

Dear Colleagues,

Please find below the mainstream news on Haiti for July 17 – 31, 2007.

Carol Williams of the Los Angeles Times wrote two back to back pieces on Haiti painting a picture of fragile peace since Preval's election and the opportunity for Haiti to replace foreign UN troops with a new Haitian army. Williams' oversimplification of both Haiti's past and present is typified by the statement "a year into his second tenure as president, Rene Preval has broken ranks with two centuries of despots and demagogues." Preval is praised for his modest, media shy and low key approach and widely accepted by 'western' foreign diplomats and international lenders for improvements to security and political stability. The article fails to even mention the perspective of the majority of Haitians who are poor and voted for Preval.

Williams' second article cites reports from a "citizens commission," a New York management consultancy, Fordworks Association contracted under the Latortue government, and quotes from former soldiers, all of whom support the return of the army. The article does not interview the vast majority of Haitians who suffered for decades under the brutal Haitian army (FADH) and overwhelmingly favored its abolition in 1994. The article repeatedly mentions national defense as a justification for the return of the army, without mentioning that FADH has never repelled a foreign invader.

The UN is reporting a rise in lynchings and mob attacks in Haiti. The International Herald Tribune article states that this form of 'popular justice' is rising as Haitians lack faith in judicial and police authorities to render justice, especially in rural areas where judicial and police presence scarcely exists. Unreported is the fact that UN and Haitian police violent raids to clean up the gangs of Port-au-Prince, has only pushed them deeper into Haiti's unpoliced rural areas.

The IMF completed an initial and generally favorable review of Haiti's economic program followed by disbursement of \$11.7 million as part of Haiti's \$113 million poverty-reduction program. IMF officials praise Haiti for progress in economic reforms and security improvements. However, the IMF's rigid demands, adherence to the poverty reduction and growth facility plan and advocating increased growth and private-sector investment as a means of poverty reduction has failed in many other poor countries around the region.

The International Herald Tribune and AP reported on the attempted arrest of former rebel leader and 2006 Presidential candidate Guy Philippe by Haitian police and US DEA agents at his home in Les Cayes on July 16. Philippe was not found at his home and remains in hiding as he denies involvement in the drug trade and claims he is being politically persecuted. According to independent Haitian media sources, in recent months Philippe has spoken out on Haitian radio revealing names of Haitian elite, such as Andre Apaid and the Group 184, as backers of the 2004 coup who directly gave him and his men arms, money and orders to launch a coup against Haiti's democratic government.

The attempted arrest of Philippe coincided with an AP/Guardian report on Preval's agreement with US authorities to "continue joint offensives against drug trafficking." Preval announced that a Haitian businessman had been arrested and other suspects were being extradited to the US on drug charges.

The Canadian press broadly covered Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper's visit to Haiti on July 20th at the end of his Latin America and Caribbean trip. Harper's brief six hour visit included meetings with Preval and a visit to a Canadian-funded hospital in Cite Soleil.

A Globe and Mail opinion piece focusing on "donor Haiti fatigue" cites lessons learned from Aristide's return in 1994 and creation of Haiti's police force as "one step forward" but donor withdrawal in the late 1990s produced "two steps backwards." The author emphasizes Canadian support and funding for Haiti should be consistent and committed for the long term.

A Toronto Star article "Haiti's future glitters with gold" spotlights recently positive results from Vancouver, Canada-based Eurasian Minerals search for gold deposits in Haiti. After decades-long efforts Eurasian's results along with a more politically stable Haiti and doubling of international gold prices has renewed Eurasian's urgency hoping to "find billions of dollars worth of gold in the hills above La Miel, which is just a few kilometers from the border with the Dominican Republic."

A new United Nations envoy for the UN mission in Haiti was recently named, a Tunisian, Hedi Annabi, will replace Guatemalan diplomat, Edmond Mulet.

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1. Haiti enjoys peace, fragile stability under President Préval

By Carol J. Williams

Los Angeles Times

July 29, 2007

http://www.boston.com/news/world/latinamerica/articles/2007/07/29/haiti_enjoys_peace_fragile_stability_under_president_prval/

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- Shoeless boys with angry eyes and empty stomachs no longer loiter outside the green iron gates of the National Palace.

