

Haiti's Crisis (1994-2004)

Patrick Hiller

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Nova Southeastern University Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution

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Introduction

In early 2004 political violence broke out in Haiti following years of fruitless efforts to bring the ruling party and the Opposition together. Pressured particularly by the U.S. and France, President Aristide left the polarized country on February 29th of that year. In this paper I will analyze the conflict in Haiti during the period when Aristide, who had been in exile after a coup in 1991, was brought back into office in 1994 until his second exile in 2004. His entire presidency, which was interrupted by an interim president between 1995 and 2001 was marked by a continual struggle among opposing political groups.

The versatility of this conflict does not allow one to focus on one theory alone. On the one hand, the conflict can be seen as one among political groups seeking power by using their available power bases; on the other hand, the parties involved during the violent escalation of the conflict have a more fundamental driving force. Therefore, the analysis will have two major theoretical bases. The human needs theory, as described by John Burton (Burton, 1998), will be one perspective, the power theory, as described by various scholars (Wrong, 1979, French and Raven, 1967, ...) will be another. Both can be applied to the parties involved in the conflict.

I will show that the major cause of the conflict in Haiti can be traced back to the past and prevailing social situation of this country. . The corrupt and ineffective regime of the Duvalier family impoverished the majority of Haitians over a period of decades, directing the power and resources of the country into the hands of a small, ruling elite. Haiti remains classified as a least developed country, lining itself up with the poorest countries of the African continent.

In the analysis I will describe the origins of the conflict, the major parties involved, the issues, the tactics, the changes in the conflict, the enlargement, the roles of the other parties, and the outcome. The complete analysis leads to the conclusion that this conflict only brought out losers.

Due to the use of extreme measures of violence in this conflict, the moves and countermoves that develop into turning points within the spiral of conflict intensification will be emphasized.

The information was gathered from official documents, such as United Nations reports, international valued news resources such as BBC and „The Economist“, human rights organizations (Human Rights watch), and scholars who have researched Haiti.

Theory

In determining the theory of this conflict, the social situation prevailing in Haiti plays a predominant role. According to the theory of human needs as developed by John Burton and other scholars in the 1960ies, every person or group has basic necessities for security, participation, autonomy, recognition, and identity, and if these are not met, the person or group involved is going to debate (Burton, 1990). I would like to point out some of the more recent elaborations and criticisms of the theory in order to build the theoretical framework for the analysis of Haiti's conflict. Burton asserts that aggressions result when social norms are incompatible with inherent human needs. He argues that aggressions and anti-social behavior are stimulated by social circumstances. Apart from the fundamental requirements for food and shelter, human needs such as personal recognition and identity form the basis of a secure society (Burton, 1998). A theoretical assumption is that the pursuit to fulfill these human needs is a goal shared by the conflict parties. By seeking to achieve security within the society, both parties benefit from each other. However, the different approaches taken, and means used to obtain this security lie in conflict with one another.

“In Haiti's political reality, managing scarcity means managing power, with equally predictable results” (Wucker, 2004, p. 45). In a conflict a party may either negotiate from strength to defend its overt or hidden interests or examine the conflict by seeking the deeper significance

(Rubenstein, 1996). It becomes obvious in the case of Haiti that the parties were trying to negotiate from strength. Power plays an important part throughout the conflict in Haiti. A definition of power by Max Weber (as cited in Wrong, 1979) reads as follows: "In general, we understand by 'power' the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will in a social action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action" (Wrong, 1979, p. 21). As one form of intended influence of one person or group over another, Wrong (1979) describes violence as the ultimate form of physical force. It is a "direct assault upon the body of another in order to inflict pain, injury, or death" (Wrong, 1979, p. 24). The use of force or violence is the fundamental manifestation of power, and, as described by Wrong (1979), frequently results from the prior failure to achieve power. . The use of coercive power by one of the conflicting parties is often employed not only to eliminate the opponent's capacity to act, but also to create or recreate a power relationship, demonstrating that party's willingness to use force (Wrong, 1979). Throughout the conflict the relationships existing among the various parties can be seen within the context of the power bases described by French and Raven (1967). Out of the five most important power bases, i.e., reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, referent power, and expert power, the first three appear to fit into the context of this conflict. Reward power is defined as power based on its ability to reward. Especially the external, intervening parties were able to fall back on this power basis. Coercive power can be understood as the capability to threaten a person or group into choosing one undesirable behavioral pattern over another. The disputing parties in Haiti applied this power base at various points during the conflict. The most complex power, as described by French and Raven (1967), is that of legitimacy. An election process can be seen as one legitimizing a person's (or group's) right to an office which already has a legitimate range of power associated with it. As will be presented later

on in the analysis of this conflict, several issues arose around the legitimacy of the Haitian government.

