"Nobody saw anything. No people were found on the beach," said commission Officer Robert Kuester. "We did find some clothes."

Shortly before 9, Deputy John Stabile saw a woman in wet clothing carrying luggage on a nearby street. As he detained her, Stabile saw a man with a suitcase, also in wet clothing, getting into a 1999 Nissan van. He stopped the van and man who was driving it, a U.S. citizen.

The three, whom police did not identify, were turned over to U.S. Border Patrol agents, who brought them to their station in Pembroke Pines for questioning.

"We're interviewing the U.S. citizen to determine his level of involvement. As of right now, no one has been charged," said Steve McDonald, assistant chief patrol agent for the Border Patrol.

Once the Border Patrol finishes the investigation, the Haitians will be taken to the Krome detention center in south Miami-Dade County, then turned over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"The boat and the van will be processed for seizure," McDonald said. McDonald declined to comment on the boat's point of departure.

Monday's was the third South Florida incident involving Haitian migrants in about six weeks. In late September, 13 Haitians came ashore in two boats in Pompano Beach and Lauderdale-by-the-Sea. At the start of the month, the Coast Guard intercepted 21 Haitians in an undisclosed location off South Florida.

Haitians who make it ashore are more often repatriated than Cubans who do. Under federal policy, Cubans who reach land are typically allowed to stay; those caught at sea are usually returned home.

Robert Nolin can be reached at rnolin@sun-sentinel.com or 954-356-4525.

At Brussels donors' conference for Haiti, UN envoy hopes for emergency fund
UN News Centre
20 October 2005 –

The United Nations Secretary-General's representative in Haiti is in Brussels today for a two-day European Union (EU) donors' conference which he hopes will create an emergency fund for the troubled Caribbean country.

Special Representative Juan Gabriel Valdés, who heads the peacekeeping UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), said international contributions for the country were lagging behind pledges and more money was needed to conduct successful elections later this year.

The UN Security Council urged the Haitian authorities on Tuesday to work with MINUSTAH to develop a phased electoral plan as a matter of priority, with a view to finalizing a feasible electoral calendar. It also urged the Haitian authorities to publish the final list of candidates for the elections and, in consultation with MINUSTAH, agree on a list of voting centres.

In the area of criminal justice, the Council urged the Transitional Government to work with MINUSTAH to put into effect reforms of the Haitian National Police (HNP) and the judicial system. The Council voiced concern over reports that some Haitian police officers were involved in serious crimes and human rights violations and stressed the need to investigate fully any such allegations.

In a formal statement, the Council President for October, Ambassador Gheorghe Dumitru of Romania, also said that while the responsibility for Haiti's future lay with its Government and people, the international community should continue to provide support.

Hurricane Wilma blamed for 10 deaths in Haiti
CTV.ca News Staff
Oct. 18, 2005

Ten deaths in Haiti from mudslides have been blamed on hurricane Wilma, which has been upgraded to a category 2 storm.

Forecasters expect Wilma to grow into a Category 4 storm on a scale of five, with winds of more than 210 kilometres per hour when it crosses from the Caribbean Sea into the Gulf of Mexico on Friday.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center has the storm crossing southern Florida on Saturday -- although a hurricane's path is difficult to predict.

At 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Wilma was centred about 295 km south of Grand Cayman and about 325 km east-northeast of the Nicaragua-Honduras border. It was moving northwest at about 13 km/h.

With maximum sustained winds near 160 km/h, forecasters expect Wilma to further intensify over the next 24 hours.

The storm's outer bands were already causing high winds, rain and surf on the Atlantic coasts of Honduras and Nicaragua.

Emergency crews in Honduras are preparing to evacuate 10,000 people from resort areas potentially exposed to the storm.

"All interests in western Cuba, the Yucatan Peninsula, the Florida Peninsula, and the Florida Keys should monitor the progress of Wilma during the next several days," the U.S. National Hurricane Center said in a public advisory.

The Keys were also planning an exodus.

Forecasters are predicting the storm will travel west and then turn toward the west-northwest, dumping roughly 10 to 15 cm of rain on the Cayman Islands, Jamaica, Haiti, southeastern Cuba and Honduras.

The official long-range track has Wilma crossing the Gulf between southwest Cuba and Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula on Friday, before curving east toward Florida's southern Gulf coast over the weekend.

"There's no scenario now that takes it toward Louisiana or Mississippi, but that could change," Max Mayfield, director of the Hurricane Center told The Associated Press.

Prompting fears the hurricane could move in on the Gulf Coast, which has already been battered this year by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Dennis, New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin warned residents they must be prepared for yet another evacuation.

On Monday, Wilma entered the history books as the season's 21st named storm, matching a 72-year-old record for the highest number of Atlantic storms in a single season.

The last time this many storms formed since record-keeping began 154 years ago was in 1933.

Having become the season's 12th hurricane, Wilma also ties a 1969 record for the most hurricanes in one term.

The six-month hurricane season ends Nov. 30.

Group To Help Children In Haiti
CD98.9 Norfolk Music
Newsroom on 2005/10/20

A group of Angels are on their way to Haiti to help make the lives of children happier and healthier. Tanya Jones, Marlene Magashazi, and Elizabeth Pais from Oxford County created the Angels for Haiti group back in February when they first travelled to Coram Deo, an orphanage and school. The now ten member group will be leaving for Port-Au-Prince again on the 24th (Oct) where they will build a playground, and nurse critically ill children. Hundreds of pounds of supplies have been gathered for their trip, but at this point the group needs 500 pillowcases to move and distribute the supplies. Angels for Haiti are asking local residents to donate pillowcases that will be filled with rice, beans, and powdered milk. If you are able to make a donation please call Marlene at 519-879-6602

UN Peacekeepers Still Abusing Women, Says Report
Feminist Daily News Wire
October 20, 2005

Despite recent international attention to the problem, United Nations peacekeepers are still sexually exploiting and abusing women in the countries in which they serve, according to a report released yesterday by Refugees International. The report, "Must Boys Be Boys?," was prepared by Sarah Martin, who visited peacekeeping missions in Haiti and Liberia.

As Martin writes in her executive summary, "Since the bulk of personnel in peacekeeping missions are men, a hyper-masculine culture that encourages sexual exploitation and abuse and a tradition of silence have evolved within them." The majority of complaints heard by Refugees International were about expatriate men, both UN employees and others, carrying on "inappropriate relationships" (such as paying for sex) with local women. In a press briefing Tuesday, reported by the New York Times, Martin said that rapes were often considered merely an outcome of prostitution.

The report's recommendations include increasing female representation among the UN troops and in senior management positions, setting up an independent watchdog organization and mandatory training programs on gender issues, improving access to the UN complaint process, and conducting programs to empower local women in post-combat areas.

Earlier this year, Prince Zeid Raad al-Hussein, Jordan's ambassador to the UN, reported that UN peacekeepers in the Congo were having sex with women and girls in exchange for food and money, and in some cases committing rape. At the Tuesday briefing, he said that influential member states of the United Nations had greeted his report with "utter silence," the Times reports.

Report Charges that UN Soldiers Covering Up Sexual Exploitation, Rape and Abuse
LifeSiteNews.com
October 20, 2005

NEW YORK— A report released Tuesday reveals that UN peacekeepers involved in overseas missions often cover up instances of sexual exploitation, abuse, and rape by fellow soldiers in what the report calls a “boys will be boys” attitude.

“A ‘boys will be boys’ attitude in peacekeeping missions breeds tolerance for exploiting and abusing local women,” wrote Sarah Martin, author of the report titled, *Must Boys Be Boys? Ending Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in UN Peacekeeping Missions*. “This attitude is slowly changing, but the UN must go beyond rhetoric and ensure that the resources needed to change this culture are available.”

The advocacy group Refugees International, who commissioned the report, relied on information from UN peacekeeping missions in Liberia and Haiti as examples, arguing that a “hyper-masculine culture” has evolved that breeds a “wall of silence” that bonds together members to protect them from outside criticism. “Even in countries where it is illegal, solicitation of prostitutes by men in post-conflict countries is treated as commonplace,” a release explained. “Employees are reluctant to report sexual misconduct by colleagues due to fear of recrimination from within the system. UN employees confirm that many do not truly buy into the UN’s official policy of zero tolerance and zero contact.”

UN peacekeepers have been accused of sexual abuse in missions from Bosnia and Kosovo to Cambodia, East Timor, Somalia, West Africa and Congo. Last year the UN investigated approximately 150 allegations of sexual abuse by UN staff and peacekeepers in the Congo, including rape, prostitution and pedophilia.

“Until there is a better understanding of the zero contact rule, peacekeepers will continue to think of it as a rule that makes no sense,” Martin stated. “Fear of punishment is not enough to ensure compliance.”

Refugees International said that Liberians regularly complained to them about the problem. A Liberian man told them in an interview, “This behaviour would not be acceptable in the home country of these soldiers. Why are these soldiers playing around with our children?”

In Liberia, where the UN Undersecretary general made bars off-limits because of terrible behaviour by UN troops and staff, “people started having parties in private homes,” Martin said. “It was still going on, it just wasn’t publicly visible. People just stopped going to those bars and discos but the behaviour didn’t change.”

Undersecretary general Jean-Marie Guehenno said that UN staff have yet to understand the meaning of zero tolerance. “It’s an ongoing battle,” she said, according to a Yahoo News report. “It’s not going to be resolved quickly.”

UN peacekeeping chief urges States to police their troops against sex abuse
UN News Centre
21 October 2005 –

Pledging further action to root out sexual abuse by peacekeepers, a senior United Nations official has urged countries contributing troops to the world body's operations to do their part to end the scourge.

Over the past 20 months, more than 221 peacekeepers have been investigated, 10 civilians have been fired and over 88 uniformed personnel repatriated, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Jean-Marie Guéhenno told the General Assembly's Special Political and Decolonization (Fourth) Committee on Thursday.

The UN has established conduct and discipline units at Headquarters and in eight missions to put in place preventive strategies to ensure that sexual abuse and exploitation is eradicated, he said.

"Ultimately, the eradication of sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping missions depends on your enforcement of established standards among the personnel you deploy to peacekeeping missions," he stressed, urging countries to hold their commanders accountable for enforcing standards in the field.

"We will likewise hold to account mission managers," he pledged.

"The Department will need your continued commitment to rid UN peacekeeping of these shameful acts, which include the solicitation of prostitutes," he added. "I mention this because it is clear that not all personnel have understood this. Please help us get this message across."

With 18 peace operations consisting of 83,000 troops, police and civilian staff currently deployed around the world, the UN peacekeeping's (DPKO) capacity has increased by five times since 2000, and has successfully completed its mandate in Sierra Leone, and Timor-Leste, and is currently responding to the complex situation in Côte d'Ivoire, and Kosovo, Mr. Guéhenno said.

"In 2005 alone we will have supported the organization of elections in 5 post-conflict countries: Afghanistan, Burundi, Haiti, Liberia, and soon the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)," as well as comprehensive disarmament in DRC and Haiti, he said.

The Under-Secretary-General also noted that dedicated personnel operate in an environment of constant budget shortfalls and maximize their resources. "We run the leanest field operations organization in the world," he said.

Pastor with local ties killed in Haiti
By KIRK SWAUGER
The Tribune Democrat, Johnstown, PA
Somerset —

A Haitian minister with close ties to Somerset and Cambria counties was ambushed and killed outside his home in the violent, impoverished Caribbean nation Wednesday.

The Rev. Raymond Deshomme believed it was God's calling to leave his established church in northern Haiti to spread the Gospel farther south in the voodoo village of Mahotte. Reports indicate Deshomme was driving his wife to work when a gang pulled him from his pickup and shot him behind a building.

Somerset church leaders said another pastor in the village, the Rev. St. Hilaire Faniel, has gone into hiding.

Always energetic and enthusiastic, "Pastor Raymond," as he was known, became the driving force behind Calvary Christian Center in Haiti. He established strong relationships with medical and spiritual missionary groups from churches in Somerset and Johnstown.

"Pastor Raymond was the smallest giant I ever met," said the Rev. Gary Tustin, senior pastor at Greater Johnstown Christian Fellowship in Richland Township.

"He stands so tall in Port-au-Prince for Jesus Christ."

Tustin said he is convinced Deshomme was slain for his beliefs.

"The emphasis I'm hearing is it probably was not as much civil as it was Christian," said Tustin, who has spearheaded pastoral leadership conferences in Haiti for the past 13 years, along with medical missions and vacation Bible schools.

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Somerset has been sending medical mission teams to Deshomme's church for a decade. In return, Deshomme has visited the Somerset congregation for the past five or six years.

Dave Battista of Somerset, a member of St. Paul's, said Deshomme always was like long-lost family.

"You wonder what God is doing and why, but we can never really answer that," Battista said. "Did Pastor Raymond work hard enough and suffer long enough on Earth that God took him home?"

"I'm still in shock," added Dr. Ken VanAntwerp of Somerset, who has gone on 10 missionary trips to Mahotte.

"He was just such an upbeat and personal guy. He always had a smile. You could tell from his personality that he really had a passion for the Lord."

The Rev. Keith Fink, pastor at St. Paul's, said he will remember Deshomme's generous welcomes and saddened goodbyes.

After picking up missionary teams at the airport, Deshomme would open his home to them while he and his family slept in a large cardboard box in the back yard.

Fink described him as "highly, highly energetic, always running, always on the go."

Dr. Jan deVries of Boswell, who went on six missions with St. Paul's and two others to Mahotte, remembered hiking up a 3,000-foot mountain with Deshomme to provide medical care to villagers in nearby Doco II.

On the way down, the group of missionaries wondered whether they were having an impact amid the rampant poverty and despair.

" 'God does his work in his time and his way,' " deVries recalled Deshomme telling them. " 'We're just tools in his hands.' "

Tustin said his church purchased the property for Calvary Christian Center, while Somerset businessman Bill Riggs drilled a well and members of St. Paul's helped build pews.

Doctors on the missionary teams from St. Paul's cared for malnourished children and people with skin and fungal infections. Others on the trips handed out eyeglasses or taught children the Bible.

While Haiti is 96 percent Christian – 80 percent Catholic, 16 percent Protestant – the 2005 World Almanac says voodoo is "widely practiced." The country remains politically fractured following the ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004. Often-delayed elections now are scheduled for December.

Despite the dangers of his work, Deshomme lived by a simple philosophy:

"Tangan pan," he would say. Creole for, "No problem."

Would-be candidate fights for chance to change Haiti
Dual citizenship puts Simeus run in doubt
By Indira A.R. Lakshmanan, Globe Staff
Boston Globe |
October 19, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- Dumarsais Simeus, the son of illiterate Haitian rice farmers, overcame daunting obstacles to study in the United States and rise to run a \$2 billion US-based food empire.

Now, Simeus, 66, is back in his impoverished homeland and says he wants to do for Haiti what he has done for several businesses: fix what's broken, create jobs, generate wealth. But he faces odds that may be more intractable than those of any in his rags-to-riches life.

Two months after Simeus declared he was running for Haiti's presidency, his candidacy is in peril. Following a ruling last week by the Haitian Supreme Court that Simeus, a naturalized US citizen, should be on the ballot for upcoming elections, a newly formed commission is expected to counter as early as today that his dual nationality bars him from running.

"I represent major change. I am independent," Simeus, the former president and chief operating officer of TLC Beatrice Foods who later founded his own international food company, said in an interview yesterday. "We need to get rid of the status quo, dirty tricks, and corruption.

"If somebody is a Haitian and has a passport here and a passport there, who cares? This country is broken. Let the people choose who can fix it," he said.

The election is seen as a critical moment for the country, which has been without an elected leader since President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was ousted in 2004. Simeus, a political novice who started a foundation six years ago to provide medical care and clean water in his hometown, has become nationally known through radio and television interviews over the last two months. He has presented himself as a homegrown Horatio Alger, a man of the people.

But the electoral process has been marred by delays in registering voters, violence in the capital, infighting among the electoral commission, and disputes over candidates' eligibility. Scheduled for next month, the vote for president as well as more than 1,000 local, municipal, and legislative offices is expected to be delayed until December or January.

Some 22 presidential candidates were scratched from the ballot last month, including Simeus and the Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste, a popular Catholic priest and Aristide ally who has been jailed by the interim government. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice criticized the decision to bar the two men's candidacies, urging the government to ensure "open, fair, and inclusive presidential elections."

Last Tuesday, the nation's Supreme Court overturned the exclusion of Simeus, concluding that despite becoming a US citizen in 1970, he never lost his Haitian citizenship.

Interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue criticized the court's decision, saying the electoral commission should be the final arbiter.

Yesterday, Simeus railed against the entrenched political powers in Haiti, asserting that Latortue and other powerbrokers are trying to block his candidacy because they are afraid of radical changes he says he would bring to wipe out privileges that favor the elite. Continued...

Would-be candidate fights for chance to change Haiti

Dual citizenship puts Simeus run in doubt

By Indira A.R. Lakshmanan, Globe Staff |

October 19, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- Dumarsais Simeus, the son of illiterate Haitian rice farmers, overcame daunting obstacles to study in the United States and rise to run a \$2 billion US-based food empire.

Now, Simeus, 66, is back in his impoverished homeland and says he wants to do for Haiti what he has done for several businesses: fix what's broken, create jobs, generate wealth. But he faces odds that may be more intractable than those of any in his rags-to-riches life.

Two months after Simeus declared he was running for Haiti's presidency, his candidacy is in peril. Following a ruling last week by the Haitian Supreme Court that Simeus, a naturalized US citizen, should be on the ballot for upcoming elections, a newly formed commission is expected to counter as early as today that his dual nationality bars him from running.

"I represent major change. I am independent," Simeus, the former president and chief operating officer of TLC Beatrice Foods who later founded his own international food company, said in an interview yesterday. "We need to get rid of the status quo, dirty tricks, and corruption.

"If somebody is a Haitian and has a passport here and a passport there, who cares? This country is broken. Let the people choose who can fix it," he said.

The election is seen as a critical moment for the country, which has been without an elected leader since President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was ousted in 2004. Simeus, a political novice who started a foundation six years ago to provide medical care and clean water in his hometown, has become nationally known through radio and television interviews over the last two months. He has presented himself as a homegrown Horatio Alger, a man of the people.

But the electoral process has been marred by delays in registering voters, violence in the capital, infighting among the electoral commission, and disputes over candidates' eligibility. Scheduled for next month, the vote for president as well as more than 1,000 local, municipal, and legislative offices is expected to be delayed until December or January.

Some 22 presidential candidates were scratched from the ballot last month, including Simeus and the Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste, a popular Catholic priest and Aristide ally who has been jailed by the interim government. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice criticized the decision to bar the two men's candidacies, urging the government to ensure "open, fair, and inclusive presidential elections."

Last Tuesday, the nation's Supreme Court overturned the exclusion of Simeus, concluding that despite becoming a US citizen in 1970, he never lost his Haitian citizenship.

Interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue criticized the court's decision, saying the electoral commission should be the final arbiter.

Yesterday, Simeus railed against the entrenched political powers in Haiti, asserting that Latortue and other powerbrokers are trying to block his candidacy because they are afraid of radical changes he says he would bring to wipe out privileges that favor the elite.

Page 2 of 2 --Ordinary Haitians, whether or not they favor him as a candidate, admit that Simeus's life story is an inspiration, not only for 2 million Haitians who live in the United States and send hundreds of millions of dollars home annually, but for the majority of 8 million Haitians here who struggle to afford one meal a day.

As The eldest of 12 children born in a two-room hut to peasants in the western town of Pont-Sonde, Simeus recounts dreaming of sailing for a new life in America. He attended a parochial high school in Port-au-Prince, later earning admission to Florida A&M University in Tallahassee. Simeus says he worked his way through school with menial jobs at factories and restaurants, eventually graduating from Howard University and the University of Chicago business school.

Simeus climbed the corporate ladder at companies including Atari Inc. and Rockwell International, eventually rising to the top ranks of Beatrice, a \$2 billion multinational corporation. In 1996, he founded a Texas-based food manufacturing company with \$160 million in annual sales, whose clients include Burger King, T.G.I. Fridays, and Denny's.

Over the years he has brought 40 relatives to the United States, but insists that his roots and soul remain in Haiti, where his parents live. "I have been coming back always. . . There is no one in the political elite who speaks Creole [the language of Haiti's majority] as well as I do."

"I'm here because my country has suffered too long. I want people who look like me and who look like my wife," his American spouse, Kimberly, who is white, "to have the same opportunities. . . . I don't want the privileged class [of any color] to have a monopoly on all the opportunities," he said.

In other countries, expatriates have run for high office. Naturalized American Valdas Adamkus was elected president of Lithuania, though he later renounced his US passport.

In Honduras, President Ricardo Maduro's candidacy was challenged but upheld, after it was revealed he was born in Panama and acquired Honduran nationality at age 36. Former world soccer star George Weah is running for the presidency of Liberia, despite controversy over his adopted French nationality.

Asked what he will do if the electoral commission overturns the Supreme Court's ruling, Simeus replied: "Don't think I'm going to pack my bag and leave. . . . I bet you 99 percent of the people in this country don't even know what the term double-nationality means, and they don't care."

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Interventions to improve child survival are not reaching the poorest children

Child Health News

News-Medical.Net

Thursday, 20-Oct-2005

Interventions to improve child survival are not reaching the poorest children that need them the most, concludes an article in this week's issue of The Lancet.

In most low-income countries, coverage rates for child-survival interventions are low, and millions of children die every year from diseases for which there are effective interventions.

Cesar Victora (Federal University of Pelotas, Brazil) and colleagues looked at whether interventions, such as vitamin A supplements, safe water and immunisations, reached mothers and children in nine low and middle income countries. Researchers analysed data from Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Cambodia, Eritrea, Malawi, Nepal, and Nicaragua. The investigators found that though there are many child survival strategies running in each country, inequity is rife, with some children receiving no intervention and others receiving many. They also found that children from the poorest families received fewer interventions than their wealthier peers. In Cambodia, 31% of children received no intervention and 17% only one intervention. In Haiti, these figures were 15% and 17%, respectively. The researchers found that countries with higher rates of coverage had less inequity than those with lower coverage rates.

Professor Victora states: "Most of the interventions studied have been available for several decades. The fact that many children do not receive any intervention is a painful example of social exclusion as applied to child survival?New interventions are on the horizon for widespread dissemination but are likely to reach the same children who are already protected. Packaging several interventions through a single delivery strategy, while making economic sense, could contribute to increased inequities unless population coverage is high."

"That one in every two poor children in Cambodia, or one in every three in Haiti, do not receive more than a single cost-effective preventive intervention is simply unacceptable," he adds.

<http://www.thelancet.com>

'Electoral Cleansing' in Haiti Violates Human Rights and Democracy

by Brian Concannon Jr.

ZNet

October 17, 2005

Americas Program, International Relations Center (IRC)

Haiti is in the midst of a comprehensive program of electoral cleansing.

Its ballots are being cleansed of political dissidents, its voting rolls cleansed of the urban and rural poor. The streets are being cleansed of anti-government political activity.

This cleansing violates the fundamental human rights guaranteed by the charters and other instruments of the OAS and the UN. It also violates the electoral standards that are applied in other countries, and that were applied to elections run by Haiti's constitutional governments. The persecution and disenfranchisement of political opponents is being conducted openly, notoriously, and under the eyes of the international community. The persecution is not the result of a government unable to assure adequate security, but of a deliberate and multifaceted campaign against opponents by Haiti's Interim Government. This government's primary benefactor is the American taxpayer.

Haiti's ballots have been cleansed by prohibiting or discouraging political opponents, especially supporters of the ousted constitutional government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide. In some cases this has been done by the application of rules that appear neutral on the surface, but have a targeted impact. For example, all presidential candidates were required to register in person by September 15, but only Lavalas candidates could not meet this requirement because they were in jail. Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste, widely believed to be the most popular potential candidate, was arrested without a warrant two months ago, on July 21. He has been held since then on trumped-up charges, despite a call for his release issued by twenty-nine members of the U.S. House of Representatives led by Rep. Waters and echoed by Amnesty International, Human Rights First, and hundreds of religious, community, and human rights leaders throughout the world.

Yvon Neptune, Haiti's last constitutional Prime Minister, has been in prison since May 2004. U.S. Ambassador James Foley, in his last address before leaving Haiti in August, called Mr. Neptune's detention "a violation of human rights, an injustice, and an abuse of power." He aptly contrasted Prime Minister Neptune's treatment with the expedited release of death squad leader and convicted murderer Jodel Chamblain at the same time. Although formal charges were finally announced against Mr. Neptune on September 19, the charges resulted from a long process packed with irregularities.

Less prominent dissidents have been imprisoned explicitly for being "close to the former regime." All these arrests directly limit the arrestees' political activities, but more important, each political arrest dissuades many others from participating in politics.

While the most likely Presidential candidate has been excluded, an unlikely 54 candidates from 45 parties have filed. This is a sign not of confidence in the elections, but a widespread belief that the vote may be so undemocratic that almost anyone might win. The announced candidates include top officials of past dictatorships, a paramilitary leader identified as a drug trafficker by the United States, and an

American citizen and Texas resident running despite bars in two independent clauses of the Constitution.

The Haitian government has also cleansed electoral rolls by discouraging voters through political persecution and by imposing hurdles that disproportionately affect poorer Haitians. With the end of the third prolongation of the registration period approaching, only about 2.4 million of Haiti's 4.5 million eligible voters have registered.

This low registration rate -- despite non-electoral incentives including making voter registration a requirement for obtaining a national ID card, passport, or driver's license -- has resulted in grand part from a lack of coverage of electoral services in the nation. Whereas Haiti's democratic governments provided over 10,000 voter registration offices and polling places for elections, the Interim Government plans to install only 424. This figure is worth comparing to Los Angeles County, which has a slightly larger population than Haiti but only 37% of the land area and infinitely better private and public transportation. L.A. County expects to have about 4,400 polling places for its November elections -- over ten times what Haiti expects.

The insufficiency of polling and registration offices, like most burdens in Haiti, falls heaviest on the urban and rural poor. By mid-July, half-way through the registration period, there were three registration offices in Petionville, an upscale suburb, and three in the entire Central Plateau department, a large rural district. To this day, there is not one registration office in Cite Soleil, a poor, urban neighborhood of 300,000 inhabitants. Similarly Bel-Air, another poor neighborhood, currently has only one registration office.

Public spaces have also been cleansed of anti-government political activity through a combination of explicit government policies and brutal police attacks. On September 17, the Interim Government issued an order prohibiting all demonstrations until October 2. This order is as unconstitutional in Haiti as it would be in the United States. It is a general hindrance to organizing for the elections, but it is particularly targeted at a large demonstration previously announced by government critics for next Friday, September 30, to commemorate the anniversary of the first coup d'etat against President Aristide in 1991.

Over and over again, the Haitian police have responded to legal anti-government demonstrations with lethal force. On May 18, 2004 the police violently closed down a demonstration on the grounds that they had not been notified -- pretext they were forced to retract a few days later. On February 28 of this year, police shot into a peaceful demonstration in full view of the international press and United Nations Peacekeepers.

The August 20 soccer massacre in the Grande Ravine neighborhood is illustrative of both the Haitian police's brutality and the futility of trying to reform the Haitian government by feeding it guns and money. Police accompanied by machete-wielding civilians attacked a soccer crowd of thousands, shooting or hacking to death at least six and as many as thirty spectators.

Our tax dollars were at both ends of the killing. The soccer game was sponsored by a USAID program, to promote peace in the neighborhood. The United States also sponsors the killers, the Haitian National Police, by providing guns and weapons despite a consistent history of police killings over the last eighteen months. When the House of Representatives passed Rep. Barbara Lee's resolution to block arms transfers on June 28, the State Department responded by announcing on August 9 that it would send \$1.9 million worth of guns and other equipment to the police, before the elections and presumably before the Senate could vote on the resolution.

There has been much discussion about whether Fanmi Lavalas, Haiti's largest and most popular party, will participate in the upcoming elections. The party's official position has been that the current high level of political repression makes fair elections impossible. Because the international community appears eager to place its seal of approval on elections in November, no matter how unfair, the party is faced with a dilemma. It can either risk legitimizing a patently unfair process by participating in it, or it can refuse to participate and let electees who do not represent the Haitian people run the country for the next 2-5 years. This is truly a choice of two evils, and the fact that the party chooses one over the other does not make either less evil.

What should the United States do about this situation? Passage of Rep. Lee's ban on arms transfers to the police as long as they continue persecuting is a good start. Congress should also inform the Interim Government that it will not accept the results of any elections that are not free and fair, nor will it provide continued financial support unless the persecution stops.

Rep. Waters' proposed amendment to H.R. 2601 provides solid standards for evaluating conditions as the elections approach. It asks for, among other things, adequate security, disarmament of paramilitary groups, and trials or release for the political prisoners.

Policy Recommendations to Ensure Fair Elections in Haiti

- Monitor distribution of polling places and delivery of voting cards.
- Review and denounce the Interim Government's attempts to limit the constitutionally-guaranteed right to assembly.
- Insist on the release of all political prisoners, and defend the right of opposition members to register and campaign for office.
- Ban arms transfers to the Haitian police as long as they continue persecuting.
- Demand a climate for fair elections through adequate security and disarmament of paramilitary groups.

The following issues also deserve particular attention:

1) Right to Vote: Congress should continue to look at the number of polling places, and their distribution. Monitoring is needed to assure that those who have registered actually receive their cards, especially in the poor urban and rural areas. No voting cards have been delivered yet, and when delivery begins, any problems with the delivery system may disproportionately affect the poor.

2) Right to Organize: Congress should look at both de jure and de facto attempts to limit the constitutionally-guaranteed right to assembly, starting with next Friday's demonstrations.

3) Right to Campaign: Congress should also continue to follow the cases of political prisoners, and insist that they be released from prison and allowed to register and campaign for office. Special vigilance is needed to denounce forms of intimidation of dissident politicians that fall short of actual imprisonment.

It is tempting, when confronted with the complexity of the challenges facing Haiti, to look for shortcuts -- accepting expedients not recognized in the constitution or candidates who are only slightly unconstitutional, or having elections for the sake of getting them done. But Haiti's history shows that shortcuts are not the solution to the country's problems, but the cause. In 200 years of independence, nearly every conceivable alternative to constitutional democracy has been tried in Haiti: an empire, a kingdom, foreign occupations and foreign puppets, Presidents for Life, Interim Presidents, "governments of national unity," military dictatorships, paramilitary dictatorships. All have brought increasing misery to Haiti's people.

Haiti needs better things from America than guns, impatience, and double standards. We can help our oldest neighbor with its complex challenges because we have overcome similar challenges ourselves throughout our history. Our Civil War is still the standard by which all political violence in the hemisphere falls short. The struggle to extend equal voting, eating, and transportation rights to all citizens was long, polarizing, and sometimes violent. Our experience in grappling with these issues should provide valuable experience to share, but should also provide the humility to accept that Haiti's citizens may not always vote, and their representatives not always govern, exactly as we want them to.

Brian Concannon Jr. is the Director of the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti, and is an analyst for the International Relations Center's Americas Program www.americas.irc-online.org. This text is based on his presentation before the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Legislative Forum Panel on September 22, 2005

Venezuela, Paraguay and Haiti the “most corrupt”

MercoPress

Mercosur

Wednesday, 19 October 2005

Several Latinamerican countries, mainly Venezuela, Paraguay and Haiti, figure among the group of countries perceived to be the most corrupt in the world, according to a Corruption Perceptions Index, (CPI) report by the Berlin based Transparency International released Tuesday.

The Transparency International report which includes 159 countries underlines that “corruption isn’t a natural disaster: it is the cold, calculated theft of opportunity from the men, women and children who are least able to protect themselves”.

David Nussbaum, TI’s Chief Executive added that “leaders must go beyond lip service and make good on their promises to provide the commitment and resources to improve governance, transparency and accountability”.

More than two-thirds of the 159 nations surveyed in Transparency International’s 2005 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) scored less than 5 out of a clean score of 10, indicating serious levels of corruption in a majority of the countries surveyed.

According to the report Venezuela ranks 130 (2,3); Paraguay 144 (2,1) and Haiti 155 (1,8).

In Latinamerica the country best placed is Chile, 21 (7,3) followed by Uruguay, 38 (5,9) and Costa Rica 51 (4,2). Other outstanding members of the region have the following ranking: Cuba 59 (3,4); Brazil 62 (3,7); Peru 65 (3,5) and Argentina 97 (2,8). United States stands 17 (7,6) and United Kingdom 11 (8,6).

The Western Hemisphere country rated least corrupt was Canada which figures 14, (8,4), although there has been a slight retraction from last year.

Among the leading countries in the world, China figures 78; Japan 21; South Korea and Italy 40, while New Zealand and Australia outstand among those perceived as less corrupt in positions 2 and 9.

Chad, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Turkmenistan and Haiti (all below 2) figure among the most corrupt in the world, and at the other extreme Iceland 9,7; Finland 9,6; New Zealand 9,6 and Denmark 9,5 out of 10 points.

The TI Corruption Perceptions Index, CPI, is a composite survey, reflecting the perceptions of business people and country analysts, both resident and non-resident. It draws on 16 different polls from 10 independent institutions. For a country to be included, it must feature in at least 3 polls. As a result, a number of countries – including some which could be among the most corrupt – are missing because not enough survey data is available.

TI is advised in relation to the CPI by a group of international specialists. The statistical work on the index was coordinated by Professor Graf Lambsdorff.

Finally TI urges the following actions: By lower-income countries: Increase resources and political will for anti-corruption efforts. Enable greater public access to information about budgets, revenue and expenditure.

By higher-income countries: combine increased aid with support for recipient-led reforms. Reduce tied aid, which limits local opportunities and ownership of aid programmes.

By all countries: promote strong coordination among governments, the private sector and civil society to increase efficiency and sustainability in anti-corruption and good governance efforts. Ratify, implement and monitor existing anti-corruption conventions in all countries to establish international norms. These include, the UN Convention against Corruption, the OECD Anti-bribery Convention, and the regional conventions of the African Union and the Organization of American States

Guard tied to refugee case

A Miami-Dade corrections officer was charged with helping illegal immigrants sneak into the country.

BY JANETTE NEUWAHL

Miami Herald

October 19, 2005

A correctional officer who works for the Miami-Dade County Jail was arrested on charges of bringing illegal immigrants into the country, the U.S. Department of Justice announced late Tuesday.

Officials arrested Max Nadime Deus, 41, a three-year officer at Miami's Pre-Trial Detention Center, on Tuesday.

His arrest came a day after the man's brother, Agly Deus, and a person named Bethie Simeon, were taken into custody near a beach in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea.

Law enforcement officials learned Monday that Haitian natives Agly Deus and Simeon were smuggled into South Florida aboard a 22-foot Boston Whaler left on the beach.

There may be three others who sneaked into the U.S. from Haiti and were not caught, officials said.

Broward Sheriff's deputies discovered the illegal entry after calls came from residents around 7:30 a.m. Monday questioning why the Whaler was abandoned on the beach.

The boat was found in the 5200 block of State Road A1A.

Deputies caught up with the three at about 8:50 a.m., when they saw two people walking from the beach towards a Publix supermarket in the 4700 block of A1A.

They watched Deus' brother and Simeon get into a minivan driven by Deus, prosecutors said.

BSO deputies stopped the van after it left the parking lot and questioned the three.

With the help of the U.S. Border Patrol, authorities learned that the two refugees were smuggled into the country.

