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**Canadian Development Policy in Post-Aristide Haiti**

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On 29 February 2004, the democratically elected president of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide was overthrown by a rebellion mounted from the neighbouring Dominican Republic a few weeks before. On 5 March, the Canadian government announced that 500 Canadian military personnel had been deployed to Haiti on a three-month long United Nations mandated mission “to contribute to a secure and stable environment in Haiti, to facilitate the delivery of relief aid to those in need, and to help the Haitian Police and Coast Guard maintain law and order and protect human rights.”<sup>1</sup> A few months later, Canada contributed 100 Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers to the UN Civilian Police force (CivPol) to provide training to the Haitian National Police (HNP). In July 2004, moreover, Canada announced that it would provide \$147 million to support the transitional government that was appointed by the United States, France, and Canada.

This paper will examine Canadian development policy vis-à-vis Haiti, focusing especially on developments since February 2004, but also exploring the lessons of aid policy in prior years. I will undertake to assess Canada’s development policy in the context of achieving political stability through support for democratic elections and socioeconomic development, and then briefly assess these in the overarching context of the challenges posed by American interests in, and relations with, Haiti, stressing the need for further research. Before proceeding, however, I should note that the arguments presented below are tentative, based the early stages of an ongoing research project examining Canada’s involvement in Haiti, and I hope that they can stimulate critical dialogue on this currently unfolding issue.

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<sup>1</sup> National Defence, “Operation HALO – CF Commitment to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH),” May 2005. Accessed 29 Novemeber 2005; available at: [http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/operations/Halo/index\\_e.asp](http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/operations/Halo/index_e.asp)

## **Building Democracy: Human Rights, Elections and the Justice System**

Haiti's human rights situation following Aristide's removal from power has been characterized by widespread abuses by the Haitian National Police (HNP). A key MINUSTAH mandate established early in the mission in April 2004 was to "assist the Transitional Government in monitoring, restructuring and reforming" the HNP in a manner "consistent with democratic policing standards."<sup>2</sup> A Harvard Law School report<sup>3</sup> released in March 2005 and based on field work in Haiti, however, noted that the HNP "works under the mantle of a well deserved credibility gap" and that Haitians find "ironic accord in their near universal distrust and disapproval" of the police force. Moreover, MINUSTAH's police division, CivPol, which was led until recently by Canadian David Beer and counts over 100 RCMP officers in its ranks, "has neglected to implement any systematic training program, and its attempts at monitoring and mentoring have been woefully inadequate." The report concludes its analysis of the HNP by noting that "[f]ar from preventing human rights abuses, MINUSTAH has at best turned a blind eye to them; at worst, it has facilitated them." The human rights abuses referred to here were investigated by a team organized by the University of Miami Law School, which released a report in January of the same year that contained detailed accounts of HNP abuses in Port-au-Prince in November 2004, noting that "on an almost daily basis," the HNP, "in various units and dressed in a wide variety of uniforms often masked, select and attack a neighborhood in operations reported as efforts to arrest gang members..."<sup>4</sup> Police abuses continued throughout

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1542, (S/RES/1542), 30 April 2004.

<sup>3</sup> James Cavallaro, *Keeping the Peace in Haiti? An Assessment of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti Using Compliance with its Prescribed Mandate as a Barometer for Success* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Law Student Advocates for Human Rights, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Thomas M. Griffin and Irwin P. Stozky, *Haiti: Human Rights Investigation: November 11-21, 2004* (Miami: University of Miami, 2005) 9. It should be noted that the integrity of this report has been challenged by some observers, such as Michael Deibert, a Reuters correspondent in Post-au-Prince between 2001 and 2003 (thus, much

2005, particularly against pro-Aristide supporters, who were targeted several times at non-violent political rallies. Major incidents involving police killings of protestors occurred between March and June and then again in August.<sup>5</sup> Following an April incident in which five civilians were killed at a political rally, Amnesty International issued a call for “an independent and public investigation into the killings,” while also noting that such incidents are not “isolated” cases.

As noted above by the Harvard report, there is also evidence that UN forces have facilitated HNP abuses. After a March incident in which police opened fire on pro-Aristide supporters, MINUSTAH’s second in command, Brazilian Commander Carlos Chagas Braga, commented that “[w]e are supposed to support the Haitian National Police. We cannot fire at them.”<sup>6</sup> Though Braga is correct to point out that MINUSTAH has not been explicitly authorized to fire at the HNP, the relevant resolution does state that the mission is responsible “to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence ... without prejudice to the responsibilities ... of the police.”<sup>7</sup> It appears, however, that in practice MINUSTAH has chosen to interpret its mandate in a manner that does not lead to confrontations with the HNP. Instead, MINUSTAH personnel often travel with the HNP as it engages in various operations around Port-au-Prince, standing by when abuses occur. As Haiti expert Robert Fatton Jr. has observed:

*Minustah* and the interim government have failed to curb criminal activities. In addition, they have used repressive means against Aristide’s supporters while