I believe it is essential to point out the concept of conflicting groups described by Blalock (1989), elaborating on the above described power theories. According to his theory, conflict groups emerge whenever a larger party finds it either impossible or highly costly to carry out an effective campaign involving extreme conflict. These conflict groups are often of a weak and exploited nature, functioning as the dirty workers for the superior parties. The acts of aggression inherent to the conflict are often carried out by these groups, but their lasting success is dependent on the satisfaction of the larger group.

The conflict in Haiti clearly shows signs of Pruitt and Kim's (2004) conflict spiral model. The model holds that escalation results from a vicious circle of action and reaction. Contentious tactics by one party lead to contentious retaliatory or defensive reactions from the other party. This spiral can intensify until one side has mobilized sufficient power to overwhelm its adversary (Rubenstein, 1996). Both parties resort to the ultimate application of power – violence.

Social Context

Haiti is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere and is classified among the least developed countries in the world. The alarming economic and vital statistics of the country prevailing during the past decades include a high mortality rate due to poor living conditions, malnutrition, lack of safe water and medical attention, and the high incidence of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, among others. The critical economic and social conditions in Haiti have been related to the political situation, which has had a direct negative effect on the public sector's efficiency, leading to unsustainable fiscal deficits (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2004). Haiti's ecological problems have fueled the social problems as well. The country is one of the most

deforested countries in the world, and suffers from depleted topsoil. The rural-urban migration rate is very high, thus the major cities are overrun. This again has led to more slums, extreme poverty, crime, and further slum-related problems frequently associated with cities in least developed countries.

The country has suffered under the regime of two brutal dictators, Francois Duvalier, followed by his son Jean-Claude Duvalier, who ruled Haiti from 1956 until 1985. Both build up a reign of terror, their power secured by the so-called Tontons Macoute militia. After Jean-Claude Duvalier fled into exile, temporary military governments ran the country but continued to resort to terror and human rights violations. The first democratic elections brought the former priest, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, into power as president in 1990. The expectations of the people were very high, however, the ruling elite and the military were afraid of this champion of the poor. Only months into the office he was overthrown by a coup and Haiti was once again under military rule. ("Timeline Haiti", 2005). The military junta that ousted Aristide in 1991 and ruled the country until Aristide was brought back into power in 1994 with the help of international pressure (e.g. economic sanctions) and troops, was responsible for a series of human rights' abuses and an extreme abuse of power. It is important to mention them, since they reappeared as major actors during the uprising leading to Aristide's second exile. According to Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, two major global human rights organizations, human rights' abuses have been and still are taking place at a critical level in Haiti.

During Aristide's first exile, the country suffered an international embargo, which caused further hardship for Aristide after his reinstatement, since he was not able to keep his promises of reducing poverty and improving the economic situation under the increasingly deteriorated conditions. "By the time the U.S. returned Aristide to power [...], the embargo had left most of Haiti's 8 million people significantly poorer" (Wucker, 2004).

It is important to be aware of the nation's most serious social problem: the huge wealth gap between the impoverished, Creole-speaking black majority and the French-speaking mulattos, 1% of whom own nearly half the country's wealth (“Country profile: Haiti”, 2005)

Analysis

The sources of the conflict

The moment Aristide took office, after winning the first democratic elections of the country in 1990, the conflict between him and his opponents had already started. His radical approach towards the country's elite and military was incompatible with their need to maintain power and resources. The conflict was an intra-state conflict over national power between the ruling party and the Opposition. Even though it was not a conflict between different ethnic groups, one can say it was an inter-group conflict between two constructed groups. Intervention on the part of foreign countries transformed the conflict onto an international level, however, the sources remained internal regime battles over power within Haiti. In a country with scarce resources like Haiti, power involves control over these resources. Although the conflict seemed essentially to be between two large interest groups fighting over power, it was also a civil conflict between a legally elected, but unpopular ruler and frustrated citizens (O'Neill, 2004). As will be shown throughout the analysis the driving forces for the various parties differed. Whereas the political opposition and its supporters sought power by applying power, the citizenry longed to meet their basic human needs.

