

# **Explaining the Shift in Canada's Haiti Policy, 1991-2004**

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## 1. Introduction

This paper is an investigation of a marked shift in Canadian policy towards Haiti over the period beginning roughly in 1990, when Jean-Bertrand Aristide became the first democratically elected president of that small Caribbean state, to 2004, when he was overthrown in a coup and exiled. During the early 1990s, Canada was one of the most ardent supporters of the process that led to Aristide's rise to power and a key defender of his government, especially after it was overthrown by the military in September 1991. By the next decade, however, Canadian support for Aristide's government – elected once more in 2000 – collapsed, and Canada stood by, perhaps even facilitated, the second coup of February 29, 2004.

Given this, there is very much a need for a coherent explanation of Canada's Haiti policy over this period that transcends the quick judgments and facile arguments that seem to dominate what little analysis of this matter exists in the mainstream media. Moreover, academic coverage of Canada-Haiti relations is rather small, despite a long, complex relationship between the two countries, which continues to the present day. Emblematic of all this is an article by W. Don McNamara published in a 2005 edition of *Policy Options*. In it, he argues that Canada's

involvement in Haiti can be explained *in part* because it is situated in the Caribbean, which hosts “tens to hundreds of thousands” of Canadians during the tourist season, and because “[f]ailed states like Haiti ... are havens for and breeding grounds of terrorists.”<sup>1</sup> With due respect, it seems that such explanations are quite a stretch, and do not really help us make sense of Canadian policy towards Haiti.

Almost as soon as Aristide fell from power in February 2004, the nature of Canada’s role in the crisis elicited some interesting media attention. An article appearing in the *National Post* on 9 March 2004 cited a former professor at the Université du Québec à Montréal, Paul Arcelin, as stating that: “Two years ago, I met [Haitian rebel leader] Guy Philippe in Santo Domingo [Dominican Republic] and we spent 10 to 15 hours a day together, plotting against Aristide ... From time to time we’d cross the border through the woods to conspire against Aristide, to meet with the opposition and regional leaders to prepare for Aristide’s downfall.” Arcelin also claimed that he used his political connections to meet with Pierre Pettigrew, Member of Parliament for Montréal’s Haitian-rich Papineau riding, the previous month, as the rebellion was underway, to explain “the reality of Haiti to him.” Arcelin then added that: “My country looks like Hiroshima – dirty and destroyed like there was a war. But there wasn’t a war. It was the destruction of the country by a president who was crazy.”<sup>2</sup> Arcelin’s claims elicit a number of key questions, and will thus serve as a launch point for the basic structure of this study. For instance, can it really be said that Aristide’s actions and policies destroyed Haiti? If so, is this why Canada turned against Aristide? Also, what influence were Haitian-Canadians like Arcelin able to have on the government’s policies towards the Caribbean state? Moreover, who were these “regional leaders”

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<sup>1</sup> McNamara does mention, however, that Montréal has a large Haitian Diaspora, but does not suggest how this determines the specific course of Canadian policy. See W. Don McNamara, “Haiti – An Opportunity for Canada to Apply the ‘3-D’ Concept,” *Policy Options* (February 2005) 63-67.

<sup>2</sup> Sue Montgomery, “Montréal professor boasts he’s the brains behind Haitian coup,” *National Post*, 9 March 2004.

that Arcelin and Philippe claim to have met in order to prepare for the February 2004 coup? Specifically, what links may exist between this regional dimension and Canadian policy towards Haiti?

I will begin my analysis by providing an overview of Canada's relationship with Haiti over the relevant period, which will show that Canadian policy did in fact shift from support for Aristide to opposition to his government. This will be followed by a discussion of the various possible reasons for the shift. The first will examine the Aristide government's human rights record and its respect for democracy to see if evidence of a negative trend in these two areas can explain the policy shift. The second explanation to be assessed will be the role of the Haitian Diaspora in Canada in the formation of policy towards Haiti. Was the shift a result of domestic pressures on key government officials? And the third explanation to be examined will be the effect of Canada's relationship with the US, especially through the medium of the Organization of American States (OAS), on the country's foreign policy. I will show that the first explanation is unsatisfactory, that the second explanation is valuable to the extent that it helps elucidate the reason Canada is engaged in Haiti, irrespective of the specific nature of policies pursued, and that the third explanation is valuable in terms of understanding the policy shift. Before proceeding any further, however, let us survey the context of Haitian politics in the Aristide era.

From the time freed Haitian slaves expelled the French from their territory in 1803, Haiti has experienced a seemingly perpetual cycle of dictatorships, coups, counter-coups, and foreign military interventions. In 1957, Francois Duvalier became Haiti's president through highly dubious elections and unleashed an extremely repressive ruling regime that pushed well beyond anything that even Haiti had experienced until then. Yet, with foreign support, particularly from the United States, the Duvalier dictatorship lasted for almost three decades, though from 1971

onwards, Jean-Claude, Francois' son, took over the reigns. A popular uprising in 1986, however, led Jean-Claude to step down from power and take refuge in France. In the three subsequent years, Haiti experienced six other military rulers before the country's first democratic elections were scheduled for December 1990.

The man who would win those elections with approximately 67 per cent of the vote was little known in the preceding period. The rise of Aristide's Lavalas party was so quick that most Haiti observers were caught completely by surprise when Aristide declared his candidacy for the 1990 democratic elections – the first in Haiti's history – just two months before the vote. For instance, a comprehensive essay on Haiti's transition appearing in the establishment journal *Foreign Affairs* in the Fall of 1988, and written by one of the foremost Haiti scholars in the US, Harvard's Robert I. Rotberg, makes no mention of the priest who would soon come to power with a large portion of the vote.<sup>3</sup> In the short period before the election, Aristide skyrocketed in the polls to become the front-runner within a month, ahead of the favoured candidate, a US-backed former World Bank official named Marc Bazin.

Aristide had spent a few years in the mid-1980s studying in Canada, where he began a doctoral degree in psychology at the Université de Montréal, but soon returned to Haiti to work in the countryside, delivering fiery, charismatic speeches to the masses that employed strong elements of liberation theology. Speaking in the local Creole – as opposed to French, the language usually associated with elites and incomprehensible to the vast majority of Haitians – Aristide's ideas resonated profoundly with the poor, who had experienced nothing less than exploitation and terror from the state throughout their lives. While the poor had always been told to accept their wretched fates, Aristide urged them to agitate for a life of dignified poverty. To quote a passage from his book, *In the Parish of the Poor*: "I say: Disobey the rules. Ask for

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<sup>3</sup> Robert I. Rotberg, "Haiti's Past Mortgages its Future," *Foreign Affairs* (Fall 1988) Vol. 67, No. 1, 93-109.

more. Leave your wretchedness behind. Organize with your brothers and sisters. Never accept the hand of fate. Keep hope alive. Refuse the squalor of the parishes of the poor. Escape the charnel house, and move toward life.”<sup>4</sup>

Aristide’s resounding victory at the polls on 16 December 1990 represented for the Haitian masses the first real chance at a better life. For once, a popular leader who could credibly claim to represent the wishes of the vast majority, was at the head of government. Yet, right from the beginning, it was clear that any change in the way Haitian politics were going to be handled would be challenged by the long-established economic elite, backed by the military. A *New York Times* article filed just prior to Aristide’s win captured the reality very well, and is of continued relevance in the present period: though Aristide “quickly reached beyond his base among the youth in the dusty, tumbledown south of this city [Port-au-Prince] to claim strong support among destitute and working class people throughout the country ... [f]rom the business community, the army, and the Catholic and Protestant Churches to Voodoo priests and rural landowners, sentiment is strongly, if not uniformly, set against him.”<sup>5</sup> It is, indeed, this dynamic that must be recognized and understood if one wishes to make sense of Haitian politics, and thus the context of Canadian policy, in the Aristide era. Let us then begin our analysis of Canada’s Haiti policy shift during the 1990-2004 period.

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<sup>4</sup> As excerpted in: “Disobey the Rules,” *New York Times*, 21 December 1990.

<sup>5</sup> Howard W. French, “Front Running Priest a Shock to Haiti,” *New York Times*, 13 December 1990.

## 2. From Support to Opposition

On September 30, 1991, the Haitian military, led by General Raoul Cédras, overthrew Aristide's seven-month-old government, leading the president to go into exile in Venezuela and thousands of his supporters to be jailed, tortured, and killed. Aristide would not return until October 1994, and it is within this period that Canada became a leading exponent of international efforts to restore the democratically elected Haitian leader to power. Canadian reaction to the coup was quick and determined. On October 1, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney told reporters that: "We think it's a bloody disgrace what has taken place and there's only so many times that people can put up with this."<sup>6</sup> He also added that "we're examining all possible options which will help the Haitians help themselves," and referred to the Cédras junta as a "gang of thugs."<sup>7</sup> The following day, Secretary of State for External Affairs (SSEA) Barbara MacDougall told the press that resort to force "clearly exists as a possibility" and that it was very urgent that the international community "come to grips with the situation [in Haiti] right away."<sup>8</sup> To these ends, Canada worked within the framework of the Organization of American States (OAS), to promote

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<sup>6</sup> "Aristide bids to remove coup soldiers," *Toronto Star*, 2 October 1991.

<sup>7</sup> Tim Harper, "Haitian takeover 'bloody disgrace' Mulroney says," *Toronto Star*, 2 October 1991.

<sup>8</sup> "Canada calls for sanctions on Haiti," *Toronto Star*, 3 October 1991.

international efforts at restoring Aristide. Following an OAS meeting in early October, MacDougall led a high-level nine-country delegation from the organization to Haiti on a Canadian Forces Boeing 707 to notify the Cédras regime that it would not be recognized or accepted.<sup>9</sup> By mid-October, however, likely as a result of lukewarm support for military action by other OAS members, Canada began to emphasize peaceful solutions to the crisis.

Nevertheless, Mulroney's support for Aristide's restoration was so quick and strong that it contrasted with the nature of support offered to the deposed president by the US government, which saw the coup as an opportunity to install a leader in Haiti that would be friendly to US interests. Additionally, Canada appears to have been perceived in Haiti as a leading and determined supporter of Aristide; one article in the *Toronto Star* filed shortly after the coup reported that a wealthy Haitian couple at a Port-au-Prince hotel became so upset about Canada's position that they began yelling at a British journalist: "Those f---ing Canadians. THEY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING!"<sup>10</sup> In December 1991, furthermore, Aristide, still recognized by the Mulroney government as the only legitimate leader of Haiti, was warmly received in Ottawa and met with a slew of leaders, including the Québec premier, the Montréal mayor, Mulroney, and opposition leaders from the Liberal Party and New Democratic Party (NDP).<sup>11</sup>

Beyond diplomatic support and niceties, in material terms Canada's first action against the Cédras regime was its support for economic sanctions devised by the OAS. As an aside, it should be noted that these measures were controversial from the beginning, with critics charging that they would lead to great suffering by the already deprived Haitian masses, and that the military regime would benefit from the food and cooking oil exempted from the blockade. As such, it cannot be argued that Canada was somehow completely unaware of the negative

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<sup>9</sup> Peter McKenna, "Canada and the Haitian Crisis," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 32, Iss. 3. (Fall 1997).

<sup>10</sup> Linda Diebel, "U.S. appears to double-deal during coup," *Toronto Star*, 13 October 1991.

<sup>11</sup> Patrick Doyle, "Ottawa plans special welcome for deposed Haitian president," *Toronto Star*, 8 December 1991.

consequences of the sanctions. But as Canada's ambassador to Port-au-Prince put it: "It must be made clear that the people of Haiti are not standing alone. It must be made clear they have support."<sup>12</sup> It might then be said that in the absence of military action, sanctions were viewed by Ottawa as a politically feasible policy option to pursue, even though they would likely hurt civilians. It should also be noted here that while the OAS implemented the sanctions, countries outside the organization did not cooperate. A number of European countries, for example, continued shipping oil to Haiti during the sanctions period.

In the subsequent years, Canada continued working closely on plans to restore Aristide with the United States, France, and Venezuela, a grouping which became known as the 'Four Friends'. The efforts of these countries culminated in the Governors Island Accords signed on July 3, 1993, after six days of discussions. The Accords gave Cédras protection from prosecution and lifted economic sanctions, while in return they required that the junta allow Aristide to return to Haiti later that year, following the deployment of an advance UN-sanctioned military mission. On October 13, the *USS Harlan County* arrived just off Port-au-Prince's harbour, carrying 220 UN personnel, to secure the capital for Aristide's return. The vessel, however, was not allowed to dock as the paramilitary organization, FRAPH<sup>13</sup>, almost certainly with support from Cédras, staged threatening riots onshore.<sup>14</sup> Following this aborted mission, the UN passed Resolution 873, which restored the sanctions frozen earlier that year and called for a military blockade of Haiti. Canada was a key participant in the renewed sanctions, with two destroyers and one supply ship, complemented by three Sea King helicopters, patrolling the Haitian coast. In

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<sup>12</sup> Linda Diebel, "Debate rages over sanctions against Haiti," *Toronto Star*, 10 October 1991.

<sup>13</sup> Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti. There is also evidence that the organization was backed by the CIA, which paid FRAPH leader Emmanuel Constant \$500 a month. See: Center for Constitutional Rights, "CCR Warns of Threat of Mass Murder in Haiti and the Return of FRAPH," 18 February 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Constant claims that the US knew ahead of time that FRAPH would hold riots. See Philippe Girard, *Clinton in Haiti* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004) 45.

comparison, the US deployed six ships to the mission, while the UK, Netherlands, Argentina and France each deployed one vessel.<sup>15</sup>

Later that month, on October 25, federal elections in Canada led to a new Liberal government under Jean Chrétien and the appointment of André Ouellet as the new SSEA. Despite the change in government, the Canadian position on Haiti remained much the same. If anything, as will be discussed later in greater detail, the Haiti file assumed greater importance for Ouellet as he represented the Montréal riding of Papineau, which has a relatively high proportion of Haitian Canadians. Under Ouellet's tenure, then, Canada continued its role within the Four Friends framework to seek a solution to the crisis. Given the recalcitrance of the Cédras regime and the inefficacy of the renewed sanctions program, the need for a military intervention became increasingly apparent as the summer of 1994 passed. And while Canada certainly maintained its political support for military action, it would have to rely heavily on the US for any such mission, given its own limited capabilities.

On September 15, 1994, US President Bill Clinton gave Cédras a final warning to step down from power and then asked former President Jimmy Carter to travel to Port-au-Prince for a final round of talks. Following three days of intense negotiations and news that thousands of US paratroopers were in the process of being dispatched from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Cédras agreed to leave the country in return for an amnesty and a payment and services package valued at \$1 million.<sup>16</sup>

On September 17, the UN-sanctioned, but US-led multinational force (MNF) entered the country and began preparations for assuming control after Cédras' departure. Now, while Canada opted out of this initial mission, known as Phase I, it nonetheless supported it politically, and

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<sup>15</sup> "Embargo grows against Haiti," *Globe and Mail*, 20 October 1993.

