

**STRATEGY
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**HAITI: A STUDY IN CANADIAN-AMERICAN COOPERATION
IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE**

BY

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Haiti: A Study in Canadian-American Cooperation in the Western Hemisphere

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ABSTRACT

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The case of Haiti provides insights into Canadian-American cooperation in regional and security issues. Washington and Ottawa shared the same interests, faced similar domestic pressures, and for the most part held a common view over how to pursue restoration of the deposed Aristide government. The only major divergence came when the United States decided to resolve the Haiti crisis by invasion and Canada declined to participate. However, after the American intervention, Canada became a willing participant in the United Nations peacekeeping operation in Haiti and assumed leadership of the UN operation after the United States met its self-imposed one-year deadline for withdrawal of its peacekeepers. The degree of harmony in the two governments' approaches to Haiti is especially remarkable in that it continued for several years and through changes of government in both Washington and Ottawa.

This paper will review the crisis in Haiti from the coup in September 1991 through the end of the UN peacekeeping operation in 1997. It will focus on the evolution of American and Canadian policies toward Haiti and attempt to explain how Canada and the United States maintained their cooperation in pursuit of reversing the military coup and restoring of the elected government.

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HAITI: A STUDY IN CANADIAN-AMERICAN COOPERATION IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

The case of Haiti provides insights into Canadian-American cooperation in regional security issues. Washington and Ottawa shared the same interests, faced similar domestic pressures, and for the most part held a common view over how to pursue restoration of the deposed Aristide government. The only major divergence came when the United States decided to resolve the Haiti crisis by invasion and Canada declined to participate. However, after the American intervention, Canada became a willing participant in the United Nations peacekeeping operation in Haiti and assumed leadership of the UN operation after the United States met its self-imposed one-year deadline for withdrawal of its peacekeepers. The degree of harmony in the two governments' approaches to Haiti is especially remarkable in that it continued for several years and through changes of government in both Washington and Ottawa.

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Dictators and violence dominated Haiti's political history from independence in 1806 through the 1990's. "Although Haiti was the second country in the Western Hemisphere to win its independence, it never managed to establish anything remotely resembling a democratic tradition. Violence has always been the means of settling conflicts and choosing leaders in Haiti."¹ Haiti seemed to be moving towards a democratic system following the popular overthrow of Jean-Claude Duvalier in 1986. However, the elections set for 29 November 1987 were cancelled by rampant violence before and on election day, and the military retained power through the fall of 1990.

Elections were finally held in December 1990. International observers, including the Organization of American States, the United Nations, and a number of non-governmental organizations, monitored the elections.² The winner was Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a Catholic priest whose advocacy of liberation theology and opposition to the rule of the elites made him a hero to the Haitian people. Aristide won handily, garnering 67 percent of the vote.³ Even though the elections were viewed as legitimate, elements of the military were not yet ready to cede power. On 6 January 1991, military officers associated with the Duvalier dictatorships attempted to seize control of the government prior to Aristide's inauguration. Officers loyal to Aristide, including General Raoul Cédras, suppressed the coup the next day. Both sides committed acts of terror and at least 65 deaths resulted.⁴

Aristide was able to assume office on 7 February 1991. The economic and social challenges facing his government were daunting. Aristide had ridden into office on his own personal charisma and support from his mass movement, Lavalas. He continued to rely on Lavalas as his base of political power as he made the adjustment from leading dissident to head of state. Frustrated with the slow pace of reform, Aristide and his immediate subordinates began to engage in the personal exercise of power. In

July, Aristide replaced the head of the armed forces, who had supported the democratic process, with General Cédras. Cédras had impressed Aristide with his support during the abortive January coup and for his service as the officer responsible for election security in 1990.⁵ Aristide appointed judges and ministers without Parliament's approval. Members of Parliament and the Judiciary complained of intimidation by Lavalas supporters. When Parliament threatened a no-confidence vote on Prime Minister Rene Préval, Aristide supporters filled the galleries of Parliament and threatened members with "Pere Lebrun," a form of lynching in which the victim is burned to death by a gasoline-soaked tire placed around his neck. Within a few months, Aristide had alienated the key elites in Haiti, the military, the Catholic Church and the wealthy, through his leftist policies, increasingly personalized rule, and fiery rhetoric directed against those elites whom Aristide accused (to a large degree, correctly) of oppressing the Haitian masses.⁶ As President Clinton's special envoy for Haiti, Lawrence Pezzullo, later put it, "Aristide represented . . . a choice of the people. But, certainly, that coalition of forces that would have supported his presidency never gelled."⁷

On 27 September 1991, after returning from New York where he addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations, Aristide gave a particularly inflammatory speech in Port-au-Prince in which he seemed to encourage violence against the old elites. In what was taken as a reference to Pere Lebrun, Aristide told the crowd, many of whom carried tires, "If you see a faker who pretends to be one of our supporters . . . just grab him. Make sure he gets what he deserves. You have the right tool in your hands . . . the right instrument . . . What a beautiful tool we have. What a nice instrument . . . It smells good, and everywhere you go, you want to smell it."⁸

On 29 September, two of Aristide's leading opponents, Roger LaFontanant and Sylvio Claudio, were murdered in Port-au-Prince.⁹ That day, the military overthrew Aristide. On 30 September, Cédras allowed Aristide to leave the country. He probably spared Aristide's life to prevent him from becoming a martyr for the Haitian people. Cédras also sought to avoid problems with world leaders, including the United States and France, who were pressing the military to let Aristide leave the country. Aristide flew to Caracas on the night of 30 September on a plane provided by the President of Venezuela, Carlos Andres Perez. There, Aristide went to the French Ambassador's residence and met with the US Ambassador.¹⁰

On 3 October, Aristide addressed the United Nations Security Council and asked it intervene in the crisis.¹¹ The Security Council refused to hold a meeting or consider a resolution on the coup, describing it as an internal matter.¹² On 11 October, the General Assembly passed a resolution condemning the coup and demanding Aristide's return, but it was largely a symbolic gesture.¹³ The international response to the coup was initially led by the Organization of American States, although France, which held a special relationship with Francophone Haiti, suspended its \$36 million economic aid program.¹⁴

The Organization of American States viewed the coup as a threat to the expansion of democracy in the Western Hemisphere. By 1991, military rule in the Western Hemisphere had been replaced by elective democracies. In June 1991, the OAS had adopted the Santiago Declaration that mandated an emergency meeting of foreign ministers in the event of the overthrow of any member's elected government.¹⁵ The coup in Haiti was the first test of the OAS' commitment to the principles of the Santiago Declaration. The OAS met in Washington on 1 October and decided to actively pursue Aristide's return to authority in Haiti. On 3 October, it adopted a resolution calling for the diplomatic isolation of the military regime in Haiti and suspension of all economic ties with Haiti except for humanitarian assistance. The governments of the OAS would only recognize representatives appointed by Aristide. The OAS also agreed to send a delegation led by Secretary General Joao Baena Soares and made up of representatives from the United States, Canada, Venezuela, Argentina, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Bolivia and Trinidad and Tobago to Haiti to meet with the Haitian military and urge them to restore Aristide to office.¹⁶ It was strong action for a body that only a few years earlier had been viewed as moribund and ineffectual.¹⁷

