

# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL Monterey, California



## THESIS

### DRUG TRAFFICKING IN HAITI

by

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June 2002

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**DRUG TRAFFICKING IN HAITI**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines Haiti's role in international drug trafficking, how it impacts Haiti's political and economic development, and how Haiti and the United States are combating the drug trade. The thesis argues that Haiti's geographic location, political culture, illegal immigrants, entrepreneurial class and weak institutions have made it a major transshipment point for drugs to the United States from South America. Haiti's weak democratic institutions, dysfunctional judicial system and fledgling police force present South American drug traffickers with a path of little resistance.

Drug trafficking has contributed to violence, corruption, political instability, poor economic development and lack of democratic consolidation in Haiti today. Finally, the thesis examines Haiti and the United States' efforts to combat drug trafficking in Haiti. Although Haiti has made steps to adhere to the measures the UN drug convention set forth, Haiti's counternarcotics initiatives have suffered due to a long political crisis between the executive and legislative and economic instability. Despite the lack of a bilateral counternarcotics agreement between the U. S. and Haiti, the two countries cooperate and the DEA maintain a permanent staff of seven agents in Port-au-Prince.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Illegal immigration, drug trafficking and money laundering threaten the United States' domestic politics and strain its relations with Haiti. Since the early 1990s, the United States has focused much attention on Haiti, a nation which has greatly influenced U.S. hemispheric policy. The U.S. objectives have been to help Haiti strengthen its democratic institutions, restore its political stability, promote an open economy and deter drug trafficking. Pursuing these objectives has been a monumental challenge, for Haiti is struggling to overcome political, economic and social legacies of two centuries of authoritarian regimes.

This thesis examines Haiti's role in international drug trafficking, how it has disrupted Haiti's political and economic development, and how Haiti and the U.S. are confronting the drug trade. The thesis argues that Haiti's geographic location, political culture, illegal immigrants, entrepreneurial class and weak institutions have allowed Haiti to become a transit point for drugs to the United States from South America. Owing to Haiti's weak democratic institutions, dysfunctional judicial system and fledgling police force, South American drug traffickers see Haiti as a path of little resistance. The problem is so severe and widespread that many experts suspect that many high-ranking officials in the government, judiciary and police force are tolerating or are even directly involved in the drug trafficking. Clearly, drug trafficking in Haiti has contributed to violence, corruption, political instability, poor economic development and has undermined democratic consolidation.

Finally, the thesis examines Haiti and the United States' efforts to combat drug trafficking in Haiti. Although Haiti has made steps to adhere to the measures the UN drug convention set forth, Haiti's counternarcotics initiatives have suffered due to a long political crisis between the executive and legislative and economic instability. Despite the lack of a bilateral counternarcotics agreement between the U. S. and Haiti, the two countries cooperate and the DEA maintain a permanent staff of seven agents in Port-au-Prince.

Although the government of Haiti is aware of the nation's status as a principal transit zone from the South to North America for drug trafficking, the government views counternarcotics efforts as secondary to matters of political stability, public order, and economic development. This thesis shows how the government of Haiti failed to make a connection between drug trafficking and the above problems and how it is preventing them from adequately addressing the root causes of social instability. Likewise, U.S. policy must appreciate the constraints under which Haitian leaders operate.

Chapter II discusses Haiti's role in international drug trafficking since its attempted transition to democracy began in 1994. First, it reviews the mode and evolution of drug trafficking in Haiti. Then it explains why Haiti has become a major transit point for illicit drugs. The dysfunctional judicial system and the limited capabilities of the Haitian National Police (HNP) are the main focus of attention.

Chapter III evaluates the impact of drug trafficking on Haiti's political and economic development. As the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti is extremely vulnerable to official corruption and remains strangled by numerous problems, despite efforts to revive its weak economy and to stabilize its volatile politics. The prospects for political stability are slim given the compounding problems of drug trafficking, crime, widespread violence, political apathy, and economic depression. Widespread corruption linked to drug trafficking severely undermines democratic institutions in Haiti, as well as many other nations in the region. Mounting street crimes and violence fueled by economic distress and drug trafficking leaves many Haitians insecure and vulnerable. Drug trafficking threatens to corrupt the basic institutions of Haiti, including the police, judiciary and government. This contributes to an environment that is unfavorable to economic development. In addition, sustained international political commitment to nurture democracy in Haiti has been elusive.

Chapter IV analyzes the bilateral efforts of the governments of Haiti and the United States to combat drug trafficking. The U.S. portion of this effort is needed because Haiti has few resources. Even though the government of Haiti cooperates with U.S. officials, including firing tainted police officers, it lacks the resources and the



necessary intelligence information to combat drugs trafficking adequately. Presently, the HNP also lacks logistical support and training, and command and control capabilities.

Chapter V examines American assistance in Haiti since the restoration of democracy in 1994, which has focused on improving of public security, rule of law, and respect for human rights. The U.S. has also focused on bolstering the capacities of the Haitian judiciary and newly created Haitian National Police (HNP) to address Haiti's problems. However, Haiti has far to go before it can take significant, independent action in counternarcotics. Finally, Chapter V provides a conclusion and recommendations for future research.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The issues of Haitian immigration, drug trafficking and money laundering are important issues in the United States' domestic and foreign politics.<sup>1</sup> Since the early 1990s, Haiti has been a focal point of the United States' efforts in the hemisphere, greatly impacting the U.S. hemispheric policy. The U.S. objectives have been to help Haiti strengthen democratic institutions and respect for human rights; to restore political stability; to promote of an open economy and to develop strategy; to stem illegal migration; to deter drug trafficking; and to stabilize the Caribbean region.<sup>2</sup> These objectives have been difficult to achieve, given that Haiti is struggling to overcome political, economic and social legacies of two centuries of authoritarian regimes.

During the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the United States has intervened militarily several times in Haiti.<sup>3</sup> United States intervention in 1994 sought to restore Haiti's democracy by removing the government from the hands of a corrupt military dictatorship.<sup>4</sup> For over three years, the military regime in Haiti had been able to preserve its power "through repression, manipulation of elections, and general corruption including heavy involvement in drug trafficking and other illicit enterprises."<sup>5</sup> Since the 1994 restoration of the legitimate government, many believe Haiti is worse off now than before the United States intervened. Six years after the 1994 invasion, drug shipments through Haiti soared to unprecedented levels.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Orlando J. Perez, "Drugs and Post-Intervention Political Economy in Haiti and Panama." p. 138 IN Griffith, Ivelaw L. (ed.) *The Political Economy of Drugs in the Caribbean*. New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Peter F. Romero. "Statement by Acting Assistant Secretary Peter F. Romero on U.S. Policy Toward Haiti," House International Relations Committee, April 5, 2000. <http://www.us.net/cip/romero2.htm> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 04/11/2002]

<sup>3</sup> The United States intervened in Haiti in 1915-34 and again in 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Griffith, p. 138.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Tom Carter, "Cocaine Furthers Setbacks in Haiti Drug Shipments Soar: Votes Tainted," The Washington Times, August 6, 2000. Special Report, page C1. Available on-line. <http://www.haiti-info.com/Html/news08/wastimes.htm> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 02/24/2002]

This thesis suggests that Haitian drug trafficking has contributed to the violence, corruption, political instability, poor economic development and lack of democratic consolidation. Drug trade will hinder Haiti's hope for democracy. At present, the democratic institutions in Haiti are fragile at best with unemployment, crime, corruption, and drug trafficking constantly threatening its stability. The economy appears to have little chance of recovery, for much of the population lives in poverty and many Haitians are struggling to escape to the United States. Clearly, Haiti desperately needs aid to develop its economy and alleviate its poverty.

The U.S. State Department argues that the magnitude of ever increasing levels of drug trafficking "threatens the stability and integrity of Haitian institutions and will ruin countless lives in Haiti and elsewhere."<sup>7</sup> Widespread corruption linked to drug trafficking severely undermines democratic institutions in Haiti, as well as many other nations in the region. Mounting street crimes and violence fueled by economic distress and drug trafficking leaves many Haitians insecure and vulnerable. Drug trafficking threatens to corrupt the basic institutions of Haiti, including the police, judiciary and government. Furthermore, drug trafficking directly threatens the United States' national security interests.

Haiti's geographic location, political culture, a large number of illegal immigrants, entrepreneurial class and weak institutions are factors that make this country an ideal place from which to traffic in drugs. As a result, Haiti has become a major transshipment point for drugs, primarily cocaine, to the United States from South America. Haiti's weak democratic institutions, dysfunctional judicial system and fledgling police force present South America drug traffickers with a path of little resistance. Moreover, many experts suspect that high-ranking government officials, judiciary and police are tolerating or are directly involved in the drug trafficking.

Finally, the thesis examines how Haiti and the United States combat drug trafficking in Haiti and how the trafficking impacts U.S. national security. Haiti and the international community face enormous challenges. The government of Haiti is aware of

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<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of State. Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. *International Narcotic Control Strategy Report*, 2000. March 1, 2001. Available on-line. <http://www.state.gov/g/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2000/889.htm> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 03/06/2002]

the nation's status as a principal transit zone for drugs moving to North America; however, their counternarcotics efforts are secondary to more crucial matters of political stability, public order, and economic development.

To trace drug trafficking in Haiti and the government efforts to combat it, the thesis examines the following questions:

- What role has Haiti played in international drug trafficking since the transition to democracy in 1994?
- What impact does drug trafficking have on political and economic development in Haiti and on the United States?
- What are the governments of Haiti and the United States doing to combat drug trafficking? What more could be done?

The methodology of this paper will be inductive, thereby drawing extensively from available empirical data and publications on Haiti and the Caribbean region. Additionally, other sources will include, but are not limited to, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), World Bank publications, periodicals, and other unclassified sources.

Chapter II discusses Haiti's role in international drug trafficking since 1994 when its democracy began. This chapter examines the mode and evolution of drug trafficking since then. The chapter further explains the reasons Haiti has become a major transit point for illicit drugs, emphasizing Haiti's geo-strategic location, political culture, illegal immigrants, entrepreneurial class and weak democratic institutions. Chapter II further shows that Haiti occupies an ideal position for drug trafficking, midway between Colombia and Florida, with 1,500 kilometers of coastline and an airspace free of surveillance.<sup>8</sup> Since drug traffickers are aware of the inadequate defense along Haiti's southern coastline, trafficking has soared, making it a major transshipment point for cocaine headed to the United States. This chapter primarily focuses on the dysfunctional judicial system and the limited capabilities of the Haitian National Police (HNP).

