The United States and Haiti: 1991-1994

David Michael Rittgers

Iowa State University

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The United States and Haiti: 1991-1994

by

David Michael Rittgers

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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Program of Study Committee:
Richard N. Kottman, Major Professor
Hamilton Cravens
Tony Smith

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Iowa State University

This is to certify that the master's thesis of

David Michael Rittgers

has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

Signatures have been redacted for privacy
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

In December 1990, Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected president of the Caribbean nation of Haiti. This event was a watershed for the people of Haiti – for it was the country's first free and fair democratic election. Aristide, a populist priest, was elected with a remarkable 67 percent of the total vote – due in large part to his rapport with the impoverished underclass of Haiti (people living below the poverty line represent approximately 80 percent of the population). As a candidate, Aristide sought to reach out to this peasant class – offering to bring significant and empowering social, political, and economic reforms to this Creole-speaking nation. The majority of Haitians viewed President Aristide as the long-awaited liberator to the majority of the indigent population, carrying the hopes and dreams not only for a much-needed reprieve from the devastating decades of corrupt and authoritarian rule of the Duvalier family, but also for a chance to live in a just and orderly democratic nation.

This optimism, however, was short-lived. Within nine months, President Aristide found himself victim of a military coup led by General Raoul Cédras. The deposed president was allowed exile in the United States, where he would spend the next three years fighting for his return to power. The burden of seeking a solution and returning Aristide to his rightful position fell largely on the United States

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government – specifically the administrations of George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton, although there were other influential actors such as the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of American States (OAS).

It was in the United States where the sharp policy differences among the key power brokers emerged. The central disagreement revolved around what the primary goal was in this dispute, democracy or stability, and how the United States could obtain the best possible outcome for both itself and Haiti. In the end, stability won out. For the Haitian people, this result unfortunately meant that their national goals and objectives would take a back seat to U.S. interests in a broader geopolitical agenda. This agenda would be based on open markets, a continued military presence, and political “stability” – with stability ultimately representing a stable trading partner and a familiar and agreeable government.

It took three long years, two American presidents, and thousands of political murders and refugee deaths for the United States to move beyond the calculated rhetoric toward a real solution. Although Aristide was returned to power with no American lives lost, it became clear during the process that the United States interests continually came first, thereby placing stability over democracy.

To begin this thesis, I will start with a brief overview of the history between the United States and Haiti, beginning with the Haitian Revolution and finishing with the coup d’état that cut President Aristide’s term by over three years. Following that introduction, the majority of the thesis will consist of an exploration of the complicated relationship that developed throughout the Haitian interregnum, attempting to analyze the motivating factors behind the United States involvement.
In the end, it is my intention to expose the hidden agenda that the U.S. government operated under during both the Bush and Clinton administrations. It was here, in this exchange between the two nations, that the American drive for political stability and neoliberal economics overshadowed the ostensible campaign for democratic achievement across the world.
CHAPTER II. HAITI AND THE UNITED STATES

United States Influence

There is an extensive record of U.S. intervention in the Caribbean, Haiti not being an exception. In the years just following the United States acquisition of independence from colonial England, slaves on the western two-thirds of the island of Hispaniola (the island consisting of modern day Haiti and the Dominican Republic) followed suit and set off a rebellion against their French masters, who were experiencing internal divisions due to the onset of the French Revolution. Beginning in 1791, slaves began to rise up against the white colonialists, killing slave owners and destroying crops and plantations. François Dominique Toussaint Louverture, a former slave and member of the French military forces, emerged as the leader of the slave rebellion, eventually declaring himself president for life in 1801 while still in the midst of the revolution. Three years later, following a series of bloody engagements with Napoleon’s troops in which Toussaint was captured, former Haitian slaves led by Jean-Jacques Dessalines declared their independence. This slave revolution in the Caribbean had immense repercussions for the future of the Americas – serving
as a precursor to Latin American independence, but also to the eradication of African-American slavery.¹

The Haitian drive for freedom was met by the United States and other colonial powers with economic and political isolation. On the European side, nations were worried that the slave rebellion would prompt other colonies to look toward their own independence, not only in the Caribbean, but around the world. For the United States, a country that had only recently ended its own colonial subservience, worries focused not on fear of the end of colonialism, but on the proliferation of the abolition of slavery. Many southern states were completely dependent upon slave labor, and the idea that Haiti’s slave revolt would have a ripple effect in America was truly something to be feared. For that reason, the United States did not formally recognize their island neighbor until 1862, when “the Civil War brought an unexpected need for cotton and destroyed southern power and influence in Washington.”² It was during wartime, with southern members not in attendance, when President Lincoln approached Congress about extending recognition to Haiti. On December 3, 1861, he rhetorically asked the legislative members, “If any good reason exists why we should persevere longer in withholding our recognition of the independence and sovereignty of Hayti and Liberia, I am unable to discern it.”³

Decades before Lincoln’s recognition, President James Monroe, in 1823, warned European nations not to interfere in the Western Hemisphere, a policy that

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later became known as the Monroe Doctrine. In 1905, President Roosevelt added his “corollary,” an addendum, which argued that stability must be preserved in the Western Hemisphere, even if it requires an exercise of regional police power by the United States. Thus, the hegemonic ambitions of the United States in Latin America grew considerably in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

During the initial stages of World War I, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, in accordance with the precedent set before him, sent American troops into Hispaniola. Historians contend that Wilson had numerous reasons for the intervention, including a perceived German and French ambition in the region. He also wanted to assist democracy and restore order, and to protect access to the newly opened Panama Canal.⁴

It was clear that the United States wanted to play the role of hegemonic power in Latin America, and Haiti fell within that territory. The United States secured Guantanamo Bay as a military base in Cuba in 1903, but Washington’s desire for control and security expanded beyond Cuba to the entire Caribbean. David Nicholls, a British priest and theologian with an extensive knowledge of Haitian history, wrote, “Interest in Haiti was therefore maintained for strategic reasons, and the United States invasion of 1915 can be seen as part of a whole strategy for control on the region.” Following the mandate set by the Monroe Doctrine, “In 1898 the Americans had secured Puerto Rico and Cuba; five years later they occupied Panama; in 1909 they invaded Nicaragua and in 1916 the Dominican Republic. In 1917 the United

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States purchased the Virgin Islands from Denmark. It had become clear by the time of Wilson's invasion of Haiti that the United States believed the Monroe Doctrine should supersede the national sovereignty of Latin American nations. While the reasons for American involvement in Haiti are still open to debate, it is clear that the United States government had by this time given itself a mandate whereby unilateral intervention in Latin American affairs was acceptable behavior if it done for the protection of the Western Hemisphere.

United States Marines occupied the island nation over the course of five presidencies, from Wilson to Roosevelt. During those nineteen years, soldiers attempted to build the institutions necessary for the governance of a modern nation. The United States collected tariffs, paid foreign debts, restructured the government and military, built roads and bridges, and trained local people for leadership roles. Although some Haitians resisted the U.S. influence, most notably in the nationalist cacos rebellion of 1920, the occupation was generally peaceful.

While the United States occupation of Haiti did help create a basic infrastructure in Haiti, it also left behind a legacy of racism and oppression. Haitian peasants were forced to submit to U.S. military orders, including arduous physical labor on projects such as road building. American soldiers directed this condescending attitude not only at the black peasants in Haiti, but also at the mulatto upper class, who had traditionally viewed themselves as the racial elite.

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5 Nicholls, From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti, p. 144.
7 Nicholls, From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti, p. 149.
With the dominant U.S. military now controlling the island, the bourgeois class came to the understanding “that in the eyes of North Americans they were all ‘niggers.’”\(^8\)

On August 15, 1934, the U.S. military terminated their occupation of Haiti with President Franklin Roosevelt ending the intervention and withdrawing U.S. forces as part of his Good Neighbor policy toward Latin America, which had been initiated by President Hoover\(^9\). Unfortunately, U.S. reforms did not last and Haiti was soon back in the same position before the Marines landed. The modest progress that had been achieved in the above mentioned projects was all but lost with a return to dictators and disorganization. The power vacuum created an opportunity for control to slide back into the hands of the mulatto elite and their military allies.\(^10\)

While the United States did not continue to exert the kind of unilateral control over Haiti that it did during the occupation, the American influence continued, though in a much more subtle fashion. In 1939, Haitian President Stenio J. Vincent attempted to maintain his political stay beyond the expiration of his second term, but was turned back in his bid by strong local opposition, which was greatly aided by U.S. opposition to the extension.

\(^8\) Ibid., p. 150.

\(^9\) President Roosevelt had been involved in the earlier occupation of Haiti while serving as the Secretary of the Navy. He had an instrumental role in drafting the “Americanized” constitution for Haiti, which was ratified without the Haitian National Assembly through a national plebiscite. The new constitution included a provision permitting foreigners to own land in the country, something American businesses had coveted for quite some time. This property article, according to American presidential candidate Warren Harding, was “jammed down the throats of the Haitian people ‘at the point of bayonets borne by U.S. Marines.’” It also overturned a policy that began under the rule of Jean-Jaques Dessalines. Quoted in Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti*, p. 147. See also Robert Debs Heinl Jr. and Nancy Gordon Heinl, *Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People 1492-1971* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978), p. 441.

After Vincent stepped down, the Haitian legislature elected Elie Lescot, a former minister to the United States. Representing the close ties between Haiti and the United States, President Lescot, along with the legislature, voted unanimously to enter World War II after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. While there was little that Lescot's forces could do to alter the course of the war, efforts were made to aid the United States military in any way possible, including granting permission for antisubmarine aircraft to patrol the Atlantic and Caribbean water through the use of the Port-au-Prince landing strip. Haiti also decided to join the United Nations on June 26, 1945, thereby becoming one of the original members.

The Duvalier Reign

In 1957, François "Papa Doc" Duvalier, a former Black Nationalist leader and physician, was elected to a five year term as President of Haiti. By international standards, the election was tainted with violence and intimidation, but for a nation with such a tumultuous history, it was a positive step. Near the end of his term, however, Papa Doc declared himself president for life. His dictatorial regime oversaw military and governmental purges, mass executions, and the institution of curfews, all enforced by the dreaded Tonton Macoutes, a fearsome and violent personal security force.

In January 1971, with François Duvalier nearing the end of his life, the Haitian legislature amended the constitution by which Papa Doc had been elected, to allow
for his son, Jean Claude "Baby Doc," to inherit the presidential title. Upon his father's death, Baby Doc, then nineteen, became president of Haiti, with his mother retaining most of the power in the early years of his rule. The younger Duvalier would eventually attain the same absolute power over the impoverished country enjoyed by his father, ruling until 1986 when he was forced to flee to France after a string of political uprisings that forced him into exile.

The Duvalier regime, father and son, ruled Haiti with an iron fist from 1957 until 1986. Violence and corruption were the norm for the millions of Haitian residents. The Duvaliers set up a centralized authoritarian government that ruled through the use of the military, the police, the wealthy mulatto elite, and the Catholic Church. Particularly effective because of their ruthless tactics were the specialized personal security forces, made up of loyal military officers, known as the Tonton Macoutes. Through this group the Haitian people would be terrorized and intimidated for almost three decades.\(^{11}\)

Due to the geopolitical nature of the Cold War, the United States chose to establish common ground with the Haitian dictators. As was common in many of its foreign policy decisions, in the name of anti-Communism, Washington overlooked human rights abuses and challenges to democracy in favor of maintaining political stability. The rise of Fidel Castro just miles off the coast of Haiti in 1959 also placed

immense pressure on the American presidents to curb the spread of the Cuban Revolution to other countries in Latin America.\textsuperscript{12}

Eventually, beginning with President Jimmy Carter in 1977, the United States began to give incentives and punishments which corresponded to the status of human rights in foreign nations, including Haiti. American foreign assistance to Haiti dwindled during the Reagan administration, ending in 1986 at a time when political corruption and economic inequalities had gotten completely out of control.\textsuperscript{13} Thomas Weiss wrote, "Eventually, the combination of the decline in foreign aid, the loss of support from the business elite, and mass demonstrations resulted in a coup that ended with Baby Doc's flight on a U.S. Air Force jet to southern France, where he still resides."\textsuperscript{14}

Following the departure of the younger Duvalier, the resultant power vacuum left the Haitian people in a familiar state – that of political instability and uncertainty. Four different presidents graced the highest office during the next four years. Eventually, General Henry Namphy came to power as the ranking military officer. His rule was no less authoritarian than that of the previous three decades, but he did appoint a national council with the intention of creating a new constitution and the possibility of new elections.\textsuperscript{15} The United States was apprehensive about the idea of a new leader emerging that could possibly upset the "political stability" in Haiti, but

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\textsuperscript{13} The Reagan Administration's pullback contradicted their common practice of supporting right-wing authoritarian regimes in an attempt to rid the world of communism. This coincided with a similar retraction of support from the Marcos government in the Philippines.