The early statements of American and Canadian officials were clear about the two countries' commitment to restoring Aristide. Bernard Aronson, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, stated, "every time democracy is threatened by the military in this hemisphere it sends off potential shockwaves and we want to make clear that this kind of behavior has a terrible price. We are going to isolate them, and we hope the hemisphere is going to isolate them until democracy is restored."¹⁸ At the OAS meeting, Secretary of State James Baker endorsed collective action, and added, "this junta will be treated as a pariah throughout this hemisphere, without assistance, without friends, and without any future."¹⁹

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney spoke in strong terms in support of Aristide. In the House of Commons, he stated that Canada "will in no way recognize a group of people who have taken over control in Haiti by throwing out a president and a democratically elected government." Later, he told reporters, "I think it's a bloody disgrace what has taken place and there's only so long, so many times, that people are going to put up with this." When asked about the possibility of military action, he declined to answer, adding, "I want you to note that I am not answering that question."²⁰ External Affairs Minister Barbara MacDougall hoped diplomatic and economic sanctions would succeed, but allowed that military force "remains a possibility."²¹

On 4 October, the OAS delegation flew to Haiti on a Canadian Forces aircraft. The meetings with the Haitian military, held at the airport, were a fiasco. The Haitian military stage-managed the event, to include threatening interruptions by Haitian soldiers. They also repeatedly expressed complaints of human rights violations committed under Aristide and their concern for their safety should Aristide return to power. On 7 October, the delegation virtually fled from the airport conference room, hastily boarded the Canadian jet, and left.²²

After the delegation returned to Washington, the reports of alleged abuses under Aristide had an almost immediate impact on US policy. In discussions with the media, Bush Administration officials disclosed "accounts of human rights abuses that took place during Father Aristide's rule." Aristide quickly issued a public statement denouncing Pere Lebrun and all forms of political violence and calling on all Haitian to respect the rule of law.²³ However, the goal of US policy seemed to begin shifting from the return of Aristide to the return of democracy. When asked whether the United States still supported Aristide's return, Presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater stated, "Our support is the same as it's always been, which is for the democratic rule in the country. The electoral process produced Mr. Aristide, he was here, and holds the most hope for returning and restoring democracy, and it is that rule of democracy we support. And we will work through the OAS in terms of the specifics of implementation or helping that country guide itself back to democratic rule."²⁴

Unlike the US, Canada under Mulroney remained an active supporter of Aristide and remained in the forefront of efforts to restore him to power. Mulroney was prompted by a number of interests. First, Canada has a tradition of a "liberal-internationalist" foreign policy.²⁵ The conditions in Haiti—threats to democratic rule, human rights abuses, and economic deprivation—prompted Canadian intervention in the crisis based on principle. Further, as the only other Francophone nation in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti held a special position in Canada. Haiti received \$22 million a year in aid from Canada, "disproportionately higher than that for other countries in the Caribbean and Latin America."²⁶ The largest concentration of Canadian missionaries in the Western Hemisphere was in Haiti.²⁷ Canada had sent \$1 million in aid and 11 observers to assist in the December 1990 elections.

Second, Canada has historically favored multilateral approaches to international affairs. The OAS offered a forum for addressing the Haiti crisis. Canada had just joined the OAS in 1990 and was seeking to expand its influence in hemispheric affairs. "If Canada was going to be a serious player in Latin America, and be seen as a true hemispheric partner, it would have to assume certain responsibilities and a willingness to engage itself in crises like Haiti."²⁸ Mulroney also advocated Aristide's cause at the Commonwealth and la Francophonie summits in 1991.²⁹

Haiti also had an important domestic constituency in Canada. Over 50,000 Haitian expatriates lived in Montreal in 1991. In the 1970's, Quebec had welcomed French-speaking professionals from Haiti. They were mostly strong Aristide supporters, who provided substantial financial support to Aristide and Lavalas during the 1990 elections. Haitians continued to move to Quebec through the 1990's, although the later arrivals were blue-collar workers who dominated the janitorial and service jobs in Montreal's health care system.³⁰ There were daily protests in Montreal after the coup, and Mayor Jean Dore and Minister for External Affairs and International Development Monique Landry lobbied Mulroney for Canada to maintain an active role in the crisis.³¹

Within the OAS, the bottom line was that every member sought the restoration of democracy in Haiti. The Latin American nations were willing to let Canada play a leading role in the crisis in the only

other French-speaking nation in the hemisphere. They were more than happy to have some one other than the United States at the forefront of collective action by the OAS. The US, uncomfortable with Aristide, was also willing to let Canada lead in the OAS. Canada could pursue the US' goal—restoration of democracy—and spare the US from having to openly embrace Aristide. The US was also aware of its reputation for heavy-handedness in the hemisphere, having occupied Haiti from 1915 to 1934 and invaded Panama less than two years before the coup in Haiti. President Bush reflected this caution when he played down the possibility of military action. "I am disinclined to use military force. We've got a big history of American force in this hemisphere, so we've got to be very careful about that."³² Unanimity within the OAS allowed Canada to take the lead on an important issue without having to choose between its most important ally, the US, and the principles of democracy, human rights, and multilateralism. For Canada, Haiti offered a relatively easy opportunity to exercise leadership in the Western Hemisphere.³³

On 8 October, after receiving a report from the delegation sent to Haiti, the OAS passed a second resolution confirming the non-recognition of the *de facto* military regime. The overthrow of had become a serious test of the OAS' expressed commitment to upholding democracy in the hemisphere, and the OAS was prepared to use economic sanctions and continued diplomatic isolation to restore democracy to Haiti. There was an understanding in the OAS that Aristide's return faced fierce opposition from the military and elements of the Haitian Parliament. The hope was that sanctions would motivate Aristide's opponents to negotiate and that the return of Aristide with guarantees for the safety of his opponents could be arranged.³⁴

The plan to apply economic and political power and wait out the *de factos* was upset by a refugee crisis that kept Haiti a front-page issue in the United States. As political repression continued and the sanctions began to take effect, waves of Haitians fled Haiti for Florida on overloaded leaky boats and makeshift rafts. The numbers of refugees picked up at sea far exceeded the capacity of the government's screening facilities in Florida. The United States had to establish refugee camps at its naval base at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. As policy, the United States considered most Haitians to be economic refugees who were not entitled to asylum in the US. A series of court challenges by human rights groups in December 1991 delayed the repatriation of many refugees, but the Bush Administration ultimately prevailed in the US Supreme Court and repatriations from Guantanamo resumed in February 1992.

In line with the government's position that most of those fleeing Haiti were economic refugees, on 4 February 1992, Bush also signed an executive order lifting the embargo on goods imported from Haitian assembly industries. The move was ostensibly for the benefit of Haitians at risk of losing their jobs to the embargo. It also helped US businesses that had invested in Haiti. Bush's action was a symbol of the problem that economic sanctions had created. As Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger put it, "We are on the horns of a dilemma. Once you tighten the embargo it begins to hurt and you increase the refugees."³⁵ The US' easing of sanctions also underscored that the OAS had no enforcement mechanism and that there was no penalty on OAS members who did not fully comply with the sanctions.