They also discovered Deus knew the two were entering illegally, according to prosecutors.

Deus was released Tuesday after posting \$100,000 bond.

If convicted of transporting illegal immigrants, Deus faces a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

2 Haitians in custody after landing on beach

Broward Sheriff's Office and U.S. Border Patrol officers detained two Haitian migrants after they came ashore Monday in Broward County.

BY DIANA MOSKOVITZ

Miami Herald

October 18, 2005

Two Haitian migrants were in custody after the pair came ashore on a 22-foot Boston Whaler with an outboard motor in Sea Ranch Lakes on Monday morning.

A U.S. citizen was questioned and released after authorities say he tried picking them up.

The U.S. Border Patrol is investigating possible human trafficking, spokesman Steve McDonald said. The agency also heard from witnesses that up to three other people may have been on the boat, but they have not been found so far, McDonald said.

The migrants and the U.S. citizen spent most of Monday at the Border Patrol office in Pembroke Pines, McDonald said. The migrants will be turned over to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, McDonald said. Authorities did not identify any of the people involved, none of whom had yet been charged.

The boat landed along the beach in the 5200 block of State Road A1A. The Broward Sheriff's Office went to the scene after a person reported the abandoned boat, BSO spokesman Hugh Graf said. The first deputy arrived at about 7:22 a.m., Graf said.

At about 8:50 a.m., a deputy spotted the man and woman from the boat in the 4700 block of A1A with another person trying to pick them up, Graf said. The three were taken to the BSO substation in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea and then turned over to Border Patrol.

The boat was not registered in the United States, Graf said.

Along with BSO and the Border Patrol, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection also responded.

A life jacket was found on the beach, Fish and Wildlife spokesman Willie Puz said. Inside the boat were wet clothes and three blue barrels, he said.

Two of the barrels were empty, but the third still contained fuel, according to the state Department of Environmental Protection.

McDonald said the 1999 Nissan van used to try and pick up the migrants also was seized.

Terry Kettering said she saw the boat already empty at about 6:30 a.m., while she exercised in her building's pool overlooking the beach. Kettering started toward the boat but then decided to leave it alone, she said.

"I thought maybe it belonged to someone in the building, although I had never seen it before," Kettering said.

As the boat sat there through the day and into the afternoon before eventually getting moved, residents and tourists stopped by to take a peek.

Party called key to vote
By Reed Lindsay
Special to the Miami Herald
October 18, 2005

It doesn't have an official candidate in Haiti's presidential election, but the Lavalas Party is still expected to play a decisive role. Right now, it is split among backing two independent candidates.

PORT-AU-PRINCE - Some 20 months after the ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, his Lavalas Family party may be the decisive factor in the upcoming presidential election even though it doesn't have an official candidate, analysts say.

No publicly available polls have been conducted in Haiti, but Lavalas is believed to still dominate the political landscape because of its identification with the vast majority of Haitians who are poor.

"The masses in this country are still Lavalas," said Marcus Garcia, a veteran journalist who runs Radio Melodie and the weekly newspaper Haiti en Marche. ``With Aristide gone, everybody wants a piece of the cake, a piece of Lavalas."

Lavalas registered no candidate of its own for the elections, set for Nov. 20 but almost certain to be postponed at least until December. And the party is now split between those backing two officially independent candidates, former Prime Minister Marc Bazin and former President René Preval.

"Bazin has the support of the Lavalas bureaucrats, but Preval has the support of the grass roots," Garcia said.

In 1990, Bazin, considered the darling of Washington, faced off against Aristide in Haiti's first democratic elections. Aristide trounced him, but less than eight months later he was ousted in a military coup. From 1992 to 1993, Bazin served as prime minister under the military regime, and later served as planning minister after Aristide was re-elected in 2000.

SEEKS ARISTIDE RETURN

Bazin, now running on the ticket of his own Movement for the Establishment of Democracy in Haiti (MIDH) party, is appealing to Aristide supporters. He is calling for an end to what he sees as persecution of Lavalas partisans by the current U.S.-backed interim government. He has promised to free prisoners that he alleges are detained for political motives and to bring back Aristide, now living in exile in South Africa.

"The constitution is clear," said Bazin, who describes himself as a social democrat. ``It does not allow Haitians to be in exile, and we will start with Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who is the one the people love the most."

The Bush administration is adamantly opposed to the return of Aristide, accused by U.S. officials of tolerating drug trafficking, corruption and rights abuses.

Bazin has received the backing of prominent Lavalas politicians, such as former Sens. Gerard Gilles and Yvon Feuille and The Rev. Yvon Massac, considered a confidant of Aristide. As his campaign kicked off last Sunday, Bazin packed the former president's Aristide Foundation for Democracy with hundreds of party members.

But it is not clear whether Aristide, who has been silent so far from his exile, supports Bazin. Nor is it clear how much influence Aristide still wields over his party.

MYSTERIOUS PREVAL

For his part, Preval remains something of an enigma. He has not spoken to the media or made any public appearance for years, and has remained in seclusion since registering his candidacy. During his 1996-2001 presidency, Preval was characterized by his detractors as being a puppet of Aristide, but he was also praised for being an honest and efficient administrator who spurned the wrangling and strong-armed methods typical of Haitian politics.

But Preval seems to be popular among Haiti's majority poor. Last week, more than 1,000 residents of the desperately poor slum of Cité Soleil marched past cinder block homes and fetid canals under a scorching sun to back Preval.

"Preval is sensitive to people in the poor neighborhoods," said marcher Emanuel Joseph, 24, who has been unemployed since being fired from the state-owned telephone company after Aristide's ouster. "He did a good thing in the country already. So now the people will choose him the second time."

THE POPULAR VOTE

Ultimately, the election will be decided not by party leaders or even grass-roots militants, but by the millions of Haitian peasants and slum dwellers who in the past identified with Lavalas as a popular movement, according to Robert Fatton, a Haiti expert at the University of Virginia.

"Nobody can win this election without getting the Lavalas vote, or what was the Lavalas vote," Fatton said. "Lavalas is really a movement. It's essentially the popular vote, the lower middle class and poor people. But it's still hard to tell just where that large portion of the population finds itself."

Angels for Haiti group needs 500 pillowcases
ANGELS: To revisit Haiti Oct. 24
Amy Burton - Staff Writer
Tillsonburg News, Tillsonburg, Ontario, Canada
Wednesday October 19, 2005

The Tillsonburg News — For Haitians, Angels for Haiti is a blessing in disguise.

For humanitarians, the organization is an incredible example.

Tanya Jones, Marlene Magashazi, and Elizabeth Pais are the founding members of the now, 10-member organization. The three personal service workers formed the group in February after they decided to travel to Coram Deo, an orphanage and school, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Their goal? To help as many Haitian children and families as possible.

They all agreed the experience was life changing, and created relationships with children that will never be forgotten - like the one with Nayka.

Nayka was a resident of Coram Deo and suffered from hydrocephalous. Though serious, the bright-eyed little girl never let it stop her from enjoying life.

The ladies immediately fell in love with her and were sad to learn a few weeks after they left, that Nayka had fallen ill with an infection.

“When you have an infection in Haiti, it's a death sentence,” said Jones. “There is not much they can do.”

On March 20, 2005, Nayka passed away. She was five years old, and one of hundreds of Haitian children who perish each year because of infection, dehydration or malnutrition. She is buried in an unmarked grave.

On October 24, the ladies, along with seven other fellow Angels, will board a plane to Port-au-Prince. They have been fundraising and collecting items over the last several months and will carting all of it on their trip. Along with that is headstone for Nayka.

The Angels intend to keep Nayka's memory alive and to do so, they have decided to build a playground in her memory.

It will be specifically modified to meet the needs of children with disabilities, and, best of all, will be fitted with a bright yellow plastic slide.

“Many of the children have never seen a slide,” said Pais, adding she is excited to see their reaction. “I can't wait...I can't wait to see their smiles.”

As for other plans, the group will be going to the mountains to do a feeding program, as well as nursing the critically ill at Sisters of Charity, Mother Theresa's order.

They also plan to visit a ward for abandoned children, and care for countless youngsters left for dead.

“We went there in February, and that was the worst I've seen,” said Magashazi.

“We realize we can't save their lives,” added Jones, “but we can give them love and make their lives more comfortable near the end.”

And while the Angels have hundreds of pounds of supplies, they need your help to meet their goal of collecting 500 (empty) pillowcases. The donated sacks will be filled with rice, beans, powdered milk, and more, and given out to residents around Coram Deo.

“During the Halloween season, instead of using a pillowcase for one night, you can feed an entire family who has nothing,” said Jones.

If the goal is met, 500 families will be fed. If you would like to donate a pillowcase, call 879-6602.

“Your pillowcase will literally be lifesaving,” said Jones.

Caribbean not fully independent unless Haiti becomes independent, says UWI lecturer
Rev. Dr. George Mulrain
by Kenton Chance
Caribbean Net News
Thursday October 20, 2005

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent: The Caribbean region is not fully independent unless Haiti becomes independent.

This opinion was expressed by Rev. Dr. George Mulrain as he delivered the 7th annual independence lecture organised by the University of the West Indies School of Continuing Studies in Kingstown on Tuesday.

Dr. Mulrain is the Connexional President of the Methodist Church for the Caribbean and the Americas and has ministered in Haiti.

He made the observation while responding to a comment by a member of the audience during the open forum after his lecture on the topic: "Caribbean Independence: The Blessing, the Curse, and the Promise."

The member of the audience had questioned the extent to which the Caribbean had moved since Independence in the face of international organisations like the World Trade Organisation etc.

"I think that we have moved and some area more than others the evidence of having moved is more obvious," Dr. Mulrain commented.

Stating that he wanted to be more specific, he continued: "Whenever I go to Haiti, I have to wonder if we have moved because I see a country which became independent in 1804 and the sad state of affairs that exists there makes me realise that even though we might be celebrating some of the benefits of Independence in other parts of the region we are not fully independent unless Haiti itself becomes independent."

During his lecture, Dr. Mulrain discussed the reality of Caribbean independence including the context in which many countries won their political independence.

He highlighted the positive and negative features that have accrued from the region's independence and as the audience to envision some of the ways whereby independence can be to the common advantage of Caribbean people.

The Methodist Minister noted that Caribbean independence heightened in the 1960s after the failed Federation. He said with the Federation there used to be the underlying idea of the value of corporate activity. Independence could mean being "self-sufficient, self-reliant, not needing anybody's assistance or support.

He however noted that this view was reflected by the mottos which were adopted by some countries – “out of many, one people” (Jamaica); “Together we aspire, together we achieve” (Trinidad and Tobago) -

“Our people were profoundly interested in working together,” he commented as he added that CARICOM emerged as a result of the sustained vision of people who envisioned the region as “a geographical entity in which economically at least there was the idea of working to achieve common goals.”

Based on these facts, Dr. Mulrain concluded that there were mixed messages during the early days of Caribbean independence.

He said that Haiti and the Dominican Republic’s independence from France and Spain respectively since 1804 and the 1840s respectively also sent mixed messages.

He said Haiti must have aspired about being a united people since its motto, even until today is “L’union fait la force - Unity is strength.”

“Yet the country’s history demonstrates a lack of unity. There were plots to overthrow one leader, followed by other plots and counter plots, coup d’etats, etc. Haiti was forever in a state of turmoil,” Dr. Mulrain said.

“Yet no one was absolutely certain what independence gave to that country,” he emphasised.

“Widespread poverty continues, lawlessness abounds, so that when held up as a model, one wonders whether Haiti projects independence as a curse rather than a blessing,” Dr. Mulrain said.

Haiti Weekly Emergency Situation Report No. 46
ReliefWeb
Country: Haiti
Source: United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)
Date: 19 Oct 2005
Name of operation: PRRO 10382.0
No of beneficiaries: 550,000
Duration: May 2005 – April 2007
Total cost: US\$ 40 million
Reporting period: 4 - 17 October 2005
Food distributed during reporting period: 589 MT

Highlights

The security environment continues to be relatively stable. However, the situation remains volatile and kidnappings continue to be a day to day phenomenon and risk. The number of kidnappings increased remarkably during the reporting period despite joint efforts of MINUSTAH and the Haitian National Police (HNP). The entire country remains in UN security phase III.

At least nine people were killed during the reporting period – three of them in Gonaives where clashes between gangs in the areas of Raboteau and Jubilee created a serious threat to the security environment. 39 cases of kidnappings were reported. In 3 of the cases, the kidnappings targeted expatriates.

In Port-au-Prince, criminal actions seem to be centralized in the Cite Militaire area, where a significant number of incidents targeting MINUSTAH/HNP occurred during the reporting period. In Cite Soleil, criminal activity has decreased due to the “truce” imposed by gang leaders while the electoral registration process in the district is ongoing.

UN activities at the area close to Cite Militaire are carefully monitored considering the current security situation. Coordination case by case, use of military escorts and armoured vehicles as well as personnel protection measures are in place to mitigate the risks.

The security situation during the reporting period continues to have a non-negligible impact on WFP Office & S/Office operations. Administrative, monitoring and logistic activities are running escorted as required due to the situation in some areas, while restriction measures continue to be in place in Port-au-Prince in areas such as Cite Militaire, Route Nationale 1 and SHODECOSA, where WFP main warehouses are located.

Nevertheless WFP operations ran smoothly; as commodities deliveries continued through WFP escorted convoys and private unescorted trucks. While the transfer of commodity from the Port containers terminals to WFP warehouses remained rather fluent during the entire period.

In Cap Haitien where the WFP sub office is located, the situation remains calm with only minor incidents being reported.

On October 17, Haiti was elected as member of the United Nation's Economic and Social Council "ECOSOC" in New York with a mandate that will start on January 1st 2006. ECOSOC serves as the principal forum to discuss international economic matters and formulates policies of recommendation for the member states and the United Nations system.

On October 17, the European Union Council decided to free 72 million euro from the European Development Fund (US\$ 87 million). These funds, earmarked for Haiti, had been frozen following the grave irregularities of the Haitian elections of 2000. The funds will contribute to democratization and governance projects.

On October 15, a new executive director of the CEP (Conseil Electorale Provisoire), Jacques Bernard, was appointed. Bernard, a professional economist and manager, expressed his commitment to working towards honest and democratic elections.

On October 14, the Chief of the Human Rights Section described the human rights situation in Haiti as extremely worrisome. He noted numerous cases of arbitrary arrest, prolonged pre-trial detention, summary executions, ill-treatment and torture of detainees, denial of justice, as well as a high incidence of violence against women and children.

Implementation and operations update

During the reporting period, a total of 589 MT of food were delivered to health centres and schools (PRRO and CP) in the West, North and North-East departments and in Port-au-Prince.

A pilot project of school garden in support of school feeding in a primary school in Marmelade in the Northern Department has started in cooperation with FAO. This will serve as a "lessons learned" model for possible replication. A training session targeting the parents' and the teachers' committee was held for the project's implementation and another school garden project has been identified in Saint Raphael.

Two planning sessions, one in Cap Haitien and one in Fort Liberté, were carried out in preparation for the second phase of the deworming campaign in all schools of the North and North-East departments.

Resourcing update

PRRO 10382.0 started food distribution in May 2005 for a period of two years. Total food for the duration of the project is estimated at 46,750 MT and the total cost at US\$ 40.0 million. During 2005, and the first months of 2006, the operation needs 23,375 MT to meet project requirements. By the end of September 2005, the PRRO had received US\$ 11.9 million from directed multilateral and multilateral contributions. However, it is facing a pipeline break and accumulated shortfalls of 6,270 MT in the next six months; 4,835 MT of CSB and 1,435 MT of rice. Consequently, more contributions are needed to overcome these shortages.

The current shortfall of CSB has been overcome by using carry-over stocks of rice from the operationally closed EMOP 10347.0 and PRRO 10275.0. But CSB and rice continue being critically needed in the coming months.

The total food stocks in the country are estimated at 7,603 MT of which 4,948 MT are in WFP warehouses and available for distribution while over 2,655 MT are transiting through the port and container-terminals.

In country food stocks, (October 17th 2005)

COMMODITIES	PAP	CAP	TOTAL in WFP warehouses	Stocks at PAP port	Total in-country Stocks
WSB/CSB/PWB	45	58	103	135	238
RICE	1,454	610	2,064	1,004	3,068
BISCUITS	0	0	0	0	0
BP-5	8	0	8	0	8
MML	0	0	0	0	0
PULSES	1,011	519	1,530	1,183	2,713
HUILE	799	52	851	98	949
CAN FISH	8	7	15	0	15
CAN BEEF	0	9	9	210	219
SUGAR	135	43	178	0	178
WHEAT FLOUR	27	0	27	0	27
SALT	148	15	163	25	188
TOTAL	3,635	1,313	4,948	2,655	7,603

Other Issues

The new WFP country director arrived in Haiti on October 13 and has taken up his duty immediately.

On October 16, WFP country director and deputy country director attended the World Food Day celebration which took place in Palmiste 60 km out of Port-au-Prince. Several donor representatives, government officials as well as NGO representatives also participated.

On October 15, WFP country director and the FAO representative as well as the Minister of Agriculture were convened at the Radio Metropole to discuss issues related to the World Food Day – issues such as nutrition, school feeding programmes, HIV/Aids and agriculture were extensively discussed for more than one hour.

A FITTEST (Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency Support team) telecommunications specialist from the WFP Dubai support office visited the Haiti country office and sub office to carry out an assessment as to the compliance in Minimum Security Telecommunications Standards (MISTS) and Minimum Operational Security Standards (MOSS).

The regional finance officer from WFP Panama arrived in Haiti for a one week oversight mission.

**Immigration
South Florida Sun-Sentinel
Editorial Board
October 16 2005**

ISSUE: A loophole leaves Haitians eligible for safe harbor facing deportation.

Congress' intent is clear. U.S. authorities should immediately suspend deportation measures against Haitians who are eligible for legal status.

In 1998, lawmakers approved the Haitian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act, a law that gave residency to Haitians who fled oppressive regimes in earlier years. The law basically gave thousands of Haitians legal status if they could prove they were living in America prior to 1995.

Unfortunately, in wording the law, Congress created a legal loophole that leaves many qualified Haitians in line for deportation. It appears clear that the language in question was an error, and now Congress has proposed new legislation, the HRIFA Improvement Act, HR 1737, to amend the original law.

In the meantime, a few thousand Haitians who should rightfully receive permanent status in the United States are facing repatriation to Haiti. That's wrong, and the deportations of these individuals must stop immediately. They should get back their work permits, and their lives.

The deportations fly in the face of the spirit of the 1998 congressional law, and they are also devastating to people here and in Haiti. Many of those caught in this unintended vise have established families here, which their unjust removal threatens to break apart. Many also help support loved ones back in Haiti with remittance money.

The solution to this problem appears pretty straightforward. The Bush administration should respond to requests by lawmakers and order an end to the deportation proceedings against these individuals.

Then, lawmakers ought to act as quickly as possible to amend the 1988 law, ending the vagueness and confusion for good.

BOTTOM LINE: Florida's leaders should press for an end to the deportations, and then mend the law as fast as possible.

Clash stirs racial tensions
Police to investigate altercation involving landlord, Haitians
By Alva James-Johnson
and Brittany Wallman Staff Writers
South Florida Sun-Sentinel
October 15 2005

A confrontation between a group of Haitians and a well-known local landlord will be investigated by Fort Lauderdale police as a possible hate crime, officials said Friday.

Caldwell Cooper, son of prominent businessman Gerald Cooper, is accused of screaming a slur and pepper-spraying a woman and her baby this week in a landlord-tenant conflict.

The Haitian relatives were mourning a family member Wednesday and said Cooper broke up the wake that's dictated by their culture, hurling insults at them. He towed a car before pulling out a can of pepper spray, burning some in the crowd.

An 11-month-old baby and his mother had to be treated at Broward General Medical Center for eye irritation, according to hospital documents, along with other neighbors who said they were hit with the chemical. They were treated and released.

Cooper, speaking publicly about the incident for the first time Friday, told the South Florida Sun-Sentinel he didn't know about the funeral at the time and just wanted the group of about seven people to move their chairs off the courtyard so his grass crews could mow.

He was met with belligerence, he said, and as neighbors began taking notice, the growing crowd backed him in, threatening to beat him up, and accusing him of hating Haitians.

Witnesses said Cooper was the instigator, called the crowd "f----- Haitians" and that his office had been told about the gathering in advance.

"What that man did yesterday, I mean, I couldn't believe I was in America," witness Fred St. Amand Sr. said Thursday. The Pax-Villa Funeral Home owner is handling the funeral arrangements.

"It was uncalled for," St. Amand said Friday night while at a viewing for Georges. About 200 people attended the viewing at Pax-Villa Funeral Home.

"The guy showed himself being a racist," St. Amand said. "He made it clear: 'We don't like you Haitians, and go back to Haiti.'"

After the viewing, more than 150 people attended the traditional Haitian wake at Georges' home, where the incident occurred.

St. Amand said he plans to lead a demonstration in Fort Lauderdale next Saturday to send out a message that Haitians will not tolerate being treated unfairly.

Most of the tenants in the area, north of 13th Street and east of Andrews Avenue, are Haitian, and they complained that Cooper has been nasty to them in the past.

Cooper, who has two children, said he feels "terrible about the baby," whom he said he didn't see in the crowd. He called the racial accusations "obnoxious" and untrue and said he doesn't think he ever even uttered the word "Haitian."

"Because they're Haitian and I'm white, they want to make it into a racial situation," said Cooper. "It has nothing to do with that. It has to do with `We're the landlord, they're the tenant.'"

As he grew more afraid, Cooper said, he called police several times, then sprayed one tall, thin lady who was threatening him, in the face. The "overspray" burned the others.

Cooper has retained lawyer Don McClosky of Ruden McClosky to represent him.

The Georges family also has hired an attorney, Robert Distefano.

Cooper's father, Gerald Cooper of Cooper Properties, is one of the city's biggest landlords, with hundreds of apartments in Fort Lauderdale. Photos in his office show him arm-in-arm or at events with a judge, congressman, McClosky and other connected people.

The younger Cooper sits on the city's Nuisance Abatement Board. But city officials said their investigation is serious, and will be blind to any potential political influences. "The travesty is that this city has a terribly unfortunate history of discrimination, and it's not tolerated in this day and age," said David Hébert, acting executive officer to police Chief Bruce Roberts. Cooper's statement was taken by police on Friday, Hébert said.

Georges said the wake was for his father, Alfred, 65, who died of a heart attack on Oct. 5.

The wake included setting up an outdoor gathering area with chairs and a tent for about seven guests and family members. The lease agreement doesn't allow tenants to have any guests or vehicles who aren't registered, Cooper said, or a \$10 fine is charged for each person, and the vehicles are towed. Chairs on the lawn are considered improper "outdoor storage."

Staff Researcher William Lucey contributed to this report.

Haitian candidate campaigns for local support
Jeune among 32 who are running for the presidency
By Yolanda Sanchez
Staff Writer
South Florida Sun Sentinel
October 9 2005

Pembroke Pines · The campaign to succeed ousted Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide made its way to South Florida on Saturday, with one of 32 presidential candidates visiting a small restaurant to speak to potential supporters.

Jean Chavannes Jeune was at the Marabou Café to speak with about 50 Haitians about his presidential platform.

It's not the first time a Haitian presidential candidate has appealed to South Florida Haitians, highlighting the importance of the Haitian diaspora in the region. Candidate Charles Henry Baker, running as an independent, spoke Oct. 1 at the Marabou Café, and several other candidates have made similar appearances in South Florida. Though Haitian expatriates are not allowed to vote, many support candidates financially and can influence the opinions of family members in Haiti.

"Twenty five percent of the Haitian people are in the diaspora," said Jeune. "I need to hear about their complaints and what they would like to see in Haiti. I want to show them my vision and see how ... to attract them to come back."

Jeune said that Haiti's wealth is tied to the 2.5 million Haitians who live abroad.

Eustaches Cella, a teacher at Southside Elementary in Miami, was ready with his questions for Jeune. Cella left Haiti in 1986, but keeps in contact with friends and family. He said that his opinion on which candidate to choose is important to his family, even though he himself cannot vote.

"I want to know what he has in his baggage, what his agenda is and what he can offer my people," said Cella. "As a country [Haiti needs] basic things, but right now there is not infrastructure, no sanitation. We are all working to see it change."

Many South Florida Haitians share a vision of a better Haiti to which they may eventually return.

Rose Marcelin of Pembroke Pines, had visited Haiti often since leaving in 1981, but has not visited in the past two years.

"We want the country to change," said Marcelin. "We are mad at these people who are in Haiti that are supposed to run the country properly but don't."

Jeune, who is with the National Union for the Reconstruction of Haiti political party, said he wants to form a government of unity.

"I do not think one sector can run the country alone," he said, adding that he will use Nelson Mandela's work in South Africa as an example.

From Miami, Jeune will go to New York and then return to Haiti on Monday, where official presidential campaigns will begin. Local and national elections are scheduled to take place in November, and officials will take office in January and February of 2006.

Yolanda Sanchez can be reached at ysanchez@sun-sentinel.

Jury acquits Haiti's ex-drug chief
Former officer faced U.S. bribes, trafficking inquiry
By Ihosvani Rodriguez
Miami Bureau
South Florida Sun Sentinel
October 8 2005

Evintz Brillant was Haiti's top drug cop, but U.S. officials accused him of being just as crooked as the drug dealers he was supposed to go after.

On Friday, a federal jury in Miami disagreed.

The 12-member jury grappled with their decision for almost two days before clearing Brillant on charges he took bribes from Colombian drug traffickers in Haiti. He was chief of Haiti's anti-narcotics from the summer of 2002 until the fall of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide last year. Brillant was one of four Haitian police officials arrested after a lengthy drug trafficking and bribery investigation by U.S. officials into Aristide's government.

"We said all along that Evintz Brillant was and still is a true police officer who refused to go along with the team plan," said his attorney, Howard Schumacher, after the trial. "I think what happened here is that the jury really grappled over relying on the words of witnesses who benefited extraordinarily in this case."

Federal prosecutors alleged that Brillant took thousands of dollars in bribes from Colombian drug lords to permit shipments of tons of cocaine to move through Haiti to the United States, Europe and elsewhere. Many of the shipments were put on U.S.-bound flights at Haiti's airport in Port-au-Prince, prosecutors said.

In an affidavit made public last year, authorities said Brillant and a second police official confiscated \$450,000 in drug money at the Port-au-Prince airport. They returned \$300,000 to a drug trafficker and kept \$150,000 for themselves.

But while the investigation netted four top police officials, Brillant's case was the only one that went to trial. The other three have pleaded guilty. They are Jean Nesly Lucien, the former national police director; Rudy Therassan, a former police commander; and Romaine Lestin, former police chief at the Port-au-Prince airport. Therassan was sentenced in July to 15 years in prison, while the other two are awaiting sentencing later this year.

Schumacher spent most of the trial trying to discredit government witnesses by pointing out their deals with prosecutors. The witnesses were mainly former Haiti police officials and two admitted drug traffickers. Schumacher pointed out how most of the officials and the traffickers testified in hopes of reduced sentences or promises of immunity.

Brillant also was portrayed during the two-week trial as an honest officer who did not go along with the corrupt officials.

"He was making arrests," Schumacher told reporters. "Everyone knows that in Haiti when you wanted money from a drug dealer, all you had to do was ask. You didn't have to arrest them."

In a brief statement released late Friday, federal prosecutors in Miami said they respected the jury's decision and vowed to continue pursuing cases against corrupt officials from Aristide's former government.

"To date, this office has successfully prosecuted for drug trafficking half a dozen high-ranking officials associated with the former government of Haiti," the statement read. "We believe an aggressive approach to these cases is appropriate and we will continue to pursue them."

Brillant was not immediately released. He was detained late Friday while immigration officials determine his status. His attorney said Brilliant could either ask for asylum in the country that accused him of being a dirty cop, or return to Haiti.

The Associated Press Contributed to this report.

Ihosvani Rodriguez can be reached at ijrodriguez@sun-sentinel.com or 305-810-5005.

Cdn. ex-officers head to Haiti for election

Canadian Press

CTV.ca

October 17, 2005

OTTAWA — Retired police officers heading to Haiti have been given a formal farewell in Ottawa.

Foreign Affairs Minister Pierre Pettigrew and International Co-operation Minister Aileen Carroll wished the 25 officers well on Parliament Hill.

The police officers are heading out on a mission to help keep the peace during Haitian elections.

They will back up a contingent of about 100 Canadian police and military peacekeepers already in Haiti.

They'll serve with the UN's controversial stabilization mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) through the scheduled Nov. 20 elections, and are expected to be in the Caribbean country until the end of February.

Haiti has been in a state of violent turmoil since a February 2004 revolt toppled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Hoping for flowering of democracy

By Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

October 17 2005

South Florida Sun-Sentinel

A recent trip to Haiti, upon the invitation of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, put in perspective the significance of the upcoming elections in Haiti for the people and future of this beleaguered nation.

The goal of the trip was to monitor the situation leading up to Haiti's upcoming elections. The U.S. and international community remain hopeful that, with the appropriate preparation and focus, these elections will be a step toward democracy that will reverse this nation's experience of violence, instability, and poverty, which, in turn, have plagued it with many humanitarian woes. Elections held in a stable atmosphere under conditions ensuring fairness, transparency and the full participation of all Haitians would go a long way toward Haitians' determining their nation's political future.

We visited a registration site to assess the status of preparations, which raised concerns about the current capacity of the electoral infrastructure to carry out elections in the near future. This prompted us to urge the Provisional Electoral Council to better coordinate efforts with U.N. advisers to ensure that a new, freely elected democratic government is in place by the constitutional deadline of Feb. 7.

Our visit included meeting with President Boniface Alexandre and Prime Minister Gerard Latortue. Our delegation was very clear in communicating that we expect the interim government to uphold its responsibility to the Haitian people of ensuring the transition to an elected government. We also warned of the danger of voter fraud that has characterized previous elections in Haiti.

Haiti needs our support and that of the international community to break the cycle of failure that has marked its recent, and not-so-recent, past. Positive intervention now -- to help Haiti help itself -- could ease the demand for future costly humanitarian aid and commitment of peacekeeping forces.

Several times over the past century, coalitions of nations and international organizations like the U.N. have stepped in to provide stability and order, pledging billions of dollars and dedicating armies of peacekeeping forces.

The goal of these efforts is not simply to help the Haitian people adopt systems that will enable them, once and for all, to govern themselves in stability, but even more importantly, to help Haiti alleviate the intolerable human suffering it has known for so long. It is our hope that the benefits of a stable democratic society will enable Haiti to address corruption, violence, illiteracy and the many other issues that plague it.

Notwithstanding the many difficulties that plague the nation of Haiti, we remain confident that resolution lies under the aegis of democratically chosen leaders who will promote and respect the rule of law, value stability, and are dedicated to the social welfare of the Haitian people and the economic recovery of the Haitian nation. The U.S. and the international community are committed to this goal. The onus is now on the Haitian authorities, candidates, and voters to translate hope into reality.

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen is the U.S. representative from Florida's 18th Congressional District and is a senior member of the House International Relations Committee.

EU lifts freeze on aid to Haiti
CNN.com
Monday, October 17, 2005

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) -- The European Union on Monday unblocked 72 million euros (\$87 million in U.S. currency) in aid to Haiti, ending a freeze imposed almost five years ago in protest over electoral irregularities.

The EU said in a statement that the money would support the democratization efforts of Haiti's transitional government as it prepares for elections in December.

The EU froze payments to Haiti in January 2001 after allegedly flawed elections, claiming the government of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was not complying with the "democratic principles" of the Cotonou Agreement, which governs EU's relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific nations.

The EU's head office suggested the restrictions be lifted after the interim government made commitments on democratic reforms to the EU's Development Commissioner Louis Michel when he visited the impoverished Caribbean island nation in March.

However, governments of the 25 EU nations had to agree before the aid could be lifted.

The European Commission plans to host an international donors' conference for Haiti on Thursday and Friday.

Haiti plans in December to hold its first presidential and legislative elections since the February 2004 ouster of Aristide.

Thierry Fagart, the U.N. human rights chief in Haiti, on Friday described the rights situation in the Western hemisphere's poorest nation as "catastrophic."

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EU ends development aid freeze to Haiti
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
Seattle-Post Intelligencer
October 17, 2005

BRUSSELS, Belgium -- The European Union unblocked \$87 million in development aid for Haiti on Monday, ending a freeze imposed almost five years ago because of allegedly flawed elections in the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation.

The EU said the money would support Haiti's democratic process as its transitional government prepares for presidential and legislative elections tentatively scheduled for December - the first since the bloody 2004 rebellion that helped topple President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The EU froze payments to Haiti in January 2001 claiming Aristide's government was not complying with the "democratic principles" of the Cotonou Agreement, which governs EU's relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific nations.

The EU's administrative body suggested the restrictions be lifted after Haiti's interim government made commitments to democratic reform during a March visit by the EU development commissioner. Governments of the 25 EU nations had to agree before the restrictions could be lifted.

The European Commission plans to host an international donor conference for Haiti on Thursday and Friday.

Thierry Fagart, the U.N. human rights chief in Haiti, on Friday described the rights situation there as "catastrophic," citing gang violence and multiple cases of arbitrary arrest, torture and summary execution by Haitian police.

Canada Ltd. Murdering Haiti. Murdering Canadian Democracy

Contributed by: Robin Mathews

Vive le Canada

October 18, 2005

Book Review.

Canada in Haiti, by Yves Engler and Anthony Fenton, Vancouver, Red Publishing and Fernwood Publishing, 2005, 120 pages.

This small book explodes in your hands. It does so, partly, because its authors are so Canadian, so decent, so reasonable, so determined to be fair. It does so, too, because it's about brutalizing the Canadian police and military. It's about a covert betrayal of everything Canada stands for in the world. It's about a secret policy of the Canadian federal cabinet to engage in "regime change" in Haiti (from democratic government to imposed despotism) on behalf of U.S. imperialism.

It's about "deep integration" – Canada being an unquestioning instrument of U.S. policy in repression, murder, and racist genocide in Haiti.

It's about Canadian government hiding hundreds and hundreds of pages of information from the meeting in Ottawa - "the Ottawa Initiative on Haiti" – Jan-Feb, 2003, precursor to illegal seizure of power there and a criminal bloodbath that continues as you read this review.

The recent appointment of a Haitian immigrant journalist in Canada, Michaelle Jean, as Governor General, takes on a dark and ambiguous character. Has she been appointed to provide a blind behind which the Paul Martin government can take cover, to divert attention from its murderous complicity in Haiti? Canadians are going to have to ply Madame Jean with that question whenever she appears in public.

In very simplest terms, Canada actively helped create social chaos in Haiti so that it could be branded "unstable". Canada helped overthrow the elected government of Jean Bertrand Aristide, and presently assists the murderous brutality in Haiti. Canadian government cannot be called ignorant of conditions there. Paul Martin, Pierre Pettigrew, and even former political toy-boy of Brian Mulroney, present premier of Quebec, Jean Charest, have visited the tiny, poverty stricken country since "the Ottawa initiative on Haiti."

The fundamental story is that Haiti – after years of U.S.-backed Duvalier family despotism – moved towards justice in 1990 when Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a former priest, won the government against the U.S. backed candidate. Seven months later a CIA-backed coup overthrew Aristide and chaos entered, such terrible chaos that U.S. president Clinton had to restore Aristide in 1994.