The odd jobs of oppression have disappeared. In the unfamiliar atmosphere of peace, there are no more orders to bash heads or crush dissent that once earned the ragtag enforcers a plate of rice and beans or a tube of glue to sniff.

A year into his second tenure as president, René Préval has broken ranks with two centuries of despots and demagogues.

Préval has eschewed the politics of brutality and confrontation, quietly achieving what only a year ago seemed unimaginable: fragile unity among this country's fractious classes.

Allies and adversaries alike credit the reclusive president with creating a breathing space for addressing the poverty and environmental devastation that have made Haiti the most wretched place in the Western Hemisphere.

Préval has taken small steps to crack down on crime and corruption, and improve Haiti's infrastructure and food supply. But he largely holds fast to the strategy he used in the presidential race last year: Make no promises, raise no expectations.

Observers say Préval's low-key approach may be what Haiti has needed, but they worry what will happen if his shaky health takes a turn for the worse or if the country's 8 million people start to lose patience with his go-slow approach. The 64-year-old began treatment for prostate cancer six years ago.

Préval loathes the limelight, evading ceremony and exuding impatience with meetings, limiting them to what aides insist are essential to move mountains of corruption, injustice, squalor, and 70 percent unemployment.

"Some people think he's too laid-back," conceded Lionel Delatour, a business consultant and friend. Préval hasn't made a single diplomatic appointment since taking office, Delatour said, shying away from the kind of decisions that could alienate factions in his broad coalition.

"He isn't going to make waves," Delatour said. "He told his ministers that he didn't want to see massive firings" of civil servants, as occurred after his mentor, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, fled after being ousted in February 2004 and a caretaker government swept his supporters from office.

Aristide basked in ceremony, donning his presidential sash with relish. In contrast, Préval has yet to tour the countryside, make a public address, give a news conference, or grant an interview in his 14 months in office.

"He's a very low-key president, but it would be a mistake to think he's not a hands-on president," US Ambassador Janet Sanderson said. Still, she wishes he would get out more and promote the hard-won stability he has secured to give confidence to potential tourists and investors.

2. Haiti debates a homegrown army

By Carol J. Williams

Los Angeles Times

July 30, 2007

http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/asection/la-fg-haitiarmy30jul30,1,3487588.story?coll=la-news-a_section

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — "In this land, we are the only masters," the Haitian national anthem proudly boasts of this country that in 1804 overthrew slavery and colonization.

But for more than a dozen years, Haiti has been without an army, dependent on a politicized national police force and foreign troops of the United Nations who protect its leaders, respond to natural disasters and quell violence in some of the hemisphere's most wretched slums.

That galls Joseph Alexandre, a 49-year-old lawyer who saw his military career and family heritage of service abruptly end in 1995 when then-President Jean-Bertrand Aristide disbanded the army that had been complicit in his 1991 ouster.

"We should be doing this for ourselves," Alexandre, who holds the rank of major, said of patrols here by U.N. military units from Nepal, Croatia, Bolivia and more than a dozen other countries. "Each time I have to pass foreign soldiers in our streets, it's like a knife stabs me in the heart."

With its history of military rule and the involvement of politically corrupted army factions in numerous coups, Haiti has a tainted legacy of leadership in uniform. But as security has improved in recent months and Haitian government institutions recover from three decades of political turmoil, talk has turned to reconstituting the national army born of the slave rebellion.

A citizens commission impaneled two years ago to explore the pros and cons of rebuilding the army concluded in its recent report that this nation of 8 million, with more than 1,100 miles of coastline and a 223-mile border with the Dominican Republic, could and should have its own armed forces. A New York management consultancy, Fordworks Associates, also recommended in a review commissioned by the post-Aristide interim government that Haiti create a limited national armed force to handle border, coastal and international security affairs.

The proposals pleased former soldiers and nationalists but met with little enthusiasm in the fledgling government of President Rene Preval. During last year's presidential campaign, Preval suggested that the army be permanently abolished.

