The Haitian Dilemma
Significant Issues Series

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The Haitian Dilemma
A Case Study in Demographics, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy

Ernest H. Preeg
By the simple exercise of our will
we can exert a power for good practically unbounded.

—Joseph Conrad
*Heart of Darkness* (1899)
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The prolonged Haitian political and economic crisis, ongoing since the military overthrow of popularly elected Jean-Bertrand Aristide in September 1991, has been a distressing story of human suffering and societal decline. Moreover, the crisis continues with no end in sight. Despite more than $2 billion of external support, including a U.S. military intervention to restore Aristide to the presidency and a massive economic recovery aid program, Haiti today is less stable politically and far more destitute economically than it was when Aristide was elected president.

Haiti also remains a country poorly understood by almost all Americans. Extensive media coverage has concentrated on the day-to-day tribulations within the country rather than on underlying structural problems of national development. In any event, Haitians are famous for telling the foreign visitor what he or she wants to hear, which can make curbside quotes misleading as to what lies below the surface in this complex and deeply troubled nation. The U.S. and Haitian governments have likewise been caught up in a constant process of crisis management, with public statements concentrated on immediate challenges rather than broadly based objectives. It is no wonder that the casual American observer is baffled as to where Haiti and U.S. policy toward Haiti are ultimately heading.

This country case study in demographics, development, and U.S. foreign policy takes a longer view of Haitian prospects. The analysis focuses on the powerful demographic forces at play—rapid population growth and declining arable land in the countryside, the relentless rural/urban migratory flow, and building pressures for outward migration to the United States—that are central to any viable strategy for sustained economic growth and political stability in Haiti. This largely demographically driven development model is then related to the U.S. policy response, both in the recent past and as would be most effective in the period ahead.
The central policy theme that emerges from the study concerns the conflict in time horizons between demographic/development objectives and U.S. foreign policy objectives. The former are by definition relatively long-term in impact, while the latter tend to be short-term or immediate. The recent Haitian experience has been that when push comes to shove in high-level U.S. decision-making, the short-term foreign policy objective almost always overrides longer-term demographic/development considerations. The most glaring example of such conflict was the three-year embargo of Haiti, from November 1991 until October 1994, for the immediate foreign policy objective of restoring Aristide to the presidency. The embargo, however, predictably wreaked destruction throughout the Haitian economy and social structure, including all aspects of the demographic forces noted above, and overcoming its effects will take many years and huge financial expenditures (aside from the fact that in the end the restoration still required a military intervention). Other such trade-offs between short-term foreign policy and longer-term development objectives recur throughout the study, as they will for the future course of U.S. policy toward Haiti.

The bottom-line question, of course, is whether Haiti, despite the setbacks of recent years, can build itself into a self-sustaining nation providing reasonable justice and economic opportunity to all of its people. The conclusion drawn here is affirmative—Haiti benefits, in particular, from a wealth of human resources and proximity to the U.S. market—but subject to two critical contingencies. The first is substantial external support, which not only will be necessary for some years to come but will need to be restructured radically, away from short-term political support for the Haitian government to longer-term demographic/development objectives. The second and even more important contingency is a level of national reconciliation and government performance within Haiti that has not been realized up to this point. These two contingencies, and the likely alternative courses if they are not met, define the Haitian dilemma facing newly elected president Rene Preval and those responsible for U.S. policy toward Haiti.

This Haiti case study is part of a broader CSIS project on population and U.S. foreign policy under the able direction of David Wendt. The study was a team effort in which I was joined by Alex de Sherbinin, demographer and geographer with the Population Reference Bureau, Georges Fauriol, director of the
Americas Program at CSIS, and my research assistant Christopher Chivvis. We worked closely together throughout, including a fact-finding trip to Haiti in January 1995. Alex and Chris also authored pieces on family planning programs in Haiti and U.S. immigration law as applied to Haiti, contained in this volume as appendixes. Dedicated management support was provided by Karen Levy and administrative support by Bobbi Kahlow and Andrea T. Williams, all of CSIS. The final text and policy conclusions of the core study, however, are my sole responsibility.

We all benefited greatly from a public/private sector project Advisory Committee cochaired by Senator Alan K. Simpson (R-Wyo.) and Representative Anthony Beilenson (D-Calif.). The committee met three times, in June and December 1994 and May 1995, to discuss all aspects of the study, including detailed commentary on a full draft at the third meeting. About 100 copies of the draft were circulated to interested readers in the United States and Haiti, and most grateful thanks are extended for the many valuable comments received. Finally, the project was made possible by the generous financial support of The Pew Charitable Trusts.
The Republic of Haiti has by far the highest fertility rate in the
Western Hemisphere—about five births per woman of child-
bearing age—and the Haitian population is projected to almost
double from 7 million in 1995 to more than 13 million by 2025.
Meanwhile, arable land is decreasing as farmers cut down trees
for firewood and the soil erodes. The population of the Haitian
capital, Port-au-Prince, tripled from 460,000 in 1970 to 1.4 mil-
lion or more in 1995, and rural/urban migration has accelerated
since the lifting of the international embargo in 1994. Urban
poverty, pollution, and crime are intensifying, while the reced-
ing water table below Port-au-Prince could turn brackish within
five years. There are about 1 million people of Haitian origin in
the United States, and hundreds of thousands if not millions
more would quickly migrate to the United States if U.S. immi-
gration laws and the U.S. Coast Guard permitted it.

These are the demographic forces at play in Haiti today, and
this country case study examines their relationship to the
broader prospect for Haitian economic and political develop-
ment and to U.S. foreign policy interests. The point of departure
is the observation that demographers and others engaged in
population-related issues, on the one hand, and foreign policy
experts, on the other hand, operate in largely separate orbits, vic-
tim of, among other things, a serious communications discon-
nect. The demographer’s perspective on population issues can
be long-term, measured in decades, while the foreign policy
establishment is incessantly preoccupied with more immediate
objectives and crisis situations. This was evident in 1994 in the
fleeting interest accorded by foreign ministers to a high-level
population conference in Cairo compared with their continual
involvement in trouble spots such as Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia,
and Haiti.

The country case study approach pursued here attempts to
bridge this communications and policy disconnect by demon-
The Haitian Dilemma

...strating how longer-term demographic issues can have important impact on just such severely troubled countries as noted above. Unfortunately, these issues tend to be ignored until crisis strikes and then often become further aggravated by the short-term policy response dictated by foreign ministries. This certainly has been the recent experience in Haiti. Somehow the demographic forces need to be addressed earlier on, in a more systematic way, so as to reduce the likelihood of political crisis, violence, and consequent pressures for foreign military intervention.

The case study approach demonstrates, first of all, that demographic forces can have far more acute and immediate impact at the country as compared to the global level. In broadest policy terms, the whole is lesser than the sum of its parts. The Malthusian specter of population growing at an exponential rate while food supply grows at a slower arithmetic rate, to the point where population overwhelms available food supply, illustrates the point. In global terms, the Malthusian formula has not been borne out, and current population projections tend to be in terms of when, rather than whether, world population will level off. At the country level, in contrast, Malthus can strike with a vengeance, as is happening in Haiti today: population continues to grow exponentially while arable land and food supply are in a state of absolute decline.

Recent Haitian experience is highly relevant to U.S. foreign policy for two principal reasons. The first is the timely importance of Haiti itself as a major U.S. foreign policy problem since the military coup against President Aristide in September 1991. The subsequent international embargo, the collapse of the Haitian economy, the political killings and other human rights abuses, the large outflow of Haitian boat people, and the ultimate U.S. military intervention have received sustained high-level U.S. government and public attention. What will happen when the United Nations peacekeeping force departs, scheduled for early 1996, is highly uncertain. What is clear is that demographic forces within Haiti are even more powerful and threatening as a result of U.S. policy since 1991 than they were before.

The second reason for Haiti’s relevance is that Haiti is representative of a broader subgroup of countries facing similar severe difficulties. Indeed, the downward spiral of development in Haiti, as described in subsequent chapters, is characteristic of a number of very poor countries in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean region. The failure of economic development can threaten...
the underlying social and political cohesion of these countries and poses a dilemma for the international community. The international challenge is “nation-building,” however unpopular the term, as the alternative to prolonged human suffering, violence, political disintegration, and large-scale external migration. It is a poorly understood challenge, and the inquiry here seeks to clarify its dimensions and to draw out lessons learned in Haiti.

It is useful, in fact, to clarify the term “nation-building” at the outset. It is frequently used in the narrow sense of a foreign military intervention, wherein a mission goes beyond temporary peacekeeping to a prolonged police role under highly unstable political conditions. In contrast, nation-building as used in this case study involves the development challenge in far broader terms—political, economic, and social, as well as security—with the special connotation of a nation teetering on the brink of collapse. The international policy response correspondingly ranges from technical and financial assistance to diplomatic support to possible military intervention. Successful nation-building, in this context, can be more narrowly defined as achieving the development objectives through economic and other means short of military intervention.

The full challenge of nation-building, thus defined, constitutes a profound responsibility for the international community. How and to what extent should the more powerful and advanced countries intervene to help build “modern” nations out of poorer, less modern cultures? What combination of initiatives is justified to curb family size and migration abroad, provide highly conditional technical and economic assistance, oversee elections, and maintain a foreign police force? This integration of demographic/development and foreign policy objectives is the challenge of nation-building in crisis-prone, least-developed nations such as Haiti.

The structure of the study is relatively straightforward. Chapter 2 introduces the broad subject of demographics and development, including a three-stage demography-driven development model—rural population pressures on arable land, rural/urban migration, and pressures for external migration. This is followed by a historical perspective of Haiti in chapter 3. Chapters 4 through 6 examine in detail each of the three stages as they have evolved in Haiti, and chapter 7 recapitulates the three-stage process in terms of Haiti’s current development prospects. Chapter 8 contains a post–cold war assessment of U.S. interests in Haiti, with particular emphasis on the importance of
geographic proximity. Chapter 9 concludes with a recommended U.S. policy response for the period ahead based, in part, on lessons learned in Haiti since the fall of the Duvalier regime in February 1986. The two appendixes provide a more in-depth analysis of family planning programs in Haiti and U.S. immigration policy as applied to Haiti.
Demographics are generally understood to be an integral part of the overall development process and their broadest indicators accepted as the parameters for defining the process. The share of population engaged in agriculture is a traditional measure of the level of development: 70–90 percent in the least-developed countries, a steadily declining share as countries become “newly industrialized,” and very low levels in the most highly developed countries wherein, for example, 3 percent of the U.S. population is able to not only feed the domestic population but export $60 billion of agricultural products annually. The rate of population growth is also a critical indicator for achieving self-sustaining economic growth. A high-end fertility rate of five to six births per woman of child-bearing age—roughly the experience of Haiti in recent decades—is clearly not sustainable. The most widely used overall measure of the level of development is per capita income, which establishes a competitive race between population growth and economic output.

Within these broad parameters, however, the demographic dimension of development quickly becomes more complex and controversial. First, there is the need to distinguish between demographics at the global level, which are relatively slow moving in their impact and influenced predominantly by a relatively small number of large countries, and the often more acute demographic forces at play within individual nations or regions. Global demographic trends have major implications for the future course of the world economic and political orders. The global population is projected to grow from 5.7 billion in 1995 to 8.4 billion in 2025 before leveling off later in the next century. This increase will require enormous corresponding growth in the supply of food and raw materials. Environmental objectives can similarly be threatened through increased levels of carbon dioxide emissions, desertification, and waste disposal, although in the newly industrialized regions of Asia and Latin America
rapid growth in industrial production will likely have greater impact on the environment than projected population growth. The changing regional, racial, and ethnic balance in world population will also have major influence on future international relationships. European nations, including France, Germany, Italy, and Russia, have populations in absolute decline, while Asian and African populations are growing at a high rate. The share of world population among members of the Organization for Cooperation and Development (OECD) will decline from 16 percent in 1990 to about 12 percent in 2010.¹

These same demographic and development relationships—population as related to food supply, the environment, and the ethnic/racial mix—are engaged at the national level as well. But here their impact is distinct in two important ways, which brings them more closely in contact with the day-to-day conduct of foreign policy. The first is simply a matter of time horizon. Global demographic trends move slowly, with decisive impact measured in decades, while faster demographic change within countries can have consequences in as few as 5 to 10 years, or even more immediately in crisis situations.

The second distinction for demographic forces at the country level is the wide range of outcome, which, among developing countries in particular, became more pronounced during the 1980s. A development dichotomy has emerged between the more advanced “newly industrialized” countries that have achieved a substantial, sustained growth in per capita income and the “least-developed” grouping of poorest countries, many of which face an equally sustained decline in per capita income. In both cases, the overall process can be explained largely in terms of demographic trends—demography-driven development—but with sharply different results. Whether the demographic trends act in positive or negative concert depends principally on the performance of the government within the developing country—that is, “good governance”—although external assistance can also play an important supporting role.

A good example of the positive concert in a newly industrialized country is South Korea. A process of export and investment driven industrialization increased per capita income in South Korea, in 1985 dollars, from $480 in 1960 to $1,540 in 1980 to $4,090 in 1994. Annual growth in gross domestic product (GDP) of 8.4 percent since 1980 was made possible by a large rural/urban migration, whereby the share of population in urban areas increased from 28 percent in 1960 to 57 percent in 1980 to 78 per-
In 1994. In addition, education levels rose along with per capita income to the point where about 30 percent of Korean high school graduates go on to university, one of the highest levels in the world. As a result of family planning programs and progressively higher per capita income and education levels, the fertility rate of women of child-bearing age declined dramatically from 5.4 in 1960 to 2.8 in 1980 to 1.7 in 1994. Earlier outward migration, mostly to the United States, has recently been reversed to some extent as Koreans return home to new opportunities. A steadily growing educated middle class in an increasingly decentralized industrial society has supported political transition to democratic government with deepening institutional roots. All of these developments that have transformed South Korea from a very poor country to an industrialized democracy in three to four decades involve a major change in demographic structure.

In bleak contrast, a number of the poorest developing countries during the 1980s experienced a downward spiral of declining per capita income, urban poverty and unemployment, environmental degradation, political instability, and growing pressures for large-scale outward migration. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has characterized this syndrome as the poverty-population-environment, or “PPE,” spiral. An even more despairing scenario was presented in an article by Robert Kaplan entitled “The Coming Anarchy.” Kaplan describes a process of societal stress “in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real ‘strategic’ danger,” a process characterized by “disease, overpopulation, unprovoked crime, scarcity of resources, refugee migrations, the increasing erosion of nation-states and international borders, and the empowerment of private armies, security firms, and international drug cartels.” In these situations, the demographic forces tend to accelerate and become mutually reinforcing in creating tragic consequences within the countries and severe problems for the international community.

The Three Stages of Demography-Driven Development

This study is about the experience and outlook for one country in the troubled latter category, Haiti. The analysis is based on a three-overlapping stage model of demographic forces as they impact on the development process: rural population pressures on arable land, the rural/urban migration, and outward migration. These are familiar and much studied relationships, and
what distinguishes the model as developed here is its emphasis on interactions between demographic and other dimensions of the development process at each of the three stages, as well as on the dynamic interactions among the three stages. The hypothesis is also tested—and convincingly demonstrated—that for some among the poorest countries, the demographic forces are of growing importance and highly susceptible to turning negative in their net impact, leading to a downward spiral of development. This is unfortunately the current state of affairs in Haiti.

A description of the three stages, in briefest terms, is as follows:

**Stage 1: Rural population pressures on arable land.** This stage is relatively straightforward. A poor and largely uneducated rural population has a high rate of population growth. Limited arable land and a lack of investment in it lead to small or even negative marginal output from the growing population. Misuse of the land, such as “slash and burn” hillside deforestation in Haiti, can reduce the arable land base and degrade the environment more broadly. Foreign assistance to establish rural health care delivery systems can have an initial effect of increasing population growth through declining infant and other mortality rates.

**Stage 2: Rural/urban migration.** This is a more complicated phase of critical importance to the overall development path. There is both a supply-push effect from overpopulated arable land and a demand-pull effect from higher paying jobs in urban areas. Rural/urban migration initially tends to occur among the younger, higher-educated, and male segments of the population. Broader communication between friends and relatives in rural and urban areas produces an acceleration effect. The shift from rural traditional culture to unsettled urban life involves major social and political adjustment, including conflict between a more politically active urban population and authoritarian government. The central development challenge can, in fact, be defined largely in terms of the ability to produce adequate jobs, social infrastructure, and political accommodation for the inevitable rural/urban migration.

**Stage 3: Outward migration.** Pressures for outward migration are usually predominantly economic in motivation, but can be politically motivated as well under oppressive governments,
and in some cases there is considerable overlap. Outward migrants tend to come from the more mobile and somewhat better educated urban population, a second stage from earlier rural/urban migration. There can also be an acceleration effect through communication with and financial support from relatives and friends recently established abroad, an important factor in recent Haitian experience. One critical judgment by intending migrants is the probability for successful migration to a more advanced country. A more elusive factor concerns the level of economic and political well-being needed in the home country to reduce or eliminate the incentive to migrate abroad. In a negative sense, pressures for large outward migration constitute a key indicator that the overall development process has broken down and that the nation is losing its political and social cohesion.

**Foreign Policy and Geographic Proximity**

These are the three stages of demography-driven development as they interact within a growing number of the poorer developing countries. The impact of the process on the international community—the foreign policy connection—has likewise intensified and taken on a new political orientation since the 1980s. The intensification reflects the development dichotomy described above between newly industrialized and least-developed countries, and the fact that more countries have been trapped in the downward spiral leading to economic stagnation, political crisis, violence, and large outward migration. The international community has to respond to ever more widespread malnutrition, if not starvation, ever more killing and other gross violations of human rights, and a growing outward flow of economic migrants and political refugees. The economic aid strategies of the 1970s and early 1980s have unfortunately not worked in many of the poorest countries, and growing demands on the international community for economic resources and military peacekeeping missions have outrun available supply. There is an urgent need to establish priority criteria for assistance levels and for burden-sharing among donor countries.

The changed political orientation in responding to this dilemma is principally a result of the end of the cold war. For several decades, political struggles within developing countries were largely and often primarily extensions of the global power
struggle between the U.S.- and Soviet-led alliances. From Asia to Africa to the Caribbean, a principal rationale for U.S. economic and military assistance was to maintain friendly relationships with anti-Communist governments. Immigration from such countries was accepted largely in terms of people fleeing communism or disrupted from fighting it.

This global cold-war chess board rationale for foreign assistance to developing countries has now ended, which together with needs outrunning the capacity to respond, has led to an emerging redefinition of industrialized country national interest in providing foreign assistance which is based largely on geographic proximity: the closer to home, the higher the national interest. This relationship is most obvious in dealing with surges in migration from crisis-afflicted countries, which go preponderantly to adjoining or neighboring countries. International law concerning political refugees places responsibility on the country of first refuge, and it can likewise be extremely difficult to return economically motivated migrants to a country in political and economic distress. It is the neighboring countries of political refuge and economic opportunity that bear the immediate responsibility for problems stemming from stage 3 of the model.

The changing foreign policy orientation, moreover, goes beyond the direct impact of unwanted immigration. The cumulation of immigrants from a neighboring poor country develops into a political constituency of its own in the recipient country, and frequent travel, telephone calls, and other contacts with the country of origin, facilitated greatly by proximity, draw national interests of the two countries closer together. As noted earlier, such contacts, among other things, tend to accelerate illegal migration from the poorer to the richer neighbor.

Another political reality in assessing foreign policy priorities is what is referred to as the “CNN factor,” namely the quantity and prominence of media reporting and its impact on the body politic in the migrant-recipient country. Here again geographic proximity makes a big difference. In the case of Haiti, daily non-stop flights between Port-au-Prince and New York and Miami greatly facilitate and reduce the cost of television and other media coverage compared with more distant troubled countries. Interaction between direct reporting out of Haiti and political activities of the Haitian diaspora in prominent American cities adds to the media impact linking U.S. and Haitian interests.

The importance of geographic proximity in defining U.S.
interests in Haiti in the post–cold war setting is addressed in greater detail in chapter 8. Haiti is not, however, an isolated case, but rather an important example of a broader reordering under way of U.S. interests in the developing world. The more prominent roles of demographic forces, development objectives, and geographic proximity constitute a dimension of the post–cold war world order that deserves far greater attention in foreign policy councils.
Haiti in Perspective

Haiti is a complex society with deep cultural and historical roots, and a reasonable knowledge of its workings is prerequisite to understanding the current situation and the prospects for the period ahead. The following commentary is a step in that direction.

The Historical Perspective through 1971

Haiti’s long struggle for independence from France lasted from 1791 to 1804 and had a truly heroic dimension. The outstanding leadership of the revolt—Toussaint-L’Ouverture, Dessalines, Pétion, Christophe—is a continuing source of national pride and identity. After achieving independence, however, the nation has been characterized by disappointment and tragedy. Indeed, Haiti has been isolated internationally throughout most of its history, initially as the product of a successful slave revolt during a period of colonialism, later as a poverty-stricken nation best known for its Voodoo practices and self-serving political leaders. Internal turmoil and rebellion were frequent, and governments usually took the form of an autocratic president with strong military underpinning. Economic development was greatly neglected and the rural peasant relentlessly exploited to the benefit of those wielding political control. One consequence of its having won independence after a relatively brief colonial period was that Haiti forewent the benefits obtained by many less-developed countries with a longer colonial heritage—a trained cadre of public administrators and a firm structure of internal services and justice.

The revolutionary period also introduced the political cleavage, based on color, between the mulatto elite and the large majority of the population, made up of peasant and other lower-class blacks. The war for independence was in many respects a
three-way struggle between the French, the semi-enfranchised mulattoes, and the black slaves. The color line was never absolute, alliances constantly shifted, and unity among all Haitians against the French was ultimately achieved. But the suspicions engendered and the cruelties perpetrated between the two Haitian groups left their lasting mark. Once the immediate French threat had been eliminated, struggle quickly broke out among the surviving revolutionary leaders. Alexandre Pétion, archetype of the urbane, French-educated, and self-confident mulatto elite that still largely inhabit the affluent Port-au-Prince suburb that bears his name, revolted against the reigning emperor, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, an impulsive, fearless, and cruel black general around whom all Haitians had finally rallied because he has been the one most feared by the French generals. The two men became symbols and precursors of the two political tendencies in Haiti. Pétion won out, beginning the dominance of the mulatto elite that was to prevail through most of the nineteenth century, at times by manipulating a pliable black president—a technique called la politique de doublure (freely translated as “the understudy strategy”). Toward the latter part of the century, rivalry between the largely mulatto and black factions, under the banners of the liberal and nationalist parties, became more intense, and violence more frequent. Power-oriented leaders increasingly engaged in the dangerous game of seeking external support for their personal ambitions, promising economic and other concessions in return. The especially disruptive and bloody period beginning in 1911 set the stage for the landing of U.S. Marines in August 1915.

The Marine occupation from 1915 to 1934 has been variously interpreted. To some, it was a humanitarian mission designed to bring order and economic progress out of chaos and bloodshed. Others saw the occupation as a cynical plot to make Haiti safe for U.S. investment and commerce. The complex truth lies somewhere in-between. To its credit, the U.S. occupation built up the country’s economic infrastructure and established a broader-based system of health services and education. The Americans also created the Garde d’Haiti, the first relatively professional, disciplined military organization in Haiti. After the initial period, however, most Haitians viewed the occupation as a national humiliation. Early guerilla uprisings were suppressed, but the final years were taken up by protest and negotiations to obtain the departure of the marines, which took place peacefully in 1934.
An important political development in Haiti during the U.S. occupation, indeed encouraged by it, was the emergence of a black nationalist movement stressing Haiti’s African roots and its unique cultural identity. Unlike the leaders of virtually all previous political factions, as well as their contemporary Marxist rivals, these noiristes rejected the superior status accorded to European culture and its hold on Haitian education and values. They promoted the Voodoo religion and the Creole language as genuine expressions of national culture and viewed Haitian history as a struggle between the European-oriented mulatto elite, in collusion with the French-dominated Catholic Church, and the majority of authentic black Haitians. They were cynical about liberal democracy, seeing it as manipulated by the elite, and stressed instead the need for authority and discipline to bring about necessary change. Principal support for the nationalist movement came from an emerging black middle class of teachers, lawyers, and doctors, many of whom, much to the consternation of the traditional elite, had been trained in programs sponsored by the Americans. The movement took concrete form in 1932 with the formation of the political grouping Les Griots, which in local parlance meant the storytellers of tribal customs. One of the group’s founders and more active members was a young medical doctor named François Duvalier.

Following the departure of U.S. forces, the traditional elite renewed their efforts to control the country’s political structure, particularly under President Elie Lescot (1940–1946). A groundswell of support from several populist and nationalist movements carried the day for the election of President Dumarsais Estimé in 1946, but Estimé was unable to implement much of his reform program in the face of opposition from the Haitian senate and military. He was succeeded in 1950 by Paul Magloire, a charismatic black colonel who drew upon a broad base of political support and personal popularity. Opposition to Magloire steadily grew, however, and he was forced out of office in 1956. After 10 months of turbulence and violence, François “Papa Doc” Duvalier was elected president by a large majority vote on September 22, 1957.

Despite many charges of election fraud, it is generally accepted that Duvalier had the broadest voter support. During the election campaign he had astutely toned down his more radical earlier views, and the military junta that supervised the elections was favorably disposed to him. Once in office, however, he quickly showed himself to be a strong-willed and ruthless ruler.
The nation suffered a period of brutal political repression and major regression in its economic development. While speaking softly, Duvalier was cruel and vindictive in dealing with his enemies. He recruited a dreaded corps of *tonton macoutes*—paramilitary thugs—to establish political control through fear and engaged in widespread extortion to meet his financial needs. The professional classes fled the country, development projects were neglected or corrupted, and a xenophobic nationalism permeated Haitian foreign policy. The United States, in despair and frustration, closed down its economic assistance mission to Haiti in 1964, and thus during most of the Alliance for Progress years, when the United States was making its greatest resource commitment ever to the Western Hemisphere, the poorest country in the region received almost nothing.

There is another side to the François Duvalier record, however, namely that Duvalier carried out a major political transformation of the country against considerable odds. He set out to destroy the traditional power structure of the army, the Catholic Church, and the business elite, and he succeeded fully in the first two objectives and partially in the third. Duvalier was especially suspicious of the military officer corps, and his decisive if brutal repression of the numerous coup attempts against him resulted in the creation of a new officer class. Most members of the existing corps, predominantly mulatto, were killed, exiled, or sent into retirement and replaced largely by middle-class blacks loyal to the populist Duvalier movement. The army command was divided, with the head of each major unit reporting directly to Duvalier, and the *tonton macoutes*, later organized more formally as the Volunteers for National Security (VSN), served as a countervailing force to the army. Thus Duvalier was unique among Haitian civilian presidents in bringing the army fully under his political control.

