



## “Canada in Haiti: Considering the 3-D Approach”

November 3-4 2005

Waterloo, Ontario

## Conference Report

Andrew S. Thompson



## Introduction and Background to the Conference

This report is one of the outcomes of a conference in which academics from Canada, the United States and Haiti, officials from the Canadian Departments of Defence, Foreign Affairs and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and representatives from civil society in Canada came together to examine Canada's past and current engagements in Haiti. The conference was co-hosted by four academic organizations, all of which are located in the Waterloo area: the University of Waterloo's Centre on Foreign Policy; the Laurier Centre for Military and Strategic and Disarmament Studies (LCMSDS) at Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU); the Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS), also at WLU; and the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI). It took place on 3-4 November 2005 at CIGI. For the four organizations listed above, this was the second conference of a larger series on "fragile states and the '3-D' approach"; the first took place in spring 2005, and focused on both the challenges of governance facing Afghanistan, as well as Canada's current presence and commitment to re-building the state.

The official title of the second conference was *Canada in Haiti: Considering the 3-D Approach*. The title was chosen for a number of reasons. The first half of the equation – "Canada in Haiti" – refers to the crisis that erupted in Haiti in 2004. In February of that year, an insurgency forced President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to flee the country, precipitated the establishment of a transitional government, and prompted members of the international community, including Canada, to intervene militarily for the second time in the last decade. The second half of the conference title – "Considering the 3-D Approach" – is a direct reference to the Canadian government's 2005 *International Policy Statement* (IPS), which advocates a three-pronged strategy to Canadian involvement in

Haiti that blends Canada's diplomatic, defence and development presence in order to form a coordinated engagement.<sup>1</sup>

The timing of the conference was by no means an accident. The date was chosen so that the conference would coincide with the scheduled return of democratic rule to Haiti. On 22 June, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1608. With that resolution, the international community set the end of 2005 as the timetable for a new round of elections, and named 7 February 2006 as the date that a new government would take office.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the process of moving forward has been less than smooth. At the time of writing this report, the elections had yet to take place. When they will occur, or who the candidates might be for that matter, remains unclear.

The primary purpose of the conference was to discuss how Canada and the rest of the international community might assist Haiti in shedding its current label as a "fragile state".<sup>3</sup> One of the aims of the organizers was to further the understanding of Haiti's troubles by analyzing the current situation from a number of different perspectives. Over the course of the two days, participants explored the historical roots of the violence, and critiqued the past interventions by the international community. They also assessed previous attempts at delivering aid and promoting economic growth, and discussed the overwhelming need for both reform of the criminal justice system, as well as a nation-wide disarmament program. Participants also discussed possible ways forward for stabilizing Haiti. A number of these ideas can be found in the conclusion of the report. However, before proceeding, readers should be aware of a couple of qualifications to this report. Because Chatham House rules were in effect for the conference, none of these ideas have been attributed directly to any individual or organization. Also, some readers may find that the tone of the report is deeply

---

<sup>1</sup> See Government of Canada, *Canada's International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1608, S/RES/1608 (2005), 22 June 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Along with the Balkans and Afghanistan, the Government of Canada has labelled Haiti a "fragile state". See *Canada's International Policy Statement: Diplomacy*, p. 10.

pessimistic. Unfortunately, this is an accurate reflection of the mood of the conference. There was a general sense that Haiti's future – at least its immediate future – looks bleak; indeed, the challenges facing both Haiti and the international community appear so great that there is little prospect of any meaningful improvement, even if a successful election does take place.

### The Current Crisis

At present, Haitian society is highly volatile. It is a country that is polarized politically, and lawlessness, human rights abuses and violence are widespread. Those responsible for the instability include pro- and anti-Aristide gangs, "rogue police officers," "former rebels" and paramilitaries, "demobilized members of the former Haitian Armed Forces," and members of organized criminal gangs.<sup>4</sup> In addition to these problems, Haiti is also struggling with tremendous environmental damages, high rates of HIV/Aids, and a state infrastructure that is virtually non-existent. In short, society has lost any sense of cohesiveness.

