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A NEW POLICY FOR HAITI

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ABSTRACT

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Over the past century, the United States has intervened no less than three times in Haiti to maintain stability. While the historical contexts in which the three interventions took place are different, in every instance the presiding administration claims stability as the compelling justification. Yet, nothing has been done to address the root cause of the instability in the country. A new and comprehensive policy is badly needed for Haiti, one that addresses not only the instability issue but also lays the foundation for lasting democratic development in the country.

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Deye mòn gen mòn, beyond the mountains are mountains.

- Haitian Proverb

This proverb, more than any other, resonates in the Haitian psyche, and speaks volumes of the current crisis in Haiti as well as the Haitian dilemma in general. For it suggests that after three interventions, United States (U.S.) policy makers are still not able to develop an effective engagement policy toward Haiti. Over the years, at least with regard to Haiti, United States policies have gone from isolation to occupation, including support for various dictatorships as well as fostering democratic openings. All in all, these policies can be characterized as "expedient" and have been out-of-step with the realities of Haiti.

Unlike the United States, Haiti's social and political development has evolved in the context of authoritarian rule and thus cannot be discarded easily. Authoritarian rule in Haiti today, however, should not be viewed as a factor inhibiting democratization. Rather, it should be seen as a vehicle through which security and stability are imposed; hence, the reason for proposing a new policy for Haiti—one that supports the reconstitution of the disbanded Haitian military into a national gendarmerie force as a way to stabilize the current situation, thus providing a vector to enable the country to move forward.

1804-1915 HAITIAN ARMY

To understand the importance of the Haitian army as an institution requires a perspective of Haiti's history prior to the first U.S. occupation. From 1804 through 1915, Haiti did not have a centralized, organized army. Instead, the country had armies, consisting of peasant soldiers who were enlisted in short-term military service by regional military chiefs in the interior of the country, especially in the mountainous north. The renowned historian Hans Schmidt observes , "…the regional chiefs, self-styled generals, were allied with urban politicians who provided funds and political leadership. Prior to the American intervention, these strong regional chiefs had provided the military punch behind the numerous Haitian revolutions, serving as mercenary armies on behalf of successive presidential candidates."[1] Once in power, succeeding governments used fear and arbitrary proceedings to impose their will.

THE 1915-1957 HAITIAN ARMY AND THE 1ST US INTERVENTION

Admittedly, given the preponderant role the Haitian military has played over Haiti's history, one can easily conjure up images of a comic opera in which the cast parades flamboyantly as it engages in an old and all too familiar game of musical governments. Haitian-American historian Michel Laguerre concludes that "…it is an empirical fact that the majority of Haitian presidential regimes have been headed by generals."[2] Indeed, the military, in whichever fashion it was organized, was both a power broker and kingmaker in Haitian society. More than any other Caribbean nation with a colonial past, Haiti had a military birth, as it took shape during the revolution against the French to rid itself of slavery. Haiti's national consciousness was shaped by this secular preoccupation; the only respected profession was the military. Thus, all other factors, including educational, political and industrial, took a backseat in Haitian development. Throughout the Haitian revolution, succeeding regional military chiefs saw their roles as continuing the fight for independence.