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<sup>8</sup> Christophe Wargny. "Haiti: Haiti's Business Is Drugs," *LeMonde Diplomatique*, 01 June 2001, v. 1, no. 1069. Available on-line. <http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v01.n1069.a06.html> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 05/21/2002]

Chapter III evaluates the impact of drug trafficking on Haiti's political and economic development. As the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti is extremely vulnerable to official corruption. Wherever the cocaine trade flourishes, drug-related crime, corruption and violence flourish. With the political corruption widespread and the economy open to the drug trade, the prospects for democratic consolidation and economic development will grow dimmer if national and international actors continue to lack the political will to formulate policy reforms tailored to Haiti's unique social, economic and political situation.

Chapter IV analyzes the bilateral efforts of the governments of Haiti and the United States to combat drug trafficking. Haiti is doing what it can to cooperate with U.S. officials and firing corrupt police officers, but it lacks the resources and the necessary intelligence information to combat drugs trafficking adequately. More importantly, years of political impasse prevent Haiti from taking effective action. According to its annual international narcotics report in 1998, the U.S. State Department directly linked the country's political deadlock with drug trafficking. Combating drug trafficking through Haiti remains one of the highest priorities of the United States. Despite years of U.S. assistance totaling billions of dollars, Haiti remains a major drug transshipment point in the Caribbean, transporting huge shipments of cocaine from Colombia to the United States.

Cocaine makes its way to the United States and destroys American lives. The U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) estimates that over 52,000 drug-related deaths occur in the U.S. every year, and that over half of our nation's young people try illegal drugs before finishing high school.<sup>9</sup> To disrupt the flow of illegal drugs, the U.S. depends upon cooperation with other countries such as Haiti. Chapter IV discusses Haiti's efforts to fight drugs, including reforming the judiciary, developing a national narcotics plan and implementing—narcotics laws, such as asset forfeiture and money-laundering legislation.

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<sup>9</sup> John L. Mica. "The Emerging Drug Threat from Haiti," Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources Committee on Government Reform, Chairman John L. Mica, opening statement. April 12, 2000. Available on-line. <http://www.house.gov/reform/cj/hearings/00.04.12/Witlist.htm> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 02/28/2002]

Chapter V provides a conclusion and recommends areas for future research. In particular, serious resources and training deficits must be corrected before Haiti's law enforcement can impede and diminish drug trafficking effectively. Many initiatives have been implemented to combat drug trafficking within and outside of Haiti. Since Haiti's restoration of democracy, the United States has focused much of its aid on improving public security, rule of law, and respect for human rights by bolstering the Haitian judiciary and newly created Haitian National Police (HNP). However, Haiti still has a number of major goals to achieve before it can take significant, independent action in counternarcotics.

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## **II. HAITI'S ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL DRUG TRAFFICKING**

The drug trade learned long ago that where political will is weak it can establish a modus vivendi with a government. Trafficking organizations as a matter of course will absorb losses in a given area if their overall operations in other areas are profitable. This is the cost of doing business.

—International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, 1996

The Caribbean has been an important transit zone for drugs entering the United States from South America. Drugs are transported through the region through a wide variety of routes and methods. Drug traffickers have taken advantage of Haiti's location, weak institutions and novice police force. Haiti has played a major role in international drug trafficking since its attempted transition to democracy beginning in 1994. The dysfunctional judicial system and the limited capabilities of the Haitian National Police (HNP) are the focus of attention.

### **A. PATTERNS OF DRUG TRAFFICKING**

#### **1. Mode of Trafficking**

Cocaine enters Haiti through hundreds of miles of unguarded coastlines from the Caribbean Sea. By speedboat, Haiti's southern shore is only eight hours away from the Colombian coast. According to the White House Office on National Drug Control Policy, more than 65 metric tons of cocaine is dropped in Haiti from boats or airplanes before being shipped to the United States through couriers or on freighters that dock on the Miami River.

The primary method for smuggling cocaine into Haiti is on maritime vessels. "Go-fast boats (small launches with powerful motors), bulk cargo freighters, and containerized cargo vessels are the most common conveyances for moving large quantities of cocaine through the region."<sup>10</sup> Thus, go-fast boats from Colombia remain the most common maritime trafficking method—usually transiting from the Guajira

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<sup>10</sup> Michael S. Virgil. "DEA Congressional Testimony." Special Agent in Charge of Caribbean Field Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, testimony before the House Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resource. April 12, 2000. Available on-line. <http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/pubs/cngrtest/ct041200.htm> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 02/27/2002]

Peninsula to destinations along Haiti's poorly guarded southern coast. Colombian drug traffickers are also often equipped with satellite assisted Global Positioning System devices to allow them to locate delivery sites, typically, dropping their cocaine from airplanes into the hills or on beaches with speedboats.<sup>11</sup>

Traffickers also routinely transport cocaine from Colombia to Haiti in a single-or twin-engine aircraft to clandestine landing strips, or airdrop loads of cocaine to waiting vehicles or boats. Other common conveyances for smuggling cocaine into Haiti include fishing vessels and couriers on commercial aircraft. The cocaine couriers transport cocaine by concealing small quantities of cocaine on their person or in their baggage or even by ingesting the product. Commercial airline flights from Panama are yet another route of cocaine shipments. By July 1998, at least five substantial cocaine shipments had been seized at the Port-au-Prince airport after arriving in untagged baggage aboard COPA airline flights from Panama. A U.S. official says that "Haiti's role is to provide a commercial service" for the Colombians and the Dominicans or to move it (cocaine) through the Turks and Caicos and the Bahamas.<sup>12</sup> As cocaine enters Haiti, it is usually stored locally until it can be shipped to the United States or to other international markets.

Cocaine is often smuggled out of Haiti in containerized cargo or on bulk cargo freighters directly to Miami. The cocaine shipments aboard cargo freighters are occasionally offloaded to smaller vessels and then transported to the Continental, United States (CONUS). From Haiti, cocaine is also transferred overland through the porous 275-kilometer borders to the Dominican Republic for further transshipment to Puerto Rico, the CONUS, Europe, and Canada.<sup>13</sup> Once in Haiti, transporting the cocaine to the Dominican Republic is very easy, given the rugged terrain and the few police stations.

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<sup>11</sup> Douglas Farah. "Flow of Colombian Cocaine through Haiti Turns to Flood." Washington Post, Tuesday, May 4, 1999; Page A11. Available on-line. <http://www.rose-hulman.edu/~delacova/haiti/cocaine.htm> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 03/18/2002]

<sup>12</sup> Don. Bohning. "Haiti a Haven for Drug-traffickers." Miami Herald, July 20, 1998. Available on-line. <http://www.rose-hulman.edu/~delacova/haiti/haiti-drugs.htm> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 02/24/2002].

<sup>13</sup> Virgil, April 12, 2000.

Dominican and Colombian drug traffickers then share the distribution work to move the cocaine to the United States.<sup>14</sup>

Marijuana destined for Haiti is usually transported from Jamaica on go-fast boats and other maritime vessels. Sometimes cocaine in lesser amounts might arrive and leave in freighters transiting the Caribbean, but cocaine frequently leaves in Miami-bound vessels.<sup>15</sup>

## **2. Evolution of Drug Trafficking**

In the early 1980s, under authoritarian rule, the drug trade in Haiti was the province of a few corrupt military men associated with the father-in-law of dictator, Jean-Claude Duvalier. When the Reagan administration actively pursued a policy against the Colombian cartels and intensified interdiction programs with the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands, Haiti became the alternative site of operation. Furthermore, since the United States had withdrawn most of its aid to Haiti, and since the government of Jean-Claude Duvalier was about to collapse, the Colombian drug dealers easily invaded the weakened and corrupt governmental system.<sup>16</sup> This provided the means for some government and military officials to capitalize on drug trafficking.

According to one Haitian security expert, Haiti emerged significantly onto the international drug-trafficking scene in 1985.<sup>17</sup> Drug traffickers took advantage of Haiti's location, weak institutions and novice police force, turning this country into a major transshipment point for cocaine on route from Colombia to United States. That is when the cocaine cartels began to seek transit points for the booming cocaine industry.

The period between 1985 and 1987 witnessed the consolidation of networks used by the Colombian drug traffickers. The drug traffickers used several different and complementary strategies in Haiti. These strategies included "purchasing legal businesses in Haiti for use as front operations, buying protection from military officers,

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<sup>14</sup> Bohning, July 20, 1998.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ivelaw L. Griffith. *Drugs and Security in the Caribbean: Sovereignty under Siege*. (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.), p. 74.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

recruiting military officers as associates and using Haitian territory as a base for trafficking and storage operations.”<sup>18</sup>

By 1987, the commander of Haiti’s police was collaborating in the transshipment of tons of cocaine, according to testimony by Gabriel Toboada of the Medellin cartel before a U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee in April 1994. In 1987 alone, the police commander, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Michel Francois, received from one to four million dollars to protect Colombian cocaine shipments.<sup>19</sup> Toboada also testified that Francois helped build an airstrip on the property of Jean Claude Paul, Haitian colonel, as a landing pad for airplanes loaded with Colombian cocaine. South America drug traffickers used Haiti as a bridge to the United States, with the Haitian military providing a cover for the flights and the cargo. As a result of Gabriel Toboada’s testimony, indictments for drug trafficking were handed down in Miami against Francois on March 7, 1997.<sup>20</sup> “The indictment alleges that Francois was trusted to courier millions of dollars in illicit profits from Medellin, Baranquilla, and Cali cartels to pay off the military for use of the private airstrip, supervised off-loading operations, and arranged for storage facilities and the transfer of narcotics to maritime vessels and aircraft in Haiti for importation into the United States.”<sup>21</sup>

By the early 1990s, cocaine seizures in Haiti were increasing. A lawless partnership in drug trafficking had been formed between the police, the military and government officials. When a 1991 coup put Francois in power, cocaine seizures in Haiti dropped to near zero. According to the DEA, in 1993, approximately two to four tons of cocaine passed through Haiti with the consent of military officials. Each year under the military junta, Haiti was the transit point for nearly 50 tons of cocaine worth over a billion dollars, providing the military rulers with \$200 million in profits. Francois fled to the Dominican Republic with the return of the democratically elected government in October 1994.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Irwin P. Stotzky. *Silencing the Guns in Haiti: The Promise of Deliberative Democracy*. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1997.), p. 175.

<sup>20</sup> Griffith, p. 74.

<sup>21</sup> Stotzky, p. 175.

## **B. FIVE FACTORS AFFECTING DRUG TRAFFICKING**

Countries involved in drug trafficking often demonstrate some or all of the following characteristics: a strategic geographical location between producing and consuming countries, a political culture that tolerates corruption, a large number of illegal immigrants living outside the territorial limits of the nation-state, a country's powerful entrepreneurial class and institutional weakness.<sup>22</sup> Haiti, the small and poverty-stricken nation that occupies the western third of the island of Hispaniola, meets all five criteria. This next section discusses how Haiti is an example of these five factors in various ways, making it deeply vulnerable to drug trafficking.