Conflict had always existed in Haiti between the Catholic Church and the black nationalists. The clergy, largely French, had maintained a dominant position in the educational system and played an important Francophile role in the country’s political life, generally in support of the mulatto elite. It was not until the Magloire presidency in the early 1950s that the first Haitian bishop was named, and as late as 1963 only 113 out of 416 priests were Haitian, compared with 180 French. Duvalier had long vowed to break the power of the “Breton priests” and, once having secured his own power base, began his confrontation with the church in 1959. In the process, the archbishop and several
priests were expelled from the country, a leading seminary was closed down, and Duvalier was excommunicated. Duvalier’s objectives were to stamp out alleged subversion against the government from within the church and to indigenize the church leadership. By 1965, both sides were ready to negotiate their differences, and under the agreement of 1966 Duvalier was received back into the church, with the right to nominate the church leadership. As a result, the archbishop, all six bishops and most other church leaders in Haiti became Haitian, with loyalty to the Duvalier regime.

The effect of the François Duvalier years on the business sector was ambivalent, and, in fact, Duvalier changed course somewhat during the later part of his presidency. The elite families were, of course, the opposition. A general hostility existed between them and the government, and much of the regime’s initial violence and extortion was at their expense. But while many members of the business community fled the country, most stayed and made their peace with the government in the traditional Haitian way of paying appropriate tribute. Duvalier was never a socialist, and the early political support he had received from the left, including the Communists, was jettisoned brutally when it became expedient. In the final years of his regime, he encouraged new private investment, including foreign investment, and pursued policies favorable to the private sector. Although the old mulatto families were kept at a distance, the position of the influential Arabic-origin community was somewhat enhanced, and encouragement was given to increase the number of black middle-class businessmen. It was an uneasy, largely corrupt modus vivendi, with Duvalier clearly in charge.

François Duvalier was thus a true revolutionary in terms of overturning the existing power structure. As with many revolutionaries, however, building a new order was the more daunting challenge, and in this he almost totally failed. His black populist rhetoric had limited follow-through and no coherent development strategy. He encouraged the Creole language and the Voodoo religion, making them respectable if not official, and Haitian textbooks were rewritten to emphasize nationalist themes, strongly tilted to black populist historical figures such as Dessalines and against the mulatto elite. But relatively few children went to school and little was done to alleviate the poverty of the large black majority. A feeling of participation in the national life was awakened in the Haitian peasant, but time-tested skepticism
if not fear of government remained. Corruption and violence won out over the hard slog of nation-building.

Many critics have assessed François Duvalier’s behavior in terms of paranoia and megalomania, and some have pointed to his serious heart attack in 1959 as having had a destabilizing effect on his subsequent behavior. A more sympathetic interpretation holds that Duvalier came to power with many of the ideals and objectives initially pursued by Estimé, under whom he had served briefly as minister of health. But Estimé had failed because he did not understand the high-stakes power politics of Haiti, and Duvalier was determined not to repeat that mistake. He thus became totally absorbed in the pursuit of power and as a result corrupted by it.2 In any event, François Duvalier’s 14-year reign not only reinforced the violent legacy of Haitian history but unleashed the forces of revolutionary populism that continue to be felt today.

**Beginnings of Modernization (1971-1991)**

Commentators usually approach the entire 29 years of Duvalier rule, from 1957 to 1986, as a single period of Haitian history, and in some respects this is clearly appropriate. In terms of national development, however, there are important differences between the first 14 years under François Duvalier and the remaining 15 years under his son, Jean-Claude. Most important, the Jean-Claude phase ushered in the beginnings of economic and political modernization that would become of central importance in the post-Duvalier period. Duvalier the son was a weak leader, isolated and corrupted by the system he inherited, less prone to violence than his father, and a surprisingly wily survivor as president for so many years. His economic strategy was to make peace with the international community, obtain foreign assistance to build economic infrastructure, and thus create assembly and other labor-intensive industry. This necessitated curbing the blatant human rights abuses of his father’s era, appointing competent technocrats to some economic ministries, and welcoming the growth of a “modern” business sector disposed to wide-ranging economic and political reform. Reconciliation with the United States along these lines was achieved largely during the 1976–1980 presidency of Jimmy Carter.

The results were most apparent in the industrial sector. Total foreign assistance increased from $9 million in 1970 to $106 mil-
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lion in 1980, of which the U.S. share rose from $2 million to $27 million. Adjusted for inflation to 1995 dollars, the 1980 figures were $187 million and $48 million, not greatly below the likely per capita levels of aid to Haiti projected for the late 1990s. Economic infrastructure benefitted the most. A paved highway network was constructed among the country’s major cities and a secondary road system begun in rural areas. Port-au-Prince acquired a modern container port, good airfreight facilities, two industrial parks, and electricity and telephone service that more or less kept pace with industrial growth. The manufacturing sector as a whole grew at an annual rate of 7 percent from 1970 to 1980, while assembly industry for export, benefitting from generous tax incentives, import privileges, and an abundant low-wage labor force, increased by more than 20 percent per year. At decade end, 200 companies in assembly industry were employing 60,000 workers. Moreover, because each assembly job also generated a supporting job in the domestic service sector and each wage earner supported three to four dependents, this meant that by 1980 roughly one-half of Port-au-Prince’s population of 1 million was being sustained by export industry alone.

Some efforts were also made in the agricultural and social sectors, but progress was very limited. From 1960 to 1980, the literacy rate for the adult population grew only slightly, from 15 percent to 23 percent, and while infant mortality dropped from 182 to 115 deaths per 1,000 live births, it remained very high by international standards. An innovative reforestation program was begun in the late 1970s, but it never fully caught up with the number of trees being cut down for firewood. Agricultural production during the 1970s grew at only a little more than 1 percent per year, or half the rate of population growth, a pattern that continued during the 1980s.

The political change that took place during these years derived from Jean-Claude’s economic strategy and was a principal cause of his ultimate downfall. The growing business and middle classes became increasingly discontent with the oppressive, corrupt ways of the government. Rural migrants to urban jobs in Port-au-Prince became politically restless if not active compared with farmers in small villages. In brief, the historic system whereby a small authoritarian elite imposed its will on the large majority of impoverished peasants was changing. A political center was gradually emerging, consisting of an educated middle class, particularly in the business sector, and an urban working force of some economic means and influence.
The Jean-Claude Duvalier government was unwilling and unable to adjust to these political forces for change. The United States’ insistence on sharp restrictions on police actions against the people as a condition for its continued economic aid encouraged public protest. Jean-Claude’s unpopular marriage in 1980 into a corrupt nouveau rich mulatto family undermined support from his core black populist constituency. He left quietly on February 6, 1986, in the Haitian tradition of safe passage abroad for a failed presidency, albeit for the first time aboard a U.S. Air Force jet.

The period of 1986–1991 was one of historic missed opportunity for both the Haitian people and U.S. policy toward Haiti. An unprecedented mood of hope and public spirit existed in the aftermath of Jean-Claude Duvalier’s departure. The worst of the Duvalierists were excluded from political life and the VSN disbanded. The obvious goal was to achieve a popularly elected government of reconciliation that would bring together the dynamic new business class, the burgeoning urban work force, and the rural peasantry that still made up the majority of the population. The process of writing a new constitution and organizing elections dragged on for four years, however, through five interim governments, and the new political leadership was fragmented and weak. The army regrouped after three decades of Duvalierism and progressively reasserted its traditional political domination. Although increased aid and some able ministers bolstered the pursuit of economic reforms, the political uncertainty began to sour the business climate, and some companies pulled up stakes and moved elsewhere.

Jean-Bertrand Aristide was finally elected president in December 1990 by a resounding two-thirds vote, but the political mood in the country had shifted from reconciliation to polarization between rich and poor. The fiery president-priest drew his most active support from the radical left as expressed through the Lavalas—or tidal wave—movement. The military and the traditional wealthy elite had reluctantly supported the elections under great pressure from the international community, but they did not really believe in democracy and were strongly anti-Aristide. The fledgling political center, critical to establishing sustained democratic government in Haiti, was caught between a rock and a hard place.

The first period of the Aristide presidency, from February to September 1991, was deeply flawed. Corruption was curbed, and the oppressive rural security structure under the chefs de
section, a vestige of the Duvalier era, was largely dismantled. But the president and his cabinet were inexperienced in governing and no coherent economic program materialized. Official revolutionary rhetoric alarmed the business community and the exodus of assembly industry accelerated. The political impasse between the president and an elected national assembly dominated by the opposition degenerated into intimidation, threats, and some violence by the government. Elements of the military, with self-serving motives and benefitting from widespread discontent throughout the power structure, struck on September 30, 1991, and President Aristide received his safe passage abroad, this time aboard a Venezuelan presidential jet.

**Setback and Restart (1991–1995)**

The departure of Jean-Bertrand Aristide differed from that of Jean-Claude Duvalier in that Aristide had been democratically elected, and the United States and other members of the Organization of American States (OAS) were determined to restore him to the presidency. The United States had successfully supported transition from military to constitutional government throughout the hemisphere, and Aristide’s election in 1990 had been the capstone of this policy, leaving Fidel Castro’s Cuba the only holdout to democracy. In June 1991, three months before the coup in Haiti, OAS foreign ministers had adopted a resolution to take action against any military overthrow of a democratically elected government. In August, a Soviet coup against President Mikhail Gorbachev collapsed after President George Bush proclaimed that all coups do not necessarily succeed. The same assessment was made for Haiti.

The nature of OAS action against the military regime in Haiti was not specified, however, and the subsequent international economic embargo and ultimate military intervention to restore a democratically elected president were without precedent. Moreover, the initial judgment about the impact of the embargo was egregiously wrong. The Department of State, conscious that the assembly sector was vital to the Haitian economy, told U.S. companies in a November 1991 briefing that the embargo would last only a month or two and urged them to wait it out. The embargo, in fact, lasted for three years and in its final phase was so restrictive as to force all U.S. companies to close down.

The significance for this study of the three years of political
crisis and international embargo from November 1991 to October 1994 is their tragic impact on the longer-term development process in Haiti, including the underlying demographic forces at play. This impact, examined in detail in succeeding chapters, can be summarized here as follows:

- In the countryside, assistance programs for health, education, and agriculture funded by the United States and other donors were greatly curtailed or terminated.
- Economic infrastructure, including roads, port facilities, and electrical power and telephone systems, were neglected and fell into serious disrepair.
- The assembly industry, built up over 20 years, was totally shut down, and most companies shifted production to other countries.
- The worst elements of the military moved into the political vacuum and allied themselves with resurgent so-called attachés, or, more simply, thugs, from the Duvalier regime; repressive violence grew progressively over the three-year period.
- The embargo directly stimulated corruption by enabling the military and some wealthy families to amass huge profits from contraband while the middle class faced economic collapse.
- The consequent exodus of much of the “modern” business and middle class and the killing of 3,000-4,000 Aristide supporters created a bitter new political polarization between the remaining rich and the ever-poorer large majority.
- Pressures for outward migration to the United States increased substantially in the face of the political repression and near-hopeless economic prospects within Haiti.

In sum, the beginnings of modernization that had developed during the 1970s and 1980s were dealt a devastating setback on all fronts by the prolonged three-year political and economic crisis. The original OAS objective was the early restoration of President Aristide in the context of a government of reconciliation in which the prime minister would be a respected leader from the centrist groupings that controlled the national assembly. But several iterations of this approach were undermined by both the military and the Aristide camp. Finally, in
May 1994, President Bill Clinton rejected further negotiation and insisted on unconditional surrender by the military government, which inevitably led to the U.S. military intervention.

President Aristide returned to Haiti on October 15, 1994, with public order restored through a U.S.-led international peacekeeping force. He also returned with a strong message of political reconciliation—"reconciliation yes, retribution no"—that contrasted sharply with his revolutionary rhetoric of 1991, and his new cabinet included several members of opposition parties. An economic reform program had been developed by two respected Haitian technocrats, one an economist with World Bank experience, and both were given senior positions in the government. The Haitian army was dissolved and a new police force created. By January 1995 the international community had committed an extraordinarily large economic assistance program of $1.2 billion, half of which was to be disbursed by year end.

A new beginning was thus established for the nation-building process of democratization and economic development in Haiti. Many circumstances had deteriorated greatly compared with 1990, but an opportunity with even broader international support had also been created.

The National Character

The foregoing historical commentary raises a number of specific issues that will be analyzed more fully in succeeding chapters. How they all fit together in terms of the unique characteristics of Haitian society, however, requires a summing-up. Indeed, national character constitutes the overarching dimension to understanding the challenge of nation-building in Haiti.

Haitian political life has always been something of an enigma for foreign observers. The network of personal and institutional relationships that compose the power structure is subtle and often below the surface of observed events. Communication, especially with foreigners, can be obtuse if not misleading. One seasoned American ambassador concluded, “In Haiti I believe nothing that I hear, and only half of what I see.” News gathering in Haiti never suffers from a lack of well-connected sources but rather from a plethora of contradictory reports on most significant events.

Nevertheless, several consistent themes have stood the test of political time in Haiti. Rivalry between the mulatto elite and the leadership of black nationalist or populist movements still
exists and remains a focus of the current political situation. Another continuing theme is deep-seated pessimism about the motives of Haiti’s political leaders and about Haitian government in general—a system rooted in venality and megalomania, frequently racked by violence. The poor majority expressed unprecedented hope in President Aristide the man but reserved judgement on his government until they saw the results. Yet another characteristic of Haitians at all levels of society is the ability to adapt quickly to realities, roll with the political punches, and wait to see what the future holds. With respect to periodic external threats and military interventions, a consistent response of Haitian leaders to foreign demands has been to avoid open disagreement, as Haiti is always at an extreme tactical disadvantage, and rather to delay, dissemble, or simply not answer. During his three years of exile President Aristide, totally dependent on the U.S. government, often displayed his gift for classic Haitian diplomacy, and he continued to do so upon his return to Haiti.

In any event, political life at the Port-au-Prince center has engaged only a small minority of the Haitian people. A rural peasant culture still accounts for 70 percent of the population, and most of the 30 percent in urban areas have parents or at least grandparents of such origins. The Haitian peasant has long embodied the traits of honesty, conservative moral values, respect for family, and resignation to the grinding economic hardship that has always been his and her lot. Haiti’s very low level of common crime, as well as its capacity to survive in the face of incredibly bad government, can be attributed largely to the stability and resiliency of peasant society.

This traditional peasant culture is strongly reinforced by the Voodoo religion. Although much has been made about its more bizarre aspects, Voodoo basically is a deeply ingrained folk religion that emphasizes ancestor worship, the mysterious powers of nature, and the unpredictably malign forces and unrelenting hardship of life here on earth. Voodoo ceremonies defy simple explanation as a religious experience, but they clearly provide an escape mechanism, however brief, from the harsh realities of everyday life. The Voodoo religion permeates much of life in Haiti and has largely co-opted the less influential Catholic Church in the countryside.

The Creole language is spoken by 100 percent of Haitians, compared with the 10 to 15 percent who speak French, and is yet another pillar of the distinctive Haitian culture. Creole contains a
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rich lexicon to describe nature and human foibles, as well as hundreds of proverbs that illustrate the ironies and injustices of life. Language has been a historic class barrier in Haiti, with French schools essentially closed off to Creole-speaking peasant children, and educational reforms are only beginning to come to grips with this problem. Meanwhile, Creole language radio remains the most important means of mass communication, and Creole theater, while limited, evokes the strongest and most heartfelt audience reactions. Foreign missionaries and diplomats dutifully learn Creole in order to communicate in the countryside, but they are rarely able to understand the subtleties of informal banter that frame the attitudes of the people.

A central question as Haiti seeks to modernize its economy and political system is the extent to which the cultural setting that has evolved over the two centuries since independence is changing. Proactive Protestant missionaries have long been a force for change, providing most of the primary education and health care in the countryside while condemning Voodoo as evil, and their numbers continue to grow. A broader modernizing process, described earlier, dates from the early 1970s with the emergence of a middle class of entrepreneurs and technocrats who are changing the rural/urban economic power relationship. Democratization, the central goal of the international community since 1986, constitutes a frontal challenge to the traditional political system at the village as well as the central government level. There is no question that the historic structure of Haitian society is changing, and a strategy for “nation-building” is in effect a design to manage such change on an accelerated basis. But for the foreseeable future, the deeply rooted traditional culture will continue to exert a strong, largely countervailing influence to such change.

Finally, and pervading all other aspects of Haitian national character, is a profound and composite feeling of national identity, pride, and self-confidence. National identity stems from the internalized historical experience of an island nation—half an island actually—thousands of miles from its African roots and consistently isolated from or threatened by closer neighbors. Haitians are forceful in asserting their distinctive identity, including distinctiveness from black American culture. In Haiti, blanc (white) applies to all foreigners no matter what their skin pigment. The feeling of national pride derives from the historical experience of having struggled and triumphed over natural adversity and so many external threats. Napoleon’s army,
foreign gunboats, a 19-year occupation by U.S. Marines, exclusion from the Alliance for Progress, and the crippling 1991–1994 embargo were all endured, and the nation has prevailed in its independence with dignity. Individual self-confidence is the most remarkable Haitian trait. Highly able and educated Haitians have risen to prominence throughout the UN system and other international organizations. Haitian workers at home rise quickly to any opportunity, confident of doing a good job. Of greatest importance for the future, the Haitian business community is one of the most sophisticated and self-assured in the Caribbean region in seeking new trade and investment opportunities. Entrepreneurial self-confidence in Haiti stands in contrast to the more ambivalent and protectionist attitudes throughout much of Latin America.

The central, elusive quest throughout Haitian history, which continues today, is to somehow contain the tragic tendencies toward exploitation, corruption, and violence and bring about a national reconciliation that can capitalize on the positive forces of national pride, hard work, and self-confident leadership, a reconciliation that can bridge the historic divisions of color, class, religion, and social standing. The frustrated search for national reconciliation is aptly illustrated in a rich legacy of Haitian literature. In *Themistocle-Épaminondas Labasterre* (Frederic Marcelin, 1901), the young hero has all the attributes of a gifted leader, but despite warnings from his French mentor, joins a revolutionary group that is full of idealistic rhetoric but really interested only in gaining the spoils of government for themselves; after the hero realizes the duplicity of his colleagues, he gets himself killed in a futile protest. In *Le Choc en Retour* (J. B. Cineas, 1948), a powerful minister of the interior, enjoying all the illicit fruits of office, is forced into exile after a revolution and repents while abroad; upon return, however, no one is interested in an honest man, and the protagonist dies in anonymity while doing forced work on a road project under the U.S. Marine occupation. *Mourrir pour Haïti* (Roger Dorsinville, 1980) is a tragic story of the death of six Haitians involved, directly or indirectly, with the assassination of two high-level *tonton macoutes* during the François Duvalier reign of terror; cooperation among Haitians to overthrow the dictator appears hopeless short of violent revolution.

The best known Haitian novel, *Gouverneurs de la Rosée* (Jacques Roumain, 1944), recounts the struggle of rural Haitians to work together to build a desperately needed irrigation system
for the community benefit. Narrow, vested interests prevail, and the reformist hero, Manuel, is slain. His dying appeal is for Haitians to end traditions of hatred and vengeance because, if not, “L’eau sera perdue” (The water will be lost). His final words in this haunting parable of the lack of public spirit in Haiti are as relevant today as they were a half century ago:

La reconciliation, la reconciliation pour que la vie recommence, pour que le jour se lève sur la rosée.

Reconciliation, reconciliation so that life can begin again, so that dawn can break on the morning dew.
4

Population Growth: Unrelenting Pressure on Arable Land

Rural Haiti is a twentieth-century Greek tragedy of Malthusian prophecy run wild, and little time remains to reverse the course toward destruction of what once was the lush tropical beauty of the “Pearl of the Antilles.” High population growth, destruction of arable land through deforestation, declining agricultural productivity, and unrelenting poverty are the principal actors in this drama of developmental decline. An unresponsive and often exploitative Haitian government has been the central protagonist. A well-endowed though unfocused international community is the lamenting chorus. A coherent strategy to reverse this tragic course exists. But even in this time of maximum publicity and international largesse, the underlying driving force of Haitian poverty—population pressures on arable land—is not being adequately addressed.

A rural development strategy for Haiti needs to be comprehensive and include policies relating to population, environment, agriculture, physical infrastructure, health, education, and political reform. The discussion here concentrates on the first two areas of policy—population growth and environmental degradation caused by deforestation—in keeping with the principal focus of this study. As will be seen, these two particular areas are also critical to the overall outcome for Haiti and are ripe for decisive early action. Moreover, they are subjects typically ignored or given low priority within foreign policy councils.

Unrelenting Population Growth

Past and Current Trends

Haiti has a high population growth estimated at about 2.3 percent year—which would increase by several tenths of a percent if illegal migration were sharply curtailed. This rate projects to a
The fertility rate—the average number of births per woman—is the highest in the Western Hemisphere, although it appears to have finally begun to decline. Two population surveys in 1989 and 1991 indicated that the nationwide fertility rate of 6 births per woman had not been falling, as had been predicted earlier by the UN, and may in fact have increased somewhat during the late 1980s. Preliminary results of a 1994 national survey, however, show a substantial decline to 4.8, although interpretation of this figure is complicated by the fact that it is based on behavior during the embargo crisis of 1991–1994. The extreme economic hardship of those years is likely to have put some temporary downward pressure on birthrates. In parallel, however, as explained below, family planning programs may have finally begun to have a significant restraining effect on fertility despite program cutbacks caused by the embargo.

A net assessment is thus that after decades of a fertility rate of 6 or higher, a decline has apparently begun to levels in the order of 5. Moreover, that decline could continue depending on conditions in the country and the effectiveness of family planning programs. This conclusion, however, needs to be put in perspective in two respects. First, a fertility rate of 5 is still only modestly below the 6.2 average of sub-Saharan Africa and well above rates in most developing countries. Current fertility rates are 4.1 in the Philippines, 3.5 in Peru, 3.4 in India, 2.4 in Jamaica, and 2.3 in the neighboring Dominican Republic. Second, a downward trend in the fertility rate will take many years to have significant impact on the total population.

The factors influencing a decline in fertility rates fall into two categories, one indirect, the other direct. The indirect category concerns the fertility rate fallout from the overall development process: fertility rates decline as development moves forward. Lower infant mortality rates induce women to have fewer babies. Higher education levels, especially among women, lead to lower fertility rates. Families with higher-income urban jobs have fewer incentives for large families than impoverished farm families do. These various factors come together in the sharp differences in fertility rates between rural and urban areas. In the 1994 national survey, the average fertility rate in Port-au-Prince was 3, in other urban areas 4, and in rural areas 6. One implication is that a steady rural/urban migration, ipso facto, tends to bring down fertility rates.
The second category of factors—those that directly influence a decline in fertility rates—concerns the results achieved by family planning programs through education about family planning and the availability of modern contraception devices. Family planning programs can be more directly influenced by the government, as well as by international aid agencies, because they are clearly targeted and require relatively small amounts of money. In Haiti, a full program of support for rural development—including agriculture, general education, and health services—could easily run into hundreds of millions of dollars per year, while population programs in recent years, as described below, have absorbed less than $5 million per year.

The two categories are, of course, interrelated. The responsiveness to family planning programs increases as education and income levels rise. A key question, however, is the extent to which the prevalence of contraceptive use can be increased through family planning projects even while literacy and other economic conditions remain preponderantly depressed. Current thinking among many in the international community as well as within the Haitian government is that prevalence rates can be raised only to a very limited extent by family planning projects alone, and that population objectives can therefore be achieved only *pari passu* with effective programs on all other fronts—a comprehensive approach whereby high fertility rates, in effect, become hostage to illiteracy, general health conditions, and poverty.

Fortunately, recent experience in Haiti does not bear out such a tight causal linkage between fertility rates and poverty. Rather, it has shown that properly organized family planning programs, including emphasis on education about contraceptive methods, can make a substantial difference in a relatively short period of time, even while illiteracy, per capita income, and other development indicators remain in the least developed category. The principal reason is that the Haitian people, and particularly young women, may be poor but they are not dumb. Illiteracy does not preclude education. Although communication in rural Haiti is predominantly oral, it can effectively convey basic knowledge and common sense. Young Haitian women learn quickly that spacing babies every two or three years through available contraception methods permits more care for, and thus survival of, children, and far healthier and longer-lived mothers as well.2
Family Planning Policy to Date

The Haitian family planning program began in 1973, but it developed slowly, with limited resources, facing strong cultural resistance and lack of government commitment. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) was and remains the principal source of official foreign assistance for family planning, with more modest support from the United Nations. Family planning services are provided mostly through private voluntary organization (PVO) health clinics throughout the country, which receive USAID funding as well as financial support from their predominantly U.S.-based constituencies. A detailed account and assessment of family planning programs in Haiti is contained in appendix A.

The most important population project has been the USAID Private Sector Family Planning Project (PSFPP), which began in 1986 with $2 million of funding, building to a peak of $5 million in 1994 for a total of $18 million. The project has been implemented by the International Planned Parenthood Federation/Western Hemisphere Office (IPPF/WHO) in conjunction with the Haitian private-sector Association pour la Promotion de la Famille Haitienne (Profamil). Profamil’s role is to set standards for family planning services, develop model private projects, and provide technical assistance to PVO family planning clinics.

The results of the PSFPP to date are mixed, somewhat unclear but encouraging. The initial years were used primarily to build the infrastructure and institutional support bodies requisite to delivery of services. Emphasis was on public education about family planning options and their impact on family life and community health. Graphic street posters and group counseling by dedicated moniteurs are the modalities. In 1993, Profamil outreach even included training more than 1,000 Voodoo priests and priestesses in basic health care to promote improved sexual health in Haitian society, and the program was planned to reach the entire Voodoo clergy of 4,500 by 1997.

Actual delivery of family planning services was limited during these initial years, which has been criticized. Only about $2 million of the $18 million of the PSFPP project was spent to procure contraceptives. A major reason for the relatively low level of delivery of contraceptives was that just as the PSFPP project was becoming ready to move from the organizational to the delivery stage, the political crisis and subsequent embargo began in late 1991. A 1994 USAID report recounts:
The quest for livelihood became so critical that women could no longer take time out from their income generating activities to seek out reproductive health care. Those who could afford the time, could not afford the transport when, and if, it was available... even efforts to bring services to the client, i.e. the VSC Mobile Clinic, were hampered by the fuel shortage and logistical constraints.

A comprehensive evaluation of the project conducted by USAID in April-May 1993 concluded that “the fact that programs have maintained some momentum, and in many cases grown significantly, in spite of these (country) difficulties is impressive.”

These downbeat USAID assessments, however, are also belied by the more recent 1994 national population survey, the preliminary results of which only became available in the spring of 1995. The survey indicates a substantial increase in contraception prevalence nationwide from about 10 percent in the late 1980s to 18 percent in the early 1990s, despite the political crisis and embargo. This comes as a surprise to many. As late as January 1995 the UN and USAID population offices in Haiti still believed prevalence rates were languishing at the 10 percent level. The apparent increase, again, should be kept in perspective, and 18 percent prevalence is still relatively low compared to 40 percent in the Philippines, 41 percent in India, 56 percent in the Dominican Republic, 59 percent in Peru, and 67 percent in Jamaica. Nevertheless, contraception prevalence seems finally to be on the rise in Haiti, and the questions to be answered are what accounted for the change and will the upward trend continue.