\textsuperscript{14} Weiss, \textit{Military-Civilian Interactions: Intervening in Humanitarian Crises}, p. 171.

\textsuperscript{15} Jesse Birnbaum, "Déjà vu, All Over Again; Avril's Crackdown Brings Back the Bad Old Days," \textit{Time} 135, February 5, 1990, p. 44.
\end{flushleft}
they half-heartedly encouraged such measures. Lester Brune, former professor of history at Bradley University, wrote, "CIA-DIA [Department of Defense's Intelligence Agency] operatives wanted a strong Haitian leader to maintain order and guarantee profits for U.S. investments...but DIA agents and State Department officials advised Namphy to establish democracy as the best long-term political policy." This intergovernmental debate would loom large in the relationship between Washington and the Haitian government in the years to come.

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Enter Aristide

With the end of the Duvalier reign, the Haitian people found themselves in the familiar position of political and economic uncertainty. Elections whispers started crisscrossing the island giving hope to many that the will of the people might be heard and acted upon. However, concurrent with this tepid optimism was a strong sense of cynicism and despair, representing the long history of Haitian hope for new life and government followed by subsequent disappointment.¹ In the midst of this turmoil, a new figure appeared on the political horizon. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a Roman Catholic priest in his mid-thirties, was beginning to emerge as a prophetic leader for the Haitian lower classes. Aristide combined populist rhetoric with liberation theology as his platform, and the poverty-stricken masses began to take note.

Aristide, known as Titid to his Creole-speaking followers, grew in popularity for a number of reasons. His outspoken condemnation of the Duvaliers, which provoked numerous near-death assassination attempts on his life, brought him

visibility, but he resisted pursuing politics as a career. He also was extensively known through his widely-popular radio program where he preached social and economic reformation. In addition, Aristide was celebrated for his work and habitation with the poorest of the poor in one of Haiti’s most pitiable slums in Port-au-Prince, Cité Soleil, home to his Saint Jean Bosco parish.

It wasn’t until 1986 that the diminutive Aristide formally entered the Haitian political mainstream. He founded a political party named Lavalas, which in Creole means “sudden flood.” Contemporaneously, the country was falling further and further into political instability and economic stagnation. With international pressure mounting for Haiti to stage elections, the leaders of the country found common ground and began planning an election. Lester Brune wrote, “Despite three coup d’etats from 1987 to 1990, Haiti’s need for U.S. economic assistance compelled its leaders to conduct an election which, hopefully, would stabilize Haiti,” an objective long sought in Washington.\(^2\) With the scene set, Jean-Bertrand Aristide entered the race with great fanfare.

\[\text{Haiti’s First Democratic Election}\]

Internationally supervised elections in December of 1990 resulted in a landslide presidential victory for Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Both the United Nations

and the Organization of American States deemed the election to be free and fair, although many political opponents boycotted when they realized Aristide would prevail. The antielitist leader from the small town of Port Salut on Haiti's southwestern shores ended up with 68 percent of the vote. Selden Rodman, a noted Haitian intellectual, remarked that the election's "margin of victory was so substantial it could hardly be disputed."\(^3\) Aristide's Lavalas party also picked up seats in the Haitian legislature. The United States moved quickly to support the "free and fair" election, although many within the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) were hesitant to support the populist priest and his legislative allies.\(^4\)

It was later found that both the CIA and the DOD provided "monetary and political support" to "opposition parties and 'democracy by elites.'" The favored candidate of the United States was a former World Bank Official and member of the Haitian business community named Marc Bazin, who received 14 percent of the vote. To bolster Bazin's chance of winning the elections, the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy (NED) had provided $36 million to aid in his campaign.\(^5\)

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\(^4\) The Bush Administration, and many within the CIA and Department of Defense, operated under the assumption that Aristide was not a stable leader. This notion was grounded in a secret CIA report, written by veteran agent Brian Latell, which described Aristide as mentally unstable, suffering from manic depression. See Mark Danner, "The Fall of the Prophet," *New York Review of Books*, December, 1993, p. 44-45; Christopher Marquis, "CIA Analyst Discounted Haiti Terror," *Miami Herald*, December 18, 1993.

The open backing of the U.S., however, may have actually hurt Bazin's chances as he became known as "the American Candidate."⁶

Before Aristide could take office, a pre-inauguration coup took place – led by the notorious Tonton Macoutes and their new leader, Roger Lafontant. The remnants of the old Duvalier regime began by taking over the presidential palace in January 1991. In response, Lavalas and Aristide supporters took to the streets in angry protest. Events ended up turning violent, resulting in the death of over a dozen Macoutes members.⁷ To many in Washington, the murders were seen as a ghastly harbinger. Some member of the press immediately associated the violence with Aristide supporters, and Aristide himself, thereby largely ignoring the brutal history of the paramilitary group.⁸

Because of the massive mobilization in response to the coup attempt, on February 7, 1991, Aristide was able to peacefully take office in the capital city of Port-au-Prince. Following his inauguration, foreign governments, including the United States, pledged increased aid to Haiti, the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere. Aristide soon began to see what appeared to be the first fruits of his presidential leadership - opening the first round of attempts at economic reform and the enforcement of a clearly defined legal structure. President Bush and his administration were glad to see the country at least giving the impression of

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⁸ One of the harshest critics of the president was the journalist Howard French of The New York Times. See Farmer, The Uses of Haiti, pp. 130-131; see also Brune, The United States and Post-Cold War Interventions: Bush and Clinton in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia, p. 44.
progress. On August 9, 1991, Vice President Dan Quayle addressed the Haitian government on a visit to the fledgling democracy. He declared:

To the brave people of Haiti, I say: Welcome. Welcome for the first time, and finally, to the great family of democracies. Welcome to the extraordinary revolution of liberty that is sweeping the world, throwing off the dismal legacy of dictatorships and tyranny, and – at last – unlocking the human potential of all citizens to make their own choices, in the voting booth and in the marketplace.⁹

Quayle went on to state that President Bush had personally asked him to come to Haiti to congratulate the nation on "the first free, peaceful, and unquestionably legitimate election in Haiti's history," and to make known that "America joins Haiti in pledging a rebirth in the relationship between our two nations – a relationship of honor and respect." Quayle spent the last half of his speech encouraging the Haitian people to support free and open international markets – drawing a close connection between liberal markets and Haiti's ability to achieve economic success – in which the United States would play an extremely important role as a major contributor of international aid, and as the dominating force of the World Bank. The United States was offering an invitation to Haiti and President Aristide to become partners in the post-Cold War democratic world.

Aristide’s First Months in Office

Many nations across the globe joined together in common praise for the Haitian elections and the start of what was hopefully a turn from Haiti’s turbulent past. President Aristide’s inauguration was not only important for the hopes that many Haitians had for him, but also symbolically, as it was five years to the day that Baby Doc Duvalier had fled the island for France. At the inaugural ceremony, however, few world leaders were present. It was not necessarily that they did not support the new president or the election’s reliability. The Persian Gulf War had taken center stage, as dozens of nations united to expel Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. Former President Jimmy Carter represented the United States in Port-au-Prince, a city that he would return to later in an attempt to negotiate a settlement for President Aristide’s reinstitution as the leader of Haiti.

In the months after Aristide’s assumption of presidential duties, it was clear that he was not going to settle for the status quo. To combat Haiti’s corrupt and violent history of police and military brutality, President Aristide commenced one of his earliest attempts at institutional change by retiring many senior military officers in an attempt to reduce the number of active military officers and to eradicate the old Duvalier legacy within the armed forces. Some of these men were involved in the attempted coups that took place just prior to Aristide’s inauguration. One particular exchange would come back to haunt the president. Aristide replaced Lieutenant
General Herard Abraham, someone who had actually worked to thwart a coup just prior to the Catholic priest's swearing in,\textsuperscript{10} with Brigadier General Raoul Cédras. Cédras was to play a very important role in the years to come, eventually leading the coup d'état that would send Aristide fleeing the country.\textsuperscript{11}

Aristide's agenda also included various other measures designed to create a permanent and lasting political peace in Haiti. In addition to his attempts at increasing civilian control over the military and law enforcement agencies, plans were being drafted to challenge the hierarchical economic infrastructure that had produced such a blatant disparity in wealth between the black Creole-speaking peasants and the mulatto French-speaking upper class. Aristide also launched numerous investigations into corruption and human rights violations, many of which were aimed at the historically abusive and cruel paramilitary group known as the Tonton Macoutes.\textsuperscript{12}

One of the accurate criticisms leveled at the president in his first months in office was that he ruled in an authoritarian manner. Neglecting the Haitian parliament and refusing to establish any sort of connection with the business elite, the president was chided by some as moving back toward the Duvalier days. Alex Dupuy, professor of sociology at Wesleyan University, wrote concerning his relationship with the upper class: "Unfortunately for Aristide, he attempted to


\textsuperscript{11} Some insist that Cédras was on the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency's payroll. See Brune, \textit{The United States and Post-Cold War Interventions: Bush and Clinton in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia}, pp. 38-39.

\textsuperscript{12} Dupuy, \textit{Haiti in the New World Order: The Limits of the Democratic Revolution}, p. 115.
persuade the bourgeoisie by threatening it, thereby dashing any hope for a rapprochement, improbable as the latter may have been."\textsuperscript{13} While it was true that Aristide tended to rule unilaterally, and at times as a bit of a firebrand, the charge that he resembled the violence-prone dictators of the country's past was far from accurate.\textsuperscript{14} Intermittent violence did arise as Aristide supporters and those loyal to the past exchanged blows, but there does not seem to be any credible evidence linking Aristide to the fighting. On the contrary, the former Roman Catholic priest had long been an outspoken advocate of nonviolent resistance, having a strong record of resisting violence even during times when his life was threatened.

With the advent of some reforms, many in the United States, and in the international community, were beginning to view Jean-Bertrand Aristide as the crusader who could possibly bring Haiti out of the gutter of poverty and corruption. Both the United States and the World Bank agreed to renew economic aid to Haiti, and in September, Aristide visited New York City and was given the keys to the city.\textsuperscript{15}

While it appeared ostensibly that the United States and the World Bank were getting ready to disperse economic aid, an unspoken consensus was building among the lenders that Haiti was being led down a populist path, one that was antithetical to the austerity measures promulgated by the United States and many of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 122.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Some critics accused Aristide of inciting mob violence, even to the point of promoting "necklacing," whereby someone is "laced" with a burning tire around their neck (common in Haiti's troubled history). There does not seem to be any evidence supporting these claims, although Aristide did tend to give highly impassioned speeches warning the upper classes of the power of the poor masses. See Farmer, \textit{The Uses of Haiti}, pp. 139-141.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Brune, \textit{The United States and Post-Cold War Interventions: Bush and Clinton in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia}, pp. 45-46.
\end{itemize}
the nongovernmental organizations (NGO).\textsuperscript{16} Aristide's apparent rejection of neoliberal economic policies, from his agrarian reform to his campaign for increases in worker's rights and the minimum wage, began to stir up controversy – and to embolden his enemies.\textsuperscript{17} Selden Rodman accurately foreshadowed this conflict with the United States when he asserted that the "Marxist president of Haiti" [Aristide] would set a precedent making it difficult "for the Bush Administration to hold to its avowed intention to support democracies abroad, especially among the volatile, poverty-stricken small nations of this hemisphere." He later in the article addressed the probable rift with the United States, "Can fences be mended? Only if...Aristide swallows his pride, his Marxism, and his anti-Americanism (understandably inflamed by our Embassy's support for the 'bourgeois candidate,' Bazin), and with rare Christian humility takes council from his tormentors."\textsuperscript{18} Rodman's use of the word "Marxist" is one that most scholars have refrained from using when speaking about Aristide's economic and political views, but one can certainly see the distinct compatibility between Marx's principles and those of Aristide.

There were also powerful forces within the country consistently scheming, hoping to find ways to discredit the president and revert back to the familiar.

Domingo Acevedo, a member of the Inter-American Commission on Human

\textsuperscript{16} For a discussion of the neoliberal model for Haiti, including the proposed austerity measures, seechapter 2 in Alex Dupuy, \textit{Haiti in the New World Order: The Limits of the Democratic Revolution}, p. 21-45.
\textsuperscript{17} For an explanation of the clandestine projects aimed at undermining President Aristide's reputation, see Farmer, \textit{The Uses of Haiti}, pp. 144-148.
\textsuperscript{18} Rodman, "First Test for Democracy," p. 25.
Rights, wrote, "Entrenched groups that had always represented the power of wealth, privilege, and violence in Haiti – particularly the upper class [members of the business elite and large landowners] and the army – viewed Aristide’s populist approach as a threat." With much of the status quo threatened, there were bound to be powerful constituencies in Haiti, likely to be adversely affected by the Aristide reforms, working towards his removal. With a former priest and outspoken advocate for the poor masses at the helm, opposing forces were heading for a battle.