Seq	Heads of State	Dates	In Office (Yrs)	Profession	Status
1.	Dessalines, Jean Jacques	1804-1806	2	Military	Assassinated
2.	Christophe, Henry	1807-1820	13	Military	Suicide
3.	Petion, Alexander	1807-1820	11	Military	Died in office
4.	Boyer, Jean Pierre	1818-1843	25	Military	Overthrown
5.	Riviere-Herard, Riviere	1843-1844	1	Military	Overthrown
6.	Guerrier, Philippe	1844-1845	1	Military	Died in Office
7.	Pierrot, Jean Louis	1845-1846	1	Military	Overthrown
8.	Rashe, Jean Baptiste	1847-1847	1	Military	Died in Office
9.	Soulouque, Faustin	1847-1859	12	Military	Overthrown
10.	Geffrard, Fabre Nicholas	1859-1867	8	Military	Overthrown
11.	Salnave, Sylvain	1867-1869	2	Military	Executed
12.	Nissage-Saget	1870-1874	4	Military	Full Term
13.	Domingue, Michel	1874-1876	2	Military	Overthrown
14.	Boisrond-Canal	1876-1879	3	Military	Overthrown
15.	Salomon,Lysius Felicite	1879-1888	9	Military	Overthrown
16.	Legitime, Francois	1888-1889	2	Military	Overthrown
17.	Hyppolite, Hervil	1889-1896	7	Military	Died in Office
18.	Simon Sam, Tirosin	1896-1902	6	Military	Full Term
19.	Nord Alexis	1902-1908	6	Military	Overthrown
20.	Simon, Antoine	1908-1911	3	Military	Overthrown
21.	Leconte, Cincinatus	1911-1912	1	Military	Died in Office
22.	Auguste, Tancrede	1912-1913	1	Military	Died in Office
23.	Oreste, Michel	1913-1914	9	Civilian	Overthrown
24.	Zamor, Oreste	1914	1	Military	Overthrown
25.	Theodore, Davilmar	1914-1915	1	Military	Overthrown
26.	Sam, Vilbrun Guillaume	1915	1	Military	Overthrown
	1st American Intervention 1915				
26.	Dartiguenave, Sudre	1915-1922	7	Civilian	Full Term
27.	Borno, Louis	1922-1930	8	Civilian	Full Term
28.	Roy, Eugene	1930	1	Civilian	Died in Office
29.	Vincent, Stenio	1930-1941	11	Civilian	Full Term
30.	Lescot, Elie	1941-1946	5	Civilian	Overthrown
31.	Estime, Dumarsais	1946-1950	4	Civilian	Overthrown
32.	Magloire, Paul	1950-1956	6	Military	Overthrown
33.	Pignole, Daniel	1957	.1	Civilian	Overthrown
34.	Duvalier, Francois	1957-1971	14	Civilian	Died in Office
35.	Duvalier, Jean Claude	1971-1986	15	Civilian	Overthrown
36.	Namphy, Henri	1986-1987	1	Military	Transition
37.	Manigat, Leslil	1988	1	Civilian	Overthrown
38.	Namphi, Henry	1988-1989	1	Military	Overthrown
39.	Avril, Prosper	1989-1990	1	Military	Overthrown
40.	Pascal-Trouillot, Ertha	1990-1991	1	Civilian	Transition
41.	Aristide, Jean Bertrand	1991	2	Civilian	Overthrown
	2nd American Intervention 1994 and Haitian Army is disbanded				

FIGURE 1. –HAITIAN PRESIDENTS

There is much to decry about the 1915 US occupation. As Hans Schmidt observed, "…the Haitian masses suffered from the brutality and degradation of the American imposed system of forced labor, thus appearing as a twentieth-century version of the French overlords against whose slave rule the Haitian people had successfully revolted over a century ago."[3] Nonetheless, according to James Leyburn, "…a very significant change that took place in that the United States institutionalized the Haitian army and police forces." [4] The decentralized and

regional chief-based Haitian army was transformed into a well-trained, well-organized force as a national gendarmerie, responsible for internal security. As James Leyburn further explains, "…eventually firm control by this new force of weaponry, communications, and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, turned the Haitian gendarmerie into the major locus of non-electoral, president making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of a revolt against the central authority."[5]

Indeed, as figure 1 shows, in the period from the founding of the Republic in 1804 to the American intervention in 1915, a span of one hundred and eleven years since independence, less than twenty-six men occupied the office of the presidency. More significantly, of the twenty-six presidents in question, seventeen were overthrown by revolution. To some degree, the 1915 occupation met one of its important goals—to restrain the revolutionary tendencies of a decentralized Haitian army. As the sole disciplined institution in the country, the gendarmerie, by 1922, took on responsibility for external security (army), and began to play a dominant role in power politics. That said, one should not conclude that the military has been too strong of a force in Haitian society. The Haitian military, as an institution, depends not only on the government, but also on different societal actors for its survival. As Michel Laguerre explains, "…intervention (coup d'état) by the army must be seen as an act of self-preservation and survival."[6]

THE 1957-1994 HAITIAN ARMY AND THE 2ND UNITED STATES INTERVENTION

The Haitian army was placed under firm presidential control during the presidencies of both Francois and Jean Claude Duvalier. This was done through the introduction of a new force into Haitian society, known as the "Volontaires de la Securite Nationale," a voluntary militia totally loyal to the Duvaliers. More importantly, the Duvaliers successfully used this new force as a balancer of the Haitian army by removing the latter from its role as arbiters of political events in the country. Haiti suffered no coups from 1957 through 1987. One significant event that led to the second American intervention was the departure of Jean Claude Duvalier in 1986. After 29 years of firm presidential control, the military was unwilling to take over the government, despite popular demands for them to do so. As David Nicholls observes, "A whole generation of Haitian military officers had grown up, into whose conceptual world the notion of a military coup hardly entered. It is, in these circumstances, ironical that the United States, which had made energetic efforts during the first occupation (1915-1934) to depoliticize the Haitian military, encouraged a manifestly unenthusiastic General Namphy to take power."[7]