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before the report’s period of investigation), who claims (with no cited evidence) that the report is “bogus” and produced by “attorneys who continue to be employed by or are sympathetic to Aristide.” Nonetheless, other reports cited in this paper appear to corroborate some of the key findings of the Miami Law School investigation. See Michael Deibert, *Notes From the Last Testament* (Toronto: Seven Stories Press, 2005) 431.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, “Police, protestors clash during pro-Aristide protest in Haiti,” *Associated Press*, 24 March 2004; “Gunfire kills five people in demonstration in Haiti,” *Associated Press*, 27 April 2005; Joseph Guyler Delva, “Up to 25 killed as police raid Haiti slum,” *Reuters*, 5 June 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Joe Mozingo, “Two killed as police set fire on Port-au-Prince rally,” *Miami Herald*, 1 March 2005

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1542, (*S/RES/1542*), 30 April 2004.

tolerating the abuses of right-wing paramilitary groups. Under these conditions, a meaningful national reconciliation is unlikely even [if elections are held].<sup>8</sup>

All this, combined with reports that MINUSTAH itself may have killed innocent civilians during its missions, has seriously affected the mission's credibility amongst Haitians. Indeed, following a July 2005 raid by 400 MINUSTAH soldiers in the Cité Soleil neighbourhood of Port-au-Prince, numerous independent reports claimed that UN forces had killed several civilians. The UN subsequently launched an investigation and the resulting report, leaked to London's *Independent*, acknowledged that "given the length of the operation and the violence of the clashes," some civilians may have become "collateral victims".<sup>9</sup> This essentially echoed comments by Thierry Faggart, a French lawyer heading the UN Haiti mission's human rights office, when he told reporters in October that the human rights situation in Haiti was "catastrophic" and also acknowledged the role of the police in several civilian killings.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the evidence outlined above of HNP abuses, the Canadian government, whose RCMP officers in CivPol are responsible for providing training to the HNP, has been completely silent on the matter. To be sure, reforming the HNP is a challenging task, and it is unrealistic to expect that abuses would stop all of a sudden with the UN intervention. Yet, the lack of any acknowledgement by Canada since March 2004 of these very serious difficulties, and an open discussion about how these issues are to be dealt with, is incongruent with the standards and spirit of development policies.

Democratic elections originally scheduled for November 2005, moreover, were delayed four times and then finally scheduled for 7 February 2006. The record so far, however, suggests

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<sup>8</sup> Robert Fatton Jr. *The Fall of Aristide and Haiti's Current Predicament* (Waterloo, ON: Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2005) 13.

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Buncombe, "UN Admits Civilians May Have Died in Haiti Peacekeeping Raid", *Independent* (London, UK), 10 January 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph Guyler Delva, "UN: Haiti Human Rights Situation is Catastrophic," *Reuters*, 14 October 2005.

that despite René Préval's victory at the polls, the electoral process was sorely lacking in democratic credentials. The most significant reason for this is the broad crackdown that has occurred against supporters and members of Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party, some examples of which have been alluded to above. Though it is difficult to determine the level of support for Lavalas today, there is little doubt that the party has remained the most popular one in Haiti since Aristide came to power in 1990 with nearly 70 per cent voter support. Indeed, in the May 2000 legislative and mayoral elections, the Lavalas party swept up the vast majority of seats. Importantly, though there were some irregularities, the Organization of American States (OAS) issued a report stating that the elections were a "great success for the Haitian population, which turned out in large numbers to choose their local and national governments."<sup>11</sup> Moreover, a March 2002 Gallup poll commissioned by USAID found that "no other political party comes close to the support enjoyed by Fanmi Lavalas."<sup>12</sup> While support for Lavalas may have dropped since then, it is quite likely that the party remains the most, or one of the most, popular in Haiti in the present period. Yet, Aristide, exiled in South Africa, has not been allowed to return to Haiti to contest the forthcoming elections, and a number of alternative Lavalas leaders who did not flee into exile following the coup have been jailed. The two most prominent cases are those of former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune and Gérard Jean-Juste, a priest closely associated with Lavalas. Neptune turned himself into police custody in June 2004 after an arrest warrant was issued for his alleged role in a massacre on 11 February 2004 in the village of La Syrie. It soon became apparent, however, that the government did not in fact have any evidence against Neptune, but nonetheless continued to hold him without charge. With Neptune unable to lead

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<sup>11</sup> Quoted in: Peter Hallward, "Option Zero in Haiti", *New Left Review*, 27 (May-June 2004).

<sup>12</sup> Melinda Miles and Eugina Charles (eds.), *Let Haiti Live* (Coconut Creek, FL: Educa Vision, 2004) 165. Lavalas received 61.6% support while the next most popular party, Democratic Convergence, received only 13% support from the public.

