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Haiti's Changing Tide

A Sustainable Security Case Study

Reuben Brigety, II and Natalie Ondiak September 2009

Center for American Progress



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Executive summary

Haiti is a country that simultaneously has a rich history and a troubled past. As the first free black republic, it stood as a symbol of hope for those fighting against slavery and colonial oppression in the 19th and 20th centuries. Many of its artists and musicians are world renowned. The indigenous adaptation of Creole and the religion of voodoo underlie a culture that is vibrant, layered, and powerful. It is a country of stark topography and resilient people. Citizens live in a diaspora spread across the globe, but remain continually connected to events at home.

Haiti has also been continually plagued by a variety of intractable problems. Cycles of political upheaval, economic collapse, endemic poverty, rampant criminality, and natural disasters have ravaged the nation since its inception. Pessimistic observers consider it a lost cause with challenges that are too great for the global community to tackle. Yet its proximity to the United States—600 miles south of Florida—makes it impossible to ignore. And developments in the first half of 2009 suggest that Haiti is once again on the agenda of American and international policy makers.

Haiti is currently experiencing one of the best combinations of open political space and physical security that the country has seen in decades. The stability is due in large part to the United Nations peacekeeping force, which has helped maintain order since 2004. Haiti's President René Préval, elected in 2006, is also well regarded by the international community. And the democratically elected government is defined neither by corruption nor predatory behavior, unlike in many previous administrations.

U.S. President Barack Obama has committed the United States to improving its development assistance to fragile states such as Haiti, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is personally interested in helping the country. The United Nations recently named former U.S. President Bill Clinton as its new special envoy for Haiti. And a major international donors conference hosted by the Inter-American Development Bank was held in Washington in April 2009, during which countries pledged over \$300 million in foreign aid to Haiti.

All of these factors make the current situation in Haiti more promising than it has been in a long time. But Haiti has failed before, and it could fail again without the right kind of intervention. As President Preval said when he visited Washington in early 2009, "I believe we are at a very serious turning point. We can either win or lose."¹

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The sustainable security paradigm developed by the Center for American Progress provides a useful framework for examining developments in Haiti and rethinking U.S. policy toward the country. Sustainable security is a view of foreign policy that combines national security, collective security, and human security. It argues that the challenges arising from poor development outcomes can present very real threats to American security. As such, the best way to meet such national security threats is to address the core development problems from which they arise, and to do so in a cooperative manner with the host government and the international community. The core of the sustainable security approach is to use the nexus between development and security as both a means of identifying threats to our interests and a method for dealing with them. The complexity of Haiti's development challenges makes it a highly appropriate candidate for the sustainable security model.

Haiti is a country where the links between development and security are profound. CAP therefore conducted a field-based research mission to analyze U.S. policy toward Haiti using the sustainable security paradigm. The intent was to determine new defense, diplomatic, and development interventions that the United States, Haiti, and the international donor community could take to support long-term stability and economic growth in the country.

CAP researchers conducted extensive pre-mission research in the late spring of 2009 to review relevant policy documents and interview Haiti experts in Washington. The researchers received briefings from the U.S. Southern Command in Miami on June 8, 2009, and then they traveled to Haiti from June 9-17. They met in Haiti with senior members of the U.N. Stabilization Mission in Haiti, or MINUSTAH, as well as members of the diplomatic community, non-governmental organizations, and the Haitian government. They visited sites throughout Port-au-Prince, including Cité Soleil, and the Central Plateau.

This report is not intended to be an exhaustive examination of Haiti's history and relationship with the United States and international community. It aims to examine current conditions in Haiti through the sustainable security lens as a means of searching for fresh policy approaches to the country.

Analysis of the field research suggests that Haiti is experiencing a rare "dual-window" of opportunity in which conditions in Haiti and the United States make substantial change possible. These conditions will not last forever, however, and time is of the essence to take advantage of this rare opportunity. CAP's research confirmed two vital points. The first is that the creation of large numbers of jobs in the near term is absolutely essential for preserving security in Haiti long enough to start a cycle of sustainable development. The second is that the Haitian government needs substantial help to improve its capacity to perform essential services that would stimulate economic growth and improve access to basic services for the population.

To this end, CAP recommends that the United States and international community take the following steps:

- Establish a governance capacity partnership program to strengthen the functioning of the Haitian government bureaucracy in the near term and train the Haitian civil service in the medium and long term.
- Invite the U.N. Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance, in cooperation with the Haitian government, to register NGOs operating in Haiti to coordinate and regulate the provision of essential services.
- Expand MINUSTAH's mandate to promote economic development through repositioning forces to protect commercial infrastructure.
- Encourage the Haitian government to revise laws relating to the Haitian diaspora in a manner that facilitates their involvement in the Haitian economy and government.
- Direct the Department of Defense to reauthorize the Haiti Stabilization Initiative.
- Hold a Review Donors Conference not later than June 2010 to increase donor pledges in support of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and New Paradigm.

The United States and the donor community must seize the rare opportunity to help Haiti onto the path of sustainable development and political stability. Doing so would reflect American values, promote American interests, and prove America's capacity to achieve real results through smart development interventions. The people of Haiti are ready for the partnership.

The current situation in Haiti: How the past has influenced the present

Officials invoked Haitian history at every meeting we attended to discuss the current development and security challenges that the country faces. “You need to understand Haiti’s history in order to understand the current situation” was a repeated refrain. There is no doubt that Haiti’s history is both inspiring and sad and that it is ever-present in the minds of Haitians and the international community working in Haiti.

Political history

The early history of Haiti is nothing short of remarkable. The island, which now contains Haiti in the west and the Dominican Republic in the east, was claimed for Spain by Christopher Columbus in 1492 and named Hispaniola. The majority of the island’s indigenous population perished shortly thereafter. France forced the Spanish to cede the Haitian territory 200 years later in 1692,² and they found the island was ideal for growing

Timeline of Haitian history

● Domestic ● International ● United States



1492 Christopher Columbus discovers the island and names it Hispaniola

1791 Slave rebellions starts led by Toussaint L'Overture

1692 Spain cedes the Haitian territory to France

1803 The French armies under Napoleon Bonaparte surrendered

January 1, 1804 Haiti proclaimed independence

1806 Haiti’s first president, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, was assassinated

1862 United States recognized Haiti

1883 Haiti makes final reparations payment to France

1915–1934 The United States occupation of Haiti

1917 Imposition of the Haitian Constitution written by Franklin D. Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy



coffee, sugar, and cotton. Slave labor was the means by which plantations produced their goods. The majority of slaves were brought from Guinea in West Africa,³ and by 1701 the slave population numbered between 500,000 and 700,000, and the colony was the wealthiest in the Hemisphere.⁴

Slaves banded together to fight against colonial rule by 1791. Toussaint L'Ouverture, a freed black slave, led the rebellion. The French armies under Napoleon Bonaparte surrendered at the end of 1803, and Haiti proclaimed its independence on January 1, 1804. It became the first independent black republic in the world and the second independent state in the Western Hemisphere.

The fact that Haitians overthrew the French is a source of great pride to Haitians today. It also suggests two things: that Haitians are suspicious of intervention, and that some Haitians still feel a strong tie to their African roots. This is especially true in terms of religious beliefs; many Haitians believe in voodoo, and African languages have influenced Creole, one of the two official languages in Haiti.

This auspicious beginning was followed by a crisis in Haitian leadership and governance that continues to this day. Haiti's first president, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, was assassinated in 1806, and only nine of Haiti's 55 rulers since independence have served a full term. The majority of the rulers were overthrown, but there are also cases of assassination, execution, and death while in office.



AP PHOTO



AP PHOTO/DANIEL MOREL

1957 François Duvalier comes to power

1973 U.S. Foreign Aid reinstated after 10-year hiatus

1971 François Duvalier dies, his son Jean-Claude Duvalier comes to power

1986 Jean-Claude Duvalier is expelled, giving rise to a military junta

February 1991 Jean-Bertrand Aristide elected for the first time with 70 percent of the vote

September 1991 General Raoul Cedras led a successful coup against Aristide

October 1991 United States imposes an embargo on Haiti

September 1994 The U.N. Security Council authorized a multinational force led by the U.S.

