

HAITI NEWS ROUNDUP: SEPTEMBER 23 – 29, 2006

Haitian lawmakers propose new force to tackle violence

AP

Jamaica Observer

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PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) - Legislators have proposed creating a new security force to bolster Haiti's outgunned police - raising the possibility of reinstating the Caribbean country's notorious and disbanded military, an official said Tuesday.

The force would be trained by Haitian and foreign security experts, and could take control of guarding the country's coasts and its porous border with the Dominican Republic, said Sen Youri Latortue, president of the Senate commission on public safety.

"Haiti needs a force to be able to protect the country," Latortue told The Associated Press in an interview. "We think that it's the first step in (restoring) security because if our borders aren't protected, anyone can come to Haiti and do what they want."

Funds to study the new force were included in a draft national budget agreed upon by lawmakers this week, Latortue said. President Rene Preval must approve the budget before sending it back to Parliament for a final vote expected later this week.

Daily kidnappings, killings and other violence has fuelled debate over the need for a security force to support Haiti's ill-equipped police, which has 4,000 officers to serve a population of eight million.

An 8,800-strong UN peacekeeping force currently provides the only real security in the impoverished nation, which is still reeling from a violent uprising that toppled former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004.

Latortue, the nephew and former security chief of ex-interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue, said he and other colleagues support a new force to replace Haiti's demobilised military, although other lawmakers have said they favour a national police force.

Aristide dismantled the military in 1995, after a US military intervention restored him to power following the 1991 coup that first ousted him.

The 1990-1994 military coup regime is blamed for the murders, rapes, maimings and torture of thousands of Aristide supporters, and today's former soldiers include convicted murderers.

Latortue said anyone convicted of human rights abuses should be barred from joining any future security force.

"We are not going to have people who violated human rights in the past. We are going to have some new elements," said Latortue, who has denied alleged links to drug and arms trafficking.

The government offered no immediate reaction to the proposed force. Before taking power in May, Preval expressed support for creating a police force similar to that of France's national force, but stopped short of saying he would favour reinstating the armed forces.

Manual Labour: Haitians' Niche Market

By Quincy Parker

Bahamas Journal

25th September

A recent College of The Bahamas study published by the International Organization for Migration says "the skills which Haitian nationals can offer are not necessarily those required by The Bahamas, or that simply too many applications are made for labour/manual permits."

In 2003, 95 percent of all applications for work permits for all other nationalities were approved, whereas only 87 percent of applications from Haitians were approved.

The residency applications from the same year showed similar results – 87 percent of residency permit applications from Haitians were approved, versus 98 percent of those applications from every other nationality.

The trend holds up going back to 2000, according to figures from The Bahamas Immigration Department.

Also, the study found that in 2005, on New Providence and Abaco, the number of Haitian children in government schools is disproportionate to the number of Haitian nationals in the general population.

On Abaco, the percentage of Haitians in the general population was just under 17 percent, but the percentage of Haitian children in government schools on that island was just over 31 percent.

On New Providence, just over 7 percent of the population in 2005 was Haitian, but 12.5 percent of the student population in government schools was Haitian.

On Grand Bahama and Eleuthera, the figures were more or less equal, the study found.

According to the study, nearly 100 percent of the work permits issued to Haitian migrants in The Bahamas between 2001 and 2003 were for manual occupations like gardening, handyman and farming, highlighting the official "niche market" Haitian nationals occupy.

And, according to figures from The Bahamas Immigration Department, nearly all work permits issued for "gardening/handyman" and about half the permits for "farming" are allocated to Haitian nationals.

That number figures into the recently completed College of The Bahamas study on Haitian migrants in The Bahamas.

The study found that "the official occupations of the Haitian community explain why Haitian households have some of the lowest household incomes in The Bahamas and why Haitian households occupy a disproportionate place in the number of households in poverty."

The study also found that comparison of the work permits issued and the industrial groups reported in the 2000 Census points to areas where members of the Haitian community may be illegally employed.

According to the study, "it is clear that construction and housekeeping are underrepresented in the work permits issued. No permits were issued for Haitian nationals to work in tourism, yet 11 percent of those enumerated in the 2000 Census reportedly worked in that industry."

The study recommended that a migrant monitoring unit be set up to maintain data indexed by nationality collected from all sources. This unit would report annually to Cabinet on the state of migration in the country.

Immigration and Labour Minister Shane Gibson thinks such a unit is "a noble thought" but was not convinced it was realistic.

"I believe that if we use some proper research machinery or mechanism to determine these types of information it will be extremely useful, and I believe that at some point in time we ought to commission a study like that but with more specific information and detailed statistics," the minister said. "I believe it would be extremely useful to us."

He added, "Any country would want to know all the variables that exist within their borders and so if you have different migrants with different nationalities existing under different conditions within your borders, you would want to know that because when you talk about developing your country, you would want to know the variables that affect the overall development."

Nobel Prize-winning economist offers fix to make globalization work

By Kevin G. Hall

McClatchy Newspapers

The State, South Carolina

September 27, 2006

<http://www.thestate.com/mld/thestate/news/nation/15622671.htm>

NEW YORK - When Joseph Stiglitz published "Globalization and Its Discontents" in 2002, the Nobel Prize-winning economist took an issue of stodgy classroom debate - the unsettling rapid pace of change in the global economy - and gave it the voice of common-man fears.

Now he's back to offer a fix.

A former World Bank chief economist and chairman of President Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers, Stiglitz published "Making Globalization Work" this month. As the title suggests, he thinks globalization isn't working and that a protectionist backlash could follow that harms the U.S. and global economies.

"There are some real losers, and while globalization may not be the only or even the most important factor, it's one that people can grab a hold of and respond to and turn to these protectionist stances," Stiglitz said in a phone interview from Paris.

Globalization - the international flow of goods, services, capital and labor - dates at least to the Roman Empire. Today Chinese-made textiles are swamping even the smallest countries. Electronic traders half a world away can purchase or unload billions of dollars' worth of oil, currency or stocks in seconds with a mouse click. Private-equity funds - large pools of investment capital - prowl the planet in search of companies to buy, strip and flip.

Over the past 18 months, globalization has met significant pushback. French workers took to the streets to demand job security in the face of cheap foreign labor. Several oil-rich countries have moved to renationalize their oil sectors. U.S. economists increasingly agree that global forces are holding down American workers' wages.

"I think we're having the discussion now because, in spite of all the changes, it's very clear that there are some things that aren't working very well," said Stiglitz, who's now a professor at Columbia University. "Change is going to occur. The issue is really whether we are going to shape the change in ways that are constructive."

The changes Stiglitz proposes are controversial:

-He advocates a shift away from the dollar as the world's reserve currency, similar to the move away from the gold standard in the 1970s.

-Global institutions such as the World Trade Organization must be revamped, he thinks, to level a playing field in trade and finance that's tilted to favor rich nations. Stiglitz points to the latest round of

global trade negotiations. They were supposed to benefit the world's poorest nations by increasing their agricultural exports, but the talks collapsed over the summer because of intransigence by wealthier nations.

-He proposes direct financial aid to help the poorest nations build ports and roads, and suggests that countries such as Haiti, Cambodia and Bolivia should have free access for their products to the U.S. market.

Jagdish Bhagwati, a fellow Columbia professor and an intellectual rival, disagrees. The author of the acclaimed 2004 book "In Defense of Globalization," he thinks countries should be forced to compete no matter how poor they are.

"After 40 years of studying this matter I've come to the view that reducing trade barriers is good for everybody, because if you don't you tend to get flabby," he said. "It's what I call the goofing-off effect. Everyone can use some competition."

Pointing to his native India, Bhagwati said it had moved from a poor, closed market to an emerging economic power thanks to its prowess in information technology.

"IT, which has no (government) protection at all, has taken off in a very big way. The whole country is like Popeye on a diet of spinach," Bhagwati said. "Today, India is a growing power, and industry has lost all fear" of competition.

That may be, but India's emergence also has fueled a backlash against globalization in the United States, as jobs are lured away to Indian call centers and back-office administrative sites. This phenomenon, called outsourcing, is moving up the job-value chain to accounting, tax preparation, legal research, the editing of specialty publications and computer-aided design for engineering and architecture.

Outsourcing was a hot issue in the 2004 U.S. presidential race. The hot issue in 2008 may be globalization's effect on American wages. Several studies, including a recent paper by John Silvia, chief economist for Wachovia, the big North Carolina-based bank, confirm that U.S. wages are increasingly subject to global pressures, which hold them down.

Global economic integration "has delivered an increasingly global labor market that prices and allocates labor and production independent of political borders," Silvia concluded in a July study. Expanding the supply of labor to global proportions weakens the ability of U.S. workers to bargain for higher wages.

When many Americans worry about globalization, whether it's the impact on job security or flat wages, they're really worrying about China. The world's most populous nation is also the fastest-developing one, and the main source of pressure on U.S. wages and tension over trade.

The U.S. Commerce Department reported in mid-September that China had a record \$68 billion trade surplus for the first seven months of 2006. That surplus, along with China's refusal to allow market

forces to determine the value of its currency, are raising questions in the United States about whether both countries are playing by the same set of rules.

"There's nothing wrong with trade as long as trade balances, and it is not balancing right now ... and we've got to balance," said David Wyss, chief economist for Standard & Poors, the New York credit-rating agency. "And that means more emphasis on getting domestic demand going in those countries, and less emphasis on (them) trying to use exports as the leading sector for growth."

This trade imbalance led the United States and Europe this month to complain to the Geneva-based World Trade Organization, arguing that China unfairly keeps foreign-made auto parts out of the world's fast-growing market for cars and parts. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, in China earlier this month, told Chinese officials they're thwarting their own development by limiting the entry of U.S. banks and financial institutions.

UNITED NATIONS

Press Release: HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL DISCUSSES REPORTS ON CUBA, OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES, CAMBODIA AND HAITI

26 September 2006

The Human Rights Council this afternoon discussed country-specific reports on the situation of human rights in Cuba, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Cambodia, and Haiti.

Presentation of Report on Situation of Human Rights in Haiti

Louis Joinet, Independent Expert appointed by the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in Haiti, said between drafting the report and today, a number of overwhelming changes had taken place, so the report was now quite obsolete. This was one of the rare times that the Independent Expert had taken the floor at the United Nations with satisfaction, and he had never expected the situation to be so positive. It had been possible, thanks to the spirit of conciliation and reconciliation of the Haitian people, to reach a political consensus, which in turn required considerable efforts to be deployed on a daily basis. A great deal of progress remained to be done, but there had been both ground lost and headway made. There was a horrific event in July, and a sharp increase in kidnapping and sexual violence. There was further negative stabilisation in terms of crimes committed by the police, and there was corruption, creating impunity.

