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EXERCISE/EXERCICE NEW HORIZONS

**Haiti**

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**Is There Any Hope?**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Christopher Columbus arrived in what is today Haiti in December 1492 thinking that he had made his way to Cipango, Japan. Little did the indigenous people, the Tainos, who greeted him warmly, realize the disaster the European explorer's arrival would unleash on their peaceful existence. Within a century, they ceased to exist.*

*As the native population disappeared, they were replaced by African slaves thus setting the stage for the tumultuous centuries to come. Haiti is a land that has been marked by abuses, violence and despair ever since it was first settled. Today, it is considered a fragile or failed state. As the international community invests heavily in efforts to aid the country, why should Canada continue to care and is there any hope? This paper will argue that, despite the seemingly insurmountable odds, there is hope for the close to nine million Haitians living on the island under a Canadian lead.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Christopher Columbus arrived in what is today Haiti in December 1492 thinking that he had made his way to Cipango, Japan. Little did the indigenous people, the Tainos, who greeted him warmly, realize the disaster the European explorer's arrival would unleash on their peaceful existence. The Tainos, who had lived in the area for close to a 1000 years, called the island where Columbus set-up his first settlement Ayiti or "high country"; Columbus called it Ysla Espanola (Hispaniola); later generations would call the western part of it Haiti.<sup>1</sup>

Columbus' arrival began a downward spiral that would challenge the very survival of the Tainos. Disease, slavery and slaughter caused the native population of the area to go from an estimated figure in the millions to 50,000 within a generation.<sup>2</sup> Within approximately a century, when the French took the island, the indigenous people of the island no longer existed.

As the native population disappeared, they were replaced by African slaves thus setting the stage for the tumultuous centuries to come. Haiti is a land that has been marked by abuses, violence and despair ever since it was first settled. Today, it is considered a fragile or failed state. As the international community invests heavily in efforts to aid the country, why should Canada continue to care and is there any hope?

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<sup>1</sup> Randall Robinson, *An Unbroken Agony - Haiti, From Revolution to the Kidnapping of a President* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2007), 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Monroe Maine: Common Courage Press, 2006), 54.

As Canadians, we should be concerned with what happens in Haiti. There are several reasons for this. First, as good citizens of the Western Hemisphere, we should be troubled with what is happening in our own backyard. Second, there is a fairly large Haitian diaspora in Canada with approximately 75,000 Canadians of declared Haitian decent living mostly in Quebec.<sup>3</sup> In several cases, they occupy influential positions in society.<sup>4</sup> Third, the potential destabilizing effects of the absence of rule of law in Haiti (drug and arms smuggling) have a direct impact on all nations in the hemisphere including Canada.<sup>5</sup> In the past, failed or fragile states were virtually ignored by the more powerful nations of the world but today it has been recognized that they are the largest source of threat to nations like Canada, not only through their destabilizing effect but their attraction for criminal and terrorist organizations.<sup>6</sup>

This paper will argue that there is hope for the close to nine million Haitians living on the island and that Canada should take the lead in ensuring this hope becomes reality. I will do this by first taking a look at the history of Haiti. I will then draw out what are the root causes that have plunged this tiny nation into dire straits. Finally, I will suggest a way forward to bring this nation back on the road to recovery under Canadian leadership.

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<sup>3</sup> Council on Hemispheric Affairs, "Canada's Aid to Haiti: Commendable or Making Amends for a Discredited Anti-Aristide Strategy," <http://www.coha.org/2006/03/canada%E2%80%99s-aid-to-haiti-commendable-or-making-amends-for-a-discredited-anti-aristide-strategy/>; Internet; accessed 08 April 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Hal Klepak, "Haiti and Cuba," *International Journal* 61, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 691.

<sup>5</sup> Peace Operations Monitor, "Chronology: Haiti as a Threat to Security," <http://pom.peacebuild.ca/haitiChronology.shtml>; Internet; accessed 08 April 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Francis Fukuyama, "Nation Building 101," *The Atlantic* (January/February 2004) [journal online]; available from <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200401/fukuyama>; Internet; accessed 18 April 2009.

To understand the present the past can provide critical clues. Haitian history is filled with violence and misery. To begin to gain an understanding of Haiti this paper will now take a look at Haiti's troubled past.

