

Correct: [February 1991?]. Check, must be 1992
@flushright<@u<Z>, Summer 1994>
@heading<Democracy Enhancement II>

As discussed in Part I, the Reagan-Bush Administrations reluctantly adopted "prodemocracy policies as a means of relieving pressure for more radical change," and "inevitably sought only limited, top-down forms of democratic change that did not risk upsetting the traditional structures of power with which the United States has long been allied" (Thomas Carothers of the Reagan State Department). The leading idea is revealed in the documents of USAID's democracy project, which stress that the U.S. supports "processes of democratic institutional reform that will further economic liberalization objectives" -- that is, entrenchment of the service role. {Cited by Robert Vitalis, "Dreams of Markets, Nightmares of Democracy," ms. 1994; @u<Middle East Report>, Spring 1994.}

The reference to "the traditional structures of power with which the United States has long been allied" has to undergo the usual translation. The phrase "United States" refers to the "traditional structures of power" at home. This is among the elementary truths that are to remain unspoken, along with the fact that the policies for the service areas merely adapt a conception of democracy that is to apply to the home societies as well. Here the general public "must be put in its place," as Walter Lippmann explained in his progressive essays on democracy long ago. The "ignorant and meddling outsiders" are to be only "interested spectators of action," not "participants." Their sole "function" in a democracy is to choose periodically among the leadership class (elections). Also unspoken is the fact that the "responsible men" who manage the democratic society gain that status by virtue of their service to "the traditional structures of power." There is a very broad consensus in the intellectual community, and of course the business world, that the "ignorant and incapable mass of humanity" must not be allowed to disrupt policy formation (Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of State Robert Lansing), that planners must be "insulated" from politics, in World Bank lingo.

The "prodemocracy policies" in the service areas long antedate the Reaganites, and have little to do with the Cold War, apart from ideological cover. Accordingly, they should be expected to persist, as they do. Among the cases reviewed in Part I, the most striking is Colombia, which has become the leading human rights violator in the hemisphere and the recipient of more than half of total U.S. military aid and training, sent on its way with the usual acclaim for Colombia's democratic achievements as state terror mounts -- all rising to new heights under Clinton.

"Human Rights enhancement" marches on in parallel. In Part I, I reviewed Clinton's steps to evade congressional efforts to impose human rights conditions on military aid and trade privileges for

Indonesia and China, and the concept of "human rights" itself, crafted to evade atrocities that contribute to profit. In the weeks since, the China story took its predictable course. "President Clinton's decision to renew China's trade benefits was the culmination of a titanic clash between America's global economic interests and its self-image as the world's leading advocate of human rights," Thomas Friedman's lead article opened in the @u<New York Times>, reporting the surprising outcome. Clinton did not merely endorse the Bush Administration policies that he had caustically denounced during the presidential campaign, but went well beyond them, deciding "to delink human rights" completely from trade privileges.@note{@u<NYT>, May 27, 1994.}

The Indonesia case sheds further light on the "titanic clash." As discussed in Part I, Clinton joined his predecessors and colleagues abroad in ensuring the welfare of the Indonesian tyrants and murderers and the foreign corporations that benefit from their rule, blocking and evading congressional restrictions on military assistance. The issue was quite narrow: whether to refrain from direct participation in Indonesian atrocities at home and abroad. There was no thought of proceeding beyond, to some action to deter some of the worst crimes of the modern era.

The review in Part I was perhaps unfair in not mentioning that world leaders do recognize some limits, and have indeed considered sanctions against Indonesia. In November 1993, on behalf of the nonaligned movement and the World Health Organization (WHO), Indonesia submitted to the UN a resolution requesting an opinion from the World Court on the legality of the use of nuclear weapons. In the face of this atrocity, the guardians of international morality leaped into action. The U.S., U.K., and France threatened Indonesia with trade sanctions and termination of aid unless it withdrew the resolution, as it did. Traditional clients understand very well when a message from the powerful is to be heeded.

Citizens of the free world were again fortunate to have the information readily available to them; in this case, in the Catholic Church press in Canada.@note{@u<Catholic New Times>, 9 Jan. 1994; John Pilger, @u<New Statesman and Nation>, June 3, 1994.}

Freedom of information can go only so far, however. On June 10, the World Court was scheduled to take up the WHO request for an opinion, despite a furious campaign by the U.S., U.K., and their allies to prevent this outrage. The matter is of some importance. Even consideration of the issue by the Court would be a contribution to the cause of nonproliferation; even more so a decision that use of nuclear weapons is a crime under international law -- hence by implication, possession as well. As of mid-June, I have found no word on the matter, though the nonproliferation treaty is a topic of lead headlines, particularly the threat posed to its renewal in 1995 by

North Korea's alleged nuclear weapons program.

I barely mentioned one of the clearest tests of the Clinton vision on "democracy enhancement": Haiti. The case serves well to illustrate the "prodemocracy policies" of the Reagan-Bush years, as Carothers accurately describes them. We may ask, then, how things changed as the New Democrats took command. {Much of what follows appears in my introduction to Paul Farmer, [The Uses of Haiti](#) (Common Courage, 1994), a rich and informative analysis of what is happening and its backgrounds. For further discussion and sources, see also my [Year 501](#), chaps. 8-9.}

[1. The Legacy of History](#)

Even the briefest glimpse of Haiti's torment leaves impressions that do not easily fade, beginning with the scene of desolation on approaching the international airport. It is hard to remember that through the 18th century the island was the richest and most profitable of the Western colonies, and like today's Bangladesh, had struck the European conquerors as a virtual paradise. The Presidential Palace in Port-au-Prince, dominating a large square, is flanked by the headquarters of the military command and, at a slight remove, the equally-dreaded police. The symbols of authority and violence stand in impudent mockery of the misery that lies below them -- "confirming the permanence of power, a reminder to the people of their smallness in regard to the state, a reminder to the executioners of the omnipotence of their chief," in the worlds of Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot, expressing the logic of the Duvalierists, Papa Doc and Baby Doc, who ruled with brutal violence for 30 years. {[Haiti: State against Nation](#) (Monthly Review, 1990).}

In the markets and slums below, it is barely possible to make one's way down alleys of mud and filth through teeming masses of people clad in rags. Women struggle past with huge burdens on their heads, children try to sell any miserable object, an occasional cart is dragged through mud that is inches deep and puddles left by recent rains. Flies swarm over a handful of vegetables and what might pass for fish. Peasants who have trudged down from the mountains on ancient trails sit by their paltry offerings, sleeping in the relics of shacks that line the alleys. In the depths of Third World poverty, one rarely finds a scene so noxious and depressing.

When I visited briefly a year ago, before the renewed terror, some people in the marketplace were willing to speak in the presence of a translator who was known and trusted, but only in circumlocution. The eyes of the security forces are everywhere, they intimidated by their gestures more than their words. These were uniform: hunger, no work, no hope -- unless, somehow, President Aristide returns, though few dare to articulate the phrase beyond hints and nods. Some do, with

remarkable courage, even after police torture and the threat of worse. It is not easy to believe that such courage can long survive, even if the people do.