The current crisis began in early 2004, as anti-Aristide sentiment rose considerably throughout the country. Many sectors of the Haitian population, including those that had initially supported him, began to call on him to step down. To curb the dissent, Aristide's government continued to use the police and armed gangs known as *chimères* to silence its opponents, a practice that had been going on for much of Aristide's second term as President. This tactic further fuelled the opposition to his government. Under the command of Guy Philippe and Louis-Jodel Chamblain, a group of insurgents consisting of former ex-members of the disbanded Haitian military (FAdH), former FRAPH, as well as a group of paramilitary fighters known as the Cannibal Army, launched an attack in Gonaïves on 5 February. Violence quickly spread to other parts of the country as the insurgency gained momentum. The former *Chefs de Section*, the rural police chiefs dating back to the Duvalier era, even joined the ranks of the anti-Aristide

---

<sup>4</sup> Amnesty International, "Disarmament Delayed, Justice Denied," AMR 36/005/2005, 28 July 2005, 1.

rebellion. So too did the prisoners whom the insurgents had freed as part of an orchestrated jail break. Before long, the insurgents had gained control over much of the northern and central regions of the country. Predictably, Philippe and his supporters worked their way south towards the capital.

In the midst of the growing chaos and violence, a number of significant, and controversial, events occurred on 29 February. First, Aristide left Haiti on a U.S. plane destined for the Central African Republic. Second, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1529, which called for the creation of a Multinational Interim Force (MIF) under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Consisting of U.S., Canadian, French and Chilean troops, its mandate was to restore order for a period of three months (the MIF was later replaced by the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) on 1 June 2004).<sup>5</sup> Third, steps were taken to create a transitional government. With Aristide out of the country, Supreme Court President Boniface Alexandre was sworn in as Interim President. Nine days later, upon the recommendation of the Haitian Council of the Wise, Gérard Latortue, a former UN economist, was named Prime Minister of the new transitional government.<sup>6</sup> Since its formation, the Latortue government has lacked any popular legitimacy, particularly amongst Aristide's Lavalas Party supporters and pro-Aristide gangs.

### The Historical Roots of the Current Crisis

The historical roots of this latest insurgency can be traced all the way back to Haiti's days as a French slave colony. One participant argued that French authorities established an authoritarian system of rule based on the plantation system. This plantation economy, which depended on slavery and forced labour, was replicated after independence in 1804 by the country's elite, who were not prepared for the economic

---

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1529, S/RES/1529 (2004), 29 February 2004; see United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1542, S/RES/1542, 30 April 2004.

<sup>6</sup> The Council of the Wise is a group of seven advisors consisting of members from a range of sectors of Haitian society.

decline that would have followed emancipation. Since then, Haiti has experienced profound class and racial conflict, conflict that has been perpetuated and buttressed by a succession of rulers – from Toussaint Louverture to, most recently, Jean Bertrand Aristide – who have governed like supreme monarchs, with scant regard for democratic institutions and processes. Under conditions of scarce material wealth, violence became – and still is – a means for “instigating and resolving problems”.

Over the last five decades, Haiti has had trouble shedding this system of rule. Beginning in 1957, François “Papa Doc” Duvalier and his infamous Tonton Macoutes ruled Haiti with tremendous ferocity and cruelty. Conditions improved slightly under his son Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier; however, one panellist noted that his presidency was marked by a series of confrontations between the military and civilian authorities that came to a head following the economic stagnation that emerged as a result of Duvalier’s failed attempts at market liberalization.

The long and uneasy transition to democracy began in 1986 following the insurgency to unseat Baby Doc. A number of participants noted that the promise of representative government began with tremendous enthusiasm but was quickly replaced by a deep sense of frustration as the country was forced to endure five more years of military rule.<sup>7</sup> In the early 1990s, Aristide and his Lavalas Party exposed and attempted to confront the huge class divide in Haiti, something the country’s elite found unacceptable. Shortly into his term he was forced to flee Haiti for a period of three years following a military and paramilitary coup d’état. While he was eventually returned to office in 1994, politics in Haiti remained unstable. Indeed, the mid-1990s brought with it a new period of “political paralysis, popular apathy and cynicism”, the dominant characteristic of which