Lavalas, Jean-Juste, a priest who ran a kitchen for poor children, was increasingly viewed by party supporters as a strong likely candidate for the leadership. On 21 July, however, Jean-Juste was arrested by the HNP for allegedly being involved in the murder of a local journalist, despite the fact that Jean-Juste was traveling in the United States when the killing took place. Shortly thereafter, Amnesty International announced that it considered Jean-Juste a “prisoner of conscience, detained solely because he has peacefully exercised his right to freedom of expression.”<sup>13</sup> (The murder charge was eventually dropped by an investigating judge and replaced with a new charge of possessing an illegal weapon.) On 22 August, Gerard Gilles, a leader of one of the factions within Lavalas told the press that “we’ll boycott the elections if Jean-Juste, and many other political prisoners that are potential candidates for our party, are not released.”<sup>14</sup> As of this writing, Neptune remains in jail, while Jean-Juste was provisionally released for medical treatment in Miami on 29 January 2006.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, as Mark Weisbrot observed prior to the vote, the 7 February election was “an election that would not be seen as legitimate in any country, not even Iraq. Everything is being arranged so that the country's largest political party, Fanmi Lavalas - which at any moment before the coup would have overwhelmingly swept national elections - cannot win.”<sup>16</sup> Similar observations have been made by a number of international civil society groups, like the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, which called the electoral process a “grotesque parody” of democracy.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Amnesty International, “Haiti: Arbitrary arrest/prisoner of conscience: Gérard Jean-Juste,” 27 July 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Guylor Delva, “Aristide party threatens to boycott Haiti poll,” *Reuters*, 22 August 2004.

<sup>15</sup> Jacqueline Charles and Trenton Daniel, “Jailed Haitian leader Rev. Jean-Juste arrives in Miami, taken to JMH”, *Miami Herald*, 29 January 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Mark Weisbrot, “Undermining Haiti,” *The Nation*, 12 December 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Larry Birns and John Kozyn, “Haiti – And You Call This an Election?”, Council on Hemispheric Affairs, 11 October 2005; Accessed 29 January 2006, available at: <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/haiti/2005-/1011grotesque.htm>.

As with the human rights situation, Canada has not acknowledged this political repression that is being carried out ahead of the planned elections against what is likely still the most popular party in Haiti. Instead, official government news releases are full of platitudes, all quite hollow in the context of the above. For instance, a September 2005 release announcing additional funding quotes then Minister of International Cooperation Aileen Carroll as stating that “Canada is determined to provide strategic support to foster the best possible conditions for holding free, credible elections in Haiti,” while then Foreign Affairs Minister Pettigrew asserts that Canadian funding demonstrates its “commitment to Haiti on its road to democracy.”<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, the International Mission for Monitoring Haitian Elections (IMMHE), the body responsible for ensuring the elections’ democratic credentials, was established at a government organized forum in Montréal in June 2005 and is being heavily funded by Canada. In fact, as of November 2005, total Canadian funding for the Haitian “electoral process” stood at \$29.5 million, which is more than the US is providing, and just under the European Union contribution.<sup>19</sup> What is striking, however, is that the IMMHE’s October 2005 interim report, said to “assess key areas in Haiti’s electoral process”, does not once mention any of the glaring difficulties faced by F. Lavalas as a result of actions taken by the appointed transitional government.<sup>20</sup> Separate from the difficulties faced by Lavalas, furthermore, the local Haitian group organizing the elections, the Provisional Electoral Council (PEC), is of questionable capability and integrity. As the International Crisis Group comments, the CEP’s performance

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<sup>18</sup> Foreign Affairs Canada, “Canada Announces Funding for Election Security in Haiti,” No. 167, 21 September 2005.

<sup>19</sup> Canadian International Development Agency. “Canada increases its support for electoral process in Haiti”, No. 54, 16 November 2005.

<sup>20</sup> See the October 2005 “Interim Report” at: [http://www.mieeh-immhe.ca/interim\\_e.asp](http://www.mieeh-immhe.ca/interim_e.asp).

“has been ambivalent at best,” characterized by “rivalry, bureaucratic ineptitude, technical shortcomings, and charges of partisanship and corruption.”<sup>21</sup>

In his recent study, Branko Milanovic notes that “[p]olitical instability appears to have been one of the main, and possibly the main, reason why the promise of development went unfulfilled” in countries like Haiti.<sup>22</sup> And it seems perfectly obvious that political stability in Haiti will not be achievable until, at the very least, credible democratic elections are held. Yet, as with the human rights situation, it appears that official Canadian policy rhetoric is severely disconnected from actual developments in Haiti. Until F. Lavalas is allowed to contest the elections without interference, Haiti will remain highly unstable, rendering other development projects ineffective.