The embargo did not apply to non-OAS states. Europe and Africa largely ignored the embargo.³⁶ The result was that the Haitian elites were able to skirt the embargo and maintain their hold on power, while the brunt of the sanctions was born by the very people they were intended to benefit.

However, the refugee flow continued unabated. By May 1992, over 29,000 Haitians had tried to reach the US since the coup. The US Coast Guard was intercepting an average of 250 every day.³⁷ The asylum issue was further complicated by numbers of HIV-positive Haitians, including children, among the refugees. On 24 May 1992 Bush ordered that all Haitian refugees picked up at sea be returned directly to Haiti.³⁸ Haitians could now only apply for asylum through the US Embassy in Haiti. Human rights groups denounced the policy as inhuman and illegal, as it was potentially dangerous for anyone in Haiti to publicly claim they had been harmed or threatened by the military government. Bush remained adamant in his determination to send virtually all Haitian refugees home. On 28 May he defended the policy, saying, "I am convinced that the people in Haiti are not being physically oppressed. I would not want on my conscience that . . . anyone that was fleeing oppression would be victimized upon return."³⁹ The policy of forced repatriation at sea for Haitian refugees contrasted starkly with the treatment of Cuban refugees, who were virtually guaranteed asylum under US law. Presidential candidate Bill Clinton condemned the policy for abetting the military rulers in terrorizing and abusing Haiti's population. Clinton promised to change the policy if elected.

Haiti was a frustrating issue for the US throughout 1992. In addition to the refugee problem, Bush had to confront the dilemma of restoring democracy to Haiti and supporting the often anti-American and less than desirable Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Aristide was every bit as determined to have his way as was the Haitian military. Political discussions between Aristide's supporters and his opponents went nowhere. When a vague accord was reached in early 1992, Aristide doomed it by saying on American television that the plan's amnesty provisions applied to political opponents, not common criminals like Cédras. (EVENTS, 214) Within the US government, a campaign to discredit Aristide included leaks to the press alleging mental instability and drug addiction. While military intervention could have ended the crisis, there was no stomach in the US for another occupation of Haiti or the use of US force to restore Aristide.

Among the US' allies, Mulroney continued very publicly and personally to champion Aristide's return to power. In May 1992, Canada proposed a resolution adopted by the OAS that "implicitly rejected any efforts by Haiti's current leaders to try and end the political crisis without acknowledging Father Aristide's presidency and allowing him to choose a new prime minister."⁴⁰ The OAS was not ready to support any American military interventions in the internal politics of a sovereign state in the hemisphere. It was also unwilling to give up on the cause for democracy in Haiti. In fact, in 1992 the OAS had become involved in preserving democracy in Peru and Venezuela, further strengthening its resolve to protect elective government in the hemisphere.⁴¹

There was hope that given time the economic sanctions might work. However, they only appeared to be destroying Haiti's fragile economy without having any impact on the *de factos*' resolve to hold on to power. Bush's easing of sanctions in February did little to help the assembly industry, which

never recovered from the early sanctions. On the other hand, the *de factos* interpreted Bush's move as a sign of weakness and only encouraged their belief that they could wait out the US and the OAS. Mulroney seemed to understand the *de factos* sensed weakness in the international community, and on 27 December 1992 he became the first world leader to openly advocate the use of military force as an instrument for helping restore democracy in Haiti. "There should be a naval blockade by Canada, the United States, France, and Venezuela, to name but four to bring that government down," he stated in a CTV interview. His spokesman, Mark Entwistle referring to the Haitian military, said, "If you really want to shut these guys down, you have to put a stranglehold on them." Mulroney's proposal stemmed from his frustration with the resiliency of the Haitian military and the ineffectiveness of all efforts to restore democracy.⁴²

By the end of 1992, one year of political condemnation and economic sanctions by the OAS had failed to restore democracy to Haiti. The OAS appeared to have exhausted its means to resolve the crisis, and in November 1992 asked the United Nations to join in the application of economic sanctions against Haiti.⁴³ The United Nations thus began to assume a greater role as international pressure was added to that of the OAS. On 11 December 1992, the Secretary-General of the UN appointed Argentine diplomat Dante Caputo his special representative for Haiti. On 13 January 1993, the Secretary-General of the OAS designated Caputo as his special envoy for Haiti, thus giving both organizations one voice on Haiti.⁴⁴ On 8 January 1993, Aristide requested the UN deploy a human rights observation group to Haiti. From this request, the International Civilian Mission in Haiti, known by its French acronym MICIVIH, was born. MICIVIH was a joint OAS-UN mission that monitored and reported on the human rights situation in Haiti. The OAS had maintained a few ineffective observers in Haiti during the crisis. MICIVIH went to Haiti with a UN mandate and became the eyes of the world in reporting on the abuses of the military and police in Haiti.⁴⁵

Bill Clinton's election as President of the US in November gave a big boost to the hopes of the Haitian government in exile. Clinton had promised to end repatriation at sea and campaign harder for Aristide's return to power. However, in January 1993, Clinton announced that when he took office he would continue Bush's refugee policies. In spite of his election rhetoric, Clinton was unwilling to accept the large influx of boat people that would almost certainly follow his promised changes in the treatment of Haitian refugees. A surge in Haitians fleeing to America would have left him but two choices: admitting thousands of Haitians, or reopening the camps at Guantanamo and holding the refugees there until the Haitian military yielded power. As governor of Arkansas in 1980, Clinton came under great criticism when the state was inundated with Cuban refugees from the Marielito boatlift. Those memories and the thought of becoming warden to thousands of discontented Haitians living in exile in US military camps led Clinton to reluctantly conclude that he had no practical alternative to the Bush policy. To make the continuation of forced repatriation at sea more palatable to Aristide's supporters, particularly in the US and Canada, the Clinton Administration convinced Aristide to make radio broadcasts to Haiti urging the Haitian people to not risk their lives at sea but to remain in Haiti and wait for his return.⁴⁶

Clinton felt the need to bring the Haiti issue to an early resolution. He was concerned about the possibilities of another surge in refugees and felt political pressure both at home and abroad to live up to his pledge to Haiti. At a joint press appearance during the first meeting between Clinton and Mulroney in February 1993, the Prime Minister re-emphasized his support for Aristide: "Personally, I feel that at an appropriate time we can take more hard action . . . we don't have the right to let stand a government which is crushing democracy, liberty, and the personal rights and liberties of individuals." Clinton responded, "I share the Prime Minister's determination."⁴⁷

One of the *de factos*' most adamant demands was for amnesty. Aristide knew he had to win favor with Clinton, and as with his support for the refugee policy, he conceded that amnesty in some form was negotiable. In a meeting with Clinton in March 1993, Aristide told the American President, "The departure of the authors of the coup does not necessarily mean they would have to be in jail or have to leave the country." Clinton noted, "That sort of attitude on the part of President Aristide is the very thing that should enable us to resolve this in a peaceful way."⁴⁸