## HAITIAN HISTORY

Haitian history, from the time Christopher Columbus set up the first settlement in the New World (after the Vikings), has been filled with gloom. Examples, such as the fate of the natives and the treatment of the black slaves, abound in Haiti's history to illustrate this point. This section will look at Haitian history to paint a picture of its difficult past.

French rule on the island was particularly brutal. Slaves quite literally gave up their lives for the colony as the French either worked them to death or had them killed for amusement.<sup>7</sup> In return, plantation owners became very rich and France enjoyed enormous revenues from the colony.

At one time or another, the colony was first in world production of coffee, rum, cotton and indigo. On the eve of the American Revolution, Saint Domingue - roughly the size of modern day Maryland - generated more revenue than all thirteen North American colonies combined. By 1789, the colony supplied three-fourths of the world's sugar. Saint-Domingue was, in fact, the world's richest colony and the busiest trade center in the New World.<sup>8</sup>

For France, Haiti, or Saint-Domingue as it was known then, was truly *la perle des Antilles*.

By 1789, Saint-Domingue was dominated by a class system consisting in decreasing order of importance: whites, mulattos and slaves. The whites, who numbered approximately 40,000, were composed of three sub-classes: the planters followed by the royal officials followed by the poor whites.<sup>9</sup> The mulattos and free blacks numbered

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<sup>7</sup> Robinson, *An Unbroken Agony...*, 12-14.

<sup>8</sup> Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti*, 56.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.



approximately 28,000.<sup>10</sup> Finally, the slaves, at the bottom of the social chain, numbered approximately 425,000.<sup>11</sup>

Discrimination was rampant. Slaves had no rights but the mulattos also saw their rights curbed by the whites with restrictive laws preventing them from things like taking up certain professions, marrying whites, carrying weapons and even wearing European clothing.<sup>12</sup>

Although the mulattos were mostly the descendents of unions between slave-owners and slaves, they desired to attain the same social standing as whites. They wished to “stand on equal terms with the whites – as upholders of slavery.”<sup>13</sup> In fact, some mulattos actually owned land, became quite wealthy and owned slaves (an estimated 25% of slaves belonged to mulattos).<sup>14</sup>

The heavy toll plantation life took on the slaves meant that the slave-owners needed to renew their labour force regularly. As a result, the slave population ballooned and many slaves were actually first generation slaves fresh from Africa. These slaves were able to keep many of their customs and as a result the slave population in Haiti was more closely knit than in other slave colonies. In addition, many of the newly arriving slaves had some form of military experience from Africa.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>12</sup> The Library of Congress, “Country Studies – A Country Study: Haiti,” <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/htoc.html>; Internet; accessed 20 March 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti*, 59-60.

<sup>14</sup> The Library of Congress, “Country Studies – A Country Study: Haiti,” <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/htoc.html>; Internet; accessed 20 March 2009.

<sup>15</sup> Robinson, *An Unbroken Agony...*, 12.

The disproportionate ratio of slaves to non-slaves, the brutal treatment of the slaves, extensive discrimination and the closely knit class of slaves were key ingredients that eventually lead to revolution. After the start of the French Revolution in 1789, small scale slave and mulatto revolts were occurring with increasing frequency. These revolts led the colony into a vicious circle of increasing violence as the colonial masters became progressively more brutal thus leading to added violence.<sup>16</sup> In August 1791, some 30,000 slaves, lead by Toussaint Louverture, revolted in the North, with surprising organization, destroying over 1,000 plantations and killing at least 1,000 whites.<sup>17</sup>

The revolution lasted about twelve years causing the deaths of approx 150,000 ex-slaves. These slaves, however, had accomplished nothing short of a miracle. They had defeated not only the local militias but also a force of 28,000 French regular troops sent by Napoleon. In November 1803, the last of these troops were finally defeated marking the end of the revolution. On 01 January, 1804 the Nation of Haiti was officially established becoming the second independent nation in the Western Hemisphere and the only nation in history where slaves militarily defeated a colonial power to attain independence.<sup>18</sup> This last point is one the Haitian people would pay for dearly and one that still has repercussions today.