### **1. Geographical Location and Size**

Geography and size have a tendency to influence the nature and direction of the flow of drug trafficking and illicit activities. Haiti is located strategically on internationally trade routes and has attracted the attention of those involved in commercial enterprises of drugs. Geographically, Haiti is strategically located between the major drug producers in South America and United States, which is the world's largest drug-consuming country. As Figure 1 shows, Haiti sits on the eastern side of the Windward Passage, one of the most important maritime routes in the hemisphere. Haiti is particularly attractive to drug trafficking because of its direct route from the Colombian coast to Florida. Port-au-Prince is approximately 500 miles north of Colombia and 700 miles from Miami. Furthermore, Haiti and the Dominican Republic maintain an extremely porous frontier. Haiti's attraction to drug traffickers is the dozens of small airstrips, lack of patrols of Haiti's airspace and lack of radar monitoring of the country. "All these factors make Haiti an ideal transshipment point for drugs into the United States."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Griffith, p. 139.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

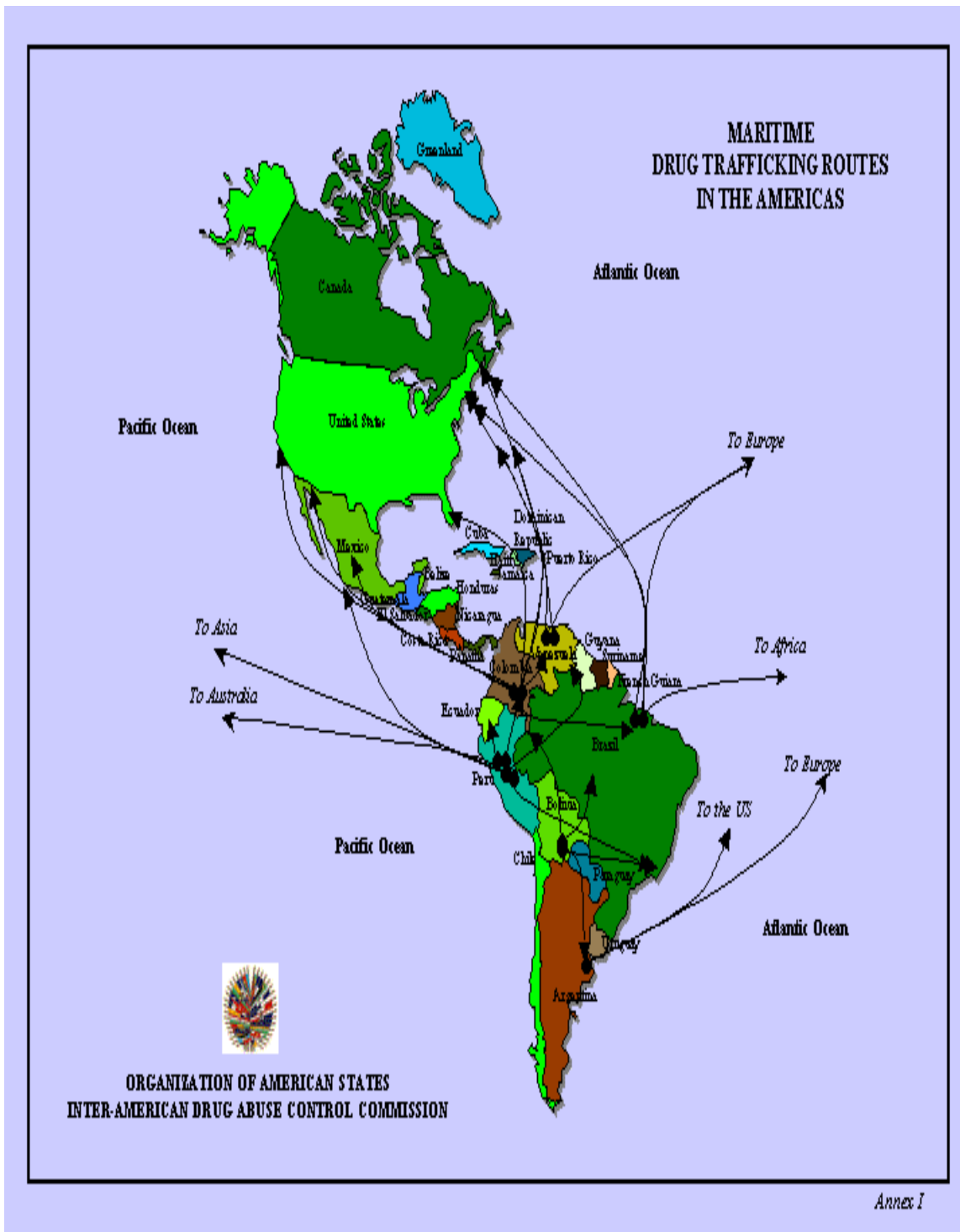


Figure 1. Maritime Drug Trafficking Routes in the Americas <sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). "Supply Reduction: Maritime Cooperation." November 20, 2001. Available on-line. <http://www.cicad.oas.org/es/Oferta/Maritime%20Cooperation.htm> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 04/10/2002]

## **2. Political Culture**

The reason some countries are vulnerable to illicit enterprises is that their political culture provides a conducive atmosphere for illicit activities.<sup>25</sup> Understood as the pattern of beliefs and attitudes about politics, a nation's political culture influences greatly the atmosphere in which illicit activities are permitted. The nature of elite political culture is important in shaping the behavior of business and government elites. Indeed, an elite political culture that permits corruption breeds drug trafficking. Traditionally, Haiti political culture sees the state in which illicit activities are common as a means of personal enrichment. In an atmosphere where illegal and corrupt practices are openly engaged, the peasants are drawn into illicit activities as a means of survival. The state's ability to fight illegal activities is vastly decreased under these circumstances.

More importantly, in Haiti a deeply engrained, 200-year tradition of predation to has contributed to the rise of the drug trade.<sup>26</sup> Haiti's culture of predation has fostered autocracy and corruption, extreme social injustice, and economic stagnation all of which are conducive to illicit activities.<sup>27</sup> Every Haitian politician wants to be president or wants to secure his share of the rewards; politicians have always used the state as a mechanism to extract wealth to benefit the elites.<sup>28</sup> Altering the attitude and values of Haitian will require at least a generation of effort.<sup>29</sup>

## **3. Large Number of Emigrants**

Migration also influences a nation's involvement in illicit activities. A large emigrant group living in a drug-consuming nation offers a prime disbursal network for illegal exports, yet simultaneously, the money sent by the diasporas to their native country benefits the economy of the native country as well.

Haitian immigrants, most of whom are law-abiding citizens, live outside of Haiti and have tremendously influence on Haitian politics and economics. They sent home

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<sup>25</sup> Griffith, p. 140.

<sup>26</sup> Donald E. Schulz. *Haiti Update*. Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1997. Available on-line. <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usassi/ssipubs/pubs97/hatiup/hatiup.htm> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 02/05/2002], p. 14.

<sup>27</sup> Griffith, p. 141-42.

<sup>28</sup> Schulz, p. 14.

over \$100 million to families and relatives during the military coup.<sup>30</sup> However, among the Haitian diasporas living in cities, such as New York, Miami, and Chicago, there are also members of Front of the Advancement and Progress of Haiti (FRAPH), the civilian arm of the military regime, who began to import terror into the United States in 1994. These FRAPH leaders were accused by the U.S. State Department of being involved in a variety of corrupt practices, including drug trafficking. In the U.S., FRAPH members served as a convenient network for the importation of drugs into the country.<sup>31</sup>

Although some diaspora Haitians returned to Haiti after the U.S. intervention in 1994 to restore the country's first democratically elected president, many remained in the United States. Some FRAPH members stayed because of Haiti's continued economic problems while others were integral part of the illicit activity network. Haiti's custom checks and import duties were relaxed after the intervention to encourage the rapid replenishment of goods from abroad. As a consequence, Haiti was more porous than before.

#### **4. Haiti's Entrepreneurial Class**

A nation's entrepreneurship class has a major effect on a country's involvement in drug trafficking and other illegal activities.<sup>32</sup> Drug traffickers tend to operate on short-term and high profits. Consequently, globalization has created a free-for-all in which organized crime secure high payoffs with little risk from law enforcement. While Haiti's leaders rhetorically condemn the drug trade and the accompanying crime, many are deeply involved in these illicit activities. A Colombian Fernando Burgos Martinez national with major business interests in Haiti has been identified in congressional records as a major cocaine trafficker bold enough to conduct business with other Colombian drug dealers on his home telephone.<sup>33</sup> Martinez was the bagman for Colombia's cocaine cartels and supervised bribes paid to the Haitian military. According

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>30</sup> Griffith, p. 142.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Griffith, p. 140

<sup>33</sup> Paul DeRienzo. "Haiti's Nightmare: The Cocaine Coup & the CIA Connection." *The Shadow*, No. 32, April/June 1994. Available on-line. <http://www.flashpoints.net/haitisNightmare.html> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 03/18/2002]



to the DEA, Martinez was involved in every major drug shipment to Haiti between 1987 and 1994. Drug trafficking in Haiti was just another profitable business.

## **5. Institutional Weakness**

Institutional weakness allows a country to be a haven for drug traffickers. Haiti has made some progress in combating drugs, yet the lack of an effective judicial system seriously impedes progress. Even today, prisons hold criminals for years without trial and under inhuman conditions. The judicial system still lacks resources, competent judges, and the credibility to serve its people effectively and justly. Furthermore, by exploiting their positions in exchange for money or other benefits, state officials support criminal illicit activities.

Since its independence in 1804, the Haitian state “has been extremely weak vis-à-vis elements of the economic and political elite and has been used by the elites as a means to acquire personal wealth.”<sup>34</sup> For these reasons, Haiti has been classified as a “prebendary state,” one in which a political class lives off politics.<sup>35</sup> Throughout Haitian history an educated urban and mostly mulatto elite has used the political system to become wealthy. They paid little taxes or customs duties and were able to manipulate the ambitious military leaders they placed in office. The two state institutions most important for combating the drug trade—the judicial system and the police force—are particularly weak in Haiti.

### ***a. Judicial System***

To dismantle the predatory state, Haiti needs to foster a universal respect for the rule of law to help create a successful democratic state. An underlying problem is Haiti’s judicial system. Haiti lacks the law enforcement capacity to challenge drug traffickers. The government is completely dysfunctional and distrusted by the populace. Haitians’ respect for the rule of law will require a justice system that works and applies to all people equally. William O’Neill and Marguerite Laurent outlined the following obstacles Haiti faces in accomplishing this task:

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<sup>34</sup> Griffith, p. 141.