The starting point for answering these questions is that the family planning program in Haiti survived the embargo crisis period intact and by 1995 was well positioned to build on the institutional structure laboriously constructed during the previous nine years. The campaign of public education appears to be succeeding, and, with adequate resources, further education and an accelerated pace of delivery of family planning services can be anticipated.

Two other pieces of evidence confirm both the most recent survey finding of higher prevalence rates and a hopeful outlook for a continued upward trend. The first is the relatively high level of “unmet need” for family planning—34 percent of Haitian women say they wish to space or limit their births but are not currently using contraception. This is a wider relative gap than in most developing countries and a further indication of the
success of the education campaign since 1986. It can also reflect a lag in contraception availability caused by the embargo. To the extent the population program moves forward, the number of couples desiring contraceptive methods will presumably continue to grow, with an implied growing demand for family planning services.

The second piece of evidence of the potential for raising the prevalence rate is provided by the striking success story of the regional health center in the provincial town of Pignon in the central plateau north of Port-au-Prince (near Hinche on the map). This private, missionary-based hospital services several neighboring communities with a total population of 150,000. It was founded in the early 1980s but only began to offer family planning services in 1986 as a recipient of the PSFPP project. During the ensuing eight years, including the embargo years, the high levels of illiteracy and poverty in the area held constant, but the prevalence of family planning practices rose dramatically from between 4 percent and 6 percent in 1986 to 13 percent in 1991 and to 26 percent in 1994. The Pignon program emphasizes education, and by 1994 99 percent of women ages 25–34 were aware of family planning possibilities. Other key factors in the Pignon experience are its integrative approach, which links family planning services with broader health care and other economic development activities, and the outstanding leadership provided by the hospital’s founder, Dr. Guy Theodore, and his wife Darlene, also a medical doctor. 4

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Family planning and related population programs are thus well-positioned to expand services and achieve a substantial further reduction in fertility rates even under current depressed economic conditions. Those expressing unmet need are the target population, and that population can be expanded through a broadened educational program. The existing network of PVO health clinics constitutes the principal vehicle for providing family planning services, with leadership and direction from Profamil. A more active support role by the government could reinforce the overall effort by establishing clearer standards and communicating with the public. The Pignon and other positive experiences provide the operational model for energizing less active family planning centers and establishing new ones.

Such a policy course would be relatively inexpensive com-
pared with the several hundred million dollars per year of foreign assistance projected for Haiti. A sustained increase in the USAID population program to $5 million–$6 million per year could be effectively utilized. The $1 million UN funding could also be increased, and some other bilateral donors with an interest in population programs could be encouraged to participate. Multilateral development banks do not normally engage in family planning projects and are unlikely to do so in Haiti.

Unfortunately, no such proactive and expanded population program is being considered. To the contrary, a cutback in the existing program began in 1995 and additional cuts are projected over the next several years. Moreover, the Haitian government will be given a larger relative role in administering the program, which will further reduce the funding and activities of the PVO network. This extremely ill-advised cutback in the PVO-led population program in Haiti reflects the policy of the Haitian government and priorities established within USAID.

The restored Aristide government had mixed views about family planning programs. At a Port-au-Prince symposium on population in July 1995, President Aristide made a vague statement about population growth and development but without specific reference to family planning programs. Some of his advisers supported a higher priority for such programs, but others, including the minister of health, put forward arguments in opposition: population growth will decline in any event as education, health care, and per capita income improve, so there is no need to concentrate on family planning; people constitute Haiti’s primary natural resource and high population growth is thus in the national interest; and USAID money to PVOs for family planning reduces funding for government-run USAID projects elsewhere in the health sector. As to be expected, the Haitian government was unified in wanting greater participation in whatever aid funds were committed to population programs. In any event, no action program for population was implemented by the Aristide government through 1995, and policy was left to drift.

USAID, under pressure in 1995 to provide large amounts of funding for government budget support, democratization, police training, and immediate poverty alleviation, cut back other longer-term development projects in the health field, including the population program. Support for Profamil and funds for the Pignon hospital project were reduced substantially from 1994 to 1995. For 1996 and beyond, USAID decided to integrate various
projects in the health field, including population, in a new multi-
year “Health Systems 2004” project, with total funding proposed
at about $10 million per year. Of this, however, less than $3 mil-
ion per year is allocated for both public and private family plan-
ing and reproductive health programs, with the government
assuming a relatively larger role. Moreover, these projected fig-
ures are likely to be reduced further through congressional bud-
get cuts in the overall USAID program.

The sharply reduced population program in Haiti, including
a shift in relative emphasis from the private to the public sector,
is addressed in broad terms in chapter 7. The more pointed
response here is simply that the impact of continued high fertili-
ty rates and population growth on what remains of arable
land—as well as on the capacity of urban areas to absorb the
anticipated acceleration in rural/urban migration—needs to be
addressed fully and promptly by the Haitian government. An
expanded, proactive program can produce early and substantial
results. The current course of neglect and cutback, in contrast,
will curtail if not reverse the welcomed increase in contraceptive
prevalence and consequent decline in fertility rates registered
during the early 1990s.

Deforestation and the Environmental Consequences

Past and Current Trends

The deforestation of Haiti is a heart-rending story of how popu-
lation growth can progressively wreak environmental havoc,
leading toward the ultimate Malthusian specter of exponential
growth in population combined with an absolute decline in food
production. “Haiti” meant “mountainous” in the language of
the island’s native Arawak inhabitants, and it is an apt descrip-
tion. Sixty-three percent of the surface of Haiti has a slope
greater than 20 percent, and only 29 percent less than 10 per-
cent. The nation has been a land of small farmers since indepen-
dence, with the law requiring the distribution of land among
surviving sons rather than primogeniture. As the flat land
became fully cultivated, farmers moved onto the hillsides, cut-
ting down the trees to plant corn and other food crops. Absent
the tree cover, a couple of rainy seasons washed away the top
soil, the hillside became barren, and the farmer moved on to the
next, somewhat steeper hillside. A larger and larger population,
in the towns as well as in the countryside, used charcoal for
cooking and other fuel, which increased the incentive to cut down trees as an immediate cash crop.

This process has continued for almost two centuries to the point where 97 percent of the original forest cover has been destroyed. Tree cutting for firewood or charcoal goes on at the rate of about 15 million–20 million trees per year, with a corresponding annual loss of at least 6,000 hectares of farmland to soil erosion. Tree cutting accelerated during the crisis of 1991–1994, including mango, coffee, and other fruit trees, as both peasants and urban dwellers became desperate for any form of income and as imported fuel supplies were curtailed by the embargo.

The cumulative deforestation has had severe negative consequences for agriculture and the environment. For agriculture, farmers have moved to ever steeper and less productive mountainsides, with a consequent decline in productivity. By 1994, this process had reached the anomalous situation wherein 46 percent of the land was being cultivated, but only 29 percent was classified as suitable for cultivation. In other words, much of Haitian farming now takes place on non-arable land. Total land under cultivation, arable and non-arable, continued to expand slowly during the 1960s and 1970s, but leveled off during the 1980s. Erosion had caught up with the supply of even non-arable land, and will presumably soon exceed it.

The land destruction continues and is approaching agricultural Armageddon. A 1986 USAID study concluded that “all areas of open and closed forest cover will likely be gone within 50 years unless extreme and immediate action is initiated and established.” The study examined the 16 river basins that still had forest cover in 1978, the most productive agricultural areas, and projected that 8 would be completely denuded of forest cover by 1990, and another 5, including the most fertile lower Artibonite Valley, by 2002. Without forest cover, annual flooding soon carries away the river basin topsoil.

The environmental impact of deforestation includes biodiversity decline, desertification, silting of rivers, and flooding. Animal, bird, and plant diversity has been greatly reduced throughout Haiti. The northwest peninsula, where deforestation is almost complete, is most threatened by a desertification process whereby the lack of tree cover influences weather patterns, leading to reduced rainfall and long-term conversion of the region to desert. The silting of rivers has an immediate impact on hydropower capability. The principal hydropower source for Port-au-Prince—the Péligre Dam in the upper Artibonite Val-
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— is now shut down for much of the year because of cumulative silting.

Flooding from denuded mountainsides not only results in the loss of valuable water supply for irrigation and urban needs, but can have immediate catastrophic consequences. Heavy rains in November 1994 flooded the Cul de Sac lowlands outside Port-au-Prince (near Croix-des-Bouquets on the map). The tragedy was described by a missionary with many years in Haiti providing education and health care to peasant families:

The rain began early on Saturday morning and was quite welcome. However, after it continued through the day and on into the night, folks began to worry. As daylight came the rains increased and flooding began. By mid-day it was obvious that the crops in the fields were already ruined. And still the rain continued into the night.

It was a night of terror! There was no light anywhere and families were trying to hold onto their children as well as to their belongings. By midnight the floodwaters had turned into rushing rivers. Mud houses began to fall; clothes, cooking pots, and all of the few treasured belongings of the family floated away. Screams of agony sounded for miles around as parents lost their children in the darkness.

Three weeks have passed and still the death toll rises. The number of deaths, many of whom were tiny children found buried in mud, has gone over one thousand. And the water continues to flow through the fields from the mountains. There are still areas where it is impossible to enter.

According to the 1986 USAID study, the Cul de Sac river basin had lost surrounding mountain forest cover by about 1982. Basin flooding is therefore likely to become more rather than less frequent unless major remedial actions are taken for reforestation and watershed management.

Reforestation Policy to Date

Reforestation efforts since the late 1970s constitute an extraordinary story of snatching defeat from the jaws of hope if not victory. The basic idea was to provide the peasants with seedlings for fast-growing hardwood trees, and to demonstrate to them that caring for the trees can protect adjoining food crops from
soil erosion and provide income when the trees, after only three to five years, are large enough to cut down for firewood. The major task for the peasant is to protect the seedling during the first six months from the omnipresent goat.

Innovative missionary groups, such as the Baptist mission in Fermanthe, up the mountain road from Port-au-Prince, began introducing such tree planting programs in the late 1970s, together with hillside terracing of farmland. USAID adopted reforestation as a top priority in the early 1980s, using the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) and CARE as the principal implementing agencies. Some other aid donor countries also joined in the tree planting program. A creative technological breakthrough was the design of a box with deep but narrow slots that could hold 100 or more seedlings and that a peasant could carry on his head the final roadless miles back home. Intensive seedling nurseries were developed, first at Operation Double Harvest outside Port-au-Prince and later in 30 additional nurseries throughout rural Haiti. Peasants responded enthusiastically, and annual planting rose to 4 million trees by 1985 and 10 million by 1990. During the decade of the 1980s, 60 million trees were distributed to 200,000 farm families. An exceptionally high survival rate of 50 percent or higher was achieved, or more than 5 million trees per year, and this number would likely double or more from seeds blown from new standing trees to the surrounding area. Thus, by 1990, about 10 million trees per year were being grown, steadily approaching the estimated 15 million–20 million trees per year being cut down.

Then, in 1991, shortly before the military coup, the USAID mission abruptly terminated the reforestation program. Washington and Mission management believed that giving free seedlings to peasants, at a cost of $3 million–$4 million per year, was unwarranted. There was also interest in providing broader agricultural assistance, with emphasis on soil conservation and technical assistance, and available funding was most readily found in the reforestation project. As a result, annual tree planting immediately dropped from 10 million to less than 1 million, while the subsequent crisis period of 1991–1994, as noted earlier, caused accelerated tree cutting. Other aid donors shut down their programs as well. The net result was a sharp increase in the rate of deforestation and soil erosion.
The Future Course

The initiation of “extreme and immediate action” to reverse the course of deforestation in Haiti is even more compelling today than when the 1986 USAID report recommended it. It is also feasible, consisting of two parts: (1) a vigorous resumption of the tree planting program, and (2) separate actions to reduce the demand for charcoal. Resumption of hillside reforestation to the 10 million trees per year achieved would require about $5 million per year funding. The infrastructure, including the seedling nurseries, is still in place and could be reactivated quickly. Actions to reduce charcoal demand and thus, over time, the incentive to cut down the remaining forests, would consist of small-scale factories for production of improved efficiency charcoal-burning, solar energized, and propane/kerosene stoves. Modest levels of small business financing for start-up costs would be required. For low-cost propane/kerosene fuel, the Haitian government would also need to reduce import restrictions, thanks largely to a Shell oil company gas monopoly in Haiti, that raise the price of these fuels in Haiti two or three times above their price in the neighboring Dominican Republic.

The USAID response to this challenge has been to reverse somewhat its 1991 decision to terminate support for hardwood seedlings. But the outcome is unclear, and in any event the result will be modest at best. Both President Clinton and Vice President Al Gore have announced interest in renewed reforestation efforts, and the USAID task force report of December 1994, “Haiti Environment Strategy,” called for the immediate reactivation of the 1980s hardwood tree planting program and the planting of at least 25 million trees over three years to 125,000 farm families, at a cost of $12 million. This project, however, was later reduced greatly in size and folded into an integrated agricultural project that retains emphasis on technical assistance and other activities. Although support for tree planting within this integrated project is projected to grow from 4 million trees in 1994 to 6 million in 1997, these aggregate figures include technical support for coffee and fruit tree plantings for the commercial market, which was always a separate activity from the hardwood seedlings for hillside reforestation as pursued in the 1980s. The 1997 projection is also vulnerable to congressional budget cuts. The USAID integrated agriculture project thus appears to provide for at most 2 million to 4 million hardwood seedlings per year, compared
with the 10 million per year level in 1990 and the 15 to 20 million trees being cut down each year. The losing battle with deforestation and erosion of farmland is thus back to about the level it was in the late 1970s.

**A Comprehensive Strategy for Rural Development**

Population growth and its impact on deforestation are two central problems of rural development in Haiti. A comprehensive strategy for rural development would have to integrate objectives for these two problems with responses in other areas, including agriculture, health, education, infrastructure, and governance. Such an analysis goes beyond the scope of this study, and the presentation here is limited to highlighting key aspects of these other areas in order to draw conclusions about the relationship between demographic forces and the broader challenge of rural development.

**Agriculture.** Agricultural production grew only a little more than 1 percent per year during the 1970s and 1980s. Substantial increases in output will require major investment in the land, which is hampered by lack of clear ownership rights. Cadastral surveys and recording of such rights, however, would be very expensive, take many years, and are not being seriously considered. Concentrated foreign assistance can produce results, as in the showcase project during the late 1970s and early 1980s at Marigot, on the south coast, where a combination of reforestation, irrigation, access roads, and technical assistance resulted in substantial increases in both food and cash crop production. But such agricultural support projects are expensive and thus far reach only a small fraction of the 5 million farm population. Since 1992, USAID has provided its agricultural assistance through the Productive Land Use System (PLUS) project, which concentrates on educating farmers about soil and water conservation, marketing, and other aspects of production. Positive results have been reported although they are difficult to measure. The $5 million per year PLUS project is expected to reach 83,000 farmers by 1999, only about 10 percent of all farmers. The international emergency aid program of 1995, as explained in chapter 7, allocates $36 million for agricultural support programs. Agricultural research and extension services carried out by the Haitian Ministry of Agriculture have had a dismal performance record since the 1970s, and a thorough institution-
building program would be needed before major assistance could be effectively channeled through the ministry.

**Health care.** Rural health delivery is carried out principally by missionary and other PVO hospitals and clinics, with substantial foreign assistance. Progress during the 1980s in reducing infant mortality—particularly through oral rehydration and vaccination against measles—and in malaria control suffered setbacks during the crisis period of the early 1990s. The high rate of HIV infection in the cities, where 7 to 10 percent of pregnant women test positive, spread somewhat to the countryside during the crisis as population temporarily moved away from urban areas. There is a shortage of doctors in rural areas because the Port-au-Prince medical school requires only one year of rural service upon graduation, after which almost all doctors return to Port-au-Prince and other cities. Integrated health delivery systems, with outreach from provincial hospitals to local clinics, are the model, but building the system and providing the medicines and health workers constitute a long-term, expensive undertaking. As explained above, USAID plans a maximum of about $10 million per year for the health sector, including the family planning program. All aid donors together pledged $57 million to the health sector for the entire country in the emergency relief program. In addition, PVO and other private hospitals and clinics derive much of their financing from their own resources overseas and within the country, including payment for services by those who are able to do so.

**Education.** More than 90 percent of rural education is provided through private, mostly missionary schools. One Baptist organization alone has a network of over 300 schools with 50,000 students. Nevertheless, the illiteracy rate in the countryside is well above the national average of 70 percent, and only about 20 percent of children who begin primary school manage to finish. Dilapidated schools, lack of teaching materials, and poorly trained, low-paid teachers prevail. One encouraging development is the belated availability of textbooks based on the educational reform program whereby students begin to read and write in Creole and then gradually make the transition to French. Resistance to the reforms and lack of resources delayed the production of textbooks and teacher training materials for over a decade, but now Creole textbooks, including teaching manuals, are being produced within the Catholic Church, ironically for
sale largely to Protestant missionary schools. Aid donors pledged $30 million for education in the 1995 emergency program.

**Infrastructure.** Secondary road construction to open farm villages to markets was active during the 1980s through projects by USAID, the World Bank, and the InterAmerican Development Bank. Local programs of road maintenance were critical for road survival in the mountainous, tropical terrain. Much of this network eroded during the early 1990s, and road rehabilitation is an immediate goal of reconstruction, such as through the USAID rural jobs program. Extending the secondary road network, however, is yet another expensive multiyear effort. The provision of other rural infrastructure, including electricity and telephone service, is still a long way off for the impoverished peasant family.

**Governance.** An overarching objective in rural Haiti is to establish more responsive and less corrupt local government. The dissolution in 1994 of the Haitian army and of the network of local security forces under the widely detested chefs de section presents an opportunity to build something new and better, but the traditional power structure has deep roots. The immediate objective is to curtail violence and fear and thus permit the peasants to develop their land and establish other rural enterprises. There is also the need to protect larger landholders, who are most able to undertake new investment, from unwarranted land seizures and general acts of violence from revolutionary elements within the poor majority. Cooperative community projects have a long history in Haiti—the Kombite phenomenon—and international support could encourage such positive activities.

**The Inner Dynamics of Population, Deforestation, and Rural Development**

The foregoing covers a broad range of challenges to reverse the downward cycle of increasing population, declining arable land, and consequent worsening of the already impoverished situation of the majority rural population of Haiti. Programs need to be developed on all fronts, within a comprehensive strategy. But the parameters of the overall strategy are limited by important qualitative factors of a largely dynamic character that are at play. Three such factors are summarized here in conclusion:
1. The rural development challenge is long-term, with many intractable obstacles, and progress even in the best of circumstances will be relatively slow. The population/soil erosion squeeze on arable land will continue for a number of years no matter how forceful the policy response. Improved health care can increase population growth in the short- to medium-term by reducing the mortality rate. Improved farm productivity is limited by the need for various inputs described above, with very large financial implications. In any event, productivity of rural farm workers begins at a very low starting point, about one-quarter of that of urban counterparts, and sustained high rates of growth in farm output would be needed to significantly reduce this gap. The vision of a fairly quick transformation of rural Haiti into a buoyant peasant society, as a major if not central driving force for the national economy, is simply not realistic, although it continues to have a romantic appeal to many Haitians.

2. The two critical immediate objectives are to reduce the high rates of population growth and deforestation. Time is running out, and without decisive action in these areas the outlook for the overall rural development strategy becomes nearly hopeless. These objectives, moreover, are amenable to early and substantial change through targeted programs as described above. The costs of such actions, while substantial, are not overwhelming in relation to the overall foreign assistance resources available to Haiti. In both cases, the issue is that of political will to establish them as high priorities, first by the Haitian government and, in response, by the international community.

3. The more successful rural development becomes, the more rapid will be the already high rate of rural/urban migration. Higher agricultural productivity through modern farming methods will tend to reduce further the marginal productivity of excess farm labor, already largely underemployed. Improved education and health standards will raise economic expectations beyond work at less than a dollar a day as unskilled farm labor. Secondary road construction increases labor mobility, principally from rural to urban areas. Overall, it is a familiar pattern, moving from stage 1 to stage 2 of the demography/development model as described in chapter 2. The distinctiveness of Haiti in the mid- to late 1990s is the apparent utter incapacity of the urban areas to absorb the inflow.
Rural/urban migration is the defining force of the development process in economic, cultural, and political terms. In economic terms, it constitutes an escalating race between urban inflow and job creation—the more jobs created, the faster the inflow. In cultural terms, it entails adjustment from rural culture—traditional, stable, and structured—to the unsettled congestion of urban life. In political terms, it presents the government with a quasi ultimatum: results-oriented effectiveness in creating jobs or angry crowds in the streets. So it has been on all counts, and continues to be, in Haiti.

There has been relatively little hard analysis of rural/urban migration in Haiti, but casual observation tends to confirm familiar patterns, although at times with exceptionally strong momentum. There is both “supply-push” from the countryside and “demand-pull” from the cities. The supply-push dimension was described in the previous chapter. Demand-pull from the mid-1970s until the late 1980s centered on the buoyancy of assembly and related service industries in Port-au-Prince. The critical determinant for such migration is not so much actual employment levels as it is the expectation of future job creation. Rural population continued to flow into Port-au-Prince during the late 1980s on the expectation that assembly industry-driven job creation would continue at the earlier 10–20 percent a year rate, when in fact industrial growth had already leveled off in the face of political uncertainty. As for the characteristic of the rural/urban migrant, it appears that young women were more prominent—if not dominant—in Haiti compared with the pattern elsewhere of young men at the forefront, because most assembly industry jobs were for women. It is, however, likely that, as elsewhere, the migrant had a relatively higher level of education than those who remained in the countryside because even unskilled factory and service work requires some disciplined behavior as acquired in schools. The acceleration factor whereby
migrants, once established in cities, act as a magnet to entice friends and relatives in the village to follow has been clearly apparent in Haiti. Secondary access roads together with the national characteristic of pervasive informal oral communication—telediol in Creole—have also influenced the rapid urban inflow from heretofore remote and isolated villages.

Statistics on internal Haitian migration are limited in scope and reliability, but the broad trends are clear. The urban share of total population increased steadily from about 16 percent in 1960 to 31 percent in 1995. The rate of change was fairly constant, a 1 percent population shift every two and half years in the 1960s and 1970s, accelerating a bit to about 1 percent every two years by the late 1980s. Some further acceleration can be anticipated as the urban base continues to grow and to the extent a national development strategy is successful in creating urban jobs. On this basis, the urban population in Haiti should reach 50 percent of total population by about 2025 or sooner.

One important implication of this trend toward a relatively larger urban population is a corresponding decline in rural population growth. Annual urban population growth in recent years has been about 4 percent in the context of 2 percent overall growth. As shown in line A–1 of table 5.1, this means that the rural population is growing at only about 1 percent per year (on the basis of a population one-third urban) and could approach zero if urban growth should increase to 6 percent (line A–2). Projecting current rural and urban population growth rates to 2025, with the urban population rising to 50 percent, results in a zero-growth or stationary rural population (line B–1). If the urban population should grow at a faster rate of 6 percent per year and/or the overall population growth should decline (in part because the urban fertility rate is lower), rural population growth would turn negative, as in lines B–2 through B–4. It is indeed reasonable (again, assuming adequate urban job creation) to project 2025 somewhere between lines B–2 and B–3, with a resulting annual 2 percent decline in rural population. In other words, the Malthusian population squeeze on arable land can be reversed on the population side over the coming 25 years if the current or somewhat accelerated population inflow into urban areas can be productively absorbed.

“Productively absorbed” is, of course, the central operative challenge, and the numbers on the urban inflow side are formidable. If total population increases from 7 million in 1995 to the 13 million projected for 2025, while the urban share rises from
Table 5.1  
Population Growth Rates: Urban and Rural  
(in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Annual Rate of Population Growth</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Population one-third urban</strong> (circa 1995)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Current urban growth</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Faster urban growth</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Population one-half urban</strong> (circa 2025)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Current urban growth</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Faster urban growth</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Reduced total growth for B(1)</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Reduced total growth for B(2)</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

one-third to one-half, the absolute level of urban population almost triples from 2.3 to 6.5 million. The corresponding growth for Port-au-Prince is from 1.4 million to 4 million people, and possibly higher, because Port-au-Prince has consistently grown faster than the provincial cities. Indeed, many believe the official 1.4 million figure for 1995 greatly understates the actual population size. Moreover, as of post–embargo 1995, the starting point for job creation is one of massive urban unemployment, estimated in the range of 50–80 percent.

Specific aspects of the urban job absorption challenge are elaborated in subsequent sections of this chapter. What is missing, however, is an overall assessment of what is at stake—in particular, what it means for the population of Port-au-Prince to rise to 4 million or more by 2025. Statistics are simply not available to project the impending, ominous forest, while elaboration of individual trees fails to capture the extreme gravity of the whole. The best that can be offered are the following impressionistic sketches of Port-au-Prince in the early 1980s, the mid-1990s, and as projected to 2025 if not sooner.

Port-au-Prince centers on a narrow coastal strip around the harbor and then moves up the mountain to the fashionable
suburb of Pétionville via the winding, two-lane John Brown mountain road. Two two-lane national “highways” follow the coast to the southwest peninsula along a narrow coastal strip and across the broader Cul de Sac Valley basin before heading north up the coast and over the mountains to Cap-Haïtien. By the early 1980s, this entire urban complex was congested, bustling, and reaching the limits of transportation and other infrastructure resources. John Brown Road backed up during rush hours, and the southwest highway was crowded with minibus “Tap-Taps” carrying thousands of assembly workers from low income and slum housing along the coast to the industrial parks across the city. A burgeoning slum area adjoining the harbor—named Cité Simone after the wife of François and mother of Jean-Claude Duvalier—was a glaring example of incredible crowding, poverty, pollution, and growing political discontent. Downtown Port-au-Prince, including the historic banking district and the picturesque Iron Market serving indigenous and foreign shoppers, was crowded but still in full operation. Cruise ships had stopped calling on Port-au-Prince, but a small, more adventuresome tourist crowd enjoyed the art, music, and friendly atmosphere.

A traveler returning a decade later to post–embargo Port-au-Prince receives a devastating “choc en retour.”2 People spill out into the streets at every turn. The mountain road and other key city roadways remain heavily congested for hours, even in the absence of the hundreds of Tap-Taps still idled by a dormant assembly industry. Shoppers can approach no closer than two or three blocks to the Iron Market by vehicle, and banks are resetting outside the center of the city. The harborside slum area—renamed Cité Soleil (Sun City)—grows ever larger and more threatening, while new slum areas are spreading in Pétionville and other suburbs. Tourism is irretrievably dead. The consequences of sustained economic recovery, meaning more traffic, more demands on public services, and more population arriving from the countryside, would overwhelm a harried municipal government with little authority or resources. Problems from air pollution to inadequate health services to street crime worsen. Most pervasive is the growing pressure of population on the available water supply, the urban counterpart to the population-arable land relationship in the countryside. Only 53 percent of the Port-au-Prince population receives potable water; raw sewage pollutes the roadsides, especially in the poorer neighborhoods; and in the face of inexorable growing demand, the water
The water table beneath the city recedes. Some experts predict the water table will turn brackish in five years, and there is no plan to do anything about it.