But there was some good news - some continued courageously to fight both crime and corruption. Tribute was paid to the courage of the magistrates of the Prosecutor's Office, who held a hearing to examine 84 cases, and who had begun to seriously convict offenders, including members of law enforcement. This showed that it was possible to combat the negative points. All the reforms the Independent Expert had called for earlier were now in evidence, and the Government had begun concerted action, with the participation of civil society, which was a source of great satisfaction. A Parliament had been put into place, and people's mindset had to move forward to encompass this.

However, there were still issues that remained to be resolved, primarily the protection of civilians, the Independent Expert said. The Office for Civilian Protection, which did not have credibility yet, needed to be completely overhauled and strengthened, as it was bringing along the human rights section. This was the work of the United Nations: to transmit to Haitians the way of promoting their own solutions. A number of reforms remained to be done, for example with regards to women's rights, and the international community needed to start to tackle these issues, in particular the more sensitive ones, such as abortion. There were two other key long-term reforms: the reform of the civil state and of the registry.

Statement by Concerned Country

JEAN-CLAUDE PIERRE (Haiti), speaking as a concerned country, said Haiti paid tribute to the Independent Expert who had shown constant interest to the country. The Government had endeavoured to implement his recommendations. The State had reinstated equality between men and women in the society. A national plan of action had also been adopted to further implement social and economic programmes. In order to curb violence, the Government had launched a programme to disarm armed

groups. Those who had been carrying arms were ordered to lay down their arms. The Haitian Government was keen to receive international assistance for training of judges and strengthening the judicial system. A certification system had been set up to provide identity cards to all Haitians. At least 10 per cent of the population had no income whatsoever. Only few of the country's rich held the country's wealth. The Haitian people were also hungry for justice and for that reason the Government was making every effort to strengthen its judiciary.

Haitian lawmakers propose new force to tackle insecurity

The Associated Press

International Herald Tribune

September 26, 2006

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The government offered no immediate reaction to the proposed force. Before taking power in May, Preval expressed support for creating a police force similar to that of France's national force, but stopped short of saying he would favor reinstating the armed forces.

Haiti: Activist's killing shows need for disarmament programme
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
PRESS RELEASE
AI Index: AMR 36/012/2006 (Public)
News Service No: 254
28 September 2006

Bruner Esterne, President of the Grand Ravine Community Council for Human Rights, was killed by unknown individuals on 21 September 2006.

The 38-year-old activist was an eyewitness of a massacre which took place on 20 August 2005 in the Port-au-Prince's neighbourhood of Martissant, in which at least 20 people were killed and many others were injured. The massacre was allegedly perpetrated by members of the armed gang "Little Machete Army" backed by rogue police officers.

"Bruner is Haiti's latest victim of a culture of gun violence. His death demonstrates the urgent need for the government to implement a broad disarmament program," said Kerrie Howard, Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Americas Programme.

Amnesty International calls on the Haitian authorities to take the necessary measures to investigate the killing of Bruner Esterne and to bring his killers and the perpetrators of the Grand Ravine and Martissant massacres to justice.

"Gun violence is taking thousands of lives across Haiti. It is time for the Haitian authorities to deal with the issue more effectively," said Kerrie Howard.

Background Information

On 20 August 2005 police officers and members of the Little Machete Army reportedly interrupted a football match at Ste-Bernadette Park in the Martissant neighbourhood of Port-au-Prince allegedly looking for 'bandits' and killed more than 20 and injured several others. During the 21 August attacks carried out in Grand Ravine by the same armed gang, Bruner Esterne's house, amongst dozens, was pillaged and set on fire.

At least five police officers allegedly involved in the stadium killings were placed in custody but were released on obscure grounds by the judge handling the case.

On 6 July 2006, the Little Army Machete attacked again the Grand Ravine neighbourhood and killed 21 persons, including women and children and torched hundreds of homes.

Public Document

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

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Illegal influx remains steady
By JASMIN BONIMY
The Nassau Guardian
September 27, 2006

Security forces have apprehended more than 1,200 illegal immigrants on the high seas – almost 10 months into the year.

According to Royal Bahamas Defence Force (RBDF) statistics, the figure already falls just shy of last year's captures which totalled 1,406 illegal immigrants from Haiti and Cuba.

RBDF figures revealed that this year's 1,222 apprehensions have surpassed 2004's 1,148 captures. They also showed that illegal immigration smuggling peaked in 2000, 2002 and 2003 with 2,962, 3,690, and 3,082 illegals being captured at sea, respectively. In a press statement released last month, the Force reported that the number of apprehensions have surged because of rising violence in neighbouring Haiti.

"In light of recent reports emanating from neighbouring Haiti that indicate an elevation of violence between rivalling factions; members of the Royal Bahamas Defence Force remain on high alert in their efforts to guard Bahamian borders," the press release stated in August. That day the HMBS P-43 had intercepted a group of Haitians, which comprised 129 men and 16 women, aboard a 40-ft Haitian freighter approximately 8 nautical miles northwest of Farmer's Cay.

Between July and August, the Defence Force had intercepted a total of 301 Haitian nationals at sea. That month officials at the Force had admitted that during this same period, two Haitian boats were able to evade detection and land in the eastern district of New Providence. But February has ushered in the most Haitian immigrants for the year. That month Haitian elections were underway and the Force was kept busy apprehending four Haitian vessels and more than 460 undocumented migrants.

Still, the most recent capture occurred just 72 hours ago after RBDF officers patrolling waters in the Exuma chain intercepted a vessel heading toward the Exuma area on Sunday with over 100 Haitian nationals aboard. Officials said that the large group of Haitian nationals were intercepted at 7 p.m. on Sunday and were taken to Black Point, Exuma to spend the night and await the arrival of another Defence Force vessel that would transport them to Nassau. The group consisted of 29 females, 97 males and one male child.

According to Defence Force officers, on Monday afternoon another Defence Force vessel, HMBS Yellow Elder, was dispatched from the Coral Harbour base to Black Point to bring the Haitian nationals back to the Defence Force base. Reports indicate that the HMBS Yellow Elder returned to the Coral Harbour Defence Force Base with the Haitian nationals after 1 a.m. yesterday morning and turned them over to Immigration officials. They were reportedly taken to the Carmichael Road Detention Centre.

Meanwhile, immigration officials are saying that they are trying to keep a tight grip on the illegal immigration problem. However, they do not believe that it is a problem that can be alleviated completely. They have also said that Haitian vessels are able to get so far into Bahamian waters

because of the fact that illegal immigrants from Haiti usually travel on wooden vessels that cannot be picked up by the radar system.

International support crucial to solidifying progress in Haiti, official tells UN
UN News Centre
27 September 2006 –

Haiti's Government is working to foster stability and economic growth but will require international support to back its efforts, the country's ambassador told the United Nations General Assembly today during its annual debate.

Léo Mérorès said in order to provide relief to the suffering masses in the country and eliminate the roots of gang recruitment, the Government had launched a programme aimed at generating jobs. To create a climate conducive to good governance, the Government had worked with all concerned to achieve social cohesion and political reconciliation.

The international conference on Haiti earlier this year produced promises of financial commitment, he noted, adding that the Government was preparing to carry out a long-term development plan and the international community should do its part to help.

Donors should live up to their promises and support Haiti, he stressed. “In the long-term, the financial aid from the international community will facilitate the consolidation of democracy and will help us to establish the basis for sustainable development.”

He voiced Haiti's gratitude for international assistance it has received so far, pledging that with this continued global backing, “my country will attain its goals.”

In Haiti, the young are a symbol of tragedy and hope

By Nancy San Martin

McClatchy Newspapers

San Luis Obispo Tribune

September 28, 2006

SIMONETTE, Haiti - On a balmy summer night, as a group of armed thugs paddled a boat toward this fishing village, 26 orphans slept through an ordeal that would make their already tragic lives more difficult.

In the morning, as the sun heated the sand, one of the children noticed a shattered window at the home of the director of the orphanage, a man they regard as a father and fondly call "Tytoo."

"There was a rock through the window. We called out for him twice, but he didn't respond," recalled Lorca Masenat, 19, who has lived at the orphanage for five years. "When we went inside the house ... Tytoo was gone."

Ed Hughes, a Canadian who runs the Tytoo Gardens orphanage, had been abducted by kidnapers operating from across the water in the capital city of Port-au-Prince. For more than a month, children as young as 1 would have to rely on each other - children caring for children in a country with the highest rate of orphans in the Western Hemisphere.

Hughes was released after paying a ransom and has since returned to his orphanage. But the case shed a heart-breaking light on Haiti's most fragile and innocent victims.

In a nation of 8.5 million, where one of eight children dies before age 5, orphanages often are the last refuge of hope. Some 610,000 Haitian children are orphans, according to U.N. estimates. Port-au-Prince alone has an estimated 2,000 street children, many of them orphans.

While Hughes was gone, the nearby Mission of Hope orphanage - home to 44 boys and girls - arranged to have food delivered, and a cook stopped by daily to prepare meals. But most of the time, the kids at Tytoo Gardens were alone.

"We did everything we could to help Tytoo's kids," said Travis Smith, co-director of Mission of Hope. "But the older ones really stepped in to take care of the younger children. They looked out for each other."

At the time of the kidnapping, school was out for the summer, so the children spent their days much like most kids on a school break, except without supervision.

"We sleep, we watch TV, sometimes we go swimming in the sea," said Lorca, who was left at the orphanage by her father when she was 14. "My father could not care for me. He was not working. So Tytoo took me in."

It is not known exactly how many of Haiti's children are housed in orphanages, but a government agency known by the French acronym CENH has estimated that some 200 orphanages serve about 200,000 children.

"If this orphanage wasn't here to help the children, things could be worse, they would probably be on the streets," said Paula LaRose, 52, a neighbor and frequent visitor to Tytoo Gardens.

Thony Durand, now 21, could have been among the street kids. He and his brothers Rony, 16, and Berthony, 13, were taken in by the Mission of Hope after their mother died in 2000. Their father had died two years earlier.

"It was kind of hopeless for me because in Haiti even when you have your family to take care of you, life is very hard," said Thony, who learned English at the orphanage. "Sometimes (parents) don't have jobs, but at least they are with you."