In Haiti, Clinton's rhetoric, the meeting between Aristide and Clinton, and the arrival of MICIVIH human rights observers seemed to strengthen Haitian opposition to the military regime. On 26 April there was a national strike. In May, there were major pro-Aristide demonstrations in Gonaives and Cap-Hatien, as well as days of student protests.⁴⁹ MICIVIH reported a decline in political killings, from 9 in May to only 5 in June.⁵⁰

On 16 June 1993, the US secured passage of UN Security Council Resolution 841, which imposed an international embargo on petroleum and petroleum products and military and police equipment, including all weapons. The sanctions were to take effect on 23 June and remain in place until "the *de facto* authorities in Haiti have signed and have begun implementing in good faith an agreement to reinstate the legitimate Government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide."⁵¹ Caputo called for Aristide and Cédras to meet in New York to negotiate a resolution to the crisis before the sanctions took effect. Both Cédras and Aristide were less than willing participants. Cédras came under the threat of international economic sanctions, increased and more defiant public opposition in Haiti, and rising international criticism of his regime. In spite of his statements that made him appear flexible, Aristide felt that his unconditional return was non-negotiable, and that sitting down at discussions with Cédras gave the Haitian military a legitimacy and recognition they did not deserve. However, Aristide understood if he failed to participate in the talks, he would be branded as obstructionist and risked losing his recently gained support of both the new US President and the UN.

The negotiations began on 27 June in the seclusion and security of the US Coast Guard base on Governor's Island, New York. Cédras and Aristide remained in separate locations on Governor's Island while Caputo shuttled endlessly between the two sides. After several days of intense discussions, an accord was hammered out. Cédras signed the Governor's Island agreement on the morning of 3 July and immediately flew back to Haiti. Aristide at first refused to sign, believing the agreement gave too much to the military. The agreement required Aristide grant amnesty to the leaders of the coup. Only

Cédras would be required to relinquish his position within the Haitian Armed Forces; all other military and police officers could retain their posts, while Cédras would simply take early retirement from the Armed Forces. Aristide would not return to Haiti until 30 October. The accord essentially left the military and police in place under the same officers who had led the coup. There were provisions for the UN to assist in the "modernization" of the Armed Forces and the establishment of a new police force. However, the *de factos* would remain in power for another four months, until Aristide's return in October.⁵² Reluctantly, after being subjected to great pressure all day from the United States and the UN, Aristide signed late on the night of 3 July. Aristide felt the US and the UN backed him into a corner. He had to choose between signing what to him was an unsatisfactory agreement or risk being branded an obstructionist and cut out of the process to restore democracy to Haiti.

Almost immediately, there were signs that Cédras and the *de factos* would not abide by the Governor's Island accords. MICIVIH reported an upsurge in political violence: 34 political killings in July, 33 more in August, and over 60 in September, including Antoine Izmeray, a prominent Aristide supporter.⁵³ Cédras publicly questioned the constitutionality of the government allowing the presence of foreign troops—UN peacekeepers and police trainers—in Haiti. The military also took steps to insulate themselves from the possible renewal of economic sanctions. They used the period from July to October to build up fuel supplies and establish smuggling routes through the Dominican Republic.⁵⁴ The *de factos* established the Haitian Front for Advancement and Progress, led by Emmanuel Constant. Its acronym, FRAPH, meant to hit or strike in Creole. FRAPH thugs became an arm of the military in maintaining control of the populace through terror.

Despite the ominous signs in Haiti that the *de factos* might not willingly yield power as Cédras had promised, the UN continued to prepare for the implementation of the Governor's Island accords. On 27 August, the Security Council passed Resolution 861, which suspended the economic sanctions imposed under Resolution 841.⁵⁵ On 31 August, the Security Council authorized the deployment to Haiti of an advance team.⁵⁶ On 23 September, the Security Council formally approved the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH). UNMIH would consist of 567 police monitors and "a military construction unit with a strength of approximately 700, including 60 military trainers." Resolution 867 called for "the Government of Haiti to take all appropriate steps to ensure the safety of United Nations personnel, as well as to ensure the freedom of movement and communications of the Mission and its members as well as the other rights necessary for the performance of the task."⁵⁷ The Resolution went on to note "that such safety and freedoms are a prerequisite for the successful implementation of the Mission." The Resolution clearly anticipated the cooperation of the Haitian military in the establishment and execution of the peacekeeping mission and implementation of the Governor's Island accords.

The advance party for UNMIH arrived in Port-au-Prince in early October, along with fifty Royal Canadian Mounted Police trainers. The first contingent of UN troops from the US and Canada sailed for Haiti aboard the USS Harlan County and arrived in Port-au Prince on the morning of 11 October. The ship was prevented from docking by an old Cuban tanker that was moored at the berth which the US

Embassy had arranged for the Harlan County. A mob of Haitians, apparently members of FRAPH, appeared at the dock, threatening officials from the US Embassy who were trying to secure permission for the Harlan County to dock. Haitian patrol boats began circling the Harlan County in the harbor, and armored cars were seen near the pier.⁵⁸

For two days, American and UN officials tried to secure commitments from the Haitian military to allow the Harlan County to dock. Senator Bob Graham and Representative Alcee Hastings of Florida were among those who met with Cédras. Cédras told them that the security of UN personnel was Aristide's responsibility, not his. After the meeting, Hastings stated, "Quite frankly, his answers amounted to obfuscation. It seems they are looking for any excuse to make the accords collapse."⁵⁹

Determining that the he was not in the permissive environment he was told to expect and fearing a confrontation in the dark with the Haitian Armed Forces, on the afternoon of 12 October the captain of the Harlan County decided to return to the Guantanamo naval base in Cuba without landing the American and Canadian troops. His military superiors in the US supported his decision.⁶⁰ The withdrawal of the Harlan County shocked diplomats in Port-au-Prince, who were not consulted. One Canadian diplomat asked, "Can anyone explain to me why Washington has done this? We learned of it on CNN, and just about everyone is shocked."⁶¹ The US had not been prepared to enter a hostile environment, and the captain of the Harlan County did what he felt was necessary to protect his ship and crew and the UN peacekeepers aboard. House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Lee Hamilton explained the dilemma quite clearly: "You cannot send American forces into Haiti if the environment is not secure. You cannot keep them sitting in the harbor for a few weeks, either."⁶²

While some officials in Port-au-Prince felt the mob would have dispersed had the ship tried to force a landing, a forcible entry would have been in violation of both US policy and UN Resolution 867, which authorized UNMIH be established in a secure environment.⁶³ When the ship was first prevented from docking, Secretary of State Warren Christopher stated, "We believe the current situation does not justify docking the ship at this time."⁶⁴ There was never any question of using the RCMP in Port-au-Prince to break up the mob on the dock.⁶⁵ The Governor's Island accords and UN Resolution 867 anticipated a permissive environment with the *de factos* ensuring the safety of the UN mission. Clearly that was not going to happen. After the Harlan County had left Port-au-Prince, Clinton stated, "I have no intention of sending our people there until the agreement is honoured. What I intend to do now is press to reimpose sanctions."⁶⁶ He went on to add, "The Department of Defense and our military leaders are convinced that the relatively light arms that our people were supposed to carry as advisers are more than adequate to protect themselves as long as the Governor's Island agreement is being honored. But I am not about to let them land to test it."⁶⁷

On 14 October, Aristide's Minister of Justice, Guy Malary, was gunned down in broad daylight on a Port-au-Prince street. Canada's new Prime Minister, Kim Campbell, ordered the immediate withdrawal of Canada's police trainers.⁶⁸ The UNMIH advance team and MICIVIH soon followed. The *de factos*

were not leaving and would not permit Aristide's return. The Governor's Island agreement completely collapsed.