<sup>35</sup> See Alex DuPuy. *Haiti in the New World Order: The Limits of the Democratic Revolution*. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997.) on aspects of the prebendary state.

- *Unequal Access to Justice*: Most of the population has no access to the courts or legal representation;
- *Uninhabitable Courthouses and Prisons*: The physical condition of courthouses, prisons, and administrative buildings is deplorable;
- *Illiterate, Corrupt, and Untrained Judges*: Many of the justice of the peace where most of the population has its first contact with the judicial system were found to be illiterate and simply contrives the law;
- *Lack of Due Process*: Haitian law still follows French law of allowing for public denunciation although this practice was abolished long ago in France;
- *Vigilante Justice*: Instant executions have occurred, but not on the scale that some had predicted. Forty cases of human rights violations were documented in March of 1995, and an additional eighteen cases were documented in July of the same year.<sup>36</sup>

The problems of the judicial system are mind-boggling. One observer stated that:

Haitian justice lacks everything: financial resources, materials, competent personnel, independence, stature and trust. Court facilities are a disgrace, courthouses often indistinguishable from small shops or run-down residences in Haitian cities and towns. Judges and prosecutors, ill-trained and often chosen because of their connections or willingness to comply with their benefactors' demands, dispense justice to the highest bidder or to the most powerful. No judge or prosecutor in Haiti, until mid-1995, had received any specialized professional training. Law schools are woefully inadequate and lack the most rudimentary necessities like decent classrooms and a law library; cronyism reigns, professors are ill trained, student's ill prepared, passing grades bought and sold.<sup>37</sup>

Haiti's justice system failed to address these and other human rights concerns. The Haitian Parliament passed a judicial reform law in May 1998 to eliminate corrupt or incompetent judges and prosecutors, training new ones, distributing law books

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<sup>36</sup> Robert I. Rotberg. *Haiti Renewed: Political and Economic Prospects*. (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1997.), p. 16-17.

<sup>37</sup> Schulz, p. 16-17.

and so on. As a result, the judicial system and police force are critically disconnected. It will not matter much whether the police can apprehend criminals if the courts cannot process them or the jails cannot hold them. The immense failings of the justice system demoralize the citizens as well as the few honest police who exist.

The dysfunctional judicial system is rife with low pay, bribery, lack of training, intimidation and assassination plots. As a result, many judges choose to protect their lives instead of upholding the law. In instances where the law is applied, powerful, corrupt groups, including police officers, manage to overturn verdicts, free convicted criminals and even assault judges. The judiciary still lacks resources, competent judges and the necessary credibility to serve its people, making the public feel hopeless and mistrusting. The inability of the legal system to address crime properly has further alienated people. Consequently, the dysfunctional judicial system routinely protects criminals whose violence is so intimidating that it discourages the reform of a crumbling legal order.

***b. Haitian National Police***

Haiti's army was disbanded in 1994, and replaced by a fledgling police force that is ill equipped to deter drug trafficking. Consequently, it is difficult for police to fight the cocaine trade, and "drug traffickers try to use, infiltrate and corrupt the police, so it is a double battle."<sup>38</sup> Since 1994, through UN and U.S. assistance, approximately 6,000 members of the *Police Nationale d'Haiti* (PNH) have been retrained and supplied. To date, this has cost \$50 million.<sup>39</sup> Yet, the police still have not earned the confidence of prominent politicians or the general Haitian society. People have criticized the police's inexperience, lack of leadership and inadequate basic-training period (of only four months.) With at least 75 murders a month and a steady increase in drug-related activities, hoping that the police force will have a chance to restore law and order is dubious.

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<sup>38</sup> Farah, May 4, 1999.

<sup>39</sup> *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment—Central America and the Caribbean*, "Security and Foreign Forces, Haiti," October 30, 2001. Available in-line. <http://online.janes> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 10/31/2001]

The middle and upper levels of the new police are sorely lacking in experience and many instances of corruption and human rights abuse remained Haiti's most pressing problems during 1998. The United Nations and Organization of American States International Civilian Mission in Haiti reported 13 killings by police using excessive force just during the beginning of 1998. The mission confirmed 150 reports of police brutality from January to May 1998. Police brutality included cases in which police officers burned suspects with cigarettes or nearly suffocated them.<sup>40</sup> This kind of police violence angered the public, sparking several retaliatory attacks. For example, in a protest in mid-1998, the citizens burned tires, damaged the police station, and freed detainees from jails. In addition, some Haitians are uneasy about former members of the Army being allowed to be part of the new police force. If these soldiers are not retrained and if the new government is not vigilant, an additional form of corruption could emerge, for these military personnel could easily become as corrupt as the police.<sup>41</sup>

Indeed, all has not been well within the HNP, "There are growing reports of police violence, incompetence and graft, and a corresponding sharp decline in public support for the institution."<sup>42</sup> The *Miami Herald* reported that about 60 officers were suspended for misconduct in November 1996. In January 1997, a coalition of human rights groups said that members of the HNP force have committed serious abuses, including torture and summary execution and continued violations would raise doubts about the training and leadership of the police force. The HNP also suffers attrition and recruitment problems. Little money has been provided for training, equipment, vehicle maintenance, fuel, and other necessities.

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<sup>40</sup> Human Rights Developments, "Haiti: Human Rights Developments," *HRW World Report 1999*. <http://www.hrw.org/worldreport99/americas/haiti.html> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 05/21/2002].

<sup>41</sup> Griffith, p. 148.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., also see Tammerlin Drummond. "A Constabulary of Thugs: Haiti's U.S.-Trained Police Forces Has Turned into a Gang of Rogue Cops Who Torture and Murder." *Time Magazine*, February 17, 1997, v. 149, no. 7, p. 62-63. Available on-line. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/1997/dom/970217/world.a.html> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 03/18/2002]

The lack of pay and training are reasons for the “involvement of the police in illicit activities, such as drug trafficking in order to supplement their income.”<sup>43</sup> Corruption and the abuse of power continue within the force and a number of police personnel have been arrested for drug-related offenses. Additionally, the HNP dismissed approximately 100 police officers in 1998 for drug-related corruption, compared with less than ten officers in 1997.<sup>44</sup> According to the State Department’s annual assessment of the global drug trade, none of those officers has been prosecuted.

Police morale continues to decline amid the turbulence Haitian society. The officers suffer from a shortage of communication equipment, vehicles, fuel and other equipment necessary to perform their job effectively. This situation has restricted the operational efficacy of the police force. Moreover, when Aristide returned to power in 2000, he replaced carefully vetted U.S.-trained officers with Lavalas Family loyalists, which only worsened the situation.

This decrease in assistance and in resources presented serious problems for the HNP’s counternarcotics efforts. Changes in the HNP leadership following the February 2001 inauguration of President Aristide led to ramifications at lower levels, which further undermined the HNP’s ability to combat the drug problem. For example, Mario Andresol was removed as Chief of the Judicial Police (DPCJ), the HNP arm responsible for counternarcotics operations. No permanent Chief of the DPCJ was appointed by the close of 2001.

### **C. CONCLUSION**

Drug trafficking emerged in Haiti around 1985 and the primary method of smuggling cocaine was on maritime vessels. Several factors facilitated drug trafficking in Haiti: geographic location, poorly monitored coasts, a mountainous interior, about twenty unpatrolled airstrips, inadequate law-enforcement resources, and a culture that is conducive to corruption. Taking advantage of Haiti’s location and weak institutions, drug traffickers have turned the country into a major transshipment center for cocaine on route from Colombia to the United States.

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<sup>43</sup> Griffith, p. 149.

<sup>44</sup> *International Narcotic Control Strategy Report*, 1998.

Haiti's outdated and inefficient judicial system continues to impede prompt and fair trials. Haiti also lacks the law enforcement capacity to challenge drug traffickers, for Haiti's fledgling police force is ill equipped and ill trained to deter drug trafficking. Furthermore, police involvement in numerous drug scandals has damaged the public confidence in the force. In sum, Haiti lacks the law enforcement capacity to challenge drug traffickers properly.

### **III. IMPACT OF DRUG TRAFFICKING ON HAITI'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

For over 200 years Haiti has “never known a period free of tyranny, repression, political conflict, racial animosity, and economic hardship.”<sup>45</sup> Haiti is a classic predatory state, preying on its people without providing political or economic goods. The lack of accountability has allowed the governments to use their power to destroy rather than develop the state. In the late 1990s, Haiti’s task was to dismantle the remnants of the predatory state and replace it with a democratic government that could respond to the needs of the nation, alleviating poverty, creating the basic for sustained economic growth and development, and providing justice and security for all. Such goals are not easily achieved. A major obstacle to political stability, economic development and the consolidation of democracy is the trafficking of drugs through Haiti. Haiti's burgeoning cocaine trade is corroding the country's already weak institutions and undermining its fragile democracy. The government of Haiti has been confronted with many obstacles, including extensive corruption, weak institutions and scarce resources.

This chapter evaluates the impact of drug trafficking on Haiti’s political and economic development after the 1994 U.S. led intervention. As the previous chapters showed, Haiti’s history of political and economic instability has increased its attractiveness as a significant transit point for drug trafficking, and owing to Haiti’s lack of a functioning judicial system and credible law enforcement, traffickers feel safe from arrest and prosecution. As a result, drug-related crime, violence, and corruption have increased, threatening Haiti’s fragile democracy. While some progress has been made in curtailing these problems since the multinational 1994 intervention, the political situation remains extremely fragile and volatile and the prospects for economic development are more problematic because of the high levels of drug trafficking.

#### **A. BACKGROUND**

The political and economic history of Haiti reveals a country that has always suffered from a corrupt elite, economic underdevelopment, and the lack of political

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<sup>45</sup> Richard A. Haggerty. *Dominican Republic and Haiti: Country Studies*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991.), p. 203.

democracy. The increase in drug trafficking prior to the 1994 restoration of democracy and the persistence of drug trafficking into the 21<sup>st</sup> century has only exacerbated these problems of a lack of democratic consolidation and economic underdevelopment linked to elite corruption. This section provides an overview of Haiti's problematic past. The chapter then highlights how drug trafficking presents obstacles to efforts to consolidate democracy and develop the economy.

Haiti gained its independence on from France January 1, 1804. Between the years of 1791 and 1804, a revolutionary war between the Haitian and the French destroyed much of the plantation economy and countryside uprooting the European class. After the struggle, French colonists and nearly all the Europeans were driven out. Left were the free people of color (mostly mulattoes).<sup>46</sup>

During the early years of Haitian independence, the bourgeoisie began to profit from the productive efforts of the agrarian masses to enhance their own personal wealth. This resulted in zero expansion of domestic production. Without a strong political and economic infrastructure, Haiti became the poorest state in the Americas and is still the poorest to this day.