The Mission of Hope, run by an evangelical organization headquartered in Oklahoma, is regarded as among the most professional in Haiti. Founded in the late 1990s, it is dedicated not only to housing orphans but also to providing a K-12 education to children from several surrounding villages.

"The attempt was to get only kids who are truly orphans, but we have some kids whose parents could not afford to take care of them," said Smith. "We've found kids in the ditch, beaten. Sometimes, parents come to the gate and try to drop off their children."

The gated compound sits on 75 acres and educates some 1,200 children, including those from Tytoo Gardens. Classes are taught in Creole, but English is part of the curriculum.

The mission's anchor is a large church with wooden benches, a tin roof and no walls that also serves as a community center, bellowing out as much music as prayer.

There are at least four other orphanages in neighboring villages that house another 200 children, Smith said. Tytoo Gardens is the oldest, opened by Hughes a decade ago after hungry children began showing up on his property to beg for food.

The building where the orphans now sleep was supposed to be a nightclub for tourists. Hughes landed in Haiti following a 1981 conviction for running a brothel in Canada. His encounter with the hungry children, friends said, changed his life.

"Yeah, he had a troubled past," Smith said. "But he had a conversion, and God is in his heart. Haiti is in his heart."

Tytoo Gardens is a two-room rock and mortar structure with concrete floors. Outside, there are picnic tables, a tiny banana farm and plenty of run-around space under a shady tree. But the inside is dark and cramped.

The 26 children share 12 bunk beds with thin mattresses stacked up in a single bedroom. Hughes sleeps at a house across the way.

Most of the children at Tytoo Gardens have lost both parents. The youngest is Yolaine, a 1-year-old girl with dry skin who likes to suck her left thumb. The oldest is Lorca.

On a recent visit, most of the children were barefoot, a sink was clogged and the bedroom was littered with shoes, dirty clothes, book bags and paper. Yolaine slept on a barren mattress on the floor. Out back, one of the girls tried to sweep away puddles of water from dripping laundry.

Tytoo Gardens was a stark contrast to the Mission of Hope, where boys and girls sleep in separate dormitories and on individual beds. The rooms are bright and tidy, white tiled floors sparkle and stuffed animals and colorful drawings crowd corners. Outside is a field large enough for a soccer match.

When the children from both orphanages come together for school or church, it is hard to tell them apart. The girls wear ruffled dresses and ribbons in their hair. The boys have tucked-in shirts and belts. Shiny shoes cover their feet. Smiles brighten their faces.

"Our goal isn't just to take a kid off the streets, it's to provide them with the tools so they can help change Haiti," Smith said. "This is a long-term vision. This isn't a quick fix."

Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, is fraught with gang violence that has spilled over to rural communities. A history of political instability has virtually kept progress hostage and elevated the level of suffering among the most vulnerable.

"The children are the ones who are going to change Haiti," he said. "We plant the seed."

If it wasn't for the orphanage, "I'd probably be in the street and forget about God and do bad things," said Thony. "I might be dead now."

"There are many, many young men like me, children, who are hopeless, homeless," Thony added. "I have no problem anymore. I have a house to live in and three meals daily. And I have good clothes. They take care of me very, very well. They are my family now."

On the afternoon of July 28, as the children of Tytoo Gardens prepared for another night without their guardian, they shrieked with delight at the sight of an unexpected arrival.

As Hughes approached, the children ran toward the 72-year-old man who lost most of his right arm after being shot during a December kidnapping of a Haitian-American missionary. Accompanying Hughes was a newly-hired armed guard.

"It'll certainly take some time to get things back in order," said Hughes. "The future rests with God. We do our own little bit."

U.S. Catholic bishops support Haiti anti-poverty measure as moral imperative

9/27/2006

Catholic Online, CA

(www.catholic.org)

WASHINGTON (Catholic Online) – A U.S. House of Representative measure that would stimulate economic growth and combat poverty in Haiti is a moral imperative and reflects the humanitarian concerns of the American people, said the U.S. bishops.

In a letter sent to House representatives, Bishop Thomas G. Wenski of Orlando, Fla., chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on International Policy, said that "Haiti is at a critical point on its path of reform" and "merits our support."

"Efforts are being undertaken to combat drug transshipment, lawlessness and violent crime," Bishop Wenski said. "These initiatives are essential if Haiti is to avoid becoming a stubborn failed state, located a couple of hundred miles from the U.S. mainland.

H.R. 6142 "is part of our moral imperative to care for the least among us and reflects the deep-rooted humanitarian concerns of the American people," he said. "It also offers a meaningful path for many vulnerable people in Haiti to become true partners in their own future."

He pointed to the section of the bill that includes the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement (HOPE) Act as a "critical tool for helping Haiti's struggling textile manufacturing industry." The generation of employment in the Caribbean nation, he added, "is essential to this process of reform and development."

"As Haiti continues to rebuild essential services, democratic institutions and effective law enforcement, those communities that know only daily violence and fear need meaningful opportunities to build a different future for themselves and their children," Bishop Wenski added. "The HOPE Act contained in H.R. 6142 will offer important investment incentives for the one remaining sector that can offer employment opportunities for Haiti's poor. These opportunities are vital in helping Haitians battle instability and build a hopeful future. They merit your full support."

He noted that during a recent visit to Haiti he heard "many voices concerned about securing Haiti's progress on the path of stability and reconstruction."

The United States has a continuing role "to be a key partner in promoting peaceful initiatives aimed at stemming the violence and promoting an atmosphere of trust and opportunity for all Haitians," he said.

In a separate letter to Rep. William Thomas, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, Bishop Wenski said that the U.S. bishops "consider trade an important tool in helping poor people exercise their right to human development."

"These measures represent a key way in which U.S. trade policy can serve a vital role in expressing the compassion of the American people," he said. "The provisions regarding Haiti that you have introduced in this legislation should be passed into law without delay."

The trade bill was pulled from a scheduled vote this week by the U.S. House leadership, but Rep. John Boehner (R-Ohio), House majority leader, indicated that the trade bill would be considered in the post-election congressional session that begins Nov. 13.

France, Canada sign Haiti aid deal
By NORMAN DELISLE
Calgary Sun, Canada
September 26, 2006

BUCHAREST, Romania (CP) - Canada and France signed a deal Tuesday to help rebuild Haiti that sets a framework for aid to other disadvantaged countries.

"We will work together for the development of this country," said Josee Verner, the federal minister responsible for La Francophonie. "Haiti is among our priorities." Her French counterpart, Brigitte Girardin, echoed Verner's commitment during the signing ceremony held at the summit of Francophone nations.

"This country was destroyed and this protocol which we signed today opens the door to a very close co-operation," she said. "Taking into account our involvement, it is necessary to provide mutual assistance and work together."

The text of the deal says Canada and France "will endeavour to accompany the efforts by the Haitian authorities to create conditions favourable with the rebuilding of a State in Haiti."

Particular support will be given to reforms in the areas of security and justice as well as economic development, which will see assistance in the form of co-financing of projects.

Verner pointed out the Canadian government had announced \$520 million in aide for Haiti last July. The amount will be spread over five years.

The Canada-France deal not only affects Haiti but sets out a framework for aid to other disadvantaged countries.

The protocol aims at the improvement of governing in the countries, mainly meaning an effort to seek improvements in the respect of human rights, prevention of conflicts, improvement in security and gender equality.

The new collaboration between Canada and France will be evaluated in the first quarter of 2007 at a meeting of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development to be held in Paris.

Quebec and Romania also expressed their desire to create a network of schools in public administration to improve the quality of the bureaucracy.

"All the countries that have succeeded have a strong and qualified civil service," said Premier Jean Charest.

Haiti Feels US Threatens Sovereignty
Prensa Latina
September 26, 2006

Port-Au-Prince, Haiti considers a threat to national sovereignty US calls to the people to denounce illegal weapon hideouts and efforts to insert aliens in national justice.

Radio broadcasts in Creole from the US embassy called the people to give information via telephone promising discretion and reward for such tips.

Though the US denies efforts to undermine Haiti's sovereignty, enraged politicians like Mayor Evans Paul told Caribbean Net News daily they treat Haiti as a protectorate though they do not say it.

Disarming armed groups and their social reinsertion is currently a key official concern that stresses on public safety.

President Rene Preval assembled a commission to recover over 200,000 weapons spread in the streets and negotiates with the leading gangs at the most violent neighborhoods.

William Baptiste, head of the armed group "Ti Bland" charged the UN Stabilization Troops for Haiti for this unnecessary operation.

French Col. Dominique Van Marcke, head of the UN Police, confirmed that he operated with 10 Haitian and 70 Pakistani policemen backed by UN copters.

The incident recalled the MINUSTAH operation of June 6, 2005 in Cite Soleil (poorest neighborhood in Haiti) considered a massacre.

Justice Minister Henry Marge Dorleans called efforts to introduce foreigners in the domestic judicial system "a strategy to monitor Haiti's justice".

AS Minister Dorleans claims such actions nurtures general mistrust Senate President Joseph Lambert calls for immediate action from the political authorities.

Let refugees settle, Ottawa urged
Canadian Press
The Globe and Mail, Canada
September 26, 2006

MONTREAL — A coalition of refugee organizations wants Ottawa to grant permanent residency to thousands of people who have come from some of the most troubled countries in the world.

The Lives on Hold Coalition says some 4,000 people have been in legal limbo for years.

The applicants come from eight countries whose “generalized insecurity” has prompted the Canadian government to impose a moratorium on deportations to the nations in question.

The countries affected are Afghanistan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Iraq, Liberia, Rwanda and Zimbabwe.

A wave of decisions this summer has denied residency based on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

The coalition wants the federal government to grant residency to people from these countries after they have been in Canada for three or more years.

Haitian Ambassador Applauds Recruitment Of Haitian Teachers To Bahamas

By Perry Scavella

The Bahama Journal

September 27, 2006

Haiti's Ambassador to The Bahamas Louis Harold Joseph said Tuesday the recruitment of Haitian teachers to The Bahamas was nothing new, but a process that is happening throughout the Caribbean and the world.

"There are many aspects of Haiti that people don't know," Mr. Joseph said. "Haiti contributed a lot to other countries."

He pointed to the 1960s, saying that when many African countries became independent, many Haitians went to those countries to teach. Similarly, during the 1960s, he said, Haitian educators also went to Quebec, Canada, to teach.

Mr. Joseph said his countrymen left mainly because of the opportunities that were being offered. But this migration was not only from Haiti, he noted.

"Many Caribbean countries in the region have the same problem [regarding] how to keep our professionals because sometimes it is difficult for our countries to offer opportunities to our nationals," he said.