<sup>16</sup> On the payment issue, see: Kenneth Freed, "US Gives Cédras a Lucrative Deal to Get Out of Haiti," *Los Angeles Times*, 14 October 1994.

went on to participate in the subsequent UN-led Phase II mission by contributing 500 soldiers. Furthermore, Canada was quick to deploy RCMP trainers to Haiti even before Phase II officially began, dispatching a contingent less than a week after Phase I deployed.<sup>17</sup> Canada remained a strong proponent and participant of the Aristide restoration mission over 1995 and then went out of its way to ensure that the mission would continue into the latter half of the 1990s; in 1996, when the United Nations Mission in Haiti's (UNMIH, created in 1993 to implement the Governors Island Agreement) future was threatened after China became upset by Haiti's relations with Taiwan and, using its seat on the Security Council, limited the size of a renewed UNMIH force to 1,200, Canada stepped in and contributed 700 soldiers at its own cost, allowing for a larger mission than authorized.<sup>18</sup>

Despite all this high level of support for Haiti and its Lavalas government during the 1990s, the situation quickly changed beginning in 2000. Following the May legislative elections of that year that led Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party to win the vast majority of seats, Canada-Haiti relations soured dramatically. The international community and the Haitian opposition complained that the elections were flawed, even fraudulent, while René Préval's government (that replaced Aristide's in 1996) maintained that they were free and fair. Perhaps as a reaction to the criticism, on July 27 of the same year the residence of the Canadian ambassador was attacked with a grenade, damaging a car.<sup>19</sup>

Canada, along with the US, Japan, and the European Union (EU), seized the May vote controversy to punish Haiti by withholding a much needed aid package worth about \$550 million, in addition to dramatically shrinking and redirecting aid to civil society. In this respect, it

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<sup>17</sup> Jeff Salot, "Canadian police on way to Haiti," *Globe and Mail*, 23 September 1994.

<sup>18</sup> Sebastian von Einsiedel and David M. Malone, "Peace and Democracy for Haiti: A UN Mission Impossible?," *International Relations*, (Spring 1996) Vol. 20(2), 156-7.

<sup>19</sup> "Canadian envoys residence bombed," *Toronto Star*, 29 July 2000.

should be noted that the US took the lead in pressuring the IFIs to freeze loans to Haiti. In the case of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), for example, the US representative to the institution, Lawrence Harrington, wrote to the IDB's president asking him "to not authorize any disbursement [totaling \$146 million]," despite the fact that the loan agreement had already been approved by the Haitian parliament, and that the IDB's constitution forbids political meddling by member states.<sup>20</sup> What is more, while holding back assistance on one side, on the other side the IDB demanded that Haiti continue paying arrears totaling \$5 million, in addition to "commission fees" on the frozen loans.<sup>21</sup> It was only in 2003 that the IDB announced that it would release the much-needed loan to Haiti, to be paid in installments, but only if the poor Caribbean state repaid \$30 million in loan arrears at one go – this, at a time when Haiti's foreign currency reserves hovered at just \$50 million.<sup>22</sup>

As the *Boston Globe* put it a few years later, the aid cutoff "left Haiti struggling to meet even basic needs and weakened the authority of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide..."<sup>23</sup> Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University and one of the most respected development economists in the world, has also argued that "Haiti's economy went into a tailspin" as a result of the frozen aid money, and has condemned the international community for its manner of dealing with Haiti.<sup>24</sup> And even the IDB's research arm issued a report on Haiti stating that "the major factor behind economic stagnation is the withholding of both foreign grants and loans associated with the international community's response to the critical political impasse."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Quoted from: 'Letter from US representative to the IDB, Lawrence Harrington, to the President of the IDB, Enrique Iglesias,' dated 6 April 2001; copy in possession of the author.

<sup>21</sup> Paul Farmer, "Haiti: short and bitter lives," *Le Monde diplomatique*, July 2003.

<sup>22</sup> "Haiti heads debt black hole," *Haiti-Progrès*, 18 June 2003.

<sup>23</sup> Farah Stockman and Susan Milligan, "Before fall of Aristide, Haiti hit by aid cutoff," *Boston Globe*, 7 March 2004.

<sup>24</sup> Jeffrey Sachs, "Don't fall for Washington's spin on Haiti," *Financial Times*, 1 March 2004.

<sup>25</sup> As quoted in: Farmer, "Haiti," *Monde diplomatique*, 2003.

Between 1999 and 2003, the Haitian gross domestic product fell by more than a quarter, from approximately \$4 billion to \$2.9 billion.<sup>26</sup>

Critical to our analysis, however, is that Canadian policy supported the aid cutoff as Canada's own bilateral aid program was restructured to conform to the IFIs' and other international donors' general parameters. While Canada continued to send (reduced) aid to Haiti, the money was now moved away from existing programs intended to strengthen public institutions. As one CIDA official noted just before Aristide's second presidential inauguration in February 2001: "Aid in Haiti is a risky business and the higher the risk, the greater the demand for accountability."<sup>27</sup> Between fiscal years 1999-2000 and 2001-2002, Canadian disbursement to Haiti was cut in half, falling from (in Canadian dollars) \$39,029,902 to \$18,693,430, and the latter sum was redirected away from government-support programs and towards non-governmental organizations.<sup>28</sup> This sharp decline fits into a longer pattern of assistance reduction that brought the total value of foreign aid flows to Haiti down from US\$611 million in 1994-1995 to \$136 million in 2001-2002.<sup>29</sup>

It is important to understand the effect that the redirection of funds to 'civil society' had on Haitian political stability. In his important study of development, 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>30</sup> Given that Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere, the government was, and continues to be, highly dependent on foreign aid flows for its functioning. Without financial support from the outside, basic services like health, police, and education are excruciatingly difficult to provide. In

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<sup>26</sup> Peter Hallward, "Option Zero in Haiti", *New Left Review*, 27 (May-June 2004) 39.

<sup>27</sup> Marina Jimenez, "Another chance for Aristide," *National Post*, 31 January 2001.

<sup>28</sup> Canadian International Development Agency, *Canadian Cooperation With Haiti: Reflecting on a Decade of "Difficult Partnership"* (Gatineau, QC: CIDA, 2004) 10 (Figure 1).

<sup>29</sup> Republic of Haiti, *Interim Cooperation Framework, 2004-2006: Summary Report* (UNDG: New York, 2004) 3.

<sup>30</sup> Branko Milanovic, *Worlds Apart: Measuring International and Global Inequality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005) 72.

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>31</sup> Indeed, the Canadian strategy of shifting aid away from the government, thus reducing its ownership of development programs, had the predictable effect, subsequently recognized by CIDA in its decade-long review of policy towards Haiti published in December 2004, which states that a consequence 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 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>32</sup> In all likelihood, this trend helped create the conditions under which the Aristide government’s unconstitutional removal from power became increasingly possible by 2003-04.

At the diplomatic level, moreover, Canada increasingly criticized the Haitian government for its many shortcomings. As Aristide was sworn into his second presidency in February 2001, a Foreign Affairs official noted that “Canada would like to continue to support the Haitian people ... but the actions of the next government will influence our ability to do so” – a curious statement, given that Canada had begun withdrawing financial and diplomatic support for Haiti well-before Aristide entered office for the second time.<sup>33</sup> At the Summit of the Americas in Québec City in April, meanwhile, Canada sponsored a special statement to be included in the final declaration dealing with the creation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas that linked

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<sup>31</sup> International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Haiti: Country Assistance Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: IBRD, 2002) 20.

<sup>32</sup> Haiti, *Cooperation Framework*, 5.

<sup>33</sup> Murray Campbell, “Aristide’s return less than a triumph,” *Globe and Mail*, 8 February 2001.

states' participation in the envisioned trading bloc and the observance of democracy, with Prime Minister Chrétien noting that “[t]he case of Haiti drew our particular attention.”<sup>34</sup>

The nadir in Canada-Haiti relations occurred in 2003, however, when an article by Michel Vastel published in *L'Actualité*, Québec's newsweekly, claimed that the Canadian Secretary of State for Latin America, Africa and the Francophonie, Denis Paradis, had secretly organized a meeting of states and international organizations concerned with Haiti at Wilson House, Meech Lake, in late January of the same year, and that together, this coalition had decided that Aristide should be removed from power and Haiti put under UN administration. As Vastel wrote, “the group ... was not ready to wait until the elections of 2005 to change the regime” in Haiti.<sup>35</sup> The article also makes reference to the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ document promoted by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), a group which was funded by Canada, and claims in particular that French diplomats at Meech Lake discussed putting Haiti under a kind of UN trusteeship.

Predictably, as word of Vastel's article spread, Haitian diplomats in Ottawa, who had neither been invited to nor told of the talks, became very concerned about what exactly had transpired at the January meeting, known as the ‘Ottawa Initiative’. The Haitian Embassy in Ottawa immediately issued a statement outlining its concerns and indicating that it “took the publication very seriously”.<sup>36</sup> Foreign Affairs officials, meanwhile, were quick to deny Vastel's claims, particularly any notion that an actual decision had been made on how to deal with Haiti, and also countered that the meeting was not secret, but just an informal consultation between interested parties. Meeting notes of the Ottawa Initiative released from Foreign Affairs do not corroborate Vastel's claim that a consensus was reached to expedite a change of government in

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<sup>34</sup> Robert Fife, “‘A clear commitment to Democracy’: Chrétien's clause added,” *National Post*, 23 April 2001.

<sup>35</sup> Author's translation. Michel Vastel, “Haiti mise en tutelle par l'ONU?,” *L'Actualité*, 15 March 2003.

<sup>36</sup> Author's translation. Statement of the Haitian Embassy in Canada, “Réactions de l'Ambassade au Canada à l'article publié par Michel Vastel sur Haiti,” 5 March 2003.

Haiti, though it should be mentioned that sections of some documents were blanked out before being released. On the issue of secrecy, however, internal government documentation states that the Government of Haiti was only informed of the Ottawa Initiative the day that Vastel's article was published – thus, more than a month after the meeting.<sup>37</sup> That the government of the country in discussion at Meech Lake – Haiti – was neither invited to nor told of a major international consultation on its future seems rather odd, and this episode certainly set the stage in Canada-Haiti relations for the following year.

Canada's cold relations with Haiti continued right through to the months leading up to Aristide's fall in February 2004. On January 13, with violence sweeping the country, Prime Minister Martin claimed that "Canada will very much be there and will do everything it can" to help Haiti.<sup>38</sup> Yet, Canada's actual behaviour in the subsequent period suggests that Canadian policy was in fact to allow the situation in Haiti to deteriorate. At the Summit of the Americas held in early January in Monterrey, Aristide announced that he would hold legislative elections within six months and seek new talks with the opposition later that month.<sup>39</sup> But instead of seizing this opportunity to achieve a peaceful solution, Canada continued to behave as if Aristide's recalcitrance was the main reason for the impasse. And instead of backing Aristide's democratically elected government, Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham suggested on February 13, in the middle of the rebellion, that if Aristide would "voluntarily resign", this would lead to a solution to the crisis.<sup>40</sup> Graham's suggestion is a rather odd one, given that the power vacuum caused by Aristide stepping down would give the rebels – no friends of democracy – an even freer hand in the country. Certainly, the only thing that would prevent the rebels from assuming

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<sup>37</sup> Meeting Notes of the Ottawa Initiative (Haiti: Notes sur les suites de la consultation informelle tenue à Ottawa sur Haiti), author not identified, Ottawa, 9-10 March 2003, Foreign Affairs Canada, File A-2004-00062, document 000045-46.

<sup>38</sup> Drew Fagan, "PM offers to help solve Haitian crisis," *Globe and Mail*, 13 January 2004.

<sup>39</sup> Paul Knox, "Aristide promises to hold elections within 6 months," *Globe and Mail*, 14 January 2004.

<sup>40</sup> Paul Koring, "Americas won't force Aristide from office," *Globe and Mail*, 14 February 2004.

power would be a foreign military intervention, but this Canada did not bother pushing for publicly – at least not until after Aristide was compelled to leave the country.

On February 19, furthermore, Graham demanded that Aristide engage in a number of reforms, including police reform, and that he carry out “confidence building measures” to placate the opposition’s concerns.<sup>41</sup> How Aristide could seriously be expected to follow through with these demands when rebels had already swept through most of the country and his government was just over a week away from being overthrown is a question that seems to have been successfully kept out of public discussion by the Canadian government. If Canada had been authentically committed to protecting the Haitian government, it seems that the reasonable policy to pursue would be to call for a small military intervention that could prevent the rebels from overrunning Port-au-Prince. As Yasmine Shamsie summarizes, “where the opportunity to toss a life preserver to the flailing government existed, the key actors (the USA, France and Canada) stood by idle allowing a regiment of well armed paramilitaries to determine the country’s fate.”<sup>42</sup>

It is also possible to make a strong argument that Canadian opposition to Aristide and his regime continued into the post-February 2004 period. During this period, the appointed transitional interim government (TIG) under Prime Minister Gérard Latortue launched a campaign of repression against Aristide’s supporters. This is of particular significance because the TIG was charged with organizing democratic elections which, ostensibly, all parties would be allowed to contest. Yet, the intimidation and violence waged against Lavalas (and other Aristide supporters) ensured that the party would not participate in the planned presidential elections, as indeed it did not. Tactics used or tolerated by the TIG ranged from violently repressing pro-Aristide

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<sup>41</sup> Jeff Salot and Paul Knox, “Ottawa set to deliver ultimatum to Aristide,” *Globe and Mail*, 20 February 2004.

<sup>42</sup> Yasmine Shamsie, “Building ‘low-intensity’ democracy in Haiti: the OAS contribution,” *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 6 (2004) 1112.

demonstrations and jailing Lavalas officials without charge, to preventing party officials in exile, including Aristide, from returning to Haiti.

Almost as soon as the TIG came to power, it appears to have adopted an anti-Lavalas policy. Under the pretense of seeking the arrest of pro-Aristide gangs, known as the Chimères, the Haitian National Police (HNP) repeatedly launched deadly incursions into Port-au-Prince slums such as Bel-Air, Martissant and Cité-Soleil, centers of Aristide support. In 2004, abuses tended to be characterized by police arrests and beatings of alleged pro-Aristide gang-members or supporters and the killing of civilians during raids on homes in the above-mentioned neighbourhoods.<sup>43</sup> By 2005, however, the HNP increasingly began to open fire on peaceful, public demonstrations in support of the deposed Aristide. For example, on February 28 the HNP opened fire on a crowd of 2,000 people marching on the capital to mark the one year since Aristide had been overthrown, killing two and injuring many more.<sup>44</sup> Then on March 24, police opened fire on another peaceful pro-Aristide march, reportedly killing one.<sup>45</sup> Again, on April 27, the HNP killed five people when it fired on protestors demanding the release of jailed Lavalas officials, prompting Amnesty International to issue a strong condemnation of the incident.<sup>46</sup> Yet, attacks continued. Over June 3 and 4, a *Reuters* report estimated that as many as twenty-five had been killed by HNP raids on several slums in Port-au-Prince.<sup>47</sup>

This violent repression of the political opposition by the TIG was accompanied by the detention of leading Lavalas officials and supporters without charge. The most prominent case was that of Prime Minister Yvon Neptune. After an arrest warrant was issued for his alleged role

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<sup>43</sup> For more on these incidents, see Amnesty International, "Haiti Amnesty International calls on the transitional government to set up an independent commission of inquiry into summary executions attributed to members of the Haitian National Police," 11 November 2004.