In 1804 Haiti stood alone as the first black sovereign nation in a largely racist world surrounded by nations where slavery remained. All other Caribbean colonies still employed slaves as did the southern states of the United States (US). There was fear in

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<sup>16</sup> Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti*, 59.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-63.

these other colonies and nations that the Haitian example would set a precedent for slaves in the area. As a result, Haiti tended to be blamed for any slave related problems.<sup>19</sup>

The next 200 plus years held little good news for Haiti. The beleaguered nation had to put up with, among other things, economic isolation, increasing debt to foreign interests, environmental degradation, foreign occupation and nearly constant violence.

A look at the list of Haitian heads of state and their fates is telling of the environment Haiti lived in. Since 1804, Haiti has had 54 presidents. Of these only eight have completed their full term in office of which four have been at times when foreign troops were in the nation ensuring security. The rest suffered various fates like dying in office, assassination, suicide and being overthrown in a coup d'état.<sup>20</sup>

Haiti's colonial history and the revolution have had enduring effects on Haiti that still affect it today. The next section of this paper will delve into the roots of Haiti's problems that continue to impact it.

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>20</sup> Terry F. Buss, *Haiti in the Balance*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008), 187-188.

## ROOTS OF THE HAITIAN PROBLEMS

Haiti's problems have deep roots linked to its history that continue to manifest themselves today. This section will look at these roots to increase understanding of what is wrong in Haiti. This will be accomplished by looking at Haiti's societal class structure and at Haiti's relationship with other nations.

According to a literature review conducted by Jean-Germain Gros Haiti's problems can trace their roots to two categories of issues. The first category is internal problems linked to history, political and class systems.<sup>21</sup> The second category is external problems linked to Haiti's relationships with other nations (in particular France and the US).<sup>22</sup>

The first problem is the class system that continues to cause issues. The societal hierarchy set-up during the times of slavery continued post independence. Haiti basically had two classes: the mulattos and the free slaves. Many mulattos had actually owned slaves, had fought to gain the rights of the ruling white class and saw themselves as superior to the slaves.

In fact, shortly after Haiti became independent the nation split into a republic and a kingdom. The republic was mulatto dominated and existed in the West and South. As for the kingdom, it was black dominated and existed in the North.<sup>23</sup> The two were

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<sup>21</sup> Jean-Germain Gros, "Haiti: The Political Economy and Sociology of Decay and Renewal," *Latin American Research Review* 35, no. 3 (2000), 211-212.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

reunited in 1820 but the colour divide remained. Segregation has meant that Haiti has never really been a whole nation.

Haitians have never developed a collective vision of their country based on mutual responsibilities and citizenship for all. Any sense of oneness that Haitians possess has evolved ipso facto out of a common language (creole), shared religion (vodun [Voodoo of West African origin] mixed with Catholicism), and other cultural manifestations such as food, painting, and music – not from any project of nation building, accountable government, prosperity, or other common goals.<sup>24</sup>

Following the revolution, top military leaders became the new ruling class and they reaped the rewards of their rule. They attempted to re-implement the plantation system, not only to enrich themselves but also, to generate revenues to maintain the army they required to protect their struggling republic.<sup>25</sup>

The former slaves resisted the rebirth of the plantation system fearing a return to the nightmare from which they had just emerged.<sup>26</sup> They wished to own their own land, grow their own sustenance and sell the extra locally.<sup>27</sup> They had no desire for international production and as a result the plantation system collapsed.<sup>28</sup> These subsistence farmers, comprised mostly of dark skinned blacks, became the new peasants of the new nation and were hence marginalized and excluded from participation in the governing of their country.<sup>29</sup> This exclusion has been a recurring theme in Haitian history as stated by Haitian historian Alix René: “Our country was founded on a fragile

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Fatton, Jr., “The Fall of Aristide and Haiti’s Current Predicament,” in *Haiti: Hope for a Fragile State*, ed. Yasmine Shamsie and Andrew S. Thompson, 15-35, (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2006), 16.

<sup>27</sup> Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti*, 65.