U.S. relations with Haiti are not a thing of yesterday, and show no sign of fundamental change. They go back 200 years, to the days when the Republic that had just won its independence from Britain joined the imperial powers in their campaign to quell Haiti's slave rebellion by violence. When the rebellion nevertheless succeeded, the U.S. exceeded all others in the harshness of its reaction, refusing to recognize Haiti until 1862, in the context of the American civil war. At that moment, Haiti was important for its strategic location and as a possible dumping ground for freed slaves; Liberia was recognized in the same year, for the same reasons. Haiti then became a plaything for U.S.-European power politics, with numerous U.S. interventions culminating in Woodrow Wilson's invasion of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, where his warriors -- as viciously racist as the Administration in Washington -- murdered and destroyed, reinstated virtual slavery, dismantled the constitutional system because the backward Haitians could not see the merits of turning their country into a U.S. plantation, and established the National Guards that held both countries in their grip after the Marines finally left.

Wilson's thuggery has entered history in two different versions: here and there. In the U.S., the events figure in the amusing reconstructions entitled "history" as an illustration of U.S. "humanitarian intervention" and its difficulties (for us). Haitians have somewhat different memories. "Most observers agree that the achievements of the occupation were minor; they disagree only as to the amount of damage it inflicted," Trouillot writes under the heading "unhealed sores. The damage included the acceleration of Haiti's economic, military, and political centralization, its economic dependence and sharp class divisions, the vicious exploitation of the peasantry, the internal racial conflicts much intensified by the extreme racism of the occupying forces, and perhaps worst of all, the establishment of "an army to fight the people." "The 1915-1934 U.S. occupation of Haiti," he writes, "left the country with two poisoned gifts: a weaker civil society and a solidified state apparatus."@note{@u<Ibid.>; NACLA Report on the Americas, Jan/Feb. 1994.}

A year ago, after enduring almost two years of renewed state violence, grassroots organizations, priests in hiding, tortured labor leaders, and others suffering bitterly from the violence of the security forces expressed marked opposition to the plan to dispatch 500 UN police to the terrorized country, seeing them as a cover for a U.S. intervention that evokes bitter memories of the Marine occupation. If ever noted, such reactions may be attributed to the fact that "even a benevolent occupation creates resistance...among the beneficiaries" (Harvard historian David Landes, writing about the Marine occupation). Or to

the deficiencies of people who need only a new culture and more kind tutelage of the kind he provided as director of the USAID mission in 1977-79, Lawrence Harrison writes in a "think piece" on Haiti's problems in which the U.S. military occupation merits only the words: "And some of the Marines abused their power."@note{@u<Haiti Info>, May 23, 1993. Personal interviews, Port-au-Prince, June 1993. Harrison, "Voodoo Politics," @u<Atlantic Monthly>, June 1993. For some comments, see Farmer, @u<op. cit.>; his letter in response was refused publication.}

Poor and suffering people do not have the luxury of indulging in fairy tales. Not uncommonly, their own experience gives them a grasp of realities that are well concealed by the intellectual culture. The usual victims can not so easily dismiss the record of U.S. power, which leaves little doubt that U.S. military intervention in Haiti would be the death knell for any form of democracy that "risks upsetting the traditional structures of power with which the United States has long been allied." Haitians who have lost all hope for restoration of democracy might support a military intervention that could, perhaps, reduce terror and torture. But that is the most that can be realistically expected.

The military occupation left the island under U.S. control and largely U.S.-owned. The killer and torturer Trujillo took over the Dominican Republic, remaining a great friend until he began to get out of hand in the 1950s. In Haiti, Washington reacted with some ambivalence to the murderous and brutal dictatorship of "Papa Doc" Francois Duvalier, finding him a bit too independent for its taste. Nevertheless, Kennedy provided him with military assistance, in line with his general program of establishing firm U.S. control over the hemisphere's military and police as they undertook the task of "internal security" that he assigned them in a historic 1962 decision. Kennedy also provided aid for the Francois Duvalier International Airport in exchange for the Haitian vote to expel Cuba from the OAS. When "Baby Doc" Jean-Claude took over in 1971, relations rapidly improved, and Haiti became another "darling" of the business community, along with Brazil under the neo-Nazi generals and other right-thinking folk. USAID undertook to turn Haiti into the "Taiwan of the Caribbean," forecasting "a historic change toward deeper market interdependence with the United States," Trouillot observes. U.S. taxpayers funded projects to establish assembly plants that would exploit such advantages as enormous unemployment (thanks in part to USAID policies emphasizing agroexport) and a workforce -- mainly women, as elsewhere considered more docile -- with wages of 14 cents an hour, no unions, ample terror, and the other usual amenities. The consequences were profits for U.S. corporations and their Haitian associates, and a decline of 56% in wages in the 1980s. In short, if not Taiwan exactly, Haiti was an "economic miracle" of the usual sort.

Haiti offered the Reaganites yet another opportunity to reveal their

understanding of democracy enhancement in June 1985, when its legislature unanimously adopted a new law requiring that every political party must recognize President-for-Life Jean-Claude Duvalier as the supreme arbiter of the nation, outlawing the Christian Democrats, and granting the government the right to suspend the rights of any party without reasons. The law was ratified by a majority of 99.98%. Washington was deeply impressed, as much so as it was when Mussolini won 99% of the vote in the March 1934 election, leading Roosevelt's State Department to conclude that the results "demonstrate incontestably the popularity of the Fascist regime" and of "that admirable Italian gentleman" who ran it, as Roosevelt described the dictator. These are among the many interesting facts that might be recalled as neo-Fascists now take their place openly in the political system that was reconstructed with their interests in mind as Italy was liberated by American forces 50 years ago. Curiously, all this escaped attention during the D-Day anniversary extravaganza, along with much else that is too enlightening.

The 1985 steps to enhance democracy in Haiti were "an encouraging step forward," the U.S. Ambassador informed his guests at a July 4 celebration. The Reagan Administration certified to Congress that "democratic development" was progressing, so that military and economic aid could continue to flow -- mainly into the pockets of Baby Doc and his entourage. It also informed Congress that the human rights situation was improving, as it was at the time in El Salvador and Guatemala, and today in Colombia, and quite generally when some client regime requires military aid for "internal security." The House Foreign Affairs Committee, controlled by Democrats, had given its approval in advance, calling on Reagan "to maintain friendly relations with Duvalier's non-Communist government."

To justify their perception of an "encouraging step forward" in "democratic development," the Reaganites could have recalled the vote held under Woodrow Wilson's rule after he had disbanded the Haitian parliament in punishment for its refusal to turn Haiti over to American corporations under a new U.S.-designed Constitution. Wilson's Marines organized a plebiscite in which the Constitution was ratified by a 99.9% vote, with 5% of the population participating, using "rather high handed methods to get the Constitution adopted by the people of Haiti," the State Department conceded a decade later. Baby Doc, in contrast, allowed a much broader franchise, though it is true that he demanded a slightly higher degree of acquiescence than Wilsonian idealists, Mussolini, and New Dealers. A case could be made, then, that the lessons in democracy that Washington had been laboring to impart were finally sinking in.

These gratifying developments were short-lived, however. By December 1985, popular protests were straining the resources of state terror. What happened next was described by the @u<Wall Street Journal> with engaging frankness: after "huge demonstrations," the White House

concluded "that the regime was unraveling" and that "Haiti's ruling inner circle had lost faith in" its favored democrat, Baby Doc. "As a result, U.S. officials, including Secretary of State George Shultz, began openly calling for a `democratic process' in Haiti." Small wonder that Shultz is so praised for his commitment to democracy and other noble traits.