In 1915, the United States occupied Haiti and dissolved the political institutions, which were not reformed until 1934. However, the Americans, in trying to reform the political system, did little to stabilize the local politics, and when they departed little had improved in Haitian life.

Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier was elected president in 1957, winning the election by appealing to nationalism, racism, and voodoo. Duvalier revolutionized Haitian politics, but he deepened the structure of corruption in the process by creating his own private army of thugs known as the "Tontons Macoutes."<sup>47</sup> Displaced from state politics, the private sector of the old mulatto elite continued its habits of avoiding taxes, corrupting public officials and draining capital from the economy. Under Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, this private sector corruption eventually began to function symbiotically with corruption in the public sector. Thus corruption became the essential

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<sup>46</sup> Griffith, p. 142.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 143.



link between the public and private sectors. There was an increase in corruption among the Duvaliers and the Bennetts (Jean-Claude's wife's family), which included drug trafficking in narcotics.<sup>48</sup>

In February 1986, amid rising economic, political, and social discontent, Jean-Claude Duvalier was overthrown. The Armed Forces Chief, General Henri Namphy assumed control and political power quickly reverted to the army. The drug business involved government agencies devoted to "public service," and government corporations, such as the Port Authority (which controls imports and exports as well as access to both military and international airports) and a state-owned flourmill.

The drug business became the 'engine' that drove the military and overwhelmed the island's commerce, providing the basis for generalized smuggling and a brisk money laundering operation.<sup>49</sup>

Individual senior military officers were encouraged to find extra work to supplement their income outside the institution, so they became involved in the illicit drug trade to supplement their income. By the mid-1980s, Haitian military leaders were deeply linked to the drug trade.<sup>50</sup>

The elections scheduled for November 1987 were annulled in the midst of state-sponsored riots and subsequent repression. A political scientist, Leslie Manigat, was named president after fraudulent elections were held in January 1988. That government lasted only five months with the military continuing its repressive rule until February 1991. The military regime scheduled another round of elections for December 1990, and Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide won the presidency.

Aristide ruled for seven months. During these months, he made significant efforts to restructure the Haitian military. Aristide realized that any reforms in the public administration and the economy would not be easy unless he first neutralized the prebendary state system. This would mean reforming the military and dismantling its allied paramilitary organization. Aristide replaced several top-ranking officers who had

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<sup>48</sup> Haggerty, p. 236.

<sup>49</sup> Griffith, p. 144.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

controlled the armed forces under past regimes with new officers thought to be more supportive of democratization. Col. Raoul Cedras was among the presumed reform minded officers, the leader of the coup that eventually ousted Aristide in September 1991.

The reforms were designed to separate the army from the police, disarm the paramilitary organization, and dismantle the system of section chiefs in the rural sector. Although the Aristide government did not succeed fully in implementing the military reforms, Aristide made significant strides in combating corruption, contraband activities, drug trafficking, and human right abuses. In February 1991, the government established an inter-ministerial commission with a second commission being established in August to investigate and bring to justice those accused of crimes between 1986 and 1990. Aristide also replaced several Supreme Court justices and many other judges in the countryside.<sup>51</sup>

Angered by Aristide's attacks against corruption and drug trafficking, the military hierarchy was worried that the relations between the Aristide government and the U.S. Embassy in Haiti would lead to greater drug enforcement activities in the country according to Orlando J. Perez, a specialist on Central America politics. In response, Col Raoul Cedras launched the September 30, 1991 military coup that ousted Aristide.

In November 1992, the UN and the Organization of America States (OAS) implemented an economic embargo on Haiti. Despite the embargo, there were many reports of drugs being trafficked through Haiti. For example the U.S. Coast Guard discovered 100 pound of cocaine on board a Haitian freighter on the Miami River on April 15, 1993. Failing to remove the Haitian military from power by tightening economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure, President Clinton was under increasing domestic and international pressure to act militarily. Former President Jimmy Carter, retired General Colin Powell, and Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia negotiated the terms of the junta's departure, as a UN sponsored invasion force was on route to the island. Aristide was welcomed back to Haiti on October 15, 1994.

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<sup>51</sup> Griffith, p. 146.

## **B. DRUG TRAFFICKING AND ITS IMPACT ON DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION**

Dankwart Rustow says that consolidation encompasses:

Habituation in which the norms, procedures, and expectations of democracy become so internalized that actors routinely, instinctively conform to the written rules of the game, even when they conflict and compete intensely.<sup>52</sup>

This routine commitment to democracy at the elite and public level is a crucial element of consolidation. Democracy is consolidated in a country when no significant collective actors challenge the legitimacy of the democratic institutions or regularly violate its constitutional norms, procedures, and laws.<sup>53</sup> Democracies have their share of extremists and rejectionists, but these anti-democrats must be marginal. However, democracies are not consolidated when supporters of rival parties frequently kill and terrorize one another in a quest for power.

To be sure, no democratic regime is ever fully consolidated in the “utopian” sense, yet democratic consolidation is regarded as the crystallization of democratic structures and norms that become accepted as legitimate by the majority of a civil society. When consolidation has been achieved, a democratic regime’s stability and long-term prospects for survival are greatly enhanced.

Haiti remains strangled by the turmoil induced by a paralyzed political system, a debilitated economy, and drug trafficking, all of which have hindered democratization. Haiti faces a threat to the development of its democratic institutions because it lacks the political will to implement reforms. The political crisis and corruption has undermined enforcement morale and explains the unsteady development of democracy in Haiti. Drug-related corruption within the police force, the justice sector, customs and port officials are enormous because drug traffickers have targeted all branches of the government responsible for supervising Haiti’s airports, seaports and border-crossing points with the Dominican Republic.

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<sup>52</sup> Larry Diamond. *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*. (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.), p. 65.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

The lack of an effective judicial reform is a further obstacle for democracy. The government's failure to crush drug trafficking has only added to the crisis of the judicial system. This is not only a fact, but also a common public perception. The detention centers hold prisoners for years without a trial and under inhuman conditions. Haiti's judiciary lacks the resources, competent judges and the credibility to serve its people. This dysfunctional judicial system continues routinely to protect criminals whose violence discourages any legal reforms. Powerful groups, including corrupt police officers, often overturn verdicts, free convicted criminals, and assault judges in the rare instances where the law has been applied. The legal system's inability to address the drug-fueled crime wave further alienates the public, making citizens more and more distrusting of the legal system.

Another important issue undermining democratic consolidation in Haiti is that of security. The security concerns are largely from an internal threat of a prevailing culture of violence. This problem is so severe that normal political activity can result in widespread violence. The widespread drug trade only contributes to this culture of violence. The Haitian government cannot provide the basic necessities for its citizens much less their security, according to an Amnesty International report released in September 2001. Respect for human rights and the rule of law has fallen to its lowest point since democracy was restored in 1994.<sup>54</sup>

The massive Caribbean drug trade undermines democratization by corrupting the fledgling police force and traditionally weak judicial system, two institutions crucial for a viable democracy.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, those who participated in repression of the Haitian people in the past continue to find funding in drug trafficking. In effect, "the drug trade empowers sectors within Haiti that are vociferously opposed to democratic transition."<sup>56</sup> Thus, the prospects for democracy are dim due to the lack of political will to implement policy reforms. The Haitian government must build and strengthen its institutions to correct these persistent threats, and if such measures are not taken, Haiti could easily

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<sup>54</sup> *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment—Central America and the Caribbean.*

<sup>55</sup> Merlye Gelin-Adams. "Holding Up Democracy," *The World Today*, May 2000, v. 56, no. 5, p. 14.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

revert to lawlessness and misrule, which might trigger another international military intervention.<sup>57</sup> Although Haiti's democratic consolidation is hampered severely by drug trafficking, its poor economic performance poses a further equally destructive threat to democratic transition.

### **C. DRUG TRAFFICKING AND ITS IMPACT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Historically, the most fundamental problem of the Haitian economy has been economic mismanagement and corruption.<sup>58</sup> Today, drug trafficking and the associated corruption continue to undermine Haiti's struggle to rebuild its economy. In turn, the lack of economic development also contributes to the violence and political instability in Haiti.

The three years of terror, neglect and international sanctions during the military junta (1991-1994) reduced Haiti's per capita income. Haiti has consistently been the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, and its poverty has only worsened. Wealth continues to be concentrated in the hands of the elite who have profited from monopolies, an unfair system of taxation and other activities designed to benefit the privileged at the expense of the vast majority of Haitians.

Under the corrupt Cedras regime, military officers appropriated about 40 percent of the national budget.<sup>59</sup> Drug trafficking operations became increasingly widespread and brought in tens of millions of dollars. Drug trafficking profited virtually everyone from the military's high command to the lowest level officers. Powerful military-business alliances dominated the country's economic activities and controlled Haiti's imports.

Even when the military institution was disestablished with the return of democracy in 1994, the prospects for economic development were doubtful. Only the assembly-manufacturing sector had any hope of attaining economic prosperity. Unfortunately, this sector now lies in ruins because of the military repression and

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p.16.

<sup>58</sup> Haggerty, p. 285.

<sup>59</sup> Rothberg, p. 101-102.

international sanctions.<sup>60</sup> Yet even if this sector is restored, according to Donald E. Schulz, it will not create enough jobs to absorb the expanding work force. Therefore, the task in Haiti is less a matter of economic recovery or restoration than starting all over from scratch with little human capital and a long history of waste and corruption.<sup>61</sup>

The illegal drug trade is undermining Haiti's struggle to rebuild its shattered economy. Given Haiti's violent past and its uncertain future, few citizens are willing to invest in the economy because they are afraid of losing their money. Likewise, foreign investors are unwilling to invest while the UN troops are necessary for maintaining order. Security is important to foreign investors and they are concerned about what will happen once the UN troops leaves Haiti. Although there are many reasons for the lack of foreign investment, including governmental delays in implementing privatization laws and other free market reform, it is important not to underestimate the role that drug-related corruption and violence play in undermining investor confidence.<sup>62</sup>

In addition, several other major economic problems arise from the presence of the drug trade: "The state loses substantial revenues from loss of port fees, sales taxes, and other levies; Haitians are being put out of business by dishonest competition; illegal weapons and drugs are being smuggled without government control; and the restoration of state authority is being undermined."<sup>63</sup> However, there is no easy solution to these problems and the Haitian government does not have the resources to carry out the battle against drug trafficking. Consequently, a drug trafficking crackdown would leave many people at provincial ports, which are poorly equipped and where most of the unloading is done by hand, without jobs.