<sup>44</sup> Joe Mozingo. "Two killed as police fire on Port-au-Prince rally," *Miami Herald*, 1 March 2005.

<sup>45</sup> "Police, protesters, clash during pro-Aristide protest in Haiti," *Associated Press*, 24 March 2004.

<sup>46</sup> "Gunfire kills five people in demonstration in Haiti," *Associated Press*, 27 April 2005. See also, Amnesty International. "Haiti National Police must be held accountable for killings of civilians," 29 April 2005.

<sup>47</sup> Joseph Guyler Delva, "Up to 25 people killed as police raid Haiti slums," *Reuters*, 5 June 2005.

in a massacre that took place in a village north of Port-au-Prince on February 11, 2004, Neptune turned himself into the HNP in June and was put in jail. Despite a constitutional requirement that charges be brought forward promptly, the TIG did not press any charges against Neptune, but kept him in prison anyway. Along with Neptune, former interior minister Jocelerme Privert was also arrested for his alleged role in the massacre. Subsequently, Louis Joinet, the UN's independent expert on human rights in Haiti, investigated the massacre claims and found them to be hollow. Nonetheless, Neptune remained in jail from then until *after* the elections of February 2006, when the new René Préval government released him.

With Neptune imprisoned, Gérard Jean-Juste, a priest who ran a kitchen for homeless children, was identified as a strong potential leadership candidate by Lavalas supporters. Yet, on July 21, 2005, the HNP arrested Jean-Juste for his alleged role in the abduction and murder of a journalist earlier that month. Eventually, this charge was dropped and replaced with that of possessing illegal weapons, but Jean-Juste was still kept in jail, only to be released in Miami just prior to the February elections so that he could receive medical treatment. Amnesty International commented on this case, noting that it appears Jean-Juste had been “detained solely because he has peacefully exercised his right to freedom of expression.”<sup>48</sup> Eventually, moreover, the UN's human rights chief in Haiti, Thierry Faggart, publicly denounced the detention of Neptune and Privert, stating that it had “proved to be illegal since their arrest.”<sup>49</sup>

As noted, HNP arrests extended to less prominent supporters of Lavalas as well. Though it is difficult to know precisely how many were arrested for their political affiliations, UN human rights officials in Haiti estimated that in the order of 95 per cent of those in prison, many of whom were undoubtedly picked up in HNP raids on pro-Aristide neighbourhoods, had been held

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<sup>48</sup> Amnesty International, “Haiti: Arbitrary arrest/prisoner of conscience: Gérard Jean-Juste,” 27 July 2005.

<sup>49</sup> Joseph Guylor Delva, “UN says former PM jailed illegally,” *Reuters*, 4 May 2005.

for lengthy periods without trial. In the case of the National Penitentiary in Port-au-Prince, for example, it was estimated that only a few dozen of the 1,700 inmates had in fact been charged.<sup>50</sup>

Important for our analysis is that all the above political repression, aimed primarily at Aristide's supporters, occurred under the watchful eye of the Canadian government. The publicly available record shows that Canada not once criticized the appointed TIG for any of the serious abuses surveyed above. Instead, attempts to raise the issue in Canada were usually met with derision from government officials such as Foreign Minister Pierre Pettigrew and Special Representative to Haiti Denis Coderre.

In the end, the February 7, 2006, presidential elections went ahead without the participation of Lavalas, whose leaders were either jailed or exiled. As Mark Weisbrot observed in *The Nation* prior to the vote, the election “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>51</sup> Similar observations have been made by a number of international civil society groups, like the respected Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA), which called the electoral process a “grotesque parody” of democracy.<sup>52</sup> Yet, all this received no apparent public concern from the Canadian government. Instead, Canada continued to provide the TIG with plenty of aid and support, including 100 RCMP officers to train the HNP, which was responsible for carrying out many of the abuses. Indeed, it may be said that Canada's policy in the post-February 2004 period has been to ignore Aristide and pretend that he is no longer of any

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<sup>50</sup> “UN official slams Haitian Courts,” *Associated Press*, 29 November 2005.

<sup>51</sup> Mark Weisbrot, “Undermining Haiti,” *The Nation*, 12 December 2005.

<sup>52</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>.

relevance to Haiti's 'democratic' future, as if the influence of the man who had received more popular support than any other leader in Haiti's history would just fizzle away and disappear.

How, then, did things reach this point? Why did Canada go from championing Aristide's return to power after the 1991 coup to, less than a decade later, pursuing policies that led to, even facilitated, his overthrow in 2004, and tolerating continued repression of his supporters in the subsequent period? To this important question we now turn.

### 3. Enlightened Politics? Human Rights, Democracy and Aristide

The two major charges made against the Lavalas governments of the 1991-2004 period are that they increasingly engaged in human rights abuses and fundamentally undermined democracy. For these reasons, detractors argue, Canada withdrew its support for Haiti and, specifically, Aristide. Let us deal with the first charge. The human rights situation in Haiti is difficult to assess because of data-quality problems. As Jim Hodgson, an official with the United Church of Canada, which runs a number of programs in Haiti, told a major conference held by the Center for International Governance Innovation in Waterloo in November 2005: “One of the challenges in responding to events in Haiti these days is that there are widely divergent interpretations of what, in other contexts, might be accepted as basic facts...”<sup>53</sup> Because of the highly polarized nature of Haitian politics, with a powerful elite perpetually concerned by the potential rise of a populist regime, “basic facts” are contingent on who is being queried for them.

Still, what will be argued here is that a distillation of the available sources of evidence shows that the human rights situation improved markedly in the years that Lavalas was in power,

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<sup>53</sup> Jim Hodgson, *Dissonant Voices: Northern NGO and Haitian Partner Perspectives on the Future of Haiti* (Waterloo, ON: CIGI, 2005) 6.

in sharp contrast to the Duvalier and Cédras years. Moreover, a recurring theme in this debate is that many human rights abuses are too easily asserted by Lavalas political opponents to be causally linked to Aristide's actions without accompanying evidence. Certainly, Aristide and his government are not innocent of charges of human rights violations. Haiti remains a fledgling democracy, shaking off, as briefly discussed earlier, a very long history of repressive elite rule. Elements belonging to the Tontons Macoutes militia, which carried out the Duvalier regime's dirty work, did not simply disappear with Jean-Claude's escape to France in 1986. Nor did the military's long role as an instrument of horrendous abuse disappear when Aristide came to power in 1991. Even when Aristide abolished the military after his return from exile in 1994, former soldiers and generals did not, again, simply disappear from the country. And a democratically elected government like Aristide's, perpetually facing the threat of a coup by well-armed and funded elements within society, can be expected to fight back, so to speak. This is not to condone Aristide's abuses, but to emphasize that nurturing a new democracy, especially in a country like Haiti, is not a clean process. One cannot seriously compare Haitian democracy to long-established democracies like Canada. There are structural elements of oppression to Haitian society that will take time to disappear and be replaced by an authentic democracy. To give one example, the HNP has been notoriously difficult to reform and continues to engage in serious human rights abuses, as outlined earlier, despite extensive training provided by the RCMP through UN-sanctioned programs.

With these caveats in mind, let us then turn to a survey of the human rights situation in Haiti during the Lavalas years. A November 1991 report produced by Americas Watch (the regional precursor to Human Rights Watch) and two regional rights organizations observed that: "Overall, violence in Haiti of all sorts – including criminal violence, killings by soldiers and

violent rural conflicts – dropped conspicuously during Aristide’s tenure.”<sup>54</sup> As noted, a key decision taken by Aristide after he was restored in 1994 was to get rid of the country’s military to help ensure that coups would not take place in the future. Partly as a result of this decision, the UN’s mission in Haiti noted in a 1996 report that “the phenomenon of massive and systematic human rights violations that marked the coup period disappeared as soon as constitutional rule was restored in 1994.”<sup>55</sup> An instructive report produced by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada in 1997, moreover, opens by stating that “the human rights situation in Haiti has improved markedly since the democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, returned to the country in October 1994.”<sup>56</sup> In a September 1996 report, additionally, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that: “As political repression has diminished, civil society has flourished... Aristide during most of his sixteen months back in office repeatedly and insistently preached the need to avoid the popular killings that had marred his first year in office and that so often stymied past efforts to establish justice.” The organization did caution, however, that “while Aristide and [Prime Minister] Préval [who replaced Aristide in 1996] regularly urged reconciliation and justice, they failed in large part to follow through on their rhetoric.” Even so, there are some important mitigating factors to take into account in assessing this. According to HRW,

the US government directly impeded the prosecution of human rights crimes in Haiti by refusing to return documents seized from FRAPH [the Cédras regime’s paramilitary arm] and Haitian military headquarters and by reaching a secret settlement with FRAPH’s leader, Emmanuel Constant, which allowed Constant to remain in the United States with a work permit while evading deportation to Haiti and criminal prosecution for human rights abuses there.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Americas Watch, The National Coalition for Haitian Refugees and Caribbean Rights, *Haiti: The Aristide Government’s Human Rights Record* (New York: Americas Watch, 1991) 6.

<sup>55</sup> As quoted in: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. *Haiti: Political Violence and State Protection Since Aristide’s Return*, May 1997; available at: [http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/publications/index\\_e.htm?docid=162&cid=0&sec=CH01&disclaimer=show](http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/publications/index_e.htm?docid=162&cid=0&sec=CH01&disclaimer=show)

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Haiti: Third for Justice: A Decade of Impunity in Haiti,” Vol. 8, No. 7(B), September 1996; available at: <http://hrw.org/reports/1996/Haiti.htm>.

Assessments produced by HRW in the 2001-2003 period, meanwhile, highlight serious human rights issues in Haiti, but a consistent feature of these reports is that major incidents of violence are attributed to supporters of the Lavalas Party or the HNP, which was (and still is) very politicized. Now, it is quite possible that high level officials in the government were involved in some of these abuses, but it is also quite likely that much of it can be attributed to the extreme economic and political turmoil that Haiti experienced in that period as a result of international isolation. Furthermore, in sharp contrast to the post February-2004 period, there is no record of the Lavalas government of René Préval arresting opposition candidates prior to the May 2000 elections in order to prevent them from running.

In late 2003 and early 2004, international criticism directed at Haiti also began to hone in on the government's use of violent gangs to deal with opposition forces, and this became a partial justification of sorts for having Aristide out of power. It is correct that in the months leading up to the coup reports of pro-Aristide gangs becoming involved in clashes with anti-Aristide gangs and rebels increased in frequency. As an analysis from the International Crisis Group (ICG) observes, however, "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>58</sup> With the absence of a national army to defend the government, a weak and disorganized national police force, and the threat of a well-armed and funded rebel force sporting US-made M-16s, Aristide's government increasingly depended on armed gangs for its defence.<sup>59</sup> For our purposes, it is important to note that internal government documents show that Canada was

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<sup>58</sup> International Crisis Group, "Can Haiti Hold Elections in 2005?", Latin America/Caribbean Briefing No. 8, 3 August 2005, 4.

<sup>59</sup> There has been much controversy over the sources of funding and support for the Dominican-based rebels that overthrew Aristide in 2004. Many observers have argued that there is clear evidence that the United States, perhaps via the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), armed the rebels. As one editorial in the *Miami Herald* put it: "Is it simply a coincidence that the United States recently sold the Dominican Republic 20,000 M-16s and that the rebels are now toting M-16s and rocket-propelled grenade launchers? Where did those weapons come from?" See "Hands off policy toward Haiti is simply wrong," (Op-Ed) *Miami Herald*, 29 February 2004.

aware of this cause-effect pattern of violence between rebels and pro-government gangs. A situation report filed on February 11, 2004, by Kenneth Cook, Canada's Ambassador to Haiti, is worth quoting at some length:

... Haitian police are not just abandoning their posts in small towns where they are defenceless but ... there is evidence that police are leaving their posts – particularly the best trained and most heavily armed elite elements as they have suffered serious losses and are demoralized by the amateur leadership that has been imposed on them. [...] *Indeed this explains why president Aristide is turning more and more to the gangs and thugs to do policing duties* like retaking police stations in some of the “liberated” towns. These gangs are therefore receiving weapons, in many cases of superior quality to those possessed by the police. (In the countryside police often have no weapons or transport or communications equipment.)<sup>60</sup>

The inefficacy and incompetence of the Haitian National Police (HNP) mentioned in Cook's report has much to say about the international community's policies towards Haiti. Canada, in particular, had been heavily involved in training the HNP from the mid-1990s until 2001, when the RCMP assistance program was terminated because Haiti could not hire any more recruits. As RCMP Superintendent Jean St.-Cyr, who trained the HNP in Haiti, comments: “For nine of the 15 months I was there, there were no cadets. The government said there was no money. After a while you want to see improvement and the Canadian government saw no sign of it, and there was no political will on the part of Haiti.”<sup>61</sup> As explained earlier, however, Canada joined the US, Japan, and the EU in blocking the desperately needed \$550 million aid package after the May 2000 elections and also reduced and redirected aid disbursements in the 2000-2002 period to civil society and away from the government; it is thus not surprising that with this significant funding shortfall, the Haitian government's efforts at police reform suffered tremendously. Certainly, by the beginning of Aristide's second term in office, in February 2001, Haiti was on the brink of bankruptcy, and it is notable that his government held out as long as it did. In the

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<sup>60</sup> Situation Report, Kenneth Cook, Canadian Ambassador to Haiti, Foreign Affairs Canada, Ottawa, 11 February 2004, File A-2005-00266, document 000005, 11 February 2004.

<sup>61</sup> Marina Jimenez, “Haiti teeters as protests to oust Aristide mount,” *National Post*, 13 January 2004.

midst of this, nonetheless, a CIDA report (produced in 2000) criticized Haiti for not including enough women in the ranks of the HNP. Yet, as the *National Post's* correspondent in Port-au-Prince reported: "Local observers say that while the recommendations [from CIDA's report] are laudable they have little to do with reality in Haiti, which seems poised to descend into total anarchy."<sup>62</sup> This case is emblematic of the broader pattern of disconnection, even contradiction, between two strands of Canadian policy towards Haiti that solidified during Aristide's second term: to suspend crucial bilateral aid on one side while demanding costly reforms on the other, and then blaming Aristide personally when his government failed to do the impossible.

What of the second charge, namely that Lavalas became undemocratic? This argument tends to focus on the legislative elections held on May, 21, 2000, followed by presidential elections in November of the same year. Roger Noriega, the US Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere, for instance, told a Senate Foreign Relations Committee in March 2004 that the 2000 elections were "fraudulent."<sup>63</sup> Yet, this is highly misleading, as the only aspect of the vote that can arguably be characterized as fraudulent is a portion of the senatorial race. As a report from the respected Ottawa-based Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) explains, the May elections "were proof of the Lavalas Family's continuing popular support: Aristide's party won 72 of 83 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 18 of 19 seats in the Senate."<sup>64</sup> In addition to these positions, Haitians also voted for more than 7,000 municipal-level positions on May 21, which were all deemed to be more or less free and fair by the OAS. Because the May 2000 elections have become highly controversial in North American discourse surrounding Haiti, it is

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<sup>62</sup> Marina Jimenez, "As nation burns, CIDA tells Haiti to hire more policewomen," *National Post*, 22 March 2001.