Feeling the pressure, and wanting to defuse it, Aristide nevertheless added fuel to the fire with inflammatory speeches advocating something akin to class warfare and revolution, one of which was given on September 27, 1991, just days before the bloody putsch.

The Cédras Junta

Aristide’s presidency, and that of the newly established constitutional democracy, did not last long. On September 30, 1991, the Aristide-appointed leader of the Haitian army, Brigadier-General Raoul Cédras, together with police chief Joseph-Michel François, successfully overthrew the Aristide government,
proclaiming Cedras president of Haiti. Aristide's time in office lasted from February 7 to September 30, six days short of eight months.

Rumors of the coup had been circulating around the country days before the actual events took place, but there was little to be done. With much of the former Haitian army "retired," there were few forces ready to protect Aristide. The failures of the previous coup, which had saved the president before he even took office, was attributable to the actions of the masses of peasants supportive of their beloved Titid. While their counterattack did ensure that Aristide would take office, the masses were not an assemblage that could be organized in any strategic manner. It had worked once, but there was certainly no guarantee that it would work again, especially given that the assailants had learned some lessons from their recent failure.23

The attack against the president began at his unfortified private residence on the north side of the capital city. Aristide was known to prefer his modest house to the presidential mansion, one more instance where he chose to live among the people instead of above them in the mountains surrounding Port-au-Prince with most of the upper class. As the automatic weapons began to fire, Aristide was secretly led away by the French Ambassador to Haiti, Jean-Raphael Dufour, but many others died in the firefight. He was taken to the National Palace where an ambush had been previously arranged. Aristide was dragged in handcuffs to the

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23 President Aristide describes in his autobiography measures that were taken to keep the Haitian masses from assembling as they had done in the Lafontant coup. One example was the killing of Michel Favard, the director of national radio, who had just begun to call for a peasant uprising to counter the rebellion. See Jean-Bertrand Aristide, *Aristide: An Autobiography* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993), p. 156.
leader of the coup, General Raoul Cédras, who the president had just months ago instated as the head of the army. Many within the rebellion were clamoring for Aristide’s execution right there on the spot, as they had done to many of his friends and guards at his private residence. The only reason he was not put to death, according to Aristide, was due to the French minister’s pleading.  

The French embassy arranged for the deposed president to be flown to Caracas, Venezuela, on a plane sent by President Carlos Andres Perez. On the way to the airport, the convoy came under attack several times, with one of Aristide’s guards being killed. Eventually, Aristide arrived in the United States, where he would spend three years in exile, actively campaigning for international aid for his return to power.

Following Aristide’s removal, Haiti’s already broken society collapsed. Human rights violations, political persecution, and murder became commonplace. Economic sanctions began to be imposed from across the globe, with the greatest burden affecting the lower classes. Lavalas supporters went into hiding, as more and more bodies of Aristide supporters appeared. Thomas Weiss, Distinguished Professor of Political Science at the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York, wrote, “Although Haiti’s history has consistently been marked by repression of opposition parties and of the poor, the human rights violations following the coup were unprecedented.” Examples of these vicious methods of repression, including “brutal beatings, torture, disappearances, execution

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24 Much of the account of the overthrow was taken from Aristide, *Aristide: An Autobiography*. See also Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti*, pp. 149-153.
without trial, corruption, extortion, gang rape, assassination, mutilation, and the
destruction of property" were all employed by the putchists in order to suppress any form of uprising against the militia.²⁵

Once in control, the military junta took over the national radio and television stations stating their reasons, and the justification, for the deposition of the priest-president. Troops were positioned all over Port-au-Prince with instructions to fire on anyone trying to establish any sort of resistance. Although the military leaders were employing fierce, violent tactics against any opposition, they were also taking calculated steps to court public opinion. The appointment of a private citizen, Joseph Nerette, someone not associated with the military leaders, to take over presidential duties was one of the first steps aimed at mitigating international efforts to restore Aristide to power. By doing so, Cédras and Francois hoped to place a civilian façade on the regime.

CHAPTER IV. THE BUSH POLICY ON HAITI

International Response

Immediately following the coup, foreign governments and international organizations moved quickly to condemn it and to call for Aristide's return. The Organization of American States (OAS), a regional body made up of countries in the western hemisphere, convened a meeting on October 2 in Washington, D.C. The OAS had two pressing objectives; to send a delegation to Port-au-Prince for immediate negotiations with the military powers concerning Aristide's reinstatement, and to issue a formal OAS decree proclaiming the illegality of the coup.

While meeting in Washington, OAS Secretary General João Baena Soares reviewed the demands of the Cédras regime with the council members. They included autonomy in governance for the military and police, the return of retired military leaders, the exile of military leaders appointed by Aristide, the stepping down of Aristide's personal security team, and the elimination of anti-Duvalier hiring in government.¹ Just four months prior to the rebellion, OAS member nations had convened a meeting in Santiago, Chile, where they unanimously agreed and signed

what later became the Santiago Agreement (formally Resolution 1080). Robert Maguire, the Haitian representative for the Inter-American Foundation, wrote:

That agreement [Santiago Agreement] in June 1991 mandated nonrecognition of a regime that seized power from a democratically elected government and required diplomatic action to restore the constitutional authorities. Ratified only shortly before and unanimously supported, the accord compelled hemispheric actors – many of them relatively young democratic governments with restive militaries of their own – to press to restore Haiti’s constitutional authorities, whatever their views of government and its leader. Having played a role along with the United Nations in the election that brought Aristide to power, the OAS had a special stake. Yet, facing intimidation from the military, the delegation retreated to Washington to lead the OAS in condemning the coup and imposing hemispheric trade sanctions. 2

Over the course of two days of negotiations, which included a meeting with President Aristide, in which he described the events of the coup, the OAS adopted two resolutions calling for it to send a delegation to Haiti, and to create an assembly, known as OEA-DEMOC, to aid in the restoration of democratic institutions and

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human rights in Haiti. This mission, however, did not meet with much success, as the Cédras regime dug in their heels, refusing to allow the delegation's admission into Haiti.

The United Nations, following the lead of the OAS and the United States, refused to acknowledge the coup leaders as a legitimate government. Their response, however, according to Thomas Weiss, was "neither as rapid nor as vigorous, largely due to the widespread unease among many developing countries that such action would set a precedent concerning intervention in the name of democracy and human rights." On October 11, the U.N. issued the General Assembly Resolution 46/7 which "strongly" condemned the "attempted illegal replacement of the constitutional President of Haiti," and expressed disdain for the violence taking place in Haiti. While the U.N. did make its stance known in this resolution, most analysts labeled Resolution 46/7 as toothless, asking its "member states...to take measures in support of the resolutions of the Organization of American States," but offering no supplementary input or sanctions.

Economic sanctions began to be put in place by the tripartite negotiating forces – made up of the United Nations, United States, and the OAS."
the OAS mission to Haiti, and its subsequent dismissal by the military, sanctions were endorsed in order to freeze assets owned by the Haitian government. An embargo was also enacted, restricting all trade goods with the exception of humanitarian aid such as food and medicine.

With the embargos authorized, the living situation in Haiti seriously deteriorated. Haiti was already the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, rivaling sub-Saharan Africa, so any sort of decline in conditions could induce a major humanitarian crisis. The trade restrictions, combined with the dictatorial oppression, initiated another crisis – that of Haitian refugees fleeing the island. Over 3000 Haitians, in the month following the coup, took to the seas in rickety life boats attempting to find their way to the shores of Florida. Needless to say, many of them did not survive the trip.7

The Bush Administration Reacts to the Coup

The initial strategy of the Bush Administration, and also that of Clinton later, must be understood in the context of the post-Cold War world. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the reputation of the communist ideology, United States foreign policy began to publicly gravitate away from anti-communism and toward the promotion of democracy around the world as priority number one. The OAS, with many of its members having just entered the world of representative government,

also allied itself with this new political ambition. The much-heralded Santiago Agreement, which provided a united front against anti-democratic forces, sent a clear message to all in the western hemisphere that democracy was to be the new norm. This agreement was, however, a double-edged sword for the United States. A report by the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) commented, “It was a tricky situation, where on the one hand the United States and the international institutions wanted to change and mobilize the society, and on the other hand, there was a risk that the people might have their own agenda at odds with the U.S. policy.”

It was in this context that the Bush Administration, in close contact with the OAS, approached the Haitian crisis. With Jean-Bertrand Aristide having been overwhelmingly elected President in an election legitimized as free and fair by the U.S., the U.N., and the OAS, the Bush team found itself in a position that seemed to lend itself to only one response – that of support for the exiled president. Any appearance of support, let alone recognition, for the dictatorial military junta would undermine the international credibility of United States as Washington sought to promote democracy across the globe. With self-imposed constraints, the executive office launched its initial response.

Immediately following the September coup, the Bush Administration, fresh from a resoundingly successful war in the Persian Gulf, found common ground with the OAS and other nations, condemning the coup and calling for the immediate

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return of Aristide's government. President Bush formally responded on October 4, 1991 with Executive Order 12775. The order proclaimed:

I, George Bush…find that the grave events that have occurred in the Republic of Haiti to disrupt the legitimate exercise of power by the democratically elected government of the country constitute an unusual threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States, and hereby declare a national emergency to deal with the threat.9

President Bush later gave direct reassurances to the exiled leader by announcing that the United States government was committed to his reinstatement. He also expressed his desire in attempting to find a solution that the international community "not settle for the lowest common denominator."10

Within five days of the coup, the United States joined the other two major players in the Haitian quandary, the U.N. and OAS, in placing restrictions on U.S. exports to Haiti and all financial transactions with the Haitian government.11 Following the imposition of these two U.S. embargos, Assistant Secretary of State Bernard W. Aronson expressed support for the OAS resolutions and their own restrictions. In reference to the American bans, he vehemently testified:

We've taken two strong measures here tonight. We have done so not to punish Haiti or the suffering people of Haiti but – as other delegations have said – to send a clear message throughout this hemisphere that those who have used violence to threaten democracy will not go unpunished. They will be isolated. They will be cut off. They will be denied legitimacy, and they will be pariahs until democracy is restored.\(^{12}\)

With the U.N., OAS, and the United States speaking as one voice, the Haitian junta responded with defiance. The Prime Minister of Haiti, Jean-Jacques Honorat, who had just days earlier been appointed by the military regime, defiantly argued against the international embargo, claiming that it would lead to civil war in Haiti. Unbeknownst to Honorat, the embargos had already been instituted. Venezuela, the main oil supplier to Haiti, had already agreed to refrain from shipping any more oil to the island nation until order was restored.\(^{13}\)


\(^{13}\) Perusse, *Haitian Democracy Restored: 1991-1995*, p. 26. Economic sanctions placed on the Haitian regime during Aristide's exile definitely hurt the country socially and economically, but there were cracks in the embargos. European nations, refusing to recognize the sanctions, continued to ship goods to Haiti, including oil. Because of this, goods were still being imported into Haiti, although on a much smaller scale, and at a price which only the wealthy and powerful could afford. Therefore, most of the sanction's burden fell on the poor peasants. See Weiss, *Military-Civilian Interactions: Intervening in Humanitarian Crises*, p. 177. See also Lester Brune, *The United States and Post-Cold War Interventions: Bush and Clinton in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia: 1992-1998*, 47. See also Maguire, *Haiti Held Hostage: International Responses to the Quest for Nationhood 1986-1996*, p. 31, 33.
Refugee Crisis

Aristide’s overthrow, and the chaos that ensued in Haiti, sent many poor peasants fleeing into the sea on unstable life rafts. Many of the evacuees had sold all of their belongings in order to purchase the rafts, or at least the materials that could be formed into a handmade seagoing vessel. Roland Perusse, director of the Inter-American institute and author of Historical Dictionary on Haiti, commented, the crafts “were generally overloaded, ill-equipped, unsafe, with insufficient food, water, gasoline and other supplies. Storms swept many overboard. Others became seasick. The chances of reaching the Florida coast were virtually nil, if only because of the watchful Coast Guard.”

Reaching Florida from the nearest coast of Haiti was at the least a 1000 kilometer journey, making the familiar Cuban emigration (250 kilometers), which Americans had grown accustomed to, seem undemanding.

This inundation created an immediate policy predicament for the Bush Administration. Over 6000 refugees fled the island in the first two months following the coup, and many more were ready to leave the shores as increasing violence and persecution began to envelop the nation. With Haitians dying in the seas, it would be extremely difficult for the administration to accept Haitians as political refugees because that would only serve as an incentive for more to attempt the crossing. On the other hand, to deny the Haitians an asylum investigation would appear callous and even hypocritical. Could one logically argue that Cuban refugees fleeing political oppression should be accepted on U.S. shores, but Haitian should not,

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especially with the clear and poignant statements coming from the State Department, and the President himself, concerning the "assault on Haitian democracy?"