The die, however, was cast. The U.S. was determined to destroy Aristide and his party Fanmi Lavalas when it won overwhelmingly throughout Haiti led by Rene Preval in 2000, prefiguring a presidential win for Aristide a few months later in November. The U.S. determination to destroy Aristide and Lavalas was motivated by the Lavalas education program, its slow movement to bring some equality to a population treated like animals by Haitian people in power, its willingness to support co-operatives and state run enterprises, and its desire for a truly informed and participating democratic population.

The U.S. went into full Cold War mode, suspending aid, infiltrating fake aid groups, and forcing other governments (Canada included) to do likewise.

Incredibly, on January 31 and February 1, 2003, Canada hosted “the Ottawa Initiative on Haiti.” It was the first of meetings to decide Haiti’s future, to which no Haitians were invited. At those meetings the first steps toward the coup d’état to take over Haiti were worked out with full Canadian (French and U.S.) participation, the evidence of which is now kept in secret in Ottawa.

Most of the people placed in power after the overthrow were working with U.S./Canadian/French overthrow forces.

In the process of destabilization leading up to the coup Canada was front and centre. Engler and Fenton tell us many things. “Without exception, documents obtained from CIDA (the Canadian International Development Agency) reveal that organizations ideologically opposed to Lavalas were sole recipients of Canadian government funding.” (p.50)

“NCHR (National Coalition for Haitian Rights) received [from Canada] \$100,000.00 in 2004 for the specific purpose of juridical, medical, psychological, and logistical assistance for victims of an alleged massacre at a town ... called Scierie.” The massacre, it seems, never took place. (p. 54)

After the coup, Philippe Vixamar became deputy minister of justice. Vixamar “stated that he is a political appointee of the Latortue administration, but the Canadian International Development Agency assigned him the position and is his direct employer.” (p.57) He shared responsibility “for police operations and for all political prisoners in the country”. (pp.57-58) Police operation supports – however tacitly – continuing brutality, and political prisoners are violated daily. (Under the supervision of a Canadian employee.)

Latortue, placed in power by the U.S., had, like the president of Afghanistan, spent many years in the U.S. and was brought back to serve the U.S. in Haiti.

The so-called interim government he leads “did not win an ‘unfair’ election, because it was not elected at all. It completely failed any test of democratic legitimacy, having been installed by foreign powers.” (p. 65)

“During a pro-Lavalas demonstration on September 30, 2004, the HNP [Haitian National Police, trained by Canadians] fired into a crowd of some 10,000 protestors. Several unarmed demonstrators were killed or wounded under the watchful eye of UN peacekeepers.” (p. 79)

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America, Roger Noriega, “explicitly called for the privatization of Haiti’s ports. The World bank also indicated that Haiti’s state run telecommunications company TELECO, should be privatized. A May 2005 World Bank report showed that Canada was overseeing the ‘decentralization’ and management of Haiti’s electrical system.” (p. 96)

What is not revealed in those quotations is the almost total devotion of the Canadian press and media to “disinformation” about Canada’s role in Haiti. For instance, almost no Canadians reading this know

that Caricom, the organization of the Caribbean group of governments: the Caribbean Community, has refused under severe pressure to recognize the post-coup government imposed by the U.S., Canada, and France.

Canadians may forget, too, that when U.S. forces were kidnapping Jean- Bertrand Aristide in order to fly him into (darkest) Africa – not to the U.S . or Canada – Canadian troops “secured” the Haitian airport so that Aristide could be whisked out of the country without incident. Aristide has repeatedly insisted he did not go willingly and did not go to prevent instability.

How did that happen?

So-called insurgents began a war to take over Haiti. They were almost without exception created or fully backed by foreign governments. Paul Martin’s government refused peace-keepers to assist the legitimate government quell insurgency. Caricom called upon the UN Security Council – which refused to help.

The legitimate government of Haiti was beginning to turn the tide on the so-called insurgents, at Port-au-Prince, hoping for Venezuelan support.

Then everything changed.

On February 29, 2004, U.S. forces kidnapped Jean-Bertrand Aristide and his security staff and flew them to the Central African Republic. As I have said, Canadian forces seized the airport so that the U.S. kidnapping could proceed unchallenged.

When the decisions to remove Aristide, to install a puppet regime, and to dismantle Lavalas organizations and murder their members were taken – then, and only then, did some Canadian military arrive in Haiti. Then, and only then, were all the embargoes lifted and forms of financial support restored.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan refused to investigate Aristide’s kidnapping and removal. Haiti is too small to risk angering the big powers who are looting it.

Haiti has suffered every violation by what are, in fact, invaders who have created fake social reconstruction, fake paramilitaries brutalizing the population, economic embargo, coup d’etat, and an almost unbelievable campaign of lies – that last totally embraced by the federal government of Canada and the larger portion of Canada’s press and media.

The case Engler and Fenton make is chilling. Canada is in Haiti as a barbaric invader, complicit with murder, torture, and repressive destruction of Haitian society and economic structure. Canadians should get the book, *Canada in Haiti* – and then begin, by every means possible, confronting Canadian government in order to force it out of its murderous policy and to force it out of Haiti.

Haiti - Tribunal's Commission of Inquiry Uncovers New Massacres: Further Indictments Forthcoming
By Haiti Progres

Democracy matters
Political Affairs Magazine
10-17-05

During a five day visit to Haiti, a Commission of Inquiry, dispatched by the International Tribunal on Haiti, gathered evidence of and testimony about new massacres and other crimes against humanity which allegedly have been committed in Haiti since Feb. 29, 2004, when U.S. soldiers kidnapped elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and flew him into exile.

The Commission met with over 50 witnesses who told it of massacres, summary executions, torture, arbitrary arrests and many other human rights abuses being carried out by Haitian police and foreign occupation troops. The Commission also interviewed Haitian National Police (PNH) director Mario Andresol as well as a high-ranking officer in the U.N. Mission to Stabilize Haiti (MINUSTAH).

A Commission of Inquiry member said that the evidence collected, once presented to the Tribunal's investigating judge, would make new indictments "inevitable." The Tribunal has already indicted 21 individuals of the PNH, MINUSTAH, former "rebels," and U.S., French and Canadian armed forces. Those convicted will be sent to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, for international criminal prosecution.

Led by former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, the Commission of Inquiry visited Haiti from Oct. 6 to 11 after being announced at the opening session of the International Tribunal on Haiti held in Washington, DC on Sep. 23 (see *Haiti Progrès*, Vol. 23, No. 29, 9/28/2005).

Other members of the Commission of Inquiry include Captain Lawrence Rockwood, a former counter-intelligence officer in the U.S. Army who was court-martialed in 1995 after acting without orders to save the lives of prisoners in Haiti's National Penitentiary on September 30, 1994 (see *Haiti Progrès*, Vol. 12, No. 49, 3/1/2005); Tom Griffin, an immigration lawyer in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and author of a widely acclaimed January 2005 human rights report issued by the University of Miami Law School; Kim Ives, a journalist with *Haiti Progrès*; Dave Welsh, a delegate of the San Francisco Labor Council and organizer of a U.S. labor human rights delegation to Haiti in June and July 2005; John Parker, west coast coordinator of the International Action Center (IAC); and Katharine Kean, a documentary filmmaker. Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, the archbishop of Detroit, Michigan, also planned to be part of the Commission but had to cancel his travel plans at the last minute.

During its stay, the Commission met primarily with eye-witnesses and the relatives of victims of massacres in Cité Soleil, Belair, Nazon, Solino, Carrefour, Canapé Vert, Pernal, and Belladère. Hours of testimony and evidence were videotaped, photographed and recorded.

At a press conference held at the Plaza Hotel in Port-au-Prince just prior to the delegation's departure from Haiti, Commission members explained the origin and mission of the International Tribunal on Haiti, read from the prosecution's indictment, and gave some idea of whom they had been meeting with and what they were investigating.

Delegation leader Ramsey Clark condemned the "terrible police and military violence against the people of Haiti" in the framework of the Feb. 29, 2004 coup against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

“It is absolutely imperative for the future of Haiti and to peace on earth that there be accountability for these crimes,” he said. “If international forces under the auspices of the United Nations can come to Haiti and engage in systematic summary executions of its people, what place on earth will be safe from that power?”

“The truth about the actions of U.N. military forces and Haitian police acting in cooperation with their own gangs, which commit murder, is essential to the future of this country,” Clark said.

Lavalas still the dominant player in Haiti's election

By Benjamin Melançon,

The NarcoSphere

Posted on Tue Oct 18th, 2005

"Party called key to vote," by Reed Lindsay:

PORT-AU-PRINCE - Some 20 months after the ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, his Lavalas Family party may be the decisive factor in the upcoming presidential election even though it doesn't have an official candidate.

This very informative article, as published, leaves out some context about the apparent attempts by the coup government to manipulate this election.

Lavalas registered no candidate of its own for the elections, set for Nov. 20 but almost certain to be postponed at least until December. And the party is now split between those backing two officially independent candidates, former Prime Minister Marc Bazin and former President René Preval.

"Bazin has the support of the Lavalas bureaucrats, but Preval has the support of the grass roots," [radio journalist] Garcia said.

In 1990, Bazin, considered the darling of Washington, faced off against Aristide in Haiti's first democratic elections. Aristide trounced him, but less than eight months later was ousted in a military coup. From 1992 to 1993, Bazin served as prime minister under the military regime, and later served as planning minister after Aristide was re-elected in 2000.

SEEKS ARISTIDE RETURN

Bazin, now running on the ticket of his own Movement for the Establishment of Democracy in Haiti (MIDH) party, is appealing to Aristide supporters. He is calling for an end to what he sees as persecution of Lavalas partisans by the current U.S.-backed interim government. He has promised to free prisoners that he alleges are detained for political motives and to bring back Aristide, now living in exile in South Africa.

"The constitution is clear," said Bazin, who describes himself as a social democrat. "It does not allow Haitians to be in exile, and we will start with Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who is the one the people love the most."

The Bush administration is adamantly opposed to the return of Aristide, accused by U.S. officials of tolerating drug trafficking, corruption and rights abuses.

As for the former president between Aristide's terms (out) of office:

Preval remains something of an enigma. He has not spoken to the media or made any public appearance for years, and has remained in seclusion since registering his candidacy. During his 1996-2001 presidency, Preval was characterized by his detractors as being a puppet of Aristide, but he was also praised for being an honest and efficient administrator who spurned the wrangling and strong-armed methods typical of Haitian politics.

But Preval seems to be popular among Haiti's majority poor. Last week, more than 1,000 residents of the desperately poor slum of Cité Soleil marched past cinder block homes and fetid canals under a scorching sun to back Preval.

"Preval is sensitive to people in the poor neighborhoods," said marcher Emanuel Joseph, 24, who has been unemployed since being fired from the state-owned telephone company after Aristide's ouster. ``He did a good thing in the country already. So now the people will choose him the second time."

The published article completely leaves out the continued unjustified imprisonment of two would-be popular candidates, both with the potential to unify Lavalas: Prime Minister Yvonne Neptune and priest-of-the-poor Father Jean-Juste. An even more critical omission is the many ways the election seems to be being rigged, from the lack of registration (and presumably voting places) near the huge poor neighborhoods to the centrally controlled new ID system, the first batch of cards for which are being printed in Mexico now. This makes the article's conclusion, unfortunately, less certain.

Ultimately, the election will be decided not by party leaders or even grass-roots militants, but by the millions of Haitian peasants and slum dwellers who in the past identified with Lavalas as a popular movement, according to Robert Fatton, a Haiti expert at the University of Virginia.

"Nobody can win this election without getting the Lavalas vote, or what was the Lavalas vote," Fatton said. ``Lavalas is really a movement. It's essentially the popular vote, the lower middle class and poor people. But it's still hard to tell just where that large portion of the population finds itself."

The full article is on-line at the Miami Herald (requires registration, try <http://bugmenot.com/> to get out of the subscription).

Correction made 12:40 p.m. My commentary on the Lindsay article completely butchered the name of Mr. Yvonne Neptune, the last legitimate and now-imprisoned Prime Minister of Haiti. Thanks to the anonymous "CHRIS" for the first tip-off.

Chilean Military Chief in Haiti Had Ties with Repression
Prensa Latina
October 17, 2005

Santiago, Chile, Oct 17 (Prensa Latina) The Chilean government confirmed Monday that the second in command of its military forces in Haiti, Gen. Eduardo Aldunate, was a member of dictator Augusto Pinochet's oppressive forces (1973-1990).

The allegation, previously denied by Minister of Defense Jaime Rabinet and Army Chief Juan Emilio Cheyre, was made last week by Carmen Soria, daughter of a Spanish diplomat killed in 1976.

Without providing details, Government spokesman Osvaldo Puccio admitted that the high-ranking officer was linked to the disbanded National Intelligence Central (CNI).

"That's right, General Aldunate did a course on intelligence in the CNI but, as far as I know, he never served as an agent," said Puccio, who added that the general's military biography was in complete order.

The information was also confirmed by Minister of Interior Francisco Vidal, who said, however, that "the important thing is that he did not take part in oppressive actions."

Regarding whether the general will continue in the Haiti peace mission, Puccio said "this is an issue that is being dealt with by the Defense Ministry."

Chile's military intervention in Haiti, in the wake of the ouster of Constitutional President Jean Bertrand Aristide in 2004, is a main project of President Ricardo Lagos' foreign policy for the region.

The Spanish diplomat Soria, who lived in Chile from the end of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), was kidnapped on July 14, 1976. His body was found two days later in a Santiago canal, and showed signs of torture.

Carmen Soria insisted on Sunday that she will appeal to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to have General Aldunate replaced as second of the peace forces in Haiti, and demanded the resignation of Chilean Minister of Defense Rabinet.

Haiti, Finally Some Good News
The Bahama Journal
October 17, 2005

17th October

Haiti, Finally Some Good News

There are occasions in life when the record should be made clearer about a picture or a situation. Such an occasion is now as we continue with our reflections on what is happening in Haiti.

As readers would know, we have previously depicted a Haiti that is devastated and a Haiti that is down on its knees; a place that is failing. It would be egregiously wrong were we to leave them with these impressions.

The elementary fact of the matter is that Haiti is far more than the bad news we often hear. Haiti is also a living testimony to the human capacity to survive against the odds. And some times, there are instances where the human capacity for good is revealed in its majesty.

One such case involves medical anthropologist and physician Paul Farmer who has dedicated his life to treating some of the world's poorest populations, in the process helping to raise the standard of health care in underdeveloped areas of the world.

Of note here is the dire situation of the residents of Haiti's central plateau who live on the edge of starvation. Their average income is \$230 a year. In most parts of the world, patients this poor rely on miracles more than on doctors.

In Cange, when people fall sick, they walk, stumble or otherwise make their way to the hospitals and clinics where Paul Farmer and his colleagues treat everything from AIDS to ear infections. Their organization, Zanmi Lasante, also runs schools, makes sure the local water is safe to drink and provides jobs for hundreds of people.

We learn that Farmer is a founding director of Partners In Health, an international charity organization that provides direct health care services and undertakes research and advocacy activities on behalf of those who are sick and living in poverty. Dr. Farmer and his colleagues have successfully challenged the policymakers and critics who claim that quality health care is impossible to deliver in resource-poor areas.

We are told that Paul Farmer has worked in infectious-disease control in the Americas for nearly two decades and is a world-renowned authority on tuberculosis treatment and control. His work draws primarily on active clinical practice (Dr. Farmer is an attending physician in infectious diseases and Chief of the Division of Social Medicine and Health Inequalities at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, and medical director of a small hospital, the Clinique Bon Sauveur, in rural Haiti) and focuses on diseases that disproportionately afflict the poor.

Along with his colleagues at the Brigham and in the Program in Infectious Disease and Social Change at Harvard Medical School, Dr. Farmer has pioneered novel, community-based treatment strategies for

infectious diseases (including HIV/AIDS and multidrug-resistant tuberculosis) in resource-poor settings.

He has also written extensively about health and human rights, and about the role of social inequalities in the distribution and outcomes of readily treatable diseases. His work in Haiti has taught him that poverty, inequality, and political turmoil lead inevitably to poor health outcomes among the vulnerable, and this belief fuels his scholarly, clinical, advocacy, and charitable activities

Of note too is the fact that Paul Farmer began his lifelong commitment to Haiti when still a student, in 1983, working with villages in Haiti's Central Plateau; the following year he began medical school at Harvard, and two years later helped found Zanmi Lasante (Creole for Partners In Health), serving as its medical director from 1991 to the present. Boston-based Partners In Health was founded in 1987.

Zanmi Lasante -- which has grown from a one-building clinic in the village of Cange to a multiservice health complex that includes a primary school, an infirmary, a surgery wing, a training program for health outreach workers, a 104-bed hospital, a women's clinic, and a pediatric care facility -- has pioneered the treatment of both multidrug-resistant tuberculosis and HIV in Haiti.

This role was key in helping Haiti qualify in 2002 among the first group of countries awarded money from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria; Haiti was actually the first country in the world to receive these funds and begin employing them to fight disease.

A ringing endorsement of Partners In Health's community-based approach to health care, the award has allowed Zanmi Lasante to expand its treatment facilities into neighboring communities, where it is the only health-care provider for hundreds of thousands of peasant farmers in the Haiti's Central Plateau.

Today we send a praise-shout to Dr. Farmer for this 'finally good news from Haiti' report.

COHA: Haiti – And You Call This an Election?

Wednesday, 12 October 2005

Column: Council on Hemispheric Affairs

Haiti – And You Call This an Election?

- Secretary Rice, on a whirlwind trip to Haiti, glosses over problems that are doomed to chain-saw upcoming elections.
- Iraq's election morass is modest when compared to Haiti's.
- The State Department is much softer on its incompetent and malevolent interim Haitian Prime Minister Gerard Latortue, than it is on a string of Central Asian countries like Uzbekistan, even though the former's derelictions are equally deplorable.
- Rice sees only qualified evil when it comes to the jailing of the islands major democratic leaders who cannot participate in the election because they have been incarcerated on no, or purely invented charges.
- Does Rice know something? – that Neptune and Jean-Juste will be released hours after the election; thus preventing Lavalas from running and likely winning, but allowing her, at the same time and after the fact, to say that U.S. intervention got them released.
- U.S. strategy is to keep Lavalas from power no matter the tortured reasoning involved.
- U.N. political representation in Haiti and the Brazil-led peacekeeping force have failed in their dual mission to bring stability and law and order to Haiti.

Haiti is a country you can't easily get your arms around and if you do, it will beat you off in a moment. Uzbekistan's human rights abuses get a lot of attention, but Haiti's much greater violations dwell undisturbed under a U.S. rug. On an in-and-out trip to Haiti on September 27, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stressed the importance of Haiti's upcoming presidential balloting on November 20 to her "democratic promotion" campaign, aimed at legitimizing her alleged Haitian game plan for returning to constitutional rule. Haiti's democratic system was traumatized for the second time within several years, when the U.S. orchestrated the ouster of its de jure president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, on February 29 of last year. In actuality, Rice is anxious to rid her agenda of Haiti as close to cost-free as possible. Any administration that selected as its interim leader of the island a figure as reprehensible as Gerard Latortue, is interested in "democracy promotion" only as a sound-bite.

Rice's pronounced apprehensions over the turbulence bedeviling Haiti's preparations for its ill-starred November 20 elections, are somewhat less startling than what she chose not to say. Not a word was mentioned about the human rights violations which are being repeatedly committed by the Haitian National Police along with the UN peacekeepers, and only a few musty words were given over to the catastrophic state of the country's judicial system, which tolerates the outrageous detention, on totally fabricated charges, of such notable political prisoners as Father Jean-Juste and former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune. Meanwhile, if the election does take place, Rice is not likely to find a problem in

validating it as fair, because Washington will state, ex cathedra, that this was the case, and who would care? Making such a statement would be merely one more example of the grotesque parody of a democratic electoral process that is now being implemented in Haiti by Latortue's non-redeeming interim regime. As noted, Washington created Gerard Latortue, who was far better known for living a low silhouette life in quiet semi-retirement in a gated community in Boca Raton as well as for his radio program over a local station, than for having any visceral connection with his motherland Haiti, a country that he had scarcely visited in recent years. Simply put, we are witnessing a fraud in the making.

Looking at the manner in which Haiti is now being run, you will have to come up with the judgment that interim Prime Minister Latortue is the perfect candidate to head FEMA – he has established beyond question that he is the quintessential total incompetent, and that he has neither the heart to relate to a populace, nor the administrative capacity to run a country. Let alone devoid of any leadership qualities, Latortue has plunged a dagger through the heart of Haiti's scarcely functioning democracy by allowing brigands and knaves to be given positions of privileges. Both in style and substance, Haiti under Latortue has been blasphemed.

During her trip to Haiti, Rice implored the interim government to speed up planning for November's elections and had some misty words about speeding up trials, but she did not use the opportunity to order that the State Department's legman Latortue must release all political prisoners, headed by Jean-Juste and Neptune and that the personal security of those affiliated with the pro-Aristide Lavalas party be guaranteed, in order for the upcoming election not to be a greater parody than it already is.

Not Ready for an Election

The fact that Rice was spotlighting attention on the need for speeding up election preparations may have been somewhat harsh, considering that the Haitian government has been creating many new polling stations. Unfortunately, most of them are being furnished in the better off urban areas of the country, while the slums on the outskirts of the city and rural areas are being woefully neglected. Clearly, Rice's statements indicate that she is aware that all Haitians will not have equal access and the same opportunity to participate in elections which she is on record as seeing as being a "powerful weapon" and as "a precious step on the road to democracy." However, assuming such access may be a patently inaccurate conclusion on her part, considering that a majority of Haitians live on under two dollars a day, and will be hard pressed to afford the trip to distant election booths. When it comes to acceptable norms for a free and fair election in Haiti, Secretary Rice has lowered the bar so far that it is now scraping the ground.

On November 20th, Haiti is scheduled to hold the first round of its presidential election. Indisputably the most impoverished and forlorn of all the hemispheric nations, Haiti also has been the nation most frequently singled out for U.S. intervention in the region. Such interventions, such, as the one which took place in early 2004, had the U.S. orchestrate the ouster of constitutionalist president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Under him, according to Washington, Haiti had become a "failed state" and he had to go because under his friend, President Préval, Haiti allegedly had staged "fraudulent elections." This became the justification for the likes of former Senator Jesse Helms to pressure the White House to turn off the spigot for crucially needed foreign aid.

A Tortuous Recent History

Ballot box stuffing, intimidation of the electorate by armed cutpurses, as well as ghastly massacres of potential voters have routinely occurred during Haiti's tortuous history. The few opportunities that the country has had to break out of its dismal cycles of foreign control or strongman repression eventually ended in wreckage. In less than two months, Haitians will again go to the polls to participate in an election that will be so blemished that Rice will be unable to sell it to the American people, let alone to Haitians as being the real thing. As a result, it is all but certain that the island will be denied taking advantage of one of its rare opportunities to institutionalize democratic procedures. Under the auspices of the outrageously unqualified and malignant Latortue, together with the grossly disappointing performance of the Brazilian-led UN peacekeeping force, and the decent but indecisive Chilean political broker dispatched by the UN's Kofi Annan, distressingly little has been accomplished and the plight of the average Haitian is as bleak as ever. Haitians are once again being urged to the polls to vote for a president under totally unacceptable conditions, while the UN has created for itself the unenviable record of being far more adept at killing innocent Haitians than bringing stability to the country. What is almost worse is that Brazil's president Lula da Silva doesn't even seem to care about the bad name that Brazil's Haitian military operation is giving to his country.

In moving ahead with a bankrupt Haiti policy, Secretary Rice fails to comprehend the despair of the Haitian electorate as it contemplates voting again for a president – as the island's voters did in 1990 and again in 2000 – only to be certain that exercising the ballot will fail to achieve an electoral solution, but only more conflict and killings. Those who voted for President Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party in recent elections, only to see their vote later invalidated by Washington's malevolence, can only wonder why they bother to even vote when it will be the U.S. embassy in Port-au-Prince who will be the final arbiter of how the island will be ruled.

A Bleak History

Haiti's current political landscape seems eerily familiar to that which was left in the ruinous wake of the departure of Baby Doc Duvalier in 1986. If those times, when one murderous military regime came upon another, were a tragedy for the nation, then the plotting last year by the United States, France and Canada, together with the generous fig leaf supplied by the UN's Kofi Annan, led to the voiding of the popular vote by the abrupt removal of Aristide from office. His immediate quasi-abduction to an African location, whose name was not even disclosed to him at the time, was the final insult to Washington's pretensions as being democracy's contractor in Haiti.

Starting over a year ago, the interim government's infamous ex-minister of justice, Bernard Gousse, began to systematically imprison (invariably without any evidence or charges) leading Lavalas figures, while at the same time he set much more relaxed standards when it came to the treatment of murderous rightwing villains – some of whom were released from jail in spite of the fact they had been found guilty of an array of brutalities. The anti-Aristide cabal led by the State Department never had a word that clearly condemned Gousse, who routinely violated constitutional norms to prosecute Aristide partisans, while convicted murderers like Louis-Jodel Chamblain, who former Secretary of State Colin Powell referred to as a "thug," walked the streets with a beaming Gousse, a free man.

Haiti's widely assailed Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) declared some 30 candidates eligible to contest the November presidential elections. Their sheer number, along with CEP's antique methodology, almost assures that a run-off will take place. Haiti's political spectrum includes parties

from the far-right, to centrist liberals, to socialists and even more radical parties. Even Baby Doc Duvalier is rumored to be considering to return to witness, but not necessarily run in the race. However, most parties are more tiny factions than bona fide parties. One particularly unsavory candidate who declared his candidacy was Frank Romain, the former mayor of Port-au-Prince, who was the subject of an extradition writ in 1989 for ordering a military unit to open fire upon voters waiting in line to cast their ballot, killing scores and forcing the abortion of that contest; this violence led to three years of bloody military-dominated-rule. How very little distance Haiti has come since then, as the arbitrary crushing of the poor continues in a nation that proudly introduced to the world, over two centuries ago, the beginnings of the human rights movement in this hemisphere.

It's a Question of Numbers

Secretary Rice's baffling problem is that no party in Haiti's history has been able to draw the numbers that ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's Lavalas party has been able to attract. Nothing that the State Department can do seems to lessen those numbers. From gaining 67.5% of the electorate in 1990, every ballot since has resulted in Lavalas winning by sizeable majorities. U.S. embassy officials have informed Washington that if Lavalas had been able to nominate either a Yvon Neptune or a Gérard Jean-Juste in the approaching elections, and have Latortue guarantee their personal security; there would be little doubt that history would repeat itself. If so, this would again have undermined Washington's game plan to deny power to Lavalas. To restate the matter, there is no question that in any presidential race that would be internationally validated as being free and fair, Lavalas would have once again won decisively. Such an eventuality would pose an enormous conundrum for the administration since it would mark a grave set-back for State Department policy which was based on preventing the possibility of any return of Aristide influence to Haiti, an event it has gone to great length to prevent – including the arbitrary invalidation of his presidency by de facto exile.

As of today, the Rev. Gérard Jean-Juste (a Catholic priest, as Aristide was in 1990), languishes in the National Penitentiary, and is not likely to be the Lavalas standard-bearer, although he is by far the country's most popular potential candidate. Former President (and Prime Minister in the first Aristide presidency) René Préval, who in the past has been close to Aristide, has now entered the fray as an independent candidate, and whose organizational skills and positive reputation attracted tens of thousands of voters to newly register, could be a strong prospect in the field if he's allowed to win and then run in the inevitable run-off.

One faction of Lavalas has formed a coalition with Marc Bazin's MIDH party, a particularly adroit move on the part of the former World Bank official, who, although long condemned for repeated acts of opportunism and self-glorification, in recent months has been displaying a seriousness of purpose in recognizing the genuine appeal of Lavalas to Haiti's masses. Once considered a pariah by Haitian patriots and charged by many progressives and populists as being too close to Washington, he has lately re-manufactured himself from the days when he briefly served as a figurehead for the "de facto" government that replaced Aristide in 1991. But later switching gears, he then went on to serve as a minister in two subsequent Lavalas governments.

Without a Father Jean-Juste to galvanize the Haitian masses, Lavalas' leadership may best be served by aligning with Bazin or, of course, Préval. Moreover, since the anti-Aristide de facto coup of 2004, it has only been Bazin among the traditional leadership sector, who has supported Lavalas and he was also very forthright in criticizing the interim government's egregious incompetence. Between now and

February, much is likely to happen; at that date the victor in the run-off is scheduled to take office, but first the U.S.-led anti-Aristide cabal has much to lose if the electoral process continues to take a chaotic course.

If one views the forthcoming elections in Haiti as a mindless exercise in "procedural democracy," the vote itself will provide far from indisputable evidence of quality governance. Haiti's basic fact of life today is that neither economic nor political democracy exists in the country, and no one could venture to claim that the vote of a subsistence farmer in Haiti's Artibonite valley will carry the same political weight after the election as that of a Pétion-ville businessman.

In underdeveloped nations around the world, where class cleavage stands out as an overwhelming fact of life, a political rhetoric is being called into play which claims that it means to empower the intended audience. The language of political discourse today in Haiti among the poor is not unlike that found in the "favelas" of Sao Paulo, or the broken barrios of Lima – the rhetoric may be similar because the basic conditions that spawn the despair is almost interchangeable.

The most gifted politicians, like religious leaders, are supposed to make the electorate feel germane to the political process and convinced that they are vital to their nation's future. Aristide was particularly adept at empowering the poor. But for the United States, the very concept remains almost a frightening specter. It is almost synonymous with Fidel Castro, therefore making it an abomination for Washington, therefore sealing the Haitian leader's fate and the island with him.

This analysis was prepared by COHA Director Larry Birns and Senior Research Fellow John Kozyn.

Larry Birns is the director of the Washington-based Council on Hemispheric Affairs.
John Kozyn was the director of the Washington Office on Haiti.

Dian Page column: Friends return to Haiti for mission
Green Bay Press-Gazette
October 17, 2005

Area people involved with the Friends of Haiti organization are returning today to the poorest of Third World countries for a ninth medical mission.

Started through the Rev. Larry Canavera and St. Philip Catholic Parish in Green Bay, Friends is now a communitywide organization. Canavera and Drs. Jack Hale and Ed Vogel have participated in all the missions. Other doctors, nurses and support staff go as they are able. Participants pay their own airfare and expenses.

The current trip was in question because of political unrest in Haiti and little fund raising was done. Most of the group's resources will be tapped to fund this trip. More donations are needed to ensure the return trip in spring.

Board member John Malcheski secured a large donation of seeds and will continue with plans to help improve the island nation's farming methods. Nurses Donna Zelazoski, Patti Runge and Candice Bilotto were involved in a mammoth medication and vitamin repacking project so the items could be carried by the travelers. This is the only way to ensure the items will arrive to treat the 3,000 to 5,000 patients the volunteers see each trip.

Inquiries and donations can be made to Friends of Haiti, 238 Victoria St., Green Bay, WI 54302.

- The Regency Suites is seeking homes on the east side of the Fox River for its Grizzly's Holiday Light Tour – 2005. More than 1,500 people enjoyed the holiday tour of lights last year. This year 15 tours already are sold out.

The tours run from Nov. 28 to Dec. 31, except on Dec. 11, Christmas Eve and Christmas.

All homes must be decorated by 5 p.m. Nov. 26. Judging begins at that time and homeowners will be notified Nov. 27 if they are chosen to be part of the tour. The Regency Redline will pass contestants' homes two to three times each night.

Prizes awarded to winners of the tour include the following: Passenger's Choice, four tickets to a show at the Meyer Theatre, \$50 gift certificate at a downtown restaurant, \$50 gift certificate at a downtown retail shop, an overnight stay at the Regency Suites and four passes to Wild Air; Mayor's Choice, four tickets to a Weidner Center performance, dinner for four at Patrick's on the Bay and two suites for one night at the Regency Suites, and the best block will receive a catered block party. Griswold House winners will receive their December electric bill paid in full.

To receive a registration form, contact Kari Moody at Regency Suites, (920) 432-4555, Ext. 391.

- Help solve a mystery as ASPIRO presents "A Bump in the Night" Oct. 28 at the Stage Fright Café. The fund-raising event featuring a mysterious dinner and a "little murder" will be held from 6 to 11

p.m. at Thornberry Creek Country Club. The reservation-only event will include a raffle and silent auction.

Suggested apparel is "Costume Dress is Sunday Best."

Tickets for dinner and show are \$100 each. For reservations, call ASPIRO at (920) 498-2599.

Jerry and Debbie Kralovetz and Phil May and Brooke Bradley are co-chairs of the event. Committee members are Pat Castiglione, Dan and Nancy Gulling, Jere and Sheri Dhein, Mike and Judy Parrish and Cyndie Shepard.

Proceeds will be used for children with developmental delay and adults with cognitive and other related disabilities.

- The Service League of Green Bay will hold its 68th rummage sale from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday at the Boys & Girls Club, 1451 University Ave. Free and open to the public, the sale will include clothing for infants through adults, books, toys, home accessories, linens, household items, furniture and sporting goods. Nothing at the sale will exceed \$25.

All proceeds will be given to organizations that support the wellness of children in Brown County.

The event began with The Rummage Shop staffed by Service League volunteers in a dressing room of the Orpheum Theater in 1935. Monthly sales were held throughout Green Bay until 1979 when the League consolidated its efforts into two seasonal events. In 1996, these two sales were combined into what is now the annual fall event.

This column appears Monday and Friday. If you have news about local people, please call Dian Page on the People line at (920) 391-9939, or write People/Green Bay Press-Gazette, P. O. Box 23430, Green Bay, WI 54305-3430.

Haiti Progres
This Week in Haiti
October 12, 2005

Wherever There Is Impunity for Power,
There Is No Law

Statement of Ramsey Clark at the Oct. 11 press conference of the International Tribunal on Haiti's
Commission of Inquiry in Port-au-Prince

I first came to Haiti in 1946, before probably anybody else in this room was born. Over the years, I've been back maybe a dozen times, but because of the nature of my work, never at a happy time.

You have heard descriptions of terrible police and military violence against the people of Haiti. All who revere life and seek peace have to recognize that police and military violence against the people is the greatest of all crimes. Who will protect the people when the police and military are violating their rights?

The very special context of this police and military violence against the people of Haiti has to be observed with the greatest care because it has happened in the wake of yet another U.S. regime change of the government of Haiti. Whatever might have happened if George Bush, and Dick Cheney and finally Colin Powell hadn't said that Aristide has to go, we will never know. But what did happen because President Bush decided that Aristide has to go we know very well: systematic violence against the people of Haiti that is clearly overwhelmingly politically motivated.

You report in the press here regularly that there is a war against what they want to call gangs and bandits. What they are really talking about is Aristide supporters and the Lavalas. Very often they use the name Lavalas as a synonym for the gangs, the bandits. And they go out and commit summary executions against the people, to control the country for the future.

It is especially tragic to see the United Nations forces used in this way. The United Nations was created to end the scourge of war. Its first peace-keeping forces were unarmed. I remember the tragedy of seeing the bodies of six young men from Fiji wearing blue helmets and unarmed, killed by an Israeli invasion in southern Lebanon. Now what we see is MINUSTAH adopting the military tactics of Special Forces. We have to remember that soldiers come to love war too well. The United States has created an international militarism that mimics its tactics. You only have to look at Iraq today in towns like Falluja and elsewhere to see the systematic destruction of the resistance of the people.

It is absolutely imperative for the future of Haiti and to peace on earth that there be accountability for these crimes. If international forces under the auspices of the United Nations can come to Haiti and engage in systematic summary executions of its people, what place on earth will be safe from that power?