The 1991 coup against President Aristide provided the catalyst for the reluctant 1994 American intervention—a reluctance that was reflected in an ill-defined exit strategy. It is important to distinguish between the two interventions. The impetus for the 1915 intervention in Haiti, similar to Venezuela in 1902-1903, as Hans Schmidt points out, "…was generally for exploitation and a deliberate attempt of preventing foreign powers that might threaten American economic and military hegemony at the time." [8] As Haiti's external debt was getting out of control, President Wilson's Administration simply followed a policy that had been in place beginning with President Theodore Roosevelt's Administration—to encourage American financial interests to replace their European counterparts as the creditors of various Caribbean countries."[9] This policy presented two advantages for the US: the reduction of European influence in the area and the opening of new markets for American capital and commerce. In fact, by 1923, US Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes asserted that "…imports from the United States into Haiti amounted to 84 percent of the total, whereas the imports from France into Haiti constituted but 4 percent."[10] Clearly, during the first intervention, the US, in pursuing its own interests, felt a moral obligation to stay in Haiti as long as necessary to address the most pressing need at the time—stability through the professionalization of the army.

In contrast to the 1915 strategy of professionalizing the Haitian army to help stabilize the country, the 1994 American intervention failed to address the role of the military. As stated before, the Haitian military, by the end of Francois Duvalier's regimes, was filled with corrupt officers and rank and file, and could not competently assure the transition of the country from autocratic to democratic rule following the departure of Jean Claude Duvalier, beginning in 1986. Accordingly, the country suffered from a succession of coups, including the overthrow of President Aristide in September 1991. In addition to the systematic destruction of the country's institutions, perhaps the most devastating legacy of the Duvaliers was the total weakening of the Haitian military, resulting in a power vacuum that has yet to be filled. Indeed, it is this power vacuum that remains the primary source of instability in Haiti.

In a way, it can be argued that the failure to properly address this power vacuum during the 1994 intervention was, foremost, the result of the election of U.S. President Bill Clinton. To many observers, the first Bush Administration, under whose watch the September 1991 coup took place, opposed President Aristide's return. Many in the administration blamed President Aristide for inciting mob violence. In fact, much of the American press, including the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, held the view that the Haitian army acted to save the nation from mob rule. Howard French of the *New York Times* wrote, "Despite much blood on the army's hand, US diplomats consider it a vital counterweight to Father Aristide, whose

class-struggle rhetoric threatened or antagonized traditional power centers at home and abroad."[11] As there was no love for President Aristide, the policy pursued, as Alex Dupuy points out, "…consisted of finding a solution that involved a return to civilian rule but without President Aristide and with the military as a dominant institution."[12]

While the first Bush Administration appeared to have understood the need to fill this power vacuum, the Clinton Administration, upon assuming the problem, quickly became a victim of its own rhetoric and did not look at the situation holistically. Instead, the Clinton Administration focused exclusively on the refugee issue, which was a mere symptom of the problem. Eventually, under mounting pressure from other Democrats, including the Congressional Black Caucus, the Clinton Administration felt compelled to intervene. In a public address on September 15, 1994, President Clinton outlined the reasons why the US intervened in Haiti: "To protect our interests, to stop the brutal atrocities that threatens thousand of Haitians, to secure our borders, and to preserve stability and promote democracy in our hemisphere, and to uphold the reliability of the commitments we make and others make to us."[13] As succinct as the goals for intervention appear, the Clinton Administration, in addition to supporting a fundamentally flawed Aristide policy, simply did not have the political will to stick to these original goals.

Again, contrary to the 1915 intervention, United States forces, after they had secured the country, were forbidden to assist in upgrading infrastructure beyond what U.S. military necessity demanded. Moreover, in lieu of reorganizing the Haitian army, the Clinton Administration allowed President Aristide to disband this most important institution entirely, thus creating a serious power vacuum that the newly created police force could not fulfill in the country. For in Haiti's tradition, the military has always had responsibility for police functions. Ironically, the disbanding of the Haitian army set the stage for Aristide to rule autocratically. In essence, what we witnessed through the 1994 intervention is a disconnect between policy statements and realities on the ground. The conditions—lack of stability and insecurity—that prompted the 1994 United States intervention have not fundamentally changed. The mission, it can be argued, was unfinished. Yet within six months, American forces were withdrawn, with the exception of a small support group to show the flag. If, as President Clinton argued in 1994, it was essential to invade Haiti and restore democracy, the question for the Clinton Administration is: Why abandon the task before its completion? The 1994 operation neither stabilized Haiti nor restored democracy.