Reform of the justice system has also been a priority funding area for the Canadian government, which contributed \$5 million “to strengthen the rule of law and the judicial system” and allow the Haitian Ministry of Justice to implement “an equitable, accessible, and efficient criminal justice system,” a key component of any democracy. Yet, as the cases of Yvon Neptune and Gérard Jean Juste highlight, the justice system remains as corrupt as it was in March 2004, when the UN intervention began. In the case of Mr. Neptune, in May 2005 the human rights chief of the UN’s mission in Haiti, Thierry Faggart, publicly stated that the judicial treatment received by Neptune and Jocelerme Privert (the former interior minister, who was also arrested by the HNP) “has proved to be illegal since their arrest,” while the UN independent expert on human rights, Louis Joinet, dismissed claims that the massacre Neptune was accused of plotting

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<sup>21</sup> International Crisis Group, *Haiti’s Elections: The Case for a Short Delay*, Latin America/Caribbean Briefing No. 9, 25 November 2005, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Branko Milanovic, *Worlds Apart: Measuring International and Global Inequality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005) 72.

even occurred, following a field investigation.<sup>23</sup> More generally, Faggart and Joinet noted that as many as 95 percent of prisoners in Haiti are held in jail for lengthy periods without trials. In the case of the National Penitentiary in Port-au-Prince, Joinet estimated in November 2005 that out of 1,700 inmates, only a few dozen had actually been charged, and added that “[i]f the Haitian judiciary does not have the means to try the people it detains, it should be compelled to release them.”<sup>24</sup>

Another major setback for the justice system occurred in May 2005, when the Supreme Court overturned convictions against 15 former members of the paramilitary group FRAPH<sup>25</sup> who were found responsible for the so-called 1994 Raboteau massacre in which 20 people were killed and many others beaten and tortured. Amnesty International expressed its concern that the Court’s decision was “politically motivated” and noted that it appeared “to be in contradiction of the Constitution.”<sup>26</sup> Again, as with the reform of the HNP, reform of the justice system, if it happens at all, will be a slow process. But given the links between the justice system, the repression against F. Lavalas, and HNP abuses, the silence of the Canadian government on this issue is rather glaring.

### **Socioeconomic Development: Neoliberalism and Aid Reduction**

This section will explore the issue of socioeconomic development and its link to state legitimacy, and thus political stability. Haiti is today the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, where

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<sup>23</sup> Joseph Guylor Delva, “Haiti’s jailed PM resumes hunger strike,” *Reuters*, 29 April 2005; Delva, “UN says former PM jailed illegally,” *Reuters*, 4 May 2005.

<sup>24</sup> “UN official slams Haitian Courts,” *Associated Press*, 29 November 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti.

<sup>26</sup> Amnesty International, “Obliterating Justice, overturning of sentence for Raboteau massacre,” 26 May 2005.

55 percent of the population lives on less than one dollar a day. It is important to note, however, that poverty reduction initiatives are linked to democratic accountability. Aristide's government was first elected to power because it promised to address the deep inequalities in Haitian society. Yet, structural fiscal constraints combined with the conditions imposed by the international financial institutions and bilateral donors from 1994 onwards made it extremely difficult for Haiti's cash-strapped government to deliver on key social program promises. Instead, the Haitian government was pressured to pursue neoliberal policies, risking its popular domestic base of support. In addition to this, state-led socioeconomic was undermined after the disputed legislative elections of 2000, when foreign donors, including Canada, drastically cut aid funding and substantially redirected remaining money towards civil society groups. These two issues are examined in greater detail below.

According to the authors of a CIDA review of Canada-Haiti relations, one of the five key factors contributing to "Canada's sustained engagement in Haiti" is interest in free trade with the Caribbean state. One very successful Canadian company with significant operations in Haiti is Montréal-based Gildan Activewear, which sold 27 million dozen T-shirts in 2004.<sup>27</sup> Total Canadian trade with Haiti stands at \$20.7 million in exports and \$18 million in imports (2003 figures). A major concern raised by several nongovernmental organizations is that Canadian development policy continues to promote neo-liberal market policies that do not adequately address the poverty issue. Jim Hodgson, of the United Church of Canada, which funds its partner organizations in Haiti, observes that "foreign governments and national elites are negotiating" a new political environment "where it no longer matters which party is elected" because all

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<sup>27</sup> Carolyn Leitch, "Analysts upsize Gildan's Targets", *The Globe and Mail*, 12 April 2005.

“implement the same neo-liberal project.”<sup>28</sup> Indeed, one of the serious problems with Aristide, as perceived by foreign donors and domestic business interests, was his radical anti-market agenda. As Harvard’s longtime Haiti expert, Robert Rotberg, noted just prior to the November 2000 elections that brought Aristide to power for a second time: “He could figure out how to return the market economy to Haiti and at the very least ... he'd make the U.S., Canada and others partners.”<sup>29</sup> A case in point is the Memorandum of Understanding signed by Canada with Haiti on 22 July 2003, which eliminated tariffs on “textile and apparel goods, an important and promising sector for Canadian investment,” which led “some Canadian companies ... to shift garment production to Haiti,” in the words of the CIDA report.<sup>30</sup> One of the companies, undoubtedly, must have been Gildan Activewear. Following a complaint launched by a number of workers’ rights monitoring groups in December 2003 against the company’s operations in Honduras, the Fair Labor Association<sup>31</sup> launched an independent external inquiry into Gildan’s factory conditions that revealed the “obstruction of workers’ rights to freedom of association,” among other abuses of the FLA’s code, “such as long working hours, failure to pay overtime, and sexual harassment.” Gildan initially agreed to rectify its factory conditions, but suddenly, in July 2004, while negotiating a resolution with the FLA, the company decided to close the factory in Honduras and, reportedly, ramp up its operations in Haiti.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Jim Hodgson, *Dissonant Voices: Northern NGO and Haitian Partner Perspectives on the Future of Haiti* (Waterloo, ON: CIGI, 2005) 5.