October 1994 Aristide returned to power, embargo and sanctions lifted

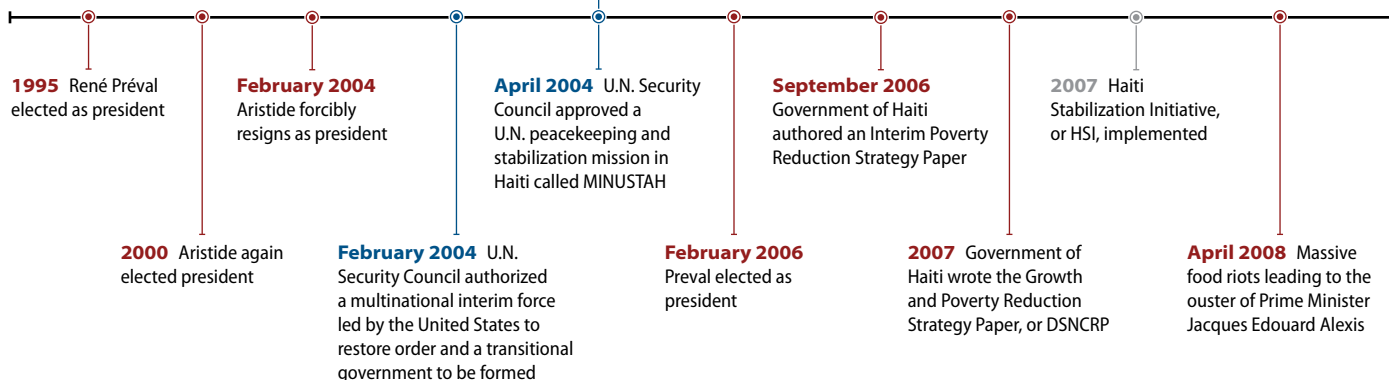
The United States and other members of the international community did little in terms of offering long-term help, instead shifting between periods of engagement and non-engagement. They embargoed Haiti for 60 years following the country’s independence, as did some European states who refused to engage the free black republic on equal terms. The United States sent its Navy to Haiti on 15 occasions to provide protection to Americans in Haiti between 1876 and 1913. And then the United States occupied Haiti from 1915 to 1934. After the United States left, a series of presidents and military juntas came to power and the country approved three new or revised constitutions in 1935, 1939, and 1946.

Haitian leaders were seen as predatory on the Haitian people from the 1950s until very recently. François Duvalier, know as “Papa Doc,” was a U.S.-educated doctor who came to power in 1957, gutting the Haitian military and filling it with loyalists. He then built a rural militia known as the *tontons macoutes*—Creole for bogeymen—which had about 10,000 adherents, as compared to the 7,000 soldiers in the Haitian army. They terrorized the Haitian people; an estimated 30,000 Haitians were killed for political reasons during his reign. Papa Doc’s son, Jean Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier came to power after his father’s death in 1971, and he too ruled as a repressive dictator.

The most powerful figure in Haitian politics over the past 20 years is Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a Catholic priest and believer in liberation theology. Aristide came to power in

Timeline of Haitian history

● Domestic ● International ● United States



February 1991 as a response to decades of dictatorship by reaching out to the poor and to leftist factions. Yet his rhetoric scared the traditional Haitian elites, and General Raoul Cedras soon led a military coup against Aristide.

The Cedras coup violated the constitution, brought the military back to power, and reverted rule to Duvalier-era tactics of terror, killing, and torture.⁵ President George H.W. Bush imposed an embargo in October 1991 that halted Haitian exports and restricted U.S. funding for humanitarian relief. U.S. policy also called for restoring Aristide to power—first under Bush, and then more vigorously under President Bill Clinton. And the U.N. Security Council authorized a multi-national force in September 1994, led by the United States,⁶ to restore the Haitian constitution and return Aristide to his elected office. Operation Uphold Democracy included 20,000 troops from 28 nations, and cost an estimated \$2.3 billion. The U.N. lifted its embargo and sanctions when Aristide was returned to power in October 1994.

Aristide agreed before his return to Haiti to respect the five-year presidential term and not press for the time he was forced in exile to be added to the original five-year term. The Haitian constitution forbids consecutive terms for presidents, and Aristide did not run for immediate re-election. A past prime minister and close associate of Aristide named René Préval was instead elected in 1995. But Aristide once again ran for president in 2000 and



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AP PHOTO/RAMON ESPINOSA

August, September 2008
Four massive hurricanes hit Haiti

January 2009
Paul Collier releases report about Haiti

April 2009
Government of Haiti releases New Paradigm Paper

June 2009 The World Bank and International Monetary Fund canceled \$1.2 billion of Haiti's debt

July 17, 2009
U.S. State Department decreased travel warning to Haiti

2008 HOPE II legislation passes in the United States

April 2009 Inter-American Development Bank Donor's Conference in Washington D.C.

May 2009 Former President Bill Clinton named U.N. Special Envoy to Haiti

June 2009 Student protests ostensibly about minimum wage laws

won with over 90 percent of the total votes. Persistent political turmoil and a decrease in international support led to his forced resignation in 2004.

The Duvaliers and Aristide remain on the minds of many Haitians. Some people we spoke to said that Aristide continues to be the dominant figure in Haitian politics despite his exile in South Africa. These leaders throughout the latter part of the 20th century have a continuing effect on Haitians today, and many Haitians distrust the government and see it as an absence in their lives, incapable of making positive change.

Economic history

Haitian leaders and the international community have undermined the country's economic situation from the start. Haiti was forced at its independence to pay reparations to France for lost "property" in land and slaves in order to secure its recognition as a nation. Haiti agreed to pay France 150 million Francs—equivalent to \$21 billion in today's U.S. dollars—as compensation to former colonizers and the French government for property lost during the Haitian revolution,⁷ and in exchange for a formal recognition of Haitian independence by the government of France.⁸ The Haitian government, bankrupt at the time, was forced to seek loans from French banks to pay the exorbitant sum.

France reduced the debt by one-third in 1838, given Haiti's severe financial position, and asked for 60 million Francs to be repaid without interest over 30 years.⁹ Haiti made its final payment to France nearly 50 years later in 1883,¹⁰ but it was not until 1947 that Haiti fully paid off its "independence debt."¹¹ Debt repayments to France devoured nearly 80 percent of Haiti's budget at the end of the 19th century, which restricted its ability to develop agricultural systems and other basic infrastructure required for modern development.¹²

These budget constraints were compounded by poor decisions by Haitian leaders, who enacted a series of land distribution and social and economic reform policies after independence. These policies initially improved the lives of Haiti's citizens, but it irreversibly reduced agricultural production by allowing families to will increasingly divided parcels of land to subsequent generations.¹³ Haiti also prohibited selling land to foreign interests, which deterred any foreign investment.

U.S. interventions yielded mixed results. Americans helped with infrastructure projects in Port-au-Prince during the U.S. occupation from 1915-1934,¹⁴ while also strengthening the forces that have kept Haiti largely immobile, including elite control of the economy and essentially institutionalizing the flow of Haitian labor to be exploited in the Dominican Republic.¹⁵

Duvalier turned the country into his own personal fiefdom following the U.S. occupation,¹⁶ causing further damage to the Haitian economy.¹⁷ Jean-Claude Duvalier was no

better than his father, but the 1970s saw a 5 percent annual economic growth rate, mostly attributed to an increase in U.S. foreign aid, which was reinstated in 1973 after a 10-year hiatus.¹⁸ After the younger Duvalier's ouster in 1986, the Haitian government enacted reforms such as budget cuts, maintenance of low minimum wages, trade liberalization, and eliminating export taxes on key products. This was also helped by an increase of duty-free exports into the United States.¹⁹

But the military takeover in 1991 resulted in Haiti's isolation and was followed by a U.S. economic embargo. These virtually wiped out all of the improvements seen in the 1980s and destroyed the economy.²⁰ There is also speculation that Haiti pursued a policy of trade liberalization too aggressively and rapidly, causing Haiti to have the lowest tariff structures in all of the Caribbean.²¹ Internal economic mismanagement and rampant corruption primarily drove these policies, but the inconsistency and suspension of foreign aid has also contributed to Haiti's economic misfortunes.²² Furthermore, Dominican products are widely sold in Haiti, undercutting Haitian production and decreasing the domestic market.²³ This has also caused many Haitians to work in the Dominican Republic under slave-like conditions.²⁴ What's more, tourism, which is the bulwark of most Caribbean economies, is virtually absent from Haiti because of security issues and instability.

Recent political and economic developments

A U.N. Security Council resolution authorized a multi-national interim force to restore order and form a transitional government after Aristide's ouster in February 2004. The United States led this force for the initial three months, which was known as "Operation Secure Tomorrow." The Security Council subsequently approved a U.N. peacekeeping and stabilization mission in Haiti, called MINUSTAH, in April 2004. The provisional government was not able to consolidate power and did not have control over much of the country, including the capital; kidnappings increased during this time, and gangs became rampant in Port-au-Prince.

Haiti held presidential elections in February 2006. There were 45 registered political parties that entered into the election managed by the provisional electoral council in lock-step with the United Nations and the Organization of American States. Early results showed President Preval winning the 50 percent margin needed to avoid a run-off, but final results showed him at 48.7 percent. Street protests and demonstrations took place, "burned ballots" were found, and popular sentiment was that he was the victim of fraud. The provisional electoral authorities, faced with huge popular discontent, determined by extrapolating some results that Preval had passed the 50.1-percent barrier, a judgment accepted by the international community.

Haiti received external shocks in 2008 that led to widespread devastation throughout the country. The global economic downturn hit Haiti especially hard. The rise in food prices

around the globe caused thousands of Haitians to go hungry and many to riot in the street over the prices of basic food and fuel. This in turn led to the ouster of Haiti's Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis.²⁵ The recent global economic downturn has meant that remittances back to Haiti have begun to dry up.²⁶

President Preval has been in power for three years. It is unclear at this point what will happen in the next presidential election, which will take place in 2011.