Initially, President Bush ordered the refugees to be returned to Haiti without an asylum hearing, defending the policy as a safeguard against further life-threatening emigration. Members of Congress, specifically the Congressional Black Caucus, and human rights organizations denounced the policy as blatantly discriminatory. The Bush Administration persisted, arguing that the refugees were fleeing for economic, not political reasons, and therefore were not eligible for asylum. In December 1991, however, Federal District Judge C. Clyde Atkins ordered the U.S. government to cease repatriation of the Haitians, rejecting the economic refugee reasoning, and ruling in favor of equal treatment with the Cubans. Atkins's ruling was later overturned by a higher court, followed by a modified Bush policy whereby the Haitian exiles were reluctantly ordered by President Bush to be taken to detention camps at the U.S. Naval Base in Guantanamo. In an official State Department Dispatch, the United States argued its case for the repatriation of Haitians, as opposed to Cubans, making three main points:

1. Cubans are "fleeing one of the world's remaining communist dictatorships. Those conditions do not apply in Haiti."

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2. There is hope that negotiations between "Haitian legislators" and President Aristide will come to a peaceful settlement and the "prompt restoration of constitutional rule." There is also no comparison between the current conditions in Haiti and the "systematic, extensive repression that is a condition of daily life in Cuba."

3. The current migrations leaving Haiti did not begin with the initial overthrow of President Aristide, but a month later. "This indicates that the political crisis, in itself, did not spark significant migration."16

President Bush himself later came out to endorse the repatriation of Haitian refugees. Following the signing of Executive Order 12324 on May 24, 1992, which authorized the U.S. Coast Guard to repatriate the Haitian refugees, President Bush attempted to reinforce his policy by speaking to the press.17 Maintaining his conviction that the Haitian people were fleeing economic oppression, the President stated on May 27, "I am convinced that the people in Haiti are not being physically oppressed."18 The President reiterated his position regarding the nature of the refugees months later when responding to a journalist who questioned the validity of his premise by stating, "I must have different information than you, but I've got pretty

good information as President of the United States that these people are not being persecuted when they go to file their claims for asylum."^{19}

While the disparity between the situations in Haiti and Cuba could not be denied, it was disingenuous to argue, as the policy makers in Washington did, that the Haitians fleeing the island did not do so for political reasons. It was true that the majority of the Haitian exodus took place weeks after the coup, but that timing did not preclude that their reasons for leaving were not directly resulting from the overthrow of President Aristide, a political event. Further, even if the exodus was not a direct consequence of the coup itself, it was quite possible, more likely probable, that the Haitian people were waiting to see if Aristide would be reinstated as he had been in the weeks following his inauguration. Strengthening this argument is the fact that it takes days, even weeks, for news to spread across the Haitian countryside. With only one in ten Haitians having access to a phone, and one in ninety-four having internet access, there was obviously a time gap between an event and its transmission across the land.\textsuperscript{20}

Even more damaging to the administration's rhetoric regarding the refugees was the fact that political repression need not originate from the coup d'etat itself. It was quite clear from all reports that repression, in the form of imprisonment, assassinations, and general intimidation, was rampant across Haiti in the months following the coup, thereby giving Haitians a continuing reason to leave – that of

political and social tyranny. One would have to argue, in order to support the claim that Haitians were leaving for economic reasons, that had President Aristide not been overthrown, the Haitian people would still have decided to set out on a life-threatening voyage across the Caribbean. There does not seem to be any support for that claim.

**Backing Off**

It was only days following the coup when the Bush Administration began retreating from its unwavering support of President Aristide and the corresponding sanctions.²¹ New ideas of power sharing began to be circulated, looking to the reinstatement of President Aristide, but with limited powers.²² During the month of February 1992, in a proposed accord entitled the “Washington Plan,” a last ditch effort was put forward in which Aristide was asked to make the following concessions, aimed at finding a negotiated settlement.

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²² The Bush Administration eventually recommended that President Aristide enter into a power sharing arrangement with former presidential candidate Marc Bazin, the unofficial U.S. candidate who received 14 percent of the vote. This was an obvious step away from Aristide and toward the traditional power structure that the Americans were accustomed to dealing with. Bazin was known to be a front man for the Haitian military and upper class. If the true intention of the United States was to return democracy to Haiti, then it is unclear why Bazin would have been involved in the power sharing structure, as he was not an elected member of any office, and with President Aristide having won 67% of the vote – a clear mandate. The evidence clearly illuminates the U.S. desire for the familiar status quo. See “Power Sharing? Haiti,” *The Economist*, August 15, 1992, pp. 34-36. See also Morris Morley and Chris McGillion, “‘Disobedient’ Generals and the Politics of Redemocratization: The Clinton Administration and Haiti” *Political Science Quarterly* 112.3 (Autumn, 1997), pp. 366-367.
1. Give amnesty to all that were involved in his September ouster.

2. Agree to a power sharing structure with a Prime Minister that would be proposed by the OAS.

3. Allow General Raoul Cédras to temporarily remain head of the armed forces.

4. Acceptance of all decisions made by the National Assembly in his exile, with an option for appeal to a reconciliation commission.²³

Aristide yielded to the demands placed on him by the United States and the OAS, and agreed to the majority of the plan, even though he strongly opposed most of the arrangement. Alex Dupuy correctly identified the impetus for the concessions asked of Aristide. He wrote, “The United States could not simply abandon its traditional allies in the Haitian military and the bourgeoisie and return Aristide to power without weakening him and forcing him to compromise with both the army leadership and the bourgeoisie.”²⁴ In the end, the plan fell through with the projunta Haitian leaders declaring it unconstitutional. President Aristide also balked at the proposed accord, arguing that the amnesty clause pertained to “political” crimes, not “common law” crimes which he accused Cedras of committing. Aristide’s rebuff drove the wedge between himself and the Bush team even further, as the White House blamed his intransigence for the failure of the plan.

With the demise of the Washington Plan, the Bush Administration seemed to lose interest, and with it, the drive to restore Aristide. Questions again arose in Washington concerning just what kind of support ought to be given to the exiled priest. Some began to have reservations about the ability, both psychologically and politically, of Aristide to lead his nation in a manner consistent with U.S. interests. Demand that Aristide find some common ground between himself and the Haitian Parliament began to alter the U.S. view of a successful resolution. An alternative game plan was formulated for the reinstatement of Aristide, indicating "a new vision of what administration officials had in mind when they spoke of the restoration of Haitian Democracy: it must not antagonize the military or the traditional political class which had largely accommodated itself to the coup."26

The Bush Administration shifted its emphasis from the restoration of democracy, and therefore President Aristide, to that of maintaining the status quo. There were numerous reasons for the retreat. First, the United States believed the Haitian military and business class to be an integral part of any political compromise. Second, a reassessment of President Aristide's abilities to govern came into question, as did his compatibility with the desires of the United States for its neighbor. Morris Morley, professor of politics and specialist in U.S.-Latin American relations at Australia's Macquarie University, wrote, "support for Aristide's return was predicated on the latter's willingness to accept specific limitations on his presidential powers, not least because his efforts to democratize the Haitian state were

perceived as a potential threat to longer-term U.S. objectives," including political stability, a reformed military (whose links to the Pentagon remained in tact), and the promotion of a liberal economy.27

Another justification for the Bush team to pull away from Aristide, at least behind the scenes, was attributable to his promulgation of a populist, left-wing ideology. Even though Aristide was far from becoming the next Fidel Castro, the United States did not hesitate to group him with his neighboring leader. It was no secret that many within the U.S. State Department, the C.I.A., and the Executive office were not comfortable with a western leader who powerfully spoke about the shortcomings of capitalist and neoliberal philosophies. In addition, Aristide went even further in his criticisms, condemning the United States specifically for trying to overpower the Haitian government in order to install open markets and neoliberal policies in a society that did not benefit from them.28 These anti-American diatribes, which painted the United States as a neocolonial economic power, contributed to the Bush Administration’s half-hearted attempts at reinstatement.

Beyond speaking out, Aristide also began to implement numerous leftist policies during his time in office – including land distribution reform and raising the minimum wage. He also utilized anti-elitist class warfare rhetoric in his fight to alter the power structure in Haiti, which in turn aroused insecurities within the Haitian

27 Morley and McGillion, "'Disobedient' Generals and the Politics of Redemocratization: The Clinton Administration and Haiti," p. 365. It is also at this time that Morley and McGillion claim the CIA began secretly waging a campaign to discredit Aristide and forge links between the CIA and the Cèdars-led military. Also see R. Jeffrey Smith, "Haitian Paramilitary Chief Spied for CIA, Sources Say," Washington Post, October 7, 1994.

28 For the most comprehensive exposition on President Aristide’s critiques of the United States economic colonialism and promotion of neoliberal policies, see Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Eyes of the Heart: Seeking a Path for the Poor in an Age of Globalization (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2000).
bourgeois community, and also with American professionals engaged in business with Haiti. While Aristide's populist beliefs had been widely known, they served as a reason for the Bush Administration to begin backing away from the former president when given the chance. It would have been extremely difficult for any U.S. President initially to refrain from expressing outrage over the coup, at least publicly, but the post-Cold War, pro-democracy atmosphere did not require that the Washington power brokers support the exiled Aristide privately. With the Haitian conflict on the periphery of American attention, President Bush knew there would not be the mass outcry for Aristide's restoration. Consistent with the Bosnian policy concurrently employed by the Bush team, it opted to "wait it out," publicly expressing outrage while surreptitiously hoping to refrain from any entanglements which could lead to a quagmire, regardless of the stake.29

Also weighing on the policy makers was the belief of many in the press corps, and the U.S. government, that President Aristide had and would rule in an authoritarian manner, including the promotion of violence to achieve his personal ambitions.30 They claimed that Aristide had been toppled owing to his "authoritarian behavior, radical policies, and his followers' acts of retribution against political enemies, including the practice of 'necklacing' opponents with burning tires."31 A surprisingly large number of journalists, headed by Howard French of the New York

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29 For an explanation of the Bush policy towards the looming civil war in Bosnia, see Thomas H. Henriksen, Clinton's Foreign Policy in Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, and North Korea (Stanford University: Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 1996), p. 13.
31 Henriksen, Clinton's Foreign Policy in Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, and North Korea, p. 22.
*Times*, began to portray the Cédras regime as a respectable command, having saved the citizens of Haiti from a brutal dictator.\(^{32}\)

In addition to the questions regarding Aristide's governing abilities and political mindset, the Haitian exodus across the Caribbean Sea, and the response from President Bush, gave rise to an atmosphere that again suggested the idea that America did not want to fight for the return of President Aristide. With negotiations between the Cédras regime, the OAS, and United States still ongoing, one ill effect that the repatriations had on the talks was that Cédras and his cohorts began to feel as though they had nothing to fear from the Bush Administration, giving them confidence in their mission (if it could be considered a mission).

Contending that the flight from Haiti was not an escape from political oppression sent a clear message throughout the world that the United States did not believe the military regime was politically oppressive, much less despotic. To address the refugee issue in the manner that the United States did was to completely ignore the reports coming out of the country concerning the horrible atrocities being committed daily by the Cédras regime.\(^{33}\) Alex Dupuy explained, “By defining the ‘boat people’ as economic rather than political refugees and returning them to Haiti, the Bush Administration implicitly endorsed the coup, disregarding the military’s human rights violations, and encouraging its further repression of Aristide’s

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supporters. It also sent a message to Aristide: If he wanted an end to the repression and the killings of his supporters, as well as a solution to the refugee crisis, it was incumbent upon him to reach a political settlement with the de facto authorities.\textsuperscript{34}

\textbf{Settling for the Status Quo}

The Bush administration finally decided to take action after numerous reports started coming in documenting the deteriorating conditions in Haiti. Unfortunately for Aristide, President Bush responded by relaxing the embargo placed on the country.\textsuperscript{35} Instead of pushing forward with the efforts, at least rhetorically, to remove the regime and reinstate the exiled president, the United States symbolically capitulated, thereby propping up the military forces in Haiti. The reasoning given for the moderation of the sanctions was to diminish the impact on the poor of the country. While this line of reasoning made sense to the public, it is questionable whether that was the true reason for the reverse. The basis for this suspicion derives from the knowledge, which was recognized at the time, that most poor Haitians, in spite of their plight, were in favor of the sanctions. They were willing to bear the burden of the economic restrictions, hoping for the return of their cherished Titid.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{34} Dupuy, \textit{Haiti in the New World Order: The Limits of the Democratic Revolution}, p. 140.
\textsuperscript{36} "Punishing Victims: Haiti," \textit{The Economist}, February 8, 1992, p. 36.
For the exiled leader, this move was taken to mean that the United States was losing its resolve, caving in to the domestic political pressures in a fashion that eased the refugee encumbrance, but also eased the pressure on the junta to relent.\textsuperscript{37} The Bush team also decided to lift the restrictions that had earlier been placed on American-owned assembly plants, which further signaled to Aristide that the administration was not fully committed to pushing for his return.