<sup>28</sup> Fatton, “The Fall of Aristide...”, 17.

unity ... among the fragile and divided elite that carried off independence, and then between them and the excluded masses. It was a country founded on exclusion.”<sup>30</sup>

Combined with the fall of the new plantations, the army “class” set Haiti on poor economic footing. The need to maintain a large army to protect the nascent republic against all enemies including Haitian society, Haitian elites who wanted to control the state and external enemies sapped the economy.<sup>31</sup>

The final class divide is likely the most damaging one. It is the divide between the rich political/economic elites and the rest of the population. In general, the elites have looked to maintain their power and have mostly protected their status rather than worked to improve the nation.<sup>32</sup> This type of class conflict has drawn Haiti into an endless power struggle between rival elites and is a root cause of the corruption in the country. In many cases, these power struggles have led to the use of private paramilitary forces to put down opponents. For example, elite families in the North had the Cacos, the Salomon family in the south had the Piquets.<sup>33</sup> More recently the Duvalier’s had the Ton Ton Macoutes, Raoul Cedras had the FRAPH, and the Lavalas movement had the Chimères.<sup>34</sup> According to Morris Janowitz, the use of paramilitary forces to remain in

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>30</sup> Jane Regan, “Haiti: In Bondage to History,” *NACLA Report on the Americas* 38, issue 4 (January February 2005): 7.

<sup>31</sup> Gros, “Haiti: The Political Economy...”, 213.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>34</sup> Henry F. Carey, “Military Without Civil War: The Security Dilemma and Regime Consolidation in Haiti,” *Civil Wars* 7, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 333, 336.

power is typical of weak regimes.<sup>35</sup> Aristide's Chimères demonstrate that these problems persist today and reveal that Haiti remains a weak state.

Closely linked to the internal issues that have caused lasting problems for Haiti are the external issues that have plagued and continue to plague the nation. These issues deal with Haiti's relationships with other nations. Mostly, the nations of concern for Haiti have been France and the US; although other nations have been mentioned in various works as having a detrimental impact on Haiti.

France is of historical significance to Haiti. It brutally ruled Haiti for close to 150 years and was replaced following a bloody revolution. After the revolution, Haiti maintained a large, if not necessarily powerful, military. In fact, by 1830, this army was larger than that of Britain.<sup>36</sup> As a result of this large army and France's embroilment in the Napoleonic Wars, Haiti initially remained unmolested by France. However, by the 1820s France became interested in Haiti again. Haiti's army, although still very large, was no longer the army that had trounced the French in the Haitian Revolution.

In 1825, Haiti agreed to pay reparations to France for the Haitian Revolution. France was to be paid 150 million francs and customs charges were to be halved on French trade. The ruling elite judged that improved diplomatic relations with France was essential to their own personal survival and that by doing this, they could ensure continued revenues from trade.<sup>37</sup> Although trade was essential to Haiti, the reparations

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 335.

<sup>36</sup> Gros, "Haiti: The Political Economy....", 213.

<sup>37</sup> Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti*, 67.

caused incredible economic grief to its troubled economy not to mention the bizarre situation of a victor paying reparations to the loser of a conflict.<sup>38</sup>

Even Haiti's most recent problems have been blamed, in part, on French involvement. France openly blamed Aristide for Haitian problems in 2004.<sup>39</sup> At a time when there was extreme unrest in the country, this certainly did not aid the situation. According to the founder of the TransAfrica organization, Randall Robinson, France was even one of the nations (like the US and Canada) that were pulling the strings to keep Aristide in forced exile.<sup>40</sup> Mr. Robinson's book illustrates the fact that there is considerable doubt and concern about foreign involvement in Haitian affairs and that this involvement is not necessarily in the best interest of Haiti.

The US is the other country that is often mentioned as having a hand in Haitian affairs. With the independence of Haiti, the US regarded the fledgling republic with great scepticism and even hostility. In 1824, US President Monroe is quoted to have said: "We never can acknowledge her independence. ... The peace and safety of a large portion of our union forbids us even to discuss it."<sup>41</sup> What the President no doubt meant was that the US could not recognize Haiti since many states in the union still employed slave labour.

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, US interest in the Caribbean led to a certain form of American imperialism in the area. This time was

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>39</sup> Robinson, *An Unbroken Agony...*, 161.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>41</sup> Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti*, 69.



marked with invasions and occupations to protect US interests.<sup>42</sup> Between 1849 and 1914, the US Navy entered Haitian waters 24 times to protect US interests.<sup>43</sup> In 1915, US Marines invaded and remained in the country until 1934. The ensuing occupation was filled with abuses and created much animosity and distrust.<sup>44</sup> Even today distrust remains about US intentions in Haiti as illustrated by suspicions of US involvement in the latest “coup d’état” to remove President Aristide from power.<sup>45</sup>

The roots of Haitian problems run deep. Their class conscious society and their relations with other nations have caused problems that still persist today. The following section will discuss what can be done to overcome these issues.