<sup>29</sup> Trenton Daniel, “Would Aristide back as president help poor Haiti,” *Reuters*, 15 October 2000.

<sup>30</sup> Canadian International Development Agency, *Canadian Cooperation With Haiti: Reflecting on a Decade of “Difficult Partnership”* (Gatineau, QC: CIDA, 2004) 22.

<sup>31</sup> The FLA is non-profit workers’ rights organization encompassing universities, non-governmental organizations, and large apparel firms. Corporate membership in the FLA is contingent on meeting particular labour standards, outlined in the organization’s code.

<sup>32</sup> Fair Labor Association, “Third Party Complaint Regarding a Facility Owned and Operated by Gildan in Honduras,” *Annual Public Report* (2005); available at: <http://www.fairlabor.org/2005report/thirdparty/honduras.html>.

Wilfred Laurier University's Yasmine Shamsie has carefully traced how neoliberal policies embodied in structural adjustment programs eroded the legitimacy of Aristide's government from 1994 onwards. Despite popular opposition to various reforms, such as the privatization of state-owned firms, Aristide was strongly pressured to ignore the wishes of his own constituency. And when he finally did reject reforms due to unrelenting public resistance, loan credits were frozen, highlighting the "clear contradiction inherent in advancing democratic governance while simultaneously dictating economic policy from above," as Shamsie points out.<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately, Canada's *International Policy Statement* of April 2005 does not problematize this contradiction, and instead continues to emphasize privatization schemes and the integration of developing countries into "the global trading system".<sup>34</sup> The argument, here, is not to argue that all privatization schemes and structural adjustment programs should be rejected, but that in certain cases, such as that of Haiti, such programs can in fact severely undermine democracy and lead to instability.

Following the disputed legislative elections of 2000, moreover, foreign donors cut aid programs substantially, and restructured distribution of left-over aid. Between fiscal years 1999-2000 and 2001-2002, Canadian disbursement to Haiti was cut in half, falling from \$39,029,902 to \$18,693,430, and the latter sum was shifted away from government and toward civil society.<sup>35</sup> This sharp decline fits into a longer pattern of assistance reduction that brought the total value of

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<sup>33</sup> Yasmine Shamsie, "Building 'low-intensity' democracy in Haiti: the OAS contribution", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 6, (2004) 1101.

<sup>34</sup> Canadian International Development Agency, *International Policy Statement: Development* (Ottawa, ON: CIDA, 2005) 18.

<sup>35</sup> Canadian International Development Agency, *Canadian Cooperation With Haiti: Reflecting on a Decade of "Difficult Partnership"* (Gatineau, QC: CIDA, 2004) 10 (Figure 1).

foreign aid flows to Haiti down from US\$611 million in 1994-1995 to US\$136 million in 2001-2002.<sup>36</sup>

In February 2002, a World Bank study of international aid directed at Haiti warned that “[n]o strategy will be effective without government ownership [of assistance programs], so the first step should be to create a climate of trust and mutual cooperation between the [Haitian] government and the donors.”<sup>37</sup> And indeed, the Canadian strategy of shifting aid away from the government, thus reducing its ownership of development programs, had the predictable effect, recognized by CIDA in its decade-long review of policy towards Haiti, which states that an effect of the shift was the “creation of parallel systems of service delivery, eroding legitimacy, capacity and will of the state to deliver key services.” This consequence was also recognized in a foreign aid analysis report released by Haiti’s Interim Cooperation Framework group in 2004, noting that “donors have often set up parallel implementation structures that weakened the State...”<sup>38</sup> Without a doubt, this trend helped create the conditions under which the Aristide government’s unconstitutional removal from power became increasingly possible by 2003-04.

To be sure, Canada did introduce strict conditionality for restoration of funding to the government, but this failed as a strategy. Again, the CIDA review, completed in December 2004, after Aristide’s fall, appears to recognize this, noting that “[i]t is highly questionable how constructive ... conditionality was given that the system did not reform and in February 2004 Haiti experienced another period of intense political instability.”<sup>39</sup> Now, to adequately appreciate the complexities inherent to the administration of aid, it is worthwhile asking why the Aristide

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<sup>36</sup> Republic of Haiti, *Interim Cooperation Framework, 2004-2006: Summary Report* (UNDG: New York, 2004) 3.