"I think Jamaica has the same problems with teachers and nurses and many other countries in the Caribbean."

On Monday, education officials announced that they had recruited 14 Cuban and two Haitian educators into the public school system to fill vacancies.

The foreign educators were recruited to teach subjects such as French, Spanish, mathematics, physical education, and physics.

The recruits were expected to start teaching on Tuesday or Wednesday. Six of the Cubans were to remain in New Providence and the others were to be sent to Andros, Acklins, San Salvador, Abaco, Exuma, and Mayaguana. The Haitian educators were to remain in New Providence.

Minister of Education Alfred Sears said the government made "no apologies" in recruiting the Haitian and Cuban teachers.

Mr. Joseph said the recruitment was a positive step and would encourage stronger ties between the two countries.

"Certainly, the relations between the two countries are very good. We have a very cordial relation. I believe the relation is getting stronger," he said.

The public school system has educators from 13 countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom and countries in the Caribbean region.

According to Howard Newbold, acting director of School Management, 65 percent of the teachers in The Bahamas are Bahamians while 35 percent are foreigners.

**Haiti: RNDDH Commits Slander Against Democracy Activist Sanba Boukman
by Indy Bay
Sunday Sep 24th, 2006**

The new president of the disarmament commission reaffirms urgency in disarming all individuals with illegal weapons and calls on those responsible for the defamation campaign against Sanba Boukman to stop their accusations

Port-au-Prince, September 21, 2006 -- (AHP); The president of the national commission for disarmament, dismantlement and reintegration (CNDDR), Alix Fils-Aimé, Thursday called on the Haitian people to unite with the goal of development.

Alix Fils-aimé, who spoke within the framework of the first conference of the commission since its creation on September 12, said that he could not understand why Haitians were ripping each other apart while other countries could unite to see real achievements.

Stating that the violence was a threat to Haitian sovereignty, Fils-Aimé called on all sectors to work towards a climate of sustainable peace. "We must disarm all individuals and armed groups in Haiti," said the president of CNDDR.

Alix Fils-Aimé also used the opportunity to reiterate that the commission does not operate in a judiciary or policing role but as a facilitator to encourage groups to lay down their arms. In this sense, he said, the awareness campaign will be run in business, schools and every neighbourhood.

Contact has been made with heads of the business sector to have all weapons purchased for the safety of their business returned. The president of the commission also denounced a recent defamation campaign against the commission's representative for the popular neighbourhoods Jean Baptiste Jean Philippe, aka Samba Boukman.

RNDDH has made the claim that Samba Boukman is accused of having been arrested for possession of illegal weapons and other crimes, wanted by the police of Latortue. On the issue, Fils-Aimé recalled that under the previous regime, the police issued warrants with no regard for the law. He called for those responsible for the accusations to show physical evidence of the legitimacy of their statements immediately; otherwise, they may face legal reprisals. The presence of Samba Boukman within the commission is very important, said Fils-Aimé.

It is RNDDH, an organization known to be close to the Latortue regime, who has launched the defamation campaign. The organization is also accused of having dozens of executives and political activists arrested following the departure of Aristide, including the former Prime Minister

Yvon Neptune and artist Annette Auguste. They accuse Boukman of being the spokesperson for what they call operation Baghdad.

According to some youth in the area of Bel-Air, this pseudo operation was an intervention of the Latortue regime to justify police extortion in popular neighbourhoods.

The controversial human rights activist Pierre Esperance and his organization National Coalition for Haitian Rights (NCHR), now RNDDH, refused to go into poor neighborhoods after the coup, which they explained to a Quixote Center delegation in March 2004. Esperance at the time of Aristide's ouster was a treasurer of POHDH, while his other organization NCHR received \$100000 USD from CIDA, renewable every six months. Platform of Haitian Human Rights Organizations (POHDH) which received funding from the Canadian quasi-governmental agency "Rights and Democracy", is a partner with the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

U.S. and Canadian government funded "human rights" groups have been used for years to spread false rumors about Lavalas activists and to undermine democracy in Haiti. RNDDH refuses to investigate crimes against the poor and they have attempted to undermine the recent study in the Lancet which shows massive human rights abuses by the Latortue paramilitary regime. They have made no attempt to investigate the mass murders carried out by the little machete army.

Cong. Mike Rogers seeks to derail trade bill
Associated Press
Columbus-Ledger Enquirer, GA
September 26, 2006

WASHINGTON - Alabama's Representative Mike Rogers wants to stop a controversial trade bill making its way through Congress that he sees as a threat to the already hobbled state textile industry.

The Saks Republican said the proposed legislation would hurt struggling textile companies and give countries like China, Haiti, and some African nations another unfair advantage.

Rogers says American industry continues to be restricted while the bill would lift restrictions for those nations.

The measure would allow apparel made in Haiti and Africa from Chinese fabrics to enter the U.S. duty-free. Yesterday, Rogers signed a letter to House Speaker Dennis Hastert and House Majority Leader John Boehner asking for H-R 6142, known as the Hemispheric Opportunity Partnership Encouragement Act of 2006, to be pulled from consideration.

Man's killing shows spread of violence across Haiti

BY DANI McCLAIN

Miami Herald

September 24, 2006

Hundreds of people packed a Kendall funeral home Saturday to bid farewell to a former commander of Haiti's army whose tragic killing 10 days ago in an upscale Port-au-Prince suburb serves as a stark reminder of Haiti's worsening violence.

Guy André François, 53, wasn't just a former colonel. He was an emblematic link between Haiti's history of bloodshed and South Florida's Haitian-American struggles. Twice, he was accused of plotting to overthrow Haiti's government.

Last year, his younger brother, Dr. M. Rony François, became Florida's secretary of health -- among the highest-ranking Haitian-Americans appointed to a state agency.

On Saturday, family, friends and strangers alike tried to make sense of François' assassination Sept. 14 in Petionville.

STILL NO ANSWERS

"Guy was killed not by foreigners, but by his countrymen," said Father Verdieu Joassaint, who officiated the services. "Why?"

The funeral service was standing-room-only. Those who came to pay their respects were packed shoulder to shoulder and spilled into the chapel's foyer. Men who had served in the military alongside François saluted their higher-ranked officers.

François' widow, Marie-Alice, sat near the open casket next to her four children -- Guy Jr., Valerie, Fabienne and Sabine.

Though he lived in Petionville, François' family buried him in the Miami area to accommodate the many family members and friends who live here, said Dr. Laurinus Pierre, director of the Center for Haitian Studies in Little Haiti and a longtime friend of François' son.

The younger François lives in the Miami area and is well known in the Haitian-American community as a music promoter, Pierre said.

The former colonel had planned to move to South Florida at the end of this month, said Eddy Altine, a Miami-Dade Department of Human Services employee and childhood friend. Altine and François both graduated from St. Louis de Gonzague, a prestigious boys' school in Port-au-Prince.

"The man worked hard all his life," Altine said. "He was in jail under Aristide, and he was trying to start his life over."

ACCUSED IN PLOT

Former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide accused François of helping to plot a December 2001 attack that Aristide said was a coup against the government. François was imprisoned soon after, many believe unjustly.

Years earlier, when he served as commander of the feared Dessalines Battalion in Port-au-Prince in 1989, he was accused of conspiring with other officers to overthrow then dictator Lt. Gen. Prosper Avril. After the failed attempt, François fled to Venezuela and later returned to Haiti.

He also served in the Department of Interior under General Raoul Cédras, who was Haiti's dictator from 1991 to 1993 after a coup against Aristide during his first presidential term.

The details surrounding François' murder remain murky. On Sept. 14, he was found dead behind the wheel of his car in Petionville, according to The Associated Press. Minutes earlier and on the same street, journalist Liliane Pierre-Paul and her brother, Stephan Pierre-Paul, were robbed.

The Pierre-Pauls were not injured, but their money, cellphones and other belongings were taken. Moments after the robbers ran away, shots rang out, Liliane Pierre-Paul told The Miami Herald. She said she believes the men who robbed her also killed François.

If François was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time, his murder is further evidence that random violence is moving out of Haiti's slums and into its wealthier neighborhoods. Several months ago, the widow of former Haitian President Dumarsais Estime also was murdered on a street in Petionville.

SPREAD OF CRIME

"This is a last-resort place where people could have a good time," Pierre, the director of the Center for Haitian Studies, said of the Petionville suburb. Violent criminals ``try to disrupt the kind of apparent peace they have there.".

At Saturday's funeral, family members sobbed as they crowded around the open casket. The packed chapel sang How Great Thou Art and incense hung heavy in the air.

Dr. M. Rony François stood near the casket, receiving those who had come to pay respects. Both the secretary of health and a spokesman from his office refused to comment on Guy François' murder.

**Healing from the heart
Meeting on mission trip leads to life-changing surgery for Haitian man
By ROGER HARRIS
Knoxville News Sentinel, TN
September 28, 2006**

Raol Toussaint is looking forward to morning walks when he returns to his native Haiti in a few days. A week ago, a brisk walk was unthinkable. His weak heart made exercise dangerous.

Today Toussaint's heartbeat is regulated by a defibrillator/pacemaker, which was placed in his chest Friday morning at Baptist Hospital of East Tennessee by a volunteer health-care team lead by Knoxville cardiologist Dr. Clint Doiron.

"Defibrillators are not common in Haiti. If not for Dr. Doiron, who knows what would have happened to his life?" Toussaint's sister-in-law, Anne Morisseau, said on his behalf.

Doiron, a partner in East Tennessee Heart Consultants, said Toussaint's prognosis is good.

"He's really an amazing guy. He hasn't taken a pain pill. If it had been me I would have been milking this thing for all the sympathy I could get," Doiron said.

Doiron first met Toussaint in early 2005 while on a mission trip to a remote area near the border of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. It was clear Toussaint needed a defibrillator, but a lack of appropriate health-care facilities in the region made implanting the device too risky at that time.

"There was no place in Haiti where they could put that in," Doiron said.

Haiti, which occupies the western third of the island of Hispaniola, is one of the poorest countries in the world. Health-care services are meager, said Doiron, who has worked as a medical missionary in the Caribbean for years.

The difficulty in providing follow-up care also was a concern. Monitoring technology necessary to allow doctors to keep tabs on high-tech heart devices was not available in the border region, Doiron said.

However, the Knoxville cardiologist promised Toussaint if his condition worsened he would bring him to Knoxville to implant a defibrillator/pacemaker.