Prospects for change in U.S. policy

President Barack Obama has made gestures toward a new engagement with the Western Hemisphere. He pledged at the Summit of the Americas in April 2009 a new relationship based on partnership:

"I know that promises of partnership have gone unfulfilled in the past, and that trust has to be earned over time. While the United States has done much to promote peace and prosperity in the hemisphere, we have at times been disengaged, and at times we sought to dictate our terms. But I pledge to you that we seek an equal partnership. There is no senior partner and junior partner in our relations; there is simply engagement based on mutual respect and common interests and shared values. So I'm here to launch a new chapter of engagement that will be sustained throughout my administration."²⁷

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has specifically focused on Haiti since assuming office. Secretary Clinton's first meeting with a head of state was with Haiti's President René Préval. She also attended the donors conference and visited Port-au-Prince in April 2009. There she promised that she would combine her personal interest in Haiti with her power as secretary of state to re-engage with the country.²⁸ President Bill Clinton was also named U.N. special envoy to Haiti by Ban Ki-Moon in May 2009.²⁹ President Obama's commitment, Secretary Clinton's personal interest, and former President Clinton's engagement—combined with recent improvements in the country's security—all suggest the time is ripe to re-evaluate U.S.-Haiti policy.

Haiti's dual window

Haiti's political history, both distant and recent, does not give much confidence for a stable, prosperous future. Rapacious governments, natural disasters, international interference, widespread criminality, social unrest, and poverty have plagued the Haitian people at repeated intervals over the years. The succession of social crises and the numerous false starts by the international community to address them have left many Haiti observers to believe that the situation there is ultimately futile, and many commentators see the country as the Western Hemisphere's perennial "basket case."

Yet Haiti is not hopeless. In fact, current circumstances in the country, as well as in the United States, provide a rare chance to place Haiti back on the path of sustained economic development. Time is of the essence, and we must seize this chance before it slips away.

There is a "dual window" of opportunity in Haiti now. Haiti is one side of the dual window. The combination of open political space and physical security in the country is the best it has been for a long time. The current Haitian government, though less than effective, is at least democratic and pushing reforms in a variety of areas including the police, prisons, justice, customs, rural poverty, and port management.

The Haitian government's willingness to pursue reforms is essential, even if it is not able to get everything done effectively. Indigenous civil society groups can operate and advocate without fear of reprisal. Corruption is a major problem, but political parties can compete for power openly and a free press can provide news and commentary with little interference from the government.

The security situation in Haiti is similarly promising. Rates of violent crime in Haiti are better than in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica. Haiti's 2007 homicide rate was 11.5 murders per year per 100,000 people, while Jamaica's was 49 and the Dominican Republic's was 23.56.³⁰ MINUSTAH peacekeeping forces and the Haitian National Police, or HNP, have dramatically reduced kidnappings. There has not been additional massive civil unrest similar to the April 2008 food riots. There were student protests in June 2009 in support of a minimum wage increase, but they were not nearly as large, nor as violent, and they remained contained. It is therefore possible for positive developments to occur through political processes in a relatively stable environment.

How can the United States use this brief dual window to initiate a virtuous cycle of development before the opportunity disappears?

The United States forms the other side of the dual window. There is a clear opportunity for the United States to re-think its engagement with Haiti. As a presidential candidate, then-Senator Obama expressed his belief that helping other countries develop economically is in our national interest, saying that, “we cannot continue to rely only on our military in order to achieve the national security objectives that we’ve set. We’ve got to have a civilian national security force that’s just as powerful, just as strong, just as well-funded.”³¹ Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and former President Bill Clinton will keep attention focused on Haiti through their personal interest and foreign policy star power. Recently passed HOPE II legislation gives Haitian products greater access to the United States’ markets and can help spur low-skilled job growth if Haiti takes advantage of it. And the Obama administration is currently reviewing its entire approach to foreign assistance, which will inevitably have consequences for the aid it gives to Haiti. These circumstances taken together suggest that there is political space to re-evaluate and re-structure U.S. assistance to Haiti if there is sufficient political will to do so.

The problem is that the components of this “dual window” are not operating on the same timeframe. The continuation of a stable security environment depends on massive low-skill job creation in the short term. Yet the Haitian government, which should have a role in job creation through public spending and a favorable regulatory environment, will need time to build its governing capacity.

Similarly, the political will in the United States to rethink U.S. policy toward Haiti will not last forever. As the president’s domestic agenda consumes public resources, there will be less financial and political capital to devote to foreign assistance reform in general and to Haiti policy in particular. Of course, reviewing and retooling U.S. policy toward Haiti will take time. It will have to be consistent with broader efforts for foreign assistance reform. Congress may have to be convinced of the value of changing the aid portfolio, especially if increases in foreign assistance dollars are required. And such changes will have to be coordinated with the Haitian government, as well as with other donors on the ground and implementing partners.

There are internal dynamics working at cross-purposes within each of the two windows of opportunity in Haiti and in the United States. At the same time, the prospects for change *between* Haiti and the United States are briefly aligned, though that will cease to be the case as circumstances in each country change. The 2011 Haitian presidential elections are seen by many observers as a moment when the window may shut for Haiti.

The fundamental question is this: How can the United States use this brief dual window to initiate a virtuous cycle of development before the opportunity disappears?

What follows are Haiti's challenges based on field research, interviews and observations. The list includes many issues which overlap:

- Governance, essential services, and NGOs
- Security and the economy
- Migration and Haiti's diaspora
- Gangs and Cité Soleil
- Donor coordination and engagement
- The environment

Challenge one: Governance, essential services, and NGOs

The security problem in Haiti, like most problems in the country, is linked to a crisis in governance. This has to do with the lack of governmental capacity to provide services for the public good. The government cannot perform its most basic functions and is therefore unable to make effective interventions to address poverty—such as initiating public works programs that provide employment—or tackle its most pernicious effects—such as poor health and education.

Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. Most Haitians live on less than \$2 a day.³² About 50 percent of Haitians live in rural areas. The fact that the majority of Haitians remain so poor is made worse by the fact that the Haitian government is unable to provide fundamental basic services such as education and health care. A vicious cycle exists in which the poverty in Haiti deprives the government of the resources it needs to tackle poverty and its consequences. This governance gap must be addressed in order to improve the provision of services, reduce poverty, and improve the livelihoods of average Haitians.

Haiti has, in effect, a “hollow government.” Most of its ministries are ably led at the top by senior ministers and their staff, but in virtually every area, there is no effective cadre of civil servants below them to effectively execute government policy. The government is therefore very weak at performing basic governmental bureaucratic tasks across ministries such as budgeting, strategic planning, service delivery, and internal administration. Haiti was ranked in the bottom 2 percent of countries on corruption, and the bottom 6 percent on government effectiveness in the World Bank biennial rankings in 2006.³³

The international development community has tried to work to bring Haitians a better quality of life, particularly in the form of non-governmental organizations. Yet there seems to be frustration in the NGO community that the Haitian government is not able to perform tasks to improve the lives of their citizens. Conversely, there is often frustration in governmental circles that NGOs choose their own projects without adequately consulting with the government and coordinating their work in a synergistic fashion. Many NGOs still operate as relief agencies—for example, providing food to Haitians on a daily basis, rather than moving toward long-term development projects. NGOs cannot solve Haiti’s poverty by working independently, and the government does not have the same capacity as the NGOs to address the population’s needs.

The government does not have adequate funds and systems to provide public services to the people in a manner that meets their essential needs and builds governmental legitimacy. The public works ministry does not have the capacity to vet and execute major projects in a timely manner, which impedes progress on everything from road construction to water management while depriving the Haitian population of a source of much needed public sector work. The education ministry is unable to develop curricula for public schools or uniform accreditation standards for the myriad private schools across the country, let alone guarantee acceptable payment for teachers or adequate facilities for students.

Arguably the most egregious example of Haiti's incapacity is the Justice Ministry. Transparency International ranked Haiti as one of the most corrupt nations in the world, and its judicial system is chronically underfunded and dysfunctional. The government has dismissed judges en masse for taking bribes, and preventative detention of political dissidents is a major problem. Prison conditions in Haiti are some of the most appalling in the world, where overcrowding and unsanitary conditions are the norm. Yet because the justice sector is weak, prison reform remains elusive and the criminal code dates back to the reign of Napoleon without much significant reform since then. These are but a few examples of a bureaucracy so infirm that it cannot support the reasonable demands placed on it.

Virtually all of the problems in Haiti can be traced to a lack of government agency and funds affecting governing capacity. Whether it is the dearth of public services, a decent regulatory environment for business, or rampant corruption, the government's inability to perform essential tasks effectively has cross-cutting consequences. One of the most important of these is the relationship with the donor community.

The weak bureaucracy of the Haitian government is a serious challenge for donors trying to support critical social and economic sectors. On the one hand, respect for Haitian sovereignty and the Paris Declaration principles on aid effectiveness has led donors to attempt working in partnership with the government of Haiti to set development priorities, plan projects, implement programs, and monitor progress. On the other hand, the government's weakness has made this extremely difficult, and at times impossible, thus hampering poverty reduction efforts. Donors have often been left with unpalatable choices as a result. They continue to work with the government and accept suboptimal development outcomes. They could set up parallel structures for service delivery to improve the lives of Haitians, but this further weakens government capacity. They might also reduce their assistance if they lose confidence that the government can spend the funds effectively to achieve the intended results.