---

<sup>7</sup> Following Jean-Claude Duvalier’s departure, Haiti experienced five different governments in roughly five years. The new Presidents were: General Henri Namphy (7 February 1986 to 17 January 1988, 20 June to 18 September 1988), who took control of the country immediately after the revolution; Leslie Manigat (18 January to 20 June 1988), who won what many considered was a fixed election and was displaced by Namphy after six months in office; Lt-General Prosper Avril (18 September 1988 to 11 March 1990), who staged a coup d’état against Namphy; and finally Judge Ertha Pascal Trouillot (10 March to 16 December 1990), who was appointed by Avril and who many observers believed was a puppet leader for the military.

was that power was relinquished reluctantly. Following his second election victory in 2000, one panellist suggested that Aristide began to “govern alone as a messiah” in that he relied on increasingly heavy-handed tactics in order to maintain his authority. By February 2004, he had alienated many of his supporters and effectively lost control over the country. As in the past, violence became the method of choice for bringing about change.

One panellist lamented that no real benefits have come from democratic rule. In the past, Haitian presidents have shown little regard for the rule of law, and there is little reason to believe that this will change with a new election. In this sense, one participant argued that, given Haiti’s long tradition of dictatorial rule, it may not matter who becomes the president in 2006, and noted the old Haitian proverb “the constitution is paper, the bayonet is steel”.

### International Engagement in Haiti and the “3-D” approach

The international community’s involvement in Haiti since the mid-1990s has been controversial to say the least. To begin with, a number of participants noted that Washington’s role in Haiti has often been “less than positive”. Dating back to the U.S. occupation of 1915 to 1934, Haiti is a country that Washington has been unable to ignore. More recently, Haiti has once again become a domestic issue in the United States because of its geographic proximity, the sizeable Haitian Diaspora, the trafficking of illegal narcotics, and the potential for a large exodus of refugees. One panellist described Washington’s responses as a policy of “estrangement” rather than “engagement”, the implication being that the United States has tried to contain Haiti’s problems rather than solve them.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> For example, in September 1981, the United States signed a bilateral agreement with the Jean-Claude Duvalier government, which permitted U.S. authorities to intercept and repatriate any Haitians that entered U.S. territorial waters.

The United Nations and Organization of American States have not fared much better. Shortly after the end of the first coup in the early 1990s, the latter half of the decade saw a gradual, and arguably premature, reduction in the UN/OAS presence in Haiti. As mandated by Resolution 940, UN Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) took over from the American-led Multinational Force (MNF) in January 1995, its force comprising roughly 6000 troops and almost 800 police officers. Over the next five years, UNMIH would consist of three follow-up missions: the UN Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH), (June 1996 to July 1997); the UN Transition Mission in Haiti (UNTMIH) (July 1997 to November 1997), a mission consisting almost exclusively of police officers; and the UN Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH), (November 1997 to March 2000). After the mandates for MIPONUH's and the OAS/UN Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) expired, the UN implemented the short-lived International Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH), a program that ended in February 2001, in large part because of funding constraints at the UN. None of these missions seem to have had any lasting effect in terms of stabilizing Haiti's turbulent political situation.

The latest intervention through MINUSTAH appears headed down a similar path. Established under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1542 on 30 April 2004, MINUSTAH first called for an international force consisting of 1622 civilian police and 6,700 peacekeepers. A Chapter VII mission, its mandate has been to secure a stable environment, support the transitional government, vet the Haitian National Police (HNP), promote human rights, and engage in a nation-wide Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Program (DDR).<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, MINUSTAH has struggled on a number of these fronts. While it has helped to bring stability to many parts of the country, including a number of highly dangerous areas, Security Council

---

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1542, S/RES/1542 (2004), 30 April 2004. Due to continued instability and deteriorating human rights situation, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1576 on 29 November 2004, which extended MINUSTAH's mission to 1 June 2005. See United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1576, S/RES/1576 (2004), 29 November 2004.