At this point, the unilateral vision of the United States began to emerge victorious as the Haitian objectives became obscured behind the U.S. emphasis on avoiding political snares. The Bush Administration had sixteen months to find a solution, with the aid of the OAS and the UN, to the Haitian dilemma. In the end, the United States clearly turned its back on Aristide, and in turn, democracy. Their methodology of publicly condemning the coup while privately pressuring Aristide for concessions ultimately led to a stalemate – one that did not seem to greatly bother the administration. Even though the U.S. had entered a "new age," where the support of democracy and human rights would be a cornerstone of American foreign policy, the administration opted for familiarity and stability – not for Haiti, but for U.S. geopolitical interests. It was now up to President Clinton to take over the Haitian policy.

CHAPTER V. TRANSITION TO THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION

The Campaign and Election

In President Bush’s last months in office, Haiti appeared to be slowly falling off the executive radar screen. Both parties, Aristide and the opposing Cédras regime, had been portrayed by the administration, and the U.S. press, as intransigent. This perception allowed the Bush team to draw back from the fray, leaving most of the negotiations to the OAS. It was still clear that the American public did not want a serious intervention in Haiti, which suited the White House just fine – but trouble was on the horizon. The Governor of Arkansas, William Jefferson Clinton, was emerging as a candidate for President of the United States, and Haiti was on his campaign agenda.

Although the humanitarian crisis had been lessened by the easing of the embargo, and fewer refugees were attempting to navigate the Caribbean waters en route to the U.S., there remained terrible political oppression, specifically aimed at Aristide supporters, and a continued economic strain on the already poverty stricken nation. The continued repatriations by the U.S. Coast Guard, as ordered by President Bush, certainly curtailed the number of refugees, but they did nothing to resolve the democratic crisis in Haiti.
During the intense battle for the White House in 1992, candidate Clinton attempted to gain ground on President Bush by critiquing his Haiti policy and bringing attention to the horrible conditions from which the refugees were attempting to escape. Clinton spoke out calling the forced repatriations "appalling" and stating that once in office, he would overturn it.¹ Not only did Bill Clinton critique Bush's refugee policy, he also called the President's character into question. On the campaign trail, he "repeatedly faulted Bush for playing 'racial politics' by repatriating Haitian refugees. Clinton asserted passionately, 'I wouldn't be shipping those poor people back.'"² Clinton also challenged Bush's policies on Haiti by attacking the embargo reduction. According to the governor, the embargo was created to procure the restoration of President Aristide, and until that was accomplished, the pressure needed to continue.³

Although President Bush was extremely popular during most of the 1992 election year, Governor Clinton gained momentum as the year progressed. Campaigning as a "new Democrat," Clinton survived numerous character attacks, and after receiving the Democratic nomination, he went on the offensive, attacking President Bush where he believed the incumbent was most vulnerable – the economy. With the help of a perceived nationwide economic downturn, his strategy worked, with Clinton winning forty-three percent of the popular vote to Bush's thirty-

² Thomas H. Henriksen, Clinton's Foreign Policy in Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, and North Korea (Stanford University: Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 1996) p. 22.
seven. It was now time to deliver on his campaign promises – including those on Haiti.

**Transition to Clinton**

With inauguration only weeks away, President-elect Clinton started to retreat from his earlier criticisms of the Bush refugee policy. United States reconnaissance flights started bringing back intelligence reports showing more than 100,000 makeshift boats being built in Haiti. The Pentagon came out with a statement that the potential influx of refugees would be unmanageable and extremely dangerous.\(^4\) It became increasingly clear that Bill Clinton intended to back out of his earlier campaign promise, thereby aligning himself almost identically with the Bush policy.

President Clinton was soon immersed in questions regarding the apparent continuation of the Bush plan. While admitting that he might have been too harsh in his criticism of Bush,\(^5\) he responded to a journalist, “My policy is not the same as President Bush’s policy because I’m trying to bring democracy back, because I am committed to putting more resources there to process people who want to be political refugees.” Clinton was here referring to his policy of encouraging Haitians

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to apply for asylum at the U.S. embassy in Port-au-Prince. While this was a slight policy shift, in real terms, little changed. The President did try to create an opportunity for Haitians to apply for refuge in the United States, but few of the Haitian population were willing to step out in front of the Cédras regime, in the midst of unyielding political oppression and murder, for a slight chance that they would be accepted for asylum.

Clinton's retreat on the repatriation issue did not undermine his support for President Aristide, or his commitment to Haiti. In a joint press conference with Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, President Clinton expressed his "commitment to restoring democracy in Haiti." He also pledged to continue to work with the OAS and U.N., which had just recently appointed Dante Caputo to be the official OAS/U.N. representative for negotiations with the de facto government in Haiti. He also stepped up the rhetoric, albeit slightly, when he stated that the United States would, with regard to the negotiations, "continue to push ahead either on the course we are on now, or if that fails, on a more vigorous course toward that end."

As a side note, Clinton also made reference to the concerns over Aristide's ability to govern the people of Haiti in a fair and legal manner. Commenting on reports that charged Aristide with authoritarian rule while in office, the president again stated his support for the "democratically elected government," but qualified his assertion by

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saying that the future government must "not abuse the human rights of ordinary citizens" – clearly a warning to the exiled President.⁷

President Clinton also hinted at an explanation for why the situation in Haiti was so difficult to resolve. On the one hand, there was the first democratically elected president in the history of the Haitian state. It would be disingenuous and against stated U.S. policy not to support him. It was something Washington wanted to do, and it was something they should do, as it matched foreign policy and human rights objectives for the western hemisphere, but also for the world in general. On the other hand, Haiti had a president who did not conform to the desires of the United States on many issues. Many within the U.S. government had publicly questioned the human rights record of President Aristide, as well as many who had privately objected to his populist economic policies. President Clinton, responding to reporter's question concerning the Haitian predicament, chose only to respond to the human rights questions when discussing the difficult negotiations. He stated:

I got, that you mean by complexity of the situation in Haiti the fact that Father Aristide was plainly elected by an overwhelming majority and is plainly still – has the support of an overwhelming majority of the people; but while, in the brief period when he was in authority, made some statements which caused people in the military and others to have fear for their security, their personal security, in ways that are inconsistent with running a democracy, which has to

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⁷ "The President's News Conference with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney," Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents 29.5 (Feb. 8, 1993), pp. 147-152.
recognize human rights – does that present the complexity? Yes, that is the nub of the issue.\(^8\)

President Clinton clearly foreshadowed the fight to come with his comments concerning the “complexities” in Haiti, and with Aristide.

**Amplified Support**

Following Clinton’s policy reversal regarding the repatriations, there was a public relations need to show some sign of progress on the foreign relations front. To attain that goal, President Clinton assigned the former U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua, Lawrence Pezzullo, to be the special envoy on Haiti policy.\(^9\) He would replace Bernard Aronson, who had been Bush’s special envoy to Haiti. On March 16, 1993, Clinton made clear his intention, at a press conference with Aristide, to “push forward with a rapid settlement” of the Haitian crisis, and to work closely alongside both the United Nations and the OAS. When asked later in the press conference if he intended to set a date for the return of Aristide, as the Haitian President had been asking for in previous days, President Clinton responded, “I certainly think that we ought to return President Aristide in the near future. But I think that the date for the conclusion of the negotiations” ought to be brought about

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through the United Nations. President Clinton also announced a commitment to participate in a 5 year, $1 billion multinational effort to rebuild the Haitian economy. It was clear that the United States was willing to cooperate, but the impetus for direct action was not strong enough at the time. For the Clinton Administration, the hopes rested on Lawrence Pezzulo and his counterpart at the UN/OAS, Dante Caputo.

At the same press conference, President Aristide had a chance to respond to some questions raised by the reporters. In a clear gesture of thanks to the Clinton team for its perceived commitment to resolving the Haitian crisis, Aristide made a point, which he reiterated numerous times, of stressing nonviolent resistance in Haiti. Knowing that many in Washington did not favor his return, he made a concerted effort to thank President Clinton, and to assure everyone listening that he would work together with the United States for the peaceful restoration of democracy. It was apparent from Aristide's upbeat demeanor that he felt he had a new partner in the mission, especially after enduring the stalled, half-hearted attempts of the Bush Administration. Just the fact that Clinton continued to meet with Aristide at the White House signaled the increased support, especially considering that President Bush did not meet once with Aristide in all of 1992.

President Clinton further confirmed Aristide's hopes for increased diplomatic action in a statement with the exiled priest a week later when he asserted, "I want to make it clear that the United States is committed strongly to a much more
aggressive effort to restore Mr. Aristide to his presidency and to, over the long run, work with the people of Haiti to restore conditions of economic prosperity."\textsuperscript{12} In response, President Aristide broadcast a speech to the Haitian people in his native Creole commending the United States, the OAS, and the U.N. for their determination to find a solution to the crisis. He also admonished his people not to take to the seas in hopes of reaching the United States, asking them instead to persist on the island, remaining committed to non-violence.\textsuperscript{13}

By April, it appeared that the negotiations were making some progress. Earlier in February, the first step toward a negotiated settlement was taken when the U.S. State Department announced an "agreement between all parties on an international civilian observer mission for Haiti."\textsuperscript{14} Building on that accomplishment, Dante Caputo and Lawrence Pezzullo arranged for a meeting with both sides of the conflict. Bringing together the power of the United States, the UN, and the OAS, the two men made significant progress, continually traveling back and forth between Washington and Port-au-Prince attempting to acquire concessions from both sides. Raoul Cédras met with negotiators, and in late April President Aristide reluctantly agreed to a proposed plan that called for sending a multinational peacekeeping force to Haiti, the resignation of top military leaders, general amnesty for the armed forces, and for the formation of a new compromise government.


\textsuperscript{14} "Restoring Democracy in Haiti," \textit{United States Department of State Dispatch} 4.7 (Feb. 15, 1993), p. 85.
The optimistic outlook, however, proved to be premature. Talks began to break down during the following months, largely owing to the obstinate and uncompromising negotiating style of the Haitian junta. It became apparent that President Clinton needed to respond to the intransigent behavior. On June 4, President Clinton stated, “In light of their [junta] failure to act constructively, I have determined that the time has come to increase the pressure on the Haitian military, the de facto regime in Haiti and their supporters.” He went on to explain that new sanctions would be put in place, which prevented all civilian military coup supporters from entering the United States.

In the weeks that followed the introduction of the new U.S. sanctions, the United Nations, on June 16, instituted a global oil and arms embargo (Resolution 841), designed to work in tandem with the U.S. restriction. The embargo would go into effect in seven days unless the Cédras regime agreed to a formalized reinstatement plan for President Aristide. Madeleine Albright, the permanent U.S. Representative to the U.N., affirmed the united front approach and explained the U.S. foreign policy methodology, “Though sometimes we will act alone, our foreign policy will necessarily point toward multilateral engagement.” This focus would become a trademark of the Clinton Administration in the eight years they served in Washington.

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Governor's Island Agreement

With the Clinton team stepping up the rhetoric, there were, at the same time, clandestine negotiations going on with an eye on working out a deal with the Cédras regime. It was clear that President Clinton wanted Aristide back in power, but he also hoped to find a settlement that would appease the Haitian economic elite, and the military. Working in tandem with the United Nations, through the work of Special Envoy Dante Caputo, the United States began to intensify the pressure on both Aristide and Cédras to come together to work out a possible solution for the return of the democratically elected leader. Just days before the UN embargo was to be implemented, Cédras agreed to meet with President Aristide, and plans were quickly drawn up for a conference.

On June 28, 1993, talks were convened on New York's Governors Island. An agreement was reached five days later, with both leaders signing. The contract basically outlined a redemocratization scenario for Haiti, including setting a date for Aristide's return – October 30, 1993. Secretary of State Warren Christopher claimed later that month that the Governor's Island Agreement "provides for a peaceful transition to constitutional rule and for President Aristide's return to Haiti. The accord is a victory not only for the Haitian people but for the international community as well." He went on to issue a bit of a cautionary note saying, "While we can and should be proud of what the international community has done, our work is certainly
not yet over. The Governor's Island accord is the first crucial step - but let me emphasize that it is only the first step."\(^{19}\)

In addition to finally setting a solid date for Aristide's return, the agreement included other provisions as well.