A near tripling of Port-au-Prince’s population by 2025 boggles even the most sophisticated planner’s mind. Major extension of residential areas will have to be predominantly in the Cul de Sac direction, but this would greatly aggravate congestion on the northbound roads out of the city, not to mention the impact on the water table. A tripling of assembly and other labor-intensive industry from the levels achieved in the mid-1980s presents a major challenge to intracity transportation and would probably require a network of broader, limited access roads. The single-runway international airport is already being hemmed in by urban sprawl, but an expanded facility outside the city—again likely in the Cul de Sac direction—would be a massive, expensive undertaking. The center of government around the presidential palace in downtown Port-au-Prince and the center of the economic and political elite in Pétionville could become isolated pockets surrounded by teeming slum areas, victims of the original city planners and the Port-au-Prince mountainside. Cité Soleil, perhaps with another more realistic name change, will have to be restructured or else will explode from political as well as economic/environmental pressures. The problem of water supply, related to reforestation and other watershed management objectives, can be addressed only through hugely expensive reservoir dams in the Cul de Sac and elsewhere, not yet a glimmer on the drawing boards.

The Broad Strategy

The foregoing describes the challenge of productively absorbing the rural/urban migration. The policy response needs to be broadly based and forceful, with a bottom line of job creation. If not, Robert Kaplan’s “Coming Anarchy,” described in chapter 2, could well come to Haiti.

Fortunately, such a policy response has been evolving throughout the developing world since the early 1980s, including within the Caribbean Basin region. A “new Caribbean economic order” has evolved, no longer based on traditional agricultural commodities—sugar, coffee, cocoa, and bananas—but rather on labor-intensive industry, tourism, other service industry such as information processing, and cash-crop agriculture. A familiar pattern triggered this transformation:
The Haitian Dilemma

growing population on limited arable land spilled into the cities; a policy of protection and state control of industries resulted in high-cost production and growing dependence on imported machinery and other inputs; a consequent growing balance-of-payments deficit led to financial crisis; and the only option became market-oriented reforms, including liberal trade and investment policies, and thus a new export and private-sector oriented economic strategy.

The result is a profoundly different economic structure, especially for the smaller nations of the Caribbean Basin, one far more dependent on the North American market but, above all, a strategy that can provide jobs for the rural/urban migration. Critics decry low-wage jobs and the loss of effective economic sovereignty, but they have no feasible alternative. The most likely alternative, absent such a strategy, is that described by Robert Kaplan.

Haiti, in fact, was out in front in developing labor-intensive urban jobs in the late 1970s, well before the export-led strategy was officially promulgated by the United States in its Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) of 1982. There was reference to Haiti as the “Taiwan of the Caribbean,” and Haitian assembly industry was the most competitive within the region. But as others moved to catch up—Costa Rica, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and most particularly Mexico—the Haitian economy, as explained earlier, fell behind and then collapsed during the early 1990s. The earlier experience can be a valuable asset in restarting Haitian industry, but the strategic position of Haitian industry within the region has shifted dramatically from leading edge to deeply troubled laggard.

The restored Aristide government and international assistance programs were dedicated to restarting urban job creation, but the decisive implementation stage for the program never materialized. Moreover, when and if forceful actions to address the various components of an urban job creation strategy are undertaken, it will still take a year or two before investor confidence is reasonably restored.

The Components

A detailed assessment of the components of such an urban job-creation strategy—as for the rural development strategy—goes
beyond the scope of this study, but again a brief commentary provides perspective on the far-reaching dimensions of such a strategy.

**Trade and investment policy.** The central objective is private-sector job creation through an open trade and investment policy. There is simply no alternative for a small, least developed country like Haiti. The proximity of the very open U.S. market and linkages between the private-sector leadership in Haiti and the Haitian-American community provide the basis for relatively rapid job creation in Haiti. Free trade, or close to it, would not only attract efficient, job-creating investment, but would also eliminate monopoly profits by well-connected Haitian firms and greatly reduce deeply ingrained corruption in the government. Protection and regulation of trade and investment are by far the most rewarding avenues for public corruption, although the quest for “good governance” tends to ignore this basic political-economic reality. Within Haiti, the customs service remains the citadel of corruption. Even exports must be inspected and certified, for no apparent reason other than to enrich the wielders of customs stamps of approval. Indeed, the protection/corruption relationship broadened with the return of President Aristide in October 1994. The huge inflow of foreign aid funds plus spending related to the military intervention led to an across-the-board surge in imports, creating an unholy mutual interest between Aristide officials in the customs and related trade areas and the wealthy families who dominate the import business. Enormous profits are being made by the aid-induced import surge, which are shared with customs officials as they frequently forego collection of tariffs and imposition of other import restrictions. The most sensible solution is for the Haitian customs service to be privatized under contract to reputable outside management, as Indonesia did two decades ago by entrusting its customs service to a Swiss firm. Such bold institutional initiative is now imperative in Haiti as the best and perhaps only means for building competent, reasonably honest public service.

**Economic infrastructure.** Rebuilding the shattered infrastructure is an urgent task for restarting industry at all levels and is essential for attracting new job-creating investment, but it is off to a very slow start. Electric power, telephone service, air and seaport facilities, and the primary road system are all in a state of near collapse or malfunction, burdened by overstuffed and corrupt state enterprises. The policy objective is to privatize these
enterprises in a manner that will produce effective private competition, but strong forces resist such an outcome. The beneficiaries of state enterprises cling to power, while private groups seek to replace public monopolies with private monopolies of their own. All of these services can be brought within a competitive environment and should be tax revenue-generating rather than a burden on the public budget. Long-term financing can be provided with the support of the multilateral development banks, including through their private-sector facilities. Technical assistance is available to draw up the plan of action. The critical ingredient is decisive implementation by the government of Haiti, free of special interests, which has not yet happened.

**Labor relations.** Basic labor standards—the right to collective bargaining, minimum wage levels, health and safety regulations—need to be strengthened as circumstances permit, although under the current devastated conditions and a mostly unemployed labor force, organized labor is at a severe disadvantage. As described below, flexibility of wage rates between Port-au-Prince and the provincial cities is necessary in order to decentralize industry away from the capital. A threat to economic recovery is disruptive labor actions of a political nature, which would further undermine hopes for an improved investment climate. Export-oriented industry, in particular, puts a high premium on the reliability of delivery dates—related largely to the Christmas season—and cannot operate in circumstances of unpredictable plant shutdowns. This was a major problem during the first phase of the Aristide presidency in 1991, when confrontation by militant labor, encouraged by elements within the government, induced some companies to leave Haiti.

**The social sectors.** Education, health services, and improved environmental standards will require a sustained and expensive commitment by the Haitian government and the international community. Most education and health services are already provided through the private sector, including PVOs, and an expanded role should be encouraged because the public sector has limited financial and professional resources of its own. An environmental plan of action, balancing priority objectives with available financial resources, is the first step in this area. In all of the social sectors, a positive collaboration between the public and private sectors, the PVOs, and the international donor community is essential.
**Good governance/public security.** Overarching all of the foregoing is the need for improvement in the technical functioning of government, the administration of justice, and the provision of public security. This is the foundation for the democratization process in Haiti upon which almost everything else depends. A top priority is to stop political violence and reverse the rise in common crime. Personal security is a major threat to the fledgling democratic political process in Haiti as well as to private-sector decisions to invest in economic recovery. The international community can help in providing technical assistance, training a new police force, and maintaining a temporary peacekeeping force. The principal responsibility for improving governance in Haiti, however, rests with the Haitian people and with the political leadership in particular. It goes to the core of the immediate challenge of national reconciliation and the long-term process of nation-building.

**Decentralization**

The rural/urban migration in Haiti cannot be productively absorbed without a major decentralization of urban life away from Port-au-Prince. For more than three decades, the economic, cultural, and political momentum for urban migration has been toward the capital city. However, as the somber picture of Port-au-Prince sketched out earlier indicated, this pattern needs to be broken.

Statistics on the distribution of the urban population are approximate, as they are elsewhere, but the contrast between Port-au-Prince and the provincial cities is stark. There are an estimated 1.4 million people in Port-au-Prince, while the second largest city, Cap-Haïtien, has an official population of 100,000. Provincial cities in the aggregate are estimated at only about 700,000 people, or one-half the population of the capital. Again, all of these available figures for urban population are likely to be understated, but the relative relationships should not change, which is at issue here.

It was not always this way. In the early years of independent Haiti, Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haïtien vied for supremacy, and while Port-au-Prince won out, the second city remained a major center of political and economic activity. Other provincial cities also played prominent roles in Haitian history, and powerful family clans, associated with city or region of origin, were influential in establishing the balance of political power. As late as
1950, the population of Port-au-Prince was 144,000, or less than six times the 25,000 population of Cap-Haïtien. It was in fact primarily because of this decentralized structure that François Duvalier cut back provincial powers and denied them economic support. Political opposition and some early rebellions started in the provinces, and Duvalier responded with characteristic brutal force. As a result, power and influence shifted almost totally to the capital under direct presidential control. By 1980, the population of Port-au-Prince had grown to 684,000 compared with 64,000 for Cap-Haïtien, a ratio of 11 to 1, and today Port-au-Prince is about 15 times larger than Cap-Haïtien.

The overcrowding of Port-au-Prince was recognized as a major problem by the early 1980s, and the official policy was to provide incentives for industry location in the provincial cities. But the Jean-Claude Duvalier effort was typically lacking in vigor and weakened by corrupt implementation. Harbor and airport facilities were built in Cap-Haïtien and an industrial park location designated, but the industrial structure never became operational. A similar lack of implementation undermined plans for north coast tourist development. Special tax incentives were offered for provincial city investment, but the incentives mattered little because few taxes were actually paid in Port-au-Prince.

A far more forceful decentralization strategy is needed for the late 1990s, and the broad lines for such a strategy are familiar. Small-scale industry in food and other consumer goods in towns throughout the country will require secondary road access to larger urban markets while larger provincial cities would become part of the international trade network. Saint Marc and Gonaïves on the north coast road, only a couple of hours from Port-au-Prince, can be tied into the Port-au-Prince economic infrastructure, but this will require an upgraded four-lane highway as well as additional local infrastructure. Les Cayes, the principal city on the southern peninsula plain, is also relatively close to Port-au-Prince by highway, some three hours when the road is in good condition, but over time and with further population growth, transportation to and through the Port-au-Prince area to reach the harbor and airport—which are on the far side of the Les Cayes road—will overwhelm the system. Les Cayes needs to be developed as a separate southwest urban hub, with its own transportation and other infrastructure, including modern sea and air transport facilities.
There is no question that Cap-Haïtien, situated on the northern plain and separated by mountains from Port-au-Prince and other points south, needs to become a self-sustaining urban center once again. Much of the infrastructure is in place, but it requires substantial upgrading. Industrial enterprises should be developed away from the city center to reduce the kind of congestion that has accumulated in Port-au-Prince.

Of particular importance, Cap-Haïtien should become the focus for a new north coast tourism strategy. Excellent beaches nearby, particularly at Labadie, are partly developed and cruise ships stop to anchor for the day. Private-sector investment to refurbish and extend hotel facilities could be attracted if a paved road were built the 20 miles to Cap-Haïtien and on another few miles to the spectacular Citadelle fortress, the Sans Souci palace, and other historic points of interest. Nearby La Tortue island, renowned as the pirate den Tortuga during the seventeenth-century Spanish Main, has equally attractive beaches. An integrated north coast tourism strategy away from the congested and unsafe capital—as in Jamaica—has great potential. In a broader regional tourism context, linkage with the north coast resorts of the Dominican Republic and ultimately Cuba would attract both hotel visitors and cruise line passengers who prefer two- or three-stop vacations. The entire process would be very job-intensive, including the construction and tourist support service sectors.

Specific economic policies to implement such a decentralization strategy are generally understood. Priority financing for infrastructure projects, tax benefits for new investors, lower electricity rates, and flexible wages—including lower minimum wage levels in keeping with the lower cost of living in provincial cities—should all be components.

The more controversial yet critical policy dimension is a decentralization of political power. Provincial and city governments need to have greater control over their finances and regulatory decisions, a reversal of the François Duvalier Port-au-Prince consolidation. Police and other administrative powers should also devolve to local governments, which would reduce the threat of a future military takeover by a centralized Port-au-Prince command, as well as eliminate layers of Port-au-Prince-oriented bureaucratic corruption. For an integrated restructuring of the Cap-Haïtien region, the recent Philippine initiative to transform the former Subic Bay U.S. naval facilities into a center
of industry and tourism, through a highly independent regional authority under the inspired leadership of Richard Gordon, could be a model.

*     *     *

Productive absorption of the rural/urban migration will be the central challenge for Haitian development over the next couple of decades. Building a more democratic political structure and raising the economic well-being of the large majority of very poor Haitians will succeed or fail depending on how well this challenge is met. Failure of the Haitian government and the international community to achieve reasonable results in urban job creation will almost certainly lead to political crisis and violence. In any event, the result will be less than fully successful for many years to come. Meanwhile, the growing flow of migrants to the cities, more mobile and restless than their rural cousins, will broaden the context for stage 3 of the demography-driven development model—pressures for outward migration.
Haiti is a nation of international migrants. At the outset of the war for independence in 1790, two-thirds of the insurgent slaves had been born in Africa, recently arrived boat people. During the nineteenth century, elite Haitians studied abroad, mainly in France, and political leaders on the losing end of Haiti’s frequent revolutions retired in overseas exile. Twentieth-century outward migration broadened in scope as poorer Haitians sought work in neighboring Caribbean countries. In the 1920s and 1930s, the grueling sugar cane cutting in Cuba and the Dominican Republic was done largely by itinerant Haitians, a “rural/rural” migration. Post-war Caribbean tourism attracted Haitian labor to the Bahamas and elsewhere. Haitians were known as hard working and willing to do work that was repugnant to the indigenous population, and they were exploited wherever they went. But the fact was that their treatment abroad, however bad, was still better than the bleak and often cruel conditions in Haiti. Haitian migrants were faithful to families back home, sending substantial remittances from their pay. They also yearned to return to Haiti. Some did so on a regular basis as seasonal workers in the Dominican Republic, others after a few years with accumulated savings from abroad, and almost all at least to visit their homeland. All of these traits continue to prevail today.

A reorientation of Haitian migration toward the United States began in the late 1950s that would change fundamentally the course of Haitian history and the U.S.-Haiti relationship. The United States and Haiti had long-standing historical ties as the first two independent republics in the hemisphere. A leader of Haitian independence, Henri Christophe, had served earlier with a contingent of Haitians in the American revolution and fought bravely with the colonists at the battle of Savannah. U.S. trade and gunboat diplomacy played important roles in Haitian history, and the 19-year U.S. Marine occupation established
political and economic linkages that were nourished more positively in the 1940s and early 1950s. Outward migration by Haitians to the United States was not a significant part of the history, however, largely for racial reasons. U.S. immigration laws favored migrants from Europe, and the white U.S. Marine occupation force was carefully segregated from the black Haitian population. From 1900 to 1950, fewer than 2,000 Haitians legally emigrated to the United States. Haiti remained culturally apart, more African and French than American in its orientation. This would change dramatically in the second half of the twentieth century.

The Deepening American Connection

The brutal dictatorship of François Duvalier was the precipitating cause for a new U.S. orientation in Haitian migration. The middle and upper classes had been growing in the relatively prosperous 1940s and 1950s, and many of them fled the initial frightful years of Papa Doc. Some went to Europe, and many highly educated Haitians entered the UN system, serving with distinction in Francophone Africa and elsewhere. A growing number, however, gravitated to nearby North America—Montreal, Chicago, Boston, and, most prominently, New York City. These relatively affluent “airplane people” were permitted entry into the United States on a liberal basis, as was a later anti-Duvalier outflow of somewhat poorer Haitians during the 1960s. Legal immigrants from Haiti increased from a little more than 300 per year in 1951–1957 to 750 per year during the initial François Duvalier years of 1958–1960 and to 3,500 per year during the 1960s. The number of nonimmigrant visas for temporary visits issued by the American Embassy in Port-au-Prince increased even more dramatically, from about 3,000 per year in the mid-1950s to over 10,000 per year by 1967 and 25,000 in 1970. It was known that many of the “temporary” visitors were staying on illegally after their visas expired, but little effort was made to contain this illegal flow. U.S. Caribbean policy was preoccupied with Castro’s communism in Cuba and therefore treated the anti-Communist Haitian dictator benignly. Moreover, the total number of Haitian and other illegal immigrants was still relatively small and not yet a national concern.

The more decisive phase of Haitian migration to the United States was the “boat people” phenomenon that began in earnest in the late 1970s and was directed toward southern Florida.¹ Very
poor Haitians, almost all seeking better economic conditions in the United States, took passage by boat for illegal entry in growing numbers. More than 100 small cargo ships, long in the business of bringing contraband freight to the northwest coast of Haiti, began smuggling people into the United States. Crew lists were bloated for the northbound trip, and hidden compartments could hold from a few up to more than 100 clandestine passengers. The Cuban Mariel crisis in 1980 in which 125,000 Cubans fled by boat to Florida triggered a further outward surge of Haitians, many in open, unseaworthy boats. The number of Haitian boat people apprehended increased from fewer than 1,000 per year in 1972–1978 to 2,500 in 1979 and to 25,000 in 1980. The image of a small open boat jammed to the gunwales with impoverished Haitians became familiar on the front page of U.S. newspapers and evening TV screens. So too did the tragic scenes of capsized boats and Haitian bodies washing up on fashionable Florida beaches.

The motivation for large-scale Haitian migration to the United States involves an inner dynamic that continues to strengthen. The rural/urban migration within Haiti since the 1970s has produced a better informed population, more disposed to migrate abroad. Friends and relatives in the United States, in ever larger numbers, are often willing to pay the $500–$5,000 to boat traffickers for passage, faithfully repaid by migrants after arrival. The boat traffickers, in turn, reap greater profits from transporting people than goods, and they face limited risk because, should they be caught, the maximum fines under U.S. law can be less than the voyage revenues. Overarching the entire process is the constant communication that characterizes life in Haiti, whether by word of mouth, Creole language radio, or ubiquitous Haitian art. Haitian paintings and wood carvings depict national folklore, and images of traditional African roots, including animals and birds never seen in Haiti, now compete with those of people in boats and a happy life to the north. The land of salvation is shifting from Africa to America, from “Guinée” to “Miami.”

The critical element of the dynamics of Haitian migration is the effectiveness of U.S. immigration policy to deter illegal migration from Haiti. If arrival in the United States and permanent stay after is reasonably assured, many—perhaps most—impoverished Haitians would gladly pay the price of passage, even if it would mean selling the farm and other belongings in Haiti to do so. If, in contrast, there is a high likelihood of being
apprehended and sent back to Haiti, the same Haitians will remain in Haiti. The lax attitude of U.S. immigration policy in the 1950s and 1960s progressively tightened, but illegal migration presented unique difficulties for U.S. law enforcement. The overlapping of political oppression and economic suffering in Haiti blurred the distinction between a political refugee—wherein an individual has to demonstrate a well-founded fear of political persecution—and the economically motivated migrant who faces a more general yet equally well-founded fear of suffering if sent back to Haiti. By 1980, U.S. courts, faced with organized legal support for Haitian migrants from the Haitian-American community and human rights groups, became paralyzed while boat people were arriving in growing numbers in southern Florida. Detention centers filled up, complaints about conditions in the centers grew, and the detained Haitians were paroled into the community, often never to be heard from again. Word quickly got back to Haiti, and the boat people business flourished even more.

The 1979–1981 surge in Haitian boat people triggered an innovative U.S. policy response with far-reaching foreign policy implications. It was clear that Haitian boats could only be apprehended as they left Haiti because once into the broad Bahamian archipelago they could slip through to the Florida coast at night undetected among the thousands of pleasure and other small craft. The United States therefore proposed a bilateral interdiction agreement with Haiti whereby the U.S. Coast Guard could intercept the slow-moving Haitian boats off the coast of Haiti, search them for intending illegal migrants, and if found, escort the boat and migrants back to Haiti. An Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) interview process aboard the Coast Guard cutter would screen for possible bona fide political refugees, who would not be returned to Haiti, but such cases were rare. Almost all boat people were simply poor Haitians seeking a better life in the United States. The Haitian government, in turn, would commit not to persecute returned migrants in any way, and in fact some assistance would be provided to them by the Haitian Red Cross. The agreement was signed in September 1981, and the appearance of U.S. Coast Guard cutters in Port-au-Prince harbor returning interdicted boat people quickly stopped the outflow. The U.S. Coast Guard was highly credible in communicating to Haitians that they would not make it through to Miami. The number of illegal Haitians intercepted at sea or in Florida dropped from 8,000 in 1981 to 134 in 1982 and averaged
only about 500 per year through the end of the Jean-Claude Duvalier regime in February 1986.²

The bilateral interdiction agreement was limited to illegal migration, but it was indirectly linked to the broader relationship between the two countries. The Haitian government had pressed to include an economic aid commitment in the agreement, which was resisted by the United States, but U.S. economic assistance to Haiti did increase substantially from $30 million in 1981 to $45 million in 1984 in the context of Haitian participation in the Caribbean Basin Initiative. It was also made clear that without an interdiction agreement little or no economic aid would be forthcoming.

A more fundamental linkage was between the implementation of the interdiction agreement and the protection of basic human rights in Haiti. The Haitian government carefully observed the agreement provision not to persecute returned migrants, and numerous follow-up interviews by the American Embassy, the Congressional Black Caucus, and human rights groups confirmed the absence of abuse. The fact was that the Haitian government had every reason to observe the agreement. It was essential for a positive relationship with the United States, including vital economic assistance, and the relatively small number of returned migrants posed no political threat. There was a limit, however, to the degree to which the human rights situation of returned boat people could be separated from general political conditions in Haiti because if general conditions worsened, all Haitians would be put at risk. The instability and periodic violence that occurred during the post–Duvalier years of 1986–1990 under several military-dominated interim governments increased this concern. The brief initial Aristide presidency in 1991 reduced the threat of political violence and increased the credibility of the interdiction agreement procedure, but this changed abruptly for the worse with the military coup against Aristide in September 1991.

The Impact of the 1991 Crisis

U.S. immigration policy toward Haiti embarked on an increasingly contradictory and surreal course during the ensuing four years beginning in October 1991. The United States did not formally recognize the military-controlled government in Haiti, while informally negotiating with it toward a new coalition government. Meanwhile, the U.S. Coast Guard continued to return
Haitian boat people and the de facto government continued to receive them under the terms of the interdiction agreement, but in the absence of any direct contact between the two governments.

The political circumstances underlying implementation of the interdiction agreement, however, had changed greatly. Two-thirds of the population had voted for Aristide, hundreds of his followers had been killed or persecuted in the immediate aftermath of the coup, and it could no longer be assumed that almost all boat people were economic migrants. Indeed, as word got out, interdicted boat people would make strident pro-Aristide and anti-military statements to establish minimum credentials as possible political refugees. The increased migrant outflow overwhelmed the INS processing aboard the Coast Guard cutters, and boat people were transferred to the U.S. military facilities at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for more orderly processing. This only increased the incentive to flee Haiti, and by May 1992 the Guantanamo facilities held 13,000 Haitians and were approaching full capacity. On May 24, President Bush issued an executive order for the U.S. Coast Guard to return all interdicted Haitians directly to Haiti, no questions asked. The number of Haitians leaving Haiti by boat promptly dropped from 1,500 per week to almost zero.

The Bush executive order constituted a repudiation of the key U.S. commitment in the 1981 agreement: "No person who is a refugee will be returned [to Haiti] without his consent." It also conflicted with the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which stated that no contracting state shall expel or return a refugee "in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories wherein his life or freedom would be threatened." The convention had been ratified by the United States in a 1967 Protocol and reinforced at the time of the 1981 agreement, whereby the U.S. government pledged to take "whatever steps are necessary to ensure . . . the strict observance of our international obligations concerning those who genuinely flee persecution in their homeland." Thus the Bush executive order provoked a public outcry and legal challenge from the Haitian-American community, human rights groups, and Democratic members of the Congress. Inconsistencies with U.S. refugee policy elsewhere in the world were cited, and comparison made with the incident 50 years earlier when the U.S. government had turned back hundreds of Jewish refugees aboard a ship bound for Florida to face Hitler’s death camps. A lawsuit by several groups to overturn
The executive order was rejected by a federal court on the grounds that the 1967 Protocol was “not self-executing” and that U.S. laws do not apply to “Haitian aliens in international waters.” The judge nevertheless condemned the change in U.S. policy in the strongest terms:

It is unconscionable that the United States should accede to the Protocol and later claim that it is not bound by it. This court is astounded that the United States would return Haitian refugees to the jaws of political persecution, terror, death and uncertainty when it has contracted not to do so.

The Bush administration’s response was that all returnees were met at the dock by embassy officers who explained how to apply for refugee status at the American Embassy, and that U.S. humanitarian assistance to Haiti had been increased to $47 million for 1992. Haiti’s geographic proximity was emphasized, including the negative impact of the embargo on illegal migration:

We face an excruciating dilemma. Haitians want to come to Miami. To save lives we pick people up at sea. By doing so we strengthen the pull of the magnet for the United States. The magnet goes well beyond the political refugees; most are people seeking better economic opportunity. The dilemma is magnified by the need to employ an embargo in our efforts to restore democracy, which adds to the economic pressures . . . hence, the problem we face in response to the outflow of Haitians is quite different from the situation in Southeast Asia, or Africa, where there is an acceptance of shared responsibility for a regional problem.4

The foreign policy linkages between geographic proximity, illegal migration, and economic sanctions had been clearly established, but the policy response of sending all Haitians back, no questions asked, was still not “conscionable” to many Americans.

U.S. policy toward Haiti became an issue in the presidential campaign in the United States on June 9, 1992, when candidate Bill Clinton condemned the Bush policy of returning boat people as unacceptable and amoral and pledged to give all Haitians a fair hearing in the United States before being sent back.5 Haitians took note of the commitment, and widespread boat building got
under way along the Haitian coasts following Clinton’s election victory in November. The president-elect was faced with the prospect of a flotilla of northbound Haitian boat people competing for prime time television during inauguration week, and his political advisers convinced him to back off his campaign pledge and continue the Bush policy of returning all interdicted Haitians, no questions asked, on a "temporary" basis until a political resolution could be negotiated. The temporary period lasted almost two years until President Aristide’s return in October 1994. The presumption was that once the military regime ceded to the democratically elected Aristide government, Haitians would no longer face a well-founded fear of persecution and thus would not qualify for political refugee status. Exactly how the broader problem of illegal Haitian migration to the United States was to be handled was less clear.