THE 3RD UNITED STATES INTERVENTION

It should come as no surprise that yet another US administration was forced to send US forces to Haiti in 2004. There were more than 14,000 US troops committed to the 1994 intervention. In contrast, the US administration deliberately opted not to play a preponderant role in 2004 and contributed a small force among "3,600 troops in a coalition consisting of Canada, Chile, and France."[14] In his *Preface to the United States National Security Strategy*, published in September 2002, President Bush states that the United States will "…actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world."[15] Given past practices, it is easy to question the depth of the United States political will to assist the government of Haiti to reestablish security and eventually, democracy.

A NEW HAITIAN GENDARMERIE

A new approach should include reorganizing Haiti's disbanded army into a small and yet effective "Gendarmerie" force, capable of maintaining internal order and securing the country's borders, yet separate from the police force. Why a gendarmerie instead of an army? As Haiti's fundamental problem is instability, a gendarmerie, based on the French model, because of its civil-military character, is much better suited to address Haiti's instability than a police force or an army, in the classical sense. The Gendarmerie should be held responsible to perform a wide range of missions, including border security, maritime security, as well as engineering for the amelioration of the country's dismal infrastructure and disaster relief. Moreover, in the event of a riot that the police are unable to handle, the gendarmerie force should be available to reinforce the police. Lastly, if well deployed throughout the country, the gendarmerie should be able to counter any potential internal insurrection.

Deployment of this new gendarmerie is equally important and should complement the police force for internal security. While the police are heavily concentrated in the major cities, the gendarmerie, unlike the structure created during the first occupation, should be heavily concentrated in the rural areas. As a way of maintaining a presence throughout the country, the gendarmerie should be deployed in twelve distinct regions, shown in figure 2.

This deployment has three distinct advantages: first, it will facilitate development of the rural sector. Second, it will provide for better allocation of security forces throughout the country. Third, and to no small degree, this deployment will help combat the growing drug trafficking problem in Haiti.

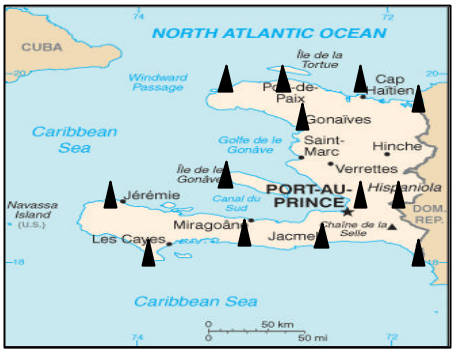

FIGURE 2 – MAP OF HAITI - PROPOSED GENDARMERIE DEPLOYMENT

CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONSHIP

Another area of critical importance is the civil-military relationship in the context of the gendarmerie's role as guardian of the state. Unlike the former military that gave greater precedence to internal rather than external security, the gendarmerie's internal security role will be secondary—that being to reinforce the police in maintaining law and order in the event of an emergency. Every precaution must be taken to ensure that the new gendarmerie mission does not expand into the civilian sphere of interest. As a departure from the old system, other quasi-military organizations, like the firefighters, should not be placed under the leadership of the gendarmerie.

The concept of a Haitian gendarmerie is not new to Haiti. As mentioned before, during the first occupation, United States forces reorganized the Haitian army into a gendarmerie force. Though well-intentioned, the first gendarmeries had two fundamental flaws: first, as the gendarmerie was created to fight an insurrection, its deployment throughout the country as well as its vocation was solely intended to assist the United States Marines put down the rebellion and stabilize the country. Hence, very little effort was made in infrastructure development missions. Second, there was no distinction in the role of the gendarmerie as a security force and judicial police. Both functions resided within the gendarmerie. As George Orwell reminds us "…all animals are equals but some animals are more equal than others."[16] The former Haitian army, at the time, was more equal than all other institutions in Haitian society. The context today is entirely different.

COMMAND AND CONTROL OF THE NEW FORCE

The command and control of the proposed gendarmerie can play a crucial role in ensuring that the institution does not venture into the political sector. Again, as a departure from the past,

the gendarmerie must have some autonomy as an institution—that is to be able to discipline, promote, dismiss or transfer without the consent of the Prime Minister. Absent a similar arrangement, the gendarmerie will lose all credibility with the public and be viewed as being subservient to the whims of the President or Prime Minister. *Article 264-1 of the 1987 Haitian Constitution* recognizes the autonomy of the army.[17] National control of the gendarmerie should be given to an appropriate ministry, with the national police given to another ministry. These two ministries should exercise control at the national level, while the respective security institution chiefs manage at the department level, in close coordination with their respective ministries. Also, rotating the department heads of both institutions would preclude department commanders from creating a power base locally.