<sup>63</sup> "Statement by Assistant Secretary of State," U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 10 March 2004, available at: <http://www.senate.gov/~foreign/testimony/2004/NoriegaTestimony040310.pdf>.

<sup>64</sup> Canadian Foundation for the Americas. *Haiti After the 2000 Elections: Searching for Solution to a Political Crisis* (Ottawa: FOCAL, 2001) 5.

worthwhile quoting at length a key section of an interim report filed by the OAS Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) on July 13, almost two months after the vote:

...The day was a great success for the Haitian population, which turned out in large and orderly numbers to choose both their local and national governments, and to the Haitian National Police, whose capacity had been questioned by the political parties, by the Government and by the Press, but who had been able to keep order quietly and effectively.

Election Day proceedings on May 21 represented the high point of the electoral process. An estimated 60 percent of registered voters went to the polls. Very few incidents of violence were reported. The Haitian National Police responded efficiently and professionally to situations that could have deteriorated into violence. Party poll watchers and national observers were present at almost every polling station observed by the OAS and performed their jobs for the most part in an objective manner. While voters had to wait in long lines, especially at the beginning of the day, they were eventually able to cast their ballots free of pressure and intimidation. Most voters were able to find their polling with relative ease.<sup>65</sup>

For a country like Haiti, such a positive account of national elections is impressive. Most importantly, the main objection raised by the OAS concerned the senatorial race and the way the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) conducted its calculations. As the mission's final report notes, "the CEP method of calculating absolute majority affected the results in nine senate races..."<sup>66</sup> The Haitian Constitution states that "[a] Senator of Republic is elected by universal suffrage by an absolute majority of vote [sic],"<sup>67</sup> but the CEP calculated the results in a way that declared candidates that received pluralities as winners. Now, though the OAS raised concerns about other aspects of the elections, it was for this specific reason of senate seat miscalculations that the OAS mission withdrew its support, not because the entire electoral exercise was fraudulent. Unfortunately, Canadian officials continually spoke of Haiti in the subsequent period

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<sup>65</sup> The report did raise some concerns regarding the arrest of some opposition candidates (who were later released) after the vote had taken place Organization of American States. *The OAS Electoral Observation Mission in Haiti: Chief of the Mission Report to the OAS Permanent Council*, 13 July 2000; available at: <http://www.upd.oas.org/EOM/Haiti/haitichief%20of%20mission%20report.htm>.

<sup>66</sup> Organization of American States. *The Election Observation Mission for the Legislative, Municipal and Local Elections in Haiti, February to July 2000* (Washington, D.C.: OAS, 2000) 54.

<sup>67</sup> *Constitution of the Republic of Haiti*, Article 94-2.

as a case of a fledgling democracy gone horribly wrong. For example, internal documents from Foreign Affairs Canada intended to advise Minister Bill Graham consistently refer to the May 2000 vote as “seriously flawed” without the important above outlined qualifications, leading one to believe that bureaucrats in Ottawa either never read the OAS mission’s official reports or simply chose to characterize the elections in a way that would legitimize a hawkish policy towards Haiti.<sup>68</sup>

Irrespective of the specifics of the controversy over the May 2000 vote, it is odd that Aristide is often blamed for what transpired, as he was not in any formal position of political power at the time. Those blaming Aristide for the controversy adduce no evidence to show that he had anything to do with the decision of the CEP. According to the OAS EOM’s report, Léon Manus, the president of the CEP, appeared willing to recalculate the senatorial results, but was allegedly pressured by then President René Préval to have the CEP ratify them. Unwilling to heed political pressure and claiming to have received unspecified threats, Manus left the country. Given this, it is ironic that Préval was allowed to run in the February 2006 elections, while Aristide, denounced as an undemocratic authoritarian, was prevented from returning to Haiti to do the same.

Before examining the controversy surrounding the November presidential elections, which brought Aristide to power for a second time, we should follow this story a little further, and see what Aristide did in fact do about the Senate controversy once he took office in February 2001. In addition to general demands by the international community to rectify the issue, the US imposed eight additional conditions on Haiti after Aristide won the presidential elections, including the creation of a new provisional electoral council. The record shows that Aristide responded to these demands quickly. In a letter to the OAS dated May 31, 2001, the Haitian

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<sup>68</sup> See, for example: Background – Assessment – Evaluation, Céline Boies et al., Analyst, Ottawa, 3 February 2004, Foreign Affairs Canada, File A-2003-00516, document 00065.

president confirmed that “seven contested Senators have resigned as evidence of their patriotic commitment to ending the electoral controversy surrounding the May 21, 2000 elections”; that he would “appoint a new Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) by June 25, 2001.”; and that “[t]he new CEP will, after appropriate consultations, set the date for elections of the contested seats in the Senate and proceed to organize these elections in a timely manner.”<sup>69</sup>

Even so, Aristide’s efforts at achieving a constructive dialogue with the Democratic Convergence (CD), the main opposition coalition consisting of a number of small parties, stalled numerous times due to the CD’s intransigence. For instance, the CD refused to meet with Aristide on May 3, 2001, at the National Palace because the venue was deemed not to be neutral. But even when the location was changed to the Museum of the National Pantheon the following week, the CD continued to argue that the venue was not sufficiently neutral.<sup>70</sup> To take another example, Aristide was not able to convene a new CEP by the self-imposed deadline of June 25, 2001, because the CD refused to name a representative to the body. Even a visit by an OAS/CARICOM team to Haiti seeking the CD’s cooperation failed to make progress with the group.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, by February 2002, two years before the second coup, Aristide appears to have responded constructively to all the other US demands. At a meeting between CARICOM foreign ministers and American Secretary of State Colin Powell that month, the ministers confirmed that Aristide had met six of the eight conditions and that the remaining two conditions required cooperation from the opposition – still not forthcoming – in order to be fulfilled.<sup>72</sup> This pattern of opposition recalcitrance continued until February 2004.

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<sup>69</sup> “Letter from H.E. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, President of the Republic of Haiti to H.E. Roberto Rojas, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica,” 31 May 2001; available at: <http://www.oas.org/Assembly2001/documentsE/agdoc260.htm>.

<sup>70</sup> “The Soap Opera Continues...” *Haiti-Progrès*, May 9 – May 15, 2001.

<sup>71</sup> “Negotiations Drag on as Economy and Justice Founder,” *Haiti-Progrès*, June 27 – July 3, 2001.

<sup>72</sup> CARICOM, “Press Release on Meeting Between Caribbean Foreign Ministers and United States Secretary of State, Nassau, 7 February 2002,” 15 February 2002; available at: [http://www.caricom.org/jsp/pressreleases/pres28\\_02.htm](http://www.caricom.org/jsp/pressreleases/pres28_02.htm).

It should also be pointed out that Aristide's efforts at meeting demands from the US, OAS/CARICOM, and the domestic opposition, elicited much consternation within the ranks of Lavalas, and thus required a significant amount of political will on Aristide's part. As the left-leaning *Haiti-Progrès* reported in April 2001: "In press conferences, radio programs, and street demonstrations, former Aristide allies and even members of his own party, the Lavalas Family (FL), have begun to denounce the new government's rightward swing as a 'betrayal' of the democratic, nationalist ideals formulated a decade ago when the Lavalas movement was born."<sup>73</sup> The negative reaction was in large part a response to Aristide's appointment of a number of former Duvalierists to his cabinet in order to placate the opposition: the ministries of Planning and External Cooperation, Commerce, and Justice were each assigned to individuals who had served as ministers in the Jean-Claude 'Baby Doc' Duvalier regime.<sup>74</sup> Similarly, Lavalas supporters were dismayed by the dismissal of the existing CEP – as required by the international community – and its reconstitution with some former Duvalierists who now formed the opposition – again, as demanded by international mediators. At a symbolic level, additionally, Aristide even invited Serge Beaulieu, who had been jailed for alleged involvement in a 1991 coup plot against his first government, to the National Palace as a sign of reconciliation.<sup>75</sup>

Now, an Action Memorandum prepared by bureaucrats at Foreign Affairs for Minister John Manley in January 2001, just before Aristide's second inauguration, states that Canada should consider "*inter alia* the signals sent by President-elect Aristide," and that "the Executive first, but also the Opposition, need to take concrete steps to demonstrate their seriousness ... which commit them a clear democratic, cooperative route."<sup>76</sup> In sharp contrast to claims

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<sup>73</sup> Original emphasis. "Aristide about-face rends his followers and allies," *Haiti-Progrès*, 18 April – 24 April, 2001.

<sup>74</sup> "Is Aristide hostage of the 'international community'," *Haiti-Progrès*, 6 March – 13 March, 2001.

<sup>75</sup> "Aristide about-face," *Haiti-Progrès*, 2001.

<sup>76</sup> Action Memorandum for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, David Lee, Special Coordinator for Haiti, Ottawa, 26 January 2001, Foreign Affairs Canada, File A-2003-00145/ag, document 00065.

advanced by Aristide's detractors, as shown above, the Haitian leader did do much to rectify the concerns raised with regards to the May 2000 vote – to help put the country on a “democratic, cooperative route.” Again, unfortunately, those who argue that Aristide undermined Haitian democracy tend to forget this part of the story; it was, the record shows, the opposition that consistently refused to cooperate with Aristide in the OAS/CARICOM framework to resolve the political impasse right up to the February 29, 2004, coup, instead of the other way around. A key question for our analysis, then, is the following: was Canada adequately aware that the opposition was refusing to cooperate with Aristide's government? That it was the opposition that was preventing a resolution to the long-running crisis? These questions are important because if Canada understood that the opposition was responsible for perpetuating the impasse, then it raises interesting questions as to why Ottawa consistently blamed Aristide for the crisis.

Internal documents from Foreign Affairs reveal that Canada was fully cognizant of the Haitian opposition's defiance. A background assessment of Haiti titled ‘Advice to the Minister’ (ATTM), prepared by bureaucrats in early 2004, explains that a CARICOM mission on January 6 of that year that sought meetings with “opposition and civil society representatives and President Aristide ... confirmed that the non-government groups are not interested in talks leading to the negotiations table with the Government of Haiti...” The document also notes that although “[t]he Haitian opposition and civil society representatives did not object” to a number of proposals presented by CARICOM to Aristide's government on January 21, they “made it clear they had no mandate to negotiate.”<sup>77</sup> A subsequent ATTM echoes this, stating that “Aristide agreed to comply with CARICOM's plan and respect the existing constitution” but that the “opposition and civil society groups rejected the CARICOM plan and any initiative that would involve talks

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<sup>77</sup> See, for example: Background – Assessment – Evaluation, Céline Boies et al., Analyst, Ottawa, 3 February 2004, Foreign Affairs Canada, File A-2003-00516, document 00065.

with Aristide or participation in a consensual [Provisional Electoral Council].”<sup>78</sup> And yet another ATTM notes that Aristide “accepted – with only minor changes – the proposal made Feb. 20 and again Feb. 21 to speed up the implementation of the CARICOM Prior action plan.” Despite all this, Canada continued to state publicly that it was up to Aristide to take action to resolve the crisis. As Andrew Dupuy writes, “instead of pressuring the opposition to accept the plan, the three major powers [US, France, and Canada] sided with the opposition, betrayed the CARICOM, and refused to authorize the deployment of a peace-keeping force to stop the armed insurgency until a political settlement had been reached.”<sup>79</sup>

More than a week before, on February 13, as noted earlier, Foreign Affairs Minister Graham had already publicly suggested that Aristide ought to “resign voluntarily” to resolve the crisis. Then again, on February 26, Graham stated that: “If Mr. Aristide were to decide to resign in the best interests of his country, at that point we would work with whatever constitutional forces are there to ensure the security on the ground.”<sup>80</sup> This, after an ATTM dated February 16 confirmed that Aristide had already begun, on February 12, to “implement one of the Caribbean mediators’ suggestions, releasing jailed opponents.”<sup>81</sup> That Aristide was making such efforts even as parts of his country were being overrun by rebels is noteworthy. Yet, just as Aristide’s efforts in the previous three years were met with recalcitrance from the opposition, continued efforts at achieving a political solution to the crisis – precisely what Canada called for publicly – in the months leading up to the coup were hopeless, as the opposition, emboldened by implicit international support, refused to cooperate.

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<sup>78</sup> See: Background – Assessment – Evaluation, Emi Furuya et al., Analyst, Ottawa, 5 March 2004, Foreign Affairs Canada, File A-2003-00516, document 000108.

<sup>79</sup> Alex Dupuy, “From Jean-Bertrand Aristide to Gerard Latortue: The Undending Crisis of Democracy in Haiti,” *Journal of Latin American Anthropology*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (April 2005) 186-205.

<sup>80</sup> Bruce Champion-Smith, “Graham wants Aristide to consider resigning,” *Toronto Star*, 27 February 2004.

<sup>81</sup> See: Background – Assessment – Evaluation, Emi Furuya et al., Analyst, Ottawa, 16 February 2004, Foreign Affairs Canada, File A-2003-00516, document 00071, 16 February 2004.

Now, to return to the issue of the November 2000 presidential elections, it is correct, as critics often argue, that most opposition parties chose to boycott that vote but, again, it is unclear how this can be blamed on Aristide.<sup>82</sup> Quite the contrary, there is good reason to believe that the opposition, after experiencing an overwhelming defeat in the May 2000 legislative vote, thought it politically astute to boycott presidential elections that it knew it could not even come close to winning. According to the CEP, turnout at the elections stood at 60.5 per cent, and Aristide won with 90 per cent of the vote. The turnout figure has been questioned by a CARICOM official who was monitoring the elections, and the alternate estimate of a 15 to 20 per cent turnout was suggested instead. It is not clear, however, if this range was based on a systematic monitoring of the vote or superficial observation.<sup>83</sup> Nonetheless, in rough confirmation of the vote's outcome, an October 2000 Gallup poll commissioned by the US Agency for International Development (AID) found that 77 per cent of Haitians intended to vote in the presidential elections and that 61 per cent were satisfied with the outcome of the May vote.<sup>84</sup> Another March 2002 Gallup poll, also commissioned by US-AID, meanwhile, found that "no other political party comes close to the support enjoyed by Fanmi Lavalas."<sup>85</sup> And indeed, an internal memorandum from Foreign Affairs filed immediately following the May 2000 vote, some six months before the presidential elections, acknowledges that "[t]he main candidate for the presidency so far is ex-president Aristide, who observers foresee as the likely winner."<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Seven candidates ran for the presidential elections of November 24, 2001. Other than Aristide's Lavalas Party, the only opposition party to field a candidate was the Union for National Reconstruction. The other five candidates ran as independents. See: IFES Election Guide at: <http://www.electionguide.org/election.php?ID=704>.

<sup>83</sup> "Clinton urges Aristide to resolve Haiti's electoral impasse," *Associated Press*, 7 December 2000.

<sup>84</sup> Robert Muggah, *Securing Haiti's Transition: Reviewing Human Insecurity and the Prospects for Disarmaments, Demobilization, and Reintegration* (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2005) 89, note 83.

<sup>85</sup> As quoted in: 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.

<sup>86</sup> Advice to the Minister – Background Assessment (Haiti Elections), Ottawa, 29 May 2000, Foreign Affairs Canada, File A-2006-00145/ag, document 008.