The Harlan County was the low point in the confrontation between the *de factos* and the international community. For the US, it was a humiliating debacle. A small, armed mob of FRAPH thugs had prevented the United States and Canada from landing their troops and forced the US Navy to turn and sail away. The Haitian military had decided to ignore the Governor's Island agreement, and there was nothing that could be done at the time to force them to comply. The military had taken advantage of flaws in the agreement to further secure their position in Haiti. The agreement gave them months to prepare for the arrival of UN peacekeepers and Aristide's planned return. The *de factos* understood that the UN was not prepared to use military force to coerce compliance. Their conviction that the US would back down was reinforced only a week before the Harlan County sailed into the harbor at Port-au-Prince. In Mogadishu, Somalia, 18 US soldiers had died in a street fight in an operation to enforce UN resolutions in Somalia. Public shock and Congressional criticism led President Clinton to announce the US was unilaterally withdrawing from Somalia. The *de factos* believed that on the heels of Mogadishu the Americans would have no stomach for a fight and could be frightened away by a show of force, and the FRAPH mob at the dock had shouted they would turn Port-au-Prince into another Mogadishu. Cédras and his colleagues read the situation correctly. The 30 October deadline for the *de factos* to give up power came and went. Aristide remained in Washington, and Cédras remained in power in Port-au-Prince.

While the failure of the Governor's Island accord was a setback on the road to restoring Aristide to power in Haiti, it did demonstrate clearly and unequivocally that the *de facto* rulers in Haiti would not yield power without a struggle. They were not afraid of confrontation with the US and the UN and apparently believed they could outlast the world. In the eyes of the *de factos*, Aristide was finished. FRAPH leader Emmanuel Constant boasted, "We don't talk about Aristide anymore. It's not going to happen." In an 18 November Army Day speech, Cédras declared that democracy "cannot be reduced to the return of one man."⁶⁹ Yet while the Harlan County episode was a victory for the *de factos*, it proved to be the catalyst that led to their downfall less than a year later.

Aristide felt that the collapse of the Governor's Island accord vindicated his position that the *de factos* could not be trusted. He began to use harsher rhetoric in calling for support for his return to Haiti. On 28 October, in a speech to the UN General Assembly, Aristide described the actions of the *de factos* in Haiti as "genocide."⁷⁰ Aristide became more confident in defending the legitimacy of his position that he should be returned to power without conditions and was publicly critical of the Clinton Administration's policies.⁷¹ He asserted that amnesty for those who staged the coup and engaged in human rights abuses was unacceptable, and the US refusal to admit Haitian refugees was supporting the *de factos* in their oppression of the Haitian people.

From the fall of 1993 through the spring of 1994, the international community steadily increased pressure on the *de factos*. The day after the Harlan County left Port-au-Prince, the UN reimposed

international economic sanctions against Haiti.⁷² On 16 October, the Security Council passed a resolution initiated by the US and co-sponsored by Canada, France, and Venezuela which authorized member states "to use such measures commensurate with the specific circumstances as may be necessary" to enforce the embargo of petroleum and arms.⁷³ A multinational naval force led by the US and supported by Canada and later France immediately deployed to the Caribbean to enforce the sanctions. When Prime Minister Campbell announced that three Canadian ships would join six US ships in enforcing the embargo, she stated, "The action reflects our determination to see the democratic process restored in Haiti."⁷⁴ When the Liberal Party won the elections and assumed power in Canada in November, Prime Minister Jean Chretien continued the Haiti policies of his predecessor. His Minister for External Affairs, Andre Ouellet, represented a Montreal riding with a substantial Haitian population. Ouellet reportedly kept a picture of Aristide in his office.⁷⁵

After the Harlan County debacle, the Clinton Administration was criticized from both parties for its efforts to restore Aristide. Democrats felt the US was naïve in its dealings with the *de factos*. "I thought our policy was made up more of wishful thinking than pragmatism," said Senator Patrick Leahy.⁷⁶ Republicans continued to criticize Aristide as unworthy of US support. Senator Bob Dole stated, "My view is that restoring Aristide is not worth risking American lives. I don't view him as a great democrat."⁷⁷ The rapid dispatch of naval forces to the Caribbean raised concerns about where Haiti policy was heading. There appeared no clear strategy for how to proceed, other than continue the sanctions, which showed no signs of having any impact on the *de factos*.⁷⁸ There were fears that the refugee flood of 1991-92 would be repeated in the aftermath of the collapse of Governor's Island.⁷⁹

The *de factos*' policy remained simply toughing it out. In October, as Aristide was decrying genocide before the UN, Cédras demanded a blanket amnesty for the military and the police as a pre-condition for any negotiations over a transfer of power. Violence and human rights violations increased during the fall and winter. The worst incident was a fire in the Port-au-Prince slum of Cite Soleil on 27 December that burned several hundred homes and left an unknown number dead. The fire was apparently set in retaliation for the Pere Lebrun lynching of a FRAPH treasurer by a pro-Aristide mob.⁸⁰ The military used its control of the distribution of embargoed commodities, especially fuel, and FRAPH's thugs to strengthen its control over the countryside.⁸¹ MICIVIH returned to Haiti in January 1994 and reported the human rights situation was worse than ever. "Extra-judicial execution, enforced disappearance, torture, and arbitrary arrest had increased, and a new phenomenon—that of rape as an instrument of political repression—had emerged." MICIVIH cited the armed forces, the police, and FRAPH as the perpetrators of organized terror and human rights abuses.⁸²

By the spring of 1994, it was clear that sanctions had run their course and would not secure Aristide's return. A series of domestic developments in the US and the deteriorating situation in Haiti began pushing the US towards a military solution to the continuing crisis in Haiti. On 23 March 1994, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) proposed legislation to further tighten economic sanctions, cease the

policy of returning refugees to Haiti, and establish as law the objective of returning Aristide to power in Haiti.⁸³ On 4 April, Aristide announced that as President of Haiti, he was suspending the 1981 agreement between Haiti and the US that permitted immediate forced repatriation of Haitian refugees intercepted at sea.⁸⁴ On 12 April prominent African-American political activist Randall Robinson, Director of TransAfrica, began a hunger strike in protest of Clinton's refugee return policy. Robinson, who was a vigorous anti-apartheid activist in the 1980's, asked, "Why has the president refused to treat Haitian refugees like the others? Race drives this policy as much as anti-Semitism in the State Department drove Roosevelt to turn around ships carrying Jews. I know I could simply never live with myself if I didn't try."⁸⁵ Calls for the use of force to resolve the crisis began appearing in the media. Democratic Senator Tom Harkin put the ineffectiveness of US policy towards Haiti in an international context when he asked, "If we can't stand up for democracy and human rights in our own hemisphere, then what do the Serbs have to fear? If we can't do it in our own hemisphere, how can we stand strong a half a world away?"⁸⁶ As the Administration's point man for Haiti, Pezzullo became the target of considerable criticism in Congress.