<sup>37</sup> International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Haiti: Country Assistance Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: IBRD, 2002) 20.

<sup>38</sup> Haiti, *Cooperation Framework*, 5.

<sup>39</sup> CIDA, *Canadian Cooperation With Haiti*, 11.

government, given its profound financial difficulties, nonetheless chose to not adhere to the conditions imposed by foreign donors.

Joel S. Migdal's "dilemma of state leaders" framework suggests one answer. State leaders, notes Migdal, operate within two intersecting arenas: the "world" and "domestic society." Within the former, state leaders "interact with representatives of other states, large corporations, international organizations, and an assortment of other transnational actors" that can create "severe ... constraints ... in what they [state leaders] can do domestically..." But in domestic society, there is "room for significant state maneuvering," and leaders "seek to maximize their autonomy whenever and wherever possible, even within a context of constraints from world forces" by working to "reshape, ignore, or circumvent the strongest groups in their societies," behaviour that is even more likely to be exhibited when political survival is at stake.<sup>40</sup> Now, in the context of Aristide's predicament in the post-2000 period, it is important to recognize that aid reduction was accompanied by the rise of a powerful political opposition – funded by foreign donors – which led Aristide to become increasingly dependent on the private gangs operating in Port-au-Prince's poorest neighbourhoods for his government's survival. (Note that after being restored to power in 1994, one of Aristide's first acts was to dismantle the country's feared armed forces.) As the International Crisis Group explains, "urban gangs received money, logistical support and weapons from the National Police because the [Aristide] government saw them as a bulwark against a coup."<sup>41</sup> So while the "world arena" created pressure on Aristide's government to conform to a particular set of conditions, the government's

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<sup>40</sup> Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 63.

<sup>41</sup> International Crisis Group, "Can Haiti Hold Elections in 2005?", Latin America/Caribbean Briefing No. 8, 3 August 2005, 4.

increasingly precarious position led it to do what was necessary to circumvent and “maximize” autonomy from the “strongest groups” challenging it.

None of this, of course, is intended to unduly diminish the responsibility of Aristide’s government for its role in creating a highly incendiary sociopolitical atmosphere in Haiti by 2002-03, but it *is* meant to highlight the disastrous (and presumably undesirable) effect that a sudden drop in foreign aid can have on the receiving country, which in this case was, and continues to be, the poorest in the hemisphere. The prescription implied here, which is certainly open to challenge, is that Canada, along with its donor partners, should have maintained funding levels to Aristide’s government in the post-2000 period, while also applying joint diplomatic pressure to achieve a resolution to the internal political impasse. Though it would be unjustified to claim with certainty that such a strategy would have led Aristide’s government to give up its repressive practices, it is reasonable to posit that Aristide would likely not have found it so necessary to rely on street gangs for his government’s security. Indeed, the record suggests that Aristide was amenable to reaching a political agreement with the opposition, having cooperated with diplomatic efforts led by the OAS<sup>42</sup> in the fall of 2003, and also having agreed to a compromise proposed by CARICOM,<sup>43</sup> which was rejected by the opposition. The alternative policy option for foreign donors like Canada, namely the one that was followed, has led to the present situation, where Canada, France, and the US lent their support to a highly repressive transitional appointed government, as outlined earlier above. As Shamsie notes, “where the opportunity to toss a life preserver to the flailing government existed, the key actors (the USA,

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<sup>42</sup> Organisation of American States.

<sup>43</sup> Caribbean Community and Common Market.

France and Canada) stood by idle allowing a regiment of well armed paramilitaries to determine the country's fate.”

Although, as noted, Canada has committed some \$147 million towards Haiti for the two years beginning in July 2004, it remains unclear how it will proceed in assisting the newly elected government under Préval who, despite having moved away from the F. Lavalas platform, has said that he sees no reason why his formerly close ally, the controversial and politically ambitious Aristide, should not be allowed to return to Haiti. Indeed, on 21 February 2006, with Préval confirmed as Haitian president, Aristide told the press from exile in South Africa that he was in the process of negotiating his return to Haiti and that he would be back “as soon as possible.”<sup>44</sup> If Aristide does make a return in the near future and finds a prominent role for himself in government, what principles will guide Canadian development policy? As Caroline Anstey, who heads the World Bank's Caribbean unit has observed: "If Haiti underscored anything it is that security and development must go hand in hand. Better security would have meant faster development results on the ground. Faster development would have contributed to better security."<sup>45</sup> The lesson to be derived from the above, and that CIDA seems to have recognized, is that the provision of steady, long-term support, to a poor, fledgling democracy is of critical importance, as a sudden reduction of aid to a country like Haiti can increase insecurity for the government and, by consequence, the population, undermining development objectives.

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<sup>44</sup> “Aristide hopes to return to Haiti ‘soon’”, *Reuters*, 21 February 2006.