Aristide's 1995 action demobilized the 7,500 troops then in service but failed to address the constitutional requirement that Haiti stand up both police and defense forces. Preval's parliamentary faction has ordered further study of the army issue by a panel of experts yet to be named, putting off any formal decision for months, if not years.

The recommendations have nonetheless stirred public debate, at least among the country's economic, social and political leaders increasingly chafing under the ever-expanding foreign military presence.

Georges Michel, a historian and writer who served on the citizens commission, believes Haiti would benefit from a small armed force, commensurate with its resources, to patrol the coastline and Dominican border, through which Colombian cocaine makes its way to Europe and the United States and contraband weapons flow to a worldwide array of hot spots.

A force of about 2,000 would be both affordable and sufficient, Michel said, describing the overstuffed U.N. mission as wasteful and lacking in the motivation that Haitians have to protect their homeland. He said he had been in contact with officials of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization who are prepared to help train a Haitian force once its structure is reformed to make it less susceptible to political manipulation.

"We are actually quite happy that Aristide erased the blackboard so completely so we can start with a blank page," Michel said.

Still, he expects the preparation of a new force to take at least five years, if an army should ever be approved.

With unemployment afflicting at least 70% of the population, there is broadening sentiment that an army would offer work to young Haitians and restore a professional path proudly trod by generations.

"Military service was always a career option for those who wanted to serve their country and a way to better oneself socially and economically," said Francois Rodnez, who has worked as a teacher since Aristide's action ended a 15-year military career.

"We had an army for almost two centuries before one man chose to disband it," said Maurice Lafortune, a businessman who served on the citizens panel. "It was an institution mistrusted by one man, not by all Haitians."

Opponents of restoring the armed forces, including Aristide's former interior minister, Jocelerme Privert, argue that Haiti can ill afford to bankroll its own defense.

The U.N. mission's annual price tag now tops \$500 million — the equivalent of Haiti's entire budget.

"We have to choose between buying tanks and helicopters or building schools and hospitals," said Privert, one of the few Aristide lieutenants still in Haiti trying to navigate the new political waters.

Preval has said he expects U.N. forces to remain in Haiti throughout his presidency, which runs to February 2011, to maintain peace and security while his government struggles to resuscitate an economy that is the poorest in the Americas.

A major component of the U.N. mission is the training and equipping of the Haitian National Police, which will need another six or seven years to reach its goal of 14,000 officers, said Fred Blaise, spokesman for the U.N. police, which make up about one-fifth of the foreign forces.

Blaise, a Boca Raton, Fla., police officer on leave to help the U.N. mission in his native Haiti, argues that putting together an army at this point would be a distraction and a drain on resources.

"I can envision, after the Haitian National Police reach their numbers, that the country could use some kind of national guard to respond to disasters," he said. "But it's premature to talk about an army."

Former soldiers such as Alexandre disagree.

"We are ready to put on our uniforms tomorrow," the lawyer said of a 2,500-strong former soldiers association. "Our only reservation is that after so many years, some of them may be too tight."

3. Lynchings On The Rise In Haiti **UN Envoy Raises Concern Over Mob Attacks** **IHT** **July 27, 2007**

<http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/07/28/news/CB-GEN-Haiti-UN-Lynchings.php>

(AP) The top U.N. official in Haiti denounced a sharp increase in lynchings and other mob attacks, including the killing of two innocent men as they traveled to a wedding.

At least six people were killed by mobs in a single week in different attacks this month, according to the U.N. mission's human rights section. At least 105 people have been reportedly lynched in Haiti since 2005.

"There have been a very large number of lynchings in the past months and weeks. We do hope this will not become a trend," Edmond Mulet, the special U.N. envoy to Haiti, told The Associated Press Friday in an interview.

He blamed the rise in part on a lack of confidence in Haiti's notoriously corrupt judicial system, which keeps hundreds of people imprisoned without trial while others who can afford a bribe walk free.

"You have cases of gang leaders being released after paying judges," Mulet said. "The population knows, so they're fed up ... and they take justice into their hands."