By May 2005, MINUSTAH consisted of about 7,400 troops in MINUSTAH, while CivPol was made up of 1622 police officers. International Crisis Group, "*Spoiling Security in Haiti*" Latin America/Caribbean Report N°13, 31 May 2005.



Resolution 1542 requires that MINUSTAH work alongside the Haitian National Police on all issues involving policing. At present, MINUSTAH does not have either the authority or the resources to engage in independent policing activities. One panellist contended that this arrangement has raised a number of questions about its neutrality, the reason being that since February 2004 the HNP has committed a number of human rights abuses, largely against Lavalas supporters. Consequently, MINUSTAH faces a serious “legitimacy deficit” with much of the population, particularly those living in the poor, urban areas – a deficit that could seriously compromise its effectiveness. A couple of panellists also noted that some countries that are contributing troops to MINUSTAH are not necessarily well-suited for a peacekeeping mission in Haiti, in part because they themselves come from governments with dubious human rights records and are not necessarily well versed in international standards for policing. Perhaps most troubling of all is that MINUSTAH’s mandate ends a week after the new government is scheduled to take over. While it will likely be renewed, many at the conference agreed that this practice of constant short-term renewals does little to instil confidence that the international community plans on being in Haiti for the long haul.

It is also worth noting that there was some scepticism about Canada’s recent International Policy Statement (IPS). While the “whole-of-government” strategy that is encompassed by the “3-Ds” was seen as something that was generally positive, one participant noted that the IPS says little about two other important “Ds”, democracy and disarmament. Nor, for that matter, does the IPS put poverty at the centre of the report. This same panellist also suggested that the IPS put far too much emphasis on Canada’s domestic security, and not enough on the human security of those people living in trouble areas.

### Economic Development in Haiti

To say that economic development has not come easily to Haiti is an understatement. The political controversies that have surrounded the international community’s

willingness (or unwillingness) to grant aid to Haiti aside, the country has now been receiving international aid for decades (Canada began giving aid in 1968), and as the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, it will likely continue to receive aid for many years to come. The sad reality for Haitians and for the international community alike, however, is that there is little proof that the aid has done much to curb the endemic levels of poverty that plague the urban lower classes and peasantry in Haiti. Many of the participants argued that Haitians and the international community must look for new answers to the question of how to bring economic growth to Haiti, as the old ways of promoting growth have simply not worked. The need for answers is urgent. The cost of these past failures has and will continue to be very high, in part because Haiti's systemic poverty has compounded its political woes considerably. Indeed, all acknowledged that poverty reduction is a fundamental component of any peace building initiative. Still, how to achieve this remains the difficult question to answer.

As mentioned above, previous attempts at economic growth have done little to reduce poverty in Haiti. A number of participants discussed the initiatives that were taken in the 1970s following the Jean-Claude Duvalier government's decision to expand Haiti's manufacturing economy by offering tremendous tax and labour incentives for American firms that wished to set up in Haiti. The result, they argued, was a brief period of economic growth. However, this decision also produced a fiscal disaster. Because the merchandise being produced and exported was not taxed, the government received little revenue from these sectors of the economy. Consequently, it focused its attention on internal tax structures aimed at the Haitian population. One result was soaring food prices in the 1980s; one participant noted that it was no coincidence that the revolution in 1986 to remove Duvalier from office began with food riots.

Few lessons seem to have been learned from these past failures. Since the summer of 2004, more than (U.S.) \$1 billion has been pledged to help Haiti build its economy. Moreover, the international community has produced the Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF), a joint proposal developed by the World Bank, the European Union,

the Inter-American Development Bank, and the United Nations, which outlines a two-year strategy for Haiti's reconstruction that will last from July 2004 to July 2006.<sup>10</sup> However, a number of participants were sceptical of the wisdom behind the strategies outlined in the ICF. One participant suggested that the strategy was not only lacking in several areas, but was arguably even counter-productive. Absent from the document is any mention of funding for agricultural development or credit for the poor; nor is there any consideration given to re-introducing tariffs on food imports, such as rice from the United States, so as to protect domestic production in Haiti. Consequently, the ICF does little to address current concerns about widespread food insecurity.