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-79.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-78.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-89.

<sup>45</sup> Robinson, *Unbroken Agony*, 111, 266-267.

## PROBLEMS, LESSONS AND SOLUTIONS

Is the solution for Haiti the complete abandonment of the country to its troubles? Any reasonable person should be able to conclude that this would be unacceptable. Nothing would ever get solved; not to mention the destabilizing impact on neighbouring nations. This section of the paper will look at possible solutions for the Haitian situation. This will be accomplished by taking a look at the current United Nations (UN) mission in Haiti and by examining various lessons learned from it and recent foreign aid failures. Following this, possible ways of approaching Haiti's problems to eventually solve them will be looked at.

### Problems and Lessons

The current UN mission in Haiti is the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). MINUSTAH, through UN Resolution 1542, commenced operations in Haiti on 01 June 2004. Its mandate is to provide a secure and stable environment, to aid the Haitian political process and to support and monitor human rights development in the country.<sup>46</sup> The mission is currently authorized to continue until 15 October 2009 and is composed of "7,039 troops and 2,031 police, supported by 491 international civilian personnel, 1,224 local civilian staff and 191 United Nations Volunteers".<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> United Nations, "Haiti – MINUSTAH – Mandate," <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/minustah/mandate.html>; Internet; accessed 11 April 2009.

<sup>47</sup> United Nations, "Haiti – MINUSTAH – Facts and Figures," <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/minustah/facts.html>; Internet; accessed 11 April 2009.

The mission in Haiti, like all missions in troubled areas of the world, has been faced with numerous challenges. The first of these is a deep rooted one that, as mentioned in the previous section, has its origins in the historical development and societal class structure of Haiti as a nation, the Haitian public sector, which is a generally corrupt, inefficient and under-resourced one.<sup>48</sup>

Due to the lack of a stable, responsible government, unemployment is high, wages for those employed are uncertain and basic services to citizens are virtually non-existent. As a result, Haiti has security issues and is prone to high criminality.<sup>49</sup> The only organization to combat crime and secure the environment, the Haitian National Police (HNP), is not up to the task. The HNP is plagued with corruption, has insufficient numbers, is ill equipped and many of its installations have been destroyed.<sup>50</sup>

From a socio-economic standpoint Haiti is not faring any better. Lack of government services has meant that education, health and sanitation services are poor.<sup>51</sup> Most of the population lives in poverty and are forced to use what they can to survive. In some cases, this means criminal activities but it also means the use of what little resources the country has for mere survival. For example, many Haitian live off subsistence farming, in order to cook what they farm they cut down trees to make charcoal. The gradual deforestation has lead to erosion of the top soil rendering farms

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<sup>48</sup> Jacques Morneau, "Reflections on the Situation in Haiti and the Ongoing UN Mission," in *Haiti Hope for a Fragile State*, ed. Yasmine Shamsie and Andrew S. Thompson, 71-81 (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2006), 71.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 72-73.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

less productive.<sup>52</sup> As a result, the nation is facing an ecological crisis that impacts the economy, another vicious circle with no easy solutions.

MINUSTAH entered Haiti with noble ambitions but has it been up to the task? According to Col Jacques Morneau, who was Chief of Staff for the Military Force in 2005, some of the deficiencies faced by MINUSTAH included a lack of coordination, direction and long term planning among the different organizations participating in the mission to say nothing of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO).<sup>53</sup> In addition the military forces committed to the mission had a lack of Intelligence support. They also lacked skills to deal with threats in built up areas and were over tasked with force and mission protection tasks. These tasks did not allow them to conduct the operations they was sent to carry out.<sup>54</sup> As a result, armed gangs continue to cause problems.

Security is paramount to success and needs to be given proper attention.<sup>55</sup> The disarmament of gangs, the reintegration of former Haitian military into society and the development of a responsible and credible police force are all necessary to ensure peace and security in the nation.<sup>56</sup> This will set the stage for further development efforts.