<sup>45</sup> As quoted in: Walt Bogdanich and Jenny Nordberg, “Mixed US Signals Helped Tilt Haiti Toward Chaos”, *New York Times*, 29 January 2006.

### **Problematizing the US Relationship With Haiti**

The above discussion elicits a third issue that requires further research, namely the difficulty of administering Canadian aid and democratization programs in a multilateral context involving great power interests. In the case of Haiti, the US role is of particular relevance. A recent investigation by the *New York Times* revealed that, according to the former US Ambassador to Haiti, Brian Dean Curran, the US effectively began pursuing a policy of destabilization against Aristide in 2003 by supporting opposition parties and counseling them to not reach a political compromise with the elected government. If accurate, this would only be the latest chapter in a long history of US interventions in Haiti through the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. How Canadian foreign aid policy can be structured in this context in a manner that is consistent with principles of development and supportive of established democratic institutions is a policymaking consideration that needs to be more actively problematized by CIDA for its programs to be effective.

A key theme noted by CIDA, USAID<sup>46</sup>, and the Haitian Interim Cooperation Framework group, is the need for greater policy coherence and donor coordination in aid policy. A USAID analysis of coordination strategies, for instance, notes that coordination can take place in the form of information exchange, division of labour on projects, and the establishment of a common framework, which requires general policy agreement among donors.<sup>47</sup> Now, the record suggests that the international donor community coordinated its aid policies towards Haiti in broad terms. As noted, foreign aid flows to Haiti fell sharply following the disputed legislative elections of 2000, and Canadian policy adhered to this pattern. Moreover, left-over aid was redirected

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<sup>46</sup> United States Agency for International Development.

<sup>47</sup> USAID, "Donor Coordination Strategies", 22 September 2000; available at: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy-ads/200/200sad.pdf>.

towards civil society groups that formed a potent opposition to Aristide's government. Yet, if as argued above, Canada should have maintained its funding to the government, this would have put it at odds with several other donors, including the US.

The US's preponderant role vis-à-vis Haiti, moreover, means that Canada has also been dragged into the historical vortex of complex and schizophrenic relations between the latter two countries. For some time, a number of civil society groups in the US and Canada have been promoting the position that the US sponsored the Dominican Republic-based rebellion that overthrew Aristide in February 2004. The evidence for this is mixed and inconclusive, though it is certainly not implausible that the US played a key role in Aristide's ouster, given its long history of intervention in Haiti.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps the most significant piece of evidence suggesting US involvement comes from a lengthy exposé published in the *New York Times* in January 2006, which cites US Ambassador Curran stating that the Washington-based International Republican Institute (IRI), a "democracy-building" organization close to the George W. Bush administration, began supporting Aristide's opponents following the 2000 elections and preventing crucial political cooperation. In this period, Curran wrote to the State Department with his concern that the IRI's activities were contrary to formal policy towards Haiti and that this made the US vulnerable to the charge that it was "attempting to destabilize the [Aristide] government." Curran claims that these concerns were ignored and that his efforts to save Haitian democracy under Aristide were thus undermined, eventually leading to the February 2004 coup.<sup>49</sup> For his part, despite US claims that he had agreed to leave voluntarily, Aristide has consistently maintained

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<sup>48</sup> See, for example: Paul Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2006) and Noam Chomsky, *Year 501: The Conquest Continues* (Boston: South End Books, 1993) Ch. 6.

<sup>49</sup> Walt Bogdanich and Jenny Nordberg, "Mixed U.S. Signals Helped Haiti Tilt Toward Chaos", *New York Times*, 29 January 2006.

since his fall from power that he was forced out by US forces and flown to the Central African Republic against his will.

Given the above, the story of Canadian involvement in Haiti becomes potentially murkier. Though activists opposed to the Canadian mission in Haiti have often claimed that Canada was complicit in the coup, the available evidence is also inconclusive. To date, the strongest piece of evidence employed to support this claim is an article by Michel Vastel that appeared in Montréal's *L'Actualité* in March 2003.<sup>50</sup> Vastel reported on a "secret" meeting, dubbed "The Ottawa Initiative on Haiti" and hosted by then Canadian Secretary of State for Latin America Denis Paradis, which took place on the shores of Meech Lake in January of the same year, and was attended by officials from the EU, OAS, and the Francophonie organization. At the meeting, according to Vastel, officials discussed ways of dealing with the quickly degenerating situation in Haiti, including direct intervention under the auspices of the UN. Vastel also noted that the meeting's participants acknowledged that the UN would likely not be interested in undertaking another major reconstruction mission, but that this would perhaps be inevitable. The implication, therefore, is that when the situation in Haiti entered a crisis phase in February 2004, Canada stood back and allowed the rebels to takeover power, only choosing to deploy Operation Halo on 6 March, *after* Aristide was overthrown.