This type of command and control arrangement would provide the effective leadership required throughout the country, serve as a political safeguard, and prevent any one institution from becoming too powerful. As Robert Wesson argues in his book, *The Latin American Institution*, "The military establishment is the most coherent sector in generally incoherent societies needing effective leadership."[18] While Haiti is in dire need of a credible institution capable of maintaining law and order, caution is necessary. For an institution that is too powerful may very well prevent others from governing. Michel Laguerre reminds us that "…an equilibrium of relationships between the military, the civilian government and the civil society is the backbone of political stability."[19] Nowhere is this maxim more appropriate than in Haiti. Yet, despite the terrible record of civil-military discourse in Haiti's history, it is possible to create an equilibrium of relationships among the proposed gendarmerie, the civilian government and civil society.

Also, the notion of a military as a political promoter of reform and guarantor of order is not new to the region. Indeed, a review of the past fifty years does reveal that Latin America, in spite of the numerous coup d'etats experienced, has experienced very little upheaval as seen now in Haiti. Robert Wesson in his book, *The Latin American Institution*, credits the Latin American militaries for the relative stability of the region. Wesson argues that, the military in Latin America has a political role and is a major reason why Latin America has seen so very little social revolution. Wesson further observes, "…revolution in Latin America succeeded only where armies quite fell apart."[20] There is no reason why a strong Haitian gendarmerie could not play a constructive political role in the form of guarantor of the republic's law and order.

WHY A GENDARMERIE?

Understandably, some would question the need for a strong and authoritarian institution, as the proposed gendarmerie undoubtedly would be in Haitian society. However, after two hundred years of struggle, Haiti's chronic problems have become, rightly or wrongly, a direct reflection of its national character. Thus, exceptional measures are needed to alter present conditions. The vacuum of power that currently exits cannot remain unfulfilled. In fact, as early as 1904, a number of important Haitian intellectuals believed that their society required some measure of authoritarianism. In her book, *Haiti and the United States*, Brenda Gayle Plummer observes that one of Haiti's foremost intellectuals, Frederic Marcelin in his classic *Au gre du Souvenir*, published in 1913, "…sought a President, possibly a militarist with extraordinary power for Haiti. Others like Leon Audain, in 1908, in his book, *Le mal d'Haiti: Ses Causes et Son Traitement,* sought for Haiti "…a program of vigorous reform supervised by a potent dictator."[21] The common theme as far back as the early part of the twentieth century was that development would not be possible without a strong institution capable of enforcing the laws of the republic.

DEMOCRACY VS A VIABLE REPUBLIC

The cry for a strong institution like a gendarmerie to help stabilize the situation in Haiti should not be misconstrued as a desire to return to dictatorship or authoritarian rule. Rather, it should be seen as an acknowledgement that the long-standing U.S. policy to promote democracy in Haiti, while well-intended, is out-of-step with Haitian realities. U.S. policy should be focusing on helping Haiti become a viable republic, with the necessary means for enforcing its laws. Stability and democracy are not mutually exclusive—the more stable a society, the more democratic it will become. Democracy cannot flourish in an unstable society. In her book *Dictatorships and Double Standards*, former UN Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick argues that , "…democratic governments require institutions strong enough to contain conflicts."[22] Thus, if the United States truly cares about seeing improvement in Haiti, the emphasis should be on helping stand up a strong gendarmerie, capable of containing potential domestic conflicts. Ultimately, what's important is achieving the conditions for change.

Moreover, it must be understood that this is a long-term effort, requiring an equally long-term commitment. Instituting democracy in a society with a history of political violence requires a heavy dose of patience. Again, Ambassador Kirkpatrick reminds us that decades, if not centuries, are normally required for a people to acquire democratic habits. In Britain, she observes, "…the road to Magna Carta to the Act of Settlement, to the great Reform Bills of

1832, 1867, and 1885, took seven centuries to traverse."[23] Of course, this is not to imply that it will take Haiti centuries to develop lasting democratic habits. However, given time, political stability, economic reform, committed leadership, and an indigenous demand for representation, which already exist in Haiti, it is conceivable to expect that Haiti can be placed on the road to a lasting democracy.

WHAT ROLE FOR THE US?