The meaning of this call for democracy was underscored by the scenario then unfolding in the Philippines, where the army and elite made it clear they would no longer support another gangster for whom Reagan and Bush had expressed their admiration, even "love," not long before, so that the White House "began openly calling for a `democratic process'" there as well. Both events accordingly enter the canon as a demonstration of how we "served as inspiration for the triumph of democracy in our time" in those wondrous years (@<New Republic>).

Washington lent its support to the post-Duvalier National Council of Government (CNG), providing \$2.8 million in military aid in its first year, while the CNG, "generously helped by the U.S. taxpayer's money, had openly gunned down more civilians than Jean-Claude Duvalier's government had done in fifteen years" (Trouillot). After a series of coups and massacres, Reagan's Ambassador explained to Human Rights investigators that "I don't see any evidence of a policy against human rights"; there may be violence, it is true, but it is just "part of the culture." We can only watch in dismay and incomprehension.

Haitian violence thus falls into the same category as the atrocities in El Salvador at the same time, for example, the massacre at El Mozote, one of the many conducted by U.S.-trained elite battalions -- and one of the few to be admitted to History, after exposure by the UN Truth Commission. Given their origins in U.S. planning, these routine atrocities must also be "part of the culture." Or perhaps "There is no one to blame except the gods of war," as Christopher Lehmann-Haupt of the @<New York Times> observed, reviewing the "fair-minded" account by Mark Danner which "aptly denotes" the "horrifying incident" as "a central parable of the cold war" for which blame is shared equally by Salvadorans on all sides, murderers and victims alike. In contrast, atrocities organized and directed by the Soviet Union always seemed to have more determinable origins, for some reason.@note{@<NYT>, May 9, 1994.}

@subheading<2. The Democratic Interlude>

Haiti's happy ascent towards Taiwan was deflected unexpectedly in December 1990, when a real problem arose, unlike the terror and virtual enslavement of workers that are just "part of the culture." Washington made a serious error, allowing a free election in expectation of an easy victory for its candidate, Marc Bazin, a former World Bank official. To the surprise of outside observers, Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected with two-thirds of the vote (Bazin

was second with 14%), backed by a popular movement, Lavalas, which had escaped the notice of the rich folk. Outside of properly educated circles, one question came to the fore at once: What would the U.S. and its clients do to remove this cancer?

President Aristide held office from February to September, when his government was overthrown by a military coup, plunging the country into even deeper barbarism than before. There are two versions of what happened in the interim. One is given by various extremists who see Aristide as the representative of a "remarkably advanced" array of grass-roots organizations (Lavalas) that gave the large majority of the population a "considerable voice in local affairs" and even in national politics (Americas Watch); and who were impressed by Aristide's domestic policies as he "acted quickly to restore order to the government's finances" after taking power when "the economy was in an unprecedented state of disintegration" (Inter-American Development Bank). Other international lending agencies agreed, offering aid and endorsing Aristide's investment program. They were particularly impressed by the steps he took to reduce foreign debt and inflation, to raise foreign exchange reserves from near zero to \$12 million, to increase government revenues with successful tax collection measures (reaching into the kleptocracy), to streamline the bloated government bureaucracy and eliminate fictitious positions in an anti-corruption campaign, to cut back contraband trade and improve customs, and to establish a responsible fiscal system.

These actions were "welcomed by the international financial community," the IADB noted, leading to "a substantial increase in assistance." Atrocities and flight of refugees also virtually ended; indeed the refugee flow reversed, as Haitians began to return to their country in its moment of hope. The U.S. Embassy in Haiti secretly acknowledged the facts. In a [February 1991?] State Department cable, declassified in 1994, the number two person in the Embassy, Vicky Huddleston, reported to Washington on "the surprisingly successful efforts of the Aristide government,...quickly reversed after the coup" (reported by Dennis Bernstein for Pacific News Service).@note{For extensive discussion, see @u<Haiti After the Coup: Sweatshop or Real Development>," National Labor Committee Education Fund (New York), April 1993, a report based on visits and research by U.S. labor union factfinders, entirely ignored in the mainstream. Bernstein, Pacific News Service, April 4-8, 1994.}

Sophisticates in Washington and New York could understand that all of this is illusion. As Secretary of State Lansing had explained: "The experience of Liberia and Haiti show that the African race are devoid of any capacity for political organization and lack genius for government. Unquestionably there is an inherent tendency to revert to savagery and to cast aside the shackles of civilization which are irksome to their physical nature. Of course, there are many exceptions to this racial weakness, but it is true of the mass, as we

know from experience in this country. It is that which makes the negro problem practically unsolvable."

A more acceptable version of Aristide's months in offices is offered by @u<New York Times> Haiti correspondent Howard French. He reported after the coup that Aristide had governed "with the aid of fear," leaning "heavily on Lavalas, an unstructured movement of affluent idealists and long-exiled leftists" whose model was China's Cultural Revolution. Aristide's power hunger led to "troubles with civil society." Furthermore, "Haitian political leaders and diplomats say, the growing climate of vigilantism as well as increasingly strident statements by Father Aristide blaming the wealthier classes for the poverty of the masses encouraged" the coup. "Although he retains much of the popular support that enabled him to win 67% of the popular vote in the country's December 1990 elections, Father Aristide was overthrown in part because of concerns among politically active people over his commitment to the Constitution, and growing fears of political and class-based violence, which many believe the President endorsed."@note{French, @u<NYT>, Oct. 22, 1991; Jan. 12, 1992.}

Relation to fact aside, the analysis provides some lessons in Political Correctness. Two-thirds of the population and their organizations fall outside of "civil society." Those involved in the popular organizations and in local and national politics are not among the "politically active people." It is scandalous to tell the plain truth about the responsibility of the kleptocracy for "the poverty of the masses." "Fears of political and class-based violence" are limited to the months when such violence sharply declined, its traditional perpetrators being unable, temporarily, to pursue their vocation.

These lessons should be remembered as Washington moves to construct a "civil society" and "democratic political order" for this "failed state" with its degenerate culture and people, quite incapable of governing themselves.

In reality, the two versions of what happened during the democratic interlude are closer than it may seem on the surface. The "remarkably advanced" array of popular organizations that brought the large majority of the population into the political arena is precisely what frightened Washington and the mainstream generally. They have a different understanding of "democracy" and "civil society," one that offers no place to popular organizations that allow the overwhelming majority a voice in managing their own affairs. By definition, the "political leaders" of such popular organizations have only "meager" democratic credentials, and can therefore be granted only symbolic participation in the "democratic institutions" that we will construct in accord with our traditional "prodemocracy policies." So the government and media have been instructing us since the coup removed the radical extremist Aristide and his Maoist clique.

These simple truths account for much of what has happened in Haiti since Aristide's election. Trouillot concludes his study by observing that "In Haiti, the peasantry is the nation." But for policymakers, the peasantry are worthless objects except insofar as they can advance corporate profits. They may produce food for export and enrich local affiliates of U.S. agribusiness, or flock to the city to provide super-cheap labor for assembly plants, but they have no further function. It is therefore entirely natural that USAID, while providing \$100 million in assistance to the private sector, should never have provided a penny to the leading popular peasant organization, the Peasant Movement of Papaye (MPP); and that former USAID director Harrison should see no special problem when MPP members are massacred by the military forces and should dismiss with contempt its call for moves to reinstitute the popularly elected President who was committed to "bottom-up" rather than "top-down" democracy.