Donor efforts to improve development outcomes through the Haitian government will not be effective until government capacity is strengthened. The most pressing priority for helping the people of Haiti after ensuring physical security must be helping its government. Current efforts in this regard are not sufficient and are unlikely to deliver results during this rare dual window of opportunity. Much more aggressive measures by

Donor efforts
to improve
development
outcomes through
the Haitian
government will
not be effective
until government
capacity is
strengthened.



Students from the school 'Mixte Divine' check their homework before their classes start in Port-au-Prince. Haiti is seeking to reverse the worst literacy rate in the Americas by 2010 through an ambitious campaign, that will offer free reading and writing lessons for 3 million Haitians, about a third of the population.

the donor community will be required in the near term to strengthen Haitian government capacity while also respecting Haitian sovereignty.

Recommendation one: Establish a governance capacity partnership between donor countries and the Haitian government

The United States and other major donors should initiate a governance capacity partnership, or GCP, to provide direct bureaucratic support to essential Haitian government ministries. The GCP would consist of teams of technical experts from donor countries—perhaps 20 to 50 in number—skilled in essential bureaucratic functions such as budgetary planning, personnel management, and project design. The GCP would also assign specialized experts to appropriate ministries; it would send public health experts to the Ministry of Health, attach civil engineers to the Ministry of Public Works, etc.

The purposes of the GCP would be two-fold. First, it would provide the Haitian government with the absorptive capacity and accountability it needs to receive donor funding in the degree required to address urgent public issues. Second, it would train a cadre of Haitian civil servants over time to staff government ministries effectively without external support.

At least four major actions would have to happen to institute the GCP. First, the international donor community and the government of Haiti would have to agree to the concept. And the GCP would have to take steps to ensure that Haitian sovereignty is respected even as foreign nationals play key roles in developing essential governmental processes.

Second, the international community and the Haitian government would have to conduct a rapid needs assessment to determine which vital ministries may require assistance, the most vital tasks, and the minimum number of external consultants required to fulfill those functions in the near term. The GCP may request additional consultants later as the program is validated and as additional requirements emerge.

Third, individual donors will have to decide jointly with the government of Haiti which ministries they can support. This might be done based on the comparative advantage of a given donor and the requests of the Haitian government. For example, the United States might support the Ministry of Planning and Foreign Aid as well as the Ministry of Finance and Economy, since the United States is the largest bilateral donor and both of these ministries are critical to the functioning of the others. Canada might support the Ministry of Education, given the importance of education in its aid portfolio to Haiti, as well as the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Rural Development, since it has particular expertise in and commitment to environmental issues. France might be well placed to support the Ministry of Justice, given that Haitian law is based on civil law and the Napoleonic code.

Finally, donors will have to commit the staff and resources to fund the GCP in the near term. This engagement will vary by donor, but the funds committed for the GCP should be in addition to those pledged at the 2009 donors conference. This should be a relatively modest cost given the relatively small numbers of personnel involved in most cases. CAP's preliminary estimates are that a GCP team of 20 experts could cost approximately \$3 million per year. The most rapid mechanism for meeting these staffing needs in the United States would be for USAID to contract with for-profit development agencies that can provide consultants with the specific skill sets dictated by the joint rapid-needs assessment. Donors and the Haitian government should complete the first stage of the GCP—conducting a needs assessment—in short order so that consultants can begin work not later than February 2010.

Recommendation two: Invite the U.N. Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance to develop an NGO registration mechanism

Non-government organizations perform the bulk of essential services for the population in Haiti. This is particularly true in health care and education. Yet there is no system in place now to regulate these activities. The Haitian government does not have a comprehensive list of which NGOs are operating in the country or what projects they are implementing. NGO activities are not coordinated to support clear objectives established by the government. And there are no uniform standards set by the government to establish consistent guidelines for projects.

This haphazard arrangement cannot persist if the basic needs of Haitian citizens are to be met in the near term while the government improves its response capacity in these areas. Improving access to health care, water and sanitation, education, shelter, and food are

essential components of promoting social stability in the near term. The government will improve its legitimacy in the eyes of the population when the government can support these services regularly. Until then, it should work with NGOs and the international community to develop a mechanism to address essential human needs in a coordinated fashion.

One way to do this would be to invite the U.N. Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance to coordinate an NGO registration process and strategic action plan. UNOCHA is skilled at working with NGOs in humanitarian crises around the world and serving as a mechanism through which they can coordinate their work. The “cluster system” they pioneered distributes the expertise of particular NGOs across vital humanitarian sectors.

Haiti is not technically in the state of acute humanitarian crisis in which UNOCHA typically operates—such as immediate post-conflict or immediate post-disaster—but it is nonetheless in a very fragile state. Many of the socio-economic indicators extant in Haiti on a regular basis, such as food security and access to potable water, are similar to those following major humanitarian emergencies elsewhere. And the number of NGOs operating in Haiti is similar in magnitude to those in major humanitarian operations. UNOCHA can therefore perform a valuable service in helping to organize the NGO community in a way that better meets Haitian citizens’ needs.

Of course, UNOCHA involvement must be sensitive both to internal U.N. bureaucratic structures and the Haitian government’s sovereignty. UNOCHA would not supplant the authority or responsibilities of the UNDP resident representative, who also serves as the U.N. humanitarian coordinator. UNOCHA would simply be bringing additional expertise and capacity to address the NGO coordination issue. Its efforts to register and organize NGOs along a cluster-based system should also be consistent with plans to strengthen the Haitian government’s ability to provide services in accordance with Haitian priorities.

The government of Haiti, in cooperation with the U.N. and donors, should mandate compliance with a registration and coordination system by denying visas to NGO personnel who fail to comply. Donors can similarly withhold funding to NGOs who do not register and who do not coordinate their activities with the Haitian government and the U.N.

There is some concern that institutionalizing NGO activities in a more systematic way will breed donor dependency on the Haitian government, create parallel structures for service delivery that would compete with governmental systems, and dampen the Haitian government’s responsiveness as it cedes responsibility for social services to the NGO community. These concerns may ultimately materialize, but the effective provision of services is the urgent consideration. Organizing the NGO community is the most practical way to address this issue in the near term.

Challenge two: Security and the economy

Security and economic conditions in Haiti are deeply intertwined and neither can be advanced without the other.

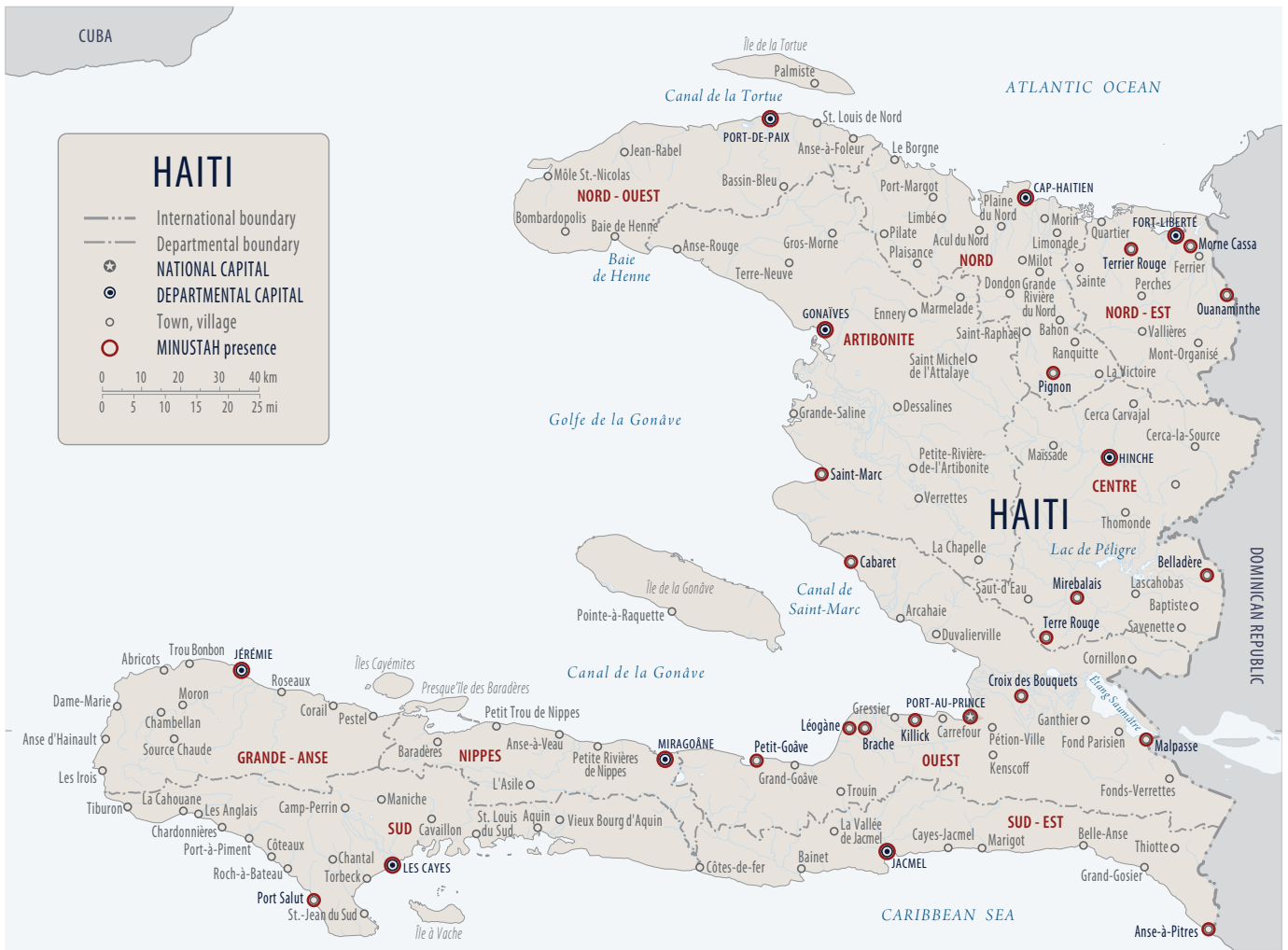
The physical security situation in Haiti has dramatically improved since 2004 when the U.N. first intervened, and it is arguably better than at any time since the end of the Duvalier regime. MINUSTAH and the Haitian National Police have arrested over 800 gang members. The State Department's 2006 country report on Haiti concludes that the Haitian state is no longer a sponsor of violence.³⁴ The State Department also changed its travel warning for the country on July 17, 2009. It previously encouraged Americans to defer all non-essential travel and now states that the situation has improved, though political tensions and politically -motivated violence remain.³⁵