The problems above deal mostly with the security aspects of the mission but what of the other aspects? The next few paragraphs will outline some of the issues and lessons learned from these.

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>55</sup> Buss, *Haiti in the Balance*, 163.

In order to use foreign aid properly, mechanisms need to be in place to channel it to the right areas and monitor its use. Unfortunately, in Haiti, this has not been occurring. The first hurdle to overcome is Haitian governance.<sup>57</sup> The Haitian government seems to not be capable of managing the aid coming into the nation. The elitist class, which is more concerned with maintaining their various positions of power, has no interest in developing good governance practices that would lead to the effective use of foreign assistance.<sup>58</sup>

To address this issue, aid programs need to address “good governance and political stability as the highest priority”<sup>59</sup> and must be planned for the long term as quick fixes will lead to failure.<sup>60</sup> The deeply rooted problems of corruption and the long history of non-functioning government have created obstacles that will take time to overcome. The international community needs to recognize that success in Haiti possibly needs to be considered in terms of decades, not years. Foreign donors to Haiti have sought the quick fix in order to get out quickly resulting in very little progress and a requirement to return.<sup>61</sup>

Related to the above is the fact that patience in the aid process is important. There are basically three phases in the process: Conflict, Post conflict reconstruction and

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<sup>56</sup> Suzy Castor, “La Difficile Sortie d’Une Longue Transition,” in *Haiti Hope for a Fragile State*, ed. Yasmine Shamsie and Andrew S. Thompson, 111-127 (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2006), 123-124.

<sup>57</sup> Buss, *Haiti in the Balance*, 131.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 131, 133.

<sup>61</sup> Robert Maguire, “Assisting a Neighbour,” in *Haiti Hope for a Fragile State*, ed. Yasmine Shamsie and Andrew S. Thompson, 25-35 (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2006), 32-33.

Normalization.<sup>62</sup> Each phase has various types of tasks associated with it and each must be allowed to be properly completed before moving to the next one. Post conflict reconstruction is where the bulk of the leg work in getting a nation back on its feet occurs. The goal, of course, is to move to normalization where the nation will become able to govern its own affairs. If aid programs move too quickly to normalization, failure is bound to ensue. For good governance to occur in normalization, the proper mechanism and structures must be put in place in the post conflict reconstruction phase. In Haiti, many believed that having elections would solve all the problems. In truth, matters seemed to have worsened since elections were held.<sup>63</sup>

Haiti has been described as an area where foreign assistance is of little value and thus unproductive.<sup>64</sup> Foreign assistance is left to its own, leading to uncoordinated and poorly targeted efforts. The general instability of the succeeding governments has led to delays and often cancellation of development projects and increased dependency on foreign aid. Haiti needs first and foremost a stable government that will be able to manage foreign assistance but, more importantly, that is able to manage its own affairs thus reducing the dependency on foreign aid entering the nation.<sup>65</sup>

The international community needs Haiti to take the leading role on reforms.<sup>66</sup> By taking ownership, the Haitian government would send a clear signal to the

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<sup>62</sup> Buss, *Haiti in the Balance*, 135.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>64</sup> Castor, "La Difficile Sortie...", 125.

<sup>65</sup> Buss, *Haiti in the Balance*, 89.

<sup>66</sup> Canadian International Development Agency, "Results Report 2004 – 2007," <http://www.acdicida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/JUD-415923-HAV#a5>; Internet, accessed 16 April 2009.

international community that they are committed to the reforms and that once they are in place they will be upheld and maintained.<sup>67</sup>

In 2004, the president of Tanzania, Benjamin Mkapa stated “Development cannot be imposed, it can only be facilitated.”<sup>68</sup> Donors need to recognize this fact and encourage the Haitian government to take ownership of the development process. Without Haitian ownership development programs will only be implemented half-heartedly and the ongoing survival of the reforms will be in jeopardy.<sup>69</sup>

The blame for aid failure should not rest solely on the shoulders of the Haitian government. Aid has suffered from a failure by donor nations to recognize that the endemic problem in Haiti has been the poor governance offered by the Haitian government.<sup>70</sup>

In addition, aid has fallen victim to donor national politics and/or has come with strings attached that have caused it to be withheld or reduced substantially when the ineffective Haitian government was unable to deliver on implementation promises.<sup>71</sup>

Furthermore, it needs to be recognized and put into practise that aid programs must be executed in cooperation with other programs.<sup>72</sup> Without unity and coordination overall assistance to the nation will be fragmented and will lack direction.