Similarly, it is hardly surprising that USAID should have denounced the labor reforms Aristide sought to institute and opposed his efforts to raise the minimum wage to a princely 37 cents an hour. Nor should we find it odd that USAID invested massively in the low wage assembly sector while wages sharply declined and working conditions fell to abysmal levels, but terminated all efforts to promote investment as the democratically elected government took office. Rather, USAID reacted to this catastrophe by dedicating itself still more firmly to providing the Haitian business community with what it called "technical assistance in labor relations, development of a business oriented public relations campaign, and intensified efforts to attract U.S. products assembly operations to Haiti." Given the unfortunate democratic deviation, USAID's task, in its own words, was to "work to develop sustainable dialogue between the government and the business community"; no comparable efforts for workers and peasants were needed when Haiti was run by U.S.-backed killers and torturers. All of this conforms well to USAID's conception of "processes of democratic institutional reform" as those that "further economic liberalization objectives."@note{@u<Haiti After the Coup>.

Similarly, there is no reason to be surprised that U.S. elites suddenly began to show a sensitive concern for human rights and democracy just as human rights violations precipitously declined and democracy (though not in the preferred "top-down" sense) began to flourish. Amy Wilentz observes that during Aristide's brief term, Washington suddenly became concerned with "human rights and the rule of law in Haiti." "During the four regimes that preceded Aristide," she writes, "international human-rights advocates and democratic observers had begged the State Department to consider helping the democratic opposition in Haiti. But no steps were taken by the United States to strengthen anything but the executive and the military until Aristide won the presidency. Then, all of a sudden, the United States began to think about how it could help those Haitians eager to limit the powers of the executive or to replace the government

constitutionally." The State Department "Democracy Enhancement" project was "specifically designed to fund those sectors of the Haitian political spectrum where opposition to the Aristide government could be encouraged," precisely as "prodemocracy policies" dictate. The institutions and leaders that merited such support are just the ones that survived the military coup, also no surprise. @note{Wilentz, @u<Reconstruction>, vol. 1.4 (1992).}

@subheading<3. After the Coup>

Wilentz reports further that immediately after the September 30 coup, the State Department apparently "circulated a thick notebook filled with alleged human rights violations" under Aristide -- "something it had not done under the previous rulers, Duvalierists and military men," who were deemed proper recipients for aid, including military aid, "based on unsubstantiated human-rights improvements." @u<Toronto Star> reporter Linda Diebel adds details. A "thick, bound dossier" on Aristide's alleged crimes was presented by the coup leader, General Cedras, to OAS negotiators. On October 3, U.S. Ambassador Alvin Adams summoned reporters from the @u<New York Times>, @u<Washington Post>, and other major U.S. journals to private meetings where he briefed them on these alleged crimes, reportedly presenting them with the "dossier" -- which, we may learn some day, was compiled by U.S. intelligence and provided to its favorite generals. The Ambassador and his helpers began leaking the tales that have been used since to demonstrate Aristide's meager democratic credentials and his psychological disorders. @note{Diebel, @u<Star>, Oct. 10, 1991; Nov. 14, 1993.}

The approved version is reflected by coverage of human rights abuses after the coup. As shown in a study by Boston Media Action, while the military were rampaging, the press focussed on abuses attributed to Aristide supporters, less than 1% of the total but the topic of 60% of the coverage in major journals during the two weeks following the coup, and over half of coverage in the @u<New York Times> through mid-1992. During the two-week period after the coup, Catherine Orenstein reports, the @u<Times> "spent over three times as many column inches discussing Aristide's alleged transgressions [as] it spent reporting on the ongoing military repression. Mass murders, executions, and tortures that were reported in human rights publications earned less than 4% of the space that the @u<Times> devoted to Haiti in those weeks." A week after the coup, the @u<Washington Post> accused Aristide of having organized his followers into "an instrument of real terror," ignoring the 75% reduction in human rights abuses during his term reported by human rights groups. @note{Boston Media Action report, distributed by Haiti Communications Project (Cambridge); @u<Z magazine>, March 1993. Orenstein, NACLA @u<Report on the Americas>, July/August 1993.}

While attention was directed to the really important topic of the

"class-based violence" of Aristide and the popular movements, the U.S.-trained military and police were conducting their reign of terror, "ruthlessly suppressing Haiti's once diverse and vibrant civil society," Americas Watch reported. Though "Washington's capacity to curb attacks on civil society was tremendous, this power was largely unexercised by the Bush administration," which "sought to convey an image of normalcy" while forcefully returning refugees. The terror is functional: it ensures that even if Aristide is permitted to return, "he would have difficulty transforming his personal popularity into the organized support needed to exert civilian authority," Americas Watch observed in early 1993, quoting priests and others who feared that the destruction of the popular social organizations that "gave people hope" had already undermined the great promise of Haiti's first democratic experiment. @note{Americas Watch and National Coalition for Haitian Refugees, @u<Silencing a People> (Human Rights Watch, 1993).}

The coup and ensuing terror revived the flow of refugees that had lapsed under Aristide. The Bush Administration ordered the Coast Guard and Navy to force them back, or to imprison them in the U.S. military base in Guantanamo until a court order terminated the shocking practices there. During the presidential campaign, Clinton bitterly condemned these cruel policies. On taking over in January 1993, he at once tightened the noose, imposing a still harsher blockade. Forceful return of refugees continued in violation of international law and human rights conventions. Clinton's increased brutality proved to be a grand success. Refugee flow, which had reached over 30,000 in 1992, sharply declined under Clinton's ministrations, to about the level of 1989, before the sharp decline under Aristide. @note{@u<USA Today>, March 2, 1994.}

The official story is that these are "economic refugees," not victims of political persecution who would be eligible for asylum. The onset of poverty can be quite precisely dated: to the date of the coup. During Aristide's term, refugee flow was slight, skyrocketing after the coup though economic sanctions were minimal. These oddities are noted by the indispensable journal @u<Haiti Info> published in Port-au-Prince, in a discussion of a cable circulated to high officials by U.S. Ambassador William Swing. The 11-page cable, full of racist slanders, alleges that "the Haitian left manipulates and fabricates human rights abuses as a propaganda tool" and is "wittingly or unwittingly assisted in this effort" by human rights organizations and the civilian monitors of the UN and OAS missions; all "comsymps" in the terminology of an earlier day. The Embassy dismissed with a sneer the reports of "the sudden epidemic of rapes" on the grounds that "For a range of cultural reasons (not pleasant to contemplate), rape has never been considered or reported as a serious crime here." The testimony of a man that his wife was raped and that he was badly beaten under police custody, corroborated by a foreign nurse, is dismissed because he chose asylum in Canada (granted at once), avoiding the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) -- a

transparent admission of iniquity. Clinton's Embassy attributes problems in Haiti to "a high level of structural, or endemic, violence," which, again, is just "part of the culture." Like the poverty that causes refugee flight, the "structural" factors causing violence had an unexplained 8-month gap: during Aristide's tenure even his most vehement opponents, the USAID-supported "human rights" advocates who moved quickly into power after the coup, could compile only 25 cases of "mob violence" and four crimes that could be considered political, a tiny fraction of the terror before, not to speak of the atrocities that followed the coup.