1. The U.N embargo would continue until Haiti's Assembly ratified the agreement.

2. Haiti's assembly would legislate reforms of the police and armed forces under UN supervision.

3. Aristide's party and other parties would be free to prepare for the president's restoration.

4. Foreign financial groups would help rebuild Haiti's economy.

5. Amnesty would be granted for the 1991 coup leaders, but Cédras would retire when Aristide returned.

6. Aristide would name a new prime minister before arriving.

7. A 1200 member UN peacekeeping force, including army technicians and engineers from the U.S. and Canada, would help Haiti to rebuild its infrastructure.\(^{20}\)

While the Clinton Administration was quick to declare the agreement a "success," especially since it was still getting into foreign policy challenges,


President Aristide was not so certain. The military junta had made modest "concessions," but President Aristide had agreed to major concessions that essentially limited his power once reinstated. The accord, as Morris Morley and Chris McGillion wrote, "Asked much of the exiled civilian president, little of the military leaders, and relied on a groundless belief in the junta's commitment to 'good faith' negotiations. The....Agreement signaled an escalation of the campaign to shrink Aristide's authority while ostensibly working for his return to Haiti."21

Additionally, the indirect message that the Governor's Island Agreement sent to the Haitian people was simple – there would be no tangible punishment for those who rebelled against rightful governments. Beyond that, there would be no punishment for the brutal atrocities committed by the military leaders while in power. The former police chief, Michel François, who played a major role in the coup and the subsequent brutality where thousands of human rights abuses were reported, was not even mentioned in the agreement. With a country that had such a long history of governments being overthrown by military leaders, granting amnesty to coup leaders and asking Cédras to resign indicated a lack of will to make anyone accountable. There is no doubt that the international community, including the Clinton Administration, hoped the reinstatement of Mr. Aristide would bring back structure and contribute to progress on the island, but there was no accompanying disincentive to those who would attempt to undermine legitimate governments in Haiti's future, including that of Aristide's reinstated government.

While it was questionable whether or not the Governors Island Agreement would be beneficial for the people of Haiti, the Clinton Administration stood to gain. Its main objective was to return democracy and President Aristide to Haiti. The Governor's Island Agreement was supposed to do both. For a U.S. President who did not have much of a foreign policy background, any peaceful transition back to democracy could be considered a success, especially if it did not require placing American troops in harm's way. It allowed the administration to look tough in the face of an illegal rebellion, but not overzealous with the use of military forces. It also mollified the American public, who were overwhelmingly opposed to a substantial intervention in Haiti.

Hopes Dashed

Given the apparent progress, the United States, alongside the United Nations, suspended sanctions. They did not, however, cancel them.22 Once again, the international community moved forward with the charge of peacefully returning Aristide to power, hoping that the brutal Cédras regime would continue its conciliatory gestures. President Aristide pressed on by nominating a new prime minister, as was mandated in the agreement. The man chosen, Robert Malval, was a respected Haitian businessman, who would appease the military and business

elite. He was also, however, known for his moderation, which appealed to Aristide. Once confirmed, Malval asked the United Nations to ease the embargo, which it promptly did on August 27, 1993 (Resolution 861). In addition, police instructors and military engineers were scheduled to come ashore to aid in rebuilding the Haitian infrastructure. The engineers were to come from the United States.23

Unfortunately, at the same time the sanctions were being repealed, Port-au-Prince residents found themselves victims of increased violence. Robert Malval, who had recently been approved by the Haitian parliament, was seriously threatened by the Cédras thugs, who told him that he would not be allowed to exercise any authority. To give substance to the threats, two assassination attempts were made on loyal Aristide supporters, including his financial advisor, and later his designated justice minister, who was shot.24 Dante Caputo claimed that over 100 killings could be linked to Police Chief Lt. Michel François. As violence escalated, hopes for a successful resolution diminished. It had begun to look as though the junta was merely attempting to extend the time they had in power, knowing that the Clinton Administration was reluctant to use any real force to end the quagmire, which was consistent with previous American attempts to resolve the crisis.

This unfortunate series of events eventually brought the Governor’s Island Agreement to a complete standstill. Most of the optimism that the deposed leader would soon be back governing the poverty-stricken nation was also lost to the

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violence. President Aristide certainly put forth every effort to make a solution possible, even though it required granting certain concessions that the Clinton team thought was necessary to achieve progress. Once again, the U.S. policy was structured to accommodate both parties involved (the Cédras regime and Aristide), and once again it was only President Aristide who fulfilled his promises. The Clinton administration was working on naïve assumptions, thereby treating the rightfully elected president with the same courtesy given to the group responsible for the bloody coup and subsequent dictatorial rule. For those who staunchly supported the Haitian right to democracy, it had become apparent that Bill Clinton needed to take more aggressive action to protect the emerging democracy just a few hundred miles off the U.S. coast. Political familiarity and stability, the retention of a U.S.-friendly military, and the promotion of an open economy in Haiti were again emerging as the driving forces behind United States foreign policy at a time when Washington’s rhetoric was declaring the restoration of democracy as the number one goal. Just prior to the increase in violence, President Clinton had explained:

One of the cornerstones of our foreign policy is to support the global march toward democracy and to stand by the world’s new democracies. The promotion of democracy, which not only reflects our values but also increases our security, is especially important in our hemisphere. As part of that goal, I
consider it a high priority to return democracy to Haiti and to return its 
democratically elected President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, to his office.\textsuperscript{25}

If there was ever a nation in need of "support" for its embryonic democracy, it was Haiti. The case for assistance could be made even stronger when considering that the thuggish ruling party had no rightful claim to power and had been consistently brutalizing its people. Add in the 1990 election – the first in the nation's history, and one that was declared free and fair – and it is difficult to see how this "cornerstone" of American foreign policy would not apply to Haiti.

\textbf{The Harlan Incident}

In spite of the violence and deviations from the Governor's Island accord, the President and his cabinet chose to move ahead with the installation of 200 American and Canadian engineers and specialists. Their purpose would be to help stabilize and train Haitian workers to rebuild the infrastructure of the country, including building roads and organizing Aristide's return. There would also be police supervisors from France, Canada, and Nigeria, who would aid in the training of new police members, but also to supervise the current force.\textsuperscript{26}

Unfortunately, the Haitian junta had other plans, and the United States was rebuffed again. On October 11, a military-encouraged civilian mob led a violent protest denouncing the United States, refusing to allow the U.S.S. Harlan County to land with the alliance personnel. Some of the crowd that had formed to oppose the U.S. intervention even began parading around a red and black flag that represented the old Duvalier regime, and with it, a remembrance of the feared Tonton Macoutes, who were still a powerful force in Haiti.

Fearing another Somalia, where eighteen U.S. troops had been killed the week before in the streets of Mogadishu, the White House recalled the ship. In addition, the president cancelled the departure of the U.S.S. Fairfax County, which was supposed to leave Virginia for Haiti a week later. Once again, the Cédras militia demonstrated their unwillingness to keep its word, and once again, the Clinton team let this naïve trust embarrass them. While the United States did not suffer another "Somalian setback" in Haiti, it was clear that the Harlan incident was not only an embarrassment, but also a step backwards. As the chief American negotiator

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27 General Cédras had earlier that day symbolically laid a wreath at the foot of a statue of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, who was memorably known for brutally fighting off foreign intrusions into the country during the Haitian Revolution. See Perusse, *Haitian Democracy Restored: 1991-1995*, p. 55.

28 It was later learned that many within the angry mob were members of the paramilitary organization known as Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti (FRAPH), which had been set up by former Duvalier members. Some have claimed, with ample evidence, that FRAPH had been supported by the United States Central Intelligence Agency, who were understood to be against the U.S. intervention in Haiti. See Stephen Engleberg, "A Haitian Leader of Paramilitaries Was Paid by C.I.A.,” *New York Times*, April 29, 1994. See Perusse, *Haitian Democracy Restored: 1991-1995*, p. 57. See Brune, *The United States and Post-Cold War Interventions: Bush and Clinton in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia*, pp. 41, 46.

29 It was also at this time that many believe the CIA began to spread additional reports about Aristide's mental instability, which some have taken as a front for the CIA's unwillingness to see Haiti as a primary U.S. interest. See Morris Morley and Chris McGillion, "'Disobedient' Generals and the Politics of Redemocratization: The Clinton Administration and Haiti," p. 370; Brune, *The United States and Post-Cold War Interventions: Bush and Clinton in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia*, 1992-1998, p. 51.
explained in a Washington Post article, the return to the U.S. homeland emboldened the junta to continue in its ways.\textsuperscript{30} The world's only superpower, with the greatest military the world had ever seen, had just been turned back by a group of thugs.

At this point, it became a battle between the State Department, who behind the scenes opposed any form of military intervention, and the members of President Clinton's cabinet, including National Security Council (NSC) Advisor Anthony Lake, who felt they were running out of diplomatic options.\textsuperscript{31} Both cited the U.S.S. Harlan fiasco as evidence that their arguments were the most prudent course of future action. Whichever side the United States chose, it was clear that the Executive Office needed, both domestically and internationally, to achieve some sort of foreign policy credibility. A Gallup Poll taken from October 13-18 revealed that Clinton's overall approval rating dropped from 56 percent in September to 47 percent the next month, and his management of foreign affairs fell to an approval of only 36 percent. The polling data suggested that much of the reason for the falloff resulted from the U.S. involvement in Haiti and Somalia.\textsuperscript{32}

Following the U.S. retreat, the President again took the less intensive approach. Still wanting to avoid a direct confrontation with the Haitian military leaders, Bill Clinton looked to the United Nations, which re-imposed sanctions on Haiti.\textsuperscript{33} As part of those sanctions, President Clinton "ordered six destroyers to

\textsuperscript{32} "Foreign Affairs Erodes Public's Confidence in Clinton," The Gallop Poll Monthly, October, 1993, p. 29.
patrol the waters off Haiti so that they are in a position to enforce the sanctions fully.\textsuperscript{34} The president also made it clear that he did not believe the Governor's Island Agreement was dead.\textsuperscript{35} Still hoping to find an agreement to which the junta would adhere, Clinton weakly stated, "The military authorities in Haiti simply must understand that they cannot indefinitely defy the desires of their own people as well as the will of the world community."\textsuperscript{36} So far, however, that was exactly what had transpired. Cédras and his allies had disregarded all orders and agreements to this juncture, and it appeared that they still had nothing more to fear in reprisal.

Under these sanctions, the economy and the living conditions once again began to deteriorate. Refugees continued to struggle out to the sea, creating another quandary for the Clinton Administration. Adding to the chaos, on October 14, Haiti's Minister of Justice, François Guy Malory, a highly respected lawyer schooled in the United States, was assassinated. It was unknown who had killed this advocate of Haitian democracy, but the role he had in a legislative attempt to separate the police from the military created many enemies.\textsuperscript{37}

The administration threatened the Cédras regime with increased sanctions if Aristide was not returned to power by January 15, a date designated earlier. Once again, it appeared that President Clinton believed in the sanctions, and was confident that they would work, as was demonstrated by his threats of enhanced

sanctions. He still claimed that Cédras and Francois were "supposed" to step down, and if they did not, the sanctions would go into effect. Clinton also defended his order to recall the Harlan County. In an exchange with reporters at a press conference, he connected the naval rebuff to the sanctions stating, "I have no intention of sending our people there [Haiti] until the agreement is honored. What I intend to do now is to press to reimpose the sanctions. I will not have our forces deposited on Haiti when they cannot serve as advisors, when they can't do what they are asked to do."38 If the junta had been trying to divine whether or not they would be faced with the threat of force if they did not step down, the answer emerged crystal clear.

Stalemate

The conditions in Haiti continued to worsen as the reinstituted sanctions imposed great economic burdens. Even those who desired to flee the island in makeshift boats lacked the money to buy the necessary equipment. This less visible refugee problem in turn allowed the Clinton team again to procrastinate, sensing no immediate need to proceed beyond the sanctions. Many of Aristide's supporters sank deeper in their despair as the hopes for President Aristide's return dwindled. The Lavalas party, and other pro-democracy organizations, had been seriously

weakened through the violence and intimidation, leaving only a remnant of the coalition that had risen up to elect Jean-Bertrand Aristide in December 1990. As the year of oppression was drawing to a close, one event triggered a new low for the poor people of Haiti. Members of the paramilitary organization FRAPH descended one night on the poor slum Cité Soleil and proceeded to burn down over 1000 homes, leaving many people dead. This area, which was one of the poorest in the world, had been known to be immensely supportive of the former priest, and was often a target of violence aimed at destroying the center of the exiled Aristide’s strength.

Negotiations in Haiti were at a standstill as both sides appeared unwilling to compromise any further. President Clinton remained steadfast in his determination to “get the Governor’s Island Process back on track.” On October 29, 1993, the American President manifested his resilient confidence in the economic embargo’s prospects when he said, “The sanctions and their enforcement are an unprecedented defense of democracy in the Americas.” He evidently intended to proceed with the sanctions, with the possibility of tightening the embargo, in hopes of finding a peaceful settlement.