As a result, such continuing political uncertainty has battered an already shrunken economy. Local manufacturers are gone, and investor confidence is so low that people joke that even the drug traffickers are leaving. Multilateral donors are suspending foreign aid because they feel the needed reforms will not be accomplished. Haiti needs privatization and a free market with trading opportunities. Furthermore, with their

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Stotzky, p. 190.

average years of schooling being the lowest in the hemisphere at 1.7 years and 80 percent of the population impoverished, Haiti needs leaders who can envision and realized prosperity derived from the political and economic freedom of their countrymen.<sup>64</sup>

Haiti's principal trading partner and largest bilateral aid contributor, the United States, has strongly influenced Haiti's economic performance. After the restoration of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power in 1994, Haiti implemented an economic program based on macroeconomic stabilization, trade liberalization, privatization, civil service reform, and decentralization in which the government cut tariffs to 15 percent.<sup>65</sup>

President Rene Preval took office in March 1996 and immediately implemented a structural adjustment program. The amount of aid (\$2 billion over three years) pledged by the international community for Haiti's social and economic reconstruction would provide Haiti with a unique opportunity to fund and to implement systemic changes that can foster sustained economic reform.<sup>66</sup>

Haiti's external debt constrains economic reform—and is a contributing factor to the limited resources devoted to counternarcotics programs in Haiti. Even though Haiti's total debt is lower than some neighboring economies, the ratio of total debt to exports was at its highest in 1994, and 1995. The external debt servicing reduces foreign exchange available for imports, which in turn, hinders economic growth. In sum, Haiti, like other governments, some times economizes on resources for counternarcotics programs to pay debts.

The prospects for economic development and substantively improving living conditions are problematic because the redistribution of economic power in favor of the poor is unlikely. For example, the neo-liberal economic policies imposed on Haiti's government by international donors prevent such a strategy. Since Haiti depends on

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<sup>64</sup> Heritage Foundation. *2002 Index of Economic Freedom*. Haiti. 2001. Available on-line. <http://www.heritage.org/index/> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 05/21/2002]

<sup>65</sup> U.S. Department of State. *1998 Country Report on Economic Policy and Trade Practices: Haiti*. January 31, 1999. Available on-line. [http://www.state.gov/www/issues/economic/trade\\_reports/wha98/haiti98.html](http://www.state.gov/www/issues/economic/trade_reports/wha98/haiti98.html) [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 03/17/2002]

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

foreign aid, the nation's options are severely constrained.<sup>67</sup> Even if the primary obstacle to economic development—the predatory state—ends, the remaining challenges are still enormous.<sup>68</sup> With the weak institutions and long history of corruption, foreign private investment has not looked promising and, lacking investment, Haiti needs foreign aid. International donors for the Haiti Economic Recovery Program pledged 1.8 billion dollars over five years (1994-99).<sup>69</sup> However, more is needed if 200 years of underdevelopment are to be reversed.

Haitian unemployment rates are well over 50 percent in the cities. In the short term, real economic development is unlikely, given the paralysis of political life and the populist tendencies of Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Consequently, the mounting street crime that is fueled by drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and U.S. deportation of convicted felons of Haitian origin, has instilled a heightened sense of insecurity on Haitians.<sup>70</sup> Consequently, fearful Haitians fleeing to the United States or the Dominican Republic will be on the rise once again.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Haiti certainly has the potential for development, but so far the leadership has failed to capitalize on the strengths of the nation's hard-working people. The development problems in Haiti, political more than economic, only exacerbate the country's economic problems. Haiti's ineffectual democratic and economic institutions have been further weakened by the political impasse in place since June 1997, undermining government plans for economic reform and rendering the country more vulnerable to drug trafficking, corruption, and money laundering.<sup>71</sup> Much of the criminal

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<sup>67</sup> Rotberg, p. 102.

<sup>68</sup> Griffith, p. 147.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Marie Kennedy, and Chris Tilly. "Haiti in 2001: Political Deadlock, Economic Crisis." Dollars & Sense, November/December 2001, no. 238, p. 14-17+ Available on-line. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 03/15/2002], p. 16.

<sup>71</sup> U.S. Department of State. Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Drug Control Fact Sheet—Haiti. March 3, 1998. Available on-line. [http://www.state.gov/www/global/narcotics\\_law/1997\\_narc\\_report/fs\\_haiti.html](http://www.state.gov/www/global/narcotics_law/1997_narc_report/fs_haiti.html) [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 03/10/2002]



violence in Haiti is attributable to drug trafficking.<sup>72</sup> A bleak analysis of Haiti's political and socioeconomic prospects suggests that in spite of the progress that was made since the U.S.-led multinational intervention in September 1994, Haiti still has much work to do before the nation achieves democracy and economic security. Three quarters of Haiti's population lives in abject poverty. Tremendous economic improvement much be achieved if Haiti's democratization is to succeed. Progress in the fight against drugs will be a necessary part of any program to create the conditions for political stability, economic development, and democracy.

Undeniably, Haiti's progress toward political stability, economic prosperity and a truly free democracy is hindered greatly by drug trafficking. Illegal drugs fuel corruption, vice, malfeasance, and social turmoil. Public confidence and respect for their leaders and institutions is destroyed by the omnipresence of the drug trade. As a result, until the presence of drugs and drug dealers is sharply contained or eliminated, Haiti's future will remain bleak.

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<sup>72</sup> "Haiti: Continued Instability." *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief*, 04 December 1997. Available on-line. [http://www.oxweb.com/daily\\_brief.asp](http://www.oxweb.com/daily_brief.asp) [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 03/10/2002]

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#### IV. HAITIAN AND U.S. EFFORTS TO COMBAT DRUG TRAFFICKING

Every year the U.S. government determines which of the major drug producing and drug transiting countries have cooperated fully with the United States or have taken adequate steps to achieve full compliance with the objectives of the 1988 UN Drug Convention. In 2002, the U.S. State Department has determined that Haiti is failing to cooperate fully with the United States in anti-drug efforts for the fourth consecutive year. Haiti's performance was evaluated for "stemming illicit cultivation, extraditing drug traffickers, and taking legal steps and law enforcement measures to prevent and punish public corruption that facilitates drug trafficking or impedes prosecution of drug-related crime."<sup>73</sup> Unfortunately, the Haitian government was criticized broadly for failing to take significant counter-drug actions, such as enacting asset forfeiture and anti-corruption legislation, as well as expanding the anti-drug unit of the national police.<sup>74</sup> Additionally, the Haitian government was criticized for "showing no increase in seizures of illegal drugs, including cocaine, nor in the number of arrests of major traffickers."<sup>75</sup> Thus, Haiti failed to meet the statutory standard required for certification based on the goals of the 1988 UN Drug Convention.<sup>76</sup> However, a cutoff of aid and assistance would threaten the democratic stability in Haiti; therefore aid has been certified on the basis of U.S. vital national interests. Given the importance of U.S. assistance, how did Haiti fail to meet the U.S. drug control requirements?

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<sup>73</sup> White House. Office of the Press Secretary. *Fact Sheet: Overview of Annual Presidential Determinations on Major Illicit Drug Producing and Drug-Transit Countries*. February 25, 2002. Available on-line. <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/global/drugs/02022505.htm> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 03/01/2002]

<sup>74</sup> Charles Arthur. "Raising the Stakes: Haiti between Mayhem and Decertification." *NACLA Report on the Americas*, July/August 2001, v. 35, No. 1, p. 42-43. Available on-line. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 02/05/2002]

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> White House. Office of the Press Secretary. *Annual Presidential Certifications for Major Drug Producing and Transit Countries*, March 1, 2000. Available on-line. <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/global/drugs/transit.htm> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 03/01/2002]

The primary focus of this chapter rests past measures to combat illegal drug activity. It will address the bilateral efforts of Haiti and the United States. Haiti has made steps to adhere to measures the UN drug convention set forth. However, Haiti's counternarcotics initiatives have suffered due to a long political impasse between the executive and the legislature and economic instability, according to the U.S. State Department 2001 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report.

#### **A. HAITI'S ACTIONS (1996-2001)**

International intervention in 1994 succeeded in reinstating Aristide's government after three years of failed negotiations and the imposition of economic sanctions. One of Haiti's first efforts to combat drug trafficking after the restoration of a democratic government in 1994 was to become a party to the 1961 UN Convention on Narcotic Drugs and its 1972 Protocol. Additionally, Haiti became a party to the 1988 UN Convention in 1995. Moreover, Haiti's main counternarcotics initiatives have focused on establishing the Haitian Coast Guard (HCG) and Counternarcotic Unit, which is part of the HNP. Moreover, President Rene Preval (who succeeded Aristide in 1996) appointed Rena Maglorie as Special Advisor for Judicial Reform in the Ministry of Justice to develop a national narcotic plan, draft narcotic laws and develop money-laundering legislation.<sup>77</sup> Given the pressing domestic law enforcement demands, the establishment of the CNU and HCG and their commitment to counternarcotics training has been impressive. The lack of infrastructure, personnel and material resources will remain a limiting factor in Haiti's ability to combat narcotics trafficking. For example, the HCG is limited in its operations to the Gulf of Gonave, while most of the nation's narcotics problems occur in its unregulated regional ports.

In 1996, Haiti continued the transition to a civilian police force by dissolving the Army (FADH) organizations, especially those involved in narcotics law enforcement. The Center for Coordination and Intelligence, a narcotic agency, was also disbanded in March 1996. The Haitian Coast Guard (HCG) began training a Counternarcotics Unit (CNU) in August. The former Minister of Justice, Rene Magloire, was appointed to

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<sup>77</sup> *International Narcotic Control Strategy Report*, 1996.

advance judicial reforms of the existing narcotics laws, develop a national narcotics plan and to implement money-laundering legislation.

Haiti signed a letter of agreement in September 1996 with the U.S. to continue financial assistance to the Haitian Coast Guard and to assist in security-related measures affecting the Port-au-Prince airport and seaports.<sup>78</sup> The Haitian Customs Service participated in two U.S. Customs training sessions for narcotics interdiction at airport facilities. Narcotics control at the airport shifted to the airlines and their security staff, who turn suspects over to the HNP, which that is stationed at the airport. In an effort to increase HNP's effectiveness, seventy-five members of the counternarcotics unit were selected to receive partial training during the year.

The HCG began operations in August 1996 and made two major cocaine seizures totaling 938 kgs in its first two months of operations. President Preval began his own anticorruption campaign, which included drug corruption. On October 1, Preval had one judge arrested for releasing an alleged Dominican drug trafficker. He dismissed another judge from judicial responsibilities because the judge was accused of improprieties in narcotic related cases. In addition, two officers were removed in 1996 for drug related problems. Haiti began discussing a bilateral maritime counternarcotics accord with the U.S., but no agreement was in place by the end of 1996.