The conflict parties

In this chapter I will describe the parties of the conflict and elaborate as to how they came into existence.

A first glance at the conflict shows that we are looking at a quarrel between the ruling party and its opposition. Jean Bertrand Aristide, a former Catholic priest and strong supporter of liberation theology was the Haitian president backed by his Lavalas party. “A stirring orator, he championed the poor, advocated democracy and campaigned against the dictatorship of Jean-Claude 'Baby Doc' Duvalier” (“Profile: Jean-Bertrand Aristide”, 2004). On the one hand, his political stance and popular support angered Haiti's ruling elite, however, on the other, he was not able to hold his promises to the poor. At this point it is important to mention, that ineligible for reelection until the year 2000, Aristide stepped down after his first term in 1995 to be replaced by Rene Preval. Preval, however, was just the filling in an Aristide sandwich. When the official sash of office was again handed over to Aristide in 2000, it was obvious that he had never ceased exercising his power through Preval during those past years (“The inevitable president”, 2000).

Two main political opposition groups emerged. A group composed mostly of former allies of Aristide who have become disgusted with what they called his authoritarian, incompetent style of governing gathered under the name Democratic Convergence. The Group of 184 was the second group, representing Haiti's business community which also was disillusioned by the situation under Aristide (Padgett, 2004). The Democratic Convergence supported by the Group of 184, functioned as the major actor in the opposition (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2003).

An additional party was Haiti's upper class, which sometimes fostered connections with the Democratic Convergence or the Group of 184, but other times supported the former army – another party to the conflict.

While former soldiers remained quiet for years, once Aristide's popular support began to dwindle – largely as a result of his administration's inability to alter the country's dismal social conditions dramatically – the former power force began to plan an uprising (“Haiti: on the verge of conflict

and instability”, 2005). The army’s resurgence took place mainly in the form of an armed rebellion. According to Human Rights Watch, the rebels included a solid core of former officers and soldiers from the country’s disbanded army, as well as former paramilitaries responsible for innumerable atrocities during Haiti’s 1991-1994 military government (Human Rights Watch, 2005). Under Aristide the military was disbanded, but not disarmed, leaving them disgruntled and politicized (Ballve, Leech, 2004). The government had failed to re-channel ex-army members into useful tasks instead of troublemaking (Wucker, 2004).

Violent gangs consisting of former army members and frustrated citizens, especially active in the capital Port-au-Prince, were a further party to this conflict. The major part of the gangs was made up of young and poor individuals. Often these “chimères” or “extremists” were “rent-a-mobs” who were mobilized for rallies to harass and attack opposition marches (Regen, 2005). In this part of the conflict one can apply the human needs theory, as well as the conflict groups concept. The unsatisfied needs of many of these individuals for identity, security, and human bonding may have led them to join the gangs.

At the escalation of the conflict, the Haitian people as a whole took over an active role within the conflict.

The international community, often lead by United States interests, exercised its influence on the conflict at various phases. Such organizations as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the European Union (EU), and the United Nations, expressed their deep concerns about the situation to the government in Haiti (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2002).

The main issues in dispute

The major issues disputed in the controversy, as described in the previous chapter, were overt as well as hidden.

As mentioned before, in an impoverished country like Haiti, power means control over the scarce resources available. During the conflict analyzed in this paper, Aristide and his party were in power. He entered office championing the poor and rejecting the use of traditional authority. What seems to stand out, is the fact that, with time, Aristide and his administration began to misuse their power, so that very few Haitians thought of them as democrats any longer. The question remains as to what extent Jean Bertrand Aristide himself was involved and could be held personally responsible for the abuse of power during his term. It would go beyond the scope of this paper to fully grasp Aristide's role as an individual. The need to hold on to their legitimate right to govern until the end of their term can be considered as the main overt issue at stake for Aristide and his administration. They declared their mandate on the basis of the elections and were not willing to give in to the Opposition's demands. The underlying issue was the maintenance of power.