Ultimately, the solution to Haiti's economic troubles may not lie with foreign governments, but rather with the Haitian Diasporas living in Miami, New York and Montréal, as well as the country's private sector. In terms of the former, the major source of international funding for Haiti comes from remittances from Haitians living abroad. Although the exact amount is not fully known, estimates suggest that it is in the range of roughly 4 to 6 times larger than Canadian Official Development Assistance (ODA). As for the latter, one participant noted that Diaspora tourism to Haiti is also a thriving business; moreover, it is the private sector, not foreign governments, that is currently behind the largest HIV/Aids project in Haiti. Both the Diaspora and the private sector represent untapped resources; both want to be involved in finding solutions for Haiti, to invest in Haiti, and to bring opportunity to Haiti's youth, many of whom have few economic prospects. The conference acknowledged that more needs to be done to understand and build on the contributions that both of these groups can and do make to Haiti. A number of participants suggested that donor governments need to do more to develop flexible aid strategies. Meaningful engagement with both of these partners to

---

<sup>10</sup> The ICF was developed at meeting in Washington, D.C., that took place on 19-20 2005. See <http://haiticci.undg.org/index.cfm?Module=ActiveWeb&Page=WebPage&s=introduction&NewLanguageID=en>. For the Canadian federal government's contribution see, <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/latinamerica/haiticonference/interimcoop-en.asp>. See also United Nations Development Group, "Haiti - Lessons Learned ICF/CCI (Needs Assessment)", 17 October 2005. <http://www.undg.org/documents/5325-Haiti - Lessons Learned ICF CCI Needs Assessment .doc>.

foster strategies for economic growth tailored towards Haiti's unique and specific needs, is one important, if perhaps neglected, possibility.

Above all, the conference acknowledged that any growth must be holistic. This means growth that increases the number of small- and medium-sized businesses; growth that encourages a decentralized economy that extends beyond simply the capitol region; growth that channels resources, such as micro-credit programmes, to the rural areas of the country, areas that to date have traditionally been ignored or overlooked by both the Haitian government and foreign governments.

Of course, accomplishing this objective is far easier said than done. It is doubtful whether the political will exists to support Haiti for a prolonged period of time. Unfortunately, this absence of long-term results has caused, and will likely continue to cause, a great deal of frustration amongst foreign donors, at least at the governmental level. In fact, in describing the inability of development aid to have a lasting impact on the country, one participant referred to the old and tragic adage that "Haiti is a graveyard of development projects". Similarly, another talked about "Haiti fatigue", the general feeling of cynicism within the international community that has come about as a result of aid projects that have failed to achieve any lasting effect. For this reason, one participant admitted that delivering aid in Haiti has been a humbling experience, and cautioned that any plan of engagement must "set realistic goals and be prepared for setbacks".

### Reform of the Justice System in Haiti

Haiti's justice system is highly dysfunctional. It has been for quite some time, although its failings have been exacerbated by the current crisis. Prior to the insurgency, the justice system was grossly under-funded, both in terms of human resources and physical facilities. During the initial weeks of the insurgency, police stations and court houses were burned down to the ground, while many police officers and judges were

forced into hiding. But beyond this, Haitians have little faith in a justice system in which arbitrary arrests, prolonged incarceration without the right to *habeas corpus*, torture and ill-treatment, and detention in overcrowded and unsanitary prisons are commonplace. Moreover, *déchoukage* (vigilante justice) is a frequent practice, distrust of the Haitian National Police is widespread, the independence of the judiciary remains very much in doubt, and the inability and/or unwillingness of the Haitian government to bring past and current perpetrators of human rights abuses to justice has fostered and strengthened a culture of impunity.

Chronic crime has also become endemic, which, along with the politically-motivated violence, has contributed greatly to the overall state of insecurity in Haiti. One participant noted that in many parts of the country the situation resembles the “Wild West”, in which rule of law is largely absent. Moreover, kidnappings have become common practice, a phenomenon that is relatively new to Haiti.