You've heard that cumulatively deaths by military and police actions in Haiti amount to some hundreds of people. You've heard a minor fraction of what's happened. Only yesterday the police here told us that there are deaths every day from police actions.

At the beginning of corrections are the facts. The truth about the actions of U.N. military forces and Haitian police acting in cooperation with their own gangs, which commit murder, is essential to the future of this country. That truth will depend upon a vigilant press and a public in Haiti which is unafraid to tell what has happened to it.

I served in the U.S. government for eight years in the 1960s. It was a period of civil rights. It began really for the government in 1961 with what we call the "Freedom Riders," with public school integration for the first time, so that African American and white children would go to the same school. The introduction of the first African American into the University of Mississippi in September 1962 cost several lives and thousands and thousands of rounds of ammunition fired to prevent the admission of one person into that university solely because of the color of his skin.

For the next years, we addressed the problem of civil rights in the United States with the highest priority on the elimination of poverty. Gandhi correctly called poverty the greatest genocide. And in Malawi and Niger and other parts of Africa you see literally tens of millions of people at risk of starvation.

But during the so-called War on Poverty in the United States, the expenditures for public education, for public healthcare, for social welfare, social security, housing and all the rest more than tripled. And then from rising expectations, beginning in August 1965 race riots broke out in our major cities. In Maryland in 1964, Los Angeles in 1965, Cleveland in 1966, Newark and Chicago in 1967. Then with the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. in April 1968, there were over 100 cities where race riots broke out spontaneously. Police repression was enormous. Hundreds of people were shot dead for the most serious offense of, perhaps, looting. People called for the shooting of looters. There was a picture of a 14-year-old kid who had been running down the street with a basket of apples, shot in the back and killed.

The U.S. Department of Justice [which Ramsey Clark headed at that time - Ed.] announced that its highest criminal law enforcement priority was the prosecution of police for violating the rights of citizens.

And against the vehement opposition of the police and political power in the United States and the National Guard, we began to prosecute police in cities across the country who had killed citizens living in their own country.

And that's very much what's happened here in Haiti. But you are afflicted not only with your own police, which have had their problems for generations, but with foreign military forces from many countries, acting under different commanders, under the auspices and direction of the United Nations, and they must be held accountable for their crimes.

There was an international conference in Paris from September 23 to 25 this year, on impunity for power. It asked how does one address the problem of the police, soldiers, and the rich being above the law. The conclusion was obvious: wherever there is impunity for power, there is no law. If power can have its way, the people live in a jungle, and it's survival of the fittest. We have to come to grips with

the lawlessness of the United Nations forces here, and political gangs acting under their orders and direction, and make all of them equally accountable for their acts.

We expect the International Criminal Court, created by a treaty signed by over 120 nations, and now sitting in The Hague, to receive evidence of these crimes in Haiti and to hold those convicted for them accountable under the law of nations. And we hope Haiti can do its part to protect itself from such lawlessness too.

A legal 'end of the road' for Haitian-American

The U.S. Supreme Court has declined to hear a case involving a Haitian- American who could now lose his citizenship.

BY ALFONSO CHARDY

Miami Herald

October 12, 2005

A naturalized American may soon have to surrender his citizenship certificate to federal authorities and may be deported, now that the U.S. Supreme Court has decided not to hear his case, the man's attorney said Tuesday.

Because the high court refused to take the case, the Department of Homeland Security can go ahead and seek to revoke the citizenship of Lionel Jean-Baptiste, a native of Haiti who arrived in South Florida on a refugee boat in 1980, attorney Andre Pierre said.

Jean-Baptiste's case has drawn national attention because he is believed to be the first naturalized American to face the possible loss of citizenship over a criminal charge and conviction that occurred after he became a citizen.

Generally, immigration authorities deny citizenship when they discover that foreign nationals have lied about criminal backgrounds in their naturalization applications. Authorities at times also have revoked the citizenship of naturalized Americans when they are found to have covered up their preexisting criminal records.

Immigration experts have said that if the Supreme Court rejected the case or ruled against Jean-Baptiste, the action would give the federal government a potent new tool for rooting out naturalized immigrants who are alleged to have committed a crime while awaiting citizenship.

Pierre filed the case in the Supreme Court May 31. He received a notice in the mail Tuesday from the high court denying the petition. Pierre said the denial notice was apparently prepared Oct. 3.

"This is the end of the road for my client," Pierre told The Herald. ``We have exhausted all our legal avenues. All doors have been shut in my client's face."

Pierre appealed to the Supreme Court after the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta said Jan. 4 that the federal government can revoke Jean-Baptiste's citizenship for alleged drug trafficking while awaiting naturalization -- even though he wasn't charged or convicted until after he became a citizen.

The key issue was whether the mere allegation of criminal activity against the Haitian American showed a lack of "good moral character," a requirement for naturalization. The appellate court said yes.

Jean-Baptiste was indicted about six months after he became a citizen in April 1996 and was convicted at trial in January 1997 of participating in a crack cocaine-distribution conspiracy. He served seven years in prison.

Jean-Baptiste has maintained his innocence. The criminal activity alleged in court took place after he applied for citizenship.

Government attorneys said in court papers that Jean-Baptiste deserved to lose his citizenship because committing a crime while awaiting citizenship showed he didn't have good moral character, required for naturalization.

The appellate court agreed, saying a naturalized immigrant cannot lose U.S. citizenship because of a conviction -- but because of the commission of a crime, even if the crime is not yet proven in court.

Doctors take medical marvels to Haiti

By Stephanie Horvath

Palm Beach Post

Monday, October 17, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Paramedics wheeled the man's body, draped in a white cloth, through the lobby and out the front door of the hospital past men wearing suits with corsages pinned to their lapels and a group of Haitian journalists.

A wailing young woman, a relative, stumbled after the gurney. An ambulance had brought the man to the hospital from Cité Soleil, a nearby slum where he was shot multiple times. He died at the hospital here despite attempts to revive him.

That morning, United Nations troops had stormed Cité Soleil looking for gang members who allegedly attacked the peacekeepers. No one knew whether the dead man was a target or simply an innocent bystander caught in the crossfire. Within moments the ambulance transporting the mortally wounded man was gone.

The men in suits and the assembled Haitian journalists were at the hospital for a rare announcement of good news: Two doctors from Palm Beach County had collected \$750,000 worth of modern medical equipment that had just been delivered to the Port-au-Prince hospital. The men led the small crowd upstairs in the hospital to begin their news conference, delayed by the horrific event that would have brought life to a standstill in some places in the United States, but was merely a sad interruption here.

Haiti is a broken country, a place where 80 percent of the people live in poverty. Violence and instability are the rule rather than the exception. The two Palm Beach County doctors recently stepped into that instability, determined to create a health-care system in a country where the majority of people don't have access to basic medical care. Dr. Wilhelm Larsen, a Haitian native, and Dr. Albert La Torra brought the donated medical equipment from Columbia Hospital in West Palm Beach. They see it as the first step in a grand plan to build rural health clinics and medical, nursing and dental schools.

But before they will be able to fulfill their long-term dreams, they have to clear several hurdles inherent in bringing modern health care to a volatile, poor country, as well as rise above gaps in their own experience. Both men are skilled doctors, but neither has familiarity with raising money or running a humanitarian organization. And right now they don't have the millions of dollars needed to accomplish their lofty goals.

Despite the formidable obstacles, the doctors, both in their 60s, are confident.

"In 10 years, we should have everything," Larsen said.

"Maybe less," La Torra added.

This should be a simple story about doing good in a country that's experienced so much bad. Unfortunately, few things are simple in Haiti.

"Everything we bring down here gives them a headache. They won't complain because they need it and they appreciate it," said Larsen, who was born in Haiti and moved to the U.S. in 1974 to practice oncology. "But they have to find a way to use it."

The idea seemed easy. Donate used medical equipment in good condition to a Haitian hospital in need. Larsen, now semi-retired, got the idea in April 2004 when he visited the hospital, called OFATMA, an acronym for Office D'Assurance Accidents Du Travail Maladie Et Maternité. His brother had just been appointed its general director. Larsen toured the old cement building with its peeling paint and old medical equipment.

Because of a miscommunication, he thought some of the disrepair was the result of looting in the chaos surrounding President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's flight to exile in February 2004. In fact, the hospital was never looted. But it still needed help.

With help from his friend La Torra, a semi-retired general surgeon, it took a year to collect enough equipment from Columbia Hospital to fill a 45-foot long metal shipping container. The load ranged from gynecological exam tables to heart monitors to mammography machines. After getting tangled in yards of red tape at the Haitian port, the first load was finally delivered to the hospital here in early September.

Larsen and La Torra flew to Port-au-Prince to witness delivery of the first shipment. Later, the doctors filled and shipped two more containers from Florida, bringing the total to \$1.56 million in donated equipment.

Putting the medical equipment to use in Haiti will be complicated.

For example, a sophisticated X-ray machine will help doctors set bones precisely, but first, the Port-au-Prince hospital must build a large, lead-lined room to accommodate it. Two high-tech machines — a mammography machine and a cryostat — will help detect and preserve suspicious lumps in women's breasts. But without a pathologist to diagnose them — cancer or no — a crucial step is missing. And 24 electric hospital beds will make patients more comfortable only after the hospital installs enough electrical outlets so they can be used.

The hospital is short on money to do those things. The Haitian companies that fund it owe it 151 million gourdes, or \$3.6 million. OFATMA is funded by a kind of workers compensation insurance that the law requires the nation's employers to pay. The hospital's operating budget for next year is \$2.3 million.

The hospital must find a way to incorporate the medical equipment into its 37-year-old building. Built from concrete block, it has no central air conditioning and poor lighting. The hospital's emergency generator goes on at least once a day when the state-run power goes out.

Outside, a broken-down ambulance with a flat tire is parked near the emergency room. Inside, the room where surgical instruments are sterilized has a green army stretcher leaning against one wall, and its windows are open, letting in air and germs. The lab has one microscope, which the doctors say is

inaccurate. Linens are hand-washed in sky blue sinks and hung out to dry on a wire. The hospital has three washing machines, but they don't work. Rooms hold three, five or six patients, and many are equipped with old iron beds.

Most patients interviewed at the hospital said medical care is good, though doctors and nurses work under challenging conditions.

"This is the hospital that I know. This is where they take care of people," said Santa Phillip, a 24-year-old lying in bed after a Caesarean section. She lost the baby, her first. "They're taking care of me very good. The nurses always come on time."

Phillip was lying on a bed made with gumball-machine-printed sheets. The intravenous tube hooked to her arm hung on a pole missing one of its wheels.

Lying on a bed in a men's ward, Frantzen Derilus, 23, whose left arm was hit by a stray bullet the week before, wore a homemade sling, a strip of cotton tied around his neck and hung in front of his chest like a man's tie. Outside on the breezeway, Dr. Jacques Pierre-Pierre held X-rays up to the sunlight while he talked to patients.

In the emergency room, a newborn baby girl, wrapped in a white hand towel, slept on a padded table. The hospital has no bassinets. She didn't move, and her face had a gray cast from fluids that had dried. Was she alive or stillborn? La Torra walked closer to investigate. Alive. Her lips were pink. She began to squirm.

Her name was Shama; a few hours later she was lying on a bed in a dark, hot room with her mother, Mary Ange Deli, a 32-year-old mother of three from a town north of Port-au-Prince. Established by Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier in 1968, OFATMA treats working people. The hospital doesn't receive any money directly from the government.

The hospital also treats people from the surrounding neighborhood, many of whom are too poor to pay for care. Some of the high-tech medical equipment from Palm Beach County, once it's installed and running, will be available to poor Haitians for the first time. Alex Larsen said it's the first time a public hospital in Haiti has had a sonography machine or a mammography machine. Right now, he said, those devices are only at private hospitals, which charge too much for the average Haitian.

The hospital is in Cité Militaire, one of Port-au-Prince's dangerous slums. It's guarded by armed security, men in black T-shirts carrying large guns. During the past few months, many patients have been treated for gunshot wounds.

"The area is very hostile," said Rochelle Vernet, a lab technologist who has worked at the hospital for five years. "Sometimes when the violence is very high, you don't find many patients here."

On their recent visit, Larsen and La Torra traveled everywhere in Haiti in a convoy of SUVs protected by armed guards. They zipped through the crowded streets of Port-au-Prince with the aid of an official government vehicle with a siren.

"We demand protection because we are concerned," Larsen said.

On the drive to the news conference at the hospital to announce their big medical equipment donation, stability and security seemed far off. The driver, who had a handgun wedged into the seat next to him, sped around colorful trucks that carry people in their beds, and United Nations SUVs. He entered Cité Militaire, turning onto an eerily quiet road with no cars, only pedestrians.

A security guard in the passenger seat, a linebacker-sized man named Edourd Celestin, rolled down his black-tinted window, cocked his large automatic gun, and aimed it out the window, ready to shoot. The empty streets are a warning in Port-au-Prince. Indeed, the day before, on this same stretch of road, one of the hospital's trucks was attacked by three armed men and flipped over while trying to flee.

On this day, the doctors' SUV passed a U.N. jeep full of soldiers in blue helmets. Two more turns and they arrived at the hospital, which had its own armed security guards at the front door.

Larsen and La Torra plan to continue collecting medical equipment from Palm Beach County hospitals and shipping it to Haiti. However, they have bigger dreams. For 20 years, the two friends have talked about creating a health-care system in Haiti, and they recently formed the La Torra-Larsen Medical Foundation to raise money for their projects.

They want to build a medical school, a nursing school, a dental school and medical clinics with satellite-linked computers in rural villages. They want to bring in doctors from the United States to rotate in Haitian hospitals and provide training.

"It's exciting to plan the future for a whole country, which is what we're doing," La Torra said.

Haiti certainly needs more doctors — the country has fewer than 2,000 for its 8.12 million people — and more clinics in its rural villages.

On a drive outside Port-au-Prince, the doctors stopped at a small village just a few miles from the border with the Dominican Republic. When they arrived, the village's people, many wearing old, mismatched clothes, came out of their cement houses and mud shacks and surrounded them.

They were Haitian sugar-cane cutters deported from the Dominican Republic; their only health care was at a clinic a few miles away that was too expensive. One woman displayed an ugly burn on her arm she said she got while cooking; she treated herself with a cure-all oil. A man described stomach pain to La Torra, who diagnosed an ulcer. An outspoken 15-year-old named Jocelyn Jean said the villagers had problems with diarrhea, fevers and skin diseases, and that women often gave birth without assistance.

"When you see something like what we saw today, it only makes me more committed to the project," La Torra said later.

La Torra explained the doctors' long-term vision at the delayed hospital news conference, detailing plans for clinics, visits from American doctors and a medical school that would require graduates to

work in Haiti for four years. He said later that he made so many promises in front of the Haitian press in order to give people here hope.

But the La Torra-Larsen foundation has no money. So far, the two doctors have paid the costs of collecting the used medical equipment. They declined to say how much they've spent, saying only that they no longer can afford it.

"The whole thing as I see it for us in the La Torra-Larsen Medical Foundation is to establish seed money to start the foundation. Our goals and dreams will never come true without seed money," La Torra said. "We're not talking \$5,000. We're talking millions."

The doctors' foundation needs money for a lot of things: To fly American doctors in to train the Haitians to operate the new equipment and to buy a second-hand truck to transport donated equipment. In the near future, it will need money to build and staff a rural clinic and run a mobile medical unit that will travel around the country. Eventually, it will have the gargantuan task of raising enough money to construct and staff a medical school.

The ambitious doctors hope to pull in up to \$150,000 during the next year, but neither man has raised money before.

"At this stage, we're very naive on what to do," La Torra said, adding that they are looking for help from experienced fund-raisers.

U.S. Rep. Mark Foley, R-West Palm Beach, likes the doctors' ideas and said he'd be willing to participate in fund-raising activities. Foley also said a proposed federal program waiting to be considered in the U.S. House could provide some money for the two doctors. Meanwhile, the doctors' ideas for raising money are grass-roots and sketchy. Their plans include asking Palm Beach County doctors and churches for donations and taking out newspaper advertisements asking people to send \$1 a month.

"Even if 50,000 people decide to give \$1 the first month, that will be some money," Larsen said. Veteran fund-raisers in Palm Beach County said that isn't the way to go.

"It's much more efficient to find one or two large foundations or gifts," said Pam Henderson, who has been fund raising for 15 years as the executive director of the Rehabilitation Center for Children and Adults.

Grass-roots efforts can work, if the mission and goals are clear, said Suzanne Cabrera, president of the Palm Beach County chapter of the Association of Professional Fundraisers and executive director of The Lord's Place, a West Palm Beach nonprofit for the homeless. Cabrera said her charity raised its first \$130,000 when its founder slept in a trash bin for 30 days, driving home his plans to aid the homeless.

"People are really looking for accountability these days," she said. "Just saying it's a good cause and we want to do good things isn't enough."

Larsen and La Torra are undeterred, however.

The day after their news conference here, the Palm Beach County doctors, several of the Port-au-Prince hospital's administrators and their armed guards took a day trip through the Haitian countryside to the border with the Dominican Republic.

Along the way they stopped in the town of Ganthier, the hometown of Haitian President Boniface Alexandre, who had sponsored several projects in the town, including a new high school. As they stood in front of the school, the smell of fresh paint still hanging in the air, Larsen and La Torra decided to build their first clinic in Ganthier.

"This is a growing area. We could use the school to teach people. We could put health prevention in the school," Larsen said.

He estimated they could build and start running the health clinic for \$50,000. He was optimistic, saying the government will probably give them the land for a small fee. Before they left Haiti, the doctors hired an architect.

"By February, we should be doing a groundbreaking at least, maybe finished," Larsen said. "It's not going to take too long to do it.... We'll find a way to get the money."

Haiti, lawlessness rife, prepares to vote
Armed gangs make security difficult for U.N. peacekeepers
Letta Tayler, Newsday
San Francisco Chronicle
Sunday, October 16, 2005

Cite Soleil, Haiti -- As he loitered on a garbage-strewn street flanked by canals of sewage, near a square where men wandered freely with M-16s slung over their shoulders, Jean Osner twisted his face in anger when asked if he'd vote in upcoming presidential elections.

"We have no one to vote for," said Osner, 25, a bone-thin man who wore tattered bedroom slippers for shoes. "No one cares about poor people like us."

Moments later, gunfire crackled through the stifling air.

Despair and lawlessness shackle this virtually stateless country as it lurches toward elections to replace ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, tempering Washington's hopes that the balloting will usher in democracy.

In this volatile slum inside the capital of Port-au-Prince, armed gangs loyal to the routed populist president remain so powerful that 7,600 U.N. peacekeepers guarding this tiny country couldn't provide enough security to open a voting registration center here until last Thursday -- a week after voting registration ended elsewhere.

Adding to the worries, Haiti's electoral council is plagued by allegations of incompetence and political favoritism.

Meanwhile, the interim government has jailed a firebrand priest -- the favorite candidate of Aristide supporters -- on vague accusations of murder. As a result, some Aristide militants are threatening to boycott the elections, in which every post from the presidency to the legislature and local offices are up for grabs.

"Major problems remain in ensuring credible elections," said Mark Schneider, a Washington-based expert on Latin America with the International Crisis Group, a global think tank. "If they're not resolved, the next government's legitimacy will be in question."

Contested results could spark another round of the violence that has claimed more than 1,000 lives since Aristide's ouster 20 months ago from the hemisphere's poorest and most troubled nation.

"If the next president isn't on our side, we'll do the same thing Aristide's enemies did to him," vowed Osner, echoing many Cite Soleil denizens. "We'll take to the streets and kick him out by force," said Osner, who has two children, two pregnant girlfriends and no job.

In two centuries of independence, four-fifths of the 48 leaders of this former French colony have been ousted prematurely.

Voting was to have been held this month for 33 presidential candidates, with a Jan. 3 runoff between the top two vote-getters. But with most voting identification cards still undistributed and challenges multiplying over the Provisional Electoral Council's disqualification of nearly two dozen presidential candidates, the first balloting isn't expected until December, at the earliest.

Nevertheless, several countries, including the United States, are determined that a new government takes office by the constitutionally set date of Feb. 7. "The date is sacrosanct because the Haitian people do not see the interim government as legitimate," said a State Department official who asked not to be identified. "There is no wiggle room."

Both here and abroad, the interim government of Prime Minister Gerard Latortue has been criticized for inefficiency and for failing to prosecute ex-military members involved in the armed revolt that ousted Aristide, while indefinitely detaining hundreds of Aristide supporters without charges.

Key among them is the Roman Catholic Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste, the would-be presidential candidate who has been jailed since July 21. The electoral council barred him from running on Aristide's Lavalas Family ticket, saying he had to register in person. But Jean-Juste's jailers wouldn't let him out to register.

Police say they suspect Jean-Juste of involvement in the death of Haitian journalist Jacques Roche. But he's never been charged. Amnesty International calls him a prisoner of conscience and his followers believe he's being held to thwart his presidential bid.

Politics aside, organizing elections would be a daunting task in this country with 80 percent poverty and 50 percent illiteracy, where phones and electricity hardly exist outside the capital.

Electoral workers have forded streams with laptops and solar panels strapped to donkeys' backs to meet voters who have walked 20 miles down winding mountain paths to register. In some cases, aspiring voters had to return three or four times to register because voting centers were closed by the time they arrived, or the registration equipment couldn't run because generators had run out of fuel or rain had stopped the solar panels from working.

But critics say progress would have been far greater had the Provisional Electoral Council spent its time creating more and efficient voting registration centers instead of tampering with test results to secure jobs for cronies. As one prominent international electoral observer put it, "Rome is burning."

Businessman Patrick Fequiere, a renegade electoral council member, wants the council to relinquish election planning to the United Nations and the Organization of American States, which is providing technical support for the balloting.

"Otherwise, they will have a disaster on their hands," he said. "Now is not a time for national pride."

That notion is tough to swallow in a country that gained independence in a bloody slave revolt and has been occupied three times in the last century by U.S. troops, who returned Aristide to power in 1994 but helped escort him out of Haiti last year.

"If the international community wants to help, it should avoid imposing solutions," said Rosemond Pradel, the electoral council's chief. Pradel denied the council was politicized or incompetent.

Despite the turmoil, there are signs of progress. With U.N. peacekeepers on the offensive, the rampant rapes, kidnappings and clashes between gangs loyal to Aristide and rogue police have ebbed somewhat.

And election officials have registered between two-thirds and four-fifths of the electorate, believed to be 3.4 million to 4.5 million.

Regardless of the percentage, "the most important point is that we've been able to give people adequate access to the registration process," said Elizabeth Spehar, a Canadian who heads the OAS election team.

Though registration ended Sept. 30, authorities extended it for two weeks in remote areas and slums. By last week, however, two-thirds of voters still hadn't been registered in Cite Soleil, a symbolic Aristide stronghold teeming with up to a half-million people, most of whom share space with pigs and dogs in tin hovels that have no plumbing or electricity and become furnaces under the broiling tropical sun.

That's because for months, the closest place election officials could set up a registration center was on Cite Soleil's perimeter. When white U.N. peacekeeping tanks tried to go in farther, gangsters would emerge from labyrinthine alleys and open fire.

That made last Thursday's opening of the voting registration center in the heart of Cite Soleil a huge symbolic victory. But the mood here remains tense. Gang members openly walk the streets. And each side -- gangs on one and the U.N. peacekeepers and Haitian police on the other -- accuses the other of starting clashes that routinely kill or wound many civilians caught in the crossfire, among them women and children.

"The bourgeoisie sends its mercenaries here to incite violence and discredit the people of Cite Soleil," John Joseph Joel, a local Lavalas Family leader, said in a comment typical of the anger here.

Imperfect or not, the elections are expected to go forward

Why Haiti isn't ready for elections

OUR OPINION: COUNTRY ONCE AGAIN IS BEING SET UP FOR FAILURE

Miami Herald

Fri, October 14, 2005

The report that Haiti's elections may be pushed back again is a bow to reality in the face of utterly unreasonable expectations. Voters should not be asked to pick new leaders in a country that remains politically fractured, fundamentally insecure and economically crippled. Throw in a widely mistrusted electoral council and an interim government with no political support, and it becomes clear that the people of Haiti are once again being set up for failure.

What are the alternatives? Few, and they present problems of their own: Either postpone the elections until the situation improves -- months, possibly years -- or get someone else to run the elections. Before exploring these possibilities, it's worth taking a look at why the country simply isn't ready to vote.

As of a few weeks ago, Haiti boasted a bewildering alphabet soup of 25 political parties, and there are 30-plus candidates for president. Although there are unquestionably a few good leaders behind some of these parties, most are led primarily by has-beens, unknowns, opportunists and small-time warlords such as Guy Philippe, a former rebel leader and local police chief.

The party of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide may be the only one with a proven large and loyal following. However, it is listed as leaderless in the CIA World Factbook, which is appropriate given that Mr. Aristide is in exile and that Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste, who might have become its presidential candidate, remains in jail under possibly trumped-up charges.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's brief visit to Haiti recently was a welcome sign of U.S. concern for Haiti's future. But holding premature elections won't help this woefully unprepared country to move ahead. An election of some sort may take place, but unless Haiti's leaders are prepared to work together, there is little hope of success. And to judge from the mad scramble for the presidency, that time has not yet arrived.

Unhappy history

Haiti's unhappy history of instability and violence over the last 20 years suggests a more stable groundwork must be prepared before effective elections take place. At a minimum, the elections should be pushed back a few months and run by an international organization that can give the balloting a measure of credibility that the hopelessly ineffective electoral council can't offer. Better yet, the balloting can be postponed until Haiti meets a set of ground rules -- improved security, for example -- that holds the hope of a better future.

Many people in Haiti would doubtless welcome some sort of international presence that could improve conditions for a genuine democratic election. The Haitian people deserve the right to elect their own leaders, but the process should be transparent and fair, and verified by impartial observers.

Haiti's human rights a disaster, UN says

By ALFRED DE MONTESQUIOU

Associated Press

The Globe and Mail

Friday, October 14, 2005

Port-au-Prince — The U.N. human rights chief in Haiti on Friday described the rights situation in the hemisphere's poorest nation as “catastrophic.”

Thierry Fagart, who heads a team of about 30 human rights monitors, said there had been multiple and grave violations of human rights by police and as well as private citizens.

His assessment comes just weeks ahead of Haiti's first presidential and legislative elections since the February 2004 ouster of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Elections have already been postponed twice and are now tentatively scheduled for December, though authorities have not yet set a fix date.

As the elections were postponed, tension have increased across the country. Mr. Fagart listed multiple cases of arbitrary arrests, torture and even summary executions committed by Haitian National Police. Street violence committed by gangs still plagued the capital, Port-au-Prince, he said.

The U.N. has not been able to establish an overall death toll since the 7,600-strong peacekeeping mission arrived in Haiti in June 2004, Mr. Fagart said. But other rights groups say that over 1,500 people have died in political violence during the past year.

There also is a “fundamental problem” with the justice system, which barely functions, Mr. Fagart said, adding that the situation in the overcrowded prisons was “appalling.”

“The state of the judiciary is so bad that people have lost all hope in it,” he said, stating he thought this partly explained the repeated cases of mob killings over the past few months.

But a U.N. investigation into one of these killings — which took place last August at a soccer stadium in the impoverished Martissant neighbourhood of the capital — illustrated a case of successful co-operation with Haitian police, Mr. Fagart said.

Earlier this week, Haitian National Police chief Mario Andresol said 15 officers had been detained and would be prosecuted for their suspected role in the Martissant killing.

Mr. Andresol said at least six people were hacked to death or shot by police and vigilantes in the event, though human rights groups have put the death toll at 10.

Haiti, Imperialism, and the Treachery of Liberals
A Review of Jane Regan's Film, 'Unfinished Country'
by Shirley Pate
ZNet
October 15, 2005

What liberals choose to overlook is dangerous.

“Unfinished Country,” a film about Haiti by Jane Regan, aired on PBS on September 6. I’m not sure if I have seen a documentary so devoid of context. For the life of me, I don’t understand how one can discuss present day Haiti without chronicling the several-year, international effort to destabilize the country that involved a full-court press by: the US Agency for International Development (along with its French and Canadian counterparts) and its funding of the National Endowment for Democracy (and associated NGO-like tentacles); Washington free-market policy wonks; US State Department officials Colin Powell, Condi Rice and Roger Noriega; US-trained and funded paramilitaries and the stooges in the Dominican Republic that hosted them; Haitian elites; fake Haitian human rights organizations; the duplicitous US Embassy staff in Port-au-Prince; the IMF; and the World Bank.

The initial goal of the destabilization campaign was two-fold: first, remove Aristide from power and second, systematically “eliminate” his abundant political support (largely, the poor) to pave the way for a Haitian elite victory in the next presidential elections. Regan’s failure to provide this vital background in her film leaves the viewer little context for what is taking place in Haiti today. Not only is this omission inconceivable, it is dangerous.

It is dangerous because the “elimination” of Aristide’s supporters involves summary executions by Haitian National Police (HNP), deadly raids in poor neighborhoods by United Nations (UN) troops, and machete massacres by “attaches” or associates of the HNP. Unless context is provided about why this all-out slaughter of Aristide’s supporters is underway, their deaths lose their political significance.

And, make no mistake; what’s happening in Haiti is political.

The Context

In 2000, Jean-Bertrand Aristide became president of Haiti for the second time. His first presidency, which he won with 67% of the vote in Haiti’s first democratic elections, was interrupted eight months after it began by a coup d’etat in 1991. His proposals to raise the minimum wage and to initiate literacy programs were more than the US and their Haitian elite partners could handle. Haitian death squads sealed the coup with a massive slaughter of his supporters. Aristide returned to power in 1994 and, in 1995, he disbanded the Haitian military, a historic tool of state repression. US officials assumed mistakenly that Aristide would not buck a plan to privatize all state-owned companies. When Aristide refused, the US signaled international lending institutions that it was time to withdraw loans made to Haiti. As was intended, the withdrawal of the loans was a major blow to the Haitian economy, yet Aristide did his best to continue expansion of social programs. At the end of his term in 1996, Aristide stepped down.

After his second election as president, which Aristide won with 92% of the vote, Haiti remained under an economic aid embargo. Yet, Aristide made good on proposals he put forth during his first term in office. In 2001, he mandated that 20% of Haiti's budget be dedicated to education. In 2003, he doubled the minimum wage. His determination to improve the lives of all Haitians was a red flag waved in front of the imperialist bull.

In another key destabilization tactic, the USAID (and its Canadian and French counterparts) dumped millions of dollars into Haiti for the formation of "opposition" groups (mainly from the ranks of the business elite) to destroy Aristide politically. At the same time, the US was amassing and arming paramilitaries in the Dominican Republic – most were former soldiers from the Haitian army that was dissolved during Aristide's first term – in preparation for a "rebellion."

The final tentacle of this plan was an indictment of Aristide through the press. US operatives wrote the copy for news stories and funneled it to members of the international press who were more than willing to publish the stories without question or analysis.

The stage was set. Shortly before the coup, the US landed Marines in Haiti to provide the muscle for the US embassy staff, already engaged in directing the coup, to ensure that Aristide was kidnapped successfully and put on a plane to the Central African Republic. After Aristide's forced departure, the remainder of the multi-national force, consisting of US, French, Canadian and Chilean troops, invaded and occupied Haiti.

With the occupation established, the elimination of Aristide supporters at the hands of the multi-national force and the Haitian National Police began in earnest. Specific targets for many of the attacks were, and still are, two of the poorest neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince: Belair and Cite Soleil.

The US never planned to be in Haiti long, partly due to the criticism it was receiving about its invasion and occupation of Iraq, and partly because it had made arrangements already for a force to succeed it. The US, working through the UN Security Council, cleverly engineered a UN "peacekeeping" mission to replace the multi-national invasion force. It was a brilliant idea to use UN "peacekeepers" for this bloody occupation. Many would not catch on until it was too late that the "peacekeepers" would become soldiers in the US' proxy army and their purpose in Haiti would be to continue with the "elimination" of Aristide's supporters. In June 2004, under the leadership of Brazil, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (known by its French acronym – MINUSTAH) arrived in Port-au-Prince. Haiti's second occupation in four months was underway.

On the Haitian side of the equation, the minuscule elite class, whose opposition to Aristide continues to be funded by the USAID, are allied with the US' illegal, immoral puppet government in Haiti in hopes that its murderous state security apparatus will preserve their free-market joy ride.

Throughout these deadly occupations, Aristide supporters have continued to mount one demonstration after another demanding his return. Early on, the police response to these demonstrations took on a disturbing pattern. Hiding behind parked cars or in alley ways along parade routes, police began to fire on demonstrators randomly. The intention to kill was obvious. Many demonstrators died of gun shots to the head. Time after time, the UN troops stood by and watched or conveniently disappeared just before the police were about to open fire.

To justify their actions, the police falsely accused the murdered demonstrators of having been armed criminals. Police have planted weapons next to the dead bodies of their victims as well. The HNP and the MINUSTAH seemed to work in tandem from the start. The troops served as look-outs along the perimeter of poor neighborhoods as the police conducted raids that often featured summary executions. Finally, MINUSTAH graduated to doing raids on its own.

Perhaps the most heinous of these is MINUSTAH's raid on July 6, when 300-400 troops attacked the residents of Cite Soleil in the middle of the night with tanks and at least one helicopter. The UN claims that they raided the neighborhood in an effort to arrest "gang member," Dred Wilme. Going after Wilme had a two-fold purpose: first, Wilme was a dynamic, young community leader and Lavalas supporter who condemned the Haitian National Police, MINUSTAH and Haitian elite for their various roles in the rotating slaughters of the residents of Cite Soleil. Wilme exhibited all the characteristics of a leader capable of organizing the poor in Cite Soleil to resist the state-sponsored terror. Because of this, Wilme had to be eliminated. The second reason for going after Wilme was that he provided the UN with the cover they needed – ridding Cite Soleil of a "criminal" - to unload massive weaponry as part of a massacre on an entire neighborhood. MINUSTAH's murder of Wilme and its full-throttle attack on Cite Soleil were meant as warnings to poor, Lavalas supporters throughout Haiti—"don't think about engaging in a resistance movement."

Witnesses and victims of this horrendous attack have stated in video footage taken the day after (see Kevin Pina's film, *Haiti: The Untold Story*) that the raid was conducted by UN troops firing indiscriminately into homes and shooting residents in the back as they ran for cover. While the exact number cannot be known, it is estimated that upwards of 50 or 60 residents were killed and countless more were wounded. Women and children were among the dead. Physicians from Doctors without Borders, who operate a hospital in Port-au-Prince, said they received 26 wounded people later on that day - 20 of them were women and children.

Throughout the post-coup period, Lavalas supporters, and poor Haitians in general, have been the victims of mass illegal arrests. It is estimated that there are over 1,000 political prisoners in Haiti's prisons. Most of the political prisoners are being held without charge or on trumped up charges. Prominent individuals have been jailed because of their membership in or support of the Lavalas Party and demand that Aristide be returned to Haiti. These include activist and singer, So-Anne Auguste; Aristide's former prime minister, Yvon Neptune; and priest and Lavalas leader, Father Gerard Jean-Juste.

Recently, it was confirmed that Haitian authorities have rounded up children in mass illegal arrests and are holding them in various locations throughout Port-au-Prince. Some of these children are as young as 10 years old and many of them are orphans. Several have been locked up since a few days after the coup – nearly eighteen months.