Migration/Foreign Policy Limbo

In April 1993, President Aristide, still in exile in Washington, gave the State Department the required six-months notice to terminate the 1981 bilateral interdiction agreement, and by the time he returned to Haiti in October, the agreement was history. The U.S. Coast Guard no longer had the permission of the Haitian government to intercept Haitian boats in international waters and return them and their occupants to Haiti.

The consequences of the new situation were not immediately apparent. The boat people business had virtually ceased during the final year of the embargo in the face of a massive U.S. Navy and Coast Guard blockade against all vessels in and out of Haiti. During the 1980s, the Haitian interdiction program was implemented by one Coast Guard cutter and one helicopter, not always full-time, but by the summer of 1993, the Haiti blockade force had grown to 17 Coast Guard cutters, five U.S. Navy vessels, and nine Coast Guard aircraft. As this force is scaled back and the U.S. military force within Haiti phased down and out, the credibility of the U.S. interdiction capability will likewise be reduced. There is indeed a question as to whether U.S. Coast Guard surveillance off the coast of Haiti will continue indefinitely in the absence of an interdiction agreement.

The new situation was first tested in April 1995. One open boat with 138 Haitians jammed on board was seized 25 miles off the Florida coast by the U.S. Coast Guard and the Haitians were returned directly to Haiti. The boat was legitimately boarded on
the grounds of "safety at sea," but the repatriation to Haiti revealed disagreement between the two governments and some confusion. The American Embassy in Port-au-Prince requested permission for repatriation from the Haitian Foreign Ministry—necessary in the absence of an interdiction agreement—and apparently interpreted the lack of response as approval. After the boat people had been returned, however, the Foreign Ministry issued a statement that the ministry "opposes firmly and categorically any form of involuntary repatriation of Haitians who have left the country illegally." If the statement then immediately went on to say that because the ministry does not have the means to resist forced repatriation, it will accept the people back.

Thus the Haitian government displayed its traditional diplomacy of first not answering foreign demands and then acquiescing to the inevitable under the pressure of foreign military control of its territory. The U.S. government, in turn, was put in the awkward position of having to ignore the Aristide government's firm and categoric opposition to repatriation and to do it anyhow.7

A second test case in April 1995 involved a Haitian-registered motor vessel, stopped just off the Florida coast and found to have 115 Haitians in a hidden compartment, reminiscent of the heyday of boat people trafficking of 1980–1981. The Haitians were taken to the Krome detention center in Miami because they were already in U.S. internal waters when seized. This raised yet another question about Haitians entering the United States illegally following the return of President Aristide and the U.S. government's assessment, related to the establishment of the UN peacekeeping mission, that Haiti was a safe and secure country. From Aristide's return in October 1994 through 1995 the U.S. courts found no Haitians eligible for exclusion and repatriation to Haiti among those apprehended after his return or among the more than 20,000 who had entered earlier and were awaiting a decision on their status. Lawyers for the Haitians claim conditions are still unsafe in Haiti, especially in the countryside, and the U.S. courts have to decide whether this merits an indefinite stay in the United States. If the courts so decide, and the word gets back to Haiti, the boat trafficking business will surely increase.

Other vessels have been apprehended subsequently. In June 1995, the U.S. Coast Guard repatriated 41 Haitians from an open sailboat, and a small freighter was intercepted in July with 141 Haitians hidden aboard, some of whom reported paying $5,000
The most tragic case concerned a freighter seized by Bahamian authorities in August with 300 Haitians crammed below decks. It was later discovered that at least 100 more had been killed during the voyage, mostly by being thrown overboard for complaining about their treatment. Yet another vessel made it through to the Miami River in October and unloaded the 300 Haitians aboard before being detected. The largest outflow during 1995 was recorded in November, when the U.S. Coast Guard apprehended more than 1,100 Haitians from two freighters and, in a separate incident, 47 Haitians drowned after a frail sailboat capsized off the coast of Haiti.

It is not clear how many vessels are back in the boat-people trafficking business and are able to slip through U.S. Coast Guard surveillance. Freighters in particular, despite the obvious possibility of hidden compartments, are not routinely boarded at sea for inspection. Two of the ships noted above were stopped because they had no running lights on at night and the boat people were discovered by chance. The Haitian army and navy, which helped the U.S. Coast Guard police the Haitian coasts for potential traffickers in the 1980s, no longer exist, and the Aristide government, as a matter of policy, was not disposed to assist U.S. efforts to stop illegal migration efforts.

The most important difference in external migration pressures in Haiti between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s is that Haitian economic prospects have become far bleaker. The destruction of assembly and other industry together with accelerated deforestation and agricultural decline during the international embargo have reduced greatly job prospects for poor Haitians for at least several years and perhaps much longer. The supply-push forces for economically motivated outward migration are at an all-time high and sustained level.

As for demand-pull in the United States, the continually growing Haitian-American community understandably wants to increase the inflow of impoverished friends and relatives and has become a potent force in demanding maximum legal protection for newly arrived Haitians. There are no precise figures on the number of U.S. residents of Haitian origin. The U.S. census does not list Haiti as a separate country of origin—as is done for Mexico and Cuba—and the recorded inflow of Haitians obviously misses a large number of unrecorded illegal entrants. The best estimates indicate about 1 million U.S. residents of Haitian origin, of whom 400,000 are in New York City and 200,000 are in Miami. This compares with an estimated 1.5 million Cuban-
Americans and is about the same in relative terms to a population in Haiti two-thirds that of Cuba. The linkages between Haitian and other black Americans are deeper, however, compared with the more distant relationships among Cuban, Mexican, and other Hispanic Americans. In sum, cultural ties and geographic proximity between Haiti and the east coast of the United States have grown enormously over the past 25 years and now constitute an important special relationship between the two countries.

How this deepening cultural and migration policy relationship influences or should influence U.S. foreign policy is much of the subject of the final two chapters of this study. The initial assessment here is that the issue is currently in limbo. The U.S. military intervention in Haiti in September 1994 was undertaken because of the threat of a far larger outflow of people if Haiti’s internal order were to break down. But the international peacekeeping mission was limited to about 18 months, and the 1995 international economic aid program, as explained in the following chapter, falls far short of a credible long-term commitment to nation-building. Meanwhile, public and Congressional opinions about what U.S. Haiti policy should be range widely, from cutting off aid and sending all illegal Haitians back home, no questions asked, to some form of long-term international trusteeship, with most opinion falling somewhere vaguely in between.

The central conclusion of this chapter is that Haitian outward migration, stage 3 of the demography-driven development model, can have major foreign policy consequences for neighboring migrant-recipient countries, particularly the United States. This circumstance applies widely throughout the Caribbean Basin region, with Haiti—and Cuba in a very different context—presenting the most pressing challenges to statesmanship and to troubled self-interest.

Further detail on the application of U.S. immigration laws to Haiti is contained in appendix B.
Demography-Driven Development in Haiti: Recapitulation and Outlook

The three-stage model of demography-driven development introduced in chapter 2 fits the recent Haitian experience well and in a forceful manner. There are some encouraging signs that the demographic forces can be contained and channeled onto a more positive path of national development. But on balance, the negative effects of population growth and rural/urban migration are more likely to overwhelm the capability of the economy to provide productive employment and basic human services. To recapitulate a current assessment of each of the three stages:

1. **Rural population growth and arable land.** The decades-old squeeze of expanding population on arable land continues and is nearing the crisis stage. The annual loss of 6,000 hectares or more of farmland to soil erosion together with an increase of 70,000 in rural population cannot be sustained much longer. A broad strategy of rural development needs to be implemented, with special priority given to expanded family planning program—within a broader rural health delivery system—and to an intensive effort to resume the reforestation program of the 1980s. No matter what, improving productivity and the standard of living for Haiti’s rural population of 5 million will be a long, slow process, given that the country’s urban workforce is now at least four times more productive than its rural counterpart.

2. **Rural/urban migration.** The central challenge for Haitian nation-building is the creation of productive jobs for rural migrants who are increasing Haiti’s urban population by 4 percent per year or more. This challenge was greatly aggravated by the 1991–1994 embargo, which destroyed most of the labor-intensive industry built up over the previous two decades. Open trade and a positive business climate constitute the policy framework necessary for attracting the private-sector investment that will create jobs. Industrial and social infrastructure also needs
massive repair. A forceful strategy of decentralization away from Port-au-Prince, especially to the north coast, is yet another key dimension to a successful urban employment program. But the outlook as of early 1996 is decidedly bleak, with economic stagnation compounded by government inaction and political instability.

3. Outward migration to the United States. Haitian migration to the United States during the past four decades has been predominantly economic in motivation, with a fluctuating minority fleeing political persecution. The supply-push economic pressures within Haiti have increased substantially as a result of the 1991–1994 crisis and will remain intense for at least the next 5 to 10 years. U.S. policy to stem illegal migration is at a hiatus with the termination of the 1981 interdiction agreement and the unpredictable course of judicial proceedings once Haitians arrive in the United States. A turn for the worse in the human rights situation in Haiti could again paralyze U.S. judicial review. Meanwhile, lucrative incentives for boat people traffickers within Haiti, stemming in part from the willingness of Haitian-Americans to finance the passage, are rekindling the illegal boat people business.

The overall assessment of the three-stage model as it has played out in Haiti is that development is spiralling downward, with grave implications for Haiti as a nation and for the U.S.-Haitian relationship. The pace of this downward spiral accelerated during the 1991–1994 crisis, and the central question at this point is whether a reversal of direction is feasible, wherein the country can move onto an upward path of sustained economic growth and political stability. The contingent answer presented here is, yes—and the remainder of this chapter describes the three principal contingencies:

- the national development strategy adopted,
- the effectiveness of the Haitian government in implementing the strategy, and
- the role of the international support program.

The more somber, subsidiary question regarding the consequences if these contingencies are not realized is left for the final two chapters.
The National Development Strategy

A number of elements for a national development strategy for Haiti have been put forward in preceding chapters:

- a comprehensive rural development program with emphasis on reforestation and slowing population growth;
- a private sector–driven program of urban job creation, including decentralization away from Port-au-Prince;
- a public-private sector program for health, education, and other social services; and
- a macroeconomic program of free trade, privatization of state enterprises, and fiscal reform.

These are the familiar elements of World Bank/IMF/USAID structural reform programs that became widely accepted during the 1980s. They also formed the basis of the restored Aristide government’s “Strategy of Social and Economic Reconstruction,” and, in response, the international donor community’s “Emergency Economic Recovery Program.”

The details of the Aristide government’s strategy and the international donor program are the subject of the two succeeding sections of this chapter. But first the broader questions must be posed: What do the specific elements add up to in terms of sustained economic growth, and over what time frame? World Bank–sponsored structural reform programs have not always been successful in implementation, particularly in least-developed countries. Is there good reason to believe that such a program will work now in Haiti?

Unfortunately, there is no reliable projection for Haitian economic recovery at this point. Medium-term projections of three to five years are always highly uncertain for very poor countries in economic crisis, but even in this context Haiti has confronted special problems in both organization and substance. Organizationally, there was little attempt to develop a comprehensive, projection for economic recovery during the first 10 months after President Aristide’s return. All attention was on managing the immediate crisis and, in any event, there was a relatively weak analytic focus within both the Haitian government and the aid donor group. The World Bank usually provides the comprehensive, longer-term perspective in such groups, but the donor coordination function for Haiti was initially assigned to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which is more accustomed
to specific project design than to broad development strategy. By fall 1995, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), together with the Haitian government, had developed the first, rudimentary longer-term projection for economic recovery, in conjunction with negotiation of a structural adjustment program involving continued high levels of budget support assistance, of which more below. This collaborative analytic effort suffered a setback, however, with the resignation of Prime Minister Smark Michel in October, and Rene Preval was elected president in December without elaborating an economic program.

The substantive problem with the fall 1995 medium-term program, which projected a hopeful level of growth in GDP in the order of 4 percent per year for the remainder of the decade, is in its key assumptions. The growth projection depends almost entirely on a sharp rebound in private-sector jobs—particularly in the export sector—a substantial improvement in revenue collection by the Haitian government, and continued high levels of foreign aid disbursements. All of these assumptions appeared highly doubtful at the outset in 1996.

In the absence of a reliable projection of likely outcome, the commentary here is limited to highlighting two circumstances—human resources and geographic location—that greatly favor Haiti's development prospects compared with those of many other of the poorest countries and that form much of the basis for the positive assessment given above. It is noteworthy, in the context of this study, that these circumstances are heavily demographic in content. It also bears repeating that any positive outcome is critically contingent on the subsequent issues of effective government performance and international support, which go to the heart of the assumptions contained in the World Bank/IMF projection.

**Human resources.** Haiti has become a country poorly endowed in natural resources—regrettably due to decades of environmental degradation—but richly endowed in human resources. The human resource endowment is largely cultural in origin, as described in chapter 3. Nurtured in adversity and traditional values, the Haitian worker, rural or urban, is eager to work hard and diligently if only given the opportunity. Young Haitians are also most eager to learn, as evident in missionary and other schools throughout the country. The discipline—and joy—of learning observed in Haitian classrooms is a lesson for
educational reformers in the United States and elsewhere. The experience of the 1970s and 1980s in assembly, service, and agroindustries demonstrated clearly that Haitian workers are more productive and reliable than most of their counterparts elsewhere in the Caribbean Basin region. Although the level of worker skills is initially very low, upgrading through training can be achieved fairly quickly, leading to higher productivity and pay.

The vital component for mobilizing such a promising workforce is, of course, an entrepreneurial/management capability, and in this area, too, Haiti generally outperforms its Caribbean neighbors. Despite a generally troubled and unstable business climate, a self-confident private-sector leadership has been nurtured and can produce impressive results under adverse circumstances. Haitian business leadership, moreover, is complemented by a limited supply of able technocrats, teachers, and technicians—in sum, a relatively small and, until the embargo, steadily growing middle class. A broadening of the middle-class center of the economic spectrum is not only vital to economic progress but fundamental to the process of democratization, and the exodus of a substantial part of it during 1991–1994 was one of the most damaging yet least noted casualties of the crisis. Nevertheless, most of the business-oriented center remains, and others in the diaspora would return if a favorable business climate were restored.

Geographic location. Haiti’s most important advantage, compared with least-developed countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, and elsewhere, is its close proximity to the open and essentially limitless U.S. market. The new Caribbean economic order, based on labor-intensive industry, nontraditional agriculture, tourism, and other services, is preponderantly based on proximity to the U.S. market, now broadened to include Canada and Mexico within the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Moreover, the Caribbean regional economy will be drawn even closer through some form of “NAFTA-parity” arrangement leading toward eventual full membership for smaller Caribbean nations, not to mention the likely reintegration of Cuba into the regional economy sometime soon.

Haiti, in fact, is favorably positioned even among Caribbean Basin nations. The private-sector leadership within Haiti has deep ties with the Haitian-American community, a relationship that is progressively strengthened by the tendency of the
younger generation of middle-class Haitians to study in the United States rather than in Francophone Europe. Haiti is also more disposed to move quickly to free trade, if the current crisis can be weathered, and a bold strategy of integration within NAFTA would naturally follow, moving ahead of other more hesitant Caribbean countries, as Haiti did for assembly industry in the late 1970s. Indeed, unilateral movement to the free trade, investment, intellectual property rights, and other provisions of NAFTA is fully compatible with the announced economic program of the Aristide government. An additional useful regional step for a small country such as Haiti—taking account of the increasing volatility of world currency markets—would be official linkage to the U.S. dollar, which is the basis for most Haitian trade and many transactions within the country. Overall, Haiti could aspire to be not the Taiwan but rather the Hong Kong of the Caribbean, with an economic strategy based on free trade and a wealth of human resources.

The foregoing can appear to be an exceedingly optimistic development prospect in view of the current troubles. There is no question that the situation in Haiti could get worse before it gets better and that the entire nation-building process could fail. The essential point to be made here, however, is that the underpinnings for a reasonably quick and sustained reversal of the recent downward spiral exist and are in some respects remarkably favorable. Those who turn their backs on Haiti as a hopeless economic basket case are simply wrong. Haiti should not be seen only as a trouble, but rather as a self-interested challenge to international statesmanship. And in this context, the outcome will depend on government performance within Haiti and an appropriate response by the international community.

**Effective Implementation by the Haitian Government**

It is now widely—and belatedly—recognized that success or failure of national development depends almost entirely on the performance of government. Natural resource endowment helps and foreign assistance can play a subsidiary supportive role, but in the absence of effective government the natural endowment is squandered while externally provided money serves no lasting purpose and can even be counterproductive. “Good governance” is the new development catchphrase, and recent history is cluttered with examples of bad governance: Argentina under Peron, the Philippines under Marcos, Zaire under Mobutu, and
Communist governments suffering from the ailment in genetic form. Bad governance is not limited to physical oppression and corruption, but usually involves, often to a decisive degree, ill-conceived policies, technical incompetence, and lack of managerial will.

Haiti has a 200-year history of consistently bad governance, including all of the foregoing attributes. Public service is deeply associated with self-serving power and financial gain, a cultural failing that will take many years to change. If there is consensus on only one thing in Haiti, it is that the best government is the least government, especially Port-au-Prince–based government. Fortunately, this objective was highly compatible with the free trade, decentralized, private sector–driven development model adopted by the restored Aristide government and supported by the international aid donor community.

The overarching political challenge to attain good, or at least better, government in Haiti is national reconciliation, the recurrent theme of Haitian literature and elusive goal throughout the nation’s history. Political polarization is deep-seated and long standing: rich versus poor; black versus mulatto; French versus Creole; black-populist people power versus military-backed authoritarianism. (The fledgling, more democratically disposed middle of the political spectrum usually gets caught in the figurative if not actual crossfire between these polarizations.) The mutual distrust and fear that characterizes the post-embargo polarization between pro- and anti-Aristide factions has been especially acute as a result of the killings and international sanctions of 1991–1994. Each side needs the other, however, if the current crisis is to be overcome: two-thirds of the people may be pro-Aristide, but more than two-thirds of the economic and traditional political power structure, including most of the business community, are opposed. If the business community feels alienated and threatened by the Aristide and successor Preval governments, there will be no significant job creation, no lasting economic recovery, and a growing threat of breakdown in political order.

President Aristide returned to Haiti committed to national reconciliation, which became his constant appeal. His new government was formed to include broad-based participation, including opposition parties, and outreach to the business community involved various mixed commissions. The specific political and economic objectives of the government all flowed from this foundation of national reconciliation. The principal political
objectives were to create a new police force to replace the disbanded Haitian army and to build a more independent and less corrupt judiciary. The economic objectives were even more detailed, as contained in the August 1994 Strategy of Social and Economic Reconstruction: fiscal reform to rebuild tax collection capability; privatization of state enterprises, which were described as “a major economic and social catastrophe” that have “imposed serious economic and financial costs . . . because of mismanagement . . . (and) associated opportunities for corruption”; free trade except for a few agricultural commodities; and a smaller, more professional government, including incentives to secure the voluntary departure “of about half of the 45,000 civil servants.” Of particular relevance to the population-related social sector focus of this study, government ministries were to “refrain from excessive regulation and focus on broad policy questions.” To improve accountability and increase effectiveness in the education and health sectors, service delivery “will use channels in Civil Society (private-sector, qualified NGOs—i.e., non-governmental organizations—grass roots organizations, cooperatives and local governance).” Staffing requirements will “progressively shift to a smaller number of highly qualified professionals which can be recruited partly from the Haitian Diaspora.”

Overall, these objectives pointed clearly in the direction of a more just and effective government, conducive to private-sector investment and job creation. Particularly noteworthy was the major reduction in government size and control, which would be especially welcome to a population long the victim of government abuse and corruption.

By the beginning of 1996, however, the implementation record for this reconstruction strategy was mixed at best on the political front and minimal on the economic front. A new, 5,000-member police force had been trained and was in place, but this task had been essentially delegated by the Aristide government to the U.S. training mission. Similarly, a beginning had been made to upgrade the judicial system. The heralded call for political reconciliation, in contrast, had not been realized. Several prominent members of the initial cabinet were not Aristide supporters, including the ministers of justice, commerce, and public works, but by summer 1995 all of them had been forced out of office or fired. A pro-Aristide majority of 80-90 percent was elected to the National Assembly in mid-1995, but the elections were marred by organizational chaos and a blatantly
pro-Aristide electoral commission, and they were condemned by opposition parties as well as some international observers, casting a dark cloud of political uncertainty over the period ahead. The fall of Prime Minister Michel, a pro-Aristide businessman, was another blow to national reconciliation, and the Preval presidency begins with the country still deeply divided.

The economic performance record of the restored Aristide government was consistently one of fine rhetoric, considerable study, and almost no implementation:

1. **Fiscal reform.** The need to restore and improve tax revenue collection, which had collapsed from an already inadequate 8 percent of GDP in 1991 to 3 percent in 1994, was arguably the most important and certainly the most difficult economic challenge for the restored Aristide government. But the government was spared from having to do anything significant by the largesse of foreign aid—which provided direct and indirect cash transfers for more than half of the government’s budget expenditures—a one-time payment by AT&T of tax payments accumulated in escrow during the three-year embargo, and a temporary increase in customs and gasoline revenues (despite lax implementation by the customs service) caused by the surge in imports from emergency aid disbursements and spending by the international peacekeeping force. The government announced toward the end of 1995 that the first step in fiscal reform would be to audit the 300 largest taxpayers, but implementation of this and any further steps on the fiscal front were left for the successor Preval government.

2. **Privatization.** The “major economic and social catastrophe” of public enterprises suffered a similar fate of intense study and no action. Nine public enterprises were identified for possible privatization. The four most important involved economic infrastructure vital to resuscitating private-sector investment and job creation: an electric power grid in shambles; a highly unreliable, antiquated telephone system; the congested Port-au-Prince airport; and port facilities run down through a combination of neglect of maintenance and a redundant workforce based on political patronage to the point that port charges were two to three times higher than those in neighboring Santo Domingo. The other enterprises designated were two public banks, an edible oil manufacturing plant, a cement factory, and a flour mill. Under intense pressure from the international donor community
to do something in this area, the Aristide government announced in summer 1995 that it would privatize the cement plant and flour mill, the easiest to justify in view of their long history of mismanagement, corruption, and redundant labor force. But even these privatizations were attacked by Aristide’s radical left political constituency and became the precipitating cause for the resignation of Prime Minister Michel.

3. **Free trade.** Although Haiti already has relatively low import barriers, the free trade objective appears to have been sidetracked, in part because customs revenues are projected to play an increasingly important role for government revenues. Meanwhile, all reports are that the customs service in Port-au-Prince and the provincial ports is more corrupt than ever. As suggested earlier, the customs service should be added to the list of candidates for privatization, indeed, as a top priority.

4. **A more professional, smaller government.** This critical objective of the Aristide Strategy of Social and Economic Reconstruction has conveniently disappeared from sight. Aid donors claim to have no figures on total government employment, while episodic reports indicate a substantial increase in the number of people on the central government payroll rather than the 50 percent decrease called for in the strategy document. Moreover, political patronage rather than professional competence has been the guiding principle for selection, as civil servants who worked for the military “de facto” government have been systematically replaced by Aristide supporters.

5. **Decentralization, deregulation, and a shift to “civil society.”** Much of the emergency aid program has been administered through local government and the NGOs, but the longer-term restructuring of the social sectors, as described earlier for health and population services, is clearly in the direction of more rather than less central government control and participation.

None of these economic reforms will be easy in a country such as Haiti. What is needed is a political understanding based on national reconciliation and a government composed largely of able and forceful technocrats who have the firm backing of their president. None of this happened during the 15 months after President Aristide’s return. Rather, the president’s performance was characterized by statements of support for the
economic reform program he had agreed to before his return coupled with delay if not dissimulation in implementation. In effect, it follows the classic pattern of Haitian diplomacy in the face of strong international pressures, as described in chapter 3.

The International Support Program

The course of the restored Aristide government inevitably became closely integrated with the massive support it received from the international community in both security and economic terms. This support, moreover, brought together the immediate foreign policy interests of the U.S.-led military intervention with the longer-term interests of the demographers and other development professionals. The specific short-term foreign policy interest was the completion of Aristide’s term in office and inauguration of his duly elected successor in February 1996, after which the international peacekeeping force was to depart. The longer-term demographic/development objective was to lay the foundation for sustained economic recovery and political reconciliation beyond February 1996. The elusive foreign policy-development nexus, a central target of inquiry for this case study, had been engaged in starkest terms in post-embargo Haiti and is being played out through the content of the international support program.

The response of the international aid donor community to the restored Aristide government has been extremely generous and prompt for a country as small as Haiti. In the summer of 1993, at the time of the ill-fated Governor’s Island accord for the return of President Aristide, the donor community had assembled a $550 million emergency relief package. This package grew to $668 million by November 1994, after Aristide’s return, and to $1.2 billion in total commitments at the aid donor consultative group meeting in Paris in January 1995. The donor composition for this $1.2 billion broke down roughly as $200 million or more from the United States, the World Bank, the IDB, and the European Union; substantial amounts from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the IMF, Canada, France, Germany, and Japan; and lesser amounts from 16 other donors.

The substantive composition of these overall aid levels is important in several respects. There is first a question of timing of disbursement as it impacts on the level of economic activity within Haiti. The $668 million emergency program was intended for implementation during the 15-month emergency period
through February 1996. The remainder of the $1.2 billion was principally for longer-term projects—for example, a jointly financed World Bank and IDB project of $95 million for rural road maintenance, which was developed in 1995 for implementation later over five years. Part of the $668 million to be disbursed during the 15-month emergency period was used to pay foreign technical advisers, and $74 million was paid directly to the World Bank and the IDB for arrearages in order to reactivate their programs in Haiti. Nevertheless, approximately $600 million was in fact disbursed during the 15 months as promised, of which $400-$500 million went directly into the Haitian economy. Additional foreign exchange flowed in from U.S. military forces later broadened to a UN peacekeeping force. Overall, foreign assistance-induced spending during the 15 months amounted to at least 25 percent of Haiti’s GDP, an extremely high level by any standard.

A more fundamental distinction in international economic support is between expenditures for immediate, temporary relief, with no lasting development impact, and funding for projects that contribute to longer-term, sustained economic growth and development. On this basis, the emergency economic relief program breaks down about half and half by broad category. Of the $668 million, $74 million, as noted above, went to clear arrearages, $105 million was for humanitarian assistance—principally food aid and the creation of up to 60,000 temporary public works jobs—and another $130 million was for budget support to the government, of which more below, for a total of $309 million of what might be considered the core pump-priming package. The remaining $359 million, generally with a longer-term orientation, consisted of $79 million to support improved governance/management and $280 million for sector-related projects, including $57 million for agriculture, $47 million for energy, $36 million for agriculture, and $31 million for education. Some of these sector funds, however, were used essentially for emergency relief to restart the government, tilting the overall balance more in the short-term direction.