All at the conference agreed that reforming the Haitian National Police should remain a priority for the Haitian authorities and the international community. For more than a decade (if not longer) the HNP has been a highly politicized institution that has relied on lethal force to silence the opponents of the government of the day. As a result, Haitians have lost confidence in the HNP. One participant spoke about the “disease of the power of the uniform” when explaining the abusive nature of Haitian police. Although a number of participants agreed that there are some very dedicated officers, all concurred that the HNP needs to be vetted and professionalized. Unfortunately, both a purge and a comprehensive training programme are not things that either the interim government or the HNP can do on their own; MINUSTAH will have to continue to make them a priority of its mission.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the police force’s numbers need to be strengthened.

---

<sup>11</sup> Section 7.1(b) of Security Council Resolution 1542 gives MINUSTAH the mandate “to assist the Transitional Government in monitoring, restructuring, and reforming the Haitian National Police, consistent with democratic policing standards, including through the vetting and certification of its personnel, advising on its reorganization and training, including gender training, as well as monitoring/mentoring members of the Haitian National Police”. See United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1542, S/RES/1542 (2004), 30 April 2004.

Many participants noted that there is a desperate shortage of police officers in Haiti; at present, there are only a few thousand police for a population of about 8 million.

Without question, reforming the HNP is difficult work that will take many years; but it is one problem among many that currently plague the justice system. Most participants agreed that police reform will be of little value if judicial and penal reforms are neglected. The sense among the group was that a competent police force is of little use if the judiciary is susceptible to corruption and political interference, or if conditions in the prison facilities are so deplorable that incarceration contravenes international standards concerning the humane treatment of prisoners. Both were areas that the international community did not pay enough attention to in the mid-1990s; both need to be strengthened if Haitians are to gain confidence in the ability of the state to provide order and justice. More importantly, both require a substantial commitment from the international community, and should take place in conjunction with engagement with the HNP.

### Disarmament

Several of the participants talked about the need for a nation-wide disarmament program, and lamented that one of the biggest mistakes of the international interventions of the 1990s was the decision not to engage in a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme. At present, estimates suggest that there are approximately 170, 000 small arms in Haiti; many are in the hands of illegal non-state actors, including insurgents, former military and paramilitary, Lavalas supporters, and criminal gangs. To date, MINUSTAH has not compelled groups to disarm although there have been some efforts through the National Commission on Disarmament to collect illegal weapons. One reason for this reluctance may be that the size of the force is insufficient to carry out such a task. Another may be that the political will to disarm all sectors of society is simply not there. A third may be that meaningful disarmament cannot take place unless those who hold the guns – particularly urban

youth – become convinced that their economic situation will improve as a result of handing over their weapons. One danger that these weapons pose is that those with the guns will use them to bring back the old repressive forms of government. Of course, one participant noted that even if the guns are taken away, there is little reason to believe that they won't reappear if demand for arms remains strong.

Should a comprehensive DDR programme ever be established, one of the looming questions to be answered is “Who should be allowed to carry guns?” Over the past few months there have been calls to reinstitute the Haitian army. All of the participants at the conference believed that this was a dangerous proposition. The Haitian military is an institution with a long history of abusive behaviour; there is little reason to believe that a new army would break from this tradition. Given that Haiti does not face any external threats, the need is minimal, while the costs are potentially disastrous.

### Elections and Reform of the Political System

All those who participated agreed that elections were an important part of any re-stabilization process, not simply in terms of legitimacy for the new government, but also to institutionalize democracy into the country's political culture. Still, most questioned whether elections would lead to meaningful change, at least in the short-term. In the past, elections have neither resolved Haiti's problems, nor altered the behaviour of Haiti's political and economic elite, many of whom have never bought into the idea of representative government. Moreover, logistical problems threaten to derail the upcoming vote, whenever it might occur. The Conseil Electoral Provisoire (CEP), the body that is responsible for organizing the elections, has been plagued by delays, infighting, and slow voter registration; at the time of the conference, the final list of presidential candidates had yet to be printed. Also, persuading Haitians, many of whom are disillusioned with the political process, to vote is a formidable challenge which should not be underestimated. A third problem is that elections are expensive. Given the

limited resources available to the transitional government, the majority of the funding will have to come from foreign sources.