Lynchings have become more common especially in rural areas of the Western Hemisphere's poorest country, where police presence is thin and courts barely operate.

Mulet described an incident from earlier this month when two men traveling to a wedding near the coastal town of St. Marc were mistaken for kidnappers who had abducted several people the night before. A car knocked the men off their motorcycle and a crowd beat them to death with rocks and sticks.

Police arrested 10 people in the killing. All but one was later released.

Thierry Fagart, the head of the U.N. mission's human rights section, said his office interviewed witnesses to the attack and found that "perfectly innocent victims were targeted."

"It is extremely alarming," Fagart told reporters.

Mulet said the U.N. mission will launch a campaign to remind people that lynching is a crime, and is urging church leaders to denounce the practice.

About 9,000 U.N. peacekeepers are in Haiti, deployed after a 2004 revolt ousted former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The U.N. mandate in Haiti expires in October, but the Security Council is certain to renew it.

4. Haiti passes first IMF review, \$11.7 mln released

Tue Jul 24, 2007

Reuters

<http://www.reuters.com/article/bondsNews/idUSN2425034820070724>

WASHINGTON, July 24 (Reuters) - The International Monetary Fund said on Tuesday it completed an initial review of Haiti's economic program, making about \$11.7 million immediately available for disbursement to the Caribbean nation under a \$113 million poverty-reduction program.

The IMF's executive board also approved Haiti's request for a waiver that allows for a delay in submission of a new banking law to the Caribbean country's parliament along with other modifications to performance criteria to be used in the next IMF review.

"Haiti has made commendable progress on its path of economic and social stabilization. Significant economic reforms have been implemented and the security situation has improved markedly," said Murilo Portugal, IMF deputy managing director, in a statement

Portugal said Haiti's performance under the poverty reduction and growth facility arrangement has been strong and performance criteria were met, but growth had lagged slightly behind expectations. It will be important for Haiti to improve its rate of budget execution, he said.

"Over the medium term, Haiti's main challenge will be to secure a sustained increase in growth, while consolidating low inflation, in order to reduce poverty and promote social stability, he said, adding that authorities were taking steps to improve private-sector investment.

Domestic revenues need to be raised to allow for a sustainable increase in priority expenditures, which in turn would require enhancing and modernizing tax and customs administrations and a broadening of the tax base, he said.

5. In Haiti, ex-rebel sought by U.S. denies drug ties

The Associated Press

IHT

July 23, 2007

<http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/07/23/news/CB-GEN-Haiti-US-Fugitive-Rebel.php>

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: A former rebel leader and presidential candidate who disappeared after U.S. anti-drug agents raided his home denied links to drug trafficking and said he is being politically persecuted, according to a recording played Monday by a Haitian radio station.

"Clearly this is a political game that is happening. They're trying to destroy me, they're trying to eliminate me," Guy Philippe says on the recording played by private broadcaster Radio Caraibes, Haiti's most widely heard radio station.

Radio Caraibes said an unidentified individual delivered the recording on a compact disc Saturday but it was not clear when it was made.

Philippe, who helped toppled former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004, went into hiding after U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agents and Haitian police descended from helicopters and raided his home in the coastal city of Les Cayes on July 16.

In the recording, Philippe said his wife was assaulted and held at gunpoint during the raid, which he urged Haitian authorities to investigate.

"These people did not come to arrest me. They came to assassinate me," Philippe said.

"Before when they wanted to eliminate someone, they called them a communist. Now there's no more communists so you're either a terrorist or into drugs," he added. "I want everyone to know: I am not involved in drugs. If they have proof, let them bring it."

Haiti's sparsely guarded coastline and high level of corruption make it an attractive transshipment point for cocaine destined for the United States.

President Rene Preval said Friday the U.S.-Haitian drug offensives will continue and confirmed that some suspects have already been extradited to the United States.

Philippe did not reveal his location but said he planned to return to Les Cayes and live like "a simple citizen."

"If they're accusing me of something I'm ready to go before any tribunal. I don't want this to be a political reprisal," he said.