The most disturbing aspect of the emergency aid program was the especially heavy emphasis on budget support to the Haitian government. This can take the form of direct cash payments or indirect support programs whereby the aid donor provides the government with necessary imports—such as oil and foodstuffs—and the government then sells the imported products to the private sector and keeps the receipts as budget
support revenues. The $130 million initially allocated for such budget support during the 15-month period amounted to about half of total central government expenditures. In addition, portions of project assistance funds also end up as budget support when they are used as payment for government services and personnel, thus pushing the share of the government budget paid for by foreign aid still higher.

This strong emphasis on using foreign aid to cover central government expenditures runs contrary to long-standing practice in Haiti and should be kept to a minimum anywhere. It tends to bring out the worst in government performance—larger rather than smaller government payrolls, a painless alternative to unpopular tax collection at home, and excessive political power for a centralized government structure based on the patronage of government spending programs. All of these counterproductive forces have been observed in other aid recipient countries, and they can have an especially pernicious impact on the reform objectives in Haiti. Some budget support in extremis may be necessary, as it was during the initial year after Aristide’s return, but it should be kept to a minimum and phased out quickly.5

The concentration of economic and other external support on the short-term objectives of restoring President Aristide to power and maintaining him through the end of his term in office was most evident in the aid provided by the United States. Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard expenditures for the embargo and U.S. military intervention totalled more than $1 billion. Of the $435 million of bilateral foreign assistance obligated during the 1994 and 1995 fiscal years, which overlap the 15-month emergency recovery period, most was earmarked for short-term peacekeeping, emergency relief, and budget support to the Aristide government. For example, about $120 million was designated for the international peacekeeping force, $100 million for the 60,000 temporary public works jobs and humanitarian feeding programs, and $70 million for payments to the government through direct budget support and the PL480 Title III food import program. Only about $65 million was initially obligated for more traditional development assistance projects in the health, agriculture, and education sectors, and even that was reduced substantially by ever-rising expenditures for higher-priority short-term objectives elsewhere. Family planning and reforestation projects, as explained earlier, obtained less than $5
million between them in fiscal year 1995 and are likely to be cut back further during 1996.

The United States, under the leadership of the Department of Commerce, has also placed great public emphasis on aid to support the recovery of the private sector in Haiti. This has produced very limited results, however, in part because of the lack of financial instruments to restart an essentially bankrupt Haitian private sector and, more importantly, because of the political uncertainty and lack of action on economic reforms that cast a pall over the investment climate in Haiti. Former USAID programs to support private-sector development were terminated globally in 1993 and the Department of Commerce has no resources of its own. The U.S. Export-Import Bank is shut down in Haiti because the Haitian government, which has to guarantee Exim loans, is not creditworthy. The investment insurance and credit facilities of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) are available, but they require some private-sector risk capital, which generally has not been forthcoming.

The central problem for economic recovery—and thus the central challenge for the Haitian government and the aid donor community—is how to improve the investment climate and begin anew the job-creating investment in manufacturing, service, and agricultural industries that took place in the late 1970s and 1980s. The experience through 1995 for the export assembly sector is most pointed. Employment in the sector dropped progressively from 60,000 in the mid-1980s to about 8,000 during the course of the embargo, which permitted assembly industry to continue almost to the end, and then to zero just before the U.S. military intervention. Within three months after Aristide’s return, employment had bounced back to the 8,000-10,000 hard-core level preceding the intervention, due mostly to textile producers who were benefiting from unfilled Haitian quotas in the U.S. market. But it then leveled off at this low level, and to date companies producing electronics, sporting goods, toys, and footwear have not returned in significant numbers.

There has been a visible economic recovery in terms of import spending and related service industry, but this is predominantly the result of the extraordinary inflow of quick-disbursing aid, a form of “aid-bubble economy.” Official satisfaction with Haiti’s 4 percent growth in GDP during 1995, after a 30 percent drop in the previous three embargo-beleaguered years, needs to be assessed in the context of foreign assistance...
disbursements on the order of 25 percent of GDP or more. Imports have been booming and large profits are being made by Haitians in the trade and distribution sectors, but this is distinct from the creation of permanent jobs in manufacturing and other industries.

The reality, of course, is that the aid-bubble economy will contract, probably sharply, over the next year or two unless the private sector rebounds strongly, a dubious prospect in early 1996. The overall level of aid disbursements will decline from its exceptional level of 1995. U.S. bilateral aid to Haiti was scheduled to decline from $235 million in FY95 to $80-$100 million in FY96 even before the U.S. Congress made deep cuts in the president's overall budget request for foreign assistance. Other aid donors will also likely reduce their aid commitments, although to a lesser degree. An important factor influencing the deflation of the aid-bubble economy will be the slowdown in aid disbursements as assistance programs shift from quick-disbursing budget support and other emergency relief programs to slower-disbursing project assistance that is contingent on the Haitian government's doing its part in project implementation. The first stage of bubble deflation, in fact, began in late 1995, with the rejection by the Haitian government of the World Bank/IMF structural adjustment program. Budget support from the international financial institutions was postponed, Haitian government spending continued, and the deficit was reflected in renewed inflationary pressures and the decline in value of the Haitian gourde. As usual, financial markets become the ultimate arbiters of inadequate government performance, which in Haiti's case is taking place in the context of a deflating aid-bubble economy.

This overall somber outlook has critical implications for the specific subjects of this inquiry—the demographic forces within Haiti and the U.S. foreign policy response. The critical role of demographics has already been examined in considerable detail. The U.S. foreign policy response is now addressed more fully, beginning with an assessment of U.S. interests in Haiti.
A vital national interest has traditionally been defined as one that will be defended by all necessary means, up to and including military force. By this definition, Haiti became a vital interest with the U.S. military intervention in September 1994 to overthrow the ruling military regime and restore President Aristide to power. Almost all Americans, however, would disagree that Haiti deserves such a top, "vital" ranking. The sequence of events, in any event, did not demonstrate a clearly developed vital interest pursued to its logical conclusion, but rather the backing into a military intervention, earlier disclaimed, after all other options had failed to produce their expected results and Haiti was on the brink of internal collapse and violent turmoil caused by the U.S.-led embargo.

A more detailed statement of U.S. interests in Haiti is presented here and concludes that the United States does have important if not necessarily vital interests in the country, primarily because of its geographic location, and in particular the demographic dimension of migration and interaction with the Haitian-American community. U.S. interests in Haiti, moreover, have taken on a new foreign policy context in recent years and need to be more clearly defined in terms of the post–cold war order and the broader set of national interests the United States is pursuing in it. To do this, it is useful first to explain what U.S. interests are not at stake in Haiti in any significant way and, second, to place Haiti within the broader spectrum of country relationships in the post–cold war world.

**National Security and Commercial Interests**

There are no significant national security interests in Haiti in the sense of an external military threat to U.S. security, although this has not always been the case. The Caribbean Basin has a long history of foreign interests in military facilities in the region, and
German interest in a naval base in Haiti before World War I had some bearing on the later U.S. decision to invade Haiti in 1915. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the United States had intermittent interests of its own in establishing a naval facility at the excellent natural port of Môle Saint Nicolas on the northwest peninsula of Haiti, and unfounded rumors of such interest persisted into the early 1980s, mainly from radio Havana. Through the 1980s, Haiti remained a potentially vulnerable target for Communist infiltration from Soviet-backed Cuba, as was happening in Nicaragua, Grenada, and El Salvador. François Duvalier had earlier played the “Cuba Communist card” deftly to his advantage with the United States, although his son Jean-Claude was less able to do so because he had marginalized any threat to his regime from the radical left. Nevertheless, the possibility of Communist insurgency in Haiti, with ties across the Windward Passage to Cuba and threats of cross-border subversion in the Dominican Republic, restrained U.S. interest in promoting uncertain political change in Haiti.

Any such national security interests in Haiti became history with the end of the cold war. A global Communist threat extending into the Caribbean, and with it a potential Haitian dimension, no longer exists. A revived U.S. interest in a military base in Haiti is likewise out of the question when even the Guantanamo Bay facility in Cuba is viewed in strategic terms as an overly expensive relic of the cold war. Môle Saint Nicolas will remain principally inhabited by goats until Haitian rural/urban migration decentralizes to the outer limits.

The potential for Haiti to develop as a transshipment point for drug trafficking or haven for international crime can be considered a national security interest, and it is a concern, but it is discussed below in terms of a new area of intergovernmental cooperation within the Caribbean region rather than as a more traditional national security interest.

U.S. commercial interests in Haiti are also small to insignificant. From the Haitian point of view, of course, the United States is its dominant economic partner for trade, investment, tourism, and bilateral aid. Some U.S. industries concentrated in New York and Florida have a significant potential interest in Haiti. Overall, however, U.S. exports to Haiti, even with a reasonably robust recovery in the Haitian economy, will remain less than one-tenth of 1 percent of total U.S. exports. U.S. commercial interest in Haiti simply cannot justify significant attention in Washington.
The U.S. Interest in New World Order Haiti

The New World Ordering of Nations

The justification of U.S. interests in Haiti as important—not to mention vital—therefore must go beyond national security and commercial interests and relate to the broader ordering of international relationships in the post–cold war situation. It is a radically different ordering, and the Haitian position in it has been the subject of considerable confusion.

In briefest terms, the reordering can be described as a change from two overlapping dichotomies to a “big center” with two peripheries. The two dichotomies of the cold war era were, of course, the East-West ideological rivalry between communism and democratically based capitalism and the North-South divide between developed and developing countries. They were overlapping in that the East’s and West’s relationships with the South were largely and often predominantly oriented to influencing developing countries to pledge allegiance to either the Communist or the capitalist bloc. This interest was pursued through the provision of various forms of financial assistance and occasionally extended to military intervention. The ideological competition for influence in developing countries extended from Asia to Africa to the Middle East to Latin America. Castro’s triumph in 1959 ushered in three decades of such East-West oriented competition in the Caribbean Basin, with Haiti a relatively inactive pawn on the regional chessboard.

The new world ordering of a big center and two peripheries is less clearly understood and, indeed, the formulation here is somewhat novel. Such an analytic construct is necessary, however, to understand how Haiti fits into the new order of U.S. foreign relationships. The big center is the large majority of the world committed to market-oriented economics and open trade, based for the most part on democratic forms of government as well. This includes Western Europe, the former Soviet Union, and almost all of the Western Hemisphere, East Asia, and South Asia. Mainland China and Vietnam, even though they are still ruled by Communist governments, are part of this big center, as are some very low-income countries, most notably India. Important geopolitical forces are at play, but the overriding characteristics of the grouping are its shared national interest in economic growth and modernization through trade—with the developing country economies now growing at more than 6 percent per year—and its agreement in principle (although not always fully in practice) to contain common threats such as the proliferation...
The Haitian Dilemma

of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, and open warfare between states. It is the “Great Game” in latter-day form as a massive “positive sum game” based on free trade and international cooperation. The countries involved comprise 80 percent of the global population and well over 90 percent of economic wealth and military power.1

The two peripheries constitute much of the remaining 20 percent of world’s population and can be referred to as the “renegade” and the “failed” (or almost failed) states, and they have received the inordinate attention of foreign ministries since the end of the cold war. The principal renegade states are Iran, Iraq, Libya, and North Korea. These are the states that, to varying degrees, have been or are believed to be engaged in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, and armed intervention in neighboring states. Their containment is for the most part of vital interest to the United States. Indeed, the containment of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction is the most obvious current vital interest, based on the Webster definition of “vital” as “essential to the continuance of life and full physical vigor.” Although there are deep differences between the United States and its allies—not to mention Russia and China—about how to respond to the threats posed by the renegade states, there at least is no ambiguity about the vital importance of most of these threats.

There is finally the “failed-nation syndrome” of countries in deep inner distress and turmoil, plagued with widespread human suffering. Prominent recent examples in this second periphery include Angola, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Cambodia, Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, and, of course, Haiti. The political and economic circumstances vary greatly among these countries, but there is commonality in that their problems are internally generated (with partial exception in the case of Bosnia) and in that there is a real threat of collapse of public order and/or their disintegration as a nation state. Moreover, the number of countries caught up in the syndrome, and the extent of human suffering involved, have grown substantially since the late 1980s.

The definition of U.S. national interest for this failed-nation syndrome grouping of countries is the most perplexing of all, as has been the policy response country by country. Humanitarian aid is a stopgap, longer-term economic assistance often doesn’t work, and military intervention to restore or maintain public order is fraught with controversial issues of organizational framework, financial burden-sharing, sovereignty, and the
ultimate question—as posed in the case of Haiti—of putting U.S. lives at risk. And yet this is the new world order context in which the U.S. interest in Haiti has to be delineated. This interest involves both a broad interest, common to all countries caught up in the failed-nation syndrome, and country-specific interests, which in the case of Haiti turn out to be dominant.

The Failed-Nation Syndrome: The Broad U.S. Interest

The world community cannot stand idly by while people are brutally killed or babies starve in some unfortunate nation, no matter how remote. This has always been the case to some extent, but the interest is more compelling in the current information age of instant communication—the “CNN effect” of seeing such calamities on the evening television screen. In the post–cold war situation, it is even more clearly a humanitarian interest because most of the countries afflicted are truly at the periphery, with limited direct impact on the rest of the world. Consequently, the interest is more difficult to define, particularly in terms of establishing the limits on response by the international community. There are, in fact, two distinct interests involved. The first is the immediate objective to stop the killing and other physical suffering. The second is the longer-term interest in “nation-building,” that is, establishing the political and economic conditions for self-sustaining development and avoidance of renewed life-threatening situations. The first interest is clearly of a higher order, while long-term nation-building receives a more modest response from the international community, in part because there is no immediate threat to human life and in part because economic and other assistance programs over the years have produced ambiguous results at best. Moreover, the demands for international assistance to contain immediate life-threatening situations have grown rapidly in recent years, which has tended to reduce support for longer-term nation-building projects within a more or less fixed overall level of available funds.

The interest of the international community in failed-nation syndrome situations is, in any event, limited, and policy decisions often boil down to setting the limits of support in terms of the financial resources and, even more important, the personnel resources committed to dangerous situations. One controversial question is the degree to which there is commonality of interest among donor countries for a particular support initiative.
A related question pertains to the organizational structure of a response, including the role of multilateral mechanisms. A momentum toward commonality of interest has developed through the prominent roles played by multilateral organizations over the past several years, such as the United Nations for peacekeeping operations, the World Food Program for emergency food relief, and the World Bank for both short- and longer-term economic assistance. The accumulating case history since the late 1980s, however, indicates that there is no general formula for establishing the structure or content of such international support efforts. Assessments of the limits on response vary greatly among individual donor countries. Moreover, to a large extent, this differentiation reflects the location of the afflicted country. Where it is located on the periphery can make a big difference.

Recent U.S. experience illustrates this differentiated approach. There was no direct U.S. participation in the Cambodia peacekeeping mission, in part a reflection of the lingering Vietnam syndrome not to become engaged militarily in Asia. Initial entry into Somalia to provide relief to starving people evolved into a quick pullout from a longer-term nation-building effort after a relatively small number of casualties was sustained. Opposition to participation in a peacekeeping ground force in Bosnia, despite the enormity of the killing, was based on the judgment that the casualties could be too high and that Bosnia is primarily the responsibility of Europe.

The case presented in the following section is that Haiti stands out from other countries in this failed-nation syndrome grouping not only because of the distinct circumstances of its current troubled situation, but because it has special importance for U.S. interests. Such a distinction was demonstrated in starkest terms in 1994 when the United States intervened militarily in Haiti to overthrow a regime accused of killing 3,000–4,000 people over three years, whereas the U.S. response in Rwanda, where 500,000 to a million people were killed during several months of horrifying tribal genocide, was limited to supplying emergency food and medical supplies and some logistical support.

**Haiti: The Country-Specific Interests**

The distinct circumstances of Haiti’s current national dilemma lead to an equally distinctive set of country-specific U.S. inter-
ests in Haiti that add up to a much higher overall level of interest than is the case for other countries in the failed-nation syndrome grouping. Three such circumstances stand out, as were developed in preceding chapters:

1. Haiti is not as deeply into the failed-nation syndrome as others in this category, and many Haitians would probably disagree with their country’s classification as such. The political crisis caused by the coup against President Aristide in September 1991 and the ensuing three years of isolation, killing, and economic embargo have brought the country much closer to the edge. Nevertheless, there is an underlying national cohesion in Haiti that is lacking in other troubled countries such as Bosnia, Rwanda, and Somalia.

2. In contrast, the demographic time bomb of stages 1 and 2 of the development model—population squeeze on arable land and rural/urban migration—is ticking away faster in Haiti than in almost any other country in the grouping. The post-embargo outlook is extremely grave, and conditions could become much worse within a few years if strong remedial action is not forthcoming. In other words, the immediate political objective of supporting democratic government and the longer-term economic objective of establishing self-sustaining, job-creating growth are on more tightly drawn, convergent paths in Haiti than they are elsewhere.

3. Haiti is located in the middle of the Caribbean Basin, close to the United States, and is an important part of the progressively deepening regional economy. In effect, Haiti is not at the periphery as far as the United States is concerned. This is the most important country-specific circumstance.

Based on these country-specific circumstances and the broader global context of this category of troubled countries, U.S. interests in Haiti can be summarized in terms of four principal, interrelated elements:

1. **Migration.** This is the most direct and potentially most explosive specific interest. U.S. policy is moving in the direction of greater control over who is permitted legal entry into the United States, and Haiti is one of the most difficult challenges to this objective. Illegal Haitian migration continues and could increase dramatically if a renewed crisis were to occur within Haiti. The practicalities of interdicting Haitian migrants on the high seas and processing illegal migrants who are able to reach the United States become unavoidably linked with the U.S. polit-
ical and economic relationships with the Haitian government. All of these factors, moreover, grew in importance as a result of the 1991–1994 period of crisis.

2. **Humanitarian needs/respect for basic human rights.** This global interest becomes more intense in countries close to home because of greater exposure to the American public through the media and more frequent travel back and forth. The contrast between U.S. reactions to Haiti and Rwanda in 1994 again illustrate the point. The 1 million Haitian-Americans, in concert with the broader U.S. Afro-American community, constitute a substantial domestic political constituency with an active interest in human rights abuses and economic suffering in Haiti. Indeed, in an age of information and economic “globalization,” this is the kind of relationship where national boundaries begin to blur with respect to conditions in neighboring countries.

3. **Nation-building assistance.** Traditionally referred to as development assistance, this U.S. interest has been of waning importance in recent years as economic aid budgets are cut and support for longer-term development is rightly shifted to emphasis on private-sector investment and trade. Nevertheless, there are country situations, particularly among the poorest countries, where a targeted program of official financial support for longer-term political, economic, and social development can play an important role. The fast-ticking demographic/development time bomb in Haiti is one such situation today. Moreover, the two previous elements of U.S. interest—restricting illegal migration and supporting humanitarian needs/basic human rights—are contingent on a positive nation-building process within Haiti. The broad term “nation-building assistance” is appropriate for this challenge, although it raises a number of questions as to the content of such assistance, which is addressed in the concluding chapter.

4. **Post-NAFTA regional objectives.** The dynamics of NAFTA are most keenly felt in the Caribbean Basin region, where the smaller Central American and Caribbean island economies are being progressively drawn into deeper dependency on the U.S. and other North American markets. The 1995 “NAFTA-parity” legislative initiative provides a framework for immediate NAFTA benefits to these countries linked to full membership in 6 to 10 years. The process, moreover, will not be limited to
economic integration and will inevitably become more deeply engaged in such issues as migration, drug trafficking and other international crime, health and environmental problems, and democratization in potentially unstable smaller countries. This entire regional strategy will be greatly influenced by the course of events in two of the three largest Caribbean countries—Cuba and Haiti, both currently in deeply troubled circumstances—not to mention the Haitian spillover effect on the third large country, the Dominican Republic. A regional post–NAFTA Caribbean strategy must therefore integrate Haiti and will require a much higher level of attention and resources than the United States will be willing and able to provide to more distant nations caught up in the failed-nation syndrome.

This definition of U.S. interests in Haiti, post–cold war and post–NAFTA, appropriately put prime emphasis on Haiti’s neighboring location. Whether the overall interest is classified “important” or “vital” is not material. Indeed, the traditional definition linking “vital” to military intervention has less and less meaning in a post–cold war context where military intervention can involve only minor participation in a temporary peacekeeping force. Pursuit of U.S. interests in countries such as Haiti should, in any event, concentrate on objectives short of military intervention, with recourse to such intervention viewed as a policy failure. In this context, discussion turns to the appropriate U.S. policy response to Haiti post–cold war, post–NAFTA, and post–U.S. military intervention.
The foregoing account of the potentially explosive Haitian dilemma and U.S. interests in it lead to a first conclusion about the appropriate U.S. policy response: Haiti cannot be ignored. The United States cannot simply walk away if circumstances turn ugly, as happened in Somalia. Disengagement, with a protective wall at the U.S. border to keep Haitians out, is not feasible, especially if public order should collapse in Haiti—an outcome whose probability would increase with such disengagement. A substantial, proactive engagement is required, although the possible scope for such a policy response is wide-ranging. Despite the major commitment of the United States to a military intervention to restore a popularly elected president, the road ahead for U.S. policy toward Haiti is far from clear.

There are, in fact, two largely distinct challenges for U.S.-Haitian policy. The immediate challenge for 1996 is to manage a transition from the situation created by the U.S. military intervention to one in which Haiti is again in control of its affairs. This transition includes launching the government of the duly elected successor to President Aristide, Rene Preval, the replacement of the UN peacekeeping force with the newly created Haitian police force, and the scaling down of the emergency assistance program to a more normal, sustainable level. The second, longer-term challenge for U.S. policy is to structure a more enduring relationship that will help put Haiti on the path to political stability, job-creating growth, respect for basic human rights, and democratization—in short, the nation-building challenge.

The first, immediate U.S. policy challenge is not addressed here because it involves, to a large extent, tactical judgments in a fast-moving, complex situation. It may succeed, fail, or end in an inconclusive situation of continued economic distress and political tension. In any event, however, the United States should have
The U.S. Policy Response

a longer-term strategy—the second challenge—for supporting its interests in Haiti as U.S. troops are drawn down and a more normal government-to-government relationship is restored. The basis for this longer-term relationship should consist of targeted assistance for nation-building within Haiti, a specially tailored government-to-government relationship for the protection of U.S. borders, and a prominent place for Haiti within the post–NAFTA Caribbean regional strategy.

Targeted Assistance for Nation-Building

Nation-building involves the process of long-term political and economic development. In the case of Haiti, the political objective is “democratization,” explained further below, and the economic objective is self-sustaining growth that, among other things, produces jobs for a growing population and does not further degrade the environment. The political and economic objectives are often treated apart, but are in fact inseparable in terms of policy implementation. For example, job-creating economic results are critical for fostering politically stable democratization, while the form of external economic assistance, as explained earlier, can have a major impact on the internal political process.

A strategy for assisting nation-building thus centers on the specification of the objectives, including priorities and timing. This specification is more controversial for the political than for the economic objectives and can be most controversial in establishing priorities between the political and economic objectives. The specific economic objectives for Haiti are largely contained in the August 1994 Strategy for Social and Economic Reconstruction put forward by the restored Aristide government and elaborated on in aid donor programs. The political scenario for democratization—for example, with respect to decentralization of political powers and control of the police force—is less clear. Relative priorities, including time sequences for promoting democratization and economic reforms, have been the subject of extended international debate, ranging from sub-Saharan Africa to East Asia to Latin America, with nothing approaching consensus.¹ U.S. strategy for Haiti during 1991–1995 nevertheless gave precedence, over all ongoing economic objectives, to the specific political objective of restoring President Aristide and maintaining his government. A more balanced set of priorities is recommended here for the period ahead.
It is first necessary, however, to be more precise about the meaning of "democratization." In broadest terms, democratization in countries such as Haiti is a long-term process of building democratic institutions and nurturing public attitudes in the direction of creating a government that is responsive to the public good rather than to personal gain. Free and open elections are a central part of the process, but they need to be complemented by various checks and balances to prevent an elected president, once in power, from becoming authoritarian. The goal is thus "liberal" or "constitutional" rather than "pure" democracy. The U.S. model of constitutional democracy, for example, includes decentralization of power through the federal system, an independent judiciary, protection of individual rights in the Bill of Rights, and the restraining legislative role of the U.S. Senate, whereby unlimited debate by senators representing only about 15 percent of the population can block executive action. The inherent dangers in simple majority rule were recognized as far back as Aristotle, and they later took on historic context as so-called majority mob rule under Robespierre.²

Checks and balances to majority rule are even more important in Haiti than in the United States. For one thing, Haiti lacks a large middle class with its more clearly vested interests in promoting the common good. Haiti's history and political culture are based almost exclusively on authoritarian presidential rule, whether the president was installed by the military or elected in one way or another. Part of the challenge of democratization in Haiti today is to instill the habit of free and open elections, but an equal—and more difficult—part will be building a political structure that will restrain the powers of the president and the police force while protecting opposition groups and individual citizens. The most questionable premise of the U.S. military intervention in Haiti was that if President Aristide could be reinstated and a second free and open presidential election held in 1995, Haiti would have crossed the threshold to sustained democratic government.

In this broad political-economic context, the modalities of U.S. and other external support for Haitian nation-building can be summarized in terms of six categories of assistance:

1. Decentralization of political power. This objective permeates all others and is central to the Aristide program of reducing the central government bureaucracy by half and directing ministers to "refrain from excessive regulation and focus on broad
policy questions.” Direct forms of foreign assistance to this end include projects to stimulate community participation and to strengthen local government. A broad program of decentralization for north coast development could involve support for the private and social sectors, as described below. The most important economic aid issue is restraining in character, namely, to phase out budget support to the central government in whatever form and to make other economic assistance contingent on reforms to devolve powers to provincial and local government.

2. Professionalization of the police. The abolition of the Haitian army and the creation of a new police force provides an opportunity to build greater professionalism in law enforcement authorities, but it will be a long process requiring sustained foreign support. A foreign police training mission should stay on after the departure of the UN peacekeeping force to build a police structure that is reasonably independent of political control by the presidential palace. The United States is best suited for this role because U.S. military and police trainers are the most respected in Haiti and because most other countries are reluctant to take on this function. There will be opposition from some in the U.S. Congress to training foreign police on a continuing basis, but it should be resisted.

3. Strengthening the judiciary. Building a credible system of justice out of a situation permeated with corruption and political manipulation will also be a long-term process. Technical assistance and training need to be geared to the rudimentary circumstances in Haiti. Simple and reasonably prompt justice is the objective. Other countries, such as Canada and France, thus might play the lead roles because the highly litigious U.S. system of justice is not a particularly appropriate model for Haiti.