Of course, there are still the twin issues of violence and insecurity. Indeed, some participants were critical of the wisdom behind the timing of the elections. Recognizing that the Latortue government lacks any kind of popular legitimacy, many questioned whether the current conditions were suitable for a free and open election. One participant talked about the “tyranny of February 7<sup>th</sup>”, and suggested that the international community had erred in committing itself to a fixed date in which a new government must take office. The looming danger is that the elections will be a disaster. One participant noted that there is a strong chance that whoever is elected president will not have the support of the Haitian Parliament, a prospect that would mean political paralysis for the government. Furthermore, low voter turnout, irregularities in the counting and a rise in politically-motivated violence are all real possibilities. Should a combination or all of these problems come about the results will likely be disputed, an outcome that will only add further tensions to an already volatile political climate.

Beyond elections, all participants acknowledged that the state and political system need to be modernized. One participant lamented that Haiti lacks a national vision to deal with social problems such as health care, education, and literacy. Above all, what is missing in Haiti is a conception of citizenship that is inclusive, and that stratifies political and economic divides within the country. Unfortunately, there is little evidence to suggest that such a vision will emerge. At present, the political parties in Haiti are fragmented and polarized; virtually all are weak, and none offer a truly national voice. There is, however, one relatively new development that may offer the promise of a better future for Haiti: one participant noted that a positive trend to emerge over the last 10 years is the growth and strength of civil society organizations. While it is too early to know what these groups will mean for Haiti in the long-term, their mere presence may signal the emergence of a more dynamic and pluralistic society.



## Conclusions and Recommendations

Haiti is, by all accounts, a fragile state in crisis. At present, there are a number of serious obstacles that must be overcome if it is to have any hope of producing a stable, democratic society. Its population is struggling to come to terms with questions of human security, economic ruin, lawlessness, an ineffectual justice system, widespread violence, organized crime, deep political divisions, and a delicate and strained social fabric. None of these problems are easily resolved; all will require a sustained effort on the part of Haitians and the international community alike if they are to be achieved. In discussing the difficulty involved in helping Haiti steer itself off the current destructive path that it is on, one participant asked “Where does one begin?” It is a fair question. The following is a list of conclusions and recommendations that may offer some guidance to those who are charged with the task of making sure that Haiti’s status as a fragile state is as short-lived as possible.

### **1. Long-term engagement is necessary.**

Most participants agreed that the international community needs to commit itself to a long-term engagement in Haiti. One participant even went so far as to call for the establishment of a 10- to 15-year protectorate. Although this was by no means a unanimous point of view, all acknowledged that there can be no quick fixes. Most agreed that the fleeting engagements of the 1990s that saw the UN gradually remove itself from Haiti with each successive mission was a counter-productive strategy that should not be repeated.

### **2. International engagement must pay special attention to economic and social development with the aim of systematic poverty reduction.**

All at the conference acknowledged that stabilization cannot occur without addressing the systemic poverty. This means investing considerable resources into strategies for growth that not only touch all sectors of Haitian society but, more importantly, “recognize the aspirations of the poor”.

### **3. All “solutions” must be based on mutual cooperation between Haitians and the international community.**

“Solutions” – be they economic, political or judicial – can only work if they are “made-for-Haiti” solutions; one participant noted that the international community cannot afford to be prescriptive if all stakeholders are to succeed in confronting the challenges that are currently present in Haiti. Similarly, another warned that if there is no “buy-in”, the results will be “negative at best”.

### **4. Haiti’s Diasporas represent important potential partners in Haiti.**

To date, Haiti’s Diasporas in Miami, New York and Montréal have been under-utilized partners in the quest first to stabilize and then promote economic and social development in Haiti. More needs to be done to form partnerships with these communities; all of which have considerable expertise, and all of which are eager to help find solutions to the challenges plaguing their former homeland.

### **5. Remittance flows to Haiti from its Diasporas need to be better understood.**

As mentioned in the body of this report, remittances from the Haitian Diasporas represent the largest source of foreign money entering into Haiti. Nonetheless, their economic impact is poorly understood. More research needs to be done to determine what role these funds currently play in Haiti’s economy and how they might contribute to Haiti’s destiny.