Toussaint, a civil engineer, took a turn for the worse in July, prompting Doiron to schedule the procedure and line up a team of health-care professionals, who agreed to donate their services.

Fortunately for Toussaint, access to followup cardiac care in the Haiti-Dominican Republic border zone is about to take a giant leap forward. A new hospital funded in part by donations from East Tennesseans will open early in 2007 in Jimani, a small town on the Dominican Republic side of the border.

The hospital is part of a worship, health-care, agricultural and educational facility being built by Jimani Project Inc., a nonprofit corporation made up of medical missionaries and business people from East Tennessee, Southern Kentucky and elsewhere.

"The hospital is going to be finished in late January or early February (and) we're going to have equipment so we can follow people like Raol," Doiron said.

In addition to operating rooms, X-ray facilities, and medical and dental examination rooms, the hospital will have equipment to program and monitor pacemakers and defibrillators. Doctors in Knoxville, for instance, would be able to monitor Toussaint's implant via the Internet.

"We'll be able to talk to his device by having him lay an interrogator over his wound," Doiron said.

An interrogator is a computerized device that checks to make sure the implant is working properly.

The device Toussaint received is a dual chamber automatic implantable cardioverter-defibrillator with pacemaker manufactured by Minneapolis-based Medtronic Inc. The implant is similar to one Vice President Dick Cheney has, Doiron said.

Although a variety of surgeries and medical procedures will be available at the Jimani hospital, "the centerpiece is going to be ophthalmology surgery," Doiron said.

Cataracts and other eye conditions are among the most widespread health problems in the Third World. By offering eye care, the new hospital will be able to serve a large number of patients and begin to build rapport with people in the area, Doiron said.

An optometrist will be at the hospital daily and an ophthalmologist will visit the hospital weekly.

"We think we can be self sufficient after three years by charging a minimal fee - a very minimal fee - for eye exams and cataract removal," Doiron said.

The East Tennessee-Southern Kentucky mission team also has been working in small Haitian villages, or bateys, near Jimani. In addition to providing health-care services, the missionaries arranged for equipment and experts to drill wells to provide much-needed clean drinking water.

"What we'd like to do next is a solar panel project," Doiron said.

Electricity is an unknown luxury in the bateys, where life is a subsistence existence. Families live in mud and stick huts next to a saltwater lake. One of the primary means of earning a living is to burn wood to make charcoal, which is sold in the larger villages and cities.

The Jimani Project team has been working for several years to bring modern health-care, clean water, economic opportunity and the gospel of Jesus Christ to the border region of Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

"Physical and spiritual healing - that's what this whole thing is about," Doiron said.

The mission team has high hopes for the Jimani Project, which accepts donations through the Baptist Health System Foundation.

"We want this to be the Mayo Clinic of the Caribbean," Doiron said. "It's a very bold endeavor, but, hey, you've got to aim high to stir men's and women's souls."

Business writer Roger Harris may be reached at 865-342-6342.

INDUSTRY OPPOSES JOB DESTROYING TRADE PACKAGE
Decades Old Trade Policy Overturned – Industry Compromise Rejected
National Council of Textile Organizations
China Major Beneficiary – CAFTA Countries Imperiled

Contact: Cass Johnson: 202-822-8025
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September 24, 2006

Washington DC) NCTO announced its opposition to the textile provisions in HR 6142, declaring that they would “primarily benefit China and imperil tens of the thousands of U.S. textile workers.” The bill would allow China to displace U.S. yarn and fabric shipments which total billions of dollars to the CAFTA region by reversing a decades old trade policy. This policy, which helped to grow the CAFTA region into a major apparel producer and sustains hundreds of thousands of U.S. textile jobs, would be overturned by granting enormous loopholes to products made in Haiti and Africa made from Chinese yarns and fabrics.

Cass Johnson, President of NCTO, stated: “This bill creates enormous loopholes equal to nearly 600 million square meters – equal to 30 percent of the textile industry’s exports to the CAFTA region. It is also destabilizing to other CAFTA countries, imperiling 20 percent of total CAFTA exports at a time when the CAFTA countries are struggling to compete. And it creates new rules that are so difficult to enforce that China will be the main beneficiary.”

“Trade policy should not be about sacrificing additional US manufacturing jobs so that China can benefit. The US textile industry has already lost 26,000 jobs this year. This poorly crafted bill will cost tens of thousands of additional jobs. In fact, our members have already heard from the importers in the region who have said: ‘This bill passes and your orders are gone the next day. We are just waiting to source from China.’”

Johnson explained, “This bill upends trade policy that stretches back to the 1980’s by singling out one country to get dramatically better benefits than everyone else in the CAFTA, NAFTA, CBTPA and ANDEAN region. These benefits are unilateral, which means that they will come at the expense of the U.S. industry. Under this legislation, Haiti, as well as most African countries, will be able to use Chinese fabric or Chinese yarns for apparel production while every other preference partner must use regionally made yarns and fabrics. This is a benefit that cannot be beat given China’s state-owned and subsidized textile sector and its use of currency manipulation. While China wins, regional producers, including the U.S. industry, will be the big losers.”

“The result will be a huge shift of orders out of the CAFTA region. The worst part is that Customs has already told us this rule cannot be enforced. Therefore, Haiti will not even get the benefits that this bill projects because China will send fully assembled goods or nearly fully assembled goods through Haiti. Unfortunately, this is history repeating itself – the Northern Marianas Islands have exactly the same loophole and they have shipped every kind of apparel product to the United States duty free, all of it made from Chinese yarns and fabrics. Every other producer has been shut out and Customs has repeatedly found enormous fraud.”

“Ironically, this bill is being proposed at a time when apparel exports from Haiti are surging (up 20%) while exports from CAFTA are falling (down 13%). In the midst of a very competitive global environment, Haiti is doing extremely well and it is doing so using primarily U.S. yarns and fabrics.”

Johnson concluded: “Haiti, one of the most impoverished countries in this hemisphere, clearly needs help. The textile industry has offered on numerous occasions to work with this bill’s backer to provide real help to Haiti in a manner that will not harm manufacturing workers in our country that are already struggling to keep their jobs. We have offered innovative ideas that would quickly increase apparel production in Haiti. We stand ready to work to quickly pass such legislation. But we strongly oppose any legislation that needlessly sacrifices so many hardworking American jobs.”

FACTS on the Textile Provisions of HR 6142:

Haiti Provisions:

1. Creates a new TPL (tariff preference level) through a 50 percent value-added rule wherein if 50 percent of the value of the goods is added in either HAITI or any other FTA partner, the good enters the US duty-free. The size of the value-added TPL begins at 221 million in year one, and, assuming normal growth in trade, increases to 537 million square meters in year five.

Value-added rules used in a textile and apparel context are impossible to enforce. The enforcement problem occurs because Customs does not have the manpower or technical ability to monitor the dozens of steps which take place when a piece of fabric is turned into a particular garment. Thus Customs is forced to rely on an “honor code” which invites massive fraud and serves primarily to encourage China to transship goods.

A key example of why such rules do not work is the Northern Marianas Islands, which have the same rule as included in the Thomas bill. All the apparel shipped from the Northern Marianas Islands is made from fabric sourced in China and Customs teams have found repeated instances where the entire garment is made in China.

2. Creates a new TPL of 50 million square meters for woven apparel, where the fabrics and yarns can be sourced from anywhere.

AGOA Provisions:

The AGOA provisions are very similar to the benefits provided for Haiti. It should be noted that less than three years ago the industry accepted a compromise allowing third country, i.e. Chinese fabrics, to be used for apparel assembly in Africa and still receive duty-free access to the United States. We were told at the time that this would access would definitively end by next year. Now, just three years later, we are being asked to further compromise at the expense of U.S. companies and workers.

1. Extends the current program allowing duty-free access for apparel made in Africa from Chinese fabrics and creates a new TPL (tariff preference level) through a 50 percent value-added rule wherein if 50 percent of the value of the goods is added in either AGOA or any other FTA partner, the good enters the US duty-free. The size of these TPLs is equivalent of 770 million square meters annually of fabrics from China.

2. For the first time, this legislation would allow duty-free access for textile products (yarns and fabrics) from Africa. Africa does not give up anything for this benefit, including extremely high tariffs on U.S. textile exports to African countries.

3. Provides a 60 percent credit to offset U.S. tax on income earned as a result of trade with or investment in Africa. Credit is equal to 60 percent of wages and benefits and investments in tangible property. Credit can be carried forward for 10 years. There is no offsetting credit for U.S. textile manufacturers wanting to continue to do business in the U.S.

Canada complicit in Haiti violence

Canada's intervention in Haiti has exacerbated, rather than improved, Haiti's human rights situation.

by Nik Barry-Shaw and Yves Engler

Rabble News.ca

September 25, 2006

Does the Canadian-promoted “Responsibility to Protect” doctrine include murder, rape and threats of violence? That's the question we should be asking Canadian officials after a study in the prestigious Lancet medical journal released at the end of August revealed there were 8,000 murders, 35,000 rapes and thousands of incidents of armed threats in the 22 months after the overthrow of the elected government in Haiti.

In September 2000, Canada launched the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. The commission's final report, *The Responsibility to Protect*, was presented to the UN in December 2001 and at the 2005 World Summit, Canada advocated that world leaders endorse the new doctrine.

It asserts that where gross human rights abuses are occurring, it is the duty of the international community to intervene, over and above considerations of state sovereignty.

In January 2003, the Canadian government organized the “Ottawa Initiative” where U.S., Canadian and French government officials who met at Meech Lake decided that Haiti's elected president, Jean Bertrand Aristide should be removed from office. The intervention was justified, they reasoned, by the Responsibility to Protect doctrine.

In due course, Aristide was forced from office. And Canada's intervention in Haiti has exacerbated, rather than improved, Haiti's human rights situation.

Confirming numerous prior human rights investigations, The Lancet study estimates that 8,000 people in Port-au-Prince were killed in the 22 months after the toppling of Aristide's government. The Lancet study gives an idea of the scale of the persecution of those close to Aristide's Lavalas movement.

Of the estimated 8,000 people murdered — 12 people a day — in the greater Port-au-Prince area, nearly half (47.7 per cent) were killed by governmental or anti-Aristide forces; 21.7 per cent of the killings were attributed to members of the Haitian National Police (HNP); 13.0 per cent to demobilized soldiers (many of whom participated in the coup) and 13.0 per cent to anti-Aristide gangs (none were attributed to Aristide supporters).