Kenneth Roth, the director of Human Rights Watch, comments that the cable reveals the "extreme antipathy for Aristide" in the Embassy and its "willingness to play down human rights abuses to prevent a political momentum to build for [Aristide's] return." It "reflects a dislike and distrust of Aristide that has been widely felt in the Administration -- though voiced only privately," @u<Times> correspondent Elaine Sciolino adds. In reality, the dislike is quite public and widely reported, along with the fact that it has sent a very clear message to the Haitian rulers, military and civilian.@note{@u<Haiti Info>, May 21; Sciolino, May 9, 1994.}

As the Embassy cable was released, an experienced INS asylum officer in Haiti went public with his charges that thousands of "egregious cases of persecution" were rejected by the Haitian INS office, where the "entire process" of asylum review "had been politicized" and under 1% of legitimate petitions were accepted by racist and contemptuous officials; similar accounts have been documented by human rights organizations, who have also denounced the very idea that petitioners should have to identify themselves to the murderers by appearing at the INS office. At the same time, a "Top Secret" memo of the U.S. Interests Section in Cuba was leaked. Addressed to the Secretary of State, the CIA, and the INS, the document complains about the lack of genuine claims of political persecution in Cuba, contrary to policy needs. The usual silence prevailed.@note{Dennis Bernstein, Pacific News Service, April 4; @u<Cuba Action>, Spring 1994.}

Meanwhile refugees from Cuba receive royal treatment while Haitians are returned to terror. That is nothing new. Of the more than 24,000 Haitians intercepted by U.S. forces from 1981 to Aristide's takeover in 1991, 11 were granted asylum as victims of political persecution, in comparison with 75,000 out of 75,000 Cubans. In these years of terror, Washington allowed 28 asylum claims. During Aristide's tenure, with violence and repression radically reduced, 20 were allowed from a refugee pool perhaps 1/50th the scale. Practice returned to normal after the military coup and the renewed terror. As always, human rights are understood in purely instrumental terms: as a weapon to be selectively deployed for power interests, nothing more.

The democratically elected President will be acceptable to Washington

and elite opinion generally only if he abandons his popular mandate, ceding effective power to the "moderates" in the business world. The "moderates" are those who do not favor slaughter and mutilation, preferring to see the population driven to agroexport and the low-wage assembly sector. They constitute "civil society," in the technical sense. Since the coup, the U.S. has demanded that Aristide agree to "broaden the government" in such a way as to place the "moderates" in power. Insofar as he refuses to transfer power into these proper hands, he is an "extremist" whom we can hardly support.

While these are the basic terms of respectable discourse, the spectrum is not entirely uniform. It ranges from the far right, which is honest and outspoken in its call for dismantling Haitian democracy, to the more nuanced versions of the liberal Democrats. Taking a stand in the middle, George Bush calls for abandoning Aristide because "he has become unreliable" and even "turned on our president the other day" (May 1994). Aristide should be dumped because his "undemocratic behavior...included fostering violence against his opponents," according to another noted pacifist who has distinguished himself particularly for his dedication to legality and democratic principle (Elliott Abrams).

Moving toward the liberal end, a Clinton official explained in the last days of 1993 that "We're not talking about dumping Aristide or about military power-sharing. But we have two adversaries who don't want to compromise and we have to find enough of a middle to make a functioning democracy," marginalizing the extremists on both sides. The elected President should be "restored to power, at least nominally," World Peace Foundation president and historian Robert Rotberg added; but also at most nominally, as all understand. The Washington director of the Inter-American Dialogue, Peter Hakim, urged in May 1994 that "the US ought to separate out the notion of protecting human rights, and reestablishing some semblance of society in Haiti, from restoring Aristide to power." "So it is only honest for the United States to tell Father Aristide that he has little hope of returning to power without making large political compromises," as the @u<Times> editors phrased the common understanding a few weeks later. In short, the traditional "prodemocracy policies."@note{Bush, John Laidler, @u<BG>, May 13; Abrams, @u<WSJ>, May 6, 1994. Pamela Constable, @u<BG>, Dec. 25; Rotberg, @u<BG>, Dec. 29, 1993. Peter Grier, @u<CSM>, May 6; @u<NYT>, Feb. 21, 1994.}

The basic idea was outlined by Secretary of State Warren Christopher during his confirmation hearings. Christopher "expressed support for Father Aristide," Elaine Sciolino reported, "but stopped short of calling for his reinstatement as President. `There is no question in my mind that because of the election, he has to be part of the solution to this,' Mr. Christopher said. `I don't have a precise system worked out in my mind as to how he would be part of the solution, but certainly he cannot be ignored in the

matter'."@note{@u<NYT>, Jan. 15, 1993.} With this ringing endorsement of democracy, the Clinton Administration took charge.

Across the spectrum, it is taken for granted that we have both the right and the competence to "establish some semblance of society" in Haiti, whose people are so retrograde as to have developed a "remarkably advanced" array of grass-roots organizations that gave the majority of the population a place in the public arena. Plainly, they desperately need our tutelage.

@subheading<4. The Clinton Compromise>

To much acclaim, Washington finally succeeded in compelling Aristide to transfer authority to the "moderates." Under severe pressure, in July 1993 the Haitian President accepted the U.S.-UN terms for settlement, which were to allow him to return four months later in a "compromise" with the gangsters and killers. He agreed to appoint as Prime Minister a businessman from the traditional mulatto elite, Robert Malval, who is "known to be opposed to the populist policies during Aristide's seven months in power," the press announced with relief, noting that he is "generally well regarded by the business community," "respected by many businessmen who supported the coup that ousted the President," and seen as "a reassuring choice" by coup-supporters.

Shortly after these happy developments took place, UN/OAS observers reported, with little notice, that they were "very concerned that there is no perceptible lessening of human rights violations," and a few weeks later, reported an increase in "arbitrary executions and suspicious deaths" in the weeks following the UN-brokered accord, over one a day in the Port-au-Prince area alone; "the mission said that many of the victims were members of popular organizations and neighborhood associations and that some of the killers were police," wire services reported.@note{AP, @u<BG>, July 18, 27; @u<NYT>, July 26; Reuters, @u<BG>, July 27; Reuters, @u<BG>, Aug. 12, 1993.}

Expected to be a transitional figure, Malval resigned at the year's end. His presence did, however, serve a useful role for Washington and its media, diverting attention to a "political settlement" while attacks on the popular organizations and general terror mounted, Aristide's promised return was blocked, and new initiatives were put forth to transfer power to traditional power centers ("broadening the government"). Malval's presence also offered the press a great method to bring out Aristide's unreasonable intransigence. He couldn't even come to terms with "his handpicked Prime Minister," a phrase that ritually accompanied the name "Robert Malval." In a typical exercise, Howard French opened a report of Malval's resignation by writing: "Three days after formally resigning, the handpicked Prime Minister of Haiti's exiled President lashed out this weekend at the man who appointed him" -- hammering home the message in the fashion that

became so routine as to be comical. Malval described Aristide as an "erratic figure" with a "serious ego problem," French continued, referring to his commitment to restore the democratically-elected government.@note{@u<NYT>, Dec. 20, 1993.}

As the date for Aristide's scheduled October 30 return approached, atrocities mounted high enough to gain some attention, though no action. Amidst reports of "terrifying stories" of terror, murder, and threats to exterminate all members of the popular organizations, the Clinton Administration announced that the UN Mission "will rely on the Haitian military and police to maintain order" -- that is, on the killers. "It is not a peacekeeping role," Secretary of Defense Aspin explained: "We are doing something other than peacekeeping here." Meanwhile, the press emphasized the concerns of U.S. officials that Aristide "isn't moving strongly to restore democratic rights," from his exile in Washington. "Even as the situation has grown worse, foreign diplomats have increasingly blamed Father Aristide for what they say is his failure to take constructive initiatives," Howard French wrote, using the standard device to disguise propaganda as reporting.@note{Pamela Constable, @u<BG>, Oct. 1; Steven Holmes, @u<NYT>, Oct. 1; @u<WSJ>, Oct. 1; Howard French, @u<NYT>, Sept. 22, 1993.}

The stage was set for ignoring the October deadline, as the U.S. stood helplessly by, unable to bring the uncompromising and violent extremists on both sides to accept "democracy."