Aristide's claim to legitimacy was the Opposition's point of attack. The Democratic Convergence and the Group 184 united in support of an early departure of President Aristide from office (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2003). Their position can be quoted as follows: "What we need is a strong leader. What we need is somebody who can deliver on everything. And obviously he has not delivered anything. [...] on all levels ... he has failed" (CNN International, 2004). The Opposition blamed the government for persisting corruption, mismanagement, and dishonest intentions, (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2004), repeatedly pointing to electoral fraud in the 2000 parliamentary election to counter Aristide's claim to legitimacy (Padgett, 2004).

The Haitian ruling class had no interest in a change of the status quo. Even during the Duvalier dictatorships the elite was able to lead a life of luxury, not having to deal with the country's extreme poverty. By initially championing the poor and rejecting the traditional political power structures Aristide earned the hatred of the elite and of Haiti's still powerful army (CNN International, 2004).

The Haitian military, which had been a force exercising its power to influence governments, reacted negatively to Aristide's decision to disband them, a decision which denied them of their livelihoods and sources of income ("Haiti: on the verge of conflict and instability", 2005). Similar to the ruling elite, the military wanted to maintain and regain their power respectively.

Pro- and anti-Aristide gangs took over a central role during the escalation of the conflict. Bloody violence and death casualties can be attributed to them. On the outside, these gangs appeared to be concerned with political issues – upholding and removing the Aristide government. Regen (2005) describes them as groups with no real issues, nevertheless powerful in their actions. While rallying for political actors in the country they tried to meet their human needs. A Haitian citizen describes the pro-Aristide "chimères": "They are the underprivileged that society ignores [...]. They are fighting for a means to survive and feed their families (Adams, 2004). Many gang members told reporters after Aristide's second ouster that they would have preferred real jobs (Wucker, 2004). They are part of Haiti's immense poor population, feeling excluded from the seemingly arcane debates that have divided the government and the country (Orenstein, 1999).

The international actors were concerned with different issues. Whereas disarmament, reconstruction, and government building were of primary concern for the United Nations, the interests of the United States were more ambivalent. Although they openly supported the United Nations' program, the fear of a flood of refugees made them take a more active role in the conflict ("Whose coup in Haiti?", 2004). Many sources elaborate on underlying economic issues

involving U.S. businesses in Haiti. "An implicit condition for U.S. assistance in returning President Aristide to power has been the latter's willingness to "moderate" his populist economic views" (Rubenstein, 1996).

Morgan (1998) very fittingly describes the underlying issues of conflict for a country like Haiti. "Most, if not all, of contemporary national struggles are struggles in which groups [...] are putted against the state because of the desire to ensure group security or self-actualization [...]. As group frustration intensifies, it escalates to violent outbursts which in some cases produce external intervention (Morgan, 1998).

The parties' tactics

Violence can be considered a major tactic used throughout the conflict. With an overall competitive strategy, both major parties applied a coercive conflict style, even though they often used the previously described gangs to carry out violence in order to achieve their respective goals. In this chapter the various other strategies employed during the conflict will be described.

After his first term ended, Aristide installed an ally as president in 1995. The conflict moved toward the escalation, when Aristide returned to office after heavily disputed elections in 2000. Aristide considered himself the legitimately, elected leader of his country entitled to the authority associated with this office, claiming: "I will leave here on February 7, 2006. For the time people must respect that principle" (CNN International, 2004). The boycott of the 2000 elections by the Opposition and the threat posed by the Opposition's claim to power made it necessary for the administration to secure their power by various means, since their legitimate claim to power was not widely accepted. Shortly after returning to office, Aristide disbanded the Haitian army, thus removing the country's civilian leadership ("Haiti: on the verge of conflict and instability", 2005). Pro-Aristide gangs created a climate of fear, breaking up protests with rocks and guns

(Frustration boils over, 2004). The economy worsened and jobs failed to materialize, prompting Aristide to protect himself as well as to intimidate his opponents (Wucker, 2004). At one point a dubious attack on the presidential palace was branded as an attempted coup. Thereby, Aristide and his administration were able to justify various moves against opposition leaders and critical, anti-government radio stations ("In the shadows", 2001).