As an Haitian-American, I am saddened to see Haiti muddle from tragedy to tragedy. As figure 1 indicates, President Aristide is the thirty-third Haitian President to be driven out of power. Yet, as dire as the situation appears, it does offer the current Bush Administration an opportunity to learn from past practices and apply the lessons learned to future relations with Haiti. While the goal of bringing democracy to Haiti remains the underpinning of United States foreign policy, it is by no means the top priority of the Haitian people. They are much more concerned about survival matters like hunger, security, and jobs. United States Ambassador Ulric Hayes captured this sentiment well when he asserted that "…the boat people from Haiti who are trying to reach the United States do not come to our shores in order to vote; they are coming here in order to eat."[24] Accordingly, the following is proposed as a methodology for effective engagement and assistance.

STABILITY THROUGH A STRONG NATIONAL GENDARMERIE

The United States should advocate the rebuilding of the disbanded Haitian army into an effective and professionalized national gendarmerie. The national police force, once numbering 5,000, has been reduced in strength. As the *Washington Post* reported last February, "…the police force is outmanned and outgunned by gangs that control many areas of this country of 8 million people."[25] The United States administration should encourage the Haitian government to take advantage of the presence of the UN forces to start developing the gendarmerie as soon as possible.

CANADA AS NATION LEAD FOR UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL MISSION IN HAITI

The United States' record of success in bringing about political stability in Haiti has not been a good one. The lack of progress resulting from the three United States interventions in Haiti's political affairs has served to confirm that fact. Also, it is a hard reality that in Haiti's national psyche only an authoritarian type government can govern the country—a sentiment that is contrary to United States fondness for immediate democracy. Given this climate, the United States should encourage a friendly country to take the lead in Haiti. Canada, because of

its humanitarian tradition, language, cultural and historical ties with Haiti, seems perfect for leading this international effort. As Canada is a "middle power" and is not perceived as having ulterior motives, Haitians will be more likely to support such an initiative.

Of course, Canada will not be able to assume the mission without strong U.S. backing as well as a clear mandate from the UN. For this reason, the United States should introduce a resolution in the UN, calling for the establishment of a United Nations Technical Assistance Mission under Canadian leadership. This mission should be open-ended and should have jurisdiction in all aspects of governmental administration in Haiti.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Contrary to popular belief, in comparison with other nation building efforts like Bosnia, United States and international assistance to Haiti was very low, even during the Clinton Administration, which was considered friendlier to the Haitian cause. According to a study done by the RAND Corporation, two years after the 1994 United States intervention, "Bosnia received seven times more assistance on a per capita basis. Kosovo received four times more. By March 2004, Iraq received more than thirty times more American assistance, on a per capita basis, and one-hundred times more in absolute terms than Haiti received in the aftermath of the 1994 intervention."[26] Interestingly, the RAND Corporation observed that "…none of these other societies is remotely as needy as is Haiti, and none of them lies on our very doorstep."[27] According to the State Department, "…during fiscal years 1995 to 2003, the United States gave Haiti more than $850 million in direct bilateral assistance."[28] What is not said is that most of the money has gone to non-governmental organizations (NGO) that are supposed to be acting in the best interest of Haiti.

This policy of funneling financial and humanitarian assistance through NGOs over the past few years has had an adverse impact and may have contributed to the downfall of the Aristide administration. In essence, this policy created a situation where essential services are no longer provided by the Haitian government but by foreign organizations. This practice seems to go in total opposition to the United States administration's goal of forming competent and experienced civil servants to carry on the rebuilding of Haiti. For as long as foreign organizations provide essential services, Haitian Government personnel will not have acquired the skills nor the experience required to effectively contribute to the rebuilding of their country.

RESTRICT NUMBER OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT

Currently Haiti counts no less than a dozen political parties—a situation that renders the country virtually ungovernable. The multi-party system, at its core, requires a culture of

compromise to function effectively. As no such culture exists in Haitian political history, competing interests have prevented Haitian political parties from working together, forming stable coalitions and from breaking stalemates between the legislative and the executive branches. Thus, it is imperative that the number of political parties authorized to sit in the Haitian parliament be restricted to no more than two. Admittedly, some will argue that such a restriction is counter to democratic principle. While the validity of this argument is understandable, the legislative stability of a two-party system more than outweighs the undemocratic nature of this restriction. Furthermore, the two-party system does not preclude the development of internal caucuses and factions based on shared interests. There, too, the United States should encourage the Haitian government to implement this initiative.