### **1. Impasse from 1997**

Unfortunately, much of the progress on drug control accomplished by the Aristide and Preval governments between 1994 and 1996 came to a halt, along with all other government activity, as the result of a political impasse, which began in 1997 and has persisted to this day. The Lavalas coalition, which supported both Aristide and then Preval as President, united over important policies like privatization and the role of Aristide within the movement. President Rene Preval's mishandling of legislative elections in 1997 led to political strife and Preval's dissolution of parliament in January 1999. This move seriously undermined his government's legitimacy and deepened the economic crisis as offshore assembly factories closed and tourism collapsed. It became impossible to pass new legislation, a situation, which undermined significant portions of

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

the government's counterdrug efforts. For example, the Ministry of Justice's Special Advisor on Narcotics Matters completed Haiti's anti-drug policy initiatives in 1997 and drafted a National Narcotics Plan, but it has been unable to secure legislative approval of these initiatives because of the political impasse. The initiatives consisted of comprehensive narcotics legislation updating Haiti's existing laws, including Haiti's first money-laundering legislation.

Despite the challenges posed by the political deadlock, the government of Haiti continued in 1997 to implement the legal mechanisms and governmental policies that it could to counter organized trafficking elements. For example, the Minister of Justice (MOJ) began to establish an inter-ministerial task force to unify the GOH's anti-narcotics program and initiatives. The HNP and Haitian Customs leaders also developed policy guidelines to further the cooperation between the two offices. The combined efforts of the HCG and United States Coast Guard (USCG) maritime efforts yielded over nine tons of marijuana and 2.1 metric tons of cocaine in 1997. On October 17, 1997, the government of Haiti and the United States signed a bilateral maritime counternarcotics agreement that allow U.S. law enforcement vessels and aircraft greater access to Haitian territory in the pursuit and interdiction of narcotics traffickers. The Haitian government continued to give USG officials' high-level assurances of its commitment to drug control, and those assurances were supported by their progress in establishing Haitian counter-drug institutions.

Many of the critical anti-drug policy initiatives begun in 1997 by Haiti remained on hold throughout 1998 because of the continuing political impasse. The Ministry of Justice began to work on revising the National Master Plan drafted in May 1997. Haiti's counternarcotics objectives for 1998 were to give Parliament the set of anti-drug trafficking laws including money laundering and asset forfeiture laws, which had been drafted in 1997, to implement the "National Master Plan for Combating Drugs in Haiti," and to target at least one major international narcotics organization for significant interdiction efforts.<sup>79</sup> However, according to the constitution, no new legislation,

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<sup>79</sup> *International Narcotic Control Strategy Report*, 1998.

including the anti-drug laws and the "National Master Plan for Combating Drugs in Haiti" could be presented to the Parliament for enactment until the crisis was resolved.

Despite this legislative impasse and lack of direction from the executive branch, Haiti's counternarcotic units continued to cooperate with one another and with their regional and U.S. counterparts in drug-control efforts. In March 1998, Haiti hosted a U.S.-funded Intelligence Sharing Conference in Port au Prince that was attended by key counternarcotics officials from Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. Additionally, the HNP proposed a five-point strategic counternarcotics plan in which three points were related to Haiti's regional counternarcotics role in the Caribbean, the fourth called for joint Haiti-Dominican Republic efforts to secure their common border, and the fifth proposed an information exchange center within the HNP to handle internal narco-corruption.<sup>80</sup>

The HNP leadership with the assistance of the DEA started an interagency joint counternarcotics task force consisting of the HNP and Customs which began operating at the Port-au-Prince International Airport. In addition, a task force comprised of the HNP and National Port Authority officers began operating at the main Port au Prince seaport. Haiti signed a Letter of Agreement with the UN International Drugs Control Program regarding the writing of a National Drug Strategy and the development of a seven-part National Drug Council for coordination among Haitian services working on counternarcotics effort. Haiti also signed a Joint Intelligence Coordination Center agreement with the U.S. The Haitian Coast Guard fully cooperated with the USCG "ship rider" program and demonstrated some independent initiative at sea. In addition, the HNP counternarcotics unit increased the quantity of drugs seized without direct U.S. assistance. Haiti initiated the first joint Haitian-Dominican drug monitoring effort at the Malpasse-Jimani border crossing. In December of 1998, the Special Advisor to the Ministry of Justice indicated his intention to begin working with relevant Haiti authorities to revise the National Master Plan.

During 1999, some counterdrug operations were undertaken, however, the critical anti-drug legislative initiatives continued to be on hold throughout the year. The Prime

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

Minister ordered a special judicial review committee to have a new legislation ready for presentation to the new parliament once it was seated in the summer of 2000. In 1999, the government of Haiti and the U.S. targeted the principal Colombian drug trafficking organization (the Coneo family) operating in Haiti and two of its key members were arrested. The proposed Haiti and the U.S. Maritime Counternarcotics Interdiction Agreement was implemented, which included an agreement to expel non-Haitian fugitives wanted by the U.S. Justice Department. Haiti and the Dominican Republic cooperated in a Haitian border-control unit and police-exchange program. Prime Minister Alexis approved the concept of the 1997 draft Counternarcotics master plan, which created the National Drug Council and formed a special anti-corruption commission. A special judiciary team updated the counternarcotics draft legislation for parliament's earliest approval.

The HNP leadership has repeatedly exhibited cooperation with U.S. authorities in counternarcotics efforts. In addition to working with the DEA to disrupt the Coneo organization's trafficking operation in Haiti, the HNP collaborated with U.S. authorities in two operations that combined assets from the USCG, the DEA, U.S. Customs and the Haiti. Haiti also collaborated with the U.S. in the federal prosecution of a U.S. airline flight attendant accused of transporting 10 kilos of cocaine from Port au Prince to Miami.

The Haiti law enforcement officials supported U.S. efforts to establish a Joint Information Coordination Center (JICC) in the Port au Prince International Airport. The HNP provided three well-trained intelligence analysts to the JICC staff in October. They approved a bi-weekly coordination meeting of the Haitian Coast Guard and the new counternarcotics unit with their U.S. Embassy counterparts to combat airdrops and maritime smuggling.

During 2000, a trailer was refitted as an office and located at the Port-au-Prince seaport for use by the interagency maritime interdiction task force. This location now serves as a coordination center for maritime interdiction activities off Haiti's coasts and in port. With the DEA's guidance, the task force conducted port surveys throughout Haiti to develop sources of information and contacts with port authorities and other law enforcement entities. The Haitian airport and maritime drug units are evolving into



disciplined professional units, according to the DEA, that are increasingly willing to work with U.S. counterparts. The fledgling organizations show a willingness to work and to improve their professional capabilities.

In March, the Haiti participated in Operation Conquistador that resulted in an increased level of vehicle and vessel searches, airline passenger and baggage inspection, and search warrants in areas of high drug trafficking activity.<sup>81</sup> However, no large seizures were reported. The government of Haiti cooperated in maritime interdiction operations with the U.S. Coast Guard and multilateral interdiction operations, but attempts to curb corruption in 2000 were minimal.

In spite of some progress, the Haiti law enforcements continue to suffer from inexperience, an outdated legal system, and a lack of interagency coordination. The Prime Minister ordered the heads of HNP, Customs, Immigration, and the Foreign Ministry to discuss increased cooperation among Haiti law enforcement agencies in the airport and other interagency endeavors throughout Haiti, but no concrete results have ensued. Thus, Haitian authorities continued to be deprived of needed criminal laws and law enforcement tools and continue to suffer from inexperience, lack of resources, a crumbling infrastructure, and an antiquated legal system.<sup>82</sup> In sum, political impasses, economic instability and lack of political will undermine Haiti's counternarcotics initiatives for much of the 1990s.

## **2. Aristide and Tactical Cooperation**

With President Aristide's inauguration in 2001, the prospects for increased drug control efforts seemed hopeful. The election of a new legislature put an end to the long political impasse, which had blocked counterdrug legislation and the new president seemed committed to drug control. As a candidate for democracy and for a better life for Haitian people, former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide had pledged to "enhance substantially cooperation to combat drug trafficking" in a December 27 letter to President Clinton. Aristide tends to make sweeping promises and then fails to keep them. To illustrate, Aristide declared that he was in favor of election for a regulatory parliament,

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<sup>81</sup> *International Narcotic Control Strategy Report*, 2000.

<sup>82</sup> *International Narcotic Control Strategy Report*, 1999.

but he has not officially addressed the matter in Haiti. Secretary of State Colin Powell called Aristide's stated willingness to cooperate with the United States an appropriate way to proceed.<sup>83</sup>

After Aristide assumed power in 2001, an anti-money laundering law and a national drug-control strategy law was approved by Parliament and signed by President Aristide. However, Aristide did not sign the bilateral maritime law enforcement agreement or the letter of agreement proposed by the United States. Haiti cooperated on a limited, tactical level with the United States on drug control in 2001. Haiti coordinated with the U.S. in terms of expulsion of third-country nationals in the United States and Dominican Republic.<sup>84</sup> Haiti's Justice Minister Lissade acted quickly to extradite non-Haitian traffickers when requested and established a Financial Investigations Unit to combat money laundering. Even though Haiti did not put the pending bilateral maritime counternarcotics agreement into force, the government permitted the U.S. Coast Guard to operate against traffickers in Haitian waters.

In August Haiti's central bank published a circular directing commercial banks, savings banks, foreign exchange brokers and transfer agencies to report to Haiti individual monetary transactions valued at or above the Haitian gourde equivalent of \$10,000 U.S. dollars. This is Haiti's first known attempt to address money laundering through Haitian banking institutions. The United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP) has provided a money-laundering expert to work with the Haiti on implementing the new legislation. Haiti adopted and published a money laundering law and the Law for the Control and Repression of Illicit Drug Trafficking in 2001, but trials and convictions were rare.

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<sup>83</sup> "Haiti: Foes at Home and Abroad Dog Returning Aristide." *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief*, 13 February 2001. Available on-line. [http://www.oxweb.com/daily\\_brief.asp](http://www.oxweb.com/daily_brief.asp) [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 03/10/2002]

<sup>84</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Transcript: American Embassy TV Broadcast on U.S.-Haiti Counter-Drug Efforts" 03 August 2001. Available on-line. <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/global/drugs/01080301.htm> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 02/24/2002]

During a September regional counternarcotics operation, "Operation Hurricane," the Haitian National Police (HNP) worked closely with the DEA and Dominican Republic counternarcotics force. The HNP coordinated with the DEA and other countries in the Caribbean on multi-related operations.<sup>85</sup> Haiti joined the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) in October 2001.

Following the 2001 inauguration of President Aristide, changes in the HNP leadership were made including the removal of Mario Andersol, the Chief of the Judicial Police whose replacement had still not been appointed by the end of 2001. These changes led to more changes at lower levels, which affected the HNP's ability to deal with the drug problem. The HNP suffered problems, yet they managed to seize 446 kilograms of cocaine during 2001, and they eradicated marijuana fields in Gonaives, Pont Sonde, and Belle Anse.