Reviewing these mid-1993 developments, Ian Martin, who directed the OAS/UN mission from April through December 1993, writes that one basic problem was U.S. insistence on adding "a mostly American military component to the negotiators' proposals." Aristide's call for reducing the Haitian army to 1000 men was rejected. "The Haitian high command, for its part, sought U.S. assistance to ensure the army's future." The generals trusted the U.S. and "mistrusted the U.N. and the proposal for the Canadians and French, both more committed supporters of Aristide than the United States, to take the lead in the police contingent. The U.S. hoped to preserve the military -- an institution it had often assisted and in fact had created for purposes of internal control during the American occupation of 1915-34." Haitian army "resistance was encouraged whenever they perceived that the United States, despite its rhetoric of democracy, was ambivalent about that power shift" to the popular elements represented by Aristide. There was no shortage of such occasions.

The crucial signal, Martin and others agree, came on October 11, when the USS @u<Harlan County> was scheduled to disembark U.S. and Canadian troops at Port-au-Prince. The military organized "a hostile demonstration of armed thugs," Martin observes, and "instead of waiting in the harbor while the Haitian military was pressured to ensure a safe landing, the @u<Harlan County> turned tail for

Guantanamo Bay," leaving officials of the UN/OAS mission "aghast"; they "had been neither consulted nor informed of the decision by President Bill Clinton's National Security Council to retreat." "The organizers of the Haitian protest could hardly believe their success," Martin continues. The leader of the paramilitary organization FRAPH, responsible for much of the terror, said that "My people kept wanting to run away, but I took the gamble and urged them to stay. Then the Americans pulled out! We were astonished. That was the day FRAPH was actually born. Before, everyone said we were crazy, suicidal, that we would all be burned if Aristide returned. But now we know he is never going to return." The military got the message too, loud and clear.

Perhaps they were even notified in advance. @u<New York Daily News> correspondent Juan Gonzalez learned of the October 11 port demonstration the day before at a Duvalierist meeting attended by U.S. Embassy personnel. The following day, he asked in print: "How can two @u<Daily News> reporters who have only visited Haiti on a few occasions learn beforehand of secret plans to sabotage the landing of our troops, while our vaunted officialdom claims it was caught flat-footed?" How indeed.

Another possible line of communication is suggested in a report by Father Antoine Adrien, former head of Aristide's religious order in Haiti and a close associate. Just before the ship "turned tail," he informed the Catholic Church press that Haitian military officers had not only attended training school in Fort Benning, Ga., in 1992, but that "some were there as recently as the previous week" -- October 1993. "How are you going to tell those people they have no backing in the United States?," Father Adrien asked. That Haitian army officers received training in the U.S. after the coup was confirmed in an internal Pentagon document, including eight officers who started courses in early 1992. The program they joined is designed to expose "future leaders of foreign defense establishments" to "American values, regard for human rights and democratic institutions," according to the Defense Secretary's report to the President for 1993. Earlier graduates include the leading killers in Haiti, Central America, and elsewhere.

What lay behind the decision to turn tail was explained by Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Walter Slocombe, who "boasted at a cocktail party that by turning back the U.S.S. Harlan County, he had helped save the United States from a `small war'," the @u<Times> reported six months later: "He vowed that the Pentagon would not risk American soldiers' lives to put `that psychopath' back in power."@note{Martin, @u<Foreign Policy>, Summer 1994. Gonzalez, @u<NYDN>, Oct. 12, cited by Kim Ives, NACLA @u<Report on the Americas>, Jan./Feb., 1994. Patricia Zapor, @u<Birmingham Catholic Press>, Oct. 15, 1993; Paul Quinn-Judge, @u<BG>, Dec. 6, 1993. Elaine Sciolino, et al., @u<NYT>, April 29, 1994.}

While messages were coming through to the military, the Haitian people were deprived of the one voice they longed to hear. "Senior Clinton administration officials are embroiled in a fight over whether to allow...Aristide to broadcast into the junta-ruled country using airborne U.S. military transmitters," Paul Quinn-Judge reported in May 1994. The USIA is opposed, fearing that "the plan may violate international law," always a prime concern in Washington. USIA was also concerned that such broadcasts "would provide Aristide with an uncomfortably direct means to communicate with Haitians, who elected him by an overwhelming margin in 1990." His oratory has been known to "create problems," a classified USIA memorandum of May 23 noted, asking whether "we wish to have the responsibility for having given him the means to broadcast whatever he chooses to Haiti." He might even challenge the U.S. publicly "the first time we refuse to air something." It wouldn't even suffice to have him submit his scripts in advance, because of the "highly nuanced language and context" of a radio broadcast; who knows what thoughts this devious creature might convey by his tone of voice? "Debate over the idea...underscores the continuing ambivalence and nervousness with which some senior officials view Aristide," Quinn-Judge observed. @note{@u<BG>, May 28, 1994.}

After the military coup, the OAS instituted a toothless embargo, which the Bush Administration reluctantly joined, while making clear that it was not to be taken seriously. The reasons were explained a year later by Howard French: "Washington's deep-seated ambivalence about a leftward-tilting nationalist whose style diplomats say has sometimes been disquietingly erratic" precludes any meaningful support for sanctions against the military rulers. "Despite much blood on the army's hands, United States diplomats consider it a vital counterweight to Father Aristide, whose class-struggle rhetoric...threatened or antagonized traditional power centers at home and abroad." Aristide's "call for punishment of the military leadership" that had slaughtered and tortured thousands of people "reinforced a view of him as an inflexible and vindictive crusader," and heightened Washington's "antipathy" towards the "clumsy" and "erratic" extremist who has aroused great "anger" because of "his tendency toward ingratitude."@note{French, @u<NYT>, Sept. 27; Oct. 8, 1992.}

The "vital counterweight" is therefore to hold total power while the "leftward tilting nationalist" remains in exile, awaiting the "eventual return" that Bill Clinton promised on the eve of his inauguration. Meanwhile, the "traditional power centers" in Haiti and the U.S. will carry on with class struggle as usual, employing such terror as may be needed in order for plunder to proceed unhampered. And as the London @u<Financial Times> added at the same time, Washington was proving oddly ineffective in detecting the "lucrative use of the country in the transshipment of narcotics" by which "the military is funding its oil and other necessary imports," financing

the necessary terror and rapacity -- though U.S. forces seem able to find every fishing boat carrying miserable refugees. Nor had Washington figured out a way to freeze the assets of "civil society" or to hinder their shopping trips to Miami and New York, or to induce its Dominican clients to monitor the border to impede the flow of goods that takes care of the wants of "civil society" while the embargo remains "at best, sieve-like."@note{Canute James, @u<FT>, Dec. 10, 1992.}

Meanwhile Washington continued to provide Haitian military leaders with intelligence on narcotics trafficking -- which they naturally used to expedite their activities and tighten their grip on power. It is not easy to intercept narcotraffickers, the press explained, because "Haiti has no radar," and evidently the U.S. Navy and Air Force lack the means to remedy this deficiency.@note{Douglas Farah, @u<WP weekly>, Nov. 1-7, 1993.}

Under Clinton, matters only got worse. An April 1994 report of Human Rights Watch/Americas documents the increasing terror and State Department apologetics and evasions, condemning the Administration for having "embraced a murderous armed force as a counterweight to a populist president it distrusts."