Canada commands the 1,600-member United Nations police contingent mandated to train, assist and oversee the Haitian National Police. Yet while Canadian police have been supporting them, the Haitian police have been attacking peaceful demonstrations and carrying out massacres, often with the help of anti-Aristide gangs. While UN police have announced investigations in a few particularly egregious cases, not one report from such investigations has ever been released.

The Lancet study also uncovered some evidence that Canadian forces in Haiti were more than mere silent accomplices. Athena Kolbe, co-author of the study, recounts an interview with one family in the Delmas district of Port-au-Prince:

“Canadian troops came to their house, and they said they were looking for (pro-Aristide) Lavalas chimeres, and threatened to kill the head of household, who was the father, if he didn't name names of people in their neighbourhood who were Lavalas chimeres or Lavalas supporters.”

Canada took command of “reforming” Haiti's judicial system, yet by all accounts huge numbers of political prisoners, including the former Prime Minister, languished in prolonged and arbitrary detention. The Lancet found a huge number of unconstitutional detentions.

The study also found a “shocking” level of sexual violence committed since the coup, with an estimated 35,000 women raped in Port-au-Prince, more than half of the victims under 18. In a harrowing account the co-author, Athena Kolbe, discussed interviewing a mother who had been raped with a metal bar, which destroyed her cervix. Gravely ill, the woman was transported by Kolbe's crew to the general hospital, where they offered to pay for medical costs.

On discovering that a uniformed police officer was implicated, the hospital refused medical treatment. The victim eventually received medical attention at another facility, but ultimately succumbed to her injuries. Kolbe then paid for relocation of the traumatized family. (This necessitated not including the rape in The Lancet survey data.)

Throughout the period investigated by the researchers from Wayne State University in Michigan, Canada was heavily involved in Haitian affairs. After withholding aid to Aristide's elected government, Canada gave nearly \$200 million to the imposed Gerard Latortue regime. Nearly 500 Canadian troops with six CH-146 Griffon helicopters were on the ground until August of 2004. And the imposed Prime Minister was feted in Ottawa on a number of occasions.

On April 13, 2006, in Washington, U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice praised “Canada's very important role in Haiti.” We suspect that anyone who has read The Lancet study does not share her praise.

Nik Barry-Shaw is a member of Haiti Action Montreal. Yves Engler is the author of two books: *Canada in Haiti: Waging War on the Poor Majority* (with Anthony Fenton) and *Playing Left Wing: From Rink Rat to Student Radical*.

U.S. radio ad fuels debate on Haitian sovereignty

By Joseph Gyler Delva

Reuters

Washington Post

Sunday, September 24, 2006

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (Reuters) - A radio ad urging Haitians to reveal illegal weapons caches to the U.S. Embassy has angered politicians and fueled debate on whether the troubled Caribbean nation has become a tacit U.S. protectorate.

The embassy denied any attempt on its part to undermine Haiti's sovereignty but critics say U.S. authorities have appropriated the proper role of the Haitian police.

In a paid commercial broadcast in Creole on Haitian radio, U.S. officials promise compensation to those who provide information about people who have weapons or on the location of those weapons.

Haiti has been plagued by political and gang violence since Jean-Bertrand Aristide was pushed from the presidency by a bloody rebellion in 2004. The poorest country in the Americas, it has relied since on Aristide's ouster on U.N. peacekeepers for security and on foreign aid for funds.

Efforts by police and U.N. peacekeeping forces to disarm slum gangs and former members of Haiti's disbanded army have had little success, despite assurances by some gangs that they would hand over their guns after President Rene Preval, a one-time Aristide ally, was elected this year.

It was not immediately clear whether the new advertisements would have any impact on the gun violence.

"You who are listening, if you have information about people who would hide heavy weapons, please, contact the U.S. embassy in Port-au-Prince," said the U.S. embassy advertisement, which provides a telephone number to call.

"The calls will be treated confidentially and you will be amply rewarded," it said.

'SECURITY CLIMATE'

A U.S. embassy spokeswoman said the initiative was not meant to threaten Haiti's sovereignty.

"We work very closely with the Haitian police and U.N. troops to improve the security climate in Haiti," she said, declining to clarify whether the information collected by the embassy would be given to Haitian police or U.N. troops.

The spokeswoman said among the tasks of the embassy was to counter threats to the security of U.S. citizens, but the embassy was also very concerned about improving the security of all Haitians.

A Haitian cabinet minister said he was offended.

"I am not a spokesman for the government, but as a cabinet member I feel offended that a foreign embassy can be allowed to air such ads in my country," he said. The minister asked not to be identified because he was not an official spokesman.

Several government officials and politicians accused the United States and other foreign powers of turning Haiti, the world's first independent black republic, into a protectorate.

"I think it's some sort of protectorate even though they did not officially call it that name," said former Port-au-Prince Mayor Evans Paul, who ran unsuccessfully for president this year.

"I don't think Preval can make any decision without taking into account the will of those foreign powers and institutions. I don't think the Haitian embassy in the United States could have released such a commercial," he said.

Pulling of HOPE the Latest in Shameful Record of Neglect
Rep. Kendrick B. Meek (D-Fla.)
September 27, 2006

Washington - U.S. Rep. Kendrick B. Meek issued the following statement regarding the decision by House Republican leaders to postpone consideration of H.R. 6142, the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement (HOPE) Act.

"After four years of lip service and no action, the HOPE Act was finally supposed to fulfill the promises of President Bush and the Republican Congressional leadership to provide trade assistance to Haitian textile manufacturers and bring needed jobs to that impoverished nation.

The House Ways and Means Committee was supposed to bring the bill up for a vote on Tuesday, September 26, in the House of Representatives. But once again, this Republican Congress has provided no trade assistance to Haiti. The HOPE bill was pulled on Monday night from the House floor by Republican leaders, and we understand that a vote this week is unlikely.

I would like to acknowledge and thank House Ways and Means ranking member Charles Rangel (D-NY) for his tireless work urging House leaders to put the bill back on the calendar.

The HOPE bill would have expanded trade preferences for Haiti allowing apparel assembled in Haiti using third-country fabrics duty-free access to the United States market. It is a scaled down version of The Haiti Economy Recovery Opportunity (HERO) bill, H.R. 4211, which I introduced in the House in this 109th Congress.

My HERO bill would have extended important trade benefits to Haiti in return for political, economic and social reforms by the Haitian government. However, the Republican leadership refused to bring my HERO bill to the House floor for consideration, even though the Senate passed it unanimously in the 108th Congress.

The pulling of the HERO bill is just the latest episode in a shameful record of neglect on Haiti by Republican leaders. Year after year, they refused to even consider the HERO bill. They delayed introducing the HOPE Act until the end of this Congress. Then, they scheduled it for consideration on the floor of the House, but removed it from the schedule. If Haiti were important to them, they would have included Haiti in the Central American-Dominican Republic Free Trade Act. The President and Congressional Republicans not only pushed CAFTA-DR through Congress, but once it passed, the President held a signing ceremony in the White House. Haiti requires such attention.

HOPE Working Group Is Formed to Consolidate NGO Efforts
Haiti Democracy Project
2006-09-28

Lawyers from Hogan and Hartson and other firms, a former assistant U.S. Trade Representative, the ambassador of Haiti, a former counsellor at the embassy of the Dominican Republic, and three representatives of the Haiti Democracy Project all convened today at the offices of Manchester Trade to discuss the future of the HOPE initiative. On the speakerphone was Jean-Edouard Baker, a leading manufacturer in Haiti.

The sense of the meeting was that chances were good for the passage of HOPE in the lame-duck session of Congress, set to begin on November 14.

The experts at the meeting said that the argument of the textile trade association (posted on this webpage) had no validity. Haiti's feeble industry did not threaten to "demolish" U.S. jobs. Those jobs had already gone to China and the question was whether a tiny fraction of them could be shifted to Haiti.

Under HOPE the level of Haitian apparel imports could rise from its current infinitesimal 0.3 percent of the U.S. apparel market (which is less than the margin for statistical error) to a thumping 1 percent! Then if it ever got there it could rise by 0.25 percent a year.

Eighty percent of Haiti's imports came from the United States. The equivalent figure for China was between 6 to 10 percent. For the many sewing components such as pockets and buttons Haiti would normally turn to the United States, whereas China would not. This was even truer for equipment and infrastructure.

Haiti : Apparel industry fails to withstand competition
29th March, 2005
www.fibre2fashion.com

The once thriving apparel industry for sometime now been pressured from all corners due to instability in the island nation – the poorest country in the Americas and rising competition from low-cost China.

About 5,000 garment jobs were deemed as lost last year, or one in six in its top industry, leaving behind only about 25,000 in the business.

Jobbers who used to rely on U.S. companies sending them piecework to be assembled into clothes and shipped back to the United States were major losers.

U.S. buyers lay emphasis on factories find and buy fabric, zippers and supplies; cut patterns; sew garments; pack clothes and in some cases, ship them to specific stores, in what is called "full-package" or integrated production.

To have one stop operations requires finance, technical know-how and managerial skill than mere assembly.

But, this is out of major Haitian factories to switch to. Encumbered with low volumes, they can't afford to buy and run fabric-cutting machines and the high-tech equipment needed to track more complex inventories and tasks.

Further more; it's the Chinese flooding the U.S. markets with cheap imports that cannot be competed by the Haitian apparel manufacturers, since the expiry of quotas since Jan. 1, 2005 that has provided unlimited access for China and other nations with low-cost labor and strong fabric industries to gain more access of the U.S. market.

Now, certain companies from Haiti have turned to offering "full-package" between them. The months-old Astralis Group spans about a dozen firms, including manufacturers and banks. They're working with U.S. consultants specializing in full-package production, said Astralis President Marie Louise Baker.

"We're hoping we can save jobs and keep many factories open," she said at Haiti's booth at the recent Material World trade fair in Miami Beach.

Meanwhile, Haitian leaders also are pushing a new bill in the U.S. Congress that would let Haiti import some non-U.S. fabric and sell clothes made with that fabric to the U.S. market without duties. Current law lets Haiti sell U.S. duty-free only when garments use U.S. cloth.

Supporters, including Rep. Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., say the legislation would help make garment manufacturing in Haiti more attractive, since a mix of cloth from Mexico and other specified nations may be cheaper than all-U.S. fabric.

Astralis consultants said they hope U.S. fabric makers will see the bigger picture and back the bill known as HOPE.

"Haiti's production is so small that it's not going to have any effect on the United States," said apparel specialist Don Truluck of High Point, N.C., noting some factories in China produce more than all Haiti combined.