The Spin

Of the millions of dollars poured into Haiti as part of the destabilization plan, a considerable amount was devoted to shaping public opinion about Aristide and his followers. Some of the money was directed at training programs for Haitian journalists and some was spent cultivating journalists who write for international publications. In addition, much effort was devoted to planting stories and

editorials in major US newspapers to rally American support for the coup. The US State Department propaganda machine that coordinated and fed all of these efforts fixated on demonizing Aristide.

Perhaps the most ridiculous lie spread about Aristide, in an obvious attempt by the State Department to capitalize on white fear of a black Haiti and its voodoo religion, was a portrait of Aristide as a devotee of ritual sacrifice involving babies. His young, largely poor followers, were labeled as “chimères,” (the original meaning is “mythical, fire-breathing monsters”, but when applied to Aristide supporters its meaning is closer to “thugs.”) a word first introduced by an American journalist who was, no doubt, in close contact with the State Department.

Another aspect of the “spin” on Haiti is downplaying of the political. In Regan’s documentary, and in most of the conventional media, Haiti is viewed through a sociological prism in which the country’s problems are boiled down to a neat cycle of poverty, gang violence, crime and more poverty. Through this prism, the undeniably political murders of Lavalas supporters and other poor Haitians are recast easily by slick public information officers for the Haitian National Police, the international cabal, and the UN into legitimate responses to a growing “crime/gang problem.”

This hoax allows the US, French, and Canadian footprints to fade from the canvas and the UN troops seem less like occupiers and more like, well, peacekeepers. How can the situation in Haiti, in which the US, France and Canada spent millions of dollars to de-stabilize Aristide’s government and where the UN has marshalled as many as 300-400 troops at a time to commit deadly raids, be characterized simply as a police action to counter “criminal elements” in poor neighborhoods? The answer is that it can’t because this scenario is a propaganda fabrication.

On the day after Regan’s film aired, she participated in an online discussion about her film (<http://discussions.pbs.org/viewtopic.pbs?t=36080>). When challenged by a critic for not addressing the coup d’etat that ousted democratically-elected President Aristide, she stated:

“First of all the program was not about how Aristide was overthrown out/chased away. It was about how it happened again... and why and what is next.

There is little mystery here. Anyone who knows a lick about Haiti understands why this is happening. It is the same reason France occupied Haiti in the late 1700’s and the same reason US Marines occupied Haiti from 1915 to 1934 -- imperial domination.

Another critic pressed Regan further about her omission of the US role in destabilizing Haiti and the kidnapping of Aristide. Regan provided a bizarre, but revealing response:

“It is true that the US government, and also the EU, Canada, etc., all do and did fund opposition groups, NGOs that were anti-Aristide etc., and that these were the ones who were involved in lots of anti-government demos. It is also true that it was a little convenient that Philippe and another 100 camouflage-clad men with guns were able to mass in the DR and come across the border... certainly there was DR government involvement and probably US, although I have never (not yet) found proof. But the film was not about that... If I had been the editor (WNET has final say) I would have put in more about US involvement in Haiti over the years, supporting Duvalier, funding what I call the ‘real coup’ against Aristide. etc. But in the end, WNET had the final say.”

Which was it? Did she originally include footage about the imperialist web of deceit that facilitated Haiti's most recent descent into hell but WNET decided to cut it? Or, in hedging her bets about how to fund her film, did she make a conscious decision to omit this vital political background altogether?

The Treachery of Liberals

I can't know for sure what motivated Jane Regan to make her film, "Unfinished Country" (it should have been titled, "The Guy Philippe Show," with all the footage devoted to the preening, human rights abusing, US-backed "rebel leader" who now dons business suits and visions of becoming Haiti's next President). But, I speculate that her freakish, patronizing (what is an "unfinished country," anyway?) portrait of Haiti was intended to be just that.

However, for the imperialists, Regan's film is a diamond in the rough. It voids all memory of how and why Haiti got screwed (how Haiti always gets screwed). It will be another piece of imperialist propaganda that will be aired around this country to keep us looking the other way as the killing field in Haiti widens. This film, and others like it, will bring together a corps of misguided liberals who believe that, in spite of the massive evidence to the contrary, the UN presence in Haiti is that of a benign peacekeeping force rather than a murderous occupier and that the coup d'état that removed Aristide was the result of an internal squabble rather than an illegal, deadly violation of Haiti's sovereignty by the US, France and Canada.

In this particularly conservative political climate in which the US government funds the bad guys through the National Endowment for Democracy and money for Haiti (and other) solidarity work is all but dried-up, some activists are selling their souls to keep their organizations afloat. For some, the price may seem right, but for the people on whose behalf they claim to work, it is a cruel betrayal. Liberal meets capitalism and makes the wrong choice.

Many organizations that traditionally fund solidarity movements seem to be experiencing financial difficulties causing some activists to turn to larger, more mainstream funding organizations. These larger funders tend to be run by liberals, but their core set of contributors is increasingly conservative. As might be expected, these funders are applying significant pressure to solidarity groups to de-politicize their messages and activities. Hence, solidarity work takes on a distinct "human rights" tenor and focus shifts to counting the bodies and mounting campaigns to spring "high profile" political prisoners from jail. Less and less is said about why people are being killed or why massive illegal detentions of ordinary citizens are taking place.

Further, the rhetoric, so necessary to enlist the solidarity of others, must be "cleansed" so that concepts such as racism and its monster partner, imperialism, are no longer part of the discussion.

Either because funders advise it, or solidarity organizations think they need it, considerable effort is devoted to attracting mainstream members of Congress to the cause. In the case of Haiti, it seems clear that the solidarity movement has about all the friends it's going to get in Congress – these are the same members who have been supportive all along and who, throughout their careers, have taken consistent stands against US imperialist forays around the world. Softening the message may help get a foot in the door of a potentially sympathetic, more mainstream member of Congress, but before long the cause will be betrayed.

The betrayal will be captured on C-SPAN as the lobbied member recommends legislation to bring more US-owned sweat shops to the global south or announces that an obviously fraudulent election, such as the one that is about to unfold in Haiti, is free, fair and legitimate. The US Congress is a pillar of imperialism and, only in a very few cases (Haiti is one), are there brave members who will stand shoulder to shoulder in solidarity with you.

Liberals are treacherous because many never learned their history. Or, if they did, they forget it when it is expedient. Liberals cannot grasp the fact that the keepers of imperialism – governments, corporations, elected representatives – are not going to help us get rid of its ravages. We grew up in a country that has a lengthy imperialist resume, yet we still don't understand how it plays on the other end and what lessons it might offer us here.

If you know your history, you know that the same thing that toppled Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala and Mossadegh in Iran is the same thing that killed Patrice Lumumba in the Congo and Salvador Allende in Chile. It is the same thing that has blockaded Cuba for over forty years and threatens an invasion of Venezuela today and it is the same thing that kidnapped a beloved leader and democratically-elected President of Haiti on February 29, 2004. The culprit has always been, and forever will be, imperialism.

Talk to any solidarity activist from the global south and you will be advised not to waste time petitioning elected representatives whose re-election coffers are filled with contributions from corporate elites. You will be warned not to trust UN peacekeeping efforts because the permanent members of the UN Security Council use them too often as proxy armies to fulfill imperialist objectives. You will be encouraged to seek alliances throughout the world with other solidarity groups and you will be reminded that the struggle is not about you, but about the people who are under the gun, facing the repression and waking up every day to fight anew.

Resistance to Imperialism and Our Role

When you see the lengthy historical trail and the harm imperialism inflicts throughout the world, you can appreciate what I believe is one of the most efficient and successful anti-imperialist forces in recent memory – the indigenous people of Bolivia. Former Bolivian president, Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, who grew up in the United States (he speaks Spanish with an American accent) decided in 2003 (along with his US cronies) to privatize the country's gas reserves by initiating a government contract with a transnational consortium to export the gas to the US by way of Chile and Mexico. The consortium, Pacific LNG, is made up of British, Spanish, and Argentine corporations. A US company held the contract to transport Bolivian gas from Chile to Mexico. Within three weeks of de Lozada's attempted sell-out of the country, the people of Bolivia sent him packing.

In responding to this threat to their sovereignty, the people of Bolivia did not petition members of their legislature for help because they understood that many of its members had something to gain from the privatization. They were not naive enough to think an election would drive out de Lozada and other traitorous politicians -- how else could a series of privatizing capitalists with the mentality of white men continue to hold the presidency in this largely Indian country unless the elections are perpetually rigged?

No, they got the bastards out by marching, blocking roads, raising hell for weeks and not stopping. The de Lozada government did not help itself when it sent the Bolivian army into the fray, killing over 70 protesters. Like most victims of perennial imperialism in the global south, the Bolivians had nothing left to lose. You either fight back or you die. They know that it is a tactical mistake to enlist the keepers of imperialism in their fight. This is something too many people still don't understand well here in the US.

In the case of Haiti, its solidarity movement will have to make some tough choices ahead regarding its underlying philosophy and tactics to be used for furthering the cause. In the meantime, Haitians will continue to die and liberals within and outside the movement will continue to chastise those who advocate withdrawal of the UN "peacekeeping" troops because they believe the UN is the only thing that will protect Haitians from an all-out slaughter by Haitian National Police. It's too late. Haiti is drowning in a sea of blood already and the UN "peacekeeping" mission, serving as the US' proxy army, is a partner to the police in this well-choreographed carnage. Ask any victim of the July 6, UN troop massacre in Cite Soleil if they want the "casques bleus" (referring to blue-helmeted UN "peacekeeping" troops) to leave.

The next major struggle within the Haiti solidarity movement will come as the resistance to the occupation grows. I am certain that liberals will denounce it based on non-violence grounds just as they denounced the Palestinians' right to resist the murderous Israeli occupation. Our role, as solidarity activists, is to help others understand what imperialism is and to call it by name consistently. We must connect dots so that those who wish to join our movement understand, for instance, that the occupations of Palestine, Iraq and Haiti are related.

We must acknowledge that resistance may involve violence and that the only people that can decide whether, how, when and in what form are the Palestinians, the Iraqis and the Haitians. We must do our part by never softening the message, diluting the truth, nor de-politicizing the reality. Our solidarity work must be centered on fighting imperialism and racism and the core of our strategy must involve international alliances with other anti-imperialist groups. There are too many lives on the line to do otherwise.

--Shirley Pate is a Haiti solidarity activist in Washington, DC. She can be reached via email at spate@haitioye.net

Indiantown church tends mobile flock

By Megan Kenny

THE STUART NEWS

The South Florida Sun-Sentinel

October 16, 2005

INDIANTOWN · Every Sunday, the pews of the Evangelical Haitian Church of the Nazarene are packed with ladies in hats and men in suits. Children climb from lap to lap, welcomed by family members and friends who have known them since birth.

The Rev. Pascal Permis said God has blessed his congregation. When he became pastor of his church in Indiantown almost 20 years ago, he had more than 200 members, but his congregants scattered in search of better jobs and housing. He's left with about 120 members now.

Two years ago, he opened a second branch of the church in a Port St. Lucie gymnasium to accommodate his spreading congregation. "There was a need there," he said. "The many members who moved there needed to continue their faith. It was wise, instead of making them drive here."

But on special Sundays, like one in September when church members celebrated a successful mission of the Nazarene church, attendance can climb to well over 200 as church members from Indiantown, Stuart, Port St. Lucie and beyond flock to the original church.

Migration in the Haitian community is not new. Many Haitians immigrated to Miami and South Florida in the 1980s, mostly fathers who planned to work and bring their families later, Permis said.

The men drifted to Indiantown because of plentiful jobs in the area's agriculture business.

"In the past, most, if not all, worked in the groves," Permis said.

As those opportunities dwindled, men turned to construction, and many women went to work as nurse's aides.

Permis, 44, came to Florida from Gonaïves, a coastal town in southeastern Haiti, where flooding from last year's Tropical Storm Jeanne killed 1,000 people.

He arrived in Belle Glade in 1982, leaving school in Haiti just as the country's political turmoil was beginning. He was a social worker before he was ordained in 1987. The church in Indiantown was purchased in 1989.

Many of Indiantown's original Haitian residents, almost all members of Permis' congregation, still live by the church near Osceola and Jackson streets in the eastern part of Indiantown, Permis said.

Rosemond Exantus, 25, works in Orlando as a physician's assistant after graduating from Florida Atlantic and Nova Southeastern universities.

He comes home every other weekend to visit his mother, Mireille, especially since his father, Gilbert, died of liver cancer earlier this year.¶

"A lot of people moved out of Indiantown because there's not much else around it. The job market is not what it used to be," Exantus said. "It used to be a laborer, farmer kind of town, but now most people that live in Indiantown work in Stuart or Port St. Lucie."

Gilbert Exantus arrived alone in Miami from Croix-des-Bouquet, Haiti, in 1979, leaving his wife pregnant with Rosemond, her second son. Rosemond and his older brother, Jolbenne, now in Texas serving in the Army, didn't get to the United States until 1991.

His two younger brothers, Barry, a student at the West Palm Beach branch of South University, a four-year college that offers both bachelor's and associate's degrees, and Miller, a high school sophomore, were born in Florida.

Rosemond Exantus' father was a laborer in the groves, then went to work for the Louis Dreyfus Citrus, Inc. until a few months before his death.

"My father made a lot of sacrifices," he said. "Whatever he had, he didn't hesitate to spend when it came to education. He worked the fields for most of his life, and he wanted something better for me."

Church member David Touissant, 34, moved to a new house in Stuart two years ago with his wife, Ademicia. Both sets of parents still live in Indiantown. Touissant travels to Indiantown for church almost every weekend.

Touissant is from the same town in Haiti as Exantus, as are a large chunk of Indiantown's Haitians, his wife said.

His parents also arrived in the 1980s, looking for work in the fields.

They'll never move from Indiantown, he said. His parents don't speak much English, only Creole, and there's a community of Haitians in Indiantown that makes them comfortable.

"I can see the older ones that come here, they don't like it much," he said. His mother was very active in Haiti, and has been sick a lot since she moved here, he said.

Touissant, an electrician, moved to Stuart for a better home.

"It's safe and quiet," he said. "It's great."

Digicel names exec team for Haiti
Observer Reporter
The Jamaica Observer
Sunday, October 16, 2005

Cellular service company Digicel has named the senior management team for Haiti that will lead the development of the company's service in that Caribbean territory for which it secured a GSM operating licence in June this year.

The team is headed by chief executive officer, Ghada Gebara, a manager who Digicel says has had more than seven years' experience and expertise in mobile technology and wireless services having held senior positions at Asiacell, a major mobile phone provider in Iraq and CELLIS (France Telecom Mobile Lebanon) in Beirut, Lebanon.

Digicel says that Gebara who holds a Master's degree in Information Systems and Quality Management from the University of Havre, France.

The company also announced the appointment of Bernard Yacoub as chief technology officer with responsibility for managing technical operations and deployment for Digicel Haiti.

Yacoub previously served as strategic operations and network planning & optimisation manager for Ericsson in Algeria and spent six years as switching engineer and technical performance manager for France Telecom Lebanon.

Issa Touma will serve as chief financial officer of Digicel Haiti. Touma has 25 years of experience in accounting and is a certified management accountant. Most recently he served as vice CFO for Asiacell in Iraq.

"We're extremely excited about our entry into the Haiti market," said Digicel Group CEO, Colm Delves. "Now, with the right team in place we are poised to bring the same high-quality products and services to Haiti as we have elsewhere in the region. With their combined knowledge and industry experience, I am confident that Ms Gebara and her team will play a key role in our success and drive telecommunications innovation in Haiti."

With service in 15 Caribbean territories, Haiti and Trinidad & Tobago are the most recent markets in which Digicel won licence for cellular service. In Haiti, Digicel partnered with Onefone, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Haitian GB Group to win the competitive tender for the licence.

"Digicel looks forward to making an important contribution to the growth and development of Haiti economically and socially," said Delves. "Our entry into the Haitian market will result in significant job creation and Digicel fully intends to become involved in a range of sponsorships, and social and community initiatives."

With the entry into Haiti Digicel has invested over US\$600 million in the Caribbean since it first entered in the region in 2000 when it paid US\$47 million for a licence to operate service in Jamaica. It

now has 1.3 million customers in Jamaica, more than twice the 600,000 of its main rival Cable & Wireless. Jamaica remains its largest market.

Haiti Announces Changes to Election Reviews
By VOA News
14 October 2005

Haiti's interim government has announced that the nation's Supreme Court will no longer have the ability to overrule election officials.

The decision came Thursday, two days after the nation's highest court ruled a Haitian-American businessman could run for office.

Dumarsais Simeus

Election authorities had previously told Haitian-born Dumarsais Simeus that he was not eligible to run because he holds U.S. citizenship.

Also Thursday, Haiti's government announced a committee would be created to review the nationalities of all candidates running for the presidency.

Haiti's interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue has said the nation's elections will be delayed by several weeks, and not be held November 20 as scheduled.

The upcoming election will be the first since President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's ouster in February 2004.

Haiti seeks to bar dual nationals from presidential race

ALFRED de MONTESQUIOU

Associated Press

Fort Worth Star Telegram

Thu, Oct. 13, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti - A wealthy U.S. businessman who is running for president of his native Haiti faced a new obstacle Thursday after the interim prime minister announced the creation of a committee to review the citizenship of all 34 candidates for the upcoming election.

Interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue said the committee would block the candidacy of anyone who has dual nationality - and that the Supreme Court would not be able to reverse the decision.

The announcement came two days after Haiti's highest court ruled that Haitian-born U.S. businessman Dumarsais Simeus should be allowed to run in the first election since a rebellion forced the ouster of President Jean-Bertrand in February 2004.

Candidates have already begun campaigning for the election, which Latortue said would likely be postponed until December to give Haitian authorities more time to prepare.

The Supreme Court had ruled that election officials failed to provide proof that Simeus, owner of one of the largest black-owned businesses in the United States, had given up his Haitian citizenship.

Latortue told reporters that under Haiti's constitution anyone who acquires citizenship in another country automatically loses their Haitian citizenship and therefore can't run for president.

"If anybody can run by using judicial loopholes, this country's institutions will be destabilized," he said. "We cannot let this happen for the coming elections."

Simeus, the owner of food services company in Mansfield, Texas, did not immediately return phone calls seeking comment. He has said that he has always maintained close ties to his native country and that his candidacy would open up new roles in the country for Haitians who have lived abroad.

Latortue said it is possible that the new six-member Citizenship Verification Committee will reject other candidates who have dual nationality - which is not uncommon in a country where many people live abroad and have a second passport.

Haiti is struggling to distribute voter identification cards, print ballot materials and set up polling stations for the race to replace the interim government established after the ouster of Aristide. The election for president and 129 legislative seats was originally scheduled for October, then postponed until Nov. 20. A new date has not yet been set but Latortue said it would likely be in December.

Latortue said he would soon nominate a new general director to oversee the country's Provisional Electoral Council, which is charged with managing the balloting, and that the change in the election date would not prevent a handover of power on Feb. 7.

Haiti panel to decide candidate nationality
Caribbean Net News
Friday, October 14, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AFP): A panel will decide if candidates meet Haiti's citizenship rules to run for office, Prime Minister Gerard Latortue announced Thursday.

The commission, comprising the ministers of foreign affairs, justice and interior, will settle citizenship matters before a presidential and parliamentary vote set for December, he said.

"It will help the Provisional Electoral Council verify the nationality of the candidates," he told reporters.

Earlier this week, Haiti's Supreme Court unanimously ruled that a candidate had been disqualified without cause.

The court said that Dumarsais Simeus, who had been portrayed as a US citizen without sufficient ties to Haiti, had met residency requirements under the election law.

With Simeus in the race, 35 candidates will be contesting the presidential post, currently held by interim President Boniface Alexandre.

More than 1,300 candidates are running for the 120-seat legislature.

The elections would be the first since former president Jean Bertrand Aristide fled into exile in February 2004 amid an armed rebellion.

Since then, a United Nations force of about 7,700 troops and police has struggled to maintain law and order.

The Provisional Electoral Council has so far changed the date of the elections four times.

**Elections in Haiti: papering over an illegal situation
by Haiti Action (reposted)
San Francisco Bay Area Indymedia
Friday, Oct. 14, 2005**

"There is a growing consensus that there can be no free and fair elections in Haiti under the violent conditions that exist today. Nevertheless, the interim government is determined to hold elections in November of this year, despite rampant violence and the continuing imprisonment of Lavalas party leaders. Under these circumstances, it is hard to believe that the Haitian people would ever accept the results of the elections."

- Congresswoman Maxine Waters, August 23, 2005

We are inclined to believe that elections are a key step in creating democracy. Yet the United States government has used rigged elections as an instrument to maintain control and domination for many years. In their 1984 book, *Demonstration Elections: U.S.-Staged Elections in the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and El Salvador*, Edward S. Herman and Frank Brodhead explain the manipulative use of such elections to:

- * "oppose and defeat popular movements"
- * "ratify ongoing U.S. intervention strategies" and
- * "reassure the U.S. home population" that the latest Washington-backed foreign war is justified.

The authors could have written this very book about the upcoming elections in Haiti this fall.

Recent elections in Haiti

In 1990, Haitian voters elected Jean-Bertrand Aristide as president with a 2/3 majority, in the first free election with universal suffrage in Haiti's history. Aristide, a populist priest and outspoken advocate for the poorest of the poor, demanded a "place at the table" for all Haitians. He was promptly overthrown by a military coup in September 1991 (then restored to power by a U.S. led international force in 1994.)

The movement led by President Aristide, called Lavalas, won elections for president in 1995, and then in 2000, under the banner of the Fanmi Lavalas Party, when Aristide was elected overwhelmingly for the second time in the first democratic successions in Haiti's history. Despite his enormous popularity with the majority of Haiti's people, the United States government and the Haitian elite did everything possible after the election to discredit Aristide and Lavalas, including economic sabotage, aid embargo, funding the tiny opposition which had little popular support, and fighting to prevent the holding of any future elections, because it was clear that Lavalas would win.

The overthrow of constitutional democracy

Finally a U.S.-supported paramilitary force of former army officers and death squad members occupied northern Haiti in early 2004, and the U.S. military kidnapped President Aristide and forced him into exile on February 29. The U.S., French, and Canadian governments installed an occupation

government, led by Gérard Latortue, and the U.N. Security Council authorized a "peacekeeping" force, which entered Haiti in June, 2004.

In spite of a mandate to protect the people of Haiti, U.N. forces have allied themselves with the Haitian elites to destroy the Lavalas movement. They have been complicit in murderous attacks by Haitian police and paramilitaries on leaders of Lavalas and on the poor neighborhoods that support Lavalas. More than 1000 Lavalas activists and leaders have been imprisoned without charges. Thousands have been killed, and many thousands more live in hiding, unable to be with, or work to support, their families.

"Demonstration" elections

In this context the United Nations now calls for "demonstration" elections to show the world that all is well in Haiti, while at the same time stacking the deck against Lavalas. In the last general election there were more than 11,000 registration centers, but in an August 2 report, the London-based Catholic Institute for International Relations wrote that this number ". . . has been slashed to less than 500 for the 2005 elections. This raises concerns about the ability of those living in rural areas to participate, as they have to walk much further or pay to reach the registration centres by bus. The location of the registration centres also appears to favour the wealthier urban voter and potential government supporter."

Reports out of Port-au-Prince vary as to the number of voters registered from a high of 2.5 million to a low figure of 870,000 out of a potential 4.5 million eligible voters. Abner Francois, director of the National Organization for the Defense of Youth (ORNADEJ), told Haitian media on August 23, that those living in traditionally pro-Lavalas districts such as Solino, Bel-Air, Delmas 2, Sans-Fil, and Cité Soleil, are finding it impossible to register due to the absence of voter registration offices. Yet there are three centres in the upper class suburb of Petionville.

The Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti notes, "Many of those who have registered stated that they did so because registration is required for the national identity card and that they have no intention to vote." Procuring identity papers in Haiti normally requires a fee; as there are no such fees associated with registering to vote, there is an obvious financial incentive to do so for the desperately poor majority of Haitians.

The official Fanmi Lavalas Party

Why are the U.S., Canada, France, and the U.N. so determined to hold elections now, in this current state of chaos and repression, when they fought so hard to prevent elections while Aristide was president?

The goal of these elections is not to elect a representative government chosen by the people of Haiti, but rather to legitimize the ongoing process to eliminate Lavalas as a national movement and to demonstrate popular support for the candidate hand picked by the United States government. When Lavalas refuses to participate, the pro-election forces can cast them as the bad guys who are trying to prevent "free elections." Unfortunately the corporate media offers no context for those unfamiliar with Haiti's electoral history to understand otherwise. Instead, the media gives voice to the paramilitary

invective against the poor, calling them "bandits" and "rats." It refuses to acknowledge that the majority of Haitians demand the return of President Aristide, because he built schools, parks, and health clinics, and fully recognized Creole and voodoo, the language and religion of the poor - reforms that, until the coup, enabled them truly to participate in building Haitian democracy.

In El Salvador and Vietnam the opposition parties "were completely excluded from the ballot by law and/or the very real threats of murder." The same process is occurring in Haiti today, as USAID plots to eliminate Lavalas from the body politic, and the murderous police force hacks Lavalas supporters to death with machetes. While in Haiti, Aristide "could do no right," as his besieged presidency struggled to support the interests of the poor majority. Now the illegal coup government receives total international support, as it imprisons and slaughters pro-democracy activists, who have twice elected the man they want to be president in truly free elections. Any free society would consider elections a sham in which members of the most popular party cannot campaign because of threats of imprisonment or death, and such is the state of "demonstration" elections in Haiti today.

Haiti Action Committee

<http://www.HaitiAction.net>

haitiaction@yahoo.com

P.O. Box 2218, Berkeley, CA 94702

510-483-7481

http://haitiaction.org/News/HAC/10_12_5.html

Gunmen kill businessman in Haiti's capital

By ALFRED DE MONTESQUIOU

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

Seattle Post Intelligencer

Wednesday, October 12, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- Kidnappers shot and killed a businessman on a busy street in Haiti's capital Wednesday after he resisted being taken, then sped off in his car with his wife and two children, police said.

Archange Honore, who ran a large auto parts business, was driving through downtown Port-au-Prince's when gunmen tried to kidnap him, Deputy Judicial Police Commissioner Ulysse Jean Daniel said.

The kidnappers shot Honore after he resisted, dumped his body in the street and then drove off in his car with his wife and two children, Jean Daniel said.

The assault was the latest in a wave of kidnappings in Haiti that have added to insecurity ahead of the first elections since the February 2004 ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Police reported more than 50 kidnappings in September.

The rash of kidnappings has targeted both poor and prominent Haitians, as well as foreigners.

Haitian police and the FBI on Friday helped free 9-year-old U.S. citizen Olivia Geneus, who was kidnapped in the capital last month, the U.S. Embassy said in a statement.

Two men were arrested and were extradited to the United States. Yves Jean Louis, 24, and Ernso Louis, 19, could face up to 25 years in prison each if convicted.

UN Report: Haiti Could See More Violence
By VOA News
12 October 2005

The United Nations warns Haiti could see a resurgence of violence as the nation gears up for presidential and parliamentary elections.

In a report issued Tuesday, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan says Haiti is at a critical juncture, as the country prepares for its first set of elections since the ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February, 2004.

He says the security environment has improved in recent months, but the elections process would still benefit from outside assistance on security measures. The report says elections must not be tainted by candidates seen by the public as criminals, or by funds of dubious origin.

Elections were scheduled for November this year, but officials say the date could be pushed back to December due to delays in preparation.

Waiting for democracy in Haiti
By Kathie Klarreich,
Los Angeles Times
October 13, 2005

KATHIE KLARREICH, who has written about Haiti for nearly 20 years, is the author of "Madame Dread: A Tale of Love, Vodou and Civil Strife in Haiti," just published by Nation Books.

THE ONLY DATE that is certain in Haiti's electoral calendar is Feb. 7, 2006. As mandated by the country's constitution, a new president will be sworn in on that day, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the fall of the 29-year Duvalier family dictatorship.

The path leading up to the hasty, late-night departure of Jean-Claude Duvalier in 1986 was one of chaos and turmoil, as is the road leading to this year's elections: So far, more than 800 people have died in political violence over the last 12 months.

But the difference is this: After the departure of Duvalier, the country was awash with newly created grass-roots groups supporting programs geared toward the birth of a democratic, liberated and educated society. There were literacy programs, women's rights groups, labor unions and new radio stations that peppered all corners of the tiny island nation. Despite the fact that an army general took immediate control of the country, there was unprecedented optimism that Haiti could pull itself out of the quagmire of political and social mayhem and transform itself into a state providing services for everyone, not just the wealthy few.

Since then, however, there have been several democratic elections, but democracy has yet to come. The hope that attended Duvalier's fall has all but washed away with the topsoil. Coup d'états, inadequate, incompetent leadership and corruption have depleted the population. For most, the upcoming elections — designed to replace the interim government in power since last year — are just another round of musical chairs in the National Palace. (Last week, the elections were postponed for the third time, to mid-December.)

After the fall of Duvalier, it was the collective force of the peasants in the countryside, the poor in the slums, the disadvantaged and the underprivileged who found a champion in the spitfire speeches of a rebel Catholic priest, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and propelled him to victory as president in Haiti's first democratic election, in 1990.

But Aristide has since been forced from power himself (twice), bequeathing a legacy of controversy, unmet expectations and all kinds of (mostly unproven) accusations. And many of the organizations that had rallied to him no longer exist. Unions have fallen apart, and literacy programs have dried up. The military, the police and other armed forces have targeted peasant organizations; grass-roots groups have melted under pressure. The number of poor has increased.

Few of the disenfranchised have united behind a candidate — but not because there is a lack of candidates to choose from. Besides the hundreds of local and legislative candidates, there are at least 34 presidential hopefuls, including former President Rene Preval, a onetime Aristide ally who was democratically elected in 1995; former Prime Minister Marc Louis Bazin, an ex-World Bank official

who served under a military junta in the early 1990s, and former President Leslie Manigat, who came to office in rigged elections in 1988. Also running is former rebel leader Guy Philippe and wealthy businessman Charles Henri Baker — the front-runner, according to a recent poll.

One of the most popular candidates, former Catholic priest Gerard Jean-Juste, was unable to register because he has been arrested. Amnesty International has called him a "prisoner of conscience."

The official period for campaigning has just begun, but historically, candidates' travels primarily take them to places that are easily accessible, not to the tiny towns where 80% of the population lives. Now there's a new twist — the more savvy candidates are courting expatriates in South Florida, where they hope to capture money, influence and — ultimately — votes. The tri-county area of South Florida — Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach — has one of the largest and fastest-growing Haitian communities in the U.S., an increasing number of Creole radio and TV programs and a host of elected Haitian American officials. Hoping to tap into the resources in Florida (Haitians send home more than \$1 billion a year in remittances from abroad), candidates have met with Haitian Americans in informal settings and fundraisers.

So far, Haiti's nine-member Provisional Electoral Council has stumbled miserably in achieving the most perfunctory prerequisites necessary for free and fair elections. After two decades, it's time to institutionalize the electoral council and certify qualified and knowledgeable members. It's time to spread the real seeds of democracy and give grass-roots groups a chance to build a permanent power base. And those candidates with the resources to campaign in the U.S. might be better off redirecting their attention to a five-year plan that will touch the lives of those in the country's rural areas rather than those who can bankroll them from abroad.

Losing hope in Haiti

The hemisphere's poorest country prepares for elections amid death, squalor and national despair

BY LETTA TAYLER

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newsday.com

October 12, 2005

CITE SOLEIL, Haiti -- As he loitered on a garbage-strewn street flanked by canals of sewage, near a square where men wandered freely with M-16s slung over their shoulders, Jean Osner twisted his face in anger when asked if he'd vote in upcoming presidential elections.

"We have no one to vote for," said Osner, 25, a bone-thin man who wore tattered bedroom slippers for shoes. "No one cares about poor people like us."

Moments later, gunfire crackled through the stifling air.

Despair and lawlessness shackle this virtually stateless country as it lurches toward elections to replace ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, tempering Washington's hopes that the balloting will usher in democracy.

In this volatile slum inside the capital of Port-au-Prince, armed gangs loyal to the routed populist president remain so powerful that 7,600 United Nations peacekeepers guarding this tiny country couldn't provide enough security to open a voting registration center here until last Thursday - a week after voting registration ended elsewhere.

Adding to the worries, Haiti's electoral council is plagued by allegations of incompetence and political favoritism.

Threatened boycott

Meanwhile, the interim government has jailed a firebrand priest - the favorite candidate of Aristide supporters - on vague accusations of murder. As a result, some Aristide militants are threatening to boycott the elections, in which every post from the presidency to the legislature and local offices are up for grabs.

"Major problems remain in ensuring credible elections," said Mark Schneider, a Washington-based expert on Latin America with the International Crisis Group, a global think tank. "If they're not resolved, the next government's legitimacy will be in question."

Contested results could spark another round of the violence that has claimed more than 1,000 lives since Aristide's ouster 20 months ago from the hemisphere's poorest and most troubled nation.

"If the next president isn't on our side, we'll do the same thing Aristide's enemies did to him," vowed Osner, echoing many Cite Soleil denizens. "We'll take to the streets and kick him out by force," said Osner, who has two children, two pregnant girlfriends and no job.

In two centuries of independence, four-fifths of the 48 leaders of this former French colony have been ousted prematurely.

Voting was to have been held this month for 33 presidential candidates, with a Jan. 3 runoff between the top two vote-getters. But with most voting identification cards still undistributed and challenges multiplying over the Provisional Electoral Council's disqualification of nearly two dozen presidential candidates, the first balloting isn't expected until December, at the earliest.

Committed to change

Nevertheless, several countries including the United States are determined that a new government take office by the constitutionally set date of Feb. 7. "The date is sacrosanct because the Haitian people do not see the interim government as legitimate," said a State Department official who asked not to be identified. "There is no wiggle room."

Both here and abroad, the interim government of Prime Minister Gerard Latortue has been criticized for inefficiency and for failing to prosecute ex-military members involved in the armed revolt that ousted Aristide, while indefinitely detaining hundreds of Aristide supporters without charges.

Key among them is the Roman Catholic Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste, the would-be presidential candidate who has been jailed since July 21. The electoral council barred him from running on Aristide's Lavalas Family ticket, saying he had to register in person. But Jean-Juste's jailers wouldn't let him out to register.

Police say they suspect Jean-Juste of involvement in the death of Haitian journalist Jacques Roche. But he's never been charged. Amnesty International calls him a prisoner of conscience and his followers believe he's being held to thwart his presidential bid.

Politics aside, organizing elections would be a daunting task in this country with 80-percent poverty and 50-percent illiteracy, where phones and electricity hardly exist outside the capital.

Electoral workers have forded streams with laptops and solar panels strapped to donkeys' backs to meet voters who have walked 20 miles down winding mountain paths to register. In some cases, aspiring voters had to return three or four times to register because voting centers were closed by the time they arrived, or the registration equipment couldn't run because generators had run out of fuel or rain had stopped the solar panels from working.

But critics say progress would have been far greater had the Provisional Electoral Council spent its time creating more and efficient voting registration centers instead of tampering with test results to secure jobs for cronies. As one prominent international electoral observer put it, "Rome is burning."

Businessman Patrick Fequiere, a renegade electoral council member, wants the council to relinquish election planning to the United Nations and the Organization of American States, which is providing technical support for the balloting.