On February 4, 1992, the Bush Administration lifted the embargo for assembly plants, "under heavy pressure from American businesses with interests in Haiti," the @u<Washington Post> reported, with its editorial endorsement; the lobbying effort was assisted by Elliott Abrams, Human Rights Watch noted. For January-October 1992, U.S. trade with Haiti came to \$265 million, according to the Department of Commerce.@note{HRW and National Coalition for Haitian Refugees, @u<Terror Prevails in Haiti>, April 1994. @u<WP weekly>, Feb. 17, 10, 1992 (Lee Hockstader, editorial). See my "Class Struggle as Usual," @u<Letters from Lexington> (Common Courage, 1993); reprinted from @u<Lies of Our Times>, March 1993.}

As Clinton took over, the embargo became still more porous. The Dominican border was left wide open. Meanwhile, U.S. companies continued to be exempted from the embargo -- so as to ease its effects on the population, the Administration announced with a straight face; only exemptions for U.S. firms have this curious feature. There were many heartfelt laments about the suffering of poor Haitians under the embargo, but one had to turn to the underground press in Haiti, the alternative media here, or an occasional letter to learn that the major peasant organization (MPP), church coalitions, labor organizations, and the National Federation of Haitian Students continued to call for a real embargo.@note{Eyal Press and Jennifer Washburn, letters, @u<NYT>, March 3, 1994.}

Curiously, some of those most distressed by the impact of the embargo on the Haitian poor were the most forceful advocates of a still

harsher embargo on Cuba, notably liberal Democrat Robert Torricelli, author of the stepped-up embargo that the Bush Administration accepted under pressure from the Clintonites. Evidently, hunger causes no pain to Cuban children, another oddity that passed unnoticed, along with the U.S.-Haiti trade figures.

Clinton's tinkering with the embargo also passed without comment here, though the facts are known, and occasionally even leak through, as in a tiny Feb. 13 Reuters dispatch in the @<New York Times> reporting efforts of human rights advocates to convince the President to observe the embargo. "US imports from Haiti rose by more than half last year [1993]," the @<Financial Times> reported in London, "thanks in part to an exemption granted by the US Treasury for imports of goods assembled in Haiti from US parts." U.S. exports to Haiti also rose in 1993. Exports from Haiti to the United States included food (fruits and nuts, citrus fruit or melons) from the starving country, which increased by a factor of 35 from January-July 1992 to January-July 1993. The federal government was among the purchasers of the baseballs imported from Haiti (duty free), stitched by women who work 11 hour days with a half-hour break in unbearable heat without running water or a working toilet, for 10 cents an hour if they can meet the quota (few can), using toxic materials without protection so that the U.S. importer can advertise proudly that their softballs are "hand-dipped for maximum bonding." The manufacturers are the wealthy Haitian families who supported the coup and have gained new riches during the embargo, along with others profiting handsomely from the black market, such as the fuel supplier for the U.S. embassy. The "assembly zone" loophole, criticized by U.S. labor unions and at the UN Security Council by France and Canada in January, was extended by the Clinton Administration on April 25, 1994, four days after announcing that it would seek to tighten UN sanctions; the latter announcement was reported. On the same day, the U.S. Coast Guard returned 98 refugees to military authorities, 18 of them at once arrested.

"The Clinton administration still formally declares its support for Mr Aristide, but scarcely disguises its wish for a leader more accommodating to the military," the @<Financial Times> reported, while "European diplomats in Washington are scathing in their comments on what they see as the US's abdication of leadership over Haiti."@note{Reuters, @<NYT>, Feb. 14; George Graham, @<FT>, Feb. 20, 1994. Report of National Labor Committee Education Fund, Feb. 15; April 1994. See Charles Kernaghan, @<Multinational Monitor>, March 1994; @<Counterpunch> (IPS), April 1, 1994. @<Haiti Progress>, April 27-May 3, 1994. Oil, Douglas Farah, @<WP weekly>, May 30, 1994. Note that the trade increases are not attributable to the rescinding of the embargo from July to October 1993.}

In his January 1994 testimony to Congress on "Threats to the U.S. and Its Interests Abroad," the Director of the CIA predicted that Haiti "probably will be out of fuel and power very shortly." "Our

intelligence efforts are focused on detecting attempts to circumvent the embargo and monitoring its impact," and "any indication of an imminent exodus." The "Threats to the U.S." were contained with the usual selectivity and skill. "Exodus" from the charnel house was effectively blocked, while the press reported an "oil boom" as "diplomats expressed amazement at the extent of the trafficking" organized by the Haitian and Dominican armies, and the former assured reporters that "The military is not concerned about fuel shortages; it has plenty."@note{Opening Statement, Director of Central Intelligence, U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Jan. 25, 1994. Howard French, @u<NYT>, Feb. 14, March 13, 1994.}

The Clinton Administration has scarcely departed from the prescriptions outlined by the @u<Washington Post> and @u<New York Times> as it came into office.@note{@u<WP>, Dec. 20, 1992; @u<NYT>, Jan. 9, 1993.} The preferred solution, John Goshko explained in the @u<Post>, would "delay indefinitely" the return to Haiti of the "radical priest with anti-American leanings" whose "strident populism led the Haitian armed forces to seize power," and would "allow Bazin or some other prime minister to govern in his place." Bazin was then prime minister under army rule, but was having problems, because although "well-known and well-regarded in the United States," unfortunately "the masses in Haiti consider him a front man for military and business interests." A replacement would therefore be needed to represent the interests of the moderates. In the @u<Times>, Howard French indicated the scale of the required delay: "In the past, diplomats have said the Haitian President could return only after a substantial interim period during which the country's economy was revived and all its institutions, from the army itself to the judiciary to health care and education, were stabilized." That should overcome the danger of Aristide's "personalist and electoralist politics." But unfortunately, the troublesome priest has been recalcitrant: "Father Aristide and many of his supporters have held out for a quick return," undermining the moderate course.

As understood on all sides, the "delay" need not be too long. Aristide's term ends in 1996, and he is barred from running again. By then military terror should have sufficiently intimidated the population and demolished popular organizations so that "free elections" can be tolerated, as in the Central American terror states, without too much fear of any threat to "civil society" from the rabble.

@subheading<5. The May 1994 Reversal>

Plans proceeded on course into early 1994. By then, the cynicism and brutality of U.S. policy had become too blatant for the usual cover-up, particularly after Clinton's point man Lawrence Pezzullo revealed in congressional testimony that the plan that the Administration had touted as the product of negotiations among Haitian democrats,

denouncing Aristide for his intransigence in rejecting it (it made no provision for his return), had in fact been produced by the State Department, which brought to Washington selected Haitians to ratify it, among them Duvalierist collaborators of the murderous police chief Col. Francois. Something new was needed.

Pezzullo was replaced by William Gray, a more credible voice. In May Clinton instituted a new and more humane refugee policy, which "will mean the forcible return of 95 percent of boat people instead of 100 percent," a Human Rights Watch Haiti analyst observed, pointing out that "The US policy excludes people who are not high profile but are persecuted nonetheless." The new policy is just "window dressing," the national refugee coordinator of Amnesty International added.