Plus, reviving Haiti's garment industry can help a nation where 80 percent of residents live in abject poverty. A stronger Haiti long term will boost future sales of all U.S. goods to a neighbor that trades mainly with the United States, added Barry Horowitz of Boca Raton-based Linbar Group.

"The enemy for the U.S. textile industry is not Haiti. It's China," Horowitz said, charging Beijing with subsidizing its fabric industries to drive down prices and unfairly compete with U.S. producers.

As for Haitian companies, convincing buyers that their troubled island with its interim government, violent clashes and weak transport systems, can handle their apparel contracts without any hiccups will be a monumental task for the present.

For now, Haiti's factories are filling orders now, and business should be smoother after elections set for late this year and if the HOPE legislation is approved, say Baker and others.

A Delegation to Revive HOPE
2006-09-26
Haiti Democracy Project

Report of the "Delegation to Revive HOPE"

Second Haitian-American delegation to Washington, September 6–8, 2006

Introduction

The Haiti Democracy Project's September 6–8 delegation to Washington made key contacts which helped greatly in the introduction of HOPE on September 21, 2006.

In meetings with Rep. E. Clay Shaw (R-Fla.), chairman of the trade subcommittee of the Ways and Means Committee, and with Rep. Charles B. Rangel (D-N.Y.), ranking Democrat on the committee, the delegation energized the two congressmen, who then made short work of the obstacles to HOPE's introduction.

From June to September 2006, the Haiti Democracy Project's delegations of Haitian-Americans were among the few Congress and the executive agencies were hearing from on behalf of HOPE.

The pre-inaugural visit last spring of President Preval, the work of Amb. Raymond Joseph, the interventions from the Haitian ADIH manufacturers' associations, and the contributions of specialists in U.S. law firms and trade associations were also important contributing factors.

Altogether, this delegation saw six members of Congress: five House members and one senator. It also visited the White House, State Department, and international agencies.

The delegation was led as before by Lionel Delatour, well known in Washington for his tireless advocacy of Haiti, especially in the fields of investment and job creation. The delegation was strengthened by the presence of two dynamic Haitian women, Marie Florence Siclait Bell and Maryse Kedar-Penette. Ms. Bell, of Miami, was chairperson of Gov. Jeb Bush's Haiti Advisory Group. Ms. Kedar-Penette, of Port-au-Prince and Miami, is president of the ADIH manufacturers' association in Haiti, past minister of tourism, and resident representative for the Royal Caribbean Cruise Line.

The delegation also had Illinois state senator Kwame Raoul (D-13th district), the highest-ranking Haitian-American elected official in the United States. It also had Jocelyn McCalla, director of the National Coalition for Haitian Rights, the oldest Haitian human-rights organization in the United States. Amb. Ernest H. Preeg, chairman of the board of the project, joined the visit to the State Department. Claire Sturm, the able new associate of the Haiti Democracy Project, accompanied the delegation.

Summary

HOPE Legislation

Motivated by their meetings with the delegation on September 7 and 8, Representatives Rangel and Shaw each took measures to revive the HOPE legislation in the House Ways and Means Committee. These include discussions with committee chairman Rep. Bill Thomas (R-Calif.). Given the paucity of other messages, the eloquence of the Haitian-Americans on our delegations was a key factor remotivating these dramatis personae who are both long-term supporters of Haiti but are always distracted by a plethora of other issues.

This was the primary contribution of the delegation. There are many Haiti supporters in Congress, but they need to be activated.

By redirecting these key senior members of Congress to Haiti's cause, the Haitian-American legislators and leaders on our delegations have stepped to the front as full players on behalf of Haiti in Washington.

Development Strategies

Meetings with development organizations focused on ministerial capacity-building, strengthening judicial integrity, improving finance infrastructure for private sector development, creating wealth in rural areas, as well as professional development training for Haitian legislators and their staffs. Security concerns surfaced in most discussions of development strategies. There is an evident lack of coordination among key development organizations working in Haiti. There is also hope across the development community that Haitian Americans will play an increasingly prominent role in providing technical expertise.

Election Monitoring

The CEP announced that the next municipal and local elections would be held on December 3, and that date has since been published by the government. All members of Congress, agency officials and organization staff concerned with Haiti agreed that this last round of elections was essential to further build the legitimacy of the Préval government and to increase confidence of the international community. The presence of international observers would provide further validation. The OAS could field election observers if the Préval government requests them. Members of the Haitian diaspora made excellent observers because of their cultural and linguistic familiarity with the country.

Notes on individual meetings

Rep. E. Clay Shaw (R-Fla.) is the chairman of the subcommittee on trade of the House Ways and Means Committee. He considered the delegation's forceful support for Haiti as a plus in the debate. Similarly, he thought that a visit by President Préval could get the attention of policy-makers.

Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.), ranking member of the House Western Hemisphere subcommittee, is another friend of Haiti and sympathized with its problems in security, in job-creation that HOPE would address, and the completion of elections. He supported Representative Foley's bill to send a hundred Haitian-Americans to Haiti for one year. He wanted Congress to keep abreast of MINUSTAH and would like to participate in a possible bipartisan congressional delegation to Haiti in December 2006.

Rep. Mark Foley (R-Fla.) last June, after a meeting with the Haiti Democracy Project's "Delegation to Move Haiti Forward," asked Rep. Bill Thomas, the chairman of Ways and Means, to introduce the HOPE legislation in September. After two years of unofficial discussion by the committee, he believed it was time to move the bill. He said that a meeting between Chairman Thomas and President Préval could help bring that about.

Rep. Janice Schakowsky (D-Ill.) and her aide Robert Marcus expressed their deep concern for Haiti and their support for the concept of the HOPE legislation, although because of their principled support of U.S. labor and labor rights she would like to see the actual text once it was introduced.

Sen. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) knew Haiti and had visited it with Senator DeWine (R-Ohio). In the forty-five-minute meeting of the delegation with this senior senator, he asked each delegation member for an assessment of the situation in Haiti. He saw the HOPE bill as a step forward. He noted the need to work with Senators DeWine and Chris Dodd (D-Conn.) to help the bill move in the Senate. He expressed his wish to return to Haiti soon.

Rep. Charles E. Rangel (D-N.Y.) resumed discussion of the themes that the Haiti Democracy Project delegation had raised with him in June. The focus was on overcoming the hurdles to HOPE. Rangel too worried that because of internal House politics, HOPE might not be introduced before the November 7 elections. If the Democrats were to win back the House, the chances would recede that committee members would introduce HOPE during the lame-duck session. That made a push in September 2006 all the more important.

For if it languished through the lame-duck session as well, it would then only be introduced after the House was reorganized, in June or July 2007. Representative Rangel believed that that would be too late for Haiti and too late to shore up support for President Préval. The United States would have failed Haiti in a vital area and the ramifications would be far greater than any minor effect of greater Haitian production in a field already dominated by China.

The only way Rangel saw to speed up the process would be for President Bush to officially declare HOPE a "critical patriotic interest." This too was unlikely, but Rangel believed that if the president did this just before the lame-duck session, the legislation would go through. Gov. Jeb Bush reportedly had contacted Chairman Thomas without success in moving the bill forward. Linking it to another bill was not a viable option either. Congressman Rangel suggested putting it on the suspension calendar, which would allow a symbolic passage at the beginning of the next Congress.

In his masterly, systematic exploration of the options, and his low estimation of the prospects of other support for HOPE, Representative Rangel persuaded himself that HOPE would require a new, major effort by himself as ranking Democrat on the committee. And indeed after our visit he threw himself in it, with senior House Ways and Means Committee personnel reporting that Rangel was exploring new options of combining HOPE with other measures, which the Republicans on the committee wanted but Rangel had hitherto hoped to avoid.

Brian Nichols is director of the office of Caribbean affairs at the State Department. He expressed his optimism for Haiti, saying that President Préval was sending the right signals politically, although he remained concerned about security. He mentioned the November 2006 donors' meeting in Spain. To

Jocelyn McCalla's question as to how to involve the Haitian-American community, he said the Diaspora could keep the attention of policy-makers focused on Haiti and could make crucial investments of skills and financial resources in the Haitian economy.

Doug Fears is the director for Central America and the Caribbean at the National Security Council. He believed that the HOPE legislation would be introduced in the next Congress. Fears recognized the Haitian diaspora as a powerful resource for Haiti, not only in remittances but also in its potential to bring technical expertise to Haiti.

Susan Williams and Jessi Frend are legislative aides to Sen. Mike DeWine. Ms. Williams briefed the delegation on the senator's meeting with U.S. trade representative Amb. Susan Schwab on September 7. Ambassador Schwab understood Senator DeWine's dedication to HOPE, but was not actively involved because HOPE is not a negotiation but a unilateral U.S. decision. The senator told Ambassador Schwab that the bill was overdue, and said he would be in close touch with the House Ways and Means Committee. In the Senate, the vote would depend on majority leader Sen. Bill Frist (R-Tenn.), and Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa), chairman of the Finance Committee.

Caroline Tess is a legislative aide to Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.). She said that linking the HOPE bill with the Vietnam Permanent Normal Trading Relations bill would complicate the issue for the House. Senator Nelson was considering a letter recommending the bill to Senator Grassley. As to the situation in Haiti, Senator Nelson believed that President Préval was on the right track.

Greg Adams is the legislative director for Rep. Diane Watson (D-Calif.). He understood Haiti's problems in Washington including short attention span and budgetary limitations. He noted that the House Democracy Assistance Commission, coordinated by the office of fellow California representative David Dreier (R-Calif.), might also send observers.

Amb. Albert Ramdin is the assistant secretary-general of the Organization of American States. He described the organization's current involvement in Haiti:

- civil registry
- assistance to CEP
- determined targeted support of the PNH and judicial system
- dialogue between political parties
- trade orientation missions
- security mission

Ambassador Ramdin said that the Haitian-diaspora-consultant program to the ministries would be renewed if the Haitian government asked for it. He also encouraged investment in infrastructure, with the objective to create jobs in the short term, such as city cleaning, and in the long term, such as tourism. The OAS could also be involved in election monitoring, provided the Préval government requests such a presence.

Lionel Nicol is a deputy manager of regional operations at the Inter-American Development Bank. He met the delegation with eight staff members. The bank's approach to Haiti is a coordinated effort to increase cooperation between the government and the private sector. Parliament was taking its role

seriously but also needed improvements at the structural level, in staff training, and in the execution of oversight. One way to involve the Haitian diaspora was to select advisers for key ministries, although the issue then became the length of the advisers' commitment; it would need to be long-term.