Within the Clinton Administration, there were deep divisions between advocates of military intervention in the State Department and the National Security Council and the Department of Defense, which was adamantly opposed to the use of military force to restore Aristide. Secretary of State Christopher believed that support for democracy meant support for the elected leadership, which meant Aristide. To Christopher, there could be no backing down on the principle of support for democracy. National Security Adviser Sandy Berger believed the President needed to have a military option at his disposal. One reason for the rapid retreat from Haiti in October was that there were no plans for dealing with a non-permissive environment. The US could not afford another blow to its international prestige, which Haiti had become. Within the Department of Defense, the belief was that democracy in Haiti was impossible, and any military intervention would be a risky operation with no hope of long-term success.⁸⁷

The political pressure on the Clinton Administration in an election year became unbearable. The prospect of thousands of boat people who could no longer be legally picked up at sea and returned to Haiti was frightening. After Somalia and the Harlan County, with no end in sight to the Balkan wars, and genocide spreading in Rwanda, the Clinton Administration needed a foreign policy success. A thorough policy review in April concluded that the US could not back down to the military rulers in Haiti. Too much US prestige had been invested, and the US had to clearly demonstrate its support for democracy and opposition to military rule in the hemisphere.⁸⁸ Accordingly, in April 1994, US policy became more energized and clearly directed at forcing an early resolution of the crisis.

The first signal that policy was changing was Pezzullo's resignation on 27 April. On 28 April, Clinton announced several new policies. The US would ask the UN to impose a global embargo on Haiti as well as sanctions and a travel ban on all military and police who supported the *de factos*. He called for Cédras and his top lieutenants to leave Haiti within fifteen days to allow Aristide's return. He asked the Dominican Republic close its borders to tighten enforcement of economic sanctions. Clinton also ratcheted up his rhetoric. He refused to rule out the use of military force and stated flatly, "It's time for

them to go."⁸⁹ On 6 May, the UN voted to impose the new sanctions within 15 days unless the coup leaders stepped down. Some of the sanctions were aimed squarely at the Haitian military: a ban on international travel by all military and police officers and their families and a freeze on all their financial assets. The sanctions included a ban on international flights to and from Haiti and an embargo on all but humanitarian goods.⁹⁰

Clinton still needed to build political support for military intervention. At home, Pezzullo and former President Bush both joined Congressional critics in openly opposing the military option. Bush also advocated the abandonment of Aristide. In a signal of the growing influence of the CBC on Haiti policy, on 8 May Clinton appointed William Gray, former chairman of the CBC and head of the United Negro College Fund, as his special representative for Haiti. Gray was to work without pay and only serve for 130 days.⁹¹ On 4 June, at TransAfrica's annual awards dinner, the CBC continued to press the Administration as several of its prominent members called for military intervention to restore Aristide to power.⁹²

Predictably, Aristide's suspension of the US right to repatriate refugees at sea prompted a new wave of boat people. While in all of 1993 there had been but 2000 Haitians intercepted at sea, in June 1994 there were 5603 and almost 6000 more from 1-4 July.⁹³ Refugee policy flexed back and forth, between plans to reopen the Guantanamo camps, seeking to establish third country safe havens, or conducting asylum hearings at sea. Clinton was torn between the CBC, which argued Haitian refugees should be granted political asylum, and Florida Governor Lawton Chiles and the state's congressional delegation, who vigorously opposed accepting large numbers of refugees. The flow of refugees began to grow in the summer. On 6 July the US announced that henceforth applications for asylum must be made in Haiti, and refugees would be sent to third countries or Guantanamo for processing.⁹⁴

Cédras' response to the toughening of US resolve was to appoint Emile Jonaissant provisional president on 11 May. Cédras justified the appointment by asserting the presidency was vacant. Jonaissant would organize presidential elections to be held on 7 February 1995.⁹⁵ This was another clear signal of the military's intent to stay in power and not let Aristide, whose personal popularity in Haiti remained high, return. In July, while US Marine Corps units conducted publicly announced exercises near Haiti, Cédras announced new terms for his departure. He would leave power if Jonaissant remained president. Otherwise, he would retire when his term as chief of the armed forces ended on 31 January 1995 and he would subsequently run for president in the 7 February election.⁹⁶ On 11 July, Cédras expelled MICIVIH from Haiti.⁹⁷

Senior Administration officials began making the case before Congress that it was in the interests of the US to restore democracy in Haiti. On 8 June, William Gray briefed the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He declared that the US had a strong moral interest in promoting democracy and human rights. He continued that the US had a particular obligation to promote and support democracy in the Western Hemisphere.⁹⁸ On 13 July, Secretary of State Warren Christopher met with congressional

leaders. He argued that promotion of democracy, maintenance of regional stability, prevention of military coups in the Western Hemisphere, and protection of American lives in Haiti were critical American interests. He also pointed out that the flow of refugees had increased since the relaxation of immigration policies in May and the only way to halt the refugee flow was to improve conditions in Haiti.⁹⁹ Congress remained divided over intervention, which probably encouraged the *de factos* to hang on.

Throughout the spring and summer, the US had sought an international sponsor for military intervention in Haiti. On 31 July, the US secured Security Council passage of Resolution 940. The resolution authorized "Member States to form a multinational force under unified command and control and, in this framework, to use all necessary means to facilitate the departure from Haiti of the military leadership, consistent with the Governor's Island Agreement, the prompt return of the legitimately elected President and the restoration of the legitimate authorities of the Government of Haiti."¹⁰⁰ The Resolution also provided for the deployment of UNMIH once a "secure and stable" environment had been established and increased UNMIH's authorized strength to 6000.

The Administration would have difficulty in securing allies for a military solution. After the passage of Resolution 940, initially only Argentina offered to participate in the multinational force (MNF), but only with two ships that would remain outside any combat zone.¹⁰¹ Later, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Bolivia, and a number of Caribbean and Central American nations agreed to join in, but the MNF would be over 90 percent American.¹⁰²

Through the late summer and early fall, the *de factos* held on in the face of the stiff economic sanctions and international political pressure. By mid-September, over 14,000 Haitian refugees were being held at Guantanamo Bay.¹⁰³ Complicating the situation, over 30,000 Cuban refugees also entered the Guantanamo camps in August.¹⁰⁴ Finally, on 15 September, Clinton issued a final warning to the *de factos*. In a national television address, Clinton cited the uncontrolled flow of refugees, human rights abuses, and the principle of support for democracy in telling the American public that military action was at hand unless the military rulers in Haiti decided to step down. In a last measure to try and avoid invasion he dispatched former President Jimmy Carter, who had been an observer during Aristide's election, retired General Colin Powell, and Senator Sam Nunn to Haiti to convince Cédras to step aside. After several days of tense negotiations, with US troops on the way to Haiti, the military caved in. On 18 September the Carter Agreement was signed. The Haitian military leaders were promised general amnesty and agreed to cooperate with the MNF and retire by 15 October.¹⁰⁵ The MNF entered Haiti unopposed on 19 September.