### **6. The discourse on Haiti needs to be raised and strengthened across Canada.**

A couple of participants suggested that Haiti needs to be a “Canadian national project” that is important in all parts of the country, not just Ottawa and parts of Québec.

Attention of this kind will help to ensure that Haiti remains a priority for the Canadian government for the considerable future.

**7. Adequate funding must be made available for strengthening human rights and social justice in Haiti, including resources for a DDR programme.**

For long-term stability and respect for the rule of law to take hold, human rights, social justice and a nation-wide DDR programme must be taken seriously. In order for this to occur, the state must have access to adequate funds for implementing programmes aimed at reforming the justice system, and restricting non-state actors' access to small arms. One participant warned that any new Haitian government must resist the temptation to reconstitute the army, and allow power to return to reactionary elements of society.

**8. More effort needs to be made to understand both the Dominican Republic's role in the current crisis, as well as the influence of the Voodoo religion.**

Given time constraints, the conference was unable to explore with any great depth either the role of the Dominican Republic in the current crisis or the influence of the Voodoo religion on Haitian society. Nonetheless, all acknowledged that in order to understand Haiti, one must also understand both its neighbour to the east and the power of religion as a cultural force. Both have had, and will continue to have, a tremendous impact on Haiti. As such, neither one should be underestimated, as both will inevitably factor into any long-term solutions.

**9. The level of discourse and analysis on the current crisis in Haiti needs to be strengthened.**

There is a tremendous amount of disagreement about the analysis of the current situation in Haiti. Some on the left see the conflict as one rooted largely in U.S. imperialism. Many at the conference suggested that, while the role of the U.S. should never be underestimated, the roles of Haitian actors and the Government of the

Dominican Republic should not be routinely relegated to secondary importance when trying to understand political change in Haiti.

### Appendix A: *HaitiConnect*

The conference was introduced to *HaitiConnect*, an online research library and community being produced by International Governance Leaders and Organizations Online (IGLOO), a digital research portal created by CIGI. The purpose of *HaitiConnect* is to allow academics, practitioners and non-governmental organizations to “access, share and disseminate” their research on Haiti.<sup>12</sup> Like AfghanConnect, the research portal that brings specialists on Afghanistan together, the ultimate goal is to create the premier digital library on Haiti. *HaitiConnect* will soon be available at [www.theigloo.org](http://www.theigloo.org).

### Appendix B: The Participants

Patrick Brennan, Deputy Director for Haiti, Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs

Suzy Castor, Director, Centre for Research and Training in Social and Economic Development

Terry Copp, Professor Emeritus and Director of the Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies, WLU

Carlo Dade, Senior Policy Advisor, Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL)

John English, Executive Director of the Centre for International Governance Innovation, and Senior Professor of History and Political Science, University of Waterloo

Robert Fatton, Jr., Julia A. Cooper Professor of Government and Foreign Affairs, Department of Politics, University of Virginia

---

<sup>12</sup> IGLOO Research Portal, 2005.

Séline Grandchamp, Senior Analyst on Haiti, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Geoffrey Hayes, Associate Director of the LCMSDS and Associate Professor of History, University of Waterloo

Jim Hodgson, Caribbean/Central America Program Coordinator, United Church of Canada

David Johnston, President, University of Waterloo

Robert E. Maguire, Director of Programs in International Affairs and Chair of International Affairs Program, Trinity University, Washington, D.C.; Director of the Trinity University Haiti Program

Colonel J.J. Morneau, Commander Task Force Port-au-Prince and Chief of Staff of MINUSTAH in Haiti, January to June 2005

Katherine Sage Hayes, Communications Director, ACUNS; Vice-President of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs (CIIA), Waterloo Region

Andrew S. Thompson, Haiti Campaign Coordinator, Amnesty International Canadian Section (English Speaking)

Major (Ret) David J. Travers, CD, Deputy J2 Combined Joint Task Force Haiti (2004)

Yasmine Shamsie, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, WLU