Haiti lacks the capability to stem the illegal flow of drugs transiting the country and the law enforcement and judicial institution to address illegal drugs and pursue drug traffickers operating in Haiti. Haiti must develop an effective drug interdiction capability and improve the skills of prosecutors and judges and their entire legal system.

## **B. U.S. ACTIONS TO ASSIST HAITI (1996-2001)**

The U.S. strategy for combating illegal drugs in Haiti is to reduce the amount of narcotics transiting Haiti and strengthen the capacity and operational effectiveness of the Haiti institutions that oppose narcotics trafficking. To achieve these goals the U.S. must provide the law enforcement entities and the justice sector with training, equipment, infrastructure, and operational support and mentoring. The strategy also calls for the U.S. to foster interagency and international cooperation among Haitian officials and fight corruption wherever possible.

### **1. Focus on the Coast Guard**

The Haitian Coast Guard program was funded primarily by U.S. security assistance and has been very successful. The U.S. is financing CNU equipment and training.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

The U.S. Coast Guard, a significant player in counter-drug efforts, is responsible for curbing the non-commercial maritime flow of cocaine to the United States.<sup>86</sup> U.S. bilateral cooperation consists of limited information sharing with the HNP and assistance with combined U.S. Coast Guard/HCG operations. U.S. law enforcement agencies have received Haiti's approval and assistance in maritime boarding cases. The USG has also received assistance on narcotics cases with airport officials and the Seaport Authority.

In 1997, the U.S. and Haiti elevated most of the ad hoc cooperation on maritime operations. The U.S. and Haiti signed a Letter of Agreement (LOA) in support of counternarcotics activities focused on the continued development of the HCG and the CNU. The U.S. Coast Guard has cooperated in four separate maritime interdictions with the Haitian Coast Guard (HCG) that intercepted over two metric tons of cocaine during 1997. In 1998 the U.S. Southern Command reserved \$350,000 for HCG infrastructure development along with an additional \$300,000 to support HCG training. In 1999 the U.S. Southern Command earmarked approximately USD \$300,000 for infrastructure and training support to the HCG to execute Operations Frontier Lance II and Columbus.

## **2. DEA Coordination**

The DEA maintains an office with two agents in Haiti that works closely with the HNP and other Haiti officials on narcotics matters. The DEA office worked with the HNP, U.S. air carrier security personnel and the Haiti airport security official in seizing narcotics.

The DEA increased its staffing in Haiti from two to seven at the end of 1998. The DEA also established the multi-agency counternarcotics task forces, the CNU "street" investigation unit, installed of the Unified Caribbean On-Line Regional Network (UNICORN) at HNP and CNU headquarters, held the Chemical Identification Seminar for a multi-agency class, and set up a border patrol unit at Malpasse. In 1999 the staff of the DEA's Port Au Prince Country Office established eight permanent members. The DEA also divided the HNP's team into three distinct groups to address street, maritime, and airport security and took leadership roles in Operations Frontier Lance II and Columbus.

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<sup>86</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Transcript."

At the present time, the DEA coordinates many investigations and initiatives with the HNP.<sup>87</sup> With a crew of eight special agents and an office assistant, the DEA's efforts have proven to be successful. The DEA initiated a series of multinational regional operations to create an integrated regional response to drug trafficking activities and to maximize scarce resources. The multi-national regional initiatives have had a positive effect of disrupting the flow of drugs through the Caribbean for several reasons:

First, from an operational perspective, the use of the UNICORN system by law enforcement organizations from different countries establishes a viable intelligence sharing network and the necessary communication structure needed to coordinate long-term operations. Secondly, the extensive political support for counter-drug efforts that continues to be generated by these types of initiatives facilitates the integration of anti-narcotics efforts. Thirdly, many participating countries strengthen their bilateral and multilateral relationships during operational phases. Increased coordination, experience, and sophisticated investigative techniques will facilitate the region's capability to conduct complex investigations targeting the leadership of significant drug trafficking organizations.<sup>88</sup>

### **3. Customs and Justice Institutions**

U.S. Customs is currently involved in an ongoing U.S.AID-funded assistance project so that the Haiti Customs Department can effectively control the borders and the flow of illicit contraband. This project provides several narcotics interdiction courses, on-site U.S. Customs technical advisors, short-term legal advisories, executive observation trips to the U.S., and basic inspection equipment.

In September of 1999, the United States and Haiti signed a letter of agreement under which the U.S. provided the United State Department of Defense \$620,000 in counternarcotics assistance funds. The agreement covers law enforcement training, a Haitian-Dominican border counternarcotics initiative, the formation of a special investigative team to combat major international traffickers, and money-laundering efforts.

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Virgil, April 12, 2000.

A U.S. Customs training and assistance team conducted five training missions for Haitian Customs and the HNP during 1999, focusing on search procedures for seagoing vessels and aircraft. They also provided inspection and training equipment to Haitian Customs agents. Moreover, they adamantly pressed for the extradition or expulsion of traffickers under indictment in the United States who were detained in Haiti. In August 1998, the U.S. and Haiti signed an amendment to their counternarcotics Letter of Agreement, which provided an increase in assistance funds and placed more emphasis on strengthening the failing judicial sector regarding drug cases. This agreement focused on the continued development of the HCG and CNU and also established of a viable border patrol unit and installed of the JICC.

#### **4. Stalling in FY-2000**

Some bilateral programs showed potential; however, Haiti did not sign a letter of agreement for FY-2000 counternarcotics assistance funds. Assistance has been suspended until the new Bush administration's intentions on counternarcotics cooperation are clarified. The United States assisted a mobile training team of four members in Haiti working daily with the HCG.<sup>89</sup> The Bilateral Coast Guard Program showed measurable progress during 2000, but was suspended owing to restrictions in the FY-2001 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act.

The United States had no bilateral counternarcotics program with Haiti in 2001. The United States offered to sign a letter of agreement with Haiti, but the 2001 offer was not accepted. Despite the lack of a formal counternarcotics agreement between the U.S. and Haiti, the DEA maintained a permanent staff of eight agents in Port-au-Prince.

The United States is exploring ways to reduce illegal drug trafficking in the transit zone between the source countries and the United States. Haiti lacks the necessary resources to counter this threat within the Transit Zone effectively. The "United States' strategy efforts were to foster Haitian interagency cooperation, Haitian cooperation with other countries, and the willingness and ability for Haiti to fight corruption in their government."<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> *International Narcotic Control Strategy Report*, 2001.

## C. CONCLUSION

Drug control efforts have been frustrated due to the lack of a bilateral maritime counternarcotics agreement between the U.S. and Haiti. The key objectives to combating the illegal flow of drugs include improving the effectiveness of the Haiti's law enforcement and judicial institutions and pursuing drug traffickers in Haiti. To accomplish these objectives, the HNP must be trained and equipped to develop an effective drug interdiction. Haiti also must be trained and equipped to conduct counternarcotics investigations. The United States urges interagency cooperation among Haitian Customs, Immigration, and Judiciary, but emphasis instead ought to be placed on achieving a bilateral agreement so that necessary assistance and training will be available.

The State Department has viewed Haiti as failing to collaborate with the U.S. to interdict illicit drug traffic through Haiti.<sup>91</sup> Haiti claimed the reason was, in part, insufficient resources. However, to Haiti counternarcotics matters are lower in priority than social order and public safety concerns. Consequently, most counternarcotics law enforcement accomplishments are the United States' programs that have provided structure and support.

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<sup>91</sup> Arthur, p.42.

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## V. CONCLUSION

Traditionally, Haiti has been a haven for illicit enterprise. Haiti emerged as a cocaine transshipment point between Colombia and the United States in the 1980s. Its strategic geographic location and political culture make the country an ideal place from which to run drug trafficking. Drug traffickers continue to use Haitian waters and airspace with little resistance due to a fledgling political base, uncontrolled borders, and inadequate law enforcement resources. According to George A. Fauriol, "A wide path of drug trafficking is enveloping the entire Caribbean and turning receptive nations, like Haiti, into secure drug havens or, more accurately, narco-states."<sup>92</sup> Consequently today, the government of Haiti must confront extensive corruption, weak institutions and scarce resources.

Despite the U.S. intervention in 1994 and the establishment of a civilian democratic government, Haiti continues to be a haven for drug trafficking and money laundering. Evidence of these activities has increased since the intervention and because of Haiti's ingrained political culture and socioeconomic structures, these illicit activities are exceedingly difficult to eliminate. The U.S. short-term military occupations cannot possibly end Haiti's long-standing political and economic practices. Political, economic and judicial reform will be needed over a long period of time to reverse 200 years of mismanagement by previously repressive dictatorships.

Haiti is slowly becoming an increasingly confident civil society, with a free and active press, improved respect for human rights, vocal political opposition, decreased population growth, and increased literacy and access to basic health and population programs. Building on these accomplishments, Haitians can move their country toward a more responsive and democratic governance and away from a long history of oppression and severe underdevelopment.

As a representative of the impoverished populace, current President Aristide believes the government should take actions toward relieving the suffering of the poorest

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<sup>92</sup> Georges A. Fauriol. "Politics Still Counts." *The World & I*, March 2001, V. 16, No. 3, p. 20-25. Available on-line. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb> [retrieved from the World Wide Web on 03/18/2002]

members of society. Economic restructuring and privatization reforms are unattractive to political leaders because they create higher levels of unemployment and increased poverty levels in the short term. The officials need to understand that the entire society, especially the wretchedly poor will be affected, but selecting when and which economic policies are applied can ease the severity of the effects.

Haiti unquestioningly has made significant strides in establishing democratic governance, yet if Haitians are to be weaned from illicit activities, they must be encouraged to diversify their economies and construct the necessary infrastructure that will provide adequate employment for the poor and the necessary business atmosphere for legitimate entrepreneurs.

To uphold the rule of law, the Haitian judicial system must be reformed and modernized. Their law enforcement requires extensive training and resources. Especially on the south coast, the Haitian Coast Guard requires more bases and their airport and port security should be strengthened. If these reforms are not undertaken, Haiti will continue to be used as a significant transshipment point for drug trafficking.

Haiti over time can effectively dismantle drug trafficking organizations that rise to provide that the HNP continues to progress and enhance their law enforcement and judicial capabilities. Today, the DEA has an effective working relationship with some key officials in Haiti. The DEA will continue to address the drug trafficking threat in Haiti and will continue to plan law enforcement operations in conjunction with the Haitian National Police. Moreover the U.S. and international community must remain engaged.

U.S. policy in the Western Hemisphere recognizes that its support for social and economic development in this region cannot succeed if the hemisphere's democracies are weak. U.S. democracy programs can guarantee that governments like Haiti have the knowledge and the commitment to protect the rights of their citizens and deliver the services, security, and growth that they deserve.

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