The U.N. peacekeeping force, MINUSTAH, has operated in Haiti since 2004.³⁶ MINUSTAH is led by Brazil, and its current mandate is to stay in Haiti until October 2009, though it will likely be extended for some undetermined period—possibly until after Haiti's next presidential election in 2011. MINUSTAH's core goal is to create a secure and stable mechanism for the democratic process to occur, support the constitutional and political reform under way in Haiti, and protect and promote human rights in the country.³⁷ Between July 2005 and June 2009, MINUSTAH expenditures were approximately \$2 billion³⁸—almost seven times the amount international donors committed for economic development at the April 2009 donors conference.

MINUSTAH has established control in every major population center in the country and extended its presence into many rural areas as well. The peacekeeping forces were particularly successful in reversing the insecurity associated with Cité Soleil—the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince notorious for gang activity, kidnappings, and violence that plagued the entire city. According to the secretary general's report on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti,³⁹ the kidnappings declined to about seven cases per month as of February 2009—a 75 percent decrease from 2008, and an even more significant decrease from the 500 reported kidnappings in 2006, according to a U.N. official.

The improved security is in part due to MINUSTAH's training and deployment of the Haitian National Police. The HNP commanded a force of 9,247 officers as of June 2009,⁴⁰ and is widely viewed by the populace and the international community as a respected insti-

Security and economic conditions in Haiti are deeply intertwined and neither can be advanced without the other.



Source: Map adapted from United Nations Department of Field Support Cartographic Section, Map No. 4224 Rev. 23.

tution in the country. Yet it is not without issues. A force of just over 9,000 officers is woefully inadequate to police a population of over 8 million. By comparison, New York City has a population of roughly 8 million and a police force of 37,838.⁴¹ Even the relatively modest goal of 14,000 police officers by 2011 is widely viewed by experts as unlikely to be attained.

This low police-to-civilian ratio means that the HNP has, thus far, only been able to operate in urban areas such as Port-au-Prince in Nicentenaire, Fort National, Delmas 33, Cap Haitien, and Gonaïves. It has virtually no presence in the countryside, except along the border where they have support from MINUSTAH and the U.N. Police. The HNP's limited geographic remit leaves large areas of ungoverned spaces throughout the country, which are susceptible to exploitation for illicit trafficking in drugs, arms, and people.

Even with increased numbers, the HNP will need continued training and equipment, as well as administrative and logistical support in order to be an effective, self-sufficient security force. And the structure for training at police academies and personnel promotions is not yet well developed.

The rule of law is also deficient in Haiti. The country's prisons are some of the worst in the world and the justice sector is plagued by corruption among judges and a lack of public defenders. The entire justice sector must have mutually reinforcing institutions in order for the HNP to succeed.

The most significant aspect of security, however, is economic opportunity. Haiti's poverty is due in large part to the weakness of its private sector. The private sector mostly consists of microbusiness and subsistence farmers.⁴² Unemployment is rampant, and 95 percent of the employment that exists is in the underground economy, which is often based on massive illegal activity, and where the government is unable to levy taxes.⁴³ A number of well known factors have contributed to the depressed economy over time, including poor regulatory regimes and political instability leading to a lack of foreign direct investment. But another issue became clear in our field research: the lack of a managerial or professional class.

There is a limit to how much businesses can grow using the existing labor pool without significant indigenous talent to run small- and medium-size enterprises. A critical mass of Haitian accountants, lawyers, and other professionals is needed to support local commerce and develop a virtuous cycle of primary, secondary, and tertiary businesses. Yet a diverse labor pool will not develop and economic growth will be stifled without social mobility mechanisms to move people from physical labor to jobs requiring intellectual skill. A study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development found that 80 percent of Haitian citizens who are college-educated live outside of Haiti.⁴⁴ Strengthening the indigenous middle class is a long-term proposition predicated on expanding access to education at all levels—but particularly university—and creating economic opportunity to entice talented citizens to remain in Haiti. In the near term, the best way to re-introduce technical talent en masse to the Haitian economy is to encourage the return of Haitians living abroad (see challenge six).

Senior members of the MINUSTAH staff believe that the security gains achieved to date are as good as they are likely to get. They argued that if they continue with the same approaches to peacekeeping and policing, security will likely deteriorate within 18-24 months. There is wide agreement among the donor community in Haiti that low-skill employment and development opportunities are vital to begin building on security gains immediately. The absence of jobs and the resulting poverty are major near term threats to Haiti's stability and security.

Haiti has an \$11.59 billion GDP in terms of purchasing power parity, and its per capita GDP in 2008 was \$1,300; most Haitians face enormous struggles providing for their



AP PHOTO/ARIANA CUBILLOS

A Brazilian member of MINUSTAH stands guard as children wait outside a school in Cité Soleil, Port-au-Prince.

essential needs of food and shelter. These challenges are compounded when widespread shocks occur, such as in spring 2008 with a spike in food prices or the four hurricanes that slammed into the island later that year. It has long been a tenet of American foreign policy that an increase in economic stability will directly and positively influence an increase in political stability and liberalization. This is especially true in Haiti.

It is clear that maintaining a secure environment in Haiti depends on massive low-skill job creation in the near term, the continued presence of MINUSTAH peacekeeping forces, and a stronger HNP and rule of law. Near-term, low-skill job creation can come from the international donor community working with the Haitian government. The key to public sector spending to spur job creation in the near term is strengthening the capacity of the Haitian government. But the international community working with the Haitian government must also encourage and strengthen the indigenous private sector to produce decent work for the population on a sustainable basis. It will most likely be able to accomplish this by seizing trade opportunities through HOPE II, expanding support for agriculture, promoting the return of skilled expatriate Haitians, and enticing foreign direct investment.

Yet foreign direct investment is unlikely to flow back to Haiti until the security and regulatory environments are more stable⁴⁵—the current economic growth rate stands at 2.3 percent, and the industrial production growth rate is 1.2 percent.⁴⁶ Foreign direct investment into Haiti was \$75 million (USD) in 2007 and accounted for 4.8 percent of gross fixed capital formation. Seventy percent of the hard currency that does enter the country is in the form of remittances.⁴⁷

The Haitian government has neither the financial resources to invest in public works projects to create large numbers of jobs nor the capacity to spend such funds effectively even if they had them. Private philanthropy supports many small scale projects but is unlikely to marshal the resources to create large numbers of jobs over a sustained period in the

near term. The best option available is for the international community to invest enough money—in consultation with the Haitian government—into projects that create local jobs, address enduring public problems, and help set the conditions for a virtuous cycle of development. Near term stability, which can lead to longer term growth, depends on spending assistance funds strategically now.

Recommendation three: Expand MINUSTAH’s mandate to promote economic development through repositioning forces to protect commercial infrastructure.

There are a wide variety of purely economic initiatives under consideration to spur a virtuous cycle of sustainable development in Haiti. Yet given the linkage between economic development and security, it is time to consider new options that will take advantage of the effective security assets in Haiti to support the spread of economic opportunity.

Reinvigorating private investment in the medium and near term is one of the keys to Haiti’s chances of success. One of the key roadblocks to spurring private sector growth is the perception among many would-be investors that Haiti is still too unstable or dangerous for safe, long-term investments. Changing this perception through concrete action is one of the most important tasks for invigorating economic growth.

Redeploying MINUSTAH peacekeeping forces can help support the development of essential economic sectors. The United Nations should amend the peacekeeping forces’ mandate to provide for security support to economic development in Haiti. MINUSTAH has been instrumental in tamping down rampant criminality and armed violence. They have greatly contributed to the improvement of ambient security in Port-au-Prince and other population centers in the country. But the major security consideration has shifted from the impunity of armed groups to the instability resulting from rampant unemployment, and MINUSTAH’s strategy should shift accordingly.