All the above strongly points towards the need for a more rigorous Canadian research program on policy towards Haiti, to facilitate further critical analysis. It does not take long for any student of this topic area to come to the understanding that data quality is a serious issue impeding progress in analysis. When it comes to the record of Haitian politics, there is no shortage of contradictory accounts of what has happened since 2000. There is thus a strong need

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<sup>50</sup> Michel Vastel, "Haiti mise en tutelle par l'ONU?", *L'Actualité*, 15 March 2003.

to sort out the various competing interpretations of recent history, and examine how all this was viewed at the time in the eyes of Canadian policymakers.

### **Explaining Canada's Policy: An agenda for further research**

I would like to outline here two (among many) avenues for further research: the effect of the Haitian Diaspora on Canadian policy and the “Canada as satellite” thesis. First, it may be necessary to investigate the link between Canadian policy in Haiti and the large Haitian Diaspora centered in the Montréal area to see what influence, if any, it has been able to influence on the government. The first significant wave of Haitian immigrants to Canada arrived in the 1960s, following the rise to power of Francois “Papa Doc” Duvalier’s brutal regime in 1957. For linguistic reasons, these immigrants tended to strongly favour Québec as their destination province. According to one estimate, between 1965 and 1976, approximately 95 per cent of Haitian immigrants settled in Québec.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, many of these immigrants were formally educated members of the Haitian upper class; in 1968, for example, there were “ten times more Haitian psychiatrists in Montréal than in Port-au-Prince”.<sup>52</sup> Haitians were also the largest immigrant group to have landed in the Montréal area during the period between 1990 and 1996 (the first coup against Aristide in 1991 led to a campaign of terror by the military government of Raoul Cédras until September 1994, when Aristide was reinstated as president), and number well over 70,000 people in the city.

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<sup>51</sup> Paul Dejean. *The Haitians in Québec* (Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 1980) 9.

<sup>52</sup> Robert I. Rotberg. *Haiti: The Politics of Squalor* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1971) 249.

Some studies have investigated the Haitian community's organized and successful political activism in Montréal in the area of education policy,<sup>53</sup> but little research has been done into the link between the Diaspora and Canada's policy towards Haiti. Still, there are some Haitian civil society organizations like the Regroupement des organismes Canada-Haitiens pour le développement (ROCAHD) that have actively worked with the government over the last few years on matters relating to Haiti. Since the beginning of its intervention in Haiti in March 2004, Canada has also actively sought to bring the Haitian Diaspora into the general policy making process and, to this end, organized a major Diaspora conference in December 2004 in Montréal. Indeed, a Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) report reviewing Canada's relationship with Haiti noted that "[a]round 100,000 Haitian families live in Canada today and have been *a significant driver behind Canadian support to Haiti.*"<sup>54</sup> There is therefore a need for further investigation into how the Haitian Diaspora may be influencing Canadian policy with regards to Haiti.

The second area for further research is what Kim Richard Nossal has identified as the "Canada as satellite" thesis. Briefly, this view posits that "[b]ecause of the economic, ideological, and cultural linkages between Canada and the United States" Canada has been "pulled into an emerging, even if informal, American empire."<sup>55</sup> In our context, therefore, further research is necessary to assess the argument that Canadian policy in Haiti is a product of its relationship with the United States. Having not participated in the Iraq War of 2003 and the National Missile Defence program, Canada had to find some way of fulfilling its responsibilities

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<sup>53</sup> Philip Couton, "The Role of Minority Educators: Haitian Teachers in Quebec Schools," in Harold Troper and Morton Weinfield (eds.) *Ethnicity Politics and Public Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999) 145-147.

<sup>54</sup> My emphasis. Canadian International Development Agency. "Canadian Cooperation with Haiti: Reflecting on Decade of 'Difficult Partnership'", (CIDA: Gatineau, QC: 2004) 11.

<sup>55</sup> Kim Richard Nossal. *Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1989), 53.

as a “satellite” state of the US. With the possible nexus of interests provided by this “requirement” and the influence of the Haitian Diaspora, Canada may have found it expedient to intervene in Haiti in February 2004, with “development” considerations playing only a secondary role in policy formation.

This paper has argued that 1) Canada has failed to promote an authentically ‘democratic’ character for the process leading up to the 7 February elections, which may result in continued political instability in Haiti, undermining development; 2) Canadian aid policy since the disputed legislative elections of 2000 contributed to the weakening and destabilization of a democratically elected government, further undermining development programs; and 3) Canadian policy towards Haiti vis-à-vis US policy needs to be problematized, but this is contingent on further research. In November 2005, the Waterloo-based Centre for International Governance Innovation hosted an (unfortunately rare) forum that brought together academics and representatives from government and nongovernmental organizations to discuss the situation in Haiti and Canada’s involvement. This type of dialogue needs to continue and be broadened so that the three arguments outlined here can be further explored, critically assessed, and accordingly revised. All indicators suggest that Haiti will continue to remain unstable for many years, and a better understanding of Canada’s relationship with Haiti can contribute immeasurably to the formulation of new directions for the future.

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