On a final, related note, it has also been argued that Aristide became increasingly corrupt over the 2000-04 period. It is claimed that he was responsible for everything from drug-trafficking to accumulating millions of dollars for himself. More than with the above charges of human rights abuses and authoritarianism, the claim of corruption is almost always not accompanied by any evidence. Lawsuits that were supposed to be filed against Aristide by the US and the TIG on the basis of evidence obtained after the coup were all forgotten. In May 2004, for example, the *New York Times* quoted a “senior Western diplomat who has been briefed on a federal investigation under way in Miami into drug ties in the Aristide government” as claiming that Aristide’s indictment could be “a couple of months away.”<sup>87</sup> Yet, as of this writing, in August 2006, more than two years later, no such charges have been brought forward by either American or Haitian authorities. This is not to say that Aristide was not corrupt – if Canada, a stable representative democracy, can have the sponsorship fiasco, Haiti will certainly have its share of scandals – only that charges of corruption have been inadequately supported by evidence. In any case, James Bartleman, who served as Jean Chrétien’s diplomatic advisor between 1994 and 1998, is probably correct in stating the following about Aristide’s corruption in the context of the February 2004 crisis:

This time Canada joined the United States and France in forcing ... Jean-Bertrand Aristide from the office of president that he won in controversial elections in November 2000. Jean-Bertrand Aristide was no more corrupt in 2004 than he had been in 1994. He had, however, fallen out of favour with Washington and Paris.<sup>88</sup>

In sum, it does not appear that the shift in Canadian policy can be explained as a function of the Aristide’s government’s human rights practices or its democratic character. We thus turn to another common explanation for Canada’s Haiti policy.

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<sup>87</sup> Lydia Polgreen and Tim Weiner, “Drug Traffickers Find Haiti a Hospitable Port,” *New York Times*, 16 May 2004.

<sup>88</sup> James K. Bartleman, *Rollercoaster: My Hectic Years as Jean Chrétien’s Diplomatic Advisor* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 2005) 164.

#### 4. Domestic Politics: The Haitian Diaspora

How credible is the argument that domestic politics, in the form of the Haitian Diaspora, could be an explanatory variable in Canadian policy-making vis-à-vis Haiti? Certainly the Canadian government has claimed in recent years that the Diaspora has been influential in policy-making. For instance, a comprehensive report produced by CIDA in 2004 on Canada's relationship with Haiti states that "[a]round 100,000 Haitian families live in Canada today and have been *a significant driver behind Canadian support to Haiti.*"<sup>89</sup> Especially in the immediate post-coup period, Canada sought to actively involve the Haitian community centered on Montréal into the policy process, which culminated in a major Haitian Diaspora conference in December 2004. Over the years, Canada has also nurtured a close relationship with a number of Haitian-Canadian NGOs, such as the Regroupement des organismes Canada-Haitiens pour le développement (ROCAHD), an umbrella organization that brings together a number of smaller Haitian groups, which it can call on for consultations when needed. Yet, despite the claim by official government sources to the effect that the Haitian Diaspora is significantly influencing Canadian policy, it should be noted that this could be rather misleading, in the sense that the Canadian

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<sup>89</sup> My emphasis. Canadian International Development Agency. *Canadian Cooperation with Haiti: Reflecting on Decade of 'Difficult Partnership'* (CIDA: Gatineau, QC: 2004) 11.

government could simply be seeking to co-opt the Diaspora into the policy process in order to give legitimacy to policies it would pursue anyway. With this caveat in mind, let us examine to what degree the domestic Haitian-Canadian community is a driver of policy.

As noted, Canada has a sizeable Haitian community that first began arriving as refugees following the emergence of the Duvalier dictatorship in 1957. For reasons of linguistic affinity, the vast majority of Haitian immigrants settled in Québec; according to one account, some 95 per cent of new arrivals between 1965 and 1976 settled in the province, mostly around Montréal, which provided more economic opportunity than other locales.<sup>90</sup> Haitians were also the largest immigrant group to have landed in the Montréal area during the 1990 to 1996 period as a result of the abuses of the Cédras regime.<sup>91</sup> Haitians arriving during the Duvalier years were often formally educated professionals with one estimate claiming that by 1968 Montréal was home to ten times as many Haitian psychiatrists as Port-au-Prince.<sup>92</sup> Partly because of this, the Haitian community has been relatively politically aware and active, electing its first provincial Member of the National Assembly (MNA), the Haitian-born Jean Alfred, in 1976. The Haitian community has also shown an ability to organize and influence local policy in the area of education.<sup>93</sup> Yet, detailed studies into the Haitian community's role in foreign policy making have not been forthcoming.

A 2005 survey of Haitians in Montréal conducted by the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs found that 84.4 per cent of respondents had remitted money to Haiti in the previous year. The mean number of transfers in the previous five years was 28, and the average

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<sup>90</sup> Paul Dejean. *The Haitians in Québec* (Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 1980) 9.

<sup>91</sup> Infometrica Limited (for Citizenship and Immigration Canada), "Recent Immigrants in the Montréal Area – A Comparative Portrait Based on the 1996 Census," May 2000.

<sup>92</sup> Robert I. Rotberg. *Haiti: The Politics of Squalor* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1971) 249.

<sup>93</sup> Philip Couton, "The Role of Minority Educators: Haitian Teachers in Québec Schools," in Harold Troper and Morton Weinfield (eds.) *Ethnicity Politics and Public Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999) 145-147.

amount of money remitted by survey respondents in the last transfer was C\$269.<sup>94</sup> It is reasonable to posit, therefore, that Haitians in Canada have a strong interest in developments in their country of origin as their links to families and friends back home appear strong. And with an estimated present-day population of 80,000 in the greater Montréal area, it is certainly possible that Haitian-Canadians can apply pressure in key federal electoral ridings.

For our purposes, what is most noteworthy is that two Foreign Affairs ministers<sup>95</sup> during key periods of Canada-Haiti relations – that is, André Ouellet after Aristide’s first coup, and Pierre Pettigrew after the second coup – represented the riding of Papineau, a highly multicultural riding, which is also said to be home to the highest concentration of Haitian-Canadians of any riding in Canada, estimated in 2004 at 4,400.<sup>96</sup> (The present-day riding of Papineau was preceded by Papineau-St. Denis during Pettigrew’s first term as MP and Papineau St.-Michel during Ouellet’s tenure as Foreign Minister. For our purposes, these ridings will all be referred to as Papineau.) Papineau was also the provincial riding of Alfred, the Haitian-born MNA mentioned above, and constituents of the federal riding replaced Pettigrew with the Haitian-born Vivian Barbot in the 2006 national elections. It appears, then, that the Haitian community is a significant electoral block in at least one key Québec riding. All this elicits a number of interesting questions. Did the Haitian community lobby Ouellet and Pettigrew to pursue particular policies in Haiti? That is, in the early 1990s, did Papineau’s Haitians push for Aristide’s restoration and, after 2000, did they shift their position and begin asking for Aristide’s dismissal? If so, why did the seemingly ‘successful’ policy pursued by Pettigrew only lead to his defeat in the 2006 elections? Unfortunately, there is no polling of the attitudes of Haitians living

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<sup>94</sup> Alan Simmons, Dwaine Plaza, and Victor Piché, “The Remittance Sending Practices of Haitians in Canada,” paper presented at the Expert Group Meeting on International Migration and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, 13 November 2005, Table 1.

<sup>95</sup> During André Ouellet’s tenure, this position was referred to as Minister of External Affairs.

<sup>96</sup> For estimate, see: Laura-Julie Perrault, “Aux troussees de Pierre Pettigrew,” *La Presse*, 23 December 2005.

in Montréal, much less the Papineau riding, on the question of Aristide. Because of this deficiency in data, we will have to turn to proxies for an indication of what Papineau's (and Montréal's) Haitian community desires as we explore this subject.

The *Globe and Mail's* Jeff Salot observed at the time of the 1994 intervention that Ouellet "is such an admirer of Jean-Bertrand Aristide that he keeps a picture of himself with the Haitian president in his office."<sup>97</sup> There is good reason to posit that during the period of Aristide's first exile, the Montréal Haitian community overwhelmingly supported Ouellet's efforts to restore the deposed president. As most Montréal Haitians of the time were refugees of the repressive Duvalier and military governments, they had a strong interest in seeing Aristide restored to power; in fact, many had contributed financially to Aristide's 1990 presidential campaign.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, not only were there many demonstrations calling on Canada to work towards that end, but some prominent community leaders, like Université de Québec à Montréal (UQAM) professor Franklin Midy, even suggested that Aristide should raise a civilian army from the Haitian Diaspora to overthrow the Cédras regime, as foreign governments were perceived to be hesitant to risk the lives of their own soldiers for such a mission.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, opposition to Aristide in this period was reserved to a very small group of Haitian-Canadians that became known as the Canadian Connection. Among these, for example, was a journalist who had worked for *La Presse* for 25 years before leaving for Haiti to become Cédras' foreign minister.<sup>100</sup> It seems reasonable to conclude, then, that given the Haitian community's relatively uniform position on the question of Aristide's reinstatement, Ouellet had fairly explicit support in his constituency for Canada's Haiti policy. Furthermore, this general direction was reinforced by the broader community; as Roy Norton observes: "the Québec and national media highlighted their [the

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<sup>97</sup> Jeff Salot, "Canadian officials cringe as Helms set to resurface," *Globe and Mail*, 28 November 1994.

<sup>98</sup> André Picard, "Defiant expatriates keep faith with Titid," *Globe and Mail*, 4 October 1991.

<sup>99</sup> "We'll build army for Aristide, say Montréal Haitian leaders," *Toronto Star*, 7 November 1993.

<sup>100</sup> Graham Fraser, "Montrealer defends Haiti role," *Globe and Mail*, 6 October 1994.

Haitians'] campaign for democracy in Haiti, portraying the coup leaders in negative terms," which represented a facet of the "support of a broad societal coalition" that the Haitians enjoyed.<sup>101</sup>

As for Pettigrew, he certainly sought to appeal to his riding's Haitian community throughout his decade in federal politics. His path towards becoming a MP began with Prime Minister Chrétien's attempts at increasing representation from French-speaking Québec in his Cabinet following the close 1995 referendum on the province's separation from Canada. Having a long involvement in the Liberal party and having served Pierre Trudeau as a foreign policy advisor, Pettigrew was appointed as Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for La Francophonie even though he did not hold a seat in the House of Commons. Consequently, Pettigrew needed to win a seat for himself as the representative of the Papineau riding in Montréal in a by-election scheduled for March 1996, and he was quick to make his support for Haiti known, announcing a \$3 million aid infusion for two projects, and playing host to then Haitian president René Préval during the latter's first visit to Québec the weekend before the by-election. This was in addition to Canada's deployment of 700 troops to Haiti in 1996 in order to continue UNMIH. As the *New York Times* observed, from the time the by-elections had been announced in January of that year, "the welfare of Haiti has assumed an overarching importance in Canadian foreign policy..."<sup>102</sup> Similarly, McGill University's Alain Gagnon explained that "[i]f we didn't have such a major Haitian community, Canada would be much more discreet and much less forthcoming in its support to Haiti."<sup>103</sup> Pettigrew's exploitation of this issue during his campaign became the object of controversy, with Conservative MP Chuck

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<sup>101</sup> Roy Norton, "Ethnic Groups and Conservative Foreign Policy" in Nelson Michaud and Kim Richard Nossal (eds.) *Diplomatic Departures: The Conservative Era in Canadian Foreign Policy, 1984-93* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001) 252.

<sup>102</sup> Clyde H. Farnsworth, "Haitians at Center of Montréal Election," *New York Times*, 25 March 1996.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

Strahl arguing at the time that since Pettigrew “does not have the portfolio which would allow him to spend millions of dollars in his own riding ... he has decided instead to spend \$3.8 million in Haiti in an attempt to buy votes in Papineau.”<sup>104</sup> It thus appears that heeding the perceived desire of the Haitian community to have Canada engage with Haiti was a part of Pettigrew’s campaign strategy.

What about the subsequent period? While in the 2000 federal elections, Pettigrew returned to his seat with a comfortable margin, he beat out the Bloc Québécois candidate in the June 2004 elections with a razor thin 468-vote margin and then, in January 2006, lost to the Bloc’s Vivian Barbot by 990 votes. What is interesting about this trend is that as Canada became more deeply involved in Haiti’s affairs – following the February 2004 coup – Pettigrew found it more difficult to win at the polls. Yet, it would be wrong to conclude that Canada’s Haiti policy necessarily led to his loss of popularity as he was facing very strong competition in 2006. Barbot is of Haitian origin and in a riding like Pettigrew’s, which, as noted, elected Québec’s first MNA of Haitian origin, this was not a trivial fact. Moreover, it is also important to note that the Bloc’s position on Canada’s involvement in Haiti was one of not criticizing the Liberal government; in fact, the only party in parliament opposing Canadian policy was the NDP.<sup>105</sup> As *La Presse* reported after Pettigrew’s defeat: “While the Bloc strongly defends the rights of Palestinians, it maintains an ambiguous position on Haiti, and Barbot has avoided taking a position on this crisis.”<sup>106</sup> In other words, the specific nature of Canada’s engagement in Haiti did not become an issue between the Pettigrew and Barbot campaigns.

It is also necessary to account for the role of activists belonging to the Canada-Haiti Action Network (CHAN) in changing the minds of voters in Pettigrew’s riding. The CHAN

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<sup>104</sup> Chuck Strahl, Edited Hansard, Oral Question Period, 15 March 1996. Available at: <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?pub=hansard&mee=14&parl=35&ses=2&language=E>.

<sup>105</sup> Of the five major political parties, the NDP and the Green Party were opposed to the Canadian presence in Haiti.

<sup>106</sup> My translation. Khan Jooneed, “Élections canadiennes et politiques étrangère,” *La Presse*, 25 January 2006.

sprang up shortly after the February 2004 coup and consists of a mix of Haitian and non-Haitian Canadians. The group claims that Canada was complicit in Aristide's downfall, and went to work on a cross-country collaborative basis to spread an alternative, decidedly leftist, interpretation of Canadian policy towards Haiti, which it unambiguously opposes.<sup>107</sup> To this end, it targeted several key Liberal MPs, such as Pettigrew and Denis Coderre (who was named Canada's Special Representative to Haiti in November 2004 by Paul Martin), labeling the two as "criminals" for human rights abuses occurring in Haiti under the TIG. The first high-profile targeting of Pettigrew occurred at a Montréal conference on Haiti's future held in June 2005, when activist Yves Engler splashed red paint – apparently symbolizing spilt Haitian blood under the TIG – on the minister's hands as he spoke to reporters. While Engler was arrested and expected to be charged, Pettigrew suddenly decided to drop all charges, leading some in the activist community to speculate that he was trying to prevent Engler from exploiting any court proceedings to raise more negative attention to Canadian policy.<sup>108</sup>

During the run-up to the January 2006 elections, furthermore, CHAN activists launched an 'anyone-but-Pettigrew' campaign and splashed the Papineau riding with hundreds of highly critical posters and leaflets – one version read, "Pierre Pettigrew, wanted for crimes against humanity in Haiti" – leading the Liberal party to file an official complaint against the group with Elections Canada.<sup>109</sup> Given that Papineau, at nine square kilometers, is geographically the smallest riding in the country,<sup>110</sup> CHAN activists were certainly able to quickly diffuse their

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<sup>107</sup> See CHAN's website: <http://www.outofhaiti.ca/>.