Conclusion: From Hopeless to Hopeful

President Préval's initiative in visiting Washington to advocate HOPE even before he was inaugurated got the ball rolling. Then the support of the ADIH manufacturers' association, the Haitian chamber of commerce, the local Haitian-American community all set the stage for the June and September delegations of Haitian-American leaders organized by the Haiti Democracy Project. Judicious intervention by Amb. Raymond Joseph of Haiti was also essential. As a result, in Stephen Lande's words, the so-called Hopeless bill has now become the Hopeful bill.

One breaking point came when after the September delegation's conversation with Representative Rangel, he indicated to Rep. Bill Thomas (R-Calif.), chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, that he would not insist on a stand-alone bill for Haiti. Equal reasonableness on the Republican side, which was reportedly reluctant to introduce trade legislation shortly before an election, played a commensurate role. Intervention by a number of HOPE supporters, particularly Lionel Delatour in his discussions with Representatives Shaw and Rangel, paved the way for this breakthrough.

**HOPE Bill Is Pulled at Request of GOP House Members with Textile Constituencies
Originally: House Leaders Pull Thomas Bill From Schedule After Textile Opposition
Inside U.S. Trade
2006-09-25**

House leadership has pulled a bill extending U.S. trade preferences for certain countries from the Sept. 26 suspension calendar because of opposition from members with textile constituencies, according to congressional sources.

"It think it's unlikely that it will come up this week," a senior congressional aide said of the bill introduced last week by Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Thomas (R-CA). "It's highly likely it won't get done this week."

House leadership pulled the bill at the request of GOP House members with textile constituencies. In a Sept. 25 letter to GOP leaders, the GOP House members said the bill at a minimum should be "vetted through the normal committee and floor process" and "not be rushed to the House Floor for consideration under the Suspension Calendar."

The letter was signed by GOP Reps. Robin Hayes (NC), Charles Taylor (NC), Walter Jones (NC), Virginia Foxx (NC), Patrick McHenry (NC), Robert Aderhold (AL), J. Gresham Barrett (SC), Virgil Goode (VA), Charlie Norwood (GA) and Howard Coble (NC). One House source said other members might also sign on to the final version of the letter sent to leadership.

This source said members had questioned why GOP leaders would schedule a vote on a trade measure that could increase apparel exports to the U.S. just a little more than a month before the Nov. 7 mid-term election.

Under suspension of the House rules, the bill would have had to win a two-thirds majority of the House vote to be approved. The bill seemed likely to meet this threshold, as a Democratic aide said it would have been expected to win majority support from House Democrats. While Ways and Means Committee Ranking Member Charles Rangel (D-NY) would have criticized the fact that the bill was not considered in committee, the aide said Rangel and other Democrats saw the bill as an emergency stop-gap measure to keep trade preferences in place.

The letter from textile Republicans, which was expected to be delivered to House Republican leaders at mid-day on Sept. 25, criticized the bill for not allowing the U.S. textile industry any opportunity to provide input or feedback. Specifically, H.R. 6142 would extend until September 2008 a provision in the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) that allows duty-free access for AGOA apparel made with fabric from anywhere in the world up to a limit amounting to 3.5 percent of all U.S. apparel imports. It would then introduce a new AGOA "value-added" rule of origin in which a good would receive duty-free access if 50 percent of its value were added either in AGOA or another U.S. FTA partners.

The Republican letter described this part of the bill as a "dramatic deviation" from the yarn-forward rule of origin, under which yarn in a garment must be of either U.S. origin or of the country producing the product to get preferential access to the U.S. market.

The bill also would grant trade preferences for Haiti, and use the same value-added rule introduced for AGOA so that 50 percent of the value added to a finished product would have to be from Haiti or a U.S. FTA partner. This percentage would grow to 55 percent of the value in year four of the agreement, and 60 percent in year five.

Finally, the bill would extend the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) for two years, but change rules allowing the administration to grant waivers so that countries can continue to receive GSP benefits on certain products. These changes seemed targeted at Brazil and India, the two biggest beneficiaries of GSP, and would prevent the U.S. from granting the waivers necessary to allow certain imports to enter the U.S. duty free for advanced developing countries.

The National Council of Textile Organizations announced its opposition to the textile provisions of the bill in a Sept. 24 press release that suggested the bill would primarily benefit China. NCTO President Cass Johnson charged it would increase exports of apparel from AGOA and Haiti that included Chinese fabric at the expense of apparel from Central American countries that includes U.S. yarn and fabric.

The GSP portion of the Thomas bill would make it more difficult for countries to obtain competitive need limit waivers by eliminating waivers for countries with per capita incomes above \$3,400. This would prevent Brazil, which currently has 19 waivers, from keeping those or obtaining new waivers in the future.

A private-sector source said this would affect about \$300 million in annual Brazilian exports under GSP of various auto parts, as well as \$53 million in the raw material ferroniobium.

The Thomas bill also would not allow GSP waivers on an individual product from a country if U.S. imports of that product were more than \$1.5 billion in the previous year. This provision seems tailored to end a waiver for a single tariff line covering exports of Indian precious metal articles of jewelry, which two private-sector sources account for about 40 percent of all Indian exports under GSP.

They said India in 2005 exported about \$1.59 billion in goods under the gems and jewelry tariff line, which is far and away the greatest single GSP export of any individual country. Only one other tariff line accounted for more than \$500 million in exports, one of these sources said.

House to Take Up AGOA, GSP Haiti Bill
Washington Trade Daily
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Trade Reports International Group

Tomorrow the House is slated to vote on legislation (HR 6142) renewing two US trade preferences programs and extending new benefits to apparel products from Haiti (WTD, 9/24/06).

The legislation - introduced late last week by Ways and Means Chairman Bill Thomas (R-Calif) - is scheduled to be taken up under suspension of the rules, which bars amendments and requires a two-thirds majority for passage.

The bill extends the US Generalized System of Preferences program - currently set to expire at the end of this year - for an additional two years and makes changes to the program that would limit benefits for some higher-income developing countries.

HR 6142 also extends the African Growth and Opportunity Act's special third-country fabric provision for the poorest countries. The provision - which begins to phase out next month - allows sub-Saharan African beneficiaries to use fabric from third countries in their duty-free apparel exports to the United States. Continuing the provision is crucial to African countries which still lack the capacity to produce fabric, Assistant US Trade Representative Florizelle Liser said Friday. African countries already have begun losing apparel orders because of the pending expiration of the provision, she noted.

The bill extends similar benefits to apparel from Haiti.

A textile industry group on Friday came out in strong opposition to the bill, saying that the provisions would primarily benefit China. "Under this legislation, Haiti, as well as most African countries, will be able to use Chinese fabric or Chinese yarns for apparel productions while every other preference partner must use regionally made yarns and fabrics," the National Council of Textile Organizations said. This will produce a shift of orders out of the Central America free trade agreement countries, which must use regional or US inputs.

**Lawmakers convinced by textile groups to suspend debate
Generous Rules of Origin for Africa and Haiti postponed in US Congress
Emerging Textiles.com
26 September 2006**

A proposed emergency trade law introduced recently to US Congress appears to have been suspended. The bill which would have extended and amended rules of origin for sub-Saharan African countries came under pressure from influential textile lobbyists. The groups were also concerned over a controversial addition that would allow Haiti to use fabric and yarn from countries in Asia.

A trade bill last week introduced to the US Congress extending and modifying the existing duty-free access for AGOA and ATPDEA countries looks set to be suspended under pressure from US textile groups.

Sources close to key US politicians said that a vote on the bill will now be unlikely before the end of this week when Congress closes temporarily to concentrate on the crucial November mid-term elections.

Extending access and new origin rules

The bill, introduced last week by Chairman Bill Thomas of the influential House Ways and Means committee, would have extended the current duty-free access provisions for countries in AGOA (African Growth and Opportunity Act) until 31 September 2008.

A new rule of origin was then to have been applied from 1 October 2008 allowing 50 per cent non-African content decreasing to 40 per cent by the end of 2015.

This would replace the existing third country fabric provision that allows qualifying countries to use Asian fabrics in apparel production for US export.

Controversial Haiti TPL

And, in a break with previous trade deals, the bill proposed a controversial tariff preference level (TPL) for Haiti based on added value (see box below).

This would see not only inputs from the US and Haiti, but also from a range of countries in existing trade blocs such as CAFTA, NAFTA and the CBI as well as US FTA partners.

The bill consequently ran into strong opposition from US textile makers who were especially angry at the new development for Haiti.

In a statement to press, the National Coalition of Textile Organizations (NCTO) said they were concerned that the TPL would form a loophole allowing Chinese yarn and fabric to flood the US market.

ATPDEA's extension delayed?

The possibility of extending the ATPDEA (Andean Trade Preference and Drug Eradication Act) also appears to be in trouble.

ATPDEA is due to expire on 31 December 2006 and with it, duty free access for four South American countries including Peru and Colombia.

These latter two countries have signed Free Trade Agreements with the US but which have yet to be implemented.

The chances are that Peru may not see this ratified before the end of the year while Colombia could be next year at the earliest.

This could see a loss, although temporarily, of duty-free access until the FTA's are put into law.

But a possible extension to ATPDEA which would continue duty-free access appears also to be suspended although it could be reintroduced with the AGOA extension and Haiti bill in a so-called 'lame duck' session after the elections in November.

Haiti: Value added TPL

The HOPE bill for Haiti (Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement) set out a new and controversial tariff preference level (TPL) for apparel imports qualifying for US duty-free access.

The bill proposes that products eligible for US duty free access must contain a certain amount of inputs from the US and Haiti in the value of the finished product.

But it also breaks new ground in allowing inputs from trade partners in NAFTA, AGOA, CBI, ANDEAN and also those countries with a free trade agreement (FTA) with the US.

The amount of the inputs is to be set at 50 per cent in the first 3 years rising to 55 per cent in year 4 then 60 per cent after.

Mixing so many origins may result in massive fraud, textile lobbies explained.

"The enforcement problem occurs because US Customs does not have the manpower or technical ability to monitor the dozens of steps which take place when a piece of fabric is turned into a particular garment," the NCTO said.

The trade eligible for duty free access will be limited for 1 per cent of all US apparel imports in the first year before rising 0.25 per cent each year for five years.

A single transformation rule will apply for bras which allows Asian inputs but must be assembled in Haiti.

The bill also sets out a new TPL for woven apparel at 50 million square metre equivalents (SME) for the first two years before being lowered to 33.5 million SME after.

This would also have allowed the sourcing of fabrics and yarns from Asia.