ELECTION UNDER THE CARTER CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY

Few would disagree that free elections are the hallmark of a democracy. Conversely, flawed elections are nightmares for any country with democratic aspirations, for the consequence is complete polarization and instability. In Haitian political history, one would be hard-pressed to find an election that was not tainted in some form or fashion. Haiti's political parties reappeared in the political landscape after the fall of Jean Claude Duvalier in 1987. As there are many political parties with diverse interests, universal agreement on any election outcome is virtually impossible. The political landscape in Haiti is simply too polarized to allow the Haitian government to conduct the next election. For the sake of post-election stability, the United States administration should push the Haitian government to transfer the conduct of the next national election to the international community (OAS and UN) under the supervision of the Carter Center for Democracy, as the final authority.

EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Haiti will not achieve political and economic progress unless its citizens understand their relation to both their republic and nation. In his essay, *Representative Government*, John Stuart Mill asked that we keep in mind that "…political machinery does not act of itself, and that it has to be worked by men, and even ordinary men—it needs not their simple acquiescence, but their active participation."[29] Mill further argues that this implies three fundamental conditions: "One, that the people for whom the form of government is intended must be willing to accept it; two, that they must be willing and able to do what is required of them to enable them to fulfill its purpose; and three, they must do what is necessary to preserve it."[30] Without an understanding of their rights and responsibilities, Haitian citizens would not be able to be part of a democratic process, let alone be willing to fight to preserve it. To that end, the United States can play a

constructive role by funding anti-illiteracy and education programs throughout the country for children and adults alike.

FOLLOW-UP WITHOUT FALLING VICTIM TO RACISM

Of all the peacekeeping missions that the US undertook over the last few years, none invoked as much controversy and partisanship as the missions in Haiti. Indeed, given the close proximity of Haiti to the United States, it is hard to understand this attitude. Perhaps it is due to the worsening opinion of Haiti and an increasing harshness of conservative elite discourse against Haiti. Brenda Plummer in her book, *Haiti and the United States*, explains that for quite sometime, if the subject was Haiti, writers took considerable freedom. She writes that:

> …the moral of the story was usually the capacity of blacks to govern themselves. Repetition proved the most potent weapon in the arsenal of malicious writers. Over the course of time, authors began to repeat anecdotes related by previous scribes, and to present these as personal experiences. Gossip and legends, given weight and force through habit, ascended to tradition and legitimacy. [31]

One must not fall victim to right wing pundits with hidden agenda. The best way to fight against this tendency is to form a bi-partisan commission in the Congress to oversee and recommend policies toward Haiti.

THE DOMINICAN FACTOR

The nature of the Haitian-Dominican relationship over the years has played a major role in US relations with Haiti. At the core of the conflict are the ways in which Haiti and the Dominican Republic view themselves and, more importantly, the United States' differing perspectives on the two countries. Beginning in 1804, Haitians, including the mulatto population, never denied their African antecedents. In contrast, as Brenda Gayle Plummer remarked, "Dominicans in general preferred to ascribe somatic traits associated with Africans to Amerindian genes." [32] Therein lies the root of the Haitian-Dominican problem. United States policy makers have sought to use this problem to further their design in the region. Again, Brenda Gayle Plummer wrote that in 1930, "Under Secretary of State Summer Welles approved the adoption of a Caucasian national image for the Dominican Republic. He saw it as a counterpoise to the cultural and demographic pressure that Haiti exerted and suggested that Italian and Castilian settlers be brought in to whiten the country." [33] Thus it is not surprising that beginning in the 1930's, the Dominican Republic began to receive substantial United States economic investment in sugar and other commodities and had established lasting commercial relations and friendships with Dominican businessmen and politicians. By 1930, "…the Dominican

Republic boasted a higher GNP, produced more food and possessed a larger national bourgeoisie than Haiti."[34]

The United States, as the superpower in the hemisphere, can no longer play a "politique de doublure"—that is to use the Dominican Republic as an instrument of indirect pressure on Haiti. The United States will have to make it convincingly clear to the Dominican Republic that a strong Haitian Gendarmerie, capable of policing Haiti's borders, is in their country's interest. Regrettably, the Dominican Republic has become the preferred sanctuary for Haitian coup plotters, particularly those from the former Haitian army and the current police force. The United States should exert pressure on the Dominican Republic to stop giving refuge to potential coup plotters as a way of discouraging future attempts.

CONCLUSION

Admittedly, other than the fear of tens of thousands of Haitian boat people reaching Miami's shores, the United States has no real and vital interest in Haiti. By all accounts, Haiti's importance is minimal compared to those countries that pose significant threat to American interests around the world. Yet in spite of this reality, succeeding administrations have learned the hard way that ignoring Haiti's problem serves only to postpone the inevitable. As the superpower of the region, sooner or later, the United States will have to be involved. Over the years, the United States has had to intervene no fewer than three times in Haiti. While historians will continue to ponder over the rationale as well as the accomplishments, or lack thereof, of these interventions, the fact remains that Haiti is still the most unstable and least developed country in the western hemisphere. Obviously, a new policy is badly needed—one that takes into account Haiti's historical and social development as a republic born under the scourge of slavery and isolated by all major powers for more than a century of its existence.