<sup>108</sup> Despite the nature of the incident, Yves Engler proved to be an eloquent quasi-spokesperson for CHAN, quickly issuing a prepared statement after being arrested through the activist network, which read in part: "It is completely understandable that Canadians may be offended by the action taken this afternoon. I only ask them to consider whether they are offended by the real blood that is being spilled in Haiti every day, with the full support of Pierre Pettigrew and the Canadian government." See "Canada acting badly in Haiti, protester claims," *CBC News Online*, 18 June 2005.

<sup>109</sup> My translation. Sébastien Rodrigue, "Des affiches de Pettigrew vandalisées," *La Presse*, 14 December 2005.

<sup>110</sup> Ingrid Peritz, "When it comes to ridings, does size matter? The smallest: Papineau," *Globe and Mail*, 12 January 2006.

message, and it seems reasonable to infer that this may have generated moral qualms about Liberal policy in the minds of at least some constituents. Now, Papineau has a population of 103,940 (2001 Census) and, as noted, Haitians only make up an estimated 4,400 of this total. However, given that Barbot won with a narrow majority, changing the minds of even a few hundred people had the potential to make a big difference.

It is important to note, furthermore, that there appears to be a number of splits in the Haitian community's position on Canada's involvement in Haiti in the post-February 2004 period. The *Montréal Gazette* observed in November 2005 that most Haitian-Canadians in the city "tend to line up on two sides of the Aristide question: they either support him or they don't," while "[a] third, newer faction disapproves of his ouster, but opposes his re-election should he ever return to Haiti."<sup>111</sup> Again, in the absence of any polling data, it is not possible to know with any precision how large the different camps are, but a respected Haitian community leader and professor at UQAM, Georges Anglade, maintained that while CHAN activists did not represent the community's position on Canada's involvement in Haiti, many were nonetheless upset with the policy course Canada was pursuing.<sup>112</sup> And while Pettigrew's campaign consistently maintained that the CHAN view was a minority one, as noted above, this still had the potential to significantly affect electoral outcomes. It was this element of uncertainty that likely led Barbot to resist taking a clear position on Haiti; unsure of what the impact of any statement on the matter would be, she stood clear of all controversy.

Nonetheless, a couple of important caveats must be heeded when considering the above arguments. First, the January 2006 federal election was a disastrous one for the Liberals across Québec, as the party went from holding 21 seats after the 2004 elections to just 13. With the fallout coming from the Gomery Inquiry, Liberal party contenders across the province's ridings

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<sup>111</sup> Jeff Heinrich, "Aristide film bound to stir local passions," *The Gazette*, 16 November 2005.

<sup>112</sup> Laura-Julie Perrault "Aux troussees de Pierre Pettigrew," *La Presse*, 23 December 2005.

were penalized. At a personal level, Pettigrew also drew controversy after it was reported that he brought along his limousine driver on trips to Europe and South America at a cost of \$10,000 to taxpayers, even though the driver did not in fact provide any service. The cumulative effect of these other controversies likely negatively affected Pettigrew's campaign, notwithstanding the Haiti debate. Second, in the 2006 elections, the Bloc ran another Haitian candidate, Justine Charlemagne, in the riding of St. Leonard-St. Michel, which was partly carved out of the old Papineau-St. Michel riding, and is thus also home to a sizeable number of Haitian-Canadians. Yet, unlike what happened in Papineau with Barbot, Charlemagne failed to even come close to defeating the Liberal incumbent, Massimo Pacetti, who won by 15,944 votes. Pacetti did not hold a portfolio and Haiti policy did not become an electoral issue in the campaign, again suggesting that the relationship between electoral outcomes in these key Montréal ridings and the specific nature of foreign policy is quite ambiguous.

Moreover, while the cases of Pettigrew and Ouellet are interesting, other key Foreign Affairs ministers during critical periods of Canada-Haiti relations – such as Barbara McDougall (1991-93) and Bill Graham (2002-04) – were not from the Papineau riding, or even from the Montréal area. In fact, they represented ridings that are not known to have a significant number of Haitian Canadians. What the above suggests, then, is that the Montréal Haitian community did not lead Canada to particular policies towards Haiti, but, instead, that it led Canada to become engaged in Haiti. The reason for the specific nature of the policy pursued remains to be found; the shift in direction of Canadian policy being examined in this paper cannot be explained by examining the Diaspora, which, as noted above, has not held a uniform and coherent position on the Haitian crisis over the years. Instead, to understand the shift, we must consider an alternate explanation.

## **5. Multilateralism: The OAS, the US, and Canada**

If the possible explanations for Canadian policy towards Haiti examined above are ultimately unsatisfactory, what can be said about the role of multilateralism in Canadian policy in the context of OAS and US interactions with Haiti? Did the interest in working with other states and international organizations lead Canada to pursue a policy towards Haiti that was ultimately not compatible with the ideal of supporting a fledgling democracy? Let us first examine the Canadian relationship to the OAS and then examine how this relates to Canada's relations with the US in the context of Haiti.

Although the OAS was established in 1948, Canada remained outside of the organization until January 1990, the same year that Aristide came to power. As such, the 1991 coup in Haiti was one of the first major crises Canada sought to manage through the auspices of the OAS. And, as should be evident by this point, the OAS continued playing a key role in the Haiti crisis right through to 2004. Given the centrality of the OAS in hemispheric politics, then, why did Canada opt out of the organization for so long?

A key strand of thought within the scholarly community of Canadian foreign policy analysts is that, as a ‘middle power’ neighbouring a great power, Canada has had a long interest, and tradition, of seeking counterweights in approaching international issues. In practice, this means that Canada has an interest in pulling in smaller powers into the management of international conflicts, for example, so that it can increase its bargaining power vis-à-vis the hegemony of the US. Stéphane Roussel explains this thinking, writing that “problems are likely to mount when dealings between the secondary and the great power take place on the bilateral level. The remedy for these is to keep matters ‘multilateralized,’ ideally by bringing in as many other small or middle powers as one can find.”<sup>113</sup> As a report from FOCAL put it in the context of hemispheric politics:

Canada and the nations of LAC [Latin America and the Caribbean] share a common interest in finding counterbalances to U.S. predominance in the hemisphere. The traditional Canadian affinity for multilateralism fits well with the clear need to bring in other forces as counterweights to the tremendous asymmetries of North American power relationships.<sup>114</sup>

Thus, one might think that Canada would have joined the OAS, a multilateral forum, long ago in order to counterbalance the power of the US. On the contrary, though, it appears Canadian policymakers were concerned that the OAS would unduly limit Canada’s ability to pursue its preferred policy course. The 1970 foreign policy review dealt with this issue, and argues that “the potential obligation to apply political and economic sanctions against another country by virtue of an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members is a difficult feature of the OAS from the Canadian point of view.” In a section of particular relevance to our current analysis of policy towards Haiti, furthermore, the review cautions that “OAS membership ... might tend to restrict Canadian freedom of action in development assistance matters since, when becoming a member

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<sup>113</sup> Stéphane Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004) 5.

<sup>114</sup> Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL), *Toward a New World Strategy: Canadian policy in the Americas into the Twenty-first Century* (Ottawa: FOCAL, 1994).

of the OAS, Canada would join the Inter-American Development Bank...<sup>115</sup> Yet, by 1989, under the Mulroney government, Canada had decided that the time had come for it to join the organization. As Gregory S. Mahler explains, Mulroney “believed, among many others, that Pierre Trudeau’s concerns about Canadian sovereignty no longer were valued and that Canada did not need to worry about being committed to the OAS.”<sup>116</sup>

In his standard text, *Canadian Foreign Policy*, Andrew Cooper identifies three conceptual frameworks for understanding Canada’s international behaviour: principal power, satellite/dependency, and middle power.<sup>117</sup> In the context of Canada’s relationship with Haiti, it appears that the greatest source of tension resides between the satellite/dependency and middle power frameworks. The first of these two strongly leans towards the argument that Canada is fundamentally restrained in its ability pursue its ‘own’ foreign policy by the sheer dominance of its southern neighbour in international affairs. Certainly, many activists within CHAN would agree with Kim Richard Nossal’s characterization of the framework’s emergence, namely that “[b]ecause of the economic, ideological, and cultural linkages between Canada and the United States ... the country was pulled into an emerging, even if informal, American empire.”<sup>118</sup> On the other hand, the middle power framework, tends to posit that Canada is able to exert considerable influence on the world stage by working within multilateral institutions and independent of the initiatives of the great powers, to achieve a certain world order.

A classic example of Canada behaving as a middle power is that of Lester B. Pearson’s proposal for a UN-sanctioned military deployment along the Egyptian-Israeli border in the

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<sup>115</sup> Government of Canada, *Foreign Policy for Canadians: Latin America* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1970) 22-23.

<sup>116</sup> Gregory S. Mahler, “Foreign Policy and Canada’s Evolving Relations with the Caribbean Commonwealth Countries: Political and Economic Considerations” in Jerry Haar and Edgar J. Dosman (eds.) *A Dynamic Partnership: Canada’s Changing Role in the Americas* (Miami: University of Miami North South Center, 1993) 82-3.

<sup>117</sup> Andrew Cooper, *Canadian Foreign Policy: Old Habits and New Directions* (Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1997) 9-22.

<sup>118</sup> Kim Richard Nossal. *Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1989) 53.

aftermath of the 1956 Suez War, when Israel, the United Kingdom, and France invaded Egypt. While the US and Soviet Union were greatly irritated by the behaviour of the (rapidly declining) European powers and Israel, the regional hegemon, Canada succeeded in achieving a resolution to the crisis through the UN system that arguably prevented serious conflict from breaking out between Israel and its Arab neighbours for another decade. A corollary to the middle power framework, therefore, is the view that Canada has a fairly deep-rooted sensitivity to the excesses of the great powers, particularly those of its important ally, the US, and is thus always mindful to guard itself against becoming a ‘chore boy’ for American interests. In the context of the hemisphere, then, the middle power approach has meant that, particularly during the Cold War, Canada pursued a policy that sought to bridge the chasm created by the extreme interventionist policies of the US with the leftist, populist orientation of many Latin American and Caribbean governments. As Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau told an audience in St. Lucia in 1983:

We have consistently chosen to address tensions from their economic and social causes, being equipped neither by ambition nor by capacity to pursue military solutions, or grand strategic designs. Consequently, we have urged on other partners a developmental approach – non-discriminatory with respect to national plans and regional institutions.

In our view states have the right to follow whatever ideological path their peoples decide. When a country chooses a socialist, or even a Marxist path it does not necessarily buy a ‘package’ which automatically inject it into the Soviet orbit.<sup>119</sup>

What does all this have to say about the shift in Canadian policy towards Haiti in the period in question? The argument being made here is that the case of Canadian Haiti policy shows that Canada’s original concerns about becoming unduly bound to the OAS’ decisions are generally correct. Though membership and active participation in the OAS can be interpreted through the middle power framework to constitute an example of Canadian multilateralism intended – in part, at least – to dilute the dominance of the US in hemispheric affairs, the contention here is

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<sup>119</sup> As quoted in: Kari Levitt, “Canada and the Caribbean: An Assessment” in Jorge Heine and Leslie Maginat (eds.) *The Caribbean and World Politics* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1988) 227.

that the OAS became a powerful vehicle that the US successfully co-opted to its own ends in dealing with Haiti. More specifically, while we can see strong elements of middle power diplomacy at work in the early 1990s, Canadian policy was subordinated to US power and interests by the beginning of Aristide's second presidency. Let us, then, return to the early 1990s and trace this argument through the Haitian crisis.

As explained earlier in this paper, Canada was a leading proponent of Aristide's restoration following the 1991 coup, and even diverged from the US in maintaining explicit support for Aristide in the years leading to his return, while Washington began calling only for the return of democracy to Haiti. This substantial difference surfaced within a week of the first coup, in October 1991, when White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater, questioned by the press over ambiguous statements regarding Haiti, responded: "Our support is the same as it's always been, which is for the [sic] democratic rule in the country." The US was in fact playing on a technicality of the so-called Santiago Commitment, which was agreed to at an OAS General Assembly meeting that took place in Chile earlier that year in June, and held that the organization would "implement effective, timely and expeditious measures to ensure the promotion and defence of representational democracy in accordance with the OAS Charter."<sup>120</sup>

As State Department spokesman Richard Boucher argued: "The OAS resolution is clear. It deals with the whole process of restoration of constitutional order." (To be sure, in the context of Haiti, it appears that the US was alone in interpreting the resolution as only requiring the restoration of democracy, and not Aristide himself to power.) Yet, Canada resisted aligning itself with the US position and pushed specifically for Aristide's return. Even when the issue of alleged human rights abuses that occurred under Aristide was raised, for example, Mulroney remained rather

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<sup>120</sup> As quoted in: Paul Kants, "Force Justified to Free Haiti from Junta," *Toronto Star*, 3 October 1991.

defiant. He noted on October 8, 1991, for instance, that “[w]e’re not suggesting everything he has done is perfect,” but that any abuses needed to be understood in the context of the “unattractive backdrop” of Haiti’s long history of repressive government. In a similar vein, SSEA MacDougall did note that Canada viewed human rights violations during Aristide’s short tenure as “serious”, but the issue was not dwelt on, in sharp contrast to the Canadian position on Aristide during his second presidency.<sup>121</sup>

In this sense, it might be argued that Canada behaved as a middle-power would – as a ‘good citizen’ that sided politically with the deposed Aristide over the objections of the US, while also working with the US through the OAS to find a solution to the crisis. In this period, Canada played a key role within the OAS to initiate a program on “governance and democratic consolidation” that led to the creation of the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD). This was followed by the Santiago Declaration the next year, which was also heavily promoted by Canadian diplomats.<sup>122</sup> In part, these initiatives can be understood in the context of the Mulroney government’s push for a more aggressive and interventionist human rights policy, which was spelled out by the Prime Minister, coincidentally, on September 29, 1991, the eve of Aristide’s first coup, at Stanford University. In this speech, he argued for a “rethinking [of] the limits of national sovereignty in a world where problems respect no borders ... invocations of the principle of national sovereignty are as out of date and offensive to me as the police declining to stop family violence simply because a man’s home is supposed to be his castle.”<sup>123</sup> All this Canadian leadership within the OAS, however, eventually died down by the end of the decade, and the cautionary note made in the 1970 foreign policy review about restricted freedom of action became increasingly relevant.

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<sup>121</sup> “PM admits Aristide concerns,” *Toronto Star*, 9 October 1991.

<sup>122</sup> John W. Graham, “Canada and the OAS: Terra Incongnita” in Fen Osler Hamson and Maureen Appel Molot (eds.) *Canada Among Nations, 1996* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1996) 304.

<sup>123</sup> As quoted in “Rethinking the limits of sovereignty,” *Globe and Mail*, 3 October 1991.