4. Support for the private sector. This critical area of support should consist principally of establishing an investment-friendly policy framework and supplying appropriate financial support for infrastructure projects, private investment, and trade. The policy framework of open trade and investment, including deregulation, has been discussed earlier. The urgent need for economic infrastructure—electric power, telephones, sea and airport facilities—should be based on competitive privatization financed by long-term loans, largely at commercial rates of interest. Such long-term financing is not currently available from
commercial banks, and thus the World Bank and the IDB need to develop innovative means to bridge long-term financing for what should become commercially viable infrastructure projects. The United States should utilize OPIC and Trade and Development Agency (TDA) facilities and should also reopen the U.S. Exim Bank for business in Haiti, under exceptional procedures as necessary, to help restart Haitian industry. Traditional aid project assistance can be limited to support for small businesses and vocational training, targeted largely in provincial cities.

5. **Assistance for the social sectors and agriculture.** This should be a priority area for grants and other highly concessionary project assistance. In keeping with the Haitian government’s policy of support for “civil society,” assistance to the health and education sectors should be predominantly channeled through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other private agencies as the most efficient and best organized means for early substantial results. Public-sector projects should be supported with caution and on the basis of strict performance criteria and decentralized authority. Family planning programs within integrated health delivery clinics and hospitals should be given a higher priority in terms of Haitian government support and international donor funding. Assistance for agriculture will require a carefully developed set of priorities based on what, even in the best of circumstances, will be limited funding to confront the devastation caused by decades of poor land use and erosion. The best strategy may be to begin by concentrating available resources in the most fertile river basins so as to obtain early results for both food and cash crops.

6. **Protection of the environment.** Reforestation and water management are the overwhelming challenges in this other major area for concessionary assistance. A revitalization and expansion of the hillside tree growing program of the 1980s should be an immediate priority. Watershed management and provision of water supply to the Port-au-Prince and other urban area populations are an even more daunting task. Urban sanitation and growing air pollution in Port-au-Prince as the number of motor vehicles expands rapidly are other major environmental challenges. If the overall Haitian economic program can be reasonably well established by a dedicated Haitian government, Haiti should be targeted as a model test case for comprehensive environmental restoration. Although it would be a relatively
expensive test case, it could set an example for how the growing majority of wealthier nations in the “big center” can respond to a particularly threatened smaller and very poor country.

The implementation of such a nation-building program, from the point of view of both the Haitian government and the international community, will extend over a lengthy period of at least 10 and perhaps 20 years. What is needed from the Haitian government, most fundamentally, is a commitment to national reconciliation and effective governance directed to the common good rather than partisan gain. However the government is elected, this will likely require broadly representative participation in the cabinet of ministers, with emphasis on able, experienced managers. A steadily growing “center” within the population—an educated middle class—will be a key indicator of the government’s ability to achieve and maintain such a commitment.

A corresponding long-term commitment of financial and other support for nation-building in Haiti by the international community, including essential U.S. leadership, is not a popular prospect in the United States at this juncture. The self-interest in doing so has to be communicated so that the American people have a clear understanding of both the positive results to be expected and the negative consequences should the Haitian economy and public order collapse. The commitment should also be placed in the broader perspective of “graduation” occurring in many developing countries in Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere and, thus, the ability to concentrate more resources on effective support to the poorest, most threatened countries in the “second periphery.” For the United States this means the Caribbean Basin in particular and Haiti most of all.

Finally, the nation-building process in Haiti, even in the best of circumstances, will not be consistently successful. It will be a constant struggle, with frequent setbacks and occasional crises. The critical consideration is to avoid undermining the longer-term process while coping with a temporary setback. One lesson to be learned from 1991–1994, for example, is that a prolonged economic embargo is not the way to attempt to overthrow an authoritarian government. Such embargoes can do enormous long-term harm to the poorest segments of the population and to the private sector while still not accomplishing their political purpose, as happened in Haiti. The nation-building strategy currently being pursued in Haiti and supported by an international
assistance program as suggested here—with emphasis on decentralization of government power and financial support provided predominantly through NGOs and the private sector—is well structured for such a sustained yet flexible response.

A key but uncertain objective of the nation-building process is that of maintaining democratically elected government. This raises the question of how the international community should react to any future setback on this front. The question cannot be answered in the abstract and much would depend on the circumstances. Within the broader definition of the democratization process, however, the highest priority for U.S. policy should be to protect individual basic human rights—to stop politically motivated killing, torture, and arbitrary arrest while trying to get the election process back on track. Any Haitian government must be held to this minimum standard or face credible consequences. Protection of basic human rights is also the linchpin to the most direct U.S. interest in Haiti, the protection of U.S. borders.

**Protection of U.S. Borders**

U.S. interests in neighboring Haiti, as described in chapter 8, are most directly engaged in protecting the U.S. border, particularly against large numbers of illegal immigrants—the adverse stage 3 effect of the demography-driven development model. Other actual or potential border protection problems include drug trafficking, other international crime, terrorism, and disease control. A cooperative and effective framework for law enforcement is important to the United States in all of these areas and constitutes much of the basis for the high priority given to nation-building in Haiti, including substantial financial assistance.

The existing law enforcement framework for such cooperation was destroyed during the 1991–1994 crisis and needs to be reestablished. The illegal migration relationship is paramount, and by 1996 this relationship has become anomalous, to say the least. All nations but Haiti accept the involuntary repatriation of people who have tried to migrate to the United States illegally. Even Cuba, in its agreement of May 1995, accepts repatriation of boat people interdicted in international waters by the U.S. Coast Guard, on terms similar to those in the U.S.-Haiti bilateral accord of 1981. And yet Haiti under the Aristide government, restored through a U.S. military intervention and receiving the highest level of U.S. economic assistance in the Western Hemisphere, ter-
minated the 1981 accord and categorically rejected involuntary repatriation in principle, although acquiescing in practice.

This anomaly needs to be rectified through the negotiation of a new interdiction agreement for the repatriation of Haitians migrating illegally by boat to the United States, within a broader U.S. policy framework to control illegal migration. As in the early 1980s, when boat trafficking had developed into a thriving business, cooperation with Haitian authorities is necessary to identify and apprehend vessels with hidden compartments, as well as to assure the safe return home of Haitians repatriated.

Another important area of border-related cooperation is control of illegal drug trafficking. Haiti’s role as a transshipment point to the United States for such trafficking increased in the early 1990s with the breakoff of official relations between the U.S. government and the military regime in Haiti. Trafficking through Haitian air fields is presumably low to nil with the presence of the international peacekeeping force, including U.S. Air Force surveillance, but it will likely increase again once the international force leaves. The abolition of the Haitian army, including the anti-narcotics police unit that cooperated with U.S. law enforcement authorities, creates a vacuum until the new police force is engaged and gains experience in this field. The former Haitian navy—really a fledgling coast guard—received sustained training from the U.S. Coast Guard, along with financial support from the U.S. security assistance and international narcotics programs, and was useful for surveilling drug as well as boat people traffickers off the Haitian coast. The creation of a new Haitian coast guard would be similarly useful to U.S. law enforcement as well as to the Haitian government for protecting its coastline against contraband and other illegal activities.

Other areas of border cooperation, such as limiting cross-border transmission of communicable diseases and policing organized crime and international terrorism, are not currently significant problems in U.S.-Haiti relations. They could become so, however, to the extent economic and other relations normalize and the already busy flow of lawful travel back and forth, with several heavily booked daily flights between Port-au-Prince and Miami and New York, increases. Such cooperation might best be developed in a broader Caribbean regional framework, as discussed in the following section.

Two underlying relationships with respect to U.S.-Haiti border cooperation need to be elaborated. The first is the relationship between such cooperation on the part of the Haitian
government and U.S. economic aid to Haiti. The tendency on the Haitian side has long been to try to link the two directly through official agreement on the grounds that illegal Haitian migration to the United States is largely motivated by poverty in Haiti which can only be remedied by U.S. aid. The United States has always resisted a formal linkage to a specific level of aid, however, and should continue to do so. For one thing, the U.S. Congress would almost certainly reject the linkage as violation of a long-standing principle of U.S. foreign assistance policy. The more substantive reason is that linking an aid commitment to another foreign policy objective undermines the development impact of the aid and will probably make it counterproductive. It gives the recipient government effective control over the funds because disbursement becomes obligatory on the part of the United States by the end of the fiscal year. This can lead in turn to direct payments to the central government, with all of the corrupting, antidemocratic consequences described earlier. This negative result was in fact at times the outcome when U.S. economic assistance was formally linked to U.S. military base agreements, as in the Philippines.

The second relationship is between border cooperation on illegal migration to the United States and respect for basic human rights in Haiti. Respect for basic human rights has already been noted as the United States’ highest priority in supporting the democratization process within Haiti. It is also the one most directly linked to U.S. immigration policy because of its relevance to granting political refugee status. In extremis, the United States can simply return all Haitians interdicted in international waters, no questions asked, as President Bush did beginning in May 1992 and President Clinton continued to do from January 1993 to October 1994. The much-preferred policy relationship with Haiti, however, is for the United States to place highest priority on a firm commitment from the Haitian government to minimize and, hopefully, eliminate violations of basic human rights, with special safeguards for Haitians involuntarily repatriated by the U.S. government.

**Haiti and the Post-NAFTA Caribbean Strategy**

The decade of the 1990s is one of historic transition in the Caribbean Basin region even though there is still no clearly defined U.S. strategy for responding to this transition. The North American Free Trade Agreement provides for compre-
hensive free trade between the United States, Canada, and Mexico, going beyond the elimination of tariffs and other border restrictions on trade to include related policies for international investment, protection of intellectual property, financial services, transportation, and agriculture. The result is a steadily deepening interdependence among the member national economies, with Canada and Mexico in particular becoming more dependent on the U.S. economy. This free trade arrangement is scheduled to be extended throughout the Western Hemisphere by 2005, and its most profound impact will be on the smaller countries of the Caribbean Basin—the Caribbean island economies and Central American nations—which are already predominately dependent on North America for exports, foreign investment, and tourism. These countries face an immediate threat to their “investment climate” through exclusion from NAFTA. At the same time, they are presented with an enormous opportunity for longer-term job-creating growth if they can obtain membership in NAFTA.

The post–NAFTA strategy for the smaller Caribbean Basin nations has not been fully developed yet on either the U.S. or the Caribbean side. Trade preferences granted by the United States under the 1982 Caribbean Basin Initiative provide extensive free entry for exports to the U.S. market, and proposed legislation for “NAFTA-parity,” whereby the Caribbean Basin countries would obtain parity with Mexico’s access to the U.S. market for textiles and apparel for up to 10 years, pending negotiation of full NAFTA membership, goes a significant step further. The terms of full membership for the recipient countries, however, remain undefined. The most that has been said is that some countries, such as Costa Rica, El Salvador, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, are more advanced than others in terms of structural adjustment toward free trade with the United States and other NAFTA members.

The obvious inadequacy of this nascent post–NAFTA Caribbean strategy is that the four cited front runners have an aggregate population of 12 million while the two countries closest to the United States—Cuba and Haiti—have a population of 18 million but are treated almost totally apart from considerations of NAFTA membership. Leaving Cuba aside for purposes of this study, Haiti emerges, by location and size, as a key participant in any new Caribbean economic order. For U.S. Caribbean policy, this means that Haiti strategy needs to be related to regional objectives for expanding NAFTA, and vice versa. Three particu-
lar aspects of the Haitian situation, in fact, could have an important bearing on how the expansion of NAFTA will affect the Caribbean island economies:

1. **Haitian free trade as a leading edge.** Haiti had become largely a free trade area by the early 1980s through free import privileges for assembly industry and widespread contraband for almost everything else. Foreign investment was highly welcome, and new investors were offered generous incentives. As a consequence, Haiti was a leading edge for labor-intensive export-oriented growth in the region, followed toward the end of the decade by Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, and others. This lead was lost during the early 1990s through political crisis and the international embargo, but the free trade policy adopted in principle by the restored Aristide government—together with an experienced and eager private-sector leadership—could again place Haiti out front among Caribbean Basin countries on the road to comprehensive free trade. If the political and economic reform programs within Haiti can achieve some positive momentum, a bold follow-up step would be consultations with the United States for transition to NAFTA membership. Indeed, Haiti could begin the process unilaterally by adopting most of NAFTA's key provisions, including not only elimination of import duties, but actions with respect to foreign investment, intellectual property rights, transportation, and financial services. Such consultations as a prelude to formal negotiations on NAFTA membership would help the Haitian government solidify its economic reform program and thus improve the investment climate for Haitian export industry, tourism, and other sectors.

2. **The Haiti-Dominican Republic dynamic.** Haiti shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic, the third of the three largest Caribbean economies. Indeed, the northern Caribbean tier of Cuba-Haiti-Dominican Republic has a population of 26 million, or about three-quarters of the total Caribbean island population. The Haiti-Dominican Republic relationship, however, has been distant, despite the common border, because of historic conflicts and ongoing tensions. The principal interaction between the two countries concerns the large number of Haitian seasonal workers in the Dominican Republic, mainly to cut sugar cane, which is as much a political irritant as an economic benefit.

    The issue now is whether the deepening interdependence
within the overall Caribbean economy will or should have a corresponding dimension for the Haiti-Dominican relationship. If this were to happen, the impetus would likely come from the Haitian end of the island in the context of a Haitian policy of free trade and open investment. The Dominican economy—except for free trade zones—is more protectionist and troubled, and open trade in Haiti would create both competition for job-producing investment and a demonstration model for the Dominican Republic to emulate. Movement toward free trade within the island would entail an especially difficult adjustment for the Dominican economy, but the availability of low-priced, freely imported goods across the border in Haiti would create strong pressures to do so. A good way to begin to foster an understanding of the benefits as well as the costs of open trade within the island would be regular contact between the leadership of the two private sectors, including an industry-by-industry assessment of, for example, tourism, financial services, agro-industry, and labor-intensive manufacturing. Such contacts, in fact, began during 1995 between some parts of the private sectors in the two countries. It would clearly be in the interest of the United States to encourage and assist movement toward closer economic interdependence between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, which in addition to the potential economic gains could bolster the fragile democratic political structures in both countries as well.

3. Regional institutional linkages. A post–NAFTA strategy for the Caribbean Basin should include a strong component of regional institution-building to facilitate cooperation in law enforcement and to support the nation-building process of democratization and economic reform. Haiti should become a part of this process rather than remaining the pariah it has always been. The follow-on support to the UN peacekeeping force for the new Haitian police force, for example, could be within a Caribbean framework, in keeping with much of the content of regional law enforcement activities. At least one regional institution—perhaps a training facility for harbor and coastal patrols throughout the region—could be established in Haiti. All such regional linkages would be supportive of nation-building objectives within Haiti.

The Washington–Port-au-Prince relationship is understandably focused on getting Haiti back on the track to self-government and economic recovery. It is not too soon, however, to begin longer-term discussion focused on bringing Haiti within
The Haitian Dilemma

the NAFTA-extension strategy. Moreover, such discussion would likely reveal that the NAFTA connection is a potential benefit to both sides. If Haiti can get through its current crisis, it could play a lead role in steering the entire Caribbean region toward the free trade objective.

Demographics, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy

This country case study set out to examine the relationships among demographics, development, and U.S. foreign policy objectives. The working hypothesis was that these objectives are deeply interrelated but that U.S. policies do not pursue them in a correspondingly integrated manner. The interaction, moreover, has a time dimension, in that specific actions in support of the demographic and economic development objectives are generally longer-term in their implementation, whereas those in the foreign policy field have more immediate impact. This implies tradeoffs between the short- and long-term effects of a particular mix of policy actions, including possible adverse consequences in one area or the other. Finally, the working hypothesis held that when it is time for high-level decision-making, short-term foreign policy objectives tend to take precedence over longer-term demographic and development goals, as foreign ministries assert themselves over the technical development agencies.

All of these elements of the working hypothesis were borne out by the recent Haitian experience, in some respects with major impact on the outcome. A full policy assessment of these interactions would require much more technical analysis and, in any event, would lead to controversial hypothetical courses of policy that can never be tested. For example, if sustained training and technical assistance to the Haitian army had been undertaken immediately following the collapse of the Duvalier regime in February 1986, when the spirit of national reconciliation and hope was at its high point, could a reasonably reformed police force have been developed and the later political crises and coup avoided? An even more controversial hypothetical question is whether recognition and support for the largely technocratic civilian government in the summer of 1992, contingent on curtailment of army abuse of human rights and with international monitoring, would have produced a better overall result, in terms of U.S. interests, than the military intervention two years
The assessment here is more limited to concluding that whatever the optimum mix of short- and long-term objectives might have been, the short-term foreign policy objectives consistently overrode and continue to override the longer-term demographic and development objectives, and that this has had a substantial negative impact on the prospects for Haitian nation-building. Four specific examples, with remedial comment, are offered:

1. **The embargo.** The most striking and devastating example of short-term political objectives taking precedence over longer-term economic priorities was the three-year international embargo from November 1991 to October 1994. The circumstances and consequences of the embargo have been addressed at numerous points in this account, including the basic miscalculation that the initial partial embargo would resolve the political impasse between President Aristide and the de facto government in Haiti within a few months, when in fact three years of a progressively tighter embargo were still unable to do so. A principal concern of the Haitian private sector in 1996—and of potential customers in the United States considering a resumption of purchases from Haiti—is that if a new political crisis were to occur in Haiti, the United States would lead the United Nations to renew an embargo. Thus the continuing threat of embargo in the event of a renewed political crisis holds back economic recovery, which, in turn, may trigger just such a political crisis. In view of the bipartisan U.S. responsibility for the highly damaging, failed U.S. embargo of 1991–1994 under Presidents Bush and Clinton, it is recommended here that a bipartisan pledge be taken in Washington not to use this counterproductive economic sledgehammer against the Haitian people again.

2. **The public security vacuum.** The strategy developed during the preparation for the U.S. military intervention, within the U.S. government or in coordination with President Aristide, to provide for public security during the initial phase of the intervention proved to be seriously inadequate. Upon his return, Aristide abolished the Haitian army, which undermined the morale and effectiveness of the remaining “interim police force.” The training of a new police force, however, did not begin until four months after the intervention and the first police academy
graduates did not begin functioning until nine months after. The resulting vacuum in public security on the streets and in the countryside led to a sharp and unprecedented rise in common crime, land seizures, and some political violence during the critical emergency recovery period. The private sector cited personal security as a principal reason for holding back on new investment and job creation. The lesson learned is that foreign intervention to restore a particular political leader, even a duly elected president, has to be structured so as to avoid a breakdown in public security and the ensuing negative impact on longer-term economic recovery.

3. Aid for budget support. The overriding objective of restoring President Aristide and maintaining him in office through the end of his term led to excessively large budget support to his government by USAID and other aid donors. This extraordinary largesse reduces the pressures on the Haitian government to take the difficult steps necessary to implement longer-term economic reforms, especially strengthening tax collection, reducing redundant public-sector payrolls, and privatizing state enterprises. Large budget support payments to the Haitian government also encourage the worst tendencies among public officials, including preoccupation with personal gain and corruption. In addition, the unprecedentedly large payments in 1995 constituted external influence on the internal political process, whereby the “aid-bubble economy,” channeled predominantly through the government, enhanced public support for President Aristide and his Lavalas political movement during the electoral campaigns. A successful development strategy for Haiti needs to move in the opposite direction. Budget support and other cash transfers should be phased out as rapidly as possible, and aid funds shifted to more productive, longer-term development projects, implemented predominantly through the private sector.

4. Family planning and reforestation. These two narrowly focused yet strategically important programs for longer-term nation-building have been highlighted throughout the study. They nevertheless continue to be the consistent losers in budget tradeoffs with more immediate political objectives. Nothing makes high-level State Department eyes glaze over more quickly than briefings on tree planting and family planning clinics in Haiti. Sharp cutbacks in both programs from earlier levels of
support are incredibly short-sighted. Total foreign assistance for
Haiti from all donors, multilateral and bilateral, will likely settle
down in the range of $300–$400 million per year over the
remainder of the decade. The recommendation here is that of this
amount, family planning and hillside hardwood reforestation
each be allocated at least $5 million per year. Sustained progress
in these two areas should have the greatest payoff, dollar for aid
dollar, in terms of overall sustained economic growth and devel-
opment in Haiti.

A more fundamental conclusion for U.S. foreign policy that
emerges from this study concerns the growing importance of
geographic proximity in the post–cold war setting. In part, this
reflects the decline in global security interests in the developing
world together with a corresponding increase in the relative
importance of such issues as immigration and international
crime, and in part it is a consequence of the information-based
technological revolution sweeping the globe. Ever more intense
communication and travel between neighboring countries,
including the personal ties between the 1 million people of Hai-
tian origin in the United States and the 7 million Haitians in
Haiti, are drawing the two nations ever more closely together.
There is no doubt, for example, that the troubled course of Hai-
tian development is more integrated with U.S. domestic interests
than far more troubled yet distant countries such as Cambodia,
Georgia, Rwanda, and Somalia. This evolving U.S.-Haiti rela-
tionship, moreover, is part of a broader regional relationship
within North America and the Caribbean Basin that deserves
greater attention in terms of the meaning and exercise of national
sovereignty in the post–cold war world order.

A dilemma is defined as a situation involving a choice
between equally unsatisfactory alternatives. U.S. policy toward
Haiti during the crisis period of 1991–1994 thus certainly quali-
fied as a non-stop dilemma. The difficult and uncertain emer-
gency recovery period through 1996 also presents a number of
specific dilemmas, both within Haitian society and for the
international community. The overarching question is whether
Haiti can break out of this vicious cycle of dilemmas to achieve
more peaceful and sustained development as a nation. The
conclusion here is affirmative but contingent, and much of this
study has consisted of an elaboration of such contingencies.
Within Haiti, political reconciliation and a government that is
not only democratically elected, but competent and effective as
well, are sine qua non. For the United States and the international community, a more balanced strategy in pursuit of demographic, economic, and political objectives is required. Only then can dawn break on the morning dew and a new life begin in Haiti.
This appendix provides a brief retrospective look at the evolution of family planning activities in Haiti since their official inception in 1971. Particular emphasis is placed on the period since 1986 when Profamil, Haiti’s family planning association, began operations and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the main source of population funding in Haiti, initiated the Private Sector Family Planning Project (PSFPP). The appendix concludes with an evaluation of the impact of Haitian population program activities.

**Family Planning Programs in Developing Countries: An Overview**

Family planning programs have been described as “organized efforts to assure that couples who want to limit their family size and space their children have access to contraceptive information and services and are encouraged to use them as needed.”1 Depending on the country, services may be provided by the government, the private sector (both commercial and nongovernmental organization services), or a mixture of the two. Some family planning services have been integrated into existing national health service institutions and infrastructure. Others are provided separately under “vertical” programs with independent administration and facilities.

The first family planning programs in the developing world, instituted in the 1950s and 1960s, consisted mostly of fixed distribution points at clinics and hospitals as well as some community
distribution posts. Two basic services are typically performed at family planning clinics. The first is counseling, in which clients are instructed on the types of family planning methods available, the appropriateness of certain methods for a particular life stage or set of circumstances, possible side effects, and the medical contraindications for each method. The second service is the actual provision of contraceptives. In the case of oral contraceptives, condoms, diaphragms, and contraceptive foam, supplies can be obtained over the counter or with a prescription. For other methods, such as IUD insertion or sterilization, a medical procedure is required.

Although clinic-based services form the backbone of most national programs, a great variety of alternative service delivery mechanisms has developed over time. These include community-based distribution, contraceptive marketing through commercial outlets, factory-based services, integrated rural development and family planning projects, and targeted programs to reach special groups such as males or adolescents. Beyond service delivery, national family planning programs usually have information, education, and communication (IEC) units that are charged with the promotion of family planning services and the correction of inaccurate information about modern contraceptives. A quality family planning program also depends on many essential support activities. At the macro level, there need to be appropriate government policies as well as consistent political and financial support. At the programmatic level, family planning programs require good management, organized record keeping, financial accounting mechanisms, regular supplies of contraceptives, operations research, and staff training.

An important evolution has occurred since the 1960s in the focus of family planning programs. Originally, many programs were characterized by a target-driven approach, in which the national program defined goals for the number of contraceptives to be distributed or the number of clients to be served. This top-down, target-oriented approach has given way to client-centered services. This new approach is characterized by the provision of high-quality services by technically competent staff, concern for the accessibility of clinics and service delivery locations and the availability of a broad array of contraceptive methods, and—above all—respect for the clients’ needs. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development Program of Action goes even further, recommending a package of activities—from
raising female literacy rates to integrating family planning with reproductive health services—that increase the effectiveness of population programs. Women’s empowerment has been identified as a key to the long-term success of family planning interventions.

For the most part, family planning services in the developing world have been subsidized by governments or through donor contributions. Developed country donors have supported developing country family planning programs through direct financial and material support, contraceptive supplies, technical assistance, training programs, and assistance with fertility surveys. Of the major donors, USAID stands out as the earliest and largest bilateral funder of population programs. Since the mid-1960s USAID has provided over $5 billion of assistance, more than the assistance of all the other major donors in the population field combined. In an effort to make developing country population programs financially sustainable, USAID and other donors are encouraging cost-recovery strategies such as contraceptive marketing programs and fees-for-service.

**Haiti’s Family Planning Program: The Early Years**

The first tentative family planning activities in Haiti began in the mid-1960s through the efforts of an ad hoc grouping of Protestant missionaries and the Church World Service. These initiatives took place without the official approval of the François Duvalier government, which was not particularly interested in population issues and discouraged organized activities outside the purview of the government. During the dark period of Papa Doc’s reign, little progress was made in promoting family planning services. The official birth of the program would have to wait until after his death in April 1971 and the assumption of the presidency by his more forward-looking son, Jean-Claude Duvalier.

In August 1971, a government decree established the Division of Family Hygiene within the Ministry of Public Health and placed Dr. Ary Bordes at its head. Dr. Bordes, a pediatrician, public health specialist, and pioneer of Haitian family planning efforts, took a strong position that family planning services should be rooted firmly within overall maternal and child health (MCH) efforts. At the same time, the government established a National Family and Population council, also headed by Dr. Bordes. The council, composed of representatives of the president,
key government ministries, and the Red Cross, but without representation from Protestant mission groups or other private family planning service providers, had authority over all public and private family planning efforts in Haiti. Services run by a few private agencies were shut down, either due to concerns about programmatic quality or because they did not meet the criteria of integrated MCH services.\(^2\)

By the mid-1970s, fertility rates were estimated at between 5 and 6 births per woman, and approximately 6 percent of couples were acceptors of modern methods of contraception, primarily condoms. Family planning efforts during the decade continued to emphasize MCH concerns, and educational and promotional efforts were minimal. Some observers argued for more vigorous pursuit of fertility reduction objectives, citing the extremely meager land base, the continually growing population, and the already high prevalence of poverty and malnutrition. However, there were a number of barriers—cultural, religious, ideological, and bureaucratic—to the development of a more proactive family planning strategy.