Given today's climate of international relations, the United States can ill-afford to take the lead in the rebuilding of Haiti's political, bureaucratic and economic institutions. That is why, Canada, for all of the reasons stated before, seems the perfect nation to lead such an undertaking, with a clear mandate from the UN. Yet, United States political and financial support is crucial for any international initiative to work in Haiti. Accordingly, the United States should pursue a policy that is designed to bring stability and lay the foundation for lasting democratic development in Haiti. At the core of this new policy is the support for the formation of a strong gendarmerie force.

While democracy will remain an important end state for the Haitian people, for the time being, political stability and economic development must be the top priority. In Haiti's political

history, one would be hard-pressed to find a lasting functioning representative government, though there have been many attempts. That, unfortunately, has served to corroborate a deeply rooted national psyche that only a strong central government backed by a powerful institution like a gendarmerie can provide stability in Haiti. Any new policy toward Haiti must not fail to take that into account. In order to set Haiti on the path of stability and, eventually, economic and democratic development, the first step must be the formation of a strong gendarmerie force to fill the power vacuum in the country.

As a final reminder, "Deye mòn gen mòn"; beyond the mountains are mountains. Indeed, this proverb illustrates well the intricate challenges that the Haitian people have faced since the birth of their Republic. Given the enormity of the task of reconstructing Haiti's political and economic institutions, anything short of an open-ended commitment on the part of the United States, as well as the international community, will put the country at risk. If the past is any indication, it is hard to imagine such a commitment from the United States. Yet, the United States can ill-afford to ignore Haiti's problems, for Haiti's stability is vital to an already fragile Caribbean community of emerging democracies. The question, therefore, is not whether the United States will be engaged in Haiti. Rather, it is how the United States chooses to engage Haiti. The policy proposals outlined in this paper, if implemented, will serve as the basis for an effective engagement toward Haiti and will provide for political stability and simultaneously lay the foundation for both economic and democratic development.

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ENDNOTES

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[2] Michel S. Laguerre, *The Military and Society in Haiti* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1993), 2.

[3] Schmidt, xii.

[4] James G. Leyburn, The Haitian People (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1966), xvii.

[5] James G. Leyburn, *The Haitian People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966), xvii.

[6] Michel S. Laguerre, *The Military and Society in Haiti* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1993), 14.

[7] David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti,* rev. ed. (New Brunswick , NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), xvii.

[8] Schmidt, 43.

[9] Schmidt, 49.

[10] Schmidt, 177

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[13] William J. Clinton "Text of President Clinton's Address on Haiti," *Washington Post*, 16 September 1994.

[14] Jeffrey H. Fargo, "Nation Building in Haiti—Again?," *Hoover Digest Magazine Online* , Summer 2004, Issue, N0.3, available from <http://www.hooverdigest.org/043/fargo.html; Internet accessed 19 November 2004.

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[18] Robert Wesson, *The Latin American Military Institution*. (New York, NY: Praeger Scientific, 1986), 221.

[19] Laguerre, 199.

[20] Wesson, 218.

[21] Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Haiti and the United States: The psychological moment*. (Athens and London : The University of Georgia Press, 1992), 75.

[22] Jeane J. Kirpatrick, *Dictatorships and Double Standards: Rationalism and Reasons in Politics.* New York , NY: Simon and Schuster Publication, 1982), 31.

[23] Ibid

[24] Ulric Haynes, Jr. "Haiti- a Solution" *The Ambassadors Review* (Spring 2004): 9.

[25] Kevin Sullivan, "Ex-Troops Fill Haiti's Security Vacuum: Promised U.N. Force Under Half Strength". *Washington Post Foreign Service*, 15 October 2004, Sec. A, p.16.

[26] James Dobbins, Testimony before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps, and Narcotic Affairs, RAND Corporation, 10 March 2004.

[27] Ibid

[28] US State Department Fact Sheet on Haiti, released on 29 December 2003, available from: http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2003/27564pf.htm ; Internet, accessed 12 November 2004.

[29] John Stuart Mills, "Representative Government", 1861; available from: http://www.eserver.org/philosophy/mill-representative-govt.txt ; Internet. accessed 12 November 2004.

[30] Ibid

[31] Plummer, 79.

[32] Plummer, 152.

[33] Ibid

[34] Ibid. 153.

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