The above mentioned behaviour of the US in the period immediately following Aristide's first coup also suggests, moreover, that Washington has long had an at best lukewarm relationship with the Haitian leader and his wider Lavalas movement. It might be argued that since the US led Aristide's restoration in 1994 this means that the US strongly supported Aristide until the latter went astray and thus disqualified his government from any further help. In actuality, however, the US has always opposed Aristide, whom it views as an uncontrollable leftist, populist leader, and only agreed to restore him to power after the horrendous human rights abuses committed by the Cédras regime and its CIA-backed paramilitary arm, FRAPH, became an embarrassment, and led to a major flow of Haitian refugees into Florida. It was only then that the US seriously worked to restore Aristide to power, but even so, only after the Haitian leader agreed to adopt a wide array of neoliberal reforms that fundamentally undermined Lavalas' socialist platform, and were strongly opposed by the Haitian masses. It is well beyond the scope of this paper to examine in detail the US' relations with Haiti over the relevant period, and so US policy towards Haiti will be treated as an exogenous variable, accompanied here with references for substantiation.<sup>124</sup>

When the time arrived for a military intervention in Haiti to restore Aristide, Canadian bureaucrats showed a high level of concern over possible participation in the UN-sanctioned, but US-led multinational force (MNF) mission (known as Phase I) in September 1994 that would make way for the subsequent UNMIH deployment (known as Phase II). A top-level internal planning document prepared in July 1994 for Defence Minister David Collenette, and signed by

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<sup>124</sup> For more information on US motivations towards Haiti, and substantiation for the claims made in this paragraph, see the following sources: Philippe Girard, *Clinton in Haiti* (New York: Plagrave MacMillan, 2004); Noam Chomsky, *Year 501: The Conquest Continues* (Boston: South End Books, 1991) Ch. 6; Allan Nairn, "Aristide Banks on Austerity," *Multinational Monitor*, July/August 2004. Yasmine Shamsie, "Building 'low-intensity' democracy in Haiti: the OAS contribution," *Third World Quarterly* (Spring 2004) Vol. 25, No. 6. Paul Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2006). William Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy: Globalization, US intervention, and hegemony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Chief of the Defence Staff John de Chastelain as well as Deputy Minister Robert Fowler, is quite instructive in highlighting Canadian thinking on the matter. First, the document explains that participation in the MNF would be consistent with “the Government’s foreign policy pronouncements concerning the need to restore President Aristide...”; “demonstrate our [Canada’s] support for the restoration of democracy in Haiti...”; “demonstrate our commitment to play an active role in an important hemispheric issue”; and “demonstrate support for our most important ally, the United States.” A subsequent section, however, raises a number of objections to participation, including the uncertain political outcome of Aristide’s restoration to power, the possibility of becoming entangled in a lengthy mission, and physical risk to Canadian troops.

For the purposes of this analysis, however, two objections stand out. The first cautions that: “We would be closely associated with the United States whose historical involvement in hemispheric issues has been criticized widely in Latin America.” And the second notes that: “Although the US has stated that it intends to conduct this operation under the auspices of the UN, its track record of working within the UN structure is less than perfect. We could very well end up part of a US operation which we did not like but from which it would be difficult to extract ourselves.”<sup>125</sup> Unfortunately, some other objections were blanked out before the document, originally classified as ‘secret’, was released under the *Access to Information and Privacy Act*, and it is thus unclear if even more concerns relating to the US were presented to Minister Collenette. Nevertheless, it is sufficiently clear that Canada had significant qualms about becoming too closely associated with the US-led mission in Haiti because of the latter’s negative reputation and track record in international affairs. Indeed, Louise Fréchette, then Canadian Ambassador to the UN, attended a UNMIH planning meeting in New York in

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<sup>125</sup> Defence Planning Letter, John de Chastelain, Chief of the Defense Staff, and Robert Fowler, Deputy Minister of Defence, to David Collenette, Minister of Defence, Ottawa, 15 July 1994, Department of National Defence, File No. A-96-1101, document 00177-78.

September 1994 and stated unequivocally that “we would only operate in Haiti under UN command”.<sup>126</sup>

It should be mentioned here that the US actively sought Canadian participation in the MNF. A draft response by Prime Minister Chrétien to a letter from US President Clinton requesting Canadian participation states that since Canadian “police officers will need to be seen as role models for a very different kind of police force than that which Haitians have been accustomed,” requiring a “spirit of trust and cooperation” between “the new recruits and their [Canadian] superiors,” “a clear distinction must be made between those who participate in the intervention phase, and those who will work under UN mandate.”<sup>127</sup> What is interesting is that this particular concern revolving around the need for a “clear distinction” between Phases I and II does not appear in the comprehensive planning document sent to Minister Collenette cited above, suggesting Canada was simply looking for a polite way of turning down Clinton’s request.

To compensate for this decision, officials at Foreign Affairs and National Defence suggested that Canada participate in an ‘Advance Team’ mission to Haiti that would deploy 60 personnel (up to 15 of whom would be Canadian) to Haiti under UN command in order to prepare for the full 6000-person strong Phase II deployment and monitor the conduct of Phase I operations. Even so, another high-level National Defence planning document highlights two objections with participation in the Advance Team, both of which deal with the US. The first reads that having “Canadian troops on the ground in Haiti during the intervention phase ... will give rise to press reports that we are participating in the [US-led] invasion.” The second, meanwhile, cautions that: “We would be part of an organization which may be making negative

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<sup>126</sup> Memorandum, J.E.J. Boyle, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister (Policy), Ottawa, 13 September 1994, Department of National Defence, File No., A-96-1101, document 00115-16.

<sup>127</sup> Draft Letter, Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister of Canada, to Bill Clinton, President of the United States of America, Ottawa, 6 September 1994, Department of National Defence, File No. A-96-1101, document 00182-83.

reports to the Secretary General concerning the American conduct of phase one.” In the end, Canada participated in the Advance Team but was careful to characterize it publicly as separate from the US mission and “a very necessary precursor to a safe and successful deployment of UNMIH.”<sup>128</sup> All this wrangling, however, is precisely what one would expect from a middle power strongly committed to multilateralism. To recap, even though the US-MNF mission, known as Phase I, was approved by the UN, Canada only wanted to participate in Phase II, which was led by the UN itself – representing a higher point on the scale of multilateralism, one might argue.

What about the 2001-2004 period? On the issue of the legislative elections of 2000, even though the OAS Electoral Observation Mission had only raised serious concerns, as discussed earlier, about the results of a handful of senatorial races, once the US decided to exploit this to completely delegitimize the Haitian political process and portray Aristide as an undemocratic, authoritarian president, the OAS and, in turn, Canada, adopted the same position. Despite Aristide’s efforts at meeting the eight conditions imposed by the US in December 2000, as well as the demands of the OAS and CARICOM, the US maintained its opposition to Aristide and the OAS began to adopt a similarly rigid position. By May 2001, for example, the OAS began to call for a complete annulment of the election’s results. As a Fanmi Lavalas senator commented, however:

There has been talk about the calculation method, that some senators are contested and should have gone to run-offs...If that is the sacrifice which must be made, we in the Lavalas Family are ready to make it. But we can't talk about the annulment of the May 21 elections. That would simply be contradictory because the OAS has already accepted them as credible and honest with massive participation of the population.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Planning Letter, John de Chastelain, Chief of the Defence Staff, to David Collenette, Minister of National Defence, Ottawa, no date, Department of National Defence, File No. A-96-1101, document 00158-160.

<sup>129</sup> “OAS ‘Mediators’ Threaten Haiti to Accept Terms,” *Haiti-Progrès*, May 30 – June 5, 2001.

Furthermore, the former US Ambassador to Haiti, Brian Dean Curran, who served there between January 2001 and August 2003, has made the argument that in these years the US pursued policies designed to destabilize the Aristide government. According to Curran, the International Republican Institute (IRI), a ‘democracy promotion’ organization with close ties to the George W. Bush Administration, began to support the opposition and counsel it to reject reaching a political agreement with Aristide. Importantly, the former Ambassador claims that the Bush Administration supported the activities of the IRI in Haiti. In fact, Curran became so concerned with the activities of the IRI that he cabled Washington to warn superiors that the organization’s activities “risked us being accused of attempting to destabilize the government.”

This view is supported by the chief OAS negotiator in Haiti at the time, Luis R. Einaudi, who says that “you had a constant undermining of the credibility of the negotiators [seeking political agreement between Aristide and the opposition],” in reference to US policy. In one incident during the fall of 2003, according to Einaudi, after he managed to convince opposition leaders to meet with Aristide at US Ambassador James B. Foley’s home, the US suddenly decided to cancel the meeting, severely disrupting the OAS’ negotiations efforts. Asked about these charges, Secretary of State Powell has countered Curran’s position and claimed that the US never tried to undermine Aristide – a highly doubtful claim, given the US’ blocking of aid and loans from international financial institutions to Haiti. In fact, his own Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere at the time, Otto J. Reich, contradicts his assertion, stating that “[t]here was a change in policy,” which perhaps wasn’t explicitly communicated to embassy officials like Curran.<sup>130</sup>

With the OAS increasingly aligned to US policy, notwithstanding Einaudi’s concerns, Canada followed suit. Document after document released from Foreign Affairs Canada shows

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<sup>130</sup> All quotes cited from: Walt Bogdanich and Jenny Nordberg, “Mixed U.S. Signals Helped Tilt Haiti Toward Chaos,” *New York Times*, 29 January 2006.

that Canada repeatedly affirmed its support for the OAS, regardless of the particular concerns raised with the direction collective diplomacy was taking. When the Ottawa Initiative controversy broke out in March 2003 with the publication of Vastel's article, Canada repeatedly explained that it supported the OAS process, the specific nature of which was irrelevant. What mattered, instead, was the apparently multilateral nature of this process. Similarly, ministerial 'talking points' from Foreign Affairs during the February 2004 crisis again consistently refer to the OAS process even though, by this point, the process was in tatters as a result of US support for the stubborn opposition.

Following Aristide's fall, moreover, it was clear that the OAS had fallen fully in-line with the policies of the US. On March 21, 2004, just a week after being appointed as Haiti's interim leader, Prime Minister Gérard Latortue traveled to the city of Gonaives on a US helicopter, where he shared a platform with David Lee, head of the OAS' Haiti Special Mission, and Jean Tatoune, a notorious criminal who had been jailed (but later escaped) for his role in the infamous 1994 Raboteau massacre.<sup>131</sup> Latortue used the opportunity to heap praise on the anti-Aristide rebels whom he referred to as "freedom fighters," while the OAS' Lee claimed that the Prime Minister's visit to the city indicated a "return of authority."<sup>132</sup> Human Rights Watch, meanwhile, raised serious concerns with Latortue's support for the rebels, many of whom were criminals who had played key roles in the FRAPH paramilitary group during the Cédras period.<sup>133</sup> Yet, none of this mattered to the US, the OAS, and even Canada, which went on to extend full diplomatic relations with Latortue's government.

In discourse as in practice, Canada subordinated its Haiti policy to that of the US through the medium of the OAS, but could claim to be working through a multilateral institution and thus

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<sup>131</sup> The 1994 Raboteau massacre, in which some 20 people were killed, was carried out by FRAPH forces against Aristide supporters.

<sup>132</sup> "Haitian leader visits cradle of revolt," *Associated Press*, 21 March 2004.

<sup>133</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Haiti: Powell Should Back Rebel Prosecutions," 5 April 2004.

conform to the expected behaviour of a middle power. Indeed, an internal memorandum providing Foreign Affairs Minister John Manley with an overview of the Haitian situation prior to Aristide's presidential inauguration in February 2001 suggests that such thinking was becoming established even before the latter's second term began. The document notes that the outgoing "Clinton Administration had made it clear that they desired, and were very appreciative of, the considerable involvement of Canada in Haiti, and the cooperative Canada-US working relationship on that file." A subsequent section of the same document, moreover, echoes and reciprocates the reported US position, asserting that "Canada attaches importance to continuing to work closely with our friends and allies on Haiti, notably the US. We look forward to an early opportunity for detailed consultations with the new US Administration [of George W. Bush] in the coming weeks."<sup>134</sup> In the final analysis, therefore, the case of Canada's Haiti policy appears to be better understood through the satellite-dependency framework. This is particularly true of the period leading up to and following the 2004 coup.

In contrast to Canada's strong resistance to participation in the MNF mission of 1994, in 2004 Canada was quite predisposed to deploying troops to Haiti under a similar arrangement. In early March, just days after Aristide was forced out of the country, some 500 Canadian troops arrived in Haiti to join the Multinational Interim Force (MIF), which would stabilize and secure the environment for the subsequent UN-led MINUSTAH<sup>135</sup> deployment. The MIF-MINUSTAH sequence of operations was quite similar to the MNF-UNMIH deployment of a decade earlier; both the MIF and MNF missions were UN-sanctioned but US-led, entered Haiti during a power vacuum, where gangs had stepped-in to fill the void, and paved the way for a more

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<sup>134</sup> Action Memorandum for John Manley, Minister of Foreign Affairs, 26 January 2001, Foreign Affairs Canada, File No. A-2006-00145ag, document 0057.

<sup>135</sup> The UN's Stabilization Mission in Haiti, created after Aristide was overthrown in 2004.

comprehensive UN deployment. Given these similarities in character and mandate, these missions serve as a good opportunity for comparison in the context of our analysis.

The Canadian role in March 2004 was, roughly, the inverse of the Canadian role in 1994. While in 1994 Canada stayed out of the MNF but participated heavily in UNMIH, in 2004, Canada participated in the MIF, and made only token military contributions to MINUSTAH. The official transfer from the MIF to MINUSTAH occurred on June 25, 2004, and by the end of July, *Op Halo* – the codename for the Canadian mission in Haiti – was no longer operational; by mid-August, Canadian Forces personnel were back in Canada.<sup>136</sup> As of August 2006, moreover, only four Canadian staff officers were serving in Haiti under MINUSTAH.<sup>137</sup> In contrast, as shown earlier, Canada was heavily involved in UNMIH from the beginning and single-handedly saved the mission in 1996 by contributing 700 soldiers after China tried reducing the size of the operation.

The UN Security Council passed Resolution 1529 on February 29, 2004, authorizing the creation of the MIF, and the government announced Canadian participation the same day, meaning that there either was a very short period – or, rather, moment – of deliberation in Ottawa, or, as is more likely the case, that the decision had already been made ahead of time.<sup>138</sup> Internal documents released by National Defence show that from mid-February 2004 to the end of the month, Canada planned for a ‘non-combatant evacuation operation’ of Canadian civilians in Haiti in cooperation with the US military’s Southern Command in Miami. Unfortunately, these documents do not shed any light on the decision to join the MIF specifically. One heavily censored post-facto brief to the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff dated March 1 only deals with

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<sup>136</sup> See Department of National Defence, “*Op Halo*: Canadian Forces Commitment in Haiti,” 17 August 2004; available at: [http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/newsroom/view\\_news\\_e.asp?id=1378](http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/newsroom/view_news_e.asp?id=1378).

<sup>137</sup> Department of National Defence, “Operation Hamlet: Canadian Forces Commitment in Haiti,” 17 August 2006; available at: [http://www.forces.ca/site/operations/Hamlet/view\\_news\\_e.asp?id=2030](http://www.forces.ca/site/operations/Hamlet/view_news_e.asp?id=2030).