The US placed considerable pressure on Canada to join in the MNF. Canada and the US had worked closely for almost three years in promoting Aristide's return. Prime Minister Mulroney had been a more vocal supporter of Aristide, and the first advocate of the use of military force in enforcement of the embargo. However, on the issue of invasion, Canada under Jean Chretien would go its own way. In May 1994 US Ambassador to Canada James Blanchard told Secretary of Defense William Perry that Canada

would not join in any invasion. He suggested inviting Canada to participate in a subsequent peacekeeping operation, especially with Francophone police monitors.¹⁰⁶ On the eve of Clinton's final warning speech, Defence Minister David Collenette said, "We've made it clear that we will not be part of any action in Haiti that removes the people who are there now."¹⁰⁷ In addressing any potential role for the RCMP, Solicitor General Herb Gray stated, "We're not going to take part in any military activities."¹⁰⁸

At the same time, Canada was fully committed to participating in UNMIH. Collenette said, "Once President Aristide is in place and the situation somewhat normalized, then we would help, with other nations under the UN, to rebuild the country."¹⁰⁹ Immediately after Clinton's televised address, External Affairs Minister Ouellet declared that Canada would play a role in Haiti after the invasion. Canada would not participate in the MNF because of "resources, timing, and priorities." Because of Canada's commitment to UN peacekeeping operations in the Balkans, it had limited forces available and those troops would make little difference when next to the planned 20,000 US troops. However, in UNMIH those troops could make a larger contribution, so that was when Canada would join in.¹¹⁰

Although Canada would not join in the MNF, Canadian officials gave rhetorical support to Clinton's promise to use force. Prime Minister Chretien backed the US invasion and publicly urged the *de factos* to leave peacefully and reaffirmed that Canada would participate in UNMIH.¹¹¹ Ouellet stated that Canada supported the US invasion as a last resort and said the *de factos* should take Clinton's speech as a "last warning." "We hope that they have heard loud and clear the message and that they will go and allow President Aristide to go back to Haiti," he stated.¹¹²

Canada's leaders appeared to be trying to have it both ways. They did not want to oppose Aristide's return or the US in its decision to use military force under Resolution 941. At the same time, they wanted to maintain Canada's independence from the US on a key foreign policy issue. From the beginning of his prime ministership, Chretien had tried to steer a course on foreign policy more independent of the US than Mulroney's. Mulroney had come under considerable criticism in Canada for being too close to the US, and Chretien looked for opportunities to assert Canada's independence. He also sought to preserve Canada's image as an impartial peacekeeper and not become tainted in the future with charges of having supported another American military adventure abroad.¹¹³ At the time of the US intervention in Haiti, Canada's attention was closely focused on the investigations and court-martial associated with the torture and murder of a Somali teenager by Canadian paratroopers. The scandal was upsetting to Canada's image of providing the world professional, impartial peacekeepers. The Somalia intervention had been as part of a US-led multinational force. As early as the fall of 1993, in the aftermath of the Harlan County incident, there were questions as to the wisdom of Canada joining in any more overseas military operations with the US.¹¹⁴ And as Ouellette had pointed out in announcing Canada's decision not to participate, Canada's staying home would in no way endanger the success of the MNF. Thus, by staying out of the MNF, Chretien was able to maintain a comfortable distance from the

US and protect his foreign policy from domestic criticism without endangering Canada's objective of restoring Aristide.

In fact, Canada did provide support to operations in Haiti almost as soon as the MNF was ashore. In a clever maneuver, Ouellet decided Canada could begin sending in its police monitors "under a previous UN resolution, which calls for the sending of a Canadian police corps of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police . . . to Haiti at the request of President Aristide to train his new police force."¹¹⁵ He was of course referring to Resolution 867, which authorized UNMIH, and Resolutions 905, 933 and 940, which had extended UNMIH's mandate even though it had not yet deployed.¹¹⁶ Canada deployed its first police monitors to Haiti less than a week after the MNF landed.¹¹⁷

Aristide returned to Haiti on 15 October 1994. In November the UN Security Council authorized UNMIH's strength be raised to 500 in anticipation of it becoming operational once the MNF achieved its mandate of establishing a stable and secure environment.¹¹⁸ On 15 January 1995, the commander of the MNF reported that the stable and secure environment had been established. The Security Council adopted Resolution 975 on 30 January 1995, authorizing the build-up of UNMIH to a strength of 6000 military and 900 police monitors and trainers.¹¹⁹ The MNF formally stood down and turned over control of the peacekeeping mission in Haiti to UNMIH on 31 March 1995. Almost half the troops were American. Canada contributed over 600 troops, including the chief of staff of the military force. Canada also provided almost 100 police monitors, and a senior RCMP officer was head of the civilian police component of UNMIH. To avoid criticism that he was committing the US to an open-ended military commitment in Haiti, President Clinton promised that American participation in the UN mission would last for one year. In July, the Security Council formally extended UNMIH's mandate through the end of February 1996 and expressed its anticipation of "the conclusion of UNMIH's mandate at that time and to the safe, secure, and orderly assumption of office by a new, constitutionally elected government."¹²⁰ In December 1995, Rene Prével, Aristide's chosen successor, was elected President of Haiti.

After assuming office on 7 February 1996, one of Prével's first actions was to request an extension of UNMIH's mandate. One of the keys to long-term stability in Haiti was the establishment of a professional police force. While UNMIH's mandate authorized up to 900 civilian police to train and develop Haiti's new police, the Member States of the UN never provided close to that number. On 1 February 1996, there were only 349 UN civilian police in Haiti, with Canada and France each providing 92.¹²¹ The Haitian government was still dependent on UN troops for ensuring stability and desperately needed the continued presence of UN police trainers. There was general concern that without a continued UN presence, Prével would be unable to establish a functional government and Haiti would again fall into chaos.

President Clinton was in no position to extend the US mission in Haiti. He had recently deployed over 20,000 troops to maintain a fragile peace in Bosnia. He promised the troops in Bosnia would pull out after one year, and he was under great pressure to meet his commitment of limiting the US role in Haiti to

one year. After the US ended its participation in UNMIH, the US would maintain a small military presence in Haiti. This force, which would number in the hundreds rather than the thousands, was to serve as a symbol of America's commitment to Haiti. Its operational role, however, would be strictly limited to humanitarian assistance projects.

In the UN, China was threatening to veto any effort by the Security Council to extend UNMIH's mandate. The Chinese were ostensibly concerned about the UN lacking the resources to continue the Haiti mission in light of the UN's dire financial straits. The Chinese government was in fact furious that Aristide had established close relations with Taiwan and that Préval intended to continue to foster those ties.

The solution to the problem came from Canada. Canada's new Foreign Minister, Lloyd Axworthy, believed Canada had an "international vocation" to advocate human security issues, and that this sense of vocation "provided Canadians with something enormously valuable: it contributed to a uniquely Canadian identity and a sense of Canada's place in the world."¹²² He was a strong proponent of the use of soft power and the centrality of international organizations in the world order. The short-term crisis in Haiti was tailor-made for Axworthy's desire to exercise Canadian leadership and "soft power" in the world.