A significant move by the Opposition was their boycott of the 2000 presidential elections. The irregularities in the parliamentary procedures gave the Opposition an excuse to boycott the presidential ballot. It was a welcome opportunity for them to save face, since they would not have stood a chance of winning against the very popular Aristide ("The inevitable president", 2000). The Opposition denied Aristide his legitimacy, refusing to compromise, and sought his overthrow ("Whose coup in Haiti", 2004). Aristide was portrayed as not being able to handle his internal affairs (Prince, 2004). On the international front, the Opposition was also able to create difficulties causing a prolonged breakdown of communication after a disagreement. The visible manifestation of the conflict could be seen by the moves and countermoves. Both sides applied coercive power. The public debate became more radicalized and many pro- and anti-government demonstrations were organized (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2003). Protests, demonstrations and strikes were increasingly countered by repression and violence (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2004).

At the escalation of the conflict, the Opposition called for a general strike to force the replacement of Aristide by a transitional government ("Strike bites in Haitian capital", 2004).

Whether the accusations were true or false, the repetition of corruption and drug-related allegations printed in the international media and propagated by the Opposition succeeded in discrediting Aristide. It is said that the U.S. corroborated these statements by generating a propaganda campaign, which cast Aristide in an unstable role (Orenstein, 1999).

The tactics of the international community, as a directly intervening party, will be described in the chapter "Role of other parties".

To summarize the Opposition's approach, Wucker (2004) writes that the "intransigent opposition, particularly the Democratic Convergence, can hardly be said to have made a genuine effort to reach a settlement that would have allowed a transfer of power via elections instead of guns" (Wucker, 2004, p. 41). The tactics of the gangs and rebels were violent throughout the conflict.

The strategies used in this conflict can best be summarized by Morgan (1998): "...the constant struggle for power and resources in many resource-starved nations has produced a situation in which [...] groups have resorted to pressure politics and coalition-building as a means of gaining political and economic power."

The changes over time

The conflict in Haiti escalated rather linearly, however, some of the changes that took place will be mentioned here. As the public's perception of Aristide changed, the conflict also changed in a certain manner. The general public had high expectations of their president when he entered office. As mentioned earlier, however, he was not able to keep his campaign promises. Instead he turned into another Haitian despot "wanting absolute control of his destitute country" ("Whose coup in Haiti", 2004). Previously supportive groups formed alliances with hostile groups against Aristide. The business elite joined a broad array of movements, such as independent media, peasant groups, and labor unions (Williams, 2004).

Haiti was, and continues to be, very dependent on international aid. Without that economic support, it was impossible for any governing body to ameliorate the situation. The controversial 2000 elections led to the cutoff of international aid, which is said to have led to Aristide's final downfall (Wucker, 2004).

A further change took place during the escalation, when following an open rebellion against Aristide, the anti-government rebels began winning more and more territory throughout the country. Their gains made those of the political opposition look irrelevant, which proved to be a major problem for the country with regard to the outcome of the conflict (Padget, 2004). The rebels' movement, which had brought the conflict to a critical stage, forced the international community to take a more active role thus changing the initial conflict issues (O'Neill, 2004).

The enlargement of the conflict

Aristide's presidency was marked by repeated crises within the government and strong challenges by the Opposition. The challenges increased and became more radical and visible in the form of demonstrations. In late 2003 the major goal was to achieve Aristide's resignation. Opposition parties, civil society groups, and radicalized university students intensified their peaceful protests against the government (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2004).

The purpose of this paper is not to recite history, therefore the chronological details of the political changes and parties will not be covered. However, throughout the period between Aristide's reinstatement as President in 1994 and his second exile in 2004, violence was never absent in the country. One can clearly see a pattern of violent moves and countermoves, as killings on one side led to stronger retaliation on the other side. This observation can be documented by numerous news sources reporting on the situation in Haiti during that time. The overall conflict strategies were very competitive, coercive tactics were used.

After Aristide left office in 1995, finishing his first term as president, the acting head of state, René Préval proved incapable of setting up an effective, functioning government. The country drifted into a state of ongoing political turmoil, which neither the ruling party nor the Opposition was able to correct. When Aristide took over the office of the President again in February 2001,

the political polarization was even higher due to supposedly fraud elections. One can see the manner in which the conflict in Haiti escalated. During Aristide's second presidency, the conflict could not be resolved, tension grew higher. In the year 2003 the conflict steadily escalated. A common sight documented by various news sources showed peaceful demonstrations turning into violent clashes between Aristide's supporters and opponents, and between the police and gangs. In that year, under conditions of virtual anarchy, thousands of Haitians attempted to flee by boat to the U.S. seeking refuge. As the number of intercepted boats increased, the U.S. began facing a refugee problem. By 2004 violence had spread throughout the country. An armed conflict broke out in the city of Gonaives, which spread to other parts of Haiti. More violence, shootings, vandalism and pillaging erupted as police and pro-Aristide gangs struggled to control the uprisings (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2004).