Philippe was the police chief of Haiti's second-largest city, Cap-Haitien, but fled the country in 2000 after he was accused of plotting a coup. He returned in 2004 to lead rebels in a three-week uprising that toppled Aristide.

Philippe said U.S. officials told him in 2000 that he was being investigated for drug ties and that his U.S. entry visa was being suspended. He said he was contacted again in April 2006 and told his travel visa had been reinstated, although it is unclear if he ever visited the United States.

A U.S. Embassy spokeswoman declined to comment Monday, citing the ongoing investigation and privacy laws regarding Philippe's visa status.

6. Haiti, U.S. to Continue Joint Offensives

Friday July 20, 2007

By STEVENSON JACOBS

Associated Press

The Guardian Unlimited

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/worldlatest/story/0,-6794670,00.html>

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) - President Rene Preval said Friday that Haiti and the United States will continue joint offensives against drug trafficking, which he described as the biggest threat to his impoverished Caribbean country.

Preval's comments were his first public remarks since U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agents and Haitian authorities launched a forceful crackdown on suspected drug traffickers in two coastal towns earlier this week.

The agents arrested a Haitian businessman allegedly tied to cocaine traffickers but failed to capture their main target, former rebel leader and presidential candidate Guy Philippe, who is believed to be in hiding.

Preval said the operation resulted from meetings he held recently with DEA Administrator Karen Tandy, and said more actions are planned.

“These aren't operations we want to advertise. We're not going to say what the next step is but there will be other steps,” Preval told reporters during a joint press conference with visiting Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

He called drug traffickers “the single biggest destabilizing factor facing weak countries like Haiti,” which has only a few thousand poorly paid police and a notoriously corrupt judicial system.

Shortly after dawn Monday, five helicopters, two airplanes and at least a dozen DEA and Haitian agents converged on the southern town of Les Cayes and the northwestern town of Gonaives, both known receiving points for South American cocaine bound for the United States.

The agents raided Philippe's two-story home in Les Cayes but found only his wife, two children and maid. Philippe led the 2004 rebellion that toppled former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and has denied past accusations of drug trafficking.

A U.S. law enforcement official said authorities were surprised they didn't find Philippe and had already prepared a press release announcing his capture. The official requested anonymity because the operation is ongoing.

Preval said other suspects have already been extradited to the United States.

Preval did not name the extradited suspects, but Haitian media have identified them as Lavaud Francois, a Gonaives-based businessman arrested in the DEA raid; Bernard Piquion, who was arrested in May with several Haitian policemen as they allegedly transported cocaine; and Raynald Saint Pierre, a former lieutenant in Haiti's disbanded armed forces.

The U.S. investigation is led by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Miami and the DEA.

7. 'Extraordinary challenges' faced by Haiti, Harper says

Jul 21, 2007

Allan Woods, Ottawa Bureau

The Toronto Star

<http://www.thestar.com/News/article/238385>

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—Prime Minister Stephen Harper ended a trip through Latin America and the Caribbean yesterday with a brief stop in Haiti, the poorest country in the hemisphere and the one with which Canada has the closest links.

It was Harper's first trip to Haiti, Canada's second-largest aid recipient, and he was clearly moved by the extreme poverty and the challenge of shoring up government support, building up its weak institutions, cleaning up corruption and helping the Haitian people.

Leading Harper's motorcade was a vehicle with three armed UN troops, one pointing a machine-gun at the people who gathered along the road.

President René Préval said a visit as short as Harper's six-hour stop is known here as a "doctor's visit."

"You can be assured, dear doctor, that your patient is no sicker, but remains fragile," he said following a meeting at the presidential palace, an opulent white building amid devastating poverty.

Harper visited Cité Soleil, a ghetto in the Haitian capital that, just months ago, was a stronghold of armed criminal gangs.

He went to a Canadian-funded hospital, observed children being vaccinated and donated a blood-analysis machine that tests for HIV/AIDS in 15 minutes. Testing currently takes a full day.

The Prime Minister said Haiti faces "extraordinary challenges" and its people have difficult lives.

"We start to really appreciate the great challenges that our friends have in their daily lives," he said, adding Canadians can be proud of the half-billion dollars in aid money committed to the country through to 2011.