MINUSTAH should conduct an economic security assessment along with the Government of Haiti to determine where peacekeeping forces might be most strategically deployed to foster economic growth. Immediate places to reconsider force dispositions include the moribund industrial parks in and around Cité Soleil, as well as the ports of Port-au-Prince and Gonaïves. Making those places even safer for commerce might help boost investor confidence and bolster light industry and maritime operations, with salutary residual effects for the economy.

Near term stability, which can lead to longer term growth, depends on spending assistance funds strategically now.

Challenge three: Migration and Haiti's diaspora

Migration out of Haiti has been occurring since the Duvalier era in the 1960s when Haitians hoped to find better opportunities and leave a repressive regime. There have been two large waves since that time: the 1980s with the emergence of boat people trying to land in Florida, and following the coup that deposed Aristide in 1991.⁴⁸ Haitian migration continues to this day. The diaspora has created a brain drain from Haiti—most of the Haitian diaspora live in the United States, Canada, France, the Dominican Republic, the Bahamas, and Cuba. And these Haitians send home remittances that amount to about \$1.65 billion a year—nearly 35 percent of Haiti's GDP.⁴⁹

The relationship between Haiti and its diaspora is troubled. Experts in Haiti say that many young Haitians aspire to leave the country as soon as they are able. The feeling among young people is that they will not get opportunities in Haiti and that leaving is the best way to secure a better life. Yet Haitians who remain in Haiti often resent the diaspora. The government does not allow Haitians to maintain dual citizenship, and its Haitian embassies abroad do not have the capacity to allow Haitian citizens to vote in elections. Not all Haitians may want to contribute to their country, but the prevailing mood is that Haitians who have left are not welcomed back—other than for vacation and to visit family.

The Haitian diaspora also has implications for U.S. immigration policy. Secretary Clinton mentioned in early 2009 that the United States would review its policy toward Haitian deportation. Many Haitians believe they cannot return to their home country because of the entrenched poverty, lack of economic opportunities, and the hurricanes in late 2008. The election of President Obama—and with it the appointment of Secretary Clinton—have made many Haitians hopeful that the United States will grant temporary protective status to Haitians, which would protect them from deportation and detention for a set time and allow them to live and work legally in the United States.⁵⁰ It is unclear what the fate of undocumented Haitians in the United States will be, but it will likely spark a contentious debate.

Recommendation four: Revise diaspora laws to encourage economic and political engagement

Haiti has a large and talented diaspora living in North America, Europe, and beyond. Estimates are that at least one in every six Haitians live abroad.⁵¹ They represent a wide



A boarding team from the Coast Guard Cutter Forward approaches a heavily laden migrant vessel from Haiti. Many young Haitians aspire to leave the country as soon as they are able to secure a better life abroad.

spectrum of talent, from hard-working laborers to skilled professionals. At the same time, Haiti has a desperate need for intellectual capital. Only 15 percent of Haitians in Haiti have a high school education,⁵² and less than 1 percent is college-educated.⁵³ A study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development found that 80 percent of Haiti's college-educated citizens live outside of Haiti.⁵⁴ The Haitian government has a direct interest in having educated members of the diaspora return to contribute their talents directly to the country's development.

There are any number of obstacles that inhibit Haitians abroad from returning. Some remained concerned about the security situation and political stability in the country. Others are concerned that they cannot make enough money in Haiti to support themselves and their families. Still others are comfortable with their lives abroad and are unwilling to make a permanent move elsewhere.

The one factor that is firmly in the Haitian government's control is the existence of laws that place Haitians in the diaspora at a distinct disadvantage to those still living in the country. In particular, laws requiring that all business have a majority stake held by Haitian citizens and that prevent those with dual nationality from serving in the government are counterproductive. It is precisely in the areas of commerce and governance that Haiti needs the most capable people. Haitian laws should entice—rather than inhibit—those with critical skills to return to the country.

It is unclear just how many Haitians would return if the Parliament decided to make these changes. But it is equally clear that the country does not benefit from these discouraging laws. The United States and the international community should encourage the Haitian Parliament to repeal laws necessary to foster the return of Haitians living abroad.

Challenge four: Gangs and Cité Soleil

Gangs had become an endemic feature of the Port-au-Prince landscape by the time René Prével came to power as the president in 2006. Gangs concentrated in the notorious Port-au-Prince slum of Cité Soleil terrorized people through kidnappings, murder, rape, extortion, and weapons and drugs trafficking. Gangs in Haiti are largely a political phenomenon. Not only are they motivated by money, but they can also be mobilized by nefarious political actors to incite violence for profit in support of particular political objectives.

Cité Soleil is only eight square kilometers large, but it is home to 300,000 people. MINUSTAH took deliberate steps to eradicate Port-au-Prince's gangs in 2006 and 2007 and conducted a series of raids along with the Haitian National Police to flush out gangs from Cité Soleil in March 2007. Approximately 800 gang members were apprehended during that time and put in jail.⁵⁵

The U.S. government followed the MINUSTAH peacekeeping forces' efforts in Cité Soleil in 2007 with the development of the Haiti Stabilization Initiative. HSI is an innovative program bringing together American defense, diplomatic, and development assets to address the root causes of instability in Cité Soleil. HSI is funded by so-called "1207" funds. Under Section 1207 of the 2006 Defense Department Authorization Act, the Pentagon can transfer funds to the State Department to support reconstruction, security, or stabilization assistance for countries that are in the United States' national security interests. The Pentagon decided ultimately to devote just \$20 million to Haiti, which forced the scope of the program to focus exclusively on Cité Soleil.

Yet HSI has been successful even with this limited remit. It has completed infrastructure projects, which have created many jobs and improved conditions in the area. CAP researchers were accompanied to Cité Soleil by an armed State Department escort in June 2009, which suggests that the situation is still not completely safe. But just entering the area is a victory for outsiders; the State Department guide explained that traveling into Cité Soleil before HSI would have meant taking one's life into one's own hands.

A new marketplace in Cité Soleil has become a bustling hub for small-scale commerce in the center of the enclave. The Haitian National Police have established a major station in the northern part of the area. A new road bisecting the entire neighborhood is almost completed. And a new radio station, Radio Boukman, has become a popular source of news, commentary, and entertainment for the people of Cité Soleil.



Radio Boukman is a thriving community radio station in Cite Soleil, a slum in Port-au-Prince. Cite Soleil has undergone many positive changes since the Haiti Stabilization Initiative began in 2007. HSI is an innovative program bringing together American defense, diplomatic and development capabilities to address Cite Soleil's many challenges.

HSI has also proven to be a useful model for interagency coordination. The Defense Department's ability to transfer 1207 funds to the State Department and leverage those dollars against the resources of other USG agencies allowed HSI to respond to demand signals from the community, requests from MINUSTAH, requirements from the U.S. and Haitian governments, and situations that threatened local stability.

Of course, HSI is not without shortcomings. Its programs are, by definition, short-term interventions to promote stability immediately rather than long-term projects conceived with sustainability in mind. Projects will face termination when HSI funds cease, which will stop their palliative impact and may actually threaten stability anew as the root causes of conflict are no longer targeted by these efforts.

HSI also arguably undermined the potential effectiveness of USAID's own programs, as well as those in the rest of the USAID portfolio. The citizens of Cité Soleil and the NGOs working with them knew that HSI funds were earmarked for them, and they did not have to compete for funds against other USAID and U.S. government priorities in the rest of Haiti. This may have meant that HSI projects were not as well conceptualized, prioritized, or executed as they might have been had they been forced to compete for prioritization with other initiatives in Haiti. There is no way to quantify this criticism effectively, but it is worth noting.

There was no reauthorization of additional 1207 funds for HSI in FY 2010 as of mid-June 2009, nor were there specific plans to incorporate its projects into the main USAID portfolio for Haiti. The demise of HSI could cause ripples of instability in Cité Soleil and will rob the U.S. government of an interagency tool. Without follow-up plans, HSI may be yet another short-term intervention where security and stability begin to flounder since the program did not address the root-causes of devastating poverty in the city.

Recommendation five: Reauthorize the Haiti Stabilization Initiative

The Haiti Stabilization Initiative has proven to be a success in bringing stability to Cité Soleil and contributing to security in Port-au-Prince generally. It has also been a useful mechanism for fostering interagency cooperation among USG components operating in Haiti. It is not without justifiable criticism, but it is hard to deny the stabilizing effect it has had on the country.

If the Defense Department does not reauthorize HSI for fiscal year 2010, it could make matters worse than they were before. The United States raised Cité Soleil's expectations with the program and could dash them again by failing to continue the community building projects that have been so successful. Gangs and other elements could take advantage of such disillusionment and generate insecurity again in Cité Soleil with implications for security throughout the capital. And the USG would rob itself of an invaluable interagency tool by not extending HSI through this critical dual-window of opportunity.