<sup>138</sup> Agence France Press, “Martin: le Canada contribuera à une force en Haiti sous mandat de l’ONU,” 29 February 2004.

options for Canadian Forces contributions to the MIF, but participation of some kind is treated as a given.<sup>139</sup>

Further investigation through Privy Council Office records may provide more insight but, in the meantime, it seems reasonable to posit that, given Canadian involvement in Afghanistan under US command as part of Operation Enduring Freedom in the post-September 11, 2001, period, a mission to Haiti under US command would not cause any qualms. In fact, the seemingly unhesitant willingness to cooperate with the US in the case of Haiti is symptomatic of a broader trend in Canadian foreign policy that has been developing since the attacks of September 11, and was accelerated with the establishment of Paul Martin's government in December 2003. Since 2001, Canada has moved closer to the US on a range of defence and foreign policy issues, including support for the ongoing "war on terror" and the National Missile Defence (NMD) program. (There has been some public confusion over Canada's level and nature of support for the US' NMD, and the various phases of the program, which range from land- and sea-based interceptors to future space-based interception that Canada opposes. Nonetheless, in August 2004, Defence Minister Bill Graham agreed to share NORAD<sup>140</sup> data with the US commands responsible for missile defence, an important requirement for the NMD program.)

The key exception to this trend was, of course, the Chrétien government's decision – which caused considerable friction in Canada-US relations – not to participate in the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, given that the action lacked UN Security Council support, a traditional Canadian requirement. Michael Kergin, who served as the Canadian Ambassador to Washington in 2000-05, has said that in the post-Iraq invasion period, "[t]here was this sense that we had let the [US] side down ... and then there was the sense that we could be more helpful, militarily, by

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<sup>139</sup> Briefing (CA Contribution to Haiti) to the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff, Ottawa, 1 March 2004, Department of National Defence, File No. A-0069417-1, document: 000124.

<sup>140</sup> North American Aerospace Defense Command.

taking on a role in Afghanistan ... we could make a contribution in a place like Kandahar.”<sup>141</sup> In a similar vein, it seems reasonable to posit that Canadian cooperation with the US on Haiti was another way of compensating for the earlier decision to keep Canada out of Iraq.

To sum up, then, Canadian policy began to shift in 2000 as a result of pressure stemming from membership in the OAS, which itself was subject to strong pressure from the US. In the 2003-04 period, however, Canada’s shift in Haiti policy could increasingly be situated within a wider trend of closer ties between Canada and the US on international security matters that had been evolving since the attacks of September 11.

To be sure, Canadian policy towards Haiti ranges from the military sphere to the diplomatic sphere to the development sphere – what has been termed the ‘3D’ or ‘whole of government’ approach by Ottawa<sup>142</sup> – and Canada has made substantial contributions in the latter two spheres since February 2004, including sending over 100 RCMP officers to train the HNP and committing \$520 million for various programs for the July 2006-September 2011 period.<sup>143</sup> Even so, one should not be too easily impressed by this monetary commitment if it is not accompanied by the equally important commitment to support the Haitian democratic process even if it leads to a return of Lavalas and its socialist platform. Money, in itself, cannot resolve Haiti’s problems.

Unfortunately, the nature and scope of Canada’s Haiti policy has remained within the general parameters set out by the US. As outlined earlier, Canada lent strong diplomatic support to the TIG under Gérard Latortue, which has actively repressed the Lavalas movement and prevented Aristide from returning to Haiti – in congruence with US foreign policy interests. Moreover, there seems to be little interest in allowing Haiti to break from the neoliberal model

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<sup>141</sup> As quoted in: Bill Schiller, “The Road to Kandahar,” *Toronto Star*, 9 September 2006.

<sup>142</sup> The 3 Ds are: Defence, Diplomacy, and Development.

<sup>143</sup> Canadian International Development Agency, “Government of Canada shows support for rebuilding Haiti,” 25 July 2006.

imposed by the US and the IFIs. As Harvard's longtime Haiti expert, Robert Rotberg, noted just prior to the November 2000 elections that returned Aristide to power: if "[h]e could figure out how to return the market economy to Haiti [then] at the very least ... he'd make the U.S., Canada and others partners."<sup>144</sup> With Aristide's departure, the "market economy" has returned to Haiti. Indeed, a major concern raised by several nongovernmental organizations is that Canadian development policy in the post-February 2004 period continues to promote neo-liberal policies that do not adequately address the poverty issue. As Jim Hodgson of the United Church of Canada, which operates numerous social justice projects in Haiti, observes:

Foreign governments and national elites are negotiating a new power structure that they imagine will guarantee their power. They seek the emergence of a state like that of El Salvador whose electorate always makes the 'right' choice, or the Dominican Republic where it no longer matters which party is elected because all three parties implement the same neo-liberal project. Haiti's so-called friends seek conditions favourable to foreign capital: a docile, low-pay labour force, a compliant state, and a minimal security apparatus...<sup>145</sup>

According to the authors of the 2004 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. Total Canadian trade with Haiti stands at \$20.7 million in exports and \$18 million in imports (2003 figures). 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>146</sup> One of the companies, undoubtedly, must have been Gildan Activewear, a very successful Canadian company with significant operations in Haiti. Gildan is a large apparel manufacturer that sold 27

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<sup>144</sup> Trenton Daniel, "Would Aristide back as president help poor Haiti," *Reuters*, 15 October 2000.

<sup>145</sup> Jim Hodgson, "Dissonant Voices: Northern NGO and Haitian Partner Perspectives on the Future of Haiti" in Yasmine Shamsie and Andrew S. Thomson (eds.), *Haiti: Hope for a Fragile State* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press/CIGI, 2006) 102.

<sup>146</sup> Canadian International Development Agency, *Canadian Cooperation With Haiti: Reflecting on a Decade of "Difficult Partnership"* (Gatineau, QC: CIDA, 2004) 22.

million dozen T-shirts in 2004 and runs operations in many developing countries.<sup>147</sup> 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>148</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>149</sup>

Yasmine Shamsie has carefully studied the "clear contradiction inherent in advancing democratic governance while simultaneously dictating economic policy from above" in the context of Haiti.<sup>150</sup> Yet, 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>151</sup> What is important to note in the context of this paper, however, is that such policies conform to the US position on Haiti. All this, again, is part of wider trend in Canadian policy that emerged in the immediate post-September 11 period. Then with the Martin government, Canada moved even closer, a trend that has been again accelerated by the election of the Conservative government under Stephen Harper.

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<sup>147</sup> Carolyn Leitch, "Analysts upsize Gildan's Targets", *The Globe and Mail*, 12 April 2005.

<sup>148</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>149</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>.

<sup>150</sup> Yasmine Shamsie, "Building 'low-intensity' democracy in Haiti: the OAS contribution", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 6, (2004) 1101.

<sup>151</sup> Canadian International Development Agency, *International Policy Statement: Development* (Ottawa, ON: CIDA, 2005) 18.

## 6. Conclusion

The story of Haiti is an utterly tragic one. Presently, it is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, where 55 percent of the population lives on less than one dollar a day. In academia and media punditry the debate over whether an exploitative neo-colonial order prevails in the globe's North-South relations will likely continue for some time, but it is difficult to look at the bare facts – if one may be excused for employing such a term in this post-modern age – of Haiti's history without pulling away with the distinct impression that this tiny Caribbean space has suffered tremendously, and consistently, at the hands of wealthy western interests. After more than 500 years of abuse under the processes of globalization, which began with Columbus' arrival on Hispanolia and the quick subsequent destruction of the native Arawak peoples, followed by the transformation of the island into a slave plantation, followed by the forced, debilitating payment of millions of francs to former French slave owners who lost their means of oppression upon independence, followed by numerous American military operations to bring order to the nation of “shaved apes,” and followed, in recent years, by two devastating coups

against the most popular president the country has ever known, Haiti is left in a truly wretched, perhaps hopeless, state of affairs.<sup>152</sup>

Unfortunately, Canadian policy, often said to be guided by the humanitarian impulse, cannot be situated in clear opposition to the above historical trend. Certainly, as examined in this study, there were periods in which Canada played a constructive role in helping Haiti progress towards a democratic ideal, but policy at the turn of the millennium seemed to be more a function of power politics, than a primary concern with Haiti's development. As shown in some detail in this study, the argument that the policy shift away from support for Haiti's government in the 2000-04 period can be explained by Aristide's poor human rights and democracy record does not hold much water. Furthermore, the oft-cited claim that Canada's Haiti policy is heavily influenced by the significant Haitian community centered in and around Montréal also does not explain the policy shift. Instead, it merely explains why Canada is engaged in Haiti, and has little to say about the reasons for the specific direction policy has taken in recent years.

In the end, we are left with the possibility, sometimes argued by leftist critics, that a kind of "crude realpolitik" is at play, yet also one that "imputes an automatic and ugly inhumanity to those charged with making political decisions without indicating how this may be reconciled with the observation that the Canadian state is not entirely populated by latter-day devotees of Thrasymachus."<sup>153</sup> We thus have to look at alternative explanations, namely the pressures brought on Canada by its powerful neighbour to the south, the US, and the international coalition that both belong to, the OAS. As Nossal has written in this context, a "less powerful member" of a coalition "has an interest in subordinating 'real', or true, policy preferences and in moulding

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<sup>152</sup> Quote ("shaved apes") of American Marine-General Smedley Butler, who led the 1915 US invasion and occupation (ending in 1934) of Haiti. See Noam Chomsky, *Year 501: The Conquest Continues* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1993) Ch. 6.

<sup>153</sup> Kim Richard Nossal, *Statism, Realism and Canadian Policies Towards the Third World*, Working Paper No. A. 9 (Toronto: University of Toronto Development Studies, 1984) 17-18.

behaviour to fit within the parameters set by dominant members of the coalition.”<sup>154</sup> As shown in this study, this is precisely what appears to have happened in the case of Canadian policy towards Haiti in the 2000-04 period. The OAS came under increasing influence of the US, which then affected Canadian policy. And eventually, in the post-September 11 political environment, Canada became so much closer to the US on foreign policy and defence issues that it lost any willingness to pursue a divergent policy towards Haiti. As Scott Reid, Paul Martin’s communications director recalls of policy advice emanating from Foreign Affairs: “A lot of times policy was put to us based on, ‘This matters to this White House. And things that matter to this White House can’t be taken lightly, because these guys take it personally’ ... So, we really have to evaluate the importance of making a decision that runs counter to this White House.”<sup>155</sup> With the desire to heal the wounds in US-Canada relations caused particularly by the split over the Iraq war, Canada followed the US lead on Haiti.

Importantly, however, it should also be recognized that the general direction of Canadian policy in the 1990-94 period, and then in the 2000-04 period cannot be explained by the party in power. In the former period, it was a Conservative government that championed Aristide’s return after the first coup, a policy which was followed by the new Liberal government in 1993. In the latter period, it was a Liberal government that, at best, sat by while Aristide’s government was overthrown, and then supported the repressive TIG. It is too early to state with confidence what direction policy will take under the Conservative government that emerged in 2006. For instance, will it continue supporting Haiti if Aristide returns (as he likely will) and is allowed a prominent position in the newly elected government under René Prével, his old political ally? This is something that will have to be monitored closely when the former president decides to return

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<sup>154</sup> Kim Richard Nossal, “Cabin’d Cribb’d, Confin’d: Canada’s Interest in Human Rights” in Robert O. Matthews and Cranford Pratt (eds.) *Human Rights in Canadian Foreign Policy* (Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988) 54-5.

<sup>155</sup> As quoted in: Schiller, “Road to Kandahar,” *Star*, 9 September 2006.

from his current exile in South Africa. Furthermore, how will Canada react if Préval follows policies similar to Aristide's socialist platform? Perhaps more to the point, what will Canada do if the US again decides to pull support for Haiti's government?

This study has made significant use of pertinent internal government documents to help explain Canadian policy towards Haiti. Despite having scoured some 2,500 pages of documents released under the *Access to Information and Privacy Act*, the research is hardly exhaustive. Much more research needs to be done through records held by the key foreign policy departments – Foreign Affairs, National Defence, CIDA, and the PCO – in order to produce a more comprehensive picture of the Canadian policy shift examined here. Certainly, if this study makes anything clear, it is that there is enough of interest that has transpired in Canada-Haiti relations over the period in question to warrant a more aggressive academic research program into the matter.

To date, moreover, the greatest source of analysis of Canada's Haiti policy comes from the left-wing activist community, which has been especially lively since the February 2004 coup, as explained earlier. Individuals belonging to CHAN have disseminated large amounts of noteworthy analysis through the internet, and even published the first book on Canadian involvement in Haiti in the post-coup period, entitled *Canada in Haiti: Waging War on the Poor Majority*,<sup>156</sup> which has been distributed across the country since the summer of 2005. Though the book makes for very interesting reading and brings to attention many important issues, it is not accompanied by any references, and it thus becomes rather difficult to verify its many claims. Again, the need for academic engagement in this matter is clear.

In 2005, *Yale French Studies* published a special issue examining Haiti's experience over the 200 years since independence in 1804. Two articles in this volume by Nick Nesbitt and Deborah

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<sup>156</sup> Anthony Fenton and Yves Engler, *Canada in Haiti: Waging War on the Poor Majority* (Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Books, 2006)

Jenson, respectively, seem like apt choices with which to conclude this study.<sup>157</sup> In “The Idea of 1804,” Nesbitt explains how the Haitian the Revolution “initiated the world’s first radical democracy of transnational scope” and that it was in “Saint-Domingue, not Paris, that violence reached unimagined heights of brutality on both sides, that an entire society was literally reduced to ashes in the name of a single imperative: universal emancipation.” In “From the Kidnapping(s) of the Louvertures to the Alleged Kidnapping of Aristide,” meanwhile, Jenson shows the significance of the second coup against Aristide in the minds of Haitians, who strongly associate it with the kidnapping of Toussaint Louverture, the Haitian independence leader who was taken to France, where he died in prison. The sentiment captured by Nesbitt and Jenson – namely, that of resistance to ongoing, forceful western intervention in their affairs – persists in the minds of the Haitian masses.

If Canadian policy is to stand any serious chance of leading to Haiti’s betterment, these sentiments must be acknowledged, and policy must be crafted to respect them. Given the overwhelming power of the US in Haitian affairs, it should also be questioned whether Canada can actually pursue an independent course there. If the answer to this question is no, then it might be worthwhile considering a ‘do no harm’ approach, and not become involved in Haiti. Of course, this will be a difficult option to pursue due to the Canadian Haitian Diaspora, which wants to see its government help in Haiti’s development. A policy balance will likely have to be struck, but one that decisively steers clear of US excesses towards the fragile and impoverished Caribbean state.

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<sup>157</sup> See Nick Nesbitt, “From the Kidnapping(s) of the Louvertures to the Alleged Kidnapping of Aristide: Legacies of Slavery in the Post/Colonial World,” *Yale French Studies* (Spring 2005) 6-38; and Deborah Jenson, “From the Kidnapping(s) of the Louvertures to the Alleged Kidnapping of Aristide: Legacies of Slavery in the Post/Colonial World,” *Yale French Studies* (Spring 2005) 162-185.

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