"Otherwise, they will have a disaster on their hands," he said. "Now is not a time for national pride."

That notion is tough to swallow in a country that gained independence in a bloody slave revolt and has been occupied three times in the last century by U.S. troops, who returned Aristide to power in 1994 but helped escort him out of Haiti last year.

"If the international community wants to help, it should avoid imposing solutions," said Rosemond Pradel, the electoral council's chief. Pradel denied the council was politicized or incompetent.

Despite the turmoil, there are signs of progress. With UN peacekeepers on the offensive, the rampant rapes, kidnappings and clashes between gangs loyal to Aristide and rogue police have ebbed somewhat.

"Armed groups will not prevent Haitians from participating in the election," vowed Juan Gabriel Valdes, the UN special envoy to Haiti.

And election officials have registered some 3 million voters. That's between two-thirds and four-fifths of the electorate, believed to be 3.4 million to 4.5 million.

Regardless of the percentage, "the most important point is that we've been able to give people adequate access to the registration process," said Elizabeth Spehar, a Canadian who heads the OAS election team.

Though registration ended Sept. 30, authorities extended it for two weeks in remote areas and slums. By last week, however, two-thirds of voters still hadn't been registered in Cite Soleil, a symbolic Aristide stronghold teeming with up to a half-million people, most of whom share space with pigs and dogs in tin hovels that have no plumbing or electricity and become furnaces under the broiling tropical sun.

That's because for months, the closest place election officials could set up a registration center was on Cite Soleil's perimeter. When white UN peacekeeping tanks tried to go in further, gangsters would emerge from labyrinthine alleys and open fire.

A symbolic victory

That made Thursday's opening of the voting registration center in the heart of Cite Soleil a huge symbolic victory. But the mood here remains tense. Gang members openly walk the streets. And each side - gangs on one and the UN peacekeepers and Haitian police on the other - accuses the other of starting clashes that routinely kill or wound many civilians caught in the crossfire, among them women and children.

"The bourgeoisie sends its mercenaries here to incite violence and discredit the people of Cite Soleil," John Joseph Joel, a local Lavalas Family leader, said in a comment typical of the anger here.

Imperfect or not, the elections are expected to go forward.

"Elections aren't a magical solution for any serious social problems," said Valdes, "but they are essential."

Haiti rules U.S. citizen can seek office

By ALFRED DE MONTESQUIOU

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

Seattle Post Intelligencer

October 11, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- A Haitian-born U.S. businessman may run for president, Haiti's highest court ruled Tuesday in a decision the would-be candidate said marked a turning point in the roles expatriate Haitians could play in their homeland.

The elections will be the first since a February 2004 revolt toppled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the first democratically elected president in the country that has suffered decades of civilian and military dictatorships and coups.

Presidential and legislative elections were scheduled Nov. 20, but elections officials have said preparations are behind schedule and the vote likely will be postponed for up to a month.

The provisional Electoral Council had ruled that Dumarsais Simeus, owner of a food services company in Mansfield, Texas, could not run in the election because he is a U.S. citizen.

But the Supreme Court's five judges ruled he could run because the electoral commission had not produced documents to prove Simeus had given up his Haitian citizenship, the court's chief clerk Andre Bignon said.

The provisional Electoral Council likely will challenge the decision, council lawyer Andre Joel Petithomme told The Associated Press.

"This decision is completely illegal, the court did not even let us to talk," Petithomme said.

Simeus said his candidacy would allow new roles in Haitian politics for Haitians abroad.

"It's not a personal victory, it's a victory for the Haitian people," Simeus told The Associated Press by telephone. "This victory showed that we will break the spine of the status quo that has done nothing for this country in over 200 years."

Simeus, 65, would compete against 33 other candidates and is not considered among the front-runners.

Water for Haiti project auction
Cohasset Mariner, MA
Friday, October 14, 2005

The Middle School Youth Group of St., Stephen's Episcopal Church is sponsoring a fund raising auction at the South Shore Art Center, 119 Ripley Rd., on Saturday, Oct. 22, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. St. Stephen's mission is to provide an entire community in Haiti with a reliable source of pure drinking water. With the objective of purchasing a system that will treat 10,000 gallons of water per day. The fundraising target is \$10,000.

Auctioneers are Rich Ofsthun and David Bigley. Refreshments will be served.

For Art Donations or questions, call either Jim Graham at 781-383-7082 or Beth Wheatley-Dyson at 781-383-1083, Assistant Rector, St., Stephen's Episcopal Church.

Socialist candidates in Miami back fights by truckers, taxi drivers

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

The Militant, NY

October 24, 2005

MIAMI—Omari Musa, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Miami, and Eric Simpson, who is running on the SWP ticket for city commissioner in District 5, have been actively campaigning among working people. They have extended support to striking taxi drivers in Broward County and independent truckers organizing into the Teamsters union here.

Both candidates are on the ballot for the November 1 elections and have received significant media coverage.

On October 8, Simpson and SWP campaign supporters brought the campaign newspaper, the Militant, to taxi drivers on strike in Ft. Lauderdale, just north of Miami. Two drivers subscribed and 20 bought copies. One driver—wearing a T-shirt defending Father Gerard Jean-Juste, imprisoned in Haiti for his opposition to the U.S.-backed rightist regime—said he would spread the word about the SWP campaign.

Simpson and his seven opponents in the District 5 race have been speaking at a series of forums sponsored by People United to Lead the Struggle for Equality (PULSE). At one such forum October 5 in Overtown, a mostly Black community, many of the 60 people present expressed anger at the lack of affordable housing and increased difficulties in making ends meet. They were responding to a proposed \$200 million Crosswinds housing unit, built on city land, that many fear will promote gentrification, pushing housing costs up and forcing current residents out.

When someone asked, “What do you consider to be affordable housing?” Simpson said: “An example is Cuba where by law no one pays more than 10 percent of their wages in rent. We need housing working people can afford, but we need jobs too. The SWP campaign calls for a massive federally funded public works program to put millions to work at union-scale wages.”

An interview with Simpson published in the October 5-11 Miami Times, a weekly directed to the Black community, said, “‘We’re running a campaign based on the fighting capacity of the working people.’ He thinks the working class of Miami needs trade unions that are political to rally for their cause.... ‘There are two Miamis—one for the rich and one for the poor.’”

Musa addressed 10 members of the executive board of the firefighters union October 6. “Our collective power is what forces the bosses to give in to our demands,” said Musa. “Workers need to organize unions and use them to fight. We support the striking Northwest Airlines workers and the independent truckers organizing themselves into the Teamsters at the port. We also point to the need to build a labor party, based on the unions, that fights in the interests of working people year around.”

The September 16 Nuevo Herald, the main Spanish-language daily here, published an article with a photo of Musa in his campaign office in Little Haiti. His party’s platform, the Herald article concluded, “includes demanding federal aid for the victims of Hurricane Katrina and other natural disasters; solidarity with striking unionists; support for the Cuban leader Fidel Castro and Venezuelan president

Hugo Chávez; and withdrawal of the U.S. armed forces from Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, and the naval base at Guantánamo, Cuba.”

Nicole Sarmiento contributed to this article.

Latin America is microcosm of world's challenges, hopes and perils – Annan
UN News Centre
14 October 2005

With all its challenges, dangers and promise Latin America is a microcosm of the world in which all that the United Nations stands for is put to the test, Secretary-General Kofi Annan told leaders attending the Ibero-American Summit today in Spain, where he made a fervent appeal for true democracy.

"In the modern era, we have seen tremendous progress in science and technology. We have seen democracy spread to people it has never previously touched. And we have seen people on many continents move from a past of extreme poverty to a future of hope," he told the heads of State of Latin America, Spain and Portugal gathered in the city of Salamanca.

"But terrible inequalities continue to scar our world. Too many people continue to suffer and die from poverty, conflict, and disaster, despite all the means at our disposal to create and share wealth, protect people from the violence of man or nature, and deepen respect for the dignity of every human being," he added.

"When I think of this delicate balance of tremendous promise and urgent perils in the world today, I think particularly of the nations of Latin America. Because yours is a region that truly hangs in that delicate balance."

There has been an astonishing spread of democratic government in the region with increased social spending, improved human development, infant mortality halved by 50 per cent, primary education offered to nearly every child, and millions lifted out of poverty, Mr. Annan declared.

"But we also see the stubborn persistence of inequality and exclusion, along economic, social and ethnic lines," he said noting that while people believe in democracy, some have begun to doubt whether their governments can respond effectively to the needs of the poor.

"I do not, for a moment, pretend that there are easy answers to the challenges you face," he added. "But I do believe that the answers will be found in more democracy, not less. Your democracies must become true citizens' democracies, governed by a rule of law that applies to everyone, and willing and able to respond to the needs of all your peoples, including your indigenous citizens."

The Secretary-General also urged those present to build on the momentum of September's UN Summit meeting in New York.

"With your engagement, we can equip the United Nations with a truly accountable, efficient and effective Secretariat; we can get the new Peacebuilding Commission and the new Human Rights Council up and running; we can forge a united and effective response to threats as diverse as genocide, terrorism, and natural disasters; and, above all, we can press ahead with a global partnership for development in which everyone lives up to their commitments in a spirit of mutual responsibility and accountability," he said.

"If we do that, the decisions made last month will make a real difference in the lives of your peoples," he added.

He also praised Latin American leaders for working together to promote stability in Haiti and for contributing uniformed personnel to the UN mission there (MINUSTAH). Ten Latin American countries collectively contribute over 3,500 troops of the 7,640, serving that operation.

Mr. Annan stressed that the Caribbean country will need further international aid to break the cycle of violence. "I appeal to donor countries for timely and sustained financial support for Haiti's recovery and reconstruction," he said.

In a separate speech to a joint session of the first Ibero-American Business and Civic Meetings, the Secretary-General stressed the importance of cooperation between the government and private sectors.

"Ibero-American countries have made great strides in recognizing the complementarity of the market and the State," he said. "Business leaders and civil society are understood to be key partners in a social contract.

"European and especially Iberian efforts to build social cohesion offer lessons for Latin American and Caribbean countries seeking the same objective. Experience shows that it is not enough to focus on macroeconomic policy. There must also be adequate funding for social policies, and adequate incentives for productive development," he added.

"Ibero-American cooperation, with the participation of business and civil society, is essential if we are to tackle global problems and create global public goods such as security, financial stability, environmental stewardship and a truly fair international trading system."

Jordanian forces for Haiti peace mission
My Caribbean News, FL
October 13, 2005

A group from Jordan's Special Forces on Thursday departed for Haiti to take part in peace keeping missions under the UN umbrella, the Jordanian government newspaper, Petra, reported today.

Assistant Director of the Public Security Department for Operations and Training, Brigadier General Ali Salameh, called on the group to perform their mission in the "best manner with a view to reflect the bright image that Jordan and its security department enjoys on the world level."

Ibero-American summit should discuss political reorganization of Haiti

Luiz Fara Monteiro, Reporter

Agência Brasil

October 14, 2005

Salamanca (Spain) - The political reorganization of Haiti and the war on terrorism should be part of the agenda of the 15th Ibero-American Summit, which is being held in Salamanca, Spain. Efforts to combat hunger, the need for national development financing, and compliance with the Development Goals of the Millenium are the chief items among the 26 topics expected to be covered in the Final Declaration of the meeting.

The Summit is being attended by heads of State and government from Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Venezuela, Colombia, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Honduras, Portugal, and Andorra, in addition to the host country, Spain. The meeting ends tomorrow (15).

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva will participate in three thematic groups at the meeting. He will lead the debate on the international influence of the Ibero-American community, according to information from the Planalto Palace. The other two sessions will be devoted to migration and the economic and social situation of the community.

While in Spain, president Lula is also expected to discuss the plight of Brazilians who live in that country. Around 30 thousand are there illegally. Brazil also wants to make it less expensive for Brazilians who live in Spain to transfer funds to their families. The two countries also intend to intensify cultural exchanges.

Translation: David Silberstein

14/10/2005

Official: Haiti Likely to Delay Elections

By ALFRED de MONTESQUIOU

Associated Press Writer

The Associated Press

ABC News

October 8, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti Oct 8, 2005 — Preparations for Haiti's national elections are behind schedule and the vote scheduled for Nov. 20 will likely be postponed again for up to a month, the country's top elections official said Saturday.

The election, which will require a run-off if no one gets at least 50 percent of the vote, will be Haiti's first since the rebellion that forced President Jean-Bertrand Aristide out of the country and into exile in South Africa in February 2004.

Officials next week plan to announce a new schedule for balloting to replace the interim government established after a rebellion forced the ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004, said Max Mathurin, chairman of the Provisional Electoral Council.

Mathurin, who spoke in separate interviews with The Associated Press and Radio Vision 2000, said the delay would allow the council to distribute voter identification cards and make other preparations.

"It's a secret to no one that we are behind schedule and studying a new calendar," he told the AP. "We hope that by postponing until December, we will have time to catch up."

The campaign officially began Saturday, with some of the 32 candidates for president holding rallies around the country.

The first round of voting was originally scheduled for Oct. 15 and postponed so more people could register.

More than 3 million people have registered to vote, and the electoral council is struggling to produce and distribute identification cards, hire election workers, prepare ballots and set up voting sites a major challenge amid the chaos and insecurity of Haiti.

Haiti poll 'faces postponement'

BBC News

October 11, 2005

Mr Latortue said elections could be postponed by two to three weeks

Haiti's planned elections will probably have to be postponed, interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue has said.

He was speaking after a cabinet meeting to discuss logistical and funding problems dogging the preparations.

The presidential and parliamentary polls are scheduled for 20 November, but Mr Latortue told the BBC they could now be held two to three weeks later.

It will be the first poll since President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was forced from power in 2004.

Haiti's election board is expected to make an official announcement on the poll date soon.

Campaign

The first round of voting was originally scheduled for 15 October and postponed so more people could register.

Observers say that the electoral council is struggling to produce and distribute identification cards, hire election workers, prepare ballots and set up voting sites, a major challenge amid the chaos and insecurity of Haiti.

The campaign officially began Saturday, with some of the 32 candidates for president holding rallies around the country.

Mr Latortue has said that his government will hand over power as scheduled in February next year.

A BBC correspondent in Haiti says the postponement will give him the chance to press foreign donors to honour their pledges of assistance.

The interim prime minister is due to attend a donor's conference in Brussels next week.

Friday, October 14, 2005

Army will not leave politics: Tariq Ali

By Ali Waqar

Daily Times, Pakistan

LAHORE: Pakistan's entrepreneurial army, which is gripping and penetrating national institutions, will not back off from the country's political scenario, said renowned intellectual and writer Tariq Ali during a special lecture on Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan and Haiti at Human Rights Commission of Pakistan's Durrab Patel Auditorium on Thursday.

Ali said the Pakistan Army had institutionalised itself in government and state organisations along the Indonesian Army's pattern, and it would not go away, adding, "It will stay as long as possible." He renounced every military invasion in any country, particularly by the United States, saying such invasions were based on multidimensional interests. He said the American Army had nothing to do with religion, but were trying to dominate the world "by hook or crook". He urged social forums and civil society groups to strengthen themselves at the regional level, adding that the consolidation of public opinion should be started from the grassroots level.

The South Asian region must build unity from a basic level, said Ali. He said alliances should be established at the regional level to counter US invasions and interests. He said it was not easy to expel American and other military troops from invaded countries and needed a long-term strategy. Ali said that the US needed India to counter China, "Long-term US policy does not target Islam and Jihad but China." He said that Pakistan's "only wise step" was allowing China to establish a camp in Gawadar Port.

Speaking on earthquake, the writer said that Pakistan's credibility had become doubtful in the international community. He hoped relief goods would reach far-flung areas and be distributed to deserving people, rather than being sold in black market, as in the Balochistan crisis. He said that earthquake survivors would heal with time but wondered who would heal the country's political and bureaucratic wounds? He urged that safety networks and crisis management systems be set up in the country and called for accurate planning in rehabilitating calamity-hit cities and towns.

About Iraq, Ali said the US was facing defeat and severe resistance from locals and many internal mutinies had reported within the US Army. About Palestine, he said the freedom fighters would continue their struggle, adding that the evacuation of some parts of Gaza by Israeli troops was not a victory, but a trick to occupy other parts of Palestine and stay in Jerusalem. About Haiti, he said the US invasion was related to economic interests, adding, "Haiti refused to privatise its water and had to face American wrath." About Afghanistan, he said the Taliban regime created by the US, with Pakistan Army's help. He added that US officials were reportedly meeting Pakistani militants groups and the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam to recitative them in Afghanistan.

The US will not dare to attack or invade Iran and Syria, said the writer. He said the US Army's situation in Iraq and Afghanistan did not make it feasible for them to attack the countries.

Haiti elections turning into a farce, critics charge

Tim Pelzer

People's Weekly World Newspaper

10/13/05

The Bush administration is ignoring serious structural defects that threaten to turn Haiti's upcoming elections into a farce, critics charge.

Haiti's interim government, headed by U.S.-installed Prime Minister Gerard Latortue, is planning to hold local, legislative and presidential elections Nov. 20 with a potential runoff Jan. 3. The U.S. is a major financial and political backer of the upcoming elections.

The Latortue government has prevented the country's largest party, Fanmi Lavalas, from participating in the elections by imprisoning or exiling most of its leadership, activists and potential candidates, and by repressing its supporters, often violently.

In addition, to date only 2.9 million out of 4.5 million eligible voters have been registered to vote, and voter registration facilities in poor urban neighborhoods and rural areas remain virtually nonexistent. The election plan calls for only 600 voting centers nationwide, down from 12,000 in the 2000 elections. And several critics charge the computerized voting system to be used will be open to fraud.

During a visit to Haiti Sept. 27, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice acknowledged some of these concerns. Reacting to her comments, Brian D. Concannon Jr., director of the Oregon-based Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, told the World that Rice "did raise some legitimate issues, including the lack of voter registration for the poor, political prisoners, etc."

However, Concannon said, "as far as I know, Rice's visit and [her] words have not led to the liberation of a single political prisoner. I believe there has been no proposal for a large increase in voting centers, and I have not heard any announcement that the U.S. will slow down the pipeline of guns to the Haitian police, despite a series of massacres."

As an example he cited a massacre on Aug. 20 where Haitian National Police and machete-wielding paramilitary forces killed and wounded dozens of people at a soccer tournament in Grand Ravine.

Concannon, who observed the 1995 elections for the Organization of American States and lived in Haiti from 1995-2000, said there are stark differences between today's elections and those held in 1995 and 2000, not the least of which is the 20-fold drop in voting centers and a projected voter turnout.

He said the Lavalas government in 1995 and 2000 organized fair and open elections. "In each case there were high rates of citizen participation, and the electorate's choice was clearly made and respected," commented Concannon. By contrast, "In 2005, the Haitian government, with the support of the international community, is trying to impose serious obstacles to both high participation and a clear choice by the electorate."

Concannon added, "The U.S. must condition its support for the Haitian regime on its immediate freeing of political prisoners, providing adequate registration centers and stopping police massacres."

Marguerite Laurence, a spokesperson for the New York-based Haitian Lawyers Leadership Network, charged that the Bush administration is knowingly supporting “rigged elections” in Haiti to keep Lavalas, the party of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, from coming to power again.

And Alana Gutierrez of the Washington-based Council of Hemispheric Affairs said, “Clearly, the Bush administration has not been promoting ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’ in Haiti.” Rather, she said, the administration has been deafeningly silent “as the disreputable Latortue regime has turned in a condemnable performance, featuring violent rule, the toleration of corruption and its sanctioning of the hunting down of those considered to be its foes.”
tpelzer@shaw.ca

COHA: Haiti – And You Call This an Election?

Column: Council on Hemispheric Affairs

Wednesday, 12 October 2005

- Secretary Rice, on a whirlwind trip to Haiti, glosses over problems that are doomed to chain-saw upcoming elections.
- Iraq's election morass is modest when compared to Haiti's.
- The State Department is much softer on its incompetent and malevolent interim Haitian Prime Minister Gerard Latortue, than it is on a string of Central Asian countries like Uzbekistan, even though the former's derelictions are equally deplorable.
- Rice sees only qualified evil when it comes to the jailing of the islands major democratic leaders who cannot participate in the election because they have been incarcerated on no, or purely invented charges.
- Does Rice know something? – that Neptune and Jean-Juste will be released hours after the election; thus preventing Lavalas from running and likely winning, but allowing her, at the same time and after the fact, to say that U.S. intervention got them released.
- U.S. strategy is to keep Lavalas from power no matter the tortured reasoning involved.
- U.N. political representation in Haiti and the Brazil-led peacekeeping force have failed in their dual mission to bring stability and law and order to Haiti.

Haiti is a country you can't easily get your arms around and if you do, it will beat you off in a moment. Uzbekistan's human rights abuses get a lot of attention, but Haiti's much greater violations dwell undisturbed under a U.S. rug. On an in-and-out trip to Haiti on September 27, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stressed the importance of Haiti's upcoming presidential balloting on November 20 to her "democratic promotion" campaign, aimed at legitimizing her alleged Haitian game plan for returning to constitutional rule. Haiti's democratic system was traumatized for the second time within several years, when the U.S. orchestrated the ouster of its de jure president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, on February 29 of last year. In actuality, Rice is anxious to rid her agenda of Haiti as close to cost-free as possible. Any administration that selected as its interim leader of the island a figure as reprehensible as Gerard Latortue, is interested in "democracy promotion" only as a sound-bite.

Rice's pronounced apprehensions over the turbulence bedeviling Haiti's preparations for its ill-starred November 20 elections, are somewhat less startling than what she chose not to say. Not a word was mentioned about the human rights violations which are being repeatedly committed by the Haitian National Police along with the UN peacekeepers, and only a few musty words were given over to the catastrophic state of the country's judicial system, which tolerates the outrageous detention, on totally fabricated charges, of such notable political prisoners as Father Jean-Juste and former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune. Meanwhile, if the election does take place, Rice is not likely to find a problem in validating it as fair, because Washington will state, ex cathedra, that this was the case, and who would care? Making such a statement would be merely one more example of the grotesque parody of a

democratic electoral process that is now being implemented in Haiti by Latortue's non-redeeming interim regime. As noted, Washington created Gerard Latortue, who was far better known for living a low silhouette life in quiet semi-retirement in a gated community in Boca Raton as well as for his radio program over a local station, than for having any visceral connection with his motherland Haiti, a country that he had scarcely visited in recent years. Simply put, we are witnessing a fraud in the making.

Looking at the manner in which Haiti is now being run, you will have to come up with the judgment that interim Prime Minister Latortue is the perfect candidate to head FEMA – he has established beyond question that he is the quintessential total incompetent, and that he has neither the heart to relate to a populace, nor the administrative capacity to run a country. Let alone devoid of any leadership qualities, Latortue has plunged a dagger through the heart of Haiti's scarcely functioning democracy by allowing brigands and knaves to be given positions of privileges. Both in style and substance, Haiti under Latortue has been blasphemed.

During her trip to Haiti, Rice implored the interim government to speed up planning for November's elections and had some misty words about speeding up trials, but she did not use the opportunity to order that the State Department's legman Latortue must release all political prisoners, headed by Jean-Juste and Neptune and that the personal security of those affiliated with the pro-Aristide Lavalas party be guaranteed, in order for the upcoming election not to be a greater parody than it already is.

Not Ready for an Election

The fact that Rice was spotlighting attention on the need for speeding up election preparations may have been somewhat harsh, considering that the Haitian government has been creating many new polling stations. Unfortunately, most of them are being furnished in the better off urban areas of the country, while the slums on the outskirts of the city and rural areas are being woefully neglected. Clearly, Rice's statements indicate that she is aware that all Haitians will not have equal access and the same opportunity to participate in elections which she is on record as seeing as being a "powerful weapon" and as "a precious step on the road to democracy." However, assuming such access may be a patently inaccurate conclusion on her part, considering that a majority of Haitians live on under two dollars a day, and will be hard pressed to afford the trip to distant election booths. When it comes to acceptable norms for a free and fair election in Haiti, Secretary Rice has lowered the bar so far that it is now scraping the ground.

On November 20th, Haiti is scheduled to hold the first round of its presidential election. Indisputably the most impoverished and forlorn of all the hemispheric nations, Haiti also has been the nation most frequently singled out for U.S. intervention in the region. Such interventions, such, as the one which took place in early 2004, had the U.S. orchestrate the ouster of constitutionalist president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Under him, according to Washington, Haiti had become a "failed state" and he had to go because under his friend, President Préval, Haiti allegedly had staged "fraudulent elections." This became the justification for the likes of former Senator Jesse Helms to pressure the White House to turn off the spigot for crucially needed foreign aid.

A Tortuous Recent History

Ballot box stuffing, intimidation of the electorate by armed cutpurses, as well as ghastly massacres of potential voters have routinely occurred during Haiti's tortuous history. The few opportunities that the country has had to break out of its dismal cycles of foreign control or strongman repression eventually ended in wreckage. In less than two months, Haitians will again go to the polls to participate in an election that will be so blemished that Rice will be unable to sell it to the American people, let alone to Haitians as being the real thing. As a result, it is all but certain that the island will be denied taking advantage of one of its rare opportunities to institutionalize democratic procedures. Under the auspices of the outrageously unqualified and malignant Latortue, together with the grossly disappointing performance of the Brazilian-led UN peacekeeping force, and the decent but indecisive Chilean political broker dispatched by the UN's Kofi Annan, distressingly little has been accomplished and the plight of the average Haitian is as bleak as ever. Haitians are once again being urged to the polls to vote for a president under totally unacceptable conditions, while the UN has created for itself the unenviable record of being far more adept at killing innocent Haitians than bringing stability to the country. What is almost worse is that Brazil's president Lula da Silva doesn't even seem to care about the bad name that Brazil's Haitian military operation is giving to his country.

In moving ahead with a bankrupt Haiti policy, Secretary Rice fails to comprehend the despair of the Haitian electorate as it contemplates voting again for a president – as the island's voters did in 1990 and again in 2000 – only to be certain that exercising the ballot will fail to achieve an electoral solution, but only more conflict and killings. Those who voted for President Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party in recent elections, only to see their vote later invalidated by Washington's malevolence, can only wonder why they bother to even vote when it will be the U.S. embassy in Port-au-Prince who will be the final arbiter of how the island will be ruled.

A Bleak History

Haiti's current political landscape seems eerily familiar to that which was left in the ruinous wake of the departure of Baby Doc Duvalier in 1986. If those times, when one murderous military regime came upon another, were a tragedy for the nation, then the plotting last year by the United States, France and Canada, together with the generous fig leaf supplied by the UN's Kofi Annan, led to the voiding of the popular vote by the abrupt removal of Aristide from office. His immediate quasi-abduction to an African location, whose name was not even disclosed to him at the time, was the final insult to Washington's pretensions as being democracy's contractor in Haiti.

Starting over a year ago, the interim government's infamous ex-minister of justice, Bernard Gousse, began to systematically imprison (invariably without any evidence or charges) leading Lavalas figures, while at the same time he set much more relaxed standards when it came to the treatment of murderous rightwing villains – some of whom were released from jail in spite of the fact they had been found guilty of an array of brutalities. The anti-Aristide cabal led by the State Department never had a word that clearly condemned Gousse, who routinely violated constitutional norms to prosecute Aristide partisans, while convicted murderers like Louis-Jodel Chamblain, who former Secretary of State Colin Powell referred to as a "thug," walked the streets with a beaming Gousse, a free man.

Haiti's widely assailed Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) declared some 30 candidates eligible to contest the November presidential elections. Their sheer number, along with CEP's antique methodology, almost assures that a run-off will take place. Haiti's political spectrum includes parties from the far-right, to centrist liberals, to socialists and even more radical parties. Even Baby Doc

Duvalier is rumored to be considering to return to witness, but not necessarily run in the race. However, most parties are more tiny factions than bona fide parties. One particularly unsavory candidate who declared his candidacy was Frank Romain, the former mayor of Port-au-Prince, who was the subject of an extradition writ in 1989 for ordering a military unit to open fire upon voters waiting in line to cast their ballot, killing scores and forcing the abortion of that contest; this violence led to three years of bloody military-dominated-rule. How very little distance Haiti has come since then, as the arbitrary crushing of the poor continues in a nation that proudly introduced to the world, over two centuries ago, the beginnings of the human rights movement in this hemisphere.

It's a Question of Numbers

Secretary Rice's baffling problem is that no party in Haiti's history has been able to draw the numbers that ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's Lavalas party has been able to attract. Nothing that the State Department can do seems to lessen those numbers. From gaining 67.5% of the electorate in 1990, every ballot since has resulted in Lavalas winning by sizeable majorities. U.S. embassy officials have informed Washington that if Lavalas had been able to nominate either a Yvon Neptune or a Gérard Jean-Juste in the approaching elections, and have Latortue guarantee their personal security; there would be little doubt that history would repeat itself. If so, this would again have undermined Washington's game plan to deny power to Lavalas. To restate the matter, there is no question that in any presidential race that would be internationally validated as being free and fair, Lavalas would have once again won decisively. Such an eventuality would pose an enormous conundrum for the administration since it would mark a grave set-back for State Department policy which was based on preventing the possibility of any return of Aristide influence to Haiti, an event it has gone to great length to prevent – including the arbitrary invalidation of his presidency by de facto exile.

As of today, the Rev. Gérard Jean-Juste (a Catholic priest, as Aristide was in 1990), languishes in the National Penitentiary, and is not likely to be the Lavalas standard-bearer, although he is by far the country's most popular potential candidate. Former President (and Prime Minister in the first Aristide presidency) René Préval, who in the past has been close to Aristide, has now entered the fray as an independent candidate, and whose organizational skills and positive reputation attracted tens of thousands of voters to newly register, could be a strong prospect in the field if he's allowed to win and then run in the inevitable run-off.

One faction of Lavalas has formed a coalition with Marc Bazin's MIDH party, a particularly adroit move on the part of the former World Bank official, who, although long condemned for repeated acts of opportunism and self-glorification, in recent months has been displaying a seriousness of purpose in recognizing the genuine appeal of Lavalas to Haiti's masses. Once considered a pariah by Haitian patriots and charged by many progressives and populists as being too close to Washington, he has lately re-manufactured himself from the days when he briefly served as a figurehead for the "de facto" government that replaced Aristide in 1991. But later switching gears, he then went on to serve as a minister in two subsequent Lavalas governments.

Without a Father Jean-Juste to galvanize the Haitian masses, Lavalas' leadership may best be served by aligning with Bazin or, of course, Préval. Moreover, since the anti-Aristide de facto coup of 2004, it has only been Bazin among the traditional leadership sector, who has supported Lavalas and he was also very forthright in criticizing the interim government's egregious incompetence. Between now and February, much is likely to happen; at that date the victor in the run-off is scheduled to take office, but

first the U.S.-led anti-Aristide cabal has much to lose if the electoral process continues to take a chaotic course.

If one views the forthcoming elections in Haiti as a mindless exercise in "procedural democracy," the vote itself will provide far from indisputable evidence of quality governance. Haiti's basic fact of life today is that neither economic nor political democracy exists in the country, and no one could venture to claim that the vote of a subsistence farmer in Haiti's Artibonite valley will carry the same political weight after the election as that of a Pétion-ville businessman.

In underdeveloped nations around the world, where class cleavage stands out as an overwhelming fact of life, a political rhetoric is being called into play which claims that it means to empower the intended audience. The language of political discourse today in Haiti among the poor is not unlike that found in the "favelas" of Sao Paulo, or the broken barrios of Lima – the rhetoric may be similar because the basic conditions that spawn the despair is almost interchangeable.

The most gifted politicians, like religious leaders, are supposed to make the electorate feel germane to the political process and convinced that they are vital to their nation's future. Aristide was particularly adept at empowering the poor. But for the United States, the very concept remains almost a frightening specter. It is almost synonymous with Fidel Castro, therefore making it an abomination for Washington, therefore sealing the Haitian leader's fate and the island with him.

This analysis was prepared by COHA Director Larry Birns and Senior Research Fellow John Kozyn.

Larry Birns is the director of the Washington-based Council on Hemispheric Affairs.
John Kozyn was the director of the Washington Office on Haiti.

Haiti stumbles despite support from U.S., U.N.

By Reed Lindsay

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

October 11, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti

More than 19 months after U.S. Marines whisked away President Jean-Bertrand Aristide amid an armed revolt, Haiti remains beset by worsening poverty and violence, despite a U.N. peacekeeping force and nearly \$195 million in U.S. aid.

The ouster of Mr. Aristide was welcomed by the Bush administration, which had accused the former Roman Catholic priest of tolerating drug trafficking and of using gangs to attack the opposition.

But the interim government of Prime Minister Gerard Latortue has failed to deliver stability and economic progress while making enemies among both rich and poor and exasperating its international backers.

Mr. Latortue yesterday confirmed what many had predicted, telling Agence France-Presse that "technical problems" have forced the government to defer general elections set for Nov. 20 by three weeks.

"We have problems. We have considerable delays in the logistics and finalization of the lists of candidates," he said, adding that the presidential inauguration remains fixed for Feb. 7.

It was the fourth time this year that the government had changed the date of the elections.

Bob Maguire, a Haiti specialist at Trinity University in Washington, said a surprise visit to the capital, Port-au-Prince, two weeks ago by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was a sign of the U.S. administration's growing concern that just such a delay in the critical first vote was imminent.

"It's painfully apparent that the interim government, which faced steep challenges to begin with, has disappointed," Mr. Maguire said. "The U.S. is clearly staked to these elections and wishes to see them free and fair enough so that the winner can be supported with international aid and other assistance. But the bar may be set rather low in order to achieve this, which does not portend well for the future of Haiti's democracy."

A multinational effort

In contrast to Iraq, "regime change" in Haiti has been a broadly multilateral effort, with France and Canada sending troops to join U.S. Marines after Mr. Aristide's departure, and Brazil helping lead the U.N. peacekeeping force, enlisted from more than 40 nations.

But the United States has played a central role, from arming the national police force to financing the elections, and Congress this year has budgeted \$407 million, more than twice as much as any other donor or lender.

Washington has helped rebuild Haiti's run-down police force, providing trucks, equipment and guns. Making an exception to the 14-year-old arms embargo on Haiti, the Bush administration provided 2,600 weapons to the police last year and has since approved a sale of \$1.9 million worth of pistols, rifles and tear gas to the Haitian government.

Meanwhile, Haitians from all walks of life are on the U.S. government payroll, including more than 800 street sweepers, who earn \$2 a day through a program financed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the prime minister's spokesman, whose \$4,000 monthly salary is paid by the agency.

A U.S. Embassy spokesman who asked to remain anonymous said Washington pays "technical advisers" to work in several "key ministries" and the prime minister's office.

"This interim government would have fallen without the United States," said Leslie Voltaire, a Cabinet member under Mr. Aristide who was part of a three-member commission that helped form the interim government in March last year.

"The United States has subcontracted Brazil for security and Canada for economic development. But they're all reporting to Washington. The final decisions are made there," Mr. Voltaire said.

Damian Onses-Cardona, a spokesman for the U.N. mission in Haiti, denies that the United States exerts more influence over the peacekeeping force than other countries.

"On all the big issues -- security, stability, elections -- everybody agrees on what needs to be done," Mr. Onses-Cardona said.

Election concerns

Despite Washington's support, the interim government has been unable to avoid stumbling toward elections.

Even before Mr. Latortue's acknowledgment yesterday, a member of Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council had said the election date might have to be pushed back. The council opened a voter registration center in Cite Soleil, the most populous slum in Port-au-Prince, only last week.