Six months ago, observers and locals said, Harper and his entourage of officials and journalists would not have been able to visit the hospital in Cité Soleil.

But since then, gang leaders have been toppled in major fighting between the armed gangs and United Nations forces that killed hundreds of people, according to local sources.

Now the international community is citing the slum as a sign of progress and had groups of young men at work polishing up street-front facades and cleaning out open sewer systems.

"These so-called no-go areas have basically come to an end," said Colin Granderson, assistant secretary-general of the 15-member Caribbean Community. "The armed gangs have been dismantled, their leaders have been arrested."

But there is still lingering resentment in some quarters around the 2004 overthrow of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who had the backing of Cité Soleil's gang leaders. On

the walls of buildings pocked by bullets, is the spray-painted phrase: "Vive la retour d'Aristide." It outnumbered those urging Haitians to "Vote Préval."

But regional officials insist that Préval is right, that the country is starting to recover.

"From an economic point of view, the government has been able to keep the situation under control. It's been able to come up with a budget within the constitutionally allotted time," Granderson said.

Préval said his priority now is to create the necessary conditions for private-sector investment by strengthening security, fighting poverty and ending Haiti's status as a hub for drug traffickers.

"Until those conditions are met, investors won't have confidence," he said.

He also noted a 2006 landmark in the country's electoral history – the first time since 1990 that a vote was not followed by violence and political revolt. It did not happen last year because Préval's party reached out to the opposition to form a coalition government in an attempt to appease all factions.

"It means that the political parties represented in parliament are also represented in the government. That has led to political stability and that's extremely important," he said.

8. Donor 'Haiti fatigue' a threat to real progress

TIMOTHY DONAIS

The Globe and Mail

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20070719.wwwcomment20/BNStory/specialComment/home>

July 19, 2007

Given its depressing history, Haiti might seem to be one of the least likely places to look for a peace-building success story. Yet when Prime Minister Stephen Harper lands in Port-au-Prince later this week, he will find a democratically elected government that enjoys broad popularity and a security situation that is vastly improved over even six months ago. Perhaps more significantly, he will also find a tentative but growing sense of optimism among Haitians and internationals alike that the country has a real chance to emerge from its misery.

The key to this revived sense of hope is René Prével, the understated agronomist who re-emerged as president in 2006. His return (he was also president from 1996 to 2000) was an enormous stroke of good fortune. Not only did the election of Mr. Prével, a one-time protégé of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, moderate the tensions lingering from the 2004 coup that forced Mr. Aristide from office, but it also put in place a government that enjoys broad legitimacy both within Haiti and abroad and whose priorities are more or less in line with those of the international community. With Mr. Prével in power, the international presence looks and feels less like an international occupation and more like a genuine partnership between Haitians and the international community.

The results have been most apparent in security. Over the past several years, armed gangs consolidated their hold over Port-au-Prince's more notorious slums, including Cité Soleil, the poorest neighbourhood in the hemisphere's poorest country. With Mr. Prével's blessing, the United Nations peacekeeping mission (known by its French acronym, MINUSTAH) has confronted these groups head-on, resulting in the arrest of 750 gang leaders over the past six months. At the same time, Mr. Prével's government, with international support, has made significant progress toward re-establishing the credibility of the Haitian National Police. And while the country remains mired at the bottom of Transparency International's corruption perceptions index, a handful of recent high-profile arrests on corruption charges have had a significant symbolic impact.

Haiti has been here before. After Mr. Aristide's U.S.-led restoration in 1994, a string of UN support missions focused, ultimately unsuccessfully, on consolidating the rule of law and respect for human rights, while the international community — Canada, in particular — expended considerable effort helping to build up the Haitian National Police, only to watch as corruption and politicization unravelled early advances.

And despite the latest progress, the underlying obstacles to sustainable peace-building remain daunting. Beyond the endemic corruption challenge, Haiti's economy is moribund (its most viable industry at present is cocaine transshipment); nearly half its children do

not attend school; there is a major environmental crisis; the gap between the wealthy and the impoverished remains appalling; and the judicial system has proven remarkably resistant to reform. Years of conflict, repression and brain drain have taken their toll on state institutions.