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<sup>67</sup> Buss, *Haiti in the Balance*, 97.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 102-107.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

## Solutions

What can the International Community do to bring Haiti back on the road to recovery? Probably the easiest road to follow is if one nation took the lead and all other nations and aid organizations followed that lead. This would allow a more coordinated effort.

Not just any nation, however, could be the lead. Taking a logical approach, this nation first needs the resources and a process to be able to implement the proper reforms. Furthermore, the lead must not have imperialistic designs or give the impression of having any. Additionally, the lead should have common bonds with Haiti. Finally, this lead needs to be acceptable to the Haitian people. A few nations could fit this bill such as the US and Canada.

The US, does have a keen interest in Haiti due to their Haitian diaspora as well as the illegal immigrant and the criminal situations.<sup>73</sup> Despite this the US would not be an ideal candidate due to the history it has with Haiti.

In the opinion of the author, Canada would be a better candidate. Canada is an important contributor to MINUSTAH and its priorities for Haiti are aligned with those of the mission.<sup>74</sup> These include creating better living conditions, a more secure environment, promoting a strong democratic system and improving the rule of law.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> The PRS Group, Inc., *Haiti Country Report: Haiti Country Conditions*, (East Syracuse NY: The PRS Group, 2008), 18.

<sup>74</sup> Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, "Our priorities: prosperity, security, and democratic governance," <http://geo.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/geo/haiti-priorities-priorites-en.aspx>; Internet, accessed 21 April 2009.

<sup>75</sup> Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, "Our priorities: prosperity, ..., Internet, accessed 21 April 2009.



Also, Canada has no real “imperialistic” history with any nation. In addition, Canada does have a process that shows great promise. The 3D (Defence, Development and Diplomacy) or more specifically the Whole of Government (WoG) approach that was used in Afghanistan could be improved from lessons learned there and further perfected in Haiti. It is believed that this kind of approach is what is needed in Haiti.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, as Canada’s role in Afghanistan winds down and changes in 2011, Canada could free up resources to commit to Haiti.

Canada shares bonds with Haiti. Past involvement in UN missions and humanitarian assistance are examples. In addition, the large Haitian diaspora living in Canada provides intimate links with the Haitian people. This diaspora needs to be used in order to possibly ease reforms and contribute to the economic development of the country.<sup>77</sup>

Finally, Canada has a stated foreign policy interest in the region. The recent Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago (April 2009) demonstrated that Canada wishes to take a more important role in the Americas. This policy priority is consistent with what Prime Minister Harper stated in July 2007 as he toured the region.<sup>78</sup> An increased responsibility in improving Haiti would go a long way in establishing this leadership role.

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<sup>76</sup> Jim, Hodgson, “Dissonant Voices,” in *Haiti Hope for a Fragile State*, ed. Yasmine Shamsie and Andrew S. Thompson, 99-110 (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2006), 106.

<sup>77</sup> Buss, *Haiti in the Balance*, 149-150.

<sup>78</sup> Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Canada and the Americas: Priorities and Progress,” [http://geo.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/geo/americas-report\\_ameriques-rapport-en.aspx](http://geo.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/geo/americas-report_ameriques-rapport-en.aspx); Internet, accessed on 20 April 2009.

Overall, the current process undertaken by Canada in Haiti is likely the correct approach. Through the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START) and the WoG approach, Canada is contributing to the stabilization of the region, is enhancing security and is improving the rule of law.<sup>79</sup> According to Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, progress is being made on all fronts.<sup>80</sup>

In his recommendations for the success of the mission in Haiti Col Morneau suggested the following:

To succeed, the international community must establish a UN protectorate or trusteeship, or, to be more politically correct, a transitional administration, for a period of ten to fifteen years. If the UN protectorate is not politically acceptable, the UN Security Council needs to give an “Executive Mandate” to UNPOL, essentially subordinating the Haitian National Police to UNPOL.<sup>81</sup>

The above is an attractive option. It would allow the international community to take control of the country and properly manage its recovery. As the proposal is stated, however, it would not be ideal.