Even though Aristide continued to seek dialogue, the Opposition, "a disparate coalition of students, political opponents, radical groups, civic and church groups and businessmen" ("Protests go on amid Haiti impasse"), demanded nothing less than his resignation. A win/win solution was no longer possible, the issue was to get Aristide out of office.

The demonstrations turned into a rebel movement and at that point there was an open rebellion against Aristide. As the rebels grew stronger and took over various cities, the former military junta took advantage of the situation and riding with the wave came back into the country in search of their lost power ("Analysis: Haiti's diverse rebels").

According to O'Neill (2004), experience indicates that this sort of crisis begins when a spark ignites a large protest against an elected, but weakly supported regime. The Haitian Opposition seems to have snowballed after a violent clash between gangs. Considering the context of the social situation in Haiti, we can see a triggering event in the violent gang clashes. Poverty, sanctions, insecurity and violence intensified the political polarization and, as a consequence,

Haiti was made ungovernable (Ballve, Leech, 2004). The enlargement can be clearly seen in the following description by O'Neill (2004):

“Such episodes take the crisis to a new, decidedly more dangerous phase. For three major reasons public violence elevates the stakes for all interested parties and exacerbates the risks to the democratic status quo. First, violence is likely to have feedback effects, increasing the intensity of popular protests and keeping security forces on edge. That combination is likely to lead to ever bloodier confrontations, in a disturbing spiral. Second, the inflamed public mood after violent clashes enhances the opportunities available to ambitious politicians to exploit the situation and advance their own power. With reference to the core condition cited above, it increases the payoff to "disloyalty", and thus the incentive for individual leaders to side with the mounting opposition and thereby realize political gains, which may well come at the expense of the legal order. Finally, the fact that a "democratic" regime used deadly force against its own citizens undermines the legitimacy of that regime itself. At the margin, excessive force may even taint the very idea of a "government by the people" in the eyes of some citizens” (O'Neill 2004, p. 169).

Role of other parties

When taking into consideration the other parties involved in the dispute, one must acknowledge the important role played by the United Nations, which exercised its power to reinstate Aristide back into office in 1994. By relying on Chapter VII of the UN Charter (United Nations, 1945), they were authorized by the Security Council to use force, thus applying coercive power. In the 1994 Resolution 940 (United Nations Security Council 1994) they condemned the military regime for refusing to cooperate, expressed grave concern for the humanitarian situation in Haiti, and reaffirmed their goal to restore democracy. The circumstances surrounding their intervention on behalf of Aristide seem similar to those present at the time of Aristide's overthrow – a coup d'état, an environment of fear, persecution, and economic dislocation that threatened to send

numerous refugees to neighboring countries (Morgan, 1998). U.S. forces executed the United Nation's demands. Unintentionally they set the stage for the further development of the conflict: "Mr. Aristide was elected to what should have been power by a broad popular movement. But it took American guns to give him back his inheritance. And the trouble is that the now 19,000 "international" troops, having ousted the old regime of army, police and "attaches", have not put any true authority in its place. So a new lawlessness is back, as mobs loot warehouses and take lynch law to men accused--sometimes falsely--of belonging to the old order" ("Haiti: The tide returns", 1994).

The United States used coercive power throughout the conflict, mainly out of concern for its own interests, although former Secretary of State Colin Powell maintained that the motives behind using international force were to install "a responsive, functioning, noncorrupt government" (Weiner, Polgreen, 2004). Rothschild (2004) openly criticizes the United States' role, stating that the Bush administration strangled Haiti's economy by blocking U.S. foreign aid and pressuring other countries and institutions to support the embargo. As mentioned earlier, Haiti is classified as a least developed country, therefore such an aid embargo is devastating. These coercive tactics weakened Aristide. Furthermore, Rothschild maintains that the U.S. government had been supporting Aristide's opponents for some time, thus applying reward power. At the height of the conflict, when Haiti was in turmoil, the U.S. condemned the rebellion on the one hand, but were only willing to send troops, as they finally did, when Aristide finally stepped down. One major interest explaining their actions was clearly their fear of an increased influx of Haitian refugees.