Clearly, Haiti still has a long way to go, and the risks of slippage remain considerable. Still, there are reasons to believe Haiti can avoid a repeat of the 1990s.

Mr. Préval's stabilizing influence is one. While in many ways a one-man show — "The government definitely is Préval," Haitian Senator Rudy Boulos says — the President's integrity is largely unchallenged. Many see him as Haiti's last chance to escape what scholar Robert Fatton has called predatory republicanism, in which the absence of economic opportunity has made the capture of governing power the primary means of acquiring wealth and power.

At the same time, the international community has learned important lessons, the most important of which is that abandoning the country in exasperation in the late 1990s merely accelerated its downward spiral. Peace-building is a slow, gradual process, requiring considerable patience and a long-term commitment from both peacekeepers and donors. UN planners are now thinking as far ahead as 2014. Canada also seems to have learned the lesson — Mr. Harper's government has committed \$520-million between 2006 and 2011, and has sent the right signals about staying for the long haul.

While a long-term commitment is a basic requirement for success, so too is an ability to take advantage of short-term windows of opportunity. Here, the international community's recent record is less impressive. In places like Cité Soleil, both MINUSTAH and donors have been slow to respond to the recent anti-gang campaign, failing to follow up the military intervention with quick-impact development projects designed to provide immediate peace dividends.

The international community has perhaps two more years to work with a friendly, pro-reform government before the unpredictability of next election cycle begins. Finding the right balance between patience and urgency, in recognition that this may be Haiti's last, best chance for progress, represents one of the international community's greatest challenges. Over the longer term, avoiding donor "Haiti fatigue" and a repeat of the peace-building reversals of the late 1990s will largely depend on ensuring that the recent step forward isn't again followed by two steps back.

Timothy Donais is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Windsor.

9. Haiti's future glitters with gold

Impoverished country gets second look due to stabilizing political climate, high gold price

Jul 21, 2007

Reed Lindsay

The Toronto Star

SPECIAL TO THE STAR

<http://www.thestar.com/News/article/238365>

LA MIEL, Haiti—Keith Laskowski bounds up the freshly-cut dirt road like a child at an amusement park. He stops at a patch of reddish rock, whacks at it with his miner's pick and slips a chunk into his pocket.

"This road exposure's great," he says, then laughs almost giddily.

For 27 years, Laskowski has been searching for gold, from Mongolia to the Amazon. Now, the geologist says, he may have hit pay dirt in the hills above the town of La Miel in northeastern Haiti.

But Laskowski's optimism belies a minefield of potential problems awaiting his Vancouver-based company, Eurasian Minerals. Although Canadian mining companies weather stormy political climates around the world, they have largely stayed clear of crisis-torn Haiti.

Now, with the price of gold doubling in the last five years and a newly elected government establishing a degree of stability, geologists are scouring the hilltops of Haiti, the region's poorest country.

"These are the best results I've ever seen," says Laskowski. "I don't think there's a question of whether there's a good deposit here. It's a question of whether we can develop it here in Haiti."

In late May, Eurasian Minerals announced the gold content found in several trenches cut into the hillsides here, driving its stock price up 40 per cent on the Toronto Stock Exchange. Laskowski says the company hopes to find billions of dollars worth of gold in the hills above La Miel, which is just a few kilometres from the border with the Dominican Republic.

This would be no small news for Haiti, where industrial production is meagre and agriculture is mainly subsistence. Haiti has never had a modern gold or silver mine; its only copper mine closed 35 years ago.

"It's been frustrating. But now we've got every reason to believe that in the coming years, there will finally be mineral exploitation in Haiti," says Dieuseul Anglade, a geologist who heads the Haitian government's bureau of mining.

A United Nations study in the 1970s indicated Haiti could be littered with gold and copper deposits. But political violence and recurring coups have kept investors away.

"Haiti's logical," says Alex Turkeltaub, managing director of Frontier Strategy Group, a consulting firm that advises mining companies. "The assumption of most mining executives is that its proximity to the United States and its relatively small size mean that

they will have a lot of leverage as large players in a small economy, and that the Americans will always be there to protect against complete disaster."