At the same time that fresh plans were being introduced for a possible compromise, a secret CIA report was released to the press which questioned the

40 FRAPH (Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti) was a neo-Duvalier “political” organization, closely resembling the Tonton Macoutes, formed during the 1990’s.
mental stability and human rights record of President Aristide. This development, of course, strengthened those in the United States Congress who did not want America involved in restoring President Aristide to power.\(^{43}\) It also created an additional hurdle to further U.S. involvement as more and more governmental leaders began to question the exiled president. Jesse Helms, a U.S. Senator from North Carolina, even went to the extreme of calling Aristide a “psychopath.” This CIA leak only served to complicate the negotiation process even further. The more officials within Washington questioned support for Aristide, the further entrenched and self-assured the Haitian junta became.\(^{44}\)

Accounts of Aristide’s supposed mental instability had earlier circulated throughout the press corps, but now for the first time President Clinton had to respond to questions about the charges, thereby lending some authenticity to the CIA report. While Clinton did not respond to the questions about Aristide’s cerebral capabilities, he did address the human rights record. He affirmed that during Aristide’s tenure in office “political terrorism and abuses went down in Haiti, not up.”\(^{45}\) It was well-established, at least publicly, that President Clinton continued to support Mr. Aristide, even though concurrent negotiations saw increasing pressure on him to make further concessions.\(^{46}\)

\(^{43}\) Republican Senator Robert Dole, the Senate minority leader, and his colleague, Senator Jesse Helms, were two of the most ardent opponents of President Aristide. Together, they led a conservative congressional coalition in favor of maintaining the status quo.


One Last Shot

As January ended, no change in leadership had taken place. At this point, it seemed as though everyone had just become accustomed to a cycle of negotiations, agreements, and retreat, followed by further negotiations. Although President Clinton had previously threatened expanded sanctions, he took no action. Cynicism began to increase for both Aristide and Cédras, not to mention many in the United States government. It appeared to many observers that the Clinton Administration was lacking in resolve. Threats of increased sanctions and possible intervention were increasingly viewed as bluffs. It had become apparent to many in Washington that the Somalia disaster in October was influencing the tenacity with which the Clinton team approached the Haitian crisis.

To break the stalemate, during the first few months of 1994, Washington again turned to Aristide and applied pressure on him to make additional concessions in the name of political stability. Leaning on the exiled leader, head negotiator Pezzullo attempted to convince Aristide to agree to a number of new options, all of which could be viewed as a retreat from the Governor's Island agreement. First, he would be asked to name a new Prime Minister acceptable to both Aristide and the coup leaders. Second, in another inducement for the military to cooperate, only one military leader, including those involved in the bloody repression still occurring in Haiti, would be forced to "retire." Third, the national police, also largely responsible
for the tyranny, would remain intact. And lastly, no date for Aristide's return would be set at the current time.

After reviewing the Pezzulo plan, both President Aristide and Raoul Cédras balked at the proposal. At this point, it was obvious, even to those within the administration that the plan would not work. Two factors seemed to retard the peaceful transition. First, there were no enforcement mechanisms for coercing a rebel regime to "play along." And second, the administration had lost credibility in the continuous cycle of empty threats and renegotiations. In fact, as a result of the tightened embargo, not only did the peasant class suffer from increasing poverty and unemployment, but the people in power, mostly those in the military, benefited from black market sales, most of which had entered through the border with the Dominican Republic.

As 1993 came to a close, diplomatic attempts to resolve the crisis in Haiti were all but exhausted. Tensions arose between President Aristide and President Clinton as one last major effort at negotiations began anew. With the resignation of Robert Malval as Prime Minister, Clinton pressed Aristide to name a new leader to the vacant position, which would then be followed by an attempt at a peaceful transition in which general amnesty would be granted to the military coup participants. Aristide wanted the generals to step down as a sign to the nation that they did not belong in power – after which general amnesty would be offered by the president.47 Recommendations were still given based on the guidelines set forth by

the seemingly ancient Governor's Island Agreement, which did side with President Aristide's proposal concerning the stepping down of the junta and their followers.\textsuperscript{48}

Also at this time, President Aristide began to heighten his critiques of U.S. policy in Haiti. As the pressure to compromise further intensified, Aristide finally reached a breaking point. In his mind, any further concessions made in an effort to find common ground with the Cédras regime would be too much for the Haitian people to accept. The last thing he wanted was to return to Haiti, and to his rightful office, only to find conditions ripe for another coup – just as they had been following his inauguration. He commenced what became quite common for the diminutive leader – that of forcefully criticizing the United States and the United Nations. He directed his accusations toward the superpowers involved, castigating them for lacking the resolve to go beyond their rhetorical commitment to democracy.

According to Aristide, the economic sanctions, which were still being touted as the means to a solution, had long ago turned into delaying tactics. In his opinion, if the U.S. had truly wanted to restore democracy in Haiti, Washington could have long ago produced a settlement by defying the junta and refusing to it as a legitimate government.\textsuperscript{49}

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\textsuperscript{48} "Restoring Democracy in Haiti," \textit{United States Department of State Dispatch} 5.5 (Jan. 31, 1994), pp. 46-49.

With the Clinton administration policies seemingly leading nowhere, domestic pressure began to mount for a policy change. With President Aristide beginning to question the sincerity of the administration's policy objectives, others began to join with the exiled leader, demanding that effective action be taken to help restore Aristide and save the people of Haiti from their brutal oppressors. The two major groups were the Congressional Black Caucus, joined also by a cluster of liberal colleagues in the Congress, and a lobbying group called TransAfrica.

The Congressional Black Caucus, a group of African American members of the United States Congress that focuses on issues of particular interest to black Americans, began campaigning not for a change in policy, but for the policy to be "scrapped." Of greatest and most imminent concern to the caucus was the continuation of the repatriation policy instituted under President Bush. For over two years, Haitians fleeing the country had been turned back to Haiti or shipped to Guantanamo. The congressional group, which was also represented by the Reverend Jesse Jackson, criticized the Clinton policy as "racist," arguing that the refugees were fleeing political oppression directed by a "fascist military." The Congressional Black Caucus was also one of the first organizations to propose the possible use of military forces to restore democracy in Haiti. During their crusade for change, they also called for the removal of the U.S. special envoy to Haiti, Lawrence Pezzulo. According to the caucus, Pezzulo was not representing Haiti or President

50 Arthur Jones, "Heat is on Clinton, as Spotlight Focuses on Haiti," National Catholic Reporter 30.22 April 1, 1994, p. 10.
Aristide, but instead, the special interests of private commercial lobbying groups aiming at keeping open markets in Haiti. Ultimately, the Congressional Black Caucus succeeded in calling attention to the Haitian problem, thereby placing more pressure on the administration to move beyond the measures already in place.

As part of their agenda for Haiti, the leaders of the Congressional Black Caucus proposed a series of adjustments to the policies of the Clinton Administration. First, the embargo should be expanded to increase the pressure on the junta to step down. President Aristide had been very vocal in his support of such a move in the months leading up to the proposal, but he was not able to get a serious hearing from those in Washington. Second, the caucus felt that the United States should sever all ties with the country, with the exception of humanitarian aid. Third, they asked for a tightening of the border with the Dominican Republic. It was common knowledge to anyone involved that goods were being smuggled through the eastern border of Haiti, thereby weakening the effectiveness of the embargo. And finally, something they had argued from the start, the caucus asked for an end to the repatriations.52

Another domestic lobbying group, TransAfrica, joined in the criticisms of President Clinton and his Haitian policies. In a letter written by the executive director, Randall Robinson, who had previously become famous during his campaign for the abolition of apartheid in South Africa, he asked President Clinton to reassess his repatriation policy. With refugees in mind, he wrote, “Mr. President, we do not suggest that our nation has an unbounded capacity to absorb refugees. We

do however urge that the process...be colorblind. The United States has effectively sealed the Haitian political refugees into the death chamber of their own island.53 Robinson also brought attention to the issue when he decided to launch a hunger strike. Moved by moral conviction, he began his strike with the intention of continuing until President Clinton changed the repatriation policy. The Washington Post covered his daily health, drawing a great deal of media attention to Robinson's cause. In the end, President Clinton caved to pressures, and the TransAfrica leader discontinued his hunger strike after 27 days. On May 8, the president announced a change in the repatriation policy, whereby Haitian refugees would be given an asylum hearing on the ships that picked them up.54

Changing the Tone

Not much changed in the Clinton Haiti policy from around October 1993 to May 1994. The administration's hopes for a diplomatic solution continued to be grounded in the economic embargo – hoping that the Haitian citizens would force the military leaders out of office. It was, however, slowly becoming clear to all involved that sanctions alone would not accomplish the goal. In a Time magazine article, Michael Kramer succinctly described the current situation, entitling his piece, "Haiti: The Case for a Bigger Stick." In his article, he argued that much more would

need to be done, beyond the embargo and the new refugee policy, in order to stop the oppression in Haiti and force the Cédras regime to step down.\textsuperscript{55} His sentiments were no longer the view of the minority. With mounting evidence exposing the impotence of the current Clinton policy, government officials began to express a need for change.

With more than a year of negotiations under their belt, and seemingly nothing to show for it, the Clinton Administration began to crack under the pressure. The combination of Aristide’s refusal to continually lower his expectations and the junta’s refusal to abide by negotiations left the Clinton team with one obvious choice – that of ratcheting up the pressure on the coup leaders. In late April, the administration began to change its tone. No longer did the president feel he could place some of the blame on President Aristide – his patience with the junta had simply run out.

The impact of the Congressional Black Caucus’s constant prodding, combined with the Randall Robinson hunger strike, cannot be underestimated. Domestic lobbying ended up creating a stronger impetus for action than the calls of the international human rights groups, or those of President Aristide. The media attention that the domestic groups brought with them served to expose the inconsistencies within the Clinton policies. Additionally, the Caucus’s public criticism of the administration for continually forcing the democratically elected Aristide to bow to the military desires finally took hold with many in Congress beyond the African American groups. A host of mainstream journalists also chimed in calling for change in the hypocritical strategy. Some within the Congress even claimed that the

hesitancy in Haiti was undermining U.S. credibility throughout the world — as it began to appear that rogue regimes had nothing to fear from the United States. Eventually, Clinton's rhetoric caught up with him. No longer could he speak of the United States commitment to helping countries achieve democratic reforms when his Haiti policy seemed to be doing nothing of the sort.

In a clear signal that the United States would be increasing the pressure for Cédras and the military leaders to step down, Clinton turned again to the United Nations, who on May 6 approved Security Resolution 917, which increased the embargo to all goods (except food and medicine). Additionally, on May 8, Clinton announced that he would be replacing the former head negotiator, Lawrence Pezzullo, with William Gray, a former congressman who had also been the president of the United Negro College Fund. Many involved with the Haitian negotiations felt Pezzulo's dismissal signaled a tacit admission of a failed Haiti policy.

The United States Congress remained deeply divided over the situation with Haiti. Liberal Democrats were quickly establishing themselves as proponents for increased action in Haiti, but they were equally flanked on the right by the conservative core, led by Senator Dole, who opposed almost any American intervention in Haiti. Many were content to let the economic sanctions continue their course, and many did not want Aristide involved at all. There was considerable

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56 In April, five liberal Democratic Senators (Harkin, Dodd, Mosley-Braun, Wellstone, and Feingold) introduced new legislation that would intensify the economic embargo on Haiti. See Perusse, Haitian Democracy Restored: 1991-1995, p. 75.
doubt as to whether either house of Congress would support any form of military intervention. In addition, President Clinton also received negative feedback from the OAS and France regarding possible military action. Public opinion was also divided almost evenly in America. In a *Washington Post/ABC News* poll, 46% of Americans said that the United States should take all necessary action to restore democracy to Haiti. That number was up from 36% the month before.

It was in this divided atmosphere that President Clinton, for the first time brought up the possibility of using force in Haiti. While still believing in the sanctions and a peaceful transition, he said that he was not ruling out force as a means to returning Aristide to office. Responding to a question of whether military intervention was on the table, he explained, “We’re going for stronger sanctions in the U.N. and stiffening the enforcement of the sanctions we have, consistent with what President Aristide has wanted all along. We’re going to consult with all of our friends and allies in the region, and we’re going to do our best to bring a conclusion to this before more people die innocently and continue to suffer. But we cannot remove the military option. We have to keep that as an option.” While still in its infancy, the threat of American force signaled an escalation in the talks. Clinton remained partial to non-violent means, especially with Somalia still hanging over his head, but common sense suggested that the Haitian crisis could be resolved short of military intervention.

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The Clinton administration had reached a turning point. Linda Robinson, Latin America bureau chief for *U.S. News and World Report*, explained the situation:

In a last ditch effort to force Haiti’s military rulers out of power, the Clinton administration last week rattled its sabers some more and pushed another round of sanctions through the United Nations Security Council. Yet the men in tan uniforms in Port-au-Prince are showing no sign of budging, the administration is running out of options and President Clinton eventually may be forced to choose between making good on his threats to use force and abandoning his promise to restore exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to office.\(^{62}\)

The Cédras response to the expanded embargo seemed to solidify the stance that the military regime had take all along – that of entrenched defiance. Directly following the UN vote, Cédras openly confronted Clinton by formally deposing Aristide and forcing the election of a new President.\(^{63}\) Reports were also coming back from the Caribbean that Cédras did not believe Clinton would send the military because of the extensive opposition within the U.S. government. Once again, the junta signaled that it had no intention of stepping down.