The Organization of American States (OAS) showed concern that the political crisis remained unresolved, maintaining that the mutual mistrust among political actors hindered the possibility of talks that would bring a sustainable solution to the problems arising from the 2000 elections

(Organization of American States, 2001). However, the OAS was not in a position to take any direct action.

The second ousting of President Aristide in 2004 was a combination of an armed rebellion, popular protest and French and American pressure (“Whose coup in Haiti?”, 2004)

The eventual outcome

At various points in the previous analysis the outcome has been mentioned. The escalation as described in the chapter “Enlargement” reached its climax with the controversial resignation of President Aristide and his expulsion from the country. Looking at the situation from one point of view, a democratically elected president was coerced out of office by heavy-handed pressure from the United States and France. The pressure was underlined by a show of force and the threat of a blood bath (Prince, 2004). Even though the conflict had claimed hundreds of lives, Aristide’s departure may have averted even more bloodshed (O’Neill, 2004). The local force was exercised by members of the former military, who staged a massive revolt and successfully took over the capital city of Port-au-Prince (“Haiti: on the verge of conflict and instability”, 2005).

The North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) fittingly summarizes the outcome of the conflict: “According to more than one analyst, Haiti now fully qualifies as a "failed state". Nobody really controls Haiti even though four armed groups (UN Peacekeepers, discredited Haitian National Police officers, former soldiers, and pro-Aristide gang members, patrol or slink around this country...” (Regen, 2005).

Was there a winner?

Aristide is in exile, the country is awaiting elections for November of 2005.

“The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) wishes to express its grave concern over the escalating violence in the Republic of Haiti in recent months, which continues to claim lives on a daily basis and has nearly paralyzed the regular activities of Haitians, particularly those living in the capital, Port-au-Prince” (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2005). This report by the IACHR was published in June of the year 2005. More than a year had passed since the expulsion of President Aristide, whose resignation was supposed to have brought an end to the violence in the country. As this report and numerous media reports over the last year have shown, the country remains in turmoil. I believe it is safe to say, that no party to the conflict can be considered as a winner. Once again the poorest population of the country has the heaviest burden to carry. The dispute between ruling over them – not governing for them – has been carried out on their backs. Their human needs have remained unsatisfied.. The competitive strategies used by the various conflict parties, mostly by using force to ensure their goals, have never solved the issues. As a result the conflict has never ended. On the contrary, the coercive and violent approaches have fueled the conflict and led to its spiral escalation. The Opposition succeeded in achieving their goal by having Aristide ousted, however, they only achieved a power vacuum which dubious groups and individuals try to fill.

Summary and Conclusion

The conflict in a Haiti is a class struggle. The class holding power does not want to give it up. Aristide's reinstatement after the coup, arranged by the U.S., did not settle the long-standing conflict between the Haitian military establishment and the social forces supporting it, and President Aristide and those social forces supporting him. The underlying class struggle, making Haiti a continuous social and political battleground, has not been resolved. The parties' and the Haitians' basic human needs for identity, security, solidarity, justice, and development have yet

to be satisfied (Rubenstein, 1996). When Aristide was brought back into power by the U.S., none of the real problems were addressed. Poverty and the gap between the rich and the poor remained. Especially with respect to the escalation and the violence erupting from gangs, I believe as long as the underlying concerns - human needs - of the individual members of these gangs are not met by society, they will continue to take a violent role in the conflict. I think the fundamental issue of this extensive violence is the chronic failure to tackle the poverty, social deprivation and exclusion that affect most of the population. Haiti should not be caught up in a fight between the government and the opposition, or in an armed rebellion supported by outside forces, but rather seek a social and economic revival, environmental amelioration, jobs and social services for its people, and credible elections. An overall accepted legitimate power would enable the government to abstain from using their coercive power, which in the past has made the conflict very destructive. I think that the Haitian people have to be able to forgive and trust the decision makers. Once the whole country is included in a process of economic and social development, the most visible and volatile part of the conflict, namely the violent fighting of gangs in support of various political factions - can be virtually disarmed. This is when the healing process can begin. At this point it will be a long road to reconciliation and trust.

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