Turkeltaub predicts "a stampede into Haiti" if the existence of large gold deposits can be proved.

Another Canadian-backed company recently resumed prospecting in Haiti after abandoning its claims a decade ago. Steve Lachapelle – a Quebec lawyer who is now chair of the board of the company, called St. Genevieve Haiti – says employees were threatened at gunpoint by partisans of ex-president Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The president at the time, René Préval, once an ally of Aristide, was elected for a second term last year, but Lachapelle says he has renewed confidence in the Haitian leader.

"Haitians are realizing that they no longer have a choice," says Lachapelle. "With all the problems the country has had, they realize that they have to play the game with investors or things are going to keep getting worse."

Laskowski says his biggest concerns in Haiti are venal officials and angry local residents. Haiti was recently ranked the world's most corrupt country by Transparency International, although Préval is widely seen as honest.

Formed in 1993, Transparency is a global network whose 90 chapters fight political corruption. Most of its funding comes from government development agency budgets and foundations.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper visited Haiti, the last stop in a week-long tour of South America and the Caribbean. After Afghanistan, Haiti is Canada's second-largest foreign commitment – about \$100 million a year until 2011.

Discontent is already brewing in La Miel and surrounding countryside.

The sudden appearance last year of Laskowski and his team of Haitian geologists sparked lofty expectations among the local families that the company would bring much-needed development to the area. So far, Eurasian's small-scale exploration work has resulted in only a few temporary jobs.

"They need to sit down with everyone together to let us know what decision they've made for the area. If they don't do this, we're not going to let them exploit us as they wish," says Suzanne Louis, a community leader and wife of a farmer.

Louis and other residents of La Miel say they are unaware of the environmental catastrophes and social upheaval sometimes associated with gold mining in other poor countries.

Laskowski has asked the locals to be patient. In the best of scenarios, he says, it will take from four to six years before any actual mining could begin. By that time, Haiti will have a new government and gold will likely be selling at a different price.

10. New UN envoy for Haiti in juggle of top posts

Reuters

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<http://africa.reuters.com/wire/news/usnN27306795.html>

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) - U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed a new top envoy for Haiti Friday in shuffling posts of two veteran officials in the U.N. peacekeeping department.

Hedi Annabi, a Tunisian, will go to Haiti to head the U.N. mission there. Annabi, 63, who joined the world body in 1981, is currently the U.N. assistant secretary-general in the peacekeeping department in charge of operations, including the new joint United Nations-African Union force for Darfur.

Ban had put Annabi on a list in February of U.N. officials who had been with the organization for many years and should retire but he did not name a replacement.

Jean-Marie Guehenno, the head of peacekeeping, fought to keep Annabi as long as feasible, U.N. officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Annabi swaps jobs with Edmond Mulet of Guatemala, who is now head of the Haiti mission that includes 7,200 troops and 1,500 police to help keep the peace in the Caribbean nation.

Mullet, a lawyer and former journalist, was a lawmaker for 12 years in Guatemala and served as ambassador to the European Union and the United States.

At the same time, Ban gave a promotion to Dimitri Titov of Russia, the head of the Africa peacekeeping division, which handles 80 percent of the more than 100,000 military and civilian personnel fielded around the world in eight missions.

That division will be split into two units.

Titov was appointed assistant secretary-general for the rule of law and security sector reform in the peacekeeping department, making him the highest-ranking Russian at New York headquarters.

Moscow heads the U.N. center in Geneva but does not have a top post in the New York bureaucracy, as do other permanent U.N. Security Council members.

Although Titov, who has been in the peacekeeping department since 1991, does not have a legal or human rights background, he has played a key role in developing these programs in all U.N. missions, a U.N. statement said.

His position is a new one approved by the General Assembly last month as part of Ban's restructuring, which divided the peacekeeping department into two entities.

Titov has a degree in international relations and was in the Russian diplomatic service, where he participated in negotiations in Afghanistan, Cyprus, Cambodia and Central America.