The latest snubbing by Cédras, combined with Aristide’s refusal to concede any more power to the junta, left Clinton with few options. The possibility of retaining

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the traditional Haitian military (a goal of the U.S. all along) while concurrently reinstating Aristide to office began to erode. At this point, President Aristide now became the focus of United States policy, and not just rhetorically. Previously, the military regime was viewed, or at least treated, as an equal partner in any solution. Now, however, with Cédras refusing any concessions, the United States looked exclusively to Aristide. Washington attempted to “reconfigure his [Aristide] populist socioeconomic outlook. This meant jettisoning his commitment to redistribute wealth, end exploitive labor relations, and pursue a growth strategy based on rural, not export-driven development in favor of a more economically ‘responsible’ capitalist development strategy; and appointing the kind of moderate, technocratic officials who would faith-fully oversee the implementation of this program.”64 Washington’s hopes of creating a power sharing arrangement in Haiti, with the president on one side, and the traditional American military ally on the other, had come to an end. Without a dependable, or at least predictable, ally on the right, it tried to recreate the one on the left – Aristide.

As the efforts to alter Aristide’s political philosophy were underway, conditions in Haiti continued to decline, as State Department reports of political prisoners being killed and tortured reemerged. The State Department enumerated abuse after abuse, from the assassinations of Aristide supporters to the practice of “dumping bodies in public areas of Port-au-Prince in an attempt to terrorize the populace.” In just the previous six months, the UN/OAS International Civilian Mission reported 340

“extrajudicial killings” and over 50 “rapes with political motives.” Even in this situation, the Clinton administration stood by its rhetoric saying that it was willing to let the sanction-led strategy take its course – at least until it had a chance to reconfigure Mr. Aristide’s approach to governance. Responding to the junta’s mulish actions, Clinton again turned to further sanctions, including Executive Order 12920, which prohibited additional transactions with Haiti.

Military Preparation

In an act of defiance, Haiti’s military leaders installed as a puppet president Emile Jonassaint, an 81-year-old remnant of the Duvalier regime. The U.S. State Department responded by issuing a statement calling the newly installed administration “a bogus de facto government.” The Haitian junta also staged a march of 150 soldiers through the streets of Port-au-Prince, an obvious show of strength and bravado intended to discourage any forces, whether U.N. or U.S., from entering Haiti. A few weeks later, President Clinton authorized his own demonstration. In mid-July, Clinton signaled accelerated military plans highlighted by his decision to dispatch four amphibious warships carrying almost 2000 marines to the waters surrounding Haiti. In addition, the Pentagon finally disclosed that a

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mock attack, consisting of Army Rangers and Navy Seals, had taken place along the Florida coast. This maneuver was widely known and reported on previously—a clear warning to the Haitian rebels. The Florida exercise was keenly reminiscent of a similar rehearsal ordered just before the United States, in December of 1989, invaded Panama and arrested Manuel Noriega, who was taken to Florida to stand trial.68

Over the course of the following month, with no apparent change in the junta’s strategy, Bill Clinton found himself at the end of his rope. While ordering stiffer sanctions, the administration prepared the military for a potential invasion. Toward the end of July, the UN Security Council approved, with the support and encouragement of the United States, Resolution 940, which authorized “member states to form a multinational force” as a means of planning for a possible intervention in Haiti, although it did not specify a date.69 Pushed by the flood of refugees leaving Haiti for America and the humanitarian crisis on the island, President Clinton found himself with few options. On the one hand, the administration was in dire need of foreign policy credibility, especially considering the impending mid-term elections. On the other hand, the last thing the President needed was another Somalia, which would further undermine the administration’s credibility—not to mention the American lives that might be lost.

68 Kevin Fedarko, “Policy at Sea: As the Refugees Keep Pouring out and Clinton Continues to Flounder, the U.S. Moves Closer to a Military Solution,” Time 144.3 July 18, 1994, p. 20-25.
Unfortunately for Clinton, it appeared that there was only one option, and that was a military intervention. If he were to fulfill the promise he had given to Haiti and Aristide – not to mention the rest of the world – that the United States would help any nation seeking to form a democratic state – he would have to take action. Over the next couple of weeks, President Clinton addressed the problem of how to sell a military excursion to the U.S. Congress, and to the public. Eventually, the President became immersed in the decades-old debate over the 1973 War Powers Act, and once again, the U.S. President, as had all since Nixon, denied Congress the power to restrict the Executive Office.

Endgame

With Resolution 940 authorizing member states to use "all necessary means to restore legitimate, constitutional authority in Haiti," the United States moved toward a military intervention.\(^7\) By July 31, 1994, more than 34 months had passed since Haitian Generals Cédras, Biamby, and François took over the government in Port-au-Prince. In a statement to the United Nations Security Council, United States permanent representative to the U.N. Madeline Albright expressed both the frustration and the determination of the U.S. government. She argued that the United States had "provided every opportunity for the de facto leaders in Haiti to

meet their obligations.” Albright continued, “We have imposed sanctions, suspended them, reimposed them, and strengthened them.” Ultimately, she explained, “Patience is an exhaustible commodity.” The crisis reached a climax, and unless the junta relinquished power immediately, her government would authorize the use of military force. In a concluding remark, Ambassador Albright conveyed resolve and optimism in addressing the Haitian rebels when she said, “The sun is setting on your ruthless ambition. On the near horizon, the light of a new dawn for Haiti can already be seen.”

Since only military force could effect change, preparations for an invasion ensued. U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense John M. Deutch headed a mission to confer with members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) about the possibility of joining the multinational invasion force. Four nations (Jamaica, Barbados, Belize, and Trinidad) pledged to “contribute and participate” in the “force that would go into Haiti – either under permissive or hostile circumstances – in order to carry out the will of the international community,” and all others nations of CARICOM gave their endorsement. While the strategic contribution of the CARICOM members would be minor, it did lend credibility to the invasion force. Following the Caribbean meeting, Talbott made it utterly clear that further action, beyond the sanctions, would take place. In a press conference, he signaled to the world, and to the members of the Cédras regime, that force would be forthcoming. He stated, “The way I say it is that the Multinational

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Force is going to Haiti. The issue is the circumstances under which that force enters Haiti.  

With U.S. forces stationed off the coast of Haiti, it was apparent to all involved that the intervention could take place any day. President Clinton gave a press conference on the Haitian situation where he expressed his confidence in the mission at hand. In response to a reporter's question as to whether he was nervous about the military excursion, he answered that he had already "made the decision, so if it doesn't go right, I'm responsible." Clinton's response clearly illuminated the psychological disposition with which he decided to commit forces. With the Somalia embarrassment still fresh in the minds of many Americans, and without strong foreign policy credentials, President Clinton was forced once again to brave the storm that comes with placing American troops in harm's way.

On September 15, 1994, President Clinton went on national television to explain the situation in Haiti to the American public. He described the negotiations that had taken place since the coup in September 1991, and illustrated how the sanctions had failed to peacefully return President Aristide to office. Drawing on the many reports of ceaseless oppression, murder, and torture (which had days before been published by the State Department), Clinton explained why the United States was leading the international effort to restore democratic government in Haiti. He stated, "Now the United States must protect our interests, to stop the brutal atrocities that threatened tens of thousands of Haitians, to secure our borders and to preserve

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stability and promote democracy in our hemisphere and to uphold the reliability of the commitments we make and the commitments others make to us.”\textsuperscript{74} It was clear that the president wanted to associate the Haitian dilemma with its domestic consequences, thereby hoping to connect the American public to the events in Haiti, which would in turn boost the approval rating for the intervention. It appeared successful, as a \textit{USA Today/CNN/Gallop} poll the following day showed a 56\% approval rating for the possible invasion of Haiti – the highest rating to that date.\textsuperscript{75}

As President Clinton spoke to the nation, there were last minute behind-the-scene negotiations being planned by his administration. With only days until the U.S.-led forces were to move on Haiti, a team of emissaries, consisting of former President Jimmy Carter, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell, and current Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, were dispatched to Haiti in hopes that they could reach a final agreement whereby Cédras would step down and allow Aristide to resume his presidency. President Carter had met Raoul Cédras when he supervised the 1990 election that brought President Aristide to power. The administration gave the team the power to negotiate the surrender of the junta members, but nothing more. The invasion would still take place as planned if Cédras and his followers did not step down. There would be no extensions. Beyond that, as had been previously explained by Strobe Talbott, the military landing would take place even if the resignations were obtained. It was just a matter of whether or not they would be there to fight, or to keep order.


Negotiations were arduous, but on September 14, with the U.S.-led invasion about to reach shore, Cédras conceded. Coming to terms with the Carter team, Cédras agreed to step down and allow the multinational force to come ashore. The agreement stated that General Cédras and his associates, including Biamby and François, would leave their posts by October 15. The next day, international forces landed on the shores of Haiti. The transition back to democracy and to the administration of President Aristide was underway. Less than a month later, on October 15, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide flew from the United States to Port-au-Prince, emerging among a cheering Haitian crowd ready to resume office. Following his return, the United States formally ended the declared state of emergency, and ordered all sanctions imposed against the nation to be terminated in view of the cessation of the threat to national security.

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CHAPTER VI. CONCLUSION

William Hyland, in his book *Clinton’s World*, wrote, “His [Clinton] rationale for occupying Haiti had reflected less of the human-rights and democracy-building ethic…and more of a traditional geopolitical framework.”¹ Is this assessment of the Haiti crisis accurate? Many analysts have agreed with the charge that Presidents Bush and Clinton did not handle the situation in an efficacious manner. I believe that this is the correct assessment. But what was it about their handling of the 1991-94 Haitian ordeal that led many critics to reckon it a failure?

The U.S.-Haiti policy was not a complete failure, as some on the fringe have alleged. The American administrations deserve some credit. For one, the United States did not lose a single life in the process of restoring Aristide to power, which is noteworthy considering the brutal and obstinate regime with which officials were attempting to negotiate. Second, while the crisis lasted much longer than anyone would have imagined, the administrations deserve credit for never responding in an emotionally charged or haphazard manner. And last, the situation simply did not lend itself to easy solutions. Even after the three years of tyranny in Haiti, a considerable number of government officials, including many in the CIA and Department of Defense, were still reluctant to use force — and so was a large segment of the American public. Haiti was clearly on the political periphery. Had

another incident like that which happened in Somalia occurred, serious damage to the credibility of the United States internationally, and to both administrations domestically, surely would have ensued.

There are, however, numerous criticisms that can be leveled at the Bush and Clinton performances. The first revolves around the United States treatment of President Aristide. For a man who had devoted his life to the elimination of poverty and corruption in Haiti, often in face of imminent danger, who had been elected with 67 percent of the vote in the first democratic elections in Haitian history, the U.S. did not treat him as an ally in the fight for freedom and democracy. From the onset of the Bush response to the landing of the marines, the administrations pushed and coerced the former priest into numerous concessions, which ultimately lessened his power and ability to govern his people. Coinciding with the condescending treatment of Aristide, the administrations oddly enough treated the junta with respect.

Apart from perfunctory remarks labeling Haiti's coup leaders criminal and brutal rulers, Washington was forced to wage a low-key rhetorical campaign during the three years of Aristide's exile. After all, Bush and Clinton officials could hardly rail against repression in Haiti, identify the junta as the culprits, and still deny asylum to the great majority of Haitians fleeing tyranny.²

The second problem was the agreement that Cédras and Jimmy Carter signed at the end of the junta's reign. Because the United States allowed the continued existence of an anti-Aristide military, combined with a lack of prosecution of human rights abusers, President Aristide was left with numerous militant groups who were waiting for nothing else than to cause havoc for the former priest. With Aristide content making a few concessions for the sake of a peaceful transition, the United States brokered a deal which essentially hamstrung presidential power in Haiti, leaving the people who overwhelmingly elected him with an acutely constrained head of state at a time when a dynamic authority was needed to help promote democracy. To make matters even worse, Aristide's presidency would expire in a year. He also reluctantly agreed, amidst the constant prodding by the United States, not to run for office following his term. If stability was the administration's goal, the chances of attaining it were not good.

The final and most important assessment falls within the broader framework with which the Bush and Clinton teams approached the Haiti situation. Presidential rhetoric and U.S. action did not coincide. The supposed rational for aiding Haiti was based on the American tradition of helping nations achieve human rights success, and more importantly, helping push governments down the road toward "stable" democracies. Unfortunately, the administrations seemed preoccupied with pleasing domestic politics, avoiding another Somalia at any cost, and pushing a geopolitical framework emphasizing a stable military force, a contented business class, and an open, American-friendly economy. In the end, the American policies created more instability, not less.
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