Recognizing that HSI is a so-called "1207" short-term project, now is the wrong time to end the program. The gains have been too great—and remain too fragile—to terminate the program now. A number of studies have been conducted which suggest useful reforms to the 1207 process, not the least of which is allocating such stabilization program funds directly to the State Department instead of routing them through the Pentagon.⁵⁶ Imperfect as it is in its present form, the HSI is also an indispensable tool of interagency cooperation in the promotion of sustainable security in Haiti.

The demise of HSI could cause ripples of instability in Cité Soleil and will rob the U.S. government of an interagency tool.

Challenge five: Donor coordination and engagement

The Haitian government in collaboration with the IMF and the International Development Association authored an Interim-Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper in September 2006 entitled “A Window of Opportunity for Haiti,” which lays out recommendations and attempts to create a coherent framework for development projects in Haiti. This laid the foundation for the 2007 Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, “Making a Qualitative Leap Forward,” which includes a specific plan for 2008-2010. The paper states that anti-poverty initiatives in Haiti should focus on growth sectors such as agriculture, tourism, infrastructure, human development, and democratic governance.

Another report released by Paul Collier in January 2009, “Haiti: From Natural Catastrophe to Economic Security,”⁵⁷ takes an overall positive view of Haiti’s potential. The main reason for optimism, according to Collier, is the access that Haiti has to U.S. markets through the “Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Act,” also known as HOPE II.⁵⁸ This legislation guarantees that Haitian garments can enter the United States duty-free and quota-free. It helps to promote job creation and economic opportunity within Haiti by opening trade and access to U.S. markets.

Interestingly, Collier’s report seems to argue that Haiti does not belong among the countries he describes in the book *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*. Collier’s influential book describes weak and failing states and countries caught in cycles of poverty. Haiti is always counted among these countries, but Collier’s report also emphasized Haiti’s advantages including being part of a “good neighborhood” (the Caribbean) and its diaspora, which sends huge amounts of money home to Haiti.

All of these reports were consolidated into a document known as the “New Paradigm Paper,” which was presented at the April 2009 Haiti Donors Conference at the Inter-American Development Bank. This paper seeks to create a comprehensive framework for how the government of Haiti and the international community can work together to further Haiti’s development and increase the country’s ownership over its development priorities. It looks at goals, as well as the implementation of these goals and the roles that different actors should play. And it seeks to invest in job creation engines and secure basic services for the population.

The international donor community at the Donors Conference committed \$353 million to Haiti over the next two years.⁵⁹ The United States alone pledged \$68 million in new aid in addition to the \$245.9 million it pledged in 2009.⁶⁰ And World Bank President Robert Zoellick made a speech calling for the international community to “do development differently.” This means a combination of Haitian ownership over development and long-term investment by the international community.⁶¹

The World Bank and International Monetary Fund canceled \$1.2 billion of Haiti’s debt in late June 2009.⁶² This is nearly two-thirds of Haiti’s outstanding debt and it will likely free up \$50 million a year over the next 10-15 years for poverty reduction programs that focus on job creation and limit the damage caused by natural disasters.⁶³

Coordinating the activities of international donors in developing nations is always challenging—and Haiti is no exception. Given the weakness of the Haitian government and economy, international donors play a pivotal role in Haiti by funding the provision of basic services, providing a source of employment for citizens, and aiding infrastructure development.

The breadth and complexity of Haiti’s challenges require international donors to work together synergistically, spending resources effectively, avoiding the duplication of effort, and bolstering the most critical sectors of the government and the economy. The international community’s commitment to Haiti has waxed and waned over time, and there are currently mixed signs about its collective efficacy.

At the same time, the small number of donors makes coordination relatively simple. There are 10 major donors in Haiti, known collectively as the G-10: the United States, Canada, Spain, France, the European Union, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the United Nations, and a rotation of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. Haiti is an environment where representatives of donor institutions can meet regularly to coordinate their actions with one another and with the Haitian government. The adoption of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper is an example of this. The PRSP is a blueprint for prioritizing development programs and assigning resources accordingly.

Nevertheless, there are important challenges to donor coordination and engagement. The first is the Haitian government’s capacity to be an effective partner in its own development. The government’s bureaucracy is incredibly underfunded and therefore weak. This makes it very difficult for the Haitian government to formulate plans for donors to support and to execute them effectively. For example, the European Union assembled 11 experts in 2007 to examine most of Haiti’s ministries in order to understand in specific detail why they were failing and what might be done to assist them. They put their findings in a report and gave the results to the government of Haiti, but never received a meaningful response or follow-up to this analysis.

Given the weakness of the Haitian government and economy, international donors play a pivotal role in Haiti by funding the provision of basic services.

The challenge is to match Haiti's priorities with those of the donor community in a manner that reflects their respective interests, builds the Haitian government's capacity, and permits sustained engagement.

Another problem with donor engagement is that the \$353 million committed at the April 2009 Donors Conference is woefully inadequate for the tasks assigned. Some experts with whom we met suggest that at least \$2 billion will be required to fulfill the goals of the PRSP. Haitian Prime Minister Michèle Pierre-Louis said that a \$1-billion investment from the donors conference was essential.⁶⁴ The \$353 million should be seen as an initial step to be followed quickly by additional funds as the Haitian government's capacity improves.

A last issue is that the coordination mechanisms for the donor community on the ground are not robust enough to ensure the level of synergistic effort required. U.N. Development Program serves as the convener of the G-10, but it has no direct authority over the individual donors' efforts. The U.S. government is the largest bi-lateral donor by far, giving \$202.24 million in 2007 compared to Canada's \$119.22 million and France's \$48.23 million.⁶⁵ Yet a single bilateral donor simply cannot direct the efforts of other donors in the field either. Notwithstanding the priorities outlined in the PRSP or the Haitian government's plan, each of the donors has their own priorities, which reflect their own institutional objectives and constraints. The challenge is to match Haiti's priorities with those of the donor community in a manner that reflects their respective interests, builds the Haitian government's capacity, and permits sustained engagement.

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Recommendation six: Hold a Review Donors Conference to publicly monitor progress and engagement by donors and the Haitian government

The pledges made at the 2009 Haiti Donors Conference should be seen as a starting point for the international community rather than an end. Prime Minister Michèle Pierre-Louis called during her speech to the assembled guests in April for a total commitment of \$1 billion to implement the program in the PRSP. The \$353 million pledged by the donor community falls far short of that, and as of this writing, none of the total \$353 million pledged has actually been delivered. It is understandable that donors may want to be sure that their original pledges are well spent before they commit more funds. For this reason, the Government Capacity Partnership or some similar mechanism should be developed to help the Haitian government program donor funding in a transparent, accountable, and effective manner.

The Haitian government will need the funding called for in the PRSP in order to create jobs through public sector spending in the short term and enable the return of foreign direct investment and employment in the medium term. And given the security implications of failing to spur the creation of decent work for 150,000 people in the near term, it is absolutely essential that the international community follow through on its 2009 commitments. Donor countries should also be prepared to make additional commitments in 2010 as needed to reach the \$2-billion threshold within two years, contingent on the Haitian government's progress.



AP PHOTO/J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE

The government of Haiti, the United Nations, and the G-10 donor group should jointly call for a Review Donors Conference not later than June 2010. The purpose of the conference would be three-fold. It would review the Haitian government's progress since the last Donors Conference on the PRSP and the New Paradigm. It would publicly review the extent to which donors fulfilled their 2009 pledges. And it would provide a forum for donors to commit additional funds in 2010. Helping Haiti in this critical period of transition requires the donor community's persistent engagement in partnership with the Haitian government. A Review Conference would be a very useful vehicle to facilitate this. The Inter-American Development Bank should be asked to host the Review Conference, given its role in facilitating the original Donors Conference.

Haitian Prime Minister Michèle Duvivier Pierre-Louis speaks at the Haiti Donors Conference in Washington seeking financial assistance to help rebuild her country, the poorest in the Western Hemisphere.

Challenge six: Environment

Haiti's environmental situation is dire, with cross-cutting consequences for the economy, security, and well-being of the population. The solutions to Haiti's environmental challenges are similarly complex and interconnected. Addressing them requires tackling issues of economic opportunity, governing capacity, public health, and even corruption.

Haiti's location and mountainous terrain make it prone to natural disasters.⁶⁶ The environmental problems associated with its geography are linked to energy shortages and increased vulnerability to tropical storms and hurricanes. Energy demands are mostly satisfied by wood fuel used to produce charcoal and firewood; deforestation and erosion are extremely widespread as a result. The lack of vegetation is having a devastating effect on access to clean water and agriculture. And Haiti is especially prone to natural disasters due to the environmental degradation.

The Haitian environment has been under rapacious assault for decades. Haiti is 97 percent deforested and 25 of Haiti's 30 watersheds now lack natural forest cover.⁶⁷ Without trees to hold soil in place, water from heavy rains runs off from the mountains and poses flood and other environmental risks.

For example, the slum of Cité Soleil sits in a flood plain between downtown Port-au-Prince and the Gulf of Gonaïves. Rain water from the hills surrounding the city flows down into Cité Soleil due to erosion and poor water management, which floods the streets and brings hoards of trash down into it. Cité Soleil is literally the sewer of Port-au-Prince. The combination of land erosion, un-enforced building codes, and the construction of homes in the hilly terrain above Port-au-Prince is a disaster waiting to happen. These factors combined with sustained rains over time could lead to a massive landslide in the densely populated urban area and heavy loss of life.