Canada offered to replace the US and take command of UNMIH. The Cabinet agreed in mid-February to provide the overall UN commander and 750 troops.¹²³ Shortly after, in a major foreign policy address, Chretien asserted Canada had a responsibility to remain engaged in world affairs and benefited from its role as a peacekeeper. "Again and again, citizens of other countries have saluted us as a beacon of hope for a world where people of different creeds, races and religions increasingly come in contact with each other." In response to critics who advocated a withdrawal from UN peacekeeping operations, Chretien stated, "that might make a good bumper sticker, but it makes lousy foreign policy, whether it concerns human rights, international trade, or our multilateral responsibilities." Chretien, echoing Axworthy, argued that Canada's identity in part rested on its international activism.¹²⁴

When China agreed to allow a four month extension of UNMIH's mandate but insisted troop strength be limited to 1200, Canada volunteered to provide at no cost to the UN the remaining 700 troops it deemed necessary to ensure the mission's success. The Security Council adopted resolution 1048, extending UNMIH's mandate for four months, late on 29 February 1996, just hours before the mandate expired. To allow Canada to send its own troops to Haiti in support of UNMIH, the Resolution asked "all States to provide appropriate support for the actions undertaken by the United Nations and by Member States pursuant to this and other relevant resolutions in order to carry out the provisions of the mandate."¹²⁵ After the Resolution passed, Axworthy announced, "We're taking an extraordinary step to make this happen. Haiti represents a real chance, in our own hemisphere, to see democracy established in a country that has suffered for generations under the most autocratic regimes. Enormous strides were taken over the last two years, and they are making it. It's working, but they need continued assistance. It would be too early to pull out."¹²⁶

Canada's initiative to take over the mission in Haiti would contribute to good Canadian-American relations. Continued political stability in Haiti was important to the US, and Clinton certainly did not want to face the prospect of a political collapse in Haiti and renewed refugee flows during his 1996 reelection campaign. The US needed the UN to stay in Haiti, but someone else would have to take charge. Canada helped preserve the success, however tenuous, of the US intervention in Haiti. Canada's willingness to assist the US in Haiti also sent notice that Canada still desired good relations with the US even though in February and March of 1996 the relationship was dominated by Cuba. On 24 February, Cuba shot down two unarmed civilian aircraft flown by anti-Castro Cuban-Americans. Shortly afterwards, over strong Canadian protests, the US enacted the Helms-Burton Act which gives US citizens the right to "sue foreign companies in US courts for compensation related to properties confiscated by the Castro regime" and "denies visas to anyone, including corporate executives or shareholders of foreign companies, now benefiting from the use of confiscated property."¹²⁷ Although the US and Canada remained divided over policy toward Cuba, Haiti provided an outlet for continued US-Canadian cooperation in the hemisphere.

Canada also reinforced its emerging role in the Western Hemisphere. Canada had participated in UN peacekeeping operations in Central America that had helped disarm American-sponsored Nicaraguan guerrillas and oversee the end of the guerrilla war in El Salvador, where the US had backed the San Salvador government. Now, Canada would lead a multinational military operation in the hemisphere without direct US involvement. As with its role in the OAS in the early stages of the Haiti crisis, Canada could take the lead in a hemispheric issue and enjoy the support of both the US and the Latin American and Caribbean governments. Assuming command of the Haiti mission was a means to further raise Canada's profile in hemispheric affairs and present Canada as a counterweight to US dominance.¹²⁸

Canada's decision to assume command in Haiti was taken in a domestic environment that was politically permissive. In spite of the struggles in Bosnia and Somalia, the Canadian public generally supported Canada's role in peacekeeping operations. In October 1994, 58 percent of the public had supported the government's decision to provide troops and RCMP for UNMIH, while only 27 percent felt Canada should stay out of the UN's peacekeeping mission in Haiti.¹²⁹ In December 1995, 60 percent of the populace supported Canada's role in NATO's new peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. 47 percent believed Canada's role in UN peacekeeping operations was "adequate", and another 15 percent felt it should be increased.¹³⁰

When UNSCR 1048 passed, Parliament was not in session, limiting the scope of opposition. The only real criticism raised was that Canada would participate in the mission without reimbursement. Axworthy replied to questions about cost by saying, "I don't think we have to be overly preoccupied by the costs because I think that what we gain in terms of the evolution of good development in Haiti is well worth the price."¹³¹ In fact, the government was able to fund the operation out of budgeted contingency funds.

Chretien was also looking at Quebec politics and had reason to appeal to the Haitian community in Montreal. A pro-independence referendum in Quebec in the fall of 1995 nearly passed. Andre Ouellet had given up his seat in Parliament, which was to be filled in a by-election on 25 March. The new Minister for International Co-operation, Pierre Pettigrew, was running to hold the seat for the Liberal government, and one-seventh of the population there was Haitian. Haitians tended to be anti-separatists, and the Liberals needed their votes to defeat the separatist Bloc Quebecois. Pettigrew's New Democratic opponent was Haitian; the Conservative candidate was the wife of a Haitian. Pettigrew had flown to Haiti to attend Préval's nomination, and Canada's role in saving UNMIH could only play well to a critical component of the electorate in Montreal.¹³²

Canada assumed command of the UN peacekeeping operation in Haiti on 1 March 1996. While Canada had provided logistical troops to UNMIH when it was under American command, the Canadian contribution was now primarily Francophone infantry. Over the next 21 months, as the UN gradually drew down its military presence in Haiti, Canada continued to provide troops without reimbursement. When UNMIH's mandate expired in June 1996, the Security Council established the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti with a five-month mandate and troop strength of 600. Again, nations were encouraged to voluntarily support the mission and Canada continued to voluntarily contribute over 700 troops.¹³³ On 13 November 1996, Préval again requested an extension of the UN peacekeeping operation. UNSMIH was extended through July 1997, with troop strength reduced to 500.¹³⁴ The final UN peacekeeping operation, the UN Transition Mission in Haiti, was authorized only 50 troops and 250 police.¹³⁵ Canada continued to voluntarily provide 600 troops, throughout this period, while the US helped fund additional 525 Pakistani troops.¹³⁶ Canada was also the largest contributor of civilian police in each of the UN missions, and continued to provide RCMP trainers during the subsequent UN Civilian Police Mission in Haiti that operated from December 1997 until March 2000.¹³⁷

For both the US and Canada, Haiti policy was driven by both external and internal factors. Both countries actively encouraged the expansion of democracy in the post-Cold War era. Both viewed the military coup in Haiti as a challenge to democratic rule in the Western Hemisphere that had to be confronted. Both preferred to pursue Aristide's restoration through international institutions, although the US was able and ultimately willing to act unilaterally to resolve the crisis. Leaders in Canada and the US had important domestic constituencies that pushed for activist policies toward Haiti. And for Canada and the US, military operations in Haiti were in the realm of the possible. A remarkable confluence of factors at key moments enabled the US and Canada to engage in a high level of cooperation over an extended period on a key security issue in the Western Hemisphere. Whether those conditions can be replicated again, particularly on contentious issues such as Cuba, is problematic.

WORD COUNT = 11,130

ENDNOTES

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