Haiti's police force has been accused of numerous high-profile killings and human rights abuses, including the slaying of at least eight persons during a USAID-sponsored "Play for Peace" soccer match in August.

Haitians not on the U.S. payroll complain of continually worsening conditions, especially rising prices and lack of jobs.

"It is not so much that results have not met expectations, but that achievements need to be consolidated and expanded to combat political instability, poverty and unemployment," said the U.S. Embassy spokesman.

"Violence has also slowed or inhibited the implementation of projects in slum neighborhoods. In particular, providing assistance in the area of Cite Soleil has been difficult."

Although the United States has been a strong supporter of the interim government, American officials have gone out of their way to express concern about the imprisonment of two Aristide allies, former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune and the Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste.

Considered "a prisoner of conscience" by Amnesty International, Father Jean-Juste, a Catholic priest, was prevented from running for president in the elections by not being allowed to go to the election council to register his candidacy. He was chosen by Lavalas, Haiti's most powerful political force.

During her visit to Haiti, Miss Rice told Mr. Latortue, "Justice has to come in a timely fashion, and it should not be the case that anyone can interpret that there is some kind of political motive here."

At the same time, the United States has tried to undercut Father Jean-Juste's support through the Office of Transition Initiatives in USAID that is known as "the Special Forces" of development aid.

'Legitimacy' prevented

One of OTI's aims is to reduce participation in demonstrations supporting Father Jean-Juste. The OTI Web site said the office organized a summer camp for young people in the priest's neighborhood,

helping prevent a Lavalas "demonstration from being larger and giving greater legitimacy to the protesters."

"The United States is speaking out of both sides of its mouth," Mr. Voltaire said.

"On the one hand," he said, "Condoleezza Rice is lamenting the imprisonment of Jean-Juste and Neptune, but then nothing happens. He remains in jail. With the world looking on, she capitulates in front of this weak government that the United States itself has installed."

**Haiti: Open letter from Reporters Without Borders to candidates in the presidential elections :
Future president must break with culture of impunity**

Fuente: © Reporters sans frontières

Noticias.info

October 16, 2005

For the attention of :

Charles H.J. Marie Baker, Marc Louis Bazin, Casimir Bélizaire, Joël Borgella, Philippe Jean-Hénold Buteau, Claude Bonivert, Paul Denis, Hubert Deronceray, Marc Antoine Destin, Joseph Rigaud Duplan, Edouard Francisque, Reynold Georges, Serge Gilles, Gérard Gourgue, Jean Chavannes Jeune, René Julien, Emmanuel Justima, Leslie Manigat, Luc Mésadiieu, Samir Georges Mourra, Evans Nicolas, Evans Paul, Frantz Perpignan, Guy Philippe, René Préval, Himmler Rébu, Franck François Romain, Charles Poisset Romain, Judie Roy, Yves Maret Saint-Louis, Jean Jacques Sylvain and Dany Toussaint.

Dear Candidates,

The campaign for the presidential and legislative elections of 20 November and 3 January has just officially begun. You are all running for the post of president of Haiti. As you are aware, being a candidate entails a commitment. The next president will not just have to defend the constitution and maintain the balance of powers. As depository of the Haitian people's vote, it will also be your duty to consolidate a true democratic culture in Haiti, of which press freedom must be one of the pillars.

The situation of journalists and the media is a key indicator of a country's democratic health. Reporters Without Borders, an organisation dedicated to defending press freedom worldwide, again saw how true this is during a field mission to Haiti from 22 to 28 September. It emerged from the visit, which included meetings with journalists and media executives, as well as lawyers, judges, police officers, human rights activists and culture and communication minister Magali Comeau Denis, that 2005 has been a very mixed year. This spurs us to be especially vigilant. We hope our vigilance will be shared and will be translated into action by the person who enters the National Palace on 7 February.

In the course of this visit and the preceding one in June 2004, Reporters Without Borders saw an improvement in respect for press freedom since President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's fall from power on 29 February 2004. The journalists we met said they were under less pressure, had more editorial freedom and did not fear reprisals from the state apparatus. Despite this progress, the prevailing level of political and criminal violence is still alarming and the press continues to be especially exposed to it.

The first quarter of 2005 was marked by the tragic shooting of 24-year-old Laraque Robenson of radio Tele Contact in Petit-Goâve. He sustained bullet wounds to the head and neck during a shootout between former Haitian soldiers and a detachment of peacekeepers from the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) on 20 March and died of his injuries in a Cuban hospital on 4 April. The fatal shots were alleged to have fired by peacekeepers. MINUSTAH carried out an internal investigation but never released its findings. This episode highlighted the problems of cooperation between the peacekeeping force and the transitional government. Restoration of the rule of

law will depend on the relations between MINUSTAH and the government that emerges from the elections.

MINUSTAH and Haiti's police and judicial authorities have until now still not managed to dismantle the arsenal of some 200,000 illegal firearms circulating within Haiti. Nor have they succeeded in neutralising the approximately 100 gangs that operate with complete impunity and have made kidnapping their speciality in the past year. MINUSTAH estimates that six million dollars have been paid in ransoms during the past six months. The Haitian press has paid a high price in this climate of terror.

Nancy Roc, the presenter of the radio magazine *Métropolis* on Radio *Métropole*, fled the country on 16 June after getting phone calls for nearly a week threatening her with kidnapping. Roc, who had been investigating arms and drug trafficking, finally decided she had to go after receiving an anonymous call telling her that her abduction was now just "a question of hours." Radio *Métropole* station manager Richard Widmaier had himself narrowly escaped a kidnapping attempt in Port-au-Prince just five days before, on 11 June.

Jacques Roche, a columnist and arts and culture editor at the daily *Le Matin*, was not so lucky. Kidnapped on 10 July in Port-au-Prince, he was found dead four days later. The state of his body indicated he was tortured with extreme cruelty. Investigators established that the kidnappers initially demanded a ransom of 250,000 dollars for his release, and that Roche's family and *Le Matin* paid them 10,000 dollars on the afternoon of 11 July. After at first insisting on getting the remaining 240,000 dollars, the kidnappers reduced their demand on 13 July to 50,000 dollars. But in the meantime, they had begun to realise who Roche was and that, in particular, he presented a programme on *Télé Haïti* and the national TV station on behalf of the "Group of 184," a coalition which had spearheaded protests against former President Aristide. A *Le Matin* journalist who had the job of negotiating with the kidnappers was told : "You had President Aristide kidnapped and, in so doing, you taught us kidnapping." At first just criminally-motivated, Roche's abduction had become political.

Roche's suspected kidnappers all belong to a gang called the "Rat Army" that operates in the Port-au-Prince district of Bel-Air. Three of them were arrested by MINUSTAH and the Haitian National Police (PNH) : Roger "Ti Edgard" Etienne on 16 July, and Flaubert Forestal and Jules Mentor on 22 July. The names (or aliases) of the following participants in Roche's kidnapping and murder emerged during interrogation : Alamaskay, Ti Réginald, Peter Dan Sere (who was shot dead during a MINUSTAH operation in September), Johnny Céron, Dérosiers Becker (aka Tiyabout) and Nicolas Augudson (aka General Toutou). Reporters Without Borders welcomes the investigation's rapid progress but thinks the suspects still at large should now be quickly located and arrested. Their arrests would severely weaken the Rat Army's control of Bel-Air, which the Haitian press still does not dare to enter. Our organisation also hopes that those detained receive due process and an early trial.

This is one of the major challenges for the next government. The president and administration that emerge from the coming elections must break with the culture of impunity that is jeopardising the future of democracy in Haiti. Reporters Without Borders will therefore continue to campaign for the truth to be revealed about the two murders which are unfortunately emblematic of this persistent impunity and the serious and chronic judicial malfunctioning that allows it to continue - the murders of Jean Dominique and Brignol Lindor.

More than five years have passed since the double murder of Dominique, Radio Haïti Inter's director and political commentator, and the station's caretaker, Jean-Claude Louissaint, on 3 April 2000 in Port-au-Prince. The judicial investigation, concluded on 21 March 2003, resulted in the indictment and arrest of six members of armed gangs known as "chimères." They were Dymsey "Ti Lou" Milien, Jeudi "Guimy" Jean-Daniel, Philippe Markington, Ralph Léger, Freud Junior Demarattes and Ralph Joseph. The charges against the last three were dropped by an appeal court on 4 August 2003.

We were dismayed to learn that Ti Lou, Guimy and Markington took advantage of a prison riot in February 2005 to escape. During Reporters Without Borders' latest visit to Haiti, in September, several sources close to the Dominique investigation told us that Ti Lou and Guimy are now in Martissant, a district on the south side of Port-au-Prince, where they have become gang leaders. If they have been located, why have they not been recaptured and returned to prison ?

The Reporters Without Borders delegation that visited Haiti in June 2004 obtained assurances from interim President Boniface Alexandre, Prime Minister Gérard Latortue and then justice minister Bernard Gousse that the judicial proceedings in the Dominique case would be relaunched. The supreme court issued a ruling on 29 June 2004 ordering a new investigation. Thereafter it took nearly a year for an investigative judge to be properly appointed, and then he was unable to work.

Is it normal that the justice minister publicly announced on 3 April 2005, the fifth anniversary of Dominique's death, that a judge had been put in charge of the case, and yet the judge has not been able to see a single piece of evidence in the file ? Is it normal that the two letters which this judge sent to the justice minister requesting the necessary resources to carry out this investigation never received a reply ? Is it also normal that the promise of resources (car, driver and bodyguards) made to the judge by Gousse's successor as justice minister, Henri Dorléans, was never acted on ?

These highly questionable failures and omissions compound the many others that have dogged the case since the outset. Former Port-au-Prince deputy mayor Harold Sévère and Ostide "Douze" Pétion were arrested on 14 March 2004 on suspicion of involvement in the Dominique murder. Annette "Sò Anne" Auguste, Aristide's liaison with "popular organisations," who was arrested in connection with another case on 10 May 2004 in Port-au-Prince, was later alleged to be also linked to the Dominique case. Nonetheless, none of these suspects has undergone the least interrogation. Similarly, there has never been any attempt to verify the alleged hit-man Ti Lou's claim that he was paid 10,000 dollars to kill Dominique. Finally, no light has ever been shed on the suspicious deaths of two witnesses.

The Lindor murder is the other big pending case eroding the credibility of Haiti's political and judicial institutions. Four years after this young Radio Echo 2000 reporter was hacked and stoned to death in Petit-Goâve on 3 December 2001, must we resign ourselves to the judicial impasse that has brought proceedings to a halt ? After an appeal court rejected the Lindor family's request to be granted civil party status in the case, they turned to the supreme court on 21 April 2003. More than two years later, the supreme court still has not issued a ruling, although it should have done so within two months. Twice, in June and November 2004, Reporters Without Borders interceded to call for the case to be reactivated. The prolonged delay exacerbates the disgust and incomprehension prompted by the botched investigation concluded in September 2002.

Everything seems to have been done to cover up the premeditated and planned nature of Lindor's murder. Reporters Without Borders would like to recall the following facts, supporting a report by the Citizens Commission for Implementing Justice (CCAJ) that was handed to the justice minister in July 2004.

Four days before Lindor's murder, a press conference was held in Petit-Goâve on 29 November 2001 by several local figures linked to former President Aristide's party, Fanmi Lavalas, including Petit-Goâve mayor Emmanuel Antoine and his deputy, Bony Dumay, who launched into a violent verbal attack on the opposition Democratic Convergence coalition and Lindor, considered to be one of its allies. Another meeting was held on 2 December, the eve of his murder, this time between municipal officials and members of "Domi nan Bwa," an armed group linked to Fanmi Lavalas.

One of Domi nan Bwa's chiefs, Joseph Céus Duverger, was attacked the next morning by presumed Democratic Convergence supporters. This incident was used as a pretext for the targeted reprisal against Lindor later in the day. Evidence of this comes from the fact that around 10 Domi nan Bwa members were on the point of executing Democratic Convergence member Love Augustin at his home but, when Lindor arrived on the scene, they let him go and seized Lindor.

Despite all these facts, the indictment issued by judge Fritner Duclair on 16 September 2002 failed to bring any charges any of the presumed instigators of Lindor's murder. No Petit-Goâve municipal officials were ever questioned or detained. Charges were brought against 10 Domi nan Bwa members who took part in the murder but, according to the Lindor family lawyer, none of them was ever detained. One of the presumed killers, Joubert Saint-Just, was detained by the inhabitants of nearby Miragoâne on 30 March 2005 and handed over to the police, but that was for an unrelated reason.

As for all the initiatives taken by the Lindor family, the CCAJ and the Brignol Lindor Solidarity and Justice Committee (COSOJUBRIL), they never received any support from the transitional government or the interim president, Alexandre, himself a former supreme court president.

The various cases that concern Reporters Without Borders did not just cause mourning in the Haitian press, they shocked the entire Haitian population and dismayed the international community. Within the terms of its mandate, Reporters Without Borders would like to support the efforts to democratise Haiti to which the winners of the coming elections and the next president in particular will have to respond. For this reason, our organisation asks you to promise to ensure that :

The perpetrators, accessories and accomplices of Roche's murder are tried soon,

The supreme court quickly issues a ruling in the Lindor case, and a new investigating judge is named.

The Haitian National Police arrests the Dominique murder suspects who are still at large and circulate openly.

Effective investigative resources are provided to the judge in charge of investigating this case.

The judiciary and police cooperate more in their handling of cases affecting the press.

The presence of police officers from other countries as part of MINUSTAH is used to promote a credible and effective criminal justice system.

Human rights groups such as CCAJ and COSOJUBRIL work with any commission of enquiry or parliamentary commission that is set up to shed light on the activities of the armed groups still operating. And these human rights groups are made real partners in the future government's efforts to restore the rule of law,

The authorities that emerge from the coming elections really set about strengthening the Haitian judicial system, especially the criminal justice system, and impunity is ended in Haiti.

We hope you will give the Haitian people an undertaking to do all of this and that you will keep your promise if elected.

Sincerely,

Reporters Without Borders

In Haiti, the Vote Isn't Nearly Powerful Enough

By James Harding

Washington Post

Sunday, October 16, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti

Beyond the poverty statistics and the kidnapping numbers, the signs of Haiti's miserable failure as a country are literally littered across the capital: the rats squirming across the piles of garbage that festoon the streets; the bloated corpse of a dog lying on the roadside in an upscale neighborhood; the kids paddling through fetid green water in the slums of Cite Soleil.

Port-au-Prince is a city where, in one all-too-typical week, the talk of the town was a 12-year-old boy who had become a contract killer, murdering two people for \$30 a head. The same week, a teacher and five children were abducted, ransomed and returned for \$50,000 -- and it was a cause for celebration. They were lucky to live and lucky to have negotiated down the price from \$200,000.

This is a country where there is nostalgia for strong, even if bloody, leadership. Many Haitians cite the corrupt and murderous Duvalier regime as the best government in living memory. Several I spoke to said they yearn for the return of Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, the second-generation dictator who fled to France in 1986; they believe he would restore order and some semblance of prosperity.

And it was here, on a five-hour stop in the capital, that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice recently sent out this appeal in anticipation of elections now scheduled for December: "Throughout history, people have fought for the right to vote. Some have indeed died for the right to vote. There is no more powerful weapon in the hands of a citizen than the vote. And so to the people of Haiti, I urge you to use that powerful weapon, the vote, in the days ahead."

Rarely has a truism sounded so glib. From the top down, the Bush administration has a tendency toward the airy use of the word freedom. No doubt, free and fair elections are a good thing. But in Haiti, democracy has the ring of a false promise.

For the vote in Haiti is not a powerful weapon -- at least, not powerful enough. The government's revenues last year were \$330 million. That's what Rice's State Department spends every 10 days, what Ohio's schools spend in a fortnight, what New Line Cinema spent to produce and distribute two-thirds of the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy. This year's budget, including foreign assistance, is \$880 million. In a country of 8 million people, Haiti's paltry budget means that the next president will have about \$100 to spend on each person, dispensed through a corrupt and incapable bureaucracy, not to mention a lawless and often violent police force.

The victor in Haiti's elections later this year will not inherit a poisoned chalice as much as an empty one.

To be fair to Rice, she pushed the right buttons and avoided political land mines on her brief visit to Port-au-Prince. She pressed the current Haitian government of Gerard Latortue to address promptly the cases of political prisoners such as former prime minister Yvon Neptune and the populist priest Gerard Jean-Juste, both languishing in a breezy suburban jail. She encouraged supporters of Fanmi Lavalas,

the party of exiled president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, to vote. And she made a point of calling, twice, for inclusiveness in the elections, a subtle reference to the fact that Dumarsais Simeus, a Haitian American who made his millions in the food processing business in Texas and now wants to run for president of Haiti, had been ruled ineligible to stand as a candidate. Haiti's supreme court has since ruled him back in.

But from here, the Bush administration's singular faith in the transformational power of democracy seems misplaced. Haiti's elections look like a mere prelude to disappointment. "I am not optimistic," Rotchild Francois Jr., a highly regarded Haitian journalist, told me a couple of weeks ago, nipping out between news bulletins at Radio Metropole. "We have seen a lot of presidents. A lot of prime ministers. We want democracy in Haiti, but the problem is the economic situation. The government just does not have the money."

He voices a well-grounded, weary pessimism, which echoes around Haiti: Jean-Juste, the Aristide acolyte currently suspended from the priesthood, warns darkly of a popular backlash against any election that excludes Lavalas. Amaral Duclona, a gang leader in Cite Soleil, shrugs off the elections and the authorities who have abandoned the slum to bloody gun battles in the broad light of day. Andy Apaid, one of the country's wealthiest businessmen, says simply: "We are in a very, very serious hole."

UN soldier dies of gunshot wound in Haiti
Caribbean Net News
Friday, October 14, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AFP): A UN soldier from Ecuador has died in Haiti after shooting himself with his own weapon, the UN stabilisation mission in the Caribbean nation (MINUSTAH) said Wednesday.

Sergeant Olger Leonardo Alcocer, 37, was part of a Chilean-Ecuadoran contingent based in northern Haiti, MINUSTAH spokesman Damian Onses-Cardona said in a statement.

"The death occurred when the soldier mortally wounded himself with his weapon in his cabin, eight kilometers (five miles) from Cap-Haitien," Onses-Cardona said. The soldier was married with three children.

The statement did not indicate whether the shooting, which occurred Tuesday, was accidental or a possible suicide.

The 7,700-strong UN force, which includes 6,300 soldiers and 1,400 police, was deployed to Haiti after former president Jean Bertrand Aristide fled the country amid an armed uprising in February 2004.

**'Humane Capitalism' Can Ease Haiti's Woes, says Ambassador
The Embassy
By Sarah McGregor
October 12th, 2005**

An entrepreneur in Haiti for decades, Robert H. Tippenhauer has weathered conditions few business people can imagine -- an international embargo, political coups and devastating natural disasters. Named Haiti's Ambassador to Canada this summer, Mr. Tippenhauer handed over the car rental and retail appliance companies to his family in Port-au-Prince. They are among the lucky minority to have jobs in a country with an unemployment rate of 70 per cent.

"It's absolutely tough with the insecurity that exists," says Mr. Tippenhauer in an interview last week. "The economic situation has deteriorated quickly. The transition period has been extremely difficult. This has indeed been hell for the private sector."

He calls on the political leadership that will be voted to power in upcoming elections to invoke "humane capitalism" to alleviate worsening poverty and violence.

"Things must change," he says. "We have a country that is slowly going down the drain. I think a more humane approach to the overall population is the order of the day. We have to improve the standard of living for the Haitian population."

Haiti's Interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue announced yesterday that presidential and parliamentary elections planned for Nov. 20 will likely be postponed a few weeks due to logistical and funding shortfalls. The fourth delay, the move isn't expected to derail the hand over of power to a democratically-elected government in February.

Mr. Tippenhauer, the former head of the American and Canadian Chambers of Commerce in Haiti who was schooled in all three nations, says boosting private sector business activity will depend on the next officeholder steering the country into prosperity.

"It's automatic," he says. "You give the private sector the opportunities and they'll follow. A country is run as you run a business. It's the bottom line that counts. What is the bottom line? It's improvements [to quality of life]," says Mr. Tippenhauer.

He applauds members of the interim government for their selfless act of citizenship, using it as an example of Haitians taking hold of their own destiny. Members of the transitional government cannot run for elected office in the upcoming election.

"I think there is a consciousness now that the private sector must play a role that one time was not accessible to us because of the dictators that we had," he says.

Haiti is the poorest country of the Americas, with a gross domestic product of just \$12 billion (US) in 2004 and a growth rate that inched backward by 3.5 per cent. The country is relying heavily on donor governments and a UN peacekeeping force to restore law and order after former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide was forced from the country in 2004. Street violence and armed revolts persist.

Development agencies and non-governmental agencies are using aid flows to rebuild collapsed infrastructure such as schools and hospitals.

In Canada, Mr. Tippenhauer is doing his part to promote trade and investment by making it his top agenda item in a meeting with Quebec Premier Jean Charest in Quebec City on Oct. 18. Mr. Tippenhauer is planning to meet leaders of every other province, and says he is open to friendly discussions with all Haitians living in Canada.

Ernest Preeg, the former U.S. ambassador to Haiti (1981-83) and a member of the Haiti Democracy Project in Washington D.C., says he learned from Embassy of Mr. Tippenhauer's appointment but has known the first-time diplomat for decades. He called him a "solid, honest guy" and "distinguished businessman" that should be a welcome addition to Ottawa's diplomatic corps.

Mr. Preeg acknowledges that rampant crime is the biggest deterrent for new job creation and investment in Haiti but says credible elections should alleviate those concerns. "Haiti has a lot of basic positive resources to start with - [strong] managers and a hard-working and quick-learning workforce," he says. "I think it's important that whoever is elected president, that they have a Cabinet and government that is supportive of job creation and can get the economy moving. My criticism with the interim government - and they are relatively good people - is that they haven't been taking decisions."

In the meantime, humanitarian assistance of between \$300-\$400 million (US) is pouring into the country, as well as rich remittances, says Mr. Preeg. The transfer of money from Haitian migrants to friends and relatives on the Caribbean island amounted to 19 per cent of the country's gross domestic product in 2002, according to the World Bank.

Mr. Tippenhauer says the upside of the country's economic devastation is that it's a blank slate for new business to flourish. "We have more opportunities because we have a country to build from zero. We have more than 28,000 kilometres to be built. And that is where Canadian firms have a shot of it. And I think they should have a first shot," he says. "If we succeed in changing to a more decent path of development I think Canada should also enjoy that path with us. It's not only giving to us, we are there to also give to Canada."

Canada pledged more than \$180 million over two years following the political uprising in 2004, and a large portion of that funding is helping to stage elections.

Finally, Mr. Tippenhauer says Canada newest Governor General Michaëlle Jean, a Haitian refugee who settled in Quebec as a young girl in 1968, is an inspirational choice. "She is a star, a model and she's inspiring us all like no other Haitian before," he says.

Gracious Haiti offers aid yet help should go other way

John C. Bersia

Orlando Sentinel

October 10, 2005

The moment was a curious one in U.S.-Haitian relations last week, when Haitian Finance Minister Henri Bazin handed a ceremonial check for \$36,000 to a U.S. official. That contribution, destined for victims of Hurricane Katrina -- including Haitians living in the Gulf states -- was as ironic as it was magnanimous.

Haitian officials felt it necessary to underscore the modest nature of the gift; in truth, considering that most Haitians eke out an existence on less than \$1 per day, the gesture was grand.

In the final analysis, though, it was also unnecessary. Haiti's sympathy, good wishes and encouragement would have been sufficient. Ditto for other countries that made similar commitments. The United States has the means many times over to handle the aftermath of Katrina on its own.

If anything, the United States should expand its efforts to work with other nations to help Haiti. On several occasions, I have set forth an ambitious and, some would say, controversial proposal to assist Haiti in addressing its perennial problems of economic plight, poor governance and societal disruption: a 20-year suspension of Haiti's sovereignty. Along the way, a comprehensive strategy would systematically root out the remaining influences of past regimes; strengthen and energize Haiti's society; revamp and broaden education and training; and create the foundation for a free and open system.

Predictably, some critics have lashed out at the concept, dubbing it "Western paternalism," a leftover of a historical predisposition to "interfere in Haiti's affairs," and even a "missionary" attitude.

How little they perceive beyond the realm of their petty verbal tirades. They act as if Haiti's woes spring exclusively from external influences -- which I understand and acknowledge -- rather than simultaneously faulting the greed, repressiveness and ineptitude of too many Haitian leaders. They seem to ignore that Haiti is essentially a failed state, and that such conditions spawn instability and disruption far beyond a country's borders.

My starting point is not Western paternalism, a penchant for interference or missionary zeal; it is a desire for Haitians to enjoy the full range of human rights. When I talk to my advisers on Haiti -- and they range from Haitian expatriates to scholars to practitioners in various fields with long experience in that country -- and I solicit their prescriptions, the discussion regularly returns to the need to wipe the slate clean.

Toward that end, I am not advocating a controlling position by the United States -- far from it. I would hope for a U.S. role, because I believe this nation has a responsibility to help, but others should champion the cause. In other words, I am recommending international rule, not U.S. rule, with strong involvement by Haiti's Caribbean neighbors, other countries in the Western Hemisphere and the United Nations.

Anything less would condemn Haiti to an endless cycle of internal mismanagement and foreign intervention.

Foreign-affairs columnist John C. Bersia, who works part-time for the Sentinel, is the special assistant to the president for global perspectives at the University of Central Florida. He can be reached at jbersia@orlandosentinel.com.

Ira Kurzban:
U.S. doesn't realize depth of Haiti's problems
Petroleumworld
Originally published in Miami Herald
October 6, 2005

The proposed Haitian election is a sham, and the Bush administration knows it. During her visit to Haiti last week, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was under security so tight that she could only remain in the country for several hours. But that did not stop her from trying to promote U.S.-sponsored elections even though the registration process has failed on several counts.

To begin with, most Haitians voters are disfranchised, and the period to register has ended. Haiti's electoral council, known as the CEP, established only 623 sites to register voters compared to the 11,238 sites established when Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected president.

The current registration was largely designed to exclude the vast majority of the poor who are supporters of Aristide's party Fanmi Lavalas. It had the predictable result. There was no registration site, for example, in Cité Soleil, a poor area of Port-au-Prince and an Aristide stronghold of 300,000 people. Similarly, there was only one registration site in Bel Air, where tens of thousands of Aristide's supporters live.

The Peace and Justice Commission in Haiti has noted that only 10 percent of rural voters, traditionally supportive of Fanmi Lavalas, have been registered to vote in a country where 70 percent of the population lives in rural areas. Less than 60 percent of the voting population has been registered, if you believe the CEP. In the 2000 Haitian elections almost 94 percent of eligible voters were registered.

In order to vote, a Haitian must have a voter-identification card. Unfortunately, the CEP has distributed only 20,000 voter-identification cards.

In addition, the two potential candidates for president from Fanmi Lavalas, both of whom would easily win a fair election, sit as political prisoners in Haitian jails.

Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste, a hero to the Haitian community in the United States and the poor in Haiti, has been designated a political prisoner by Amnesty International and Human Rights First. Former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune has been incarcerated on trumped-up charges for more than 14 months, and even former U.S. Ambassador James Foley called for Neptune's release before he left Haiti.

The CEP, controlled by the Group 184 that led the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Haiti, has barred Jean-Juste from running for president on the grounds that he must "personally appear" to register as a candidate.

The interim Haitian government also has done its part in this farce by keeping both Jean-Juste and Neptune in jail on no or baseless charges. They have also arrested most of the leadership of Fanmi Lavalas, banned all demonstrations until after the elections and allowed the Haitian National Police to work with death squads for the purpose of executing thousands of Fanmi Lavalas supporters since the coup against Aristide.

And this is where the Bush administration's incompetence is evident. The current government was put into office by the United States with the assistance of France and Canada. Under Haiti's constitution, its mandate was for 90 days only. Thereafter, it became an illegal government under Haitian law.

Interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue assumed his position after spending 15 years as a radio commentator in Boca Raton. If the Bush administration really wanted fair elections, one would suppose that it could put some pressure on Latortue to release all political prisoners, stop the repression against Fanmi Lavalas members, allow for the registration of all Haitians and hold fair elections. Given the fact that Latortue and his government exist solely by virtue of using U.S. troops to forcibly remove Aristide and put Latortue in office, is it incompetence, deceit or both that maintains the current situation?

Ira Kurzban was the general counsel for Haiti for 13 years during the governments of Rene Peval and Jean-Bertrand Aristide (ira@kkwtlaw.com). Petroleumworld not necessarily share these views.

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Only a democratically elected government in Haiti will be recognised
Barbados Advocate
Monday, Oct 17 2005

Web Posted - Tue Oct 11 2005

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) will only recognise a democratically elected government in Haiti, Prime Minister Owen Arthur said last week.

Arthur told an audience at a town meeting in the Brooklyn-Queens corridor in New York, "We do not agree [with] the way Mr. Aristide was removed from office," reported Caribbean World Radio last week. "We do not believe CARICOM should recognise, or admit to our deliberations, a government that is not a democratic government."

The governments of the Caribbean have not recognised the interim administration in Haiti, which came into power after the controversial removal of President Jean Bertrand Aristide early last year. Presidential elections are slated for November 20, and regional governments have stated their willingness to assist in that process.

Arthur was also concerned about some of the circumstances surrounding the election, saying they were not acceptable to CARICOM because "they have elections planned, but less than 50 per cent of the electorate has been registered". He stated that with such a large proportion of the electorate being disenfranchised, the election might not lead to the recognition of a legitimate government, even though the country would have gone through the process of having an election.

However, the Prime Minister believed that it was important to stay engaged in the Haiti issue, in order to help influence the democratic process, despite Barbados' position in the matter being "unfairly savaged" in the media. He said that this influence could only come through a relationship with the Interim Government, and that it would be sad if CARICOM continued to isolate Haiti by not being engaged.

The United Nations peacekeeping mission in Haiti reported last week that voter registration across the country had passed a benchmark of three million, which it described as a "great success".

United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, last month called on the world community to provide the necessary aid to help re-establish order and spur development in the impoverished country which has been plagued by unrest for many years.

He stressed that it was essential for the Haitian authorities to work closely with the international community to resolve outstanding technical impediments to the elections. "More fundamentally, we must do our utmost to ensure that the elections are inclusive, and that they contribute to reconciliation and stability," Annan added.

Haiti's latest elections delay highlights continuing disarray

by Clarens Renois

Caribbean Net News

Wednesday, October 12, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AFP): Haiti's latest postponement of the first general elections since the 2004 fall of its president highlights the disarray that continues to plague the poor country despite massive international aid.

The government announced late Monday that an initial round of parliamentary elections, set for November 20, would be postponed three weeks due to technical problems.

"We have problems, we have considerable delays in the logistics and finalization of the lists of candidates," Prime Minister Gerard Latortue told AFP.

"The first round of the presidential and legislative elections will take place the second week of December," he said, without specifying a date.

The new delay hardly came as a surprise, given the complexities of Haiti's politics after former president Jean Bertrand Aristide fled into exile in November 2004 under the threat of an armed rebellion.

Since then, a United Nations force of about 7,000 troops and police has struggled to maintain law and order.

It was the fourth time the interim government has changed the date of the general elections this year.

Latortue said the government would take steps to address some key problems in organizing the presidential and parliamentary elections, lobbying criticism at the Provisional Electoral Council (PEC).

The council, created a year ago and whose nine members represent the diversity of Haitian society, was bogged down, he said.

"How can you expect this council to function without internal regulations?" he asked. "No one knows who is doing what."

The prime minister said the government would name a manager for the PEC, while the nine members would play "the role of board of directors in giving the broad direction."

To assure the credibility of the elections, he said the cabinet would name in coming days an independent electoral committee, a move sought by certain political parties.

Latortue insisted that the February 7 date for the inauguration of a new president, as set by the constitution, would be respected.

Thirty-four candidates will be contesting the presidential post, currently held by interim president Boniface Alexandre. More than 1,300 candidates are running for the 120-seat legislature.

Several presidential candidates underscored the problems in the electoral process.

"The PEC should be reorganized," said Bonivert Claude, while Judi Roy, the only female presidential hopeful, said the new delay in the vote was "predictable."

The nomination of a director for the PEC was "necessary given its disarray," she told AFP. "Tasks must be clearly defined."

The electoral process is daunting in Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas, where election materials destined for remote villages sometimes must be carried on the backs of animals due to the lack of roads and infrastructure.

The country of eight million people has 3.1 million registered voters in an eligible population of 4.5 million.

The cost of the organization of the elections is estimated at 60 million dollars, of which 90 percent is being internationally funded.

US jury finds Haiti's former anti-drug czar not guilty of trafficking

AFP

Monday, October 10, 2005

MIAMI, USA (AFP): A Miami jury on Friday found Haiti's former anti-drug czar, Evintz Brillant, not guilty on charges of conspiring to ship cocaine to the United States, his attorney told AFP.

Brillant had been accused, along with other Haitian officials, of receiving money from drug traffickers smuggling Colombian cocaine via Haiti, and setting arrested drug smugglers free for a fee.

Star prosecution witness Jeannot Francois, Brillant's former supervisor, described how the pair would seize cocaine shipments and then sell them, dividing the profit.

Prosecutors said Brillant once confiscated 450,000 dollars at the Port au Prince airport, part of a shipment sent by Colombian drug lord Carlos Ovalle, then negotiated to return 300,000 dollars for a percentage of future sales.

But defense attorney Howard Schumacher successfully attacked the credibility of witnesses, some of whom testified as part of plea agreements with prosecutors.

"Even by federal standards, the benefits that were granted to witnesses were on an outrageous scale," he said.

Three of Brillant's associates have already been found guilty.

Romaine Lestin, former chief of police of the Port-au-Prince airport, pleaded guilty to drug trafficking in August; Rudy Therassan, a former police commander, was sentenced to 15 years in prison; and Jean Nesly Lucien, former police director general, was slapped with a five-year sentence.

The Vatican's rep calls for reducing tension with Haiti
The Dominican Today
October 10, 2005

SANTO DOMINGO.- The apostolic Nuncio, monsignor Timothy Broglio, yesterday requested that the Dominicans begin searching for solutions to lower the tension in with the Haitian community.

He affirmed that between both nations there is a mutual fear that must disappear, describing both towns as noble and with many things in common to contribute to the rest of the world.

"I also believe that there is the responsibility for all of us to seek to lower the tensions between Dominican Republic and Haiti, so that they can live as truly good neighbors," said the dignitary.

Broglio interviewed by Orlando Jorge Mera in Channel 9, also considers important to communicate to the people in charge of the policy in Haiti, the availability and the interest of the Dominican Republic.

Haiti is in the final stretch of its presidential elections which will be held next November 20.

Haiti: Getting the facts right

With Aristide elected, then kidnapped, where 'we' stand is not the question: A reply to Pierre Beaudet

>by Charles Demers and Derrick O'Keefe

Rabble News

October 10, 2005

Comrades: We cannot, as North American progressives, fall in to a defense of the thuggery, autocracy and brutality of the Viet Cong bandits — even if we are uncomfortable with elements of the American intervention in Vietnam. Instead, we must insist on building the civil society mechanisms needed to ensure the most democratic Republic of South Vietnam possible.