The decimation of tree coverage has exposed other communities to increased risk of natural disasters. Such catastrophes left over 18,000 people dead and 132,000 homeless between 2001 and 2007. Then four hurricanes in August and September 2008 caused widespread devastation; nearly 800 people died, 112,000 homes were destroyed, and total damages were estimated to be \$897 million.⁶⁸ The 2009 hurricane season has begun, and the country is bracing for more storms.



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What's more, the failure to capture rainwater through effective water table management has adversely affected the entire country's water supply. Less than half of the population has access to clean water and one-third has no sanitary facilities.⁶⁹ This dramatically increases the likelihood of water-borne diseases such as typhoid and cholera. Waterborne diseases are the second leading cause of death of children in Haiti, following only malnutrition.⁷⁰

Haiti is facing an environmental crisis. The country is 97 percent deforested and erosion is visible on Haiti's many mountains.

It is becoming increasingly clear that external shocks and internal dynamics will continue to damage the country's environment badly unless the Haitian government and economy become strong enough to address the interconnected issues which lead to environmental degradation. And addressing the environmental problems in Haiti will require a multi-dimensional approach.

Strengthening the government's bureaucratic capacity in key ministries will enable it to institute essential public works projects to better manage water tables, redress erosion, enforce eco-friendly zoning laws, provide broad access to potable water, and develop

disaster mitigation strategies. Improving the economy through public works programs, agricultural development, and private sector growth will decrease rural residents' need to fell trees for charcoal sales. The Haitian government and the international community can consider many more specific programs to improve Haiti's environment, but many of the recommendations contained in this report will help improve the governance and economic factors that continually contribute to environmental harm.

Conclusion

There is broad agreement between the government of Haiti and the international donor community that they must work together to improve essential human services, spur private investment, strengthen governance, and promote security. And CAP's research suggests that there is a finite timeframe for supporting this agenda. Security advances made since 2007 are in danger of eroding without job creation and development to help stabilize the economy. Failure to spur economic growth that leads to near-term job creation will compromise further economic growth and effective governance in a vicious cycle of predatory poverty.

The government of Haiti has developed a useful analysis of the challenges it confronts, but its capacity to address those challenges is extremely limited. Efforts by the donor community to support the Haitian government, while significant, have not been sufficient to build government capacity, meet the population's essential needs, or create a path toward sustainable economic growth in the medium term. The United States and its donor partners must take steps now to reverse this trend by extending the security and political window, strengthen Haitian governance, and lay the foundations for sustainable development.

To that end, the United States and the international community should take the following steps:

- Establish a Governance Capacity Partnership program to strengthen the functioning of the Haitian government bureaucracy in the near term and train the Haitian civil service in the medium and long term.
- Invite UNOCHA, in cooperation with the Haitian government, to register NGOs operating in Haiti to coordinate and regulate the provision of essential services.
- Expand MINUSTAH's mandate to promote economic development through repositioning forces to protect commercial infrastructure.
- Encourage the Haitian government to revise laws relating to the Haitian diaspora in a manner that facilitates their involvement in the Haitian economy and government.
- Direct the Department of Defense to reauthorize HSI.
- Hold a Review Donors Conference no later than June 2010 to increase donor pledges in support of the PRSP and New Paradigm.

Haiti is truly at a crossroads. Throughout its long and challenging history, rarely has a moment existed where a number of factors have come together to create an opportunity where transformative change is genuinely possible. The problems confronting Haiti are daunting indeed, but they are not insurmountable. New commitments and innovative policies are required to help the Haitian government help itself while this rare opportunity still exists. Doing so successfully will demonstrate the efficacy of American development policies, promote America humanitarian values, and support America's national interests.

The development-security link at the heart of the sustainable security paradigm is essential for thinking about policy in Haiti. The establishment of physical security by MINUSTAH and the HNP has helped create the space to spark economic development. But the security within Haiti cannot be sustained unless economic development takes off. Fostering such growth is contingent upon strengthening the Haitian government so that it can establish the rule of law and provide basic services to its citizens. The international community should therefore concentrate its efforts in the near term on helping improve the Haitian government's bureaucratic capacity so that they can provide basic services. It is the essential ingredient for enticing private investment, spurring sustainable employment, and reducing the endemic poverty that threatens stability in the country and affects neighbors in the region.

The international community needs to concentrate its attention on Haiti because solutions are possible in the country. The United States has many challenges around the globe: ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and relations to maintain with the global community. The United States is trying to redefine its global standing under President Obama. Haiti could be held up as an example of a successful development intervention if steps are taken now.

Addressing these challenges will require persistent engagement by the international community to match the persistent effort of the Haitian people. The United States and its donor partners have the resources and the skills to help Haiti in this critical time. The Haitian people are demonstrating the will to help themselves. Now is the time for all the parties to truly work together to build a better country for future generations of Haitians.

Appendix: Methodology

Two methods were employed for this report. First, we conducted a thorough literature review of pertinent books and reports that examine Haiti from the U.S. and international perspective. Much of the literature focuses on Haiti's problems and seeks specific solutions. In addition, we spoke to Haiti experts throughout Washington D.C. and the United States. These interviews were conducted between May 14 and June 5, 2009. The nature of these conversations revolved around the question: What cross-cutting U.S. policy approaches—specifically defense, diplomacy and development—could make real substantive changes to the situation in Haiti?

Second, we traveled to Haiti to meet with relevant actors there. We left Washington D.C. on June 8, 2009 and traveled to Miami, Florida, where we met with representatives from the United States Southern Command. We heard the U.S. military perspective on Haiti's challenges and the regional dynamic. The following day we traveled to Port-au-Prince, Haiti and stayed there from June 9-17, 2009. We spent the majority of our time in Port-au-Prince and traveled to Cité Soleil, a neighborhood of Port-au-Prince, and to the Central Plateau. The nature of this trip was fact-finding for answers to three central questions:

- What are Haiti's biggest challenges today? Do Haiti's challenges need to be tackled simultaneously or is focusing on one area the best way forward?
- Do cross-disciplinary projects already exist that integrate development, defense and diplomacy communities? How effective are they?
- If the U.S. were to take a sustainable security approach, what would this mean for Haiti?

Assuming that the U.S. and international community can help improve the situation in Haiti, we tried to assess how they might work effectively with the government and people of Haiti to build a more stable, secure and economically viable state. We sought to answer the following questions in our discussions:

- Going forward, what U.S. and international interventions are the most essential? What communities would need to be involved? What is the timeframe?
- Can Haiti become sustainable? Is Haiti able to support and build mutually reinforcing institutions?

Research in Haiti imposed constraints such as physical movement and security concerns in certain parts of Port-au-Prince. We worked hard through our initial research and meetings to identify and set up meetings from Washington D.C. Eight days in country allowed us to have many meetings with a cross-section of people, but time constraints meant that we were not able to meet with everyone we wanted. Specifically, we were only able to meet with one official from the Haitian government while in the country, and our interaction with influential Haitian citizens was limited. The vast majority of our meetings were with officials from the United Nations, the international donor community, the U.S. government, and the NGO community.

We kept our set of questions in both Washington, D.C. and in Haiti to those related to defense, diplomacy, and development issues. The line of questioning about the security-development nexus meant that certain topics repeatedly came up in discussion. These topics in turn influenced the types of people we interviewed in Haiti. For the sake of consistency, we presented similar questions in each of our meetings to get a sense of whether there was broad consensus or disagreement about interventions and policies that could effect positive change in Haiti. The discussions led to the analysis, recommendations, and conclusions we describe in this report.

Our D.C. meetings were conducted between May 14 and June 5 with the following:

- Representatives from relevant U.S. government agencies including USAID, the State Department and the Department of Defense.
- Think tank and NGO analysts from the U.S. Institute for Peace, International Crisis Group, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Partners In Health, the Inter-American Dialogue, and the Clinton Foundation.
- Representatives at the Inter-American Development Bank.
- The Haitian Ambassador to the United States in Washington

Between June 8 and June 14, in Miami and Haiti, the authors met with the following organizations and individuals:

- United States Southern Command, or SOUTHCOM
- U.S. State Department: Deputy Political Counselor and Deputy Regional Security Officer
- International Committee of the Red Cross: Deputy Chief Delegate
- Haitian Education & Leadership Program: Executive Director and Founder
- United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, or MINUSTAH: Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Force Commander, Police Commissioner, Deputy Police Commissioner for Haitian National Police Development
- U.N. Development Program: Resident Representative
- Food for the Poor: Executive Director
- Inter-American Development Bank: Resident Representative

- Partners in Health: Visited clinics in Lacolline and Lascahobas
- Haiti Stabilization Initiative: Stabilization Coordinator
- E.U. Ambassador
- Haitian Government Official: Chief Economic Officer to the Prime Minister
- CARE: Country Director
- Canadian Ambassador
- Save the Children: Education Officer and Deputy Representative—Programs
- International Crisis Group: Country Representative
- USAID: Director
- Haitian Civil Society leaders

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Mark Schneider
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Peer reviewers do not necessarily endorse the recommendations put forth in this report. Any errors are the authors’ own.

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