The first reason is that, historically, Haiti has had several episodes of foreign occupation. The repeated and sometimes brutal occupations by the US as well as actions by various other nations have left a fear and distrust of occupying forces.<sup>82</sup> Such a government could easily be seen as a foreign presence taking away Haitian independence.

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<sup>79</sup> Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “START in Haiti: Partners for Security and Stability,” <http://www.international.gc.ca/START-GTSR/brochure-haiti-brochure.aspx>; Internet, accessed on 21 April 2009.

<sup>80</sup> Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, “Canada’s Contribution to Haiti: Four Years of Progress,” <http://www.international.gc.ca/start-gtsr/haiti-progress-progres-haiti.aspx?lang=en>; Internet, accessed 21 April 2009.

<sup>81</sup> Morneau, “Reflections on the Situation . . . , 81.

The second reason is that it contradicts the lessons learned from international aid failures. The Haitian government needs to take ownership of the reforms being implemented.<sup>83</sup> To do so, they need to be actively involved in the processes and ultimately take responsibility for them.

A transitional administration would require the full cooperation of the Haitian government. It should not be in place too long and should transition to a mentorship role as quickly as possible. Haitians need to develop the skills to take charge of their own destiny. Without their involvement they can not reasonably acquire the required skills.<sup>84</sup>

The current Canadian approach is suited to the mentorship role. Through the involvement of various Canadian government departments with Haitian government departments, Haitian solutions can be developed for Haitian problems through a system of assistance and facilitation.<sup>85</sup> In addition, the different departments bring their area of expertise to the mix. As no department is solely suited to address issues at all levels, this is critical. For example, National Defence is suited to ensure a secure and stable environment and the Canadian International Development Agency is suited to guide Haiti in developing good governance practices.

Overall, the Canadian WoG approach should be able to ensure security, stabilize Haiti and get it back on the road to good governance. Through good governance and

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<sup>82</sup> Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti*, 11-13, 71-89.

<sup>83</sup> Buss, *Haiti in the Balance*, 142-143.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>85</sup> Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, "Whole of Government Team," [http://geo.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/geo/reconstructing-reconstruire-haiti-pan-gouv\\_gov-en.aspx](http://geo.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/geo/reconstructing-reconstruire-haiti-pan-gouv_gov-en.aspx); Internet, accessed 21 April 2009.

increased rule of law, corruption will be fought<sup>86</sup> and Haitians will begin to gain confidence in their government. From there, job creation should be kicked started as it is essential to revive the economy.<sup>87</sup> Improved governance will also permit basic services to come on line and the government will begin to operate like a government should.

It should be remembered, however, that the process will take time. A responsible, law abiding society will not occur overnight. Commitment needs to be for the long term as previous missions have shown a quick fix will lead to initial improvement but eventually will lead to failure. Haiti needs to be guided every step of the way and the process could, in the authors estimation, take at least a generation.

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<sup>86</sup> Buss, *Haiti in the Balance*, 159.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

## CONCLUSION

Haiti is a nation that has grown out of misery. All through its history its inhabitants, for the most part, have suffered. From the beginning, under Spanish rule, the natives were rendered extinct and slavery was introduced. When France took over the island, conditions worsened and the slave population ballooned. These slaves contributed in large part to make the island of Saint Domingue the most profitable colony in the New World.

Haiti developed into a strict class run society with whites on top followed by mulattos followed by slaves. Slave life was extremely brutal on the plantations and eventually led to a slave revolution and the establishment of the first black nation in the world.

If Haitians thought their troubles were over, they were wrong. The great powers of the time snubbed the struggling nation and were determined to make it fail. In addition, the class system persisted. The upper classes were determined to maintain themselves in power. This led to corruption of the Haitian state.

Today, Haitians live with the legacy of their forefathers. The nation remains corrupt, the class system remains and abject poverty is rampant. Despite all this hope remains that the nation can be brought back from the abyss.

Under Canadian leadership using the WoG approach comprehensive change in Haiti so that all may benefit from a fair and just society would be possible. It can become a place where human rights are respected and the government takes care of its citizens rather than themselves. The road will be a long one but with determination and the cooperation of the Haitians anything is possible.

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