Comrades: It's useless to call for the return of the strong-arm Bonapartist, Hugo Chavez. We must work within the new political context, under President Carmona, to build a viable, participatory Venezuela.

Comrades: Cuba — I mean come on. What can I say about Cuba?

With an endless list of populist, democratic, and even authoritarian third world leaders deposed in the “post”-colonial era by the wealthy countries of the North to grave ends and with disastrous consequences in the South — Mossadegh, Lumumba, Allende, Sukarno, and, yes, even the ill-conceived, vacuum-inducing ouster of the barbarous Saddam Hussein, which has set the context for decades of confessional violence in what was once Iraq — at least one lesson of history ought to be abundantly clear for the Left.

That lesson is that, even with the best of intentions, Empire-builders drunk on hubris have not built and cannot build safety, democracy or security over and against the wills of subject peoples (even if the dubious claim that this is what they're doing is taken at face value, which it oughtn't to be).

The failure to learn this lesson is the crux of the problem with the recent contribution of Pierre Beaudet to the discussion on the orientation that progressives and solidarity activists should adopt towards the situation of French-, American- and Canadian-mandated regime change Haiti; a greater problem even than his bungling of simple, basic, and straightforward facts. (Beaudet has, for instance, René Preval running as a “stand-in” for Aristide in the elections of 2000, when in actuality, the latter overwhelmingly won that election himself).

On the facts of the matter, the recently released book *Canada in Haiti*, written by Yves Engler and Anthony Fenton, rigorously exposes Ottawa's financial, political and military role in the February 29, 2004 coup d'état and subsequent occupation, as well as the facts on the ground in Haiti.

Beaudet gives scant attention to these matters, preferring to recycle unsubstantiated (and un-cited) blanket assertions of “rigged elections” under Aristide. In fact, rather than explicitly addressing the Left's and his own organization's position on Haiti, Beaudet sets up a familiar and unconvincing straw-man: That those actively involved in opposing the occupation of Haiti and calling for the return of constitutional order are uncritical apologists for Aristide and the shortcomings of his government.

The facetious, hypothetical polemics advanced at the opening of this essay with regard to Vietnam, Venezuela and Cuba, are meant as more than simply cheeky rhetorical devices; we are trying, instead, to highlight the absurdity of a debate which ought to have been easily resolved with common sense, but instead consumes the Left on issues such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Haiti.

Put simply: It is a sad, dangerous day when the imperatives and priorities of “first world” NGOs, churches, trade unions or other associations (no matter how well-meaning or benign) come to override the sovereignty of elected and, even, unelected “third world” governments. Beaudet's analogizing Aristide to Hussein and Noriega is mendacious and absurd, but, in the end, moot; even in those horrific cases, progressive, internationalist principles dictate the opposition to destabilization, regime change from outside, and foreign intervention.

The overriding fact of the matter is: The recognized and sovereign nation of Haiti carried out legal elections in the year 2000, a process more decisive and perhaps closer to ideal than elections carried out in another former slave republic of the Americas that same year. In the midst of his term, the legitimate president was kidnapped by historically hostile interlopers who ferried him into an exile from which he has been unable to carry out his mandate. The clock stopped then for Haitian democracy; it starts again when he comes back.

With America pretending to control over Iraq, many “progressives” in the United States are trying to make the best of a “bad” situation; at least one sectarian socialist newspaper has called for Iraqis to make use of the “civic space” opened up by the occupation. But whether it's Christopher Hitchens supporting the Iraqi occupation to advance secularism and Kurdish rights, or Pierre Beaudet supporting the NGOs backing Aristide's ouster for whatever “democratic” rationales, their fundamental validations of the imperial project are untenable and unjust.

After over 200 years of intimidation, debt slavery and foreign invasion, the Haitian people deserve the freedom to create their own national destiny — replete with glories and mistakes. This is where solidarity activists should stand: behind the Haitian people, and the organized expression of their own free will.

Derrick O'Keefe and Charles Demers are founding editors of Seven Oaks Magazine, a progressive on-line journal based in Vancouver, B.C.

What about Haiti?
St. Kitts and Nevis Sun
Monday October 10 2005

Dear Editor:

I wish the authorities in St. Kitts/Nevis will come forward and explain what it is they really want to do as it relates to Haiti.

Over the last few months we have had scores coming to our shores illegally and all we do is ship them back to where they might be coming from. We do not know what the government's stand on Haiti is up to this day.

We should take a page from the book of St. Vincent & the Grenadines Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves who has said he will not support the government now in power there because it was illegally constituted. Is this only Ralph Gonsalves speaking or is this Caricom?

If it is Caricom, does St. Kitts agree?

The time has come for Prime Minister Douglas, as the leader of this country, to say something.

Jerry Barnes

Doctors take medical marvels to Haiti

By Stephanie Horvath

Palm Beach Post

Monday, October 17, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Paramedics wheeled the man's body, draped in a white cloth, through the lobby and out the front door of the hospital past men wearing suits with corsages pinned to their lapels and a group of Haitian journalists.

A wailing young woman, a relative, stumbled after the gurney. An ambulance had brought the man to the hospital from Cité Soleil, a nearby slum where he was shot multiple times. He died at the hospital here despite attempts to revive him.

That morning, United Nations troops had stormed Cité Soleil looking for gang members who allegedly attacked the peacekeepers. No one knew whether the dead man was a target or simply an innocent bystander caught in the crossfire. Within moments the ambulance transporting the mortally wounded man was gone.

The men in suits and the assembled Haitian journalists were at the hospital for a rare announcement of good news: Two doctors from Palm Beach County had collected \$750,000 worth of modern medical equipment that had just been delivered to the Port-au-Prince hospital. The men led the small crowd upstairs in the hospital to begin their news conference, delayed by the horrific event that would have brought life to a standstill in some places in the United States, but was merely a sad interruption here.

Haiti is a broken country, a place where 80 percent of the people live in poverty. Violence and instability are the rule rather than the exception. The two Palm Beach County doctors recently stepped into that instability, determined to create a health-care system in a country where the majority of people don't have access to basic medical care. Dr. Wilhelm Larsen, a Haitian native, and Dr. Albert La Torra brought the donated medical equipment from Columbia Hospital in West Palm Beach. They see it as the first step in a grand plan to build rural health clinics and medical, nursing and dental schools.

But before they will be able to fulfill their long-term dreams, they have to clear several hurdles inherent in bringing modern health care to a volatile, poor country, as well as rise above gaps in their own experience. Both men are skilled doctors, but neither has familiarity with raising money or running a humanitarian organization. And right now they don't have the millions of dollars needed to accomplish their lofty goals.

Despite the formidable obstacles, the doctors, both in their 60s, are confident.

"In 10 years, we should have everything," Larsen said.

"Maybe less," La Torra added.

This should be a simple story about doing good in a country that's experienced so much bad. Unfortunately, few things are simple in Haiti.

"Everything we bring down here gives them a headache. They won't complain because they need it and they appreciate it," said Larsen, who was born in Haiti and moved to the U.S. in 1974 to practice oncology. "But they have to find a way to use it."

The idea seemed easy. Donate used medical equipment in good condition to a Haitian hospital in need. Larsen, now semi-retired, got the idea in April 2004 when he visited the hospital, called OFATMA, an acronym for Office D'Assurance Accidents Du Travail Maladie Et Maternité. His brother had just been appointed its general director. Larsen toured the old cement building with its peeling paint and old medical equipment.

Because of a miscommunication, he thought some of the disrepair was the result of looting in the chaos surrounding President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's flight to exile in February 2004. In fact, the hospital was never looted. But it still needed help.

With help from his friend La Torra, a semi-retired general surgeon, it took a year to collect enough equipment from Columbia Hospital to fill a 45-foot long metal shipping container. The load ranged from gynecological exam tables to heart monitors to mammography machines. After getting tangled in yards of red tape at the Haitian port, the first load was finally delivered to the hospital here in early September.

Larsen and La Torra flew to Port-au-Prince to witness delivery of the first shipment. Later, the doctors filled and shipped two more containers from Florida, bringing the total to \$1.56 million in donated equipment.

Putting the medical equipment to use in Haiti will be complicated.

For example, a sophisticated X-ray machine will help doctors set bones precisely, but first, the Port-au-Prince hospital must build a large, lead-lined room to accommodate it. Two high-tech machines — a mammography machine and a cryostat — will help detect and preserve suspicious lumps in women's breasts. But without a pathologist to diagnose them — cancer or no — a crucial step is missing. And 24 electric hospital beds will make patients more comfortable only after the hospital installs enough electrical outlets so they can be used.

The hospital is short on money to do those things. The Haitian companies that fund it owe it 151 million gourdes, or \$3.6 million. OFATMA is funded by a kind of workers compensation insurance that the law requires the nation's employers to pay. The hospital's operating budget for next year is \$2.3 million.

The hospital must find a way to incorporate the medical equipment into its 37-year-old building. Built from concrete block, it has no central air conditioning and poor lighting. The hospital's emergency generator goes on at least once a day when the state-run power goes out.

Outside, a broken-down ambulance with a flat tire is parked near the emergency room. Inside, the room where surgical instruments are sterilized has a green army stretcher leaning against one wall, and its windows are open, letting in air and germs. The lab has one microscope, which the doctors say is

inaccurate. Linens are hand-washed in sky blue sinks and hung out to dry on a wire. The hospital has three washing machines, but they don't work. Rooms hold three, five or six patients, and many are equipped with old iron beds.

Most patients interviewed at the hospital said medical care is good, though doctors and nurses work under challenging conditions.

"This is the hospital that I know. This is where they take care of people," said Santa Phillip, a 24-year-old lying in bed after a Caesarean section. She lost the baby, her first. "They're taking care of me very good. The nurses always come on time."

Phillip was lying on a bed made with gumball-machine-printed sheets. The intravenous tube hooked to her arm hung on a pole missing one of its wheels.

Lying on a bed in a men's ward, Frantzen Derilus, 23, whose left arm was hit by a stray bullet the week before, wore a homemade sling, a strip of cotton tied around his neck and hung in front of his chest like a man's tie. Outside on the breezeway, Dr. Jacques Pierre-Pierre held X-rays up to the sunlight while he talked to patients.

In the emergency room, a newborn baby girl, wrapped in a white hand towel, slept on a padded table. The hospital has no bassinets. She didn't move, and her face had a gray cast from fluids that had dried. Was she alive or stillborn? La Torra walked closer to investigate. Alive. Her lips were pink. She began to squirm.

Her name was Shama; a few hours later she was lying on a bed in a dark, hot room with her mother, Mary Ange Deli, a 32-year-old mother of three from a town north of Port-au-Prince. Established by Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier in 1968, OFATMA treats working people. The hospital doesn't receive any money directly from the government.

The hospital also treats people from the surrounding neighborhood, many of whom are too poor to pay for care. Some of the high-tech medical equipment from Palm Beach County, once it's installed and running, will be available to poor Haitians for the first time. Alex Larsen said it's the first time a public hospital in Haiti has had a sonography machine or a mammography machine. Right now, he said, those devices are only at private hospitals, which charge too much for the average Haitian.

The hospital is in Cité Militaire, one of Port-au-Prince's dangerous slums. It's guarded by armed security, men in black T-shirts carrying large guns. During the past few months, many patients have been treated for gunshot wounds.

"The area is very hostile," said Rochelle Vernet, a lab technologist who has worked at the hospital for five years. "Sometimes when the violence is very high, you don't find many patients here."

On their recent visit, Larsen and La Torra traveled everywhere in Haiti in a convoy of SUVs protected by armed guards. They zipped through the crowded streets of Port-au-Prince with the aid of an official government vehicle with a siren.

"We demand protection because we are concerned," Larsen said.

On the drive to the news conference at the hospital to announce their big medical equipment donation, stability and security seemed far off. The driver, who had a handgun wedged into the seat next to him, sped around colorful trucks that carry people in their beds, and United Nations SUVs. He entered Cité Militaire, turning onto an eerily quiet road with no cars, only pedestrians.

A security guard in the passenger seat, a linebacker-sized man named Edourd Celestin, rolled down his black-tinted window, cocked his large automatic gun, and aimed it out the window, ready to shoot. The empty streets are a warning in Port-au-Prince. Indeed, the day before, on this same stretch of road, one of the hospital's trucks was attacked by three armed men and flipped over while trying to flee.

On this day, the doctors' SUV passed a U.N. jeep full of soldiers in blue helmets. Two more turns and they arrived at the hospital, which had its own armed security guards at the front door.

Larsen and La Torra plan to continue collecting medical equipment from Palm Beach County hospitals and shipping it to Haiti. However, they have bigger dreams. For 20 years, the two friends have talked about creating a health-care system in Haiti, and they recently formed the La Torra-Larsen Medical Foundation to raise money for their projects.

They want to build a medical school, a nursing school, a dental school and medical clinics with satellite-linked computers in rural villages. They want to bring in doctors from the United States to rotate in Haitian hospitals and provide training.

"It's exciting to plan the future for a whole country, which is what we're doing," La Torra said.

Haiti certainly needs more doctors — the country has fewer than 2,000 for its 8.12 million people — and more clinics in its rural villages.

On a drive outside Port-au-Prince, the doctors stopped at a small village just a few miles from the border with the Dominican Republic. When they arrived, the village's people, many wearing old, mismatched clothes, came out of their cement houses and mud shacks and surrounded them.

They were Haitian sugar-cane cutters deported from the Dominican Republic; their only health care was at a clinic a few miles away that was too expensive. One woman displayed an ugly burn on her arm she said she got while cooking; she treated herself with a cure-all oil. A man described stomach pain to La Torra, who diagnosed an ulcer. An outspoken 15-year-old named Jocelyn Jean said the villagers had problems with diarrhea, fevers and skin diseases, and that women often gave birth without assistance.

"When you see something like what we saw today, it only makes me more committed to the project," La Torra said later.

La Torra explained the doctors' long-term vision at the delayed hospital news conference, detailing plans for clinics, visits from American doctors and a medical school that would require graduates to

work in Haiti for four years. He said later that he made so many promises in front of the Haitian press in order to give people here hope.

But the La Torra-Larsen foundation has no money. So far, the two doctors have paid the costs of collecting the used medical equipment. They declined to say how much they've spent, saying only that they no longer can afford it.

"The whole thing as I see it for us in the La Torra-Larsen Medical Foundation is to establish seed money to start the foundation. Our goals and dreams will never come true without seed money," La Torra said. "We're not talking \$5,000. We're talking millions."

The doctors' foundation needs money for a lot of things: To fly American doctors in to train the Haitians to operate the new equipment and to buy a second-hand truck to transport donated equipment. In the near future, it will need money to build and staff a rural clinic and run a mobile medical unit that will travel around the country. Eventually, it will have the gargantuan task of raising enough money to construct and staff a medical school.

The ambitious doctors hope to pull in up to \$150,000 during the next year, but neither man has raised money before.

"At this stage, we're very naive on what to do," La Torra said, adding that they are looking for help from experienced fund-raisers.

U.S. Rep. Mark Foley, R-West Palm Beach, likes the doctors' ideas and said he'd be willing to participate in fund-raising activities. Foley also said a proposed federal program waiting to be considered in the U.S. House could provide some money for the two doctors. Meanwhile, the doctors' ideas for raising money are grass-roots and sketchy. Their plans include asking Palm Beach County doctors and churches for donations and taking out newspaper advertisements asking people to send \$1 a month.

"Even if 50,000 people decide to give \$1 the first month, that will be some money," Larsen said. Veteran fund-raisers in Palm Beach County said that isn't the way to go.

"It's much more efficient to find one or two large foundations or gifts," said Pam Henderson, who has been fund raising for 15 years as the executive director of the Rehabilitation Center for Children and Adults.

Grass-roots efforts can work, if the mission and goals are clear, said Suzanne Cabrera, president of the Palm Beach County chapter of the Association of Professional Fundraisers and executive director of The Lord's Place, a West Palm Beach nonprofit for the homeless. Cabrera said her charity raised its first \$130,000 when its founder slept in a trash bin for 30 days, driving home his plans to aid the homeless.

"People are really looking for accountability these days," she said. "Just saying it's a good cause and we want to do good things isn't enough."

Larsen and La Torra are undeterred, however.

The day after their news conference here, the Palm Beach County doctors, several of the Port-au-Prince hospital's administrators and their armed guards took a day trip through the Haitian countryside to the border with the Dominican Republic.

Along the way they stopped in the town of Ganthier, the hometown of Haitian President Boniface Alexandre, who had sponsored several projects in the town, including a new high school. As they stood in front of the school, the smell of fresh paint still hanging in the air, Larsen and La Torra decided to build their first clinic in Ganthier.

"This is a growing area. We could use the school to teach people. We could put health prevention in the school," Larsen said.

He estimated they could build and start running the health clinic for \$50,000. He was optimistic, saying the government will probably give them the land for a small fee. Before they left Haiti, the doctors hired an architect.

"By February, we should be doing a groundbreaking at least, maybe finished," Larsen said. "It's not going to take too long to do it.... We'll find a way to get the money."

Discussion of Haitian Politics

Haynes leads discussion on humanitarian concerns on island.

By Sophia Koshmer

The Sandspur, FL

Friday, October 14, 2005

Ambassador Haynes

On Monday, October 10, a discussion was held concerning the politics of Haiti in the Bib Lab of the Olin Library. This discussion was led by Ambassador Ulric Haynes, former ambassador to Algeria and now Holt student professor, and Refugee Coordinator for Amnesty international and senior, Maritza Rodriguez, a student of the Hamilton Holt school.

The discussion began with a brief overview of the conditions in Haiti by Maritza, specifically on human rights abuses in Haiti, with special reference to the refugee situation and how the United States is handling it. In summation, she explained the basic criteria a person must fit to be considered for refugee status and asylum in another country.

A refugee is a person seeking asylum in another country when their own is torn by conflict, which would include such disasters as war or genocide and the person has been in some cases either harmed (an example of this could be rape or torture) or fear for their safety in their own countries because of group affiliation (race, sex, political, etc.). By international law, a country where such people seek asylum is required to help them, either by taking them in or by informing them that they may seek asylum elsewhere, but by no means to send them back to a situation of unstable government and possible torture. Both Maritza and Ambassador Haynes proceeded to point out that thus far, the United States has succeeded in stopping Haitians at sea with coast guards who are given an eight hour training session on determining whether a person qualifies for refugee status. Maritza explained that it is very important to keep in mind that people who have been kidnapped, raped, or tortured are not going to simply open up and tell their whole painful experience to a complete stranger, especially when they fear being turned away and that any confessions may cause them more harm upon their return to their own country.

International Law and human rights is a complicated subject to explain, especially to a Haitian who does not speak English by a coast guard who does not speak Creole. Therefore, Haitians are forced to return to their own country where an unstable, or rather non-existent government has caused a ratio of 71 deaths to every thousand Haitians, and a per capita income of 460 dollars a year. This is a dire situation, without the addition of human rights abuses such as massacre and kidnapping that are common occurrences in Haiti today. According to some, as has been seen in many past situations of conflict and current ones, including that of Darfur, the U.S. seems to only be interested in coming to the rescue when there are benefits economically.

Ambassador Haynes went on to add that U.S. debt to the United Nations (now in excess of 25 billion) has caused the cutting of such valuable programs as the United Nations Technical Assistance Bureau (U.N.T.A.B) of which he was affiliated with during his political career. This program was created to collect experts who could alongside someone local, build stability in governments for countries, such

as Haiti who are in need of stable government. But due to this outstanding debt, the United Nations is unable to do its job, in this and many other areas of importance.

Some other very important points touched on in this discussion included the conditions for refugees seeking asylum in the U.S., if they in fact succeed in doing so. Haitian refugees are kept in detention centers, which are not unlike prisons.

More information on the situation in Haiti and other pressing issues can be found at www.amnesty.org

Clash stirs racial tensions
Police to investigate altercation involving landlord, Haitians
By Alva James-Johnson
and Brittany Wallman Staff Writers
South Florida Sun Sentinel
October 15 2005

A confrontation between a group of Haitians and a well-known local landlord will be investigated by Fort Lauderdale police as a possible hate crime, officials said Friday.

Caldwell Cooper, son of prominent businessman Gerald Cooper, is accused of screaming a slur and pepper-spraying a woman and her baby this week in a landlord-tenant conflict.

The Haitian relatives were mourning a family member Wednesday and said Cooper broke up the wake that's dictated by their culture, hurling insults at them. He towed a car before pulling out a can of pepper spray, burning some in the crowd.

An 11-month-old baby and his mother had to be treated at Broward General Medical Center for eye irritation, according to hospital documents, along with other neighbors who said they were hit with the chemical. They were treated and released.

Cooper, speaking publicly about the incident for the first time Friday, told the South Florida Sun-Sentinel he didn't know about the funeral at the time and just wanted the group of about seven people to move their chairs off the courtyard so his grass crews could mow.

He was met with belligerence, he said, and as neighbors began taking notice, the growing crowd backed him in, threatening to beat him up, and accusing him of hating Haitians.

Witnesses said Cooper was the instigator, called the crowd "f----- Haitians" and that his office had been told about the gathering in advance.

"What that man did yesterday, I mean, I couldn't believe I was in America," witness Fred St. Amand Sr. said Thursday. The Pax-Villa Funeral Home owner is handling the funeral arrangements.

"It was uncalled for," St. Amand said Friday night while at a viewing for Georges. About 200 people attended the viewing at Pax-Villa Funeral Home.

"The guy showed himself being a racist," St. Amand said. "He made it clear: 'We don't like you Haitians, and go back to Haiti.'"

After the viewing, more than 150 people attended the traditional Haitian wake at Georges' home, where the incident occurred.

St. Amand said he plans to lead a demonstration in Fort Lauderdale next Saturday to send out a message that Haitians will not tolerate being treated unfairly.

Most of the tenants in the area, north of 13th Street and east of Andrews Avenue, are Haitian, and they complained that Cooper has been nasty to them in the past.

Cooper, who has two children, said he feels "terrible about the baby," whom he said he didn't see in the crowd. He called the racial accusations "obnoxious" and untrue and said he doesn't think he ever even uttered the word "Haitian."

"Because they're Haitian and I'm white, they want to make it into a racial situation," said Cooper. "It has nothing to do with that. It has to do with `We're the landlord, they're the tenant.'"

As he grew more afraid, Cooper said, he called police several times, then sprayed one tall, thin lady who was threatening him, in the face. The "overspray" burned the others.

Cooper has retained lawyer Don McClosky of Ruden McClosky to represent him.

The Georges family also has hired an attorney, Robert Distefano.

Cooper's father, Gerald Cooper of Cooper Properties, is one of the city's biggest landlords, with hundreds of apartments in Fort Lauderdale. Photos in his office show him arm-in-arm or at events with a judge, congressman, McClosky and other connected people.

The younger Cooper sits on the city's Nuisance Abatement Board. But city officials said their investigation is serious, and will be blind to any potential political influences. "The travesty is that this city has a terribly unfortunate history of discrimination, and it's not tolerated in this day and age," said David Hébert, acting executive officer to police Chief Bruce Roberts. Cooper's statement was taken by police on Friday, Hébert said.

Georges said the wake was for his father, Alfred, 65, who died of a heart attack on Oct. 5.

The wake included setting up an outdoor gathering area with chairs and a tent for about seven guests and family members. The lease agreement doesn't allow tenants to have any guests or vehicles who aren't registered, Cooper said, or a \$10 fine is charged for each person, and the vehicles are towed. Chairs on the lawn are considered improper "outdoor storage."

Staff Researcher William Lucey contributed to this report.

The law students who took on Guantanamo
Case prefigures today's controversy
Reviewed by Jess Bravin
Sunday, October 16, 2005

How a Band of Yale Law Students Sued the President -- and Won
By Brandt Goldstein
San Francisco Chronicle

Storming the Court

SCRIBNER; 371 PAGES; \$26

Ten years before the Bush administration began shipping terrorist suspects to Guantanamo Bay, the current president's father used the U.S. naval base in Cuba to detain a different class of alien: Haitian "boat people" intercepted en route to the United States from their tormented island.

That policy, continued by President Bill Clinton, sparked court challenges from human rights advocates that eventually reached the Supreme Court, where the activists argued the White House was violating international law, and the government replied that no laws at all protected aliens at Guantanamo. The result brought many of the boat people to new lives in the United States. But the legal implications were far from clear, setting the stage for today's court battles over Guantanamo and the law.

The Haitian case, then, might be considered Guantanamo, Episode I. And it's that story that Brandt Goldstein tells in his brisk and thoughtful account, "Storming the Court," even if the actual outcome was rather more ambiguous than the subtitle proclaims: "How a Band of Yale Law Students Sued the President and Won." Goldstein himself was a Yale law student at the time the case was filed, and though he didn't participate in it, it's no surprise that his story favors the desperate refugees and their idealistic advocates, not the politicians, bureaucrats and military men obstructing the hopes of real people in order to uphold policy goals.

Unlike today's detainees, of course, the Haitians never were alleged to have joined a global conspiracy intent on destroying America. On the contrary, they fled Haiti after the country's first elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, had been ousted by a military clique that then loosed its goons on democracy advocates.

But the refugees, largely impoverished, uneducated and in many cases afflicted with AIDS, were considered a threat nonetheless. The government viewed the Haitians primarily as economic migrants rather than political dissidents, and feared that admitting them to the United States would inspire thousands more to launch rickety boats across the Caribbean, leading to one of two undesirable outcomes: their drowning at sea, or their safe arrival on American shores. The Coast Guard began returning the boat people to violence-racked Haiti or taking them to Guantanamo, where a refugee camp was quickly built. The government believed the naval base held a unique legal status, subject to neither Cuban law nor the supervision of U.S. courts.

Historically, governments around the world have spoken of the noble responsibility to care for political refugees -- but have rarely shown enthusiasm for actually doing so. In perhaps the most notorious incident, on the eve of World War II both the United States and Cuba turned away the St. Louis, a ship carrying Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany. It was forced to return to Europe, where many of its passengers were killed by the Nazis.

As with other World War II horrors, the fate of the St. Louis helped inspire a corrective act of international law, in this case the U.N. Refugee Convention, which prohibited returning refugees to their persecutors. Washington had ratified the convention and adopted domestic legislation implementing it, so when the United States began returning the boat people to Haiti, many human rights advocates believed the government was acting not only unmercifully but also illegally. The students, who had been working at the law school's human-rights clinic, nudge an initially reluctant professor to take on the Haitian case, and what unfolds is both a legal procedural and a character odyssey in which the students and their professor find out what they're made of. The setup resembles that of "Reversal of Fortune," where a band of brilliant law students help Harvard Professor Alan Dershowitz overturn the murder conviction of a decidedly less sympathetic client, the wealthy socialite Claus von Bulow.

In "Storming the Court," the star professor is Harold Hongju Koh, a masterful teacher whose facility with people and words alike had helped him glide through the law's most elite precincts: working at the Justice Department, clerking at the Supreme Court, joining the Yale faculty. But to the activist students who staffed the human-rights clinic, a subculture apart from the careerists who made up most of the class, Koh seemed just another ruling-class functionary, more interested in preparing students for conventional success -- as well as achieving it himself -- than in their preferred goal of changing the world.

Koh, however, was the son of a South Korean political dissident and had a strong interest in the plight of refugees. In entering the case he provides the skill, the clout and the judgment to channel the students' moral outrage into a credible challenge to the U.S. government. And yet, by bringing such an audacious claim, Koh has perhaps the most to lose, not only alienating the establishment powers needed to smooth the way to possible judgeship someday but also exposing Yale Law School itself to financial penalties should the government's effort to quash the suit succeed.

Together with Michael Ratner, a part-time Yale instructor who heads the Center for Constitutional Rights, an advocacy group co-founded by the radical lawyer William Kunstler, Koh charts a litigation strategy that steers the case away from Miami and the conservative appellate judges who oversee the Southern states and into the liberal federal courts of New York, which treated skeptically Solicitor General Kenneth Starr's claims of unreviewable executive power. The government maintained that the refugee laws didn't apply until the refugees were on U.S. soil, so it was free to repel them while they were at sea. In any case, the White House argued, courts had no business telling the president how to interpret international law.

While Koh decides to damn the torpedoes, his students discover that human-rights work is, in fact, thankless -- and resented even by those they aim to help. After fighting interminable court battles to gain access to the Haitians held at Guantanamo, the students find the refugees suspicious of them. As

their internment continues for month after month while a legal case they barely understand unfolds across the sea, the Haitians' anger grows at their self-appointed saviors.

Much as they hoped that their legal views would prevail in court, the students' best shot was to delay return of the refugees until the November 1992 election. Clinton had called the Bush administration's Haitian policy "appalling" and pledged to reverse it -- but then continued it after taking office. Once in power, it turned out, Clinton officials had just as much interest as their Republican predecessors in getting courts to endorse the widest possible sweep of executive power.

The students' victory, such as it was, brought freedom to the Haitians by increments -- essentially by persuading a judge that the military lacked the capacity to treat AIDS patients at Guantanamo and therefore had a duty to bring the sickest of the group to a place where they could find care. An eventual order from a district court led to the release of the rest.

For Koh, things also turned out well. His profile as an advocate as well as a scholar grew, and in 1998 Clinton appointed his former adversary to the post of assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor. Last year, Koh became dean of Yale Law School.

But for Guantanamo, at least its legal status, nothing seemed to change. The Supreme Court vacated a ruling for the Haitians issued by the Second U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New York and left on the books an opposite finding by the 11th Circuit Court in Atlanta. And as part of the deal to end the litigation, the final district court order for the Haitians was vacated, too. When the new Bush administration began sending suspected terrorists to Guantanamo, Koh was among the first to warn of a "rights-free zone" in the Caribbean, while Ratner brought a suit that in 2004 resulted in a Supreme Court ruling establishing court jurisdiction over Guantanamo, without explaining what such authority encompassed.

So "Storming the Court" is no "Gideon's Trumpet," documenting the establishment of a mighty precedent from the faint plea of a powerless prisoner. Instead, the rights of aliens on Guantanamo remain hotly in dispute, with the final chapter to be written by the Supreme Court -- where John Roberts, once Starr's principal deputy, will now preside.

Jess Bravin covers the U.S. Supreme Court for the Wall Street Journal.

GenVec HIV vaccine reaches Phase II

Neil Adler

Staff Reporter

Washington Business Journal

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An experimental HIV vaccine candidate developed in part by GenVec and the National Institutes of Health has reached mid-stage testing.

The Phase II clinical trial will enroll 480 healthy volunteers who will either receive the vaccine or a placebo. Volunteers in the United States, Haiti, Brazil, Trinidad, South Africa and Botswana will participate, according to a statement from Gaithersburg-based GenVec (NASDAQ: GNVC).

The company, a developer of drugs using gene therapy, is working on the HIV vaccine under a \$50 million subcontract that extends through 2008 and is managed by SAIC-Frederick. The Vaccine Research Center of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, which is part of NIH, is funding the HIV vaccine work.

GenVec is attempting to commercialize drugs to treat cancer and cardiac disease and to prevent vision loss. It is also developing vaccines for malaria and foot and mouth disease.

The company announced Oct. 5 it had received a \$9.9 million increase in funding for the HIV vaccine contract.

On Sept. 26, GenVec sold 7.6 million shares of its common stock at \$2 a share, for gross proceeds of about \$15.2 million. It will use the net proceeds, expected to be about \$14 million, to fund clinical trials and for other corporate purposes.

Protests hit terror in Haiti
Workers World
Oct 8, 2005

In 40 cities around the U.S. and the world, rallies and marches on Sept. 30 protested the ongoing terror in Haiti and commemorated the 14th anniversary of the first U.S.-backed coup against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

In Los Angeles, with the eyes of two U.S. State Department officials upon them, organizers from the Coalition in Solidarity with Haiti, Global Women's Strike, ANSWER, International Action Center and Haiti activists gathered at the Brazilian Consulate.

The demonstrators were able to force a representative from the Consulate to come outside to meet with them. A U.S. State Department agent insisted on standing directly behind the Brazilian for what they said was his "security," even though organizers assured them that this was a peaceful gathering and they just wanted to dialog with the representative.

It was obvious that the Brazilian representative was painfully embarrassed. His words were very measured and his main defense against charges that his government was assisting U.S. genocide in Haiti was "I'm not aware of these facts" and "Politics is very complicated." Nolutando Williams of the Coalition in Solidarity with Haiti, Sidney Ross-Risden of Global Women's Strike and John Parker from the International Action Center led the questioning of the consular official.

In San Francisco, 75 people rallied in front of the Federal Building in solidarity with the Haitian people. Several speakers addressed the U.S. government's role in the Feb. 29, 2004, kidnapping of Aristide and the continued occupation of Haiti by foreign troops.

Pierre Labossiere from the Haiti Action Committee spoke of the sham elections campaign currently being forced upon the Haitian people, saying, "Haitians can run their own democracy and will NOT return to slavery."

Kelu, a former Black Panther Party member and currently fighting for the freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal, spoke from her wheelchair. She made the connections between the atrocities committed against the people of Haiti, Iraq, Gaza and elsewhere and U.S. imperialism. She pointed to the leadership of Fidel Castro of Cuba and Hugo Chávez of Venezuela as examples of true world leaders, punctuating her speech with, "What we need is a GLOBAL revolution!"

After the rally 18 individuals were arrested for sitting down and blocking the entrance to the Federal Building.

In Brooklyn, N.Y., Patizan Jezikri and the Committee Against Genocide in Haiti held a march and rally, starting with a mass for the victims at Holy Innocent Church. Speakers denounced the sham elections that exclude Aristide from running.

Maggie Vascassenno, J. Marquardt and G. Dunkel contributed to this article.

Neglect imperils elections in Haiti
Los Angeles Times
Palm Beach Post
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PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — When Haiti's interim government was named 20 months ago, rules were established making the transitional leaders ineligible to run in the next election to ensure that they would not use their offices to advance personal political agendas.

That strategy of disinterest might be working too well.

With Cabinet members, senior advisers and national elections organizers excluded from elected office for the next five years, none of them has been moving with much enthusiasm to arrange a vote to choose a president or Parliament.

Saturday was the official start of the election campaign, but officials of the hamstrung Provisional Electoral Council used the occasion to concede that voting, originally scheduled to begin today and twice postponed to dates in November, must wait until at least mid-December.

"We remain committed to a Feb. 7 inauguration," interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue said on the eve of the campaign kickoff, referring to the deadline imposed by the international community for Haiti to have democratically elected leaders.

Aspiring candidates, voters and international observers say they fear the transitional rulers and members of the electoral council, known as the CEP, are reluctant to relinquish power.

"Those people are completely incompetent. They don't want technical assistance from outside to facilitate elections because they want to keep power for themselves," said presidential candidate Marc Bazin, running for the Lavalas movement founded by exiled former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Officials of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, who have fanned across Haiti to register voters and install generators, mobile telephones, computers and other voting equipment, say they are still waiting for the government to designate polling places, not to mention election dates.

"From our side, we are ready," said U.N. mission spokesman Damian Onses-Cardona. "But we are not in charge of the elections. We are assisting and serve at the government's discretion."

A U.S. State Department official here said the U.S. government is "very concerned" and deemed the CEP "dysfunctional."

The council has yet to publish a list of approved candidates despite the close of registration two weeks ago. Friday's planned lottery for ballot position was canceled.

The candidate list is a necessary first step to be followed by three weeks for legal challenges, another three weeks for Dominican contractors to print ballots and two weeks to get the materials distributed to polling places.

A similarly long logistical period would be needed ahead of second-round voting, pushing the runoff and outcome well beyond Feb. 7.