But 5% of the boat people fleeing persecution is beyond what the United States can be expected to handle. It will "devastate Florida," a Republican congressional staff member complained. Explaining a few days later why the U.S. might have to invade, "Mr. Clinton saved his strongest warning for what he described as 'the continuous possibility' that Haitians left poor and desperate under military rule would join in a 'massive outflow' and seek refuge in the United States," the @u<Times> reported; the terms "poor and desperate" convey the doctrine that these are economic refugees. Overcrowded and destitute, the United States plainly cannot bear the burden of accepting refugees or even housing them until their claims of persecution are rejected; and surely it has no historical responsibilities in the matter. The President piteously pleaded with other countries to help us in our plight.@note{Peter Grier, @u<CSM>, May 16; Douglas Jehl, @u<NYT>, 1994.}

Curiously, the anguished debate over this issue missed the obvious candidate: Tanzania, which had just then accommodated hundreds of thousands of Rwandans, and could surely come to the rescue of the beleaguered United States by accepting a few thousand more black faces.

On May 21, an embargo was announced which, for the first time, may have some serious intent. The "assembly plant" exemption was quietly removed, and the Dominican border was (at least briefly) closed. The long-known involvement of the Haitian military in narcotrafficking was also officially reported. "We're not going to say, 'Let the masses and the middle class suffer, but the very wealthy don't have to pay a price,'" a senior Administration official stated. "Even Wealthy Haitians Starting to Feel Pinched," a @u<Times> headline read, again letting out the real story of the efforts to "restore democracy" during the 2 1/2 years since the coup. Government statements and press reports tacitly conceded what had always been clear: that the U.S. has the means, far short of military intervention, to restore democracy in Haiti, but had no intention of doing so, and still does not. What has always been required is a clear declaration of intent

to restore democracy, but that cannot be given, because there is no such intent. The military and their civilian allies understand that perfectly well.

In the following weeks, the U.S. banned commercial air flights and financial transactions, while leaving crucial loopholes open. Personal assets of the coup supporters were not frozen, so they can withdraw funds from U.S. bank accounts at will and transfer money to banks abroad, Administration officials acknowledged -- a matter that may be academic, the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Kweisi Mfume, observed, since "the dictators of Haiti have long ago moved their assets in anticipation of this." The sanctions also permit the families that have long dominated the economy to hold on to the monopoly of the food trade that is a major source of their wealth, including the Mevs family, which is building "a huge new oil depot here to help the army defy the embargo," French reported, adding that "Washington's hesitancy in taking firm action against the business elite and the army is a result of a long history of close ties and perceived common interests," if not fear of "a spate of embarrassing revelations made by Haitians in reprisal for a crackdown."

After sanctions were finally imposed in May 1994, a U.S. diplomat conceded that the continuing failure to move against the richest families has left "a perception out there of sending mixed messages and having double agendas." Other diplomats and Haitian experts agree that the decision not to target key civilian supporters of the coup is yet another mixed signal, noting particularly the relief granted the Mev, Brandt, Acra and Madsen families, who "still have a role to play," a U.S. Embassy source informed the press, though they have made no effort to disguise their support for the coup. Washington is "imposing sanctions designed to strangle the country into restoring Aristide at the same time they are telling the people who backed the coup and are in business with the military in keeping Aristide out that they are free to lead their privileged lives," another diplomat said. Haitian Senators who lead the anti-Aristide movement were not denied their permanent U.S. resident status, including Bernard Sansaricq, who played a leading role in installing the puppet civilian government with its new "president" Emile Jonassaint, appointed to replace Aristide. {note{Drugs, Tim Weiner, @u<NYT>, April 22; Howard French, @u<NYT>, June 8, 1994. Stephen Greenhouse, French, @u<NYT>, June 11, May 25; Pamela Constable, @u<BG>, June 11; Kenneth Freed, @u<LA Times>, May 25, 1994.}}

Meanwhile, the serious work of undermining the basis for democracy continues unhampered. By the time Clinton took office, as Americas Watch reported, the terror had already decimated the popular organizations that would allow Aristide "to exert civilian authority," even if he were eventually permitted to return. As Clinton finally agreed to sanctions 16 months later, Douglas Farah reported in the @u<Washington Post> that "the army and its allies have damaged

democratic institutions and grass-roots organizations that had begun to grow in Haiti to such an extent that they would take years to rebuild even if Haiti's military leaders surrendered power, according to diplomats and human rights monitors." "The Duvalierist system will continue, with or without the return of Aristide," the leader of a now-clandestine pro-Aristide group said, a judgment endorsed by "a veteran human rights worker" who prefers anonymity "because of numerous threats against his life." "The Duvalierists have many fine days ahead of them in this country," he said: "People are losing their ability to make things happen here, and it will take many years to reverse that under the best of circumstances." Even nonpolitical community organizations have been repressed, thousands of community leaders have been driven into hiding along with hundreds of thousands of others, while over 4000 have been murdered outright. The "massive terrorism," Farah reports, is "aimed at dismantling the last vestiges of organized support" for Aristide, while the civilian allies of the army and police in FRAPH have "become a very efficient machine of repression," which will remain the only authority even if Aristide were to return, the same human rights worker comments. Members of the popular organizations interviewed in hiding have "applied for political asylum at the U.S. Embassy and been denied."@note{@u<WP weekly>, April 25, May 16, 1994.}

To ensure a smooth transition to the intended post-coup system, with the "moderates" in charge and the Duvalierists preserving order, FRAPH and USAID-funded groups linked to it are establishing a monopoly of social services, so that "the poor who are compliant and docile get health services," a Haitian doctor explains. This is the "soft side" of counterinsurgency, on the model of Guatemala and other terror states. Meanwhile we are to ponder the question of whether Haitians "can muster the maturity and cohesiveness to forge a working democracy" (Howard French), or whether we must labor for decades in a (perhaps vain) effort to overcome the defects -- cultural, if not genetic -- that had been discerned by Wilson's Secretary of State and Carter's USAID director in Haiti.@note{NACLA, Observers Delegation report, Jan. 1994; @u<Report on the Americas>, Mar/April 1994; @u<Haiti News Digest> (Haiti Communications Project, Boston), May 1994. French, @u<NYT>, June 6, 1994.}

As the Bush Administration prepared to hand over the reins, a senior UN official observed that its dislike of Aristide was an open secret: "Two lines about Haiti co-existed at the time. There was the line about 'return to democracy,' which was for public consumption. And then there was a second line, spoken privately within the administration. And the Haitian military knew it perfectly well." A year later, after the @u<Harlan County> affair gave birth to FRAPH, a French military adviser updated the picture: "Do you know what the real problem is? The Americans don't want Aristide back, and they want the rest of us out" -- "the rest of us" being Canada, France and Venezuela, the other three of "Aristide's so-called Four

Friends."@note{Kate Doyle, @u<World Policy Journal>, Spring 1994;
Linda Diebel, @u<Toronto Star>, Nov. 14, 1993.}

That this judgment is exactly right has been apparent throughout. It should be clear, however, that the issue is not Aristide personally. The problem is the forces he represents: the lively and vibrant popular movements that swept him into office, greatly alarming the rich and powerful in Haiti and their American counterparts, and teaching lessons in democracy that have to be silenced, for who can tell what minds they might reach?

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@flushleft{Noam Chomsky
June 14, 1994}

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