In the early 1980s, efforts concentrated on public-sector staff training and on family planning information, education, and communication activities, especially in rural areas. Proof of the rural population’s awareness of family planning and willingness to use contraceptives was obtained in a pilot study that distributed oral contraceptives and foam door-to-door in three rural villages. The pilot project managed to raise contraceptive prevalence—that is, the percentage of women of reproductive age using contraception—from less than 3 percent to between 10 and 50 percent in each of the villages. This led researchers to conclude that availability, not knowledge of family planning, was the major constraint to further increases in contraceptive prevalence.\(^3\)

The community-based approach to distribution of contraceptives expanded further in the 1980s. By 1986, in addition to approximately 372 public and private health facilities offering family planning services, there were more than 100 community agents working in urban areas, 400 health agents working in rural areas, and 1,000 volunteer community collaborators distributing condoms and pills. Community services were not provided uniformly throughout the country, however, or in a systematic way, and supervision and training were spotty at best. Moreover, due to the remoteness of many rural villages,
most potential clients were still over one hour’s walk from service delivery sites.\(^4\)

In summary, throughout the early years of Haitian family planning (1970–1987) the program was largely controlled and administered by the public sector. During the 1970s the Division of Family Hygiene operated in a semiautonomous manner with outside funding from USAID, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Pan American Health Organization, and other donors. By the late 1970s, its activities were gradually integrated into the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP), which eventually took control of key decision-making functions.\(^5\) This, combined with decentralization of some division functions to regional offices, weakened the program and reduced its autonomy.

The coup de grace for the public-sector program came with the departure of Jean-Claude Duvalier in 1986. The ensuing political and economic chaos had serious repercussions for the sustainability of public health services, and many key personnel and competent technocrats left the MSPP. Though a few public-sector clinics have continued to provide limited family planning services to the present day, the failed elections in 1987 resulted in a withdrawal of donor funding for MSPP activities, effectively crippling the community outreach and other programs. Since that time the private sector has been the most important provider of subsidized health and family planning services.

**Haiti’s Family Planning Program since 1986**

Family planning in Haiti since 1986 has been the story of a dedicated group of private-sector organizations that have succeeded, despite the vicissitudes of the political climate and a three-year economic embargo, in providing basic health and family planning services to a population that had no other reliable source of services.

The Duvaliers’ mistrust of grassroots non-governmental organizations, when combined with the strong public-sector lead in family planning/MCH activities in Haiti, meant that from 1971 to 1986 the private sector had not developed beyond a few small church and foreign missionary health posts. This was unfortunate, because with the exception of two groups—the Association of Private Health Works (AOPS) and the Centers for Development and Health (CDS)—the private sector came to its
new leadership role largely unprepared. Private-sector groups for the most part did not have the staffing or infrastructure to assume the new responsibilities, and in many cases programs had to be created from scratch.

In late 1986, after several years of effort by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) to establish an affiliate in Haiti, the Haitian Family Planning Association (Profamil) opened its doors. In the same year, USAID/Haiti awarded a competitive bid to the IPPF/Western Hemisphere Region (WHR) to implement the Private Sector Family Planning Project (PSFPP). The PSFPP was instituted precisely to develop the institutional capabilities of both small and large private voluntary organizations (PVOs) to provide family planning services. The available funding gradually increased as government activities could no longer be funded and the private sector became the only source for service delivery.

In the nine-year period from 1986 to 1995, IPPF/WHR received a total of $26 million to carry out the PSFPP project. Eight major PVOs now administer 8 hospital service delivery points, 24 clinics, 19 community-based distribution programs, a physicians’ network, and 2 factory-based programs. The community-based distribution programs of both small and large PVOs comprise more than 500 community outreach workers, making this component of the program one of the most effective vehicles for reaching isolated rural areas. It is estimated that PSFPP-funded services reach more than 2 million Haitians.

Creating this network and developing institutional capacity during a period of tremendous political and economic instability has not been without cost. Substantial amounts of energy were consumed in compensating for the gradual deterioration of the already weak national infrastructure (roads, electricity, and communications). At the same time, the public sector’s service delivery capacity began to crumble after years of painstaking efforts to build it up.

Besides funding the PSFPP, approximately 30 percent of USAID/Haiti support for population activities has been allocated to a variety of projects, including contraceptive marketing, family planning IEC activities, population policy development, operations research, and a demographic and health survey (DHS). Funds were also allocated for contraceptive procurement.

USAID population funding levels have varied from $1 million to close to $7 million since 1987 (table A.1). Funding for population programs might have been cut entirely during the
economic embargo had the IPPF not lobbied to get family planning reclassified as humanitarian assistance. The next largest population funder, UNFPA, disbursed between $700 thousand and $800 thousand per year during the early 1990s.

**Overall Program Evaluation**

It is important to evaluate the Haitian program within an appropriate international family planning context, and in a way that acknowledges the extraordinary challenges that the program has faced due to the country’s troubled political and economic history.

In 1989, Haiti’s program was categorized as weak by an international study of family planning program effort. Specific areas identified for improvement included better and more

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**Table A.1**

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>U.S. Population Assistance to Haiti (in millions of U.S. dollars)</th>
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<td>1988</td>
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accessible services, greater use of mass media, and better supervision, record-keeping, and evaluation. Other program evaluations also identified high dropout rates among contraceptive acceptors as a problem area, due largely to insufficient counseling and follow-up.

Although Haiti’s population program is clearly one of the least developed in the Caribbean, there are signs of progress. A 1990 typology of family planning programs identified five stages of family planning program development: emergent, launch, growth, consolidation, and mature. The typology classified Haiti as in the “launch” stage, which represents countries where “recent investments and efforts by dedicated individuals have begun to have an effect and there now exists a broader institutional base, improved access to a variety of contraceptives, and increased knowledge of family planning alternatives.” Only two years earlier, Haiti had been placed in the “emergent” category, and experts expect that toward the end of the 1990s it will move into the “growth” stage, the stage in which “demand for services is beginning to rise among less urban and less educated segments of the population.”

This impressive progress, as evidenced by the recent increases in the national contraceptive prevalence rate (from 10 percent in 1989 to 18 percent in 1994), has been achieved against a backdrop of increasing poverty, a debilitating economic embargo, and political instability. According to a 1994 Profamil report, “Civil unrest, drastic reduction of work days, total deterioration of the quality of life at all levels, and unprecedented inflation, just to name a few, have all affected the morale of the staff, but at the same time, staff have strengthened their resilience and commitment.”

Moreover, the success of the Haitian family planning program judged primarily on the basis of national contraceptive prevalence rates may understate the degree of progress achieved. In the case of an emergent program such as the one in Haiti, it may be more appropriate to measure success based on the contraceptive prevalence in the catchment area of specific family planning projects. In this regard, a few projects stand out. The integrated family planning and rural development project at Pignon managed to raise the contraceptive prevalence rate from a very modest 6 percent in 1987 to 26 percent in 1994. In one of the poorest sections of Port-au-Prince, a clinic run by the Foundation for Reproductive Health and Family Education (FOSREF) has managed to raise prevalence to 25 percent through a
combination of reproductive health, adolescent, AIDS prevention, and infertility services. And in the rural town of St. Croix on the southern peninsula, a community-based hospital has managed to raise prevalence to 21 percent. These well-managed projects prove that where quality services are offered, there is a significant demand for modern contraception.

The restored Aristide government showed promise in the population domain. President Aristide appointed a close associate, Dr. Gérard Blot, to the position of secretary of state for population. The secretariat initiated a population policy development process that will closely adhere to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), which placed women’s empowerment and access to reproductive health services at the center of population programs. In an effort to move away from a population policy that focuses solely on family planning, the Haitian government is expected to work hand-in-hand with women’s, environmental, religious, business, health, and family planning NGOs to define a concrete population and human development plan of action for the coming decades.
U.S. policy toward Haitian migration has been in a perpetual “post-transition period” since the return of Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in October of 1994. Although a primary goal of the return of Aristide was the legitimation of the Haitian government so that U.S. policy toward Haitian migration could be normalized, no clear policy has emerged, and while numbers are significantly lower, seaborne migrants continue to leave Haiti, sometimes reaching U.S. shores and claiming asylum. The two principal issues that face policymakers are (1) how to treat Haitian migrants encountered en route to the United States by sea, and (2) how to adjudicate Haitian asylum claims effectively.

The first of these issues has been in flux since Aristide declared the U.S.-Haiti Bilateral Interdiction Agreement (BIA) in abrogation in October 1994. Under the 1981 agreement concluded with the Duvalier government, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) had carte-blanche permission from the Haitian government to interdict and return all Haitians encountered on the high seas who were believed to be attempting to migrate to the United States. Originally, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) officers aboard USCG cutters conducted interviews through Creole interpreters to determine who should be “screened in” for asylum hearings. However, in May 1992 the “Kennebunkport” executive order from President George Bush changed U.S. policy to unconditional repatriation without asylum interviews. President Clinton continued this policy until May 8, 1994, when domestic dissent ended unconditional repatriation, and requests for asylum were once again considered. On July 5, the policy changed again, and all migrants were offered

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temporary “safe haven” status at the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay in Cuba or at other safe havens, but not resettlement in the United States. This strategy was aimed at detaching offers for protection from offers for resettlement, in hope of separating economic from political migrants. This policy ended with the return of President Aristide on October 15, 1994. In addition, over the next few months almost all Haitians at Guantánamo were returned to Haiti, most voluntarily due to incentives provided by the U.S. government.

The second issue is the present ineffective processing of Haitians who wish to claim asylum. The first aspect of this issue concerns the Krome federal detention center in Miami, where most seaborne Caribbean migrants who have reached U.S. shores are held in exclusion proceedings. The refugee act of 1980, which abides by the 1967 UN Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, allows any person who has reached U.S. shores to make an asylum claim. Haitians are at present treated no differently than any other nationality in this respect. The second aspect of asylum processing concerns the availability of an asylum application process for Haitians in Haiti who wish to make asylum claims, but do not intend to migrate illegally to the United States. During Aristide’s exile, in-country processing of asylum claims was expanded, providing an opportunity for Haitians who wished to make claims to do so without taking to the sea. However, this program stopped accepting applications upon Aristide’s return, and was officially closed in June 1995. In addition, USCG cutters no longer carry INS officers to allow for the consideration of asylum claims from interdicted migrants. Since Aristide’s return, while violence in the countryside has subsided, there is not yet a fully functional police force or judicial system, and human rights abuses continue.

The following summarizes five aspects of current U.S policy related to these issues: (1) interdiction of Haitian vessels under safety-at-sea concerns; (2) interdiction of Haitian vessels under other circumstances; (3) demarcation of U.S. shores; (4) INS asylum application procedures at Krome; and (5) repatriation and Haitian contest.

Issue 1. Interdiction of Migrants on the High Seas: Safety-at-sea Contingency

On April 7, 1995, a USCG cutter encountered a vessel containing 128 Haitians 25 miles off the Miami coast. The passengers
were embarked onto the cutter, and the Haitians, along with 10 Dominicans, were repatriated without on-board asylum interviews. It was the first large group of Haitians to be repatriated since the return of President Aristide in October 1994 and, more importantly, since the October expiration of the U.S.-Haiti BIA.

The expiration of the BIA means that USCG vessels no longer have the standing permission of the Haitian government to stop and return Haitian vessels encountered on the high seas. Now the Coast Guard can board Haitian vessels only in the following circumstances: (1) with the consent of the ship’s master; (2) with case-by-case permission from the Haitian government; (3) when the flag of the vessel is indeterminate; and (4) when there is a safety-at-sea concern.

The April 7 instance fell under safety-at-sea concerns. The Coast Guard encountered the vessel, alleviated the distress, and waited for permission from the U.S. embassy in Haiti to proceed with repatriation. According to USCG sources, such permission was granted “fairly swiftly.” (The specific circumstances surrounding this repatriation incident and Haitian policy are explained under Issue 5, below.)

U.S. and international safety-at-sea laws require the captain of any ship operating under U.S. registry to assist any vessel the captain deems unseaworthy. In such cases the first priority for the Coast Guard is to alleviate distress. Once risks to safety have been dealt with, the Coast Guard then determines the nature of the voyage. At this point, if there is explicit or suspected intent to violate U.S. law, the captain can proceed to enforce U.S. law, which in the case of illegal Haitian migrants means repatriation.

In recent years, most cases of Haitian seaborne migration have involved a definite safety concern. Vessels are overcrowded and unseaworthy, and often carry little or no water and basic supplies. According to the Coast Guard, intervention in such cases is rarely against the will of those in distress. As one USCG officer said, “People know when they are in danger.” However, even in cases where consent is not given to intervene the Coast Guard is still required to do so, on the assumption that there is imminent danger.

Embarking passengers onto the USCG cutter is often tricky, especially at night. The Coast Guard takes whatever steps are necessary not to worsen the situation, even if this means waiting until weather conditions or daylight permit safe embarkation. Once the passengers are safely embarked, the value of the distressed vessel is assessed. If it has value it will be returned by the cutter, but usually it has no value and is destroyed.
The determination of the nature of the voyage is made by general interview, during which time immediate medical emergencies are treated. If it is determined that there was intent to migrate illegally to the United States, the cutter reports to the USCG base in Miami, which then contacts Washington.

Decisions regarding procedure fall under Presidential Directive 27 (PD27) of 1978, which is “for dealing with non-military incidents that could adversely impact on foreign relations.” Interagency agreement must be reached to proceed with repatriations. When such agreement is reached, the U.S. Embassy is instructed to obtain the agreement of the Haitian government for repatriation.

Such repatriations continued throughout 1995. Of particular note was an incident on November 21 and 22, when a Haitian vessel spent 38 hours trying to elude the Coast Guard by sortees into Cuban waters. The Coast Guard eventually apprehended and returned 518 passengers from the 75-foot boat to Haiti, the largest boatload returned since 1981. According to Reuters, the Coast Guard petty officer stated that “the freighter was in pretty bad shape and grossly overcrowded. There was some minor flooding going on. We’re awaiting final arrangements, but all of [the passengers] will be returned to Haiti later today and the government there will decide what to do with them.”

**Issue 2. Interdiction without Safety-at-sea Concerns: Territorial Jurisdiction, Consensual Boarding, Stateless Vessels**

There are cases where safety at sea is not a legitimate reason for interdiction. For example, freighters with hidden compartments or seaworthy sailboats fall outside of safety-at-sea concerns. To intervene in such cases, the Coast Guard must have encountered the vessel inside territorial seas, or gained consent from the master of the vessel or from the Haitian government, or determined the vessel to be stateless. Such trafficking became more and more common after the hurricane season of 1995 subsided, and boatloads of Haitians have reached Florida shores in larger and larger numbers.

**Territorial jurisdiction.** On April 16, 1995, the Coast Guard discovered 115 Haitians crammed in a small compartment aboard a ship near the Florida coast. Because the vessel was inside U.S. waters, the Coast Guard had authority to board it and enforce U.S. law. However, according to USCG lawyers the
extent of this jurisdiction is unclear. Within the contiguous zone of 0-12 miles off U.S. shores, also known as territorial seas, the Coast Guard is authorized only to search for fiscal, immigration, sanitary, and customs violations (FISC). Unless there is previous knowledge that a particular ship is engaged in smuggling, there would be no reason to search the vessel. In the April 16 case, the ship was stopped because it had no running lights, not because there was suspicion of smuggling activity. Had the vessel been on the high seas, even if intelligence sources had identified it as a possible smuggling vessel, the Coast Guard would have had no authority to board it without permission from the Haitian government or the ship’s master, because trafficking is not illegal under international law. In the absence of such permission, the Coast Guard would have to follow the ship until it reached the 12-mile limit to U.S. waters, at which point it would have authority to board and enforce FISC violations.

Consensual boarding. On the high seas, the Coast Guard could request permission to board from the ship’s master. In this case, jurisdiction is limited by the master’s consent, but permission to board is usually granted, although a smuggler might choose not to. In such cases, the USCG states its intent to search specific areas of the vessel, and if it discovers people suspected of intending to migrate illegally to the United States, it informs the ship’s master of its intent to enforce U.S. law. At this point the ship’s master may ask the Coast Guard to disembark, thereby ending the consensual boarding. The Coast Guard then informs Washington, where an interagency decision is required to seek jurisdiction for boarding and law enforcement from the Haitian government. Even if the master complies with the Coast Guard’s request, permission for repatriation is still requested from the Haitian government.

Stateless vessels. According to the 1958 Law of the Sea Convention, if a vessel’s registry is in question or if the country of claimed registry denies that the vessel is registered, the Coast Guard has a right of visit. The purpose of this type of boarding is limited to determination of the vessel’s registry, or examination of piracy, slavery, or unauthorized broadcasting. If suspected migrants are coincidentally discovered, the Coast Guard has no jurisdiction to take action. However, if it is determined that there is a problem with the registration of the vessel, then, under PD27, an interagency decision is made to take U.S. law enforcement action, including repatriation of migrants suspected of
intending to violate U.S. immigration law. Again, in this case as in others, the permission of the Haitian government would be requested for repatriation, although as a diplomatic rather than legal obligation.

**Issue 3. Demarcation of U.S. Borders: Entry or Repatriation?**

There is an unclear delineation between migrants who have come close enough to U.S. shores to be taken to a U.S. detention center, where they may begin immigration hearings, and those who can be repatriated directly to Haiti. Those found 25 miles off Miami were repatriated, while those discovered just off Miami were taken to the Krome detention center.

The Immigration and Naturalization Act (INA) defines an immigrant as having reached U.S. shores when the immigrant is at a port of entry. Precisely what this means, however, is less clear than it may seem. At the time the INA became law, territorial seas were only 3, rather than 12, miles from the coast. According to USCG lawyers, the three-mile boundary applies to all references to territorial seas before the 1982 extension to 12 miles. In practice, the zone considered to be U.S. shores is closer still, defined by the mean low-water mark, or baseline. The April 16 instance occurred inside the baseline, because the vessel was inside Government Cut, a jetty at the entrance to the Miami River.

Although most lawyers can agree that migrants between 3 and 12 miles offshore have not yet reached U.S. shores, the 0-3 mile demarcation is unclear. In the summer of 1994, there were reports of Haitians sent to Guantánamo from as close as one mile off the Florida shores.

Haitian refugee rights advocates believe the demarcation should be at least 12 miles, the limit of the territorial sea. However, this would greatly reduce the success of Coast Guard detection and intervention because seaborne migrants would be guaranteed entry to a U.S. detention center from the same point at which the Coast Guard is granted jurisdiction to board, an important consideration.


In the April 16 case, the Haitians were not repatriated, but treated as illegal migrants and turned over to the INS. Such
migrants are usually sent to the Krome detention center in Miami, where they are held in exclusion proceedings. According to the INS, a person in exclusion proceedings is essentially “knocking at the door, trying to get in.” They have not yet made entry to the United States, even though they may be physically located in U.S. territory.

Those in exclusion proceedings must go before an immigration judge and make the case that they are not excludable from the United States. At this point they may file for asylum. By definition, “asylees” are “refugees already in U.S. territory.” A migrant who is a “refugee” is

any person who is outside any country of such person’s nationality . . . and who is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or a particular political opinion.

According to the INS, migrants from countries of “strife” have a reasonable fear of harm or death. The first determination the asylum officer makes is whether that fear is well founded. Migrants who are unhappy with general conditions in their home country, economic or otherwise, do not qualify as having a well-founded fear. There must be a specific threat to their individual well-being. Furthermore, while "some forms of persecution—like disfigurement and torture—are easy to identify as persecution . . . other human rights violations are not so easily identified as rising to the level of persecution." Thus, there is a gray area between “persecution” and what are apparently considered lesser human rights violations. It is clear that most Haitian asylum seekers would not fall into the “persecution” category.

Last, having proven, by factual evidence, a well-founded fear of persecution, the applicant must prove that the persecution would be due to “race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or a particular political opinion.” Persecution for any other reason, including persecution for no reason at all, will not qualify an immigrant for asylee or refugee status.

Immigrants in exclusion proceedings can be held in detention indefinitely without bond or parole. However, they may be paroled into the community if it is determined that there is no risk of life and they are not a danger to the community. Throughout 1995 the number of Haitians detained at Krome
averaged between 50 and 100. As of November 1995, there were more than 20,000 pending asylum applications from Haitians. Most of these applicants are currently on parole.\footnote{1}

Detaining Haitians indefinitely while their hearings are pending is costly and ties up scarce space and human resources. In summer 1995, a congressional visit to Krome sparked controversy when it was discovered that officials at the detention center had paroled an extra 54 inmates and taken another 83 on a bus trip in order to give the appearance of a quieter, more orderly prison. Arrangements have now been made for the federal prison system to rent space in the municipal system to house some of the overflow of inmates.

If claims of non-excludability are not granted by the immigration judge, immigrants may appeal their case, but they must still pay all legal fees. If they choose not to appeal or if their appeal is rejected, they are repatriated to Haiti. Since the return of Aristide in October 1994, no Haitians have been excluded from the United States on these grounds. However, Emmanuel Constant, the leader of the Haitian paramilitary organization FRAPH, was ordered by an immigration judge to return to Haiti upon his application for asylum after his visa was revoked by the State Department.

The second aspect of adjudication involves the provision of opportunities for bona fide refugees. According to the definition of "refugee," it is not possible to apply for refugee or asylum status from within Haiti. When asked how a Haitian might apply do so, the general reaction from the State Department is: Why would anyone want to? The assessment of the U.S Administration appears to be that legitimate political refugees are highly unlikely under the legitimate Aristide government, although congressional leaders have threatened withholding aid if the Haitian government does not do better in investigating human rights violations.

During the large outflows in the summer of 1993, an effort was made to enhance the then-existing system for processing asylum applications in-country under the presidential authority to defer the requirement that refugees be outside their country of origin. This program closed in June 1995. Thus, to claim refugee status Haitians must first emigrate from Haiti and then either apply from a third country or reach U.S. shores and hope to be transferred to Krome.

The existence of a safe, friendly processing center in-country would legitimize a policy of automatic repatriation of Haitians.
even from U.S. shores. Such a program and complementary policy for special treatment of Haitians should be seriously considered. At present, while rafters have decreased, smuggling activity remains strong and may even be growing. In October 1995, a boatload of about 300 Haitians sailed up the Miami River and unloaded without being detected. Only 172 passengers were caught and detained. Perhaps more striking was an incident in early September 1995 off the Bahamas, in which the crew of a trafficking boat pushed nearly 100 Haitians into the sea to their deaths and beat a number of other passengers, killing three. Such incidents are bound to continue as long as reaching U.S. shores almost guarantees, in practice if not in purpose, eventual parole into the United States.

**Issue 5. U.S.-Haitian Repatriation and Asylum Policy**

U.S. policy must address two issues:

- First, the need for a clear and effective method for stopping attempts to migrate illegally to the United States, a task made difficult without a BIA.

- Second, the need for an effective method by which those who truly need assistance can apply for asylum without resorting to illegal migration, an action that imperils those who undertake it and also tends to distract political leaders from addressing the longer-term, underlying problems addressed in this study.

Given the U.S. administration’s apparent doubts that any bona fide refugees will be fleeing Haiti now that the legitimate government has been restored, U.S. migration policy for Haiti will not any differ from migration policy for the Caribbean in general: repatriation of economic migrants, while still allowing for the possibility that a few migrants may qualify for political asylum. How this will be accomplished, however, is not entirely clear. Bona fide refugees could be taken to Krome and given asylum hearings, or they could be offered safe haven but not resettlement in the United States. The idea behind the latter would be that by not offering bona fide refugees resettlement, economic migrants might be discouraged.

First, however, migrants need to be detected and intercepted. Unfortunately, the interdiction process has run into trouble with
the Haitian government, which first declared the BIA in abrogation and later heightened its objections to the forced repatriation of migrants.

In particular, the April 7, 1995, repatriation was the first real test of the Haitian government’s attitude toward repatriation. As described above, once the Coast Guard has interdicted a vessel, the U.S. Embassy requests permission from the Haitian government for repatriation. In this case, it is unclear what was communicated between the U.S. Embassy and the Haitian Foreign Ministry. According to the U.S. Embassy, the foreign ministry was “aware of it [the intent to repatriate], and did not oppose what we were going to do. They concurred in what we were going to do.” Haiti’s foreign ministry, however, has a different point of view: “There were no negotiations or agreement with the U.S. government on the modality of this repatriation. The Foreign Ministry had simply been notified.”

The foreign ministry later elaborated its policy on repatriation, stating in a press release that it “firmly and categorically opposes all forms of forcible repatriations,” yet “does not have the power to stop governments from proceeding with forced repatriation.” While this stance may be somewhat unclear in practical terms, it does clarify the position of the Haitian government. It is worth pointing out that there is an implicit paradox in the Haitian position, for on the one hand they deny any human rights violations, yet nonetheless state that they feel repatriation is wrong.

All other Caribbean governments accept repatriated migrants. Even Cuba entered into a BIA in May 1995, whereby Fidel Castro agreed to accept returned migrants picked up by the Coast Guard. The reasons for the Haitian government’s unique stance could range from a need to solidify political support in Haiti to a play for more economic aid from the United States.

In the meantime, some State Department officials hold that the expiration of the interdiction agreement has no significant impact on U.S. policy, and that Haitians can be treated as Dominicans, under safety-at-sea circumstances. There are apparently no concerns about overriding Haitian sovereignty by ignoring the Haitian government’s stated objections. On the other hand, the U.S. Embassy said that Washington is interested in the possibility of a new repatriation agreement. An interdiction agreement would facilitate the process of Coast Guard intervention.

Even in the event of Haitian acceptance of repatriation, in the absence of a BIA there is still the problem of clandestine
trafficking activity, which remains the most effective way for most Haitians to enter the United States permanently. There is no current policy for dealing with trafficking in the event that boarding jurisdiction is not granted by the Haitian government. At present, traffickers are likely to be stopped only when they have been previously identified, and even then, only in U.S. territory.

As far as asylum claims are concerned, the general rule is to repatriate all migrants who have not reached the undefined U.S. shores. However, those who say they “absolutely must” have their cases heard would, in principle, be allowed to state their desire for special treatment to a USCG officer, who would then relay the message to Washington for interagency decision. This contingency, however, seems highly unlikely.

At the same time, those who successfully reach U.S. shores are granted asylum hearings, which may last years. As mentioned above, there are currently more than 20,000 Haitian asylum cases pending decision. Almost all of these applicants are paroled into the community. In the six months after Aristide’s return, 276 cases were granted asylum and 402 were closed, which usually means that the applicant did not show for the hearing or found another way to become a legal resident. It seems, therefore, that under the present system, there is something to be gained from attempting illegal migration to the United States. This is especially true without in-country processing or alternative routes to asylum hearings.

Beyond these concerns lies the question of contingent U.S. policy in the face of a breakdown of Haitian civil order. The administration is apparently confident that such a situation will not occur. Nonetheless, the political and economic circumstances that encourage migration and sometimes lead to instability are not yet eradicated from Haiti. The possibility of such a relapse, however difficult or unpleasant to envisage, cannot be ignored.
Notes

Notes to Chapter 2

1. This projection is based on the 24 members of the OECD in 1990. Mexico and the Czech Republic have since joined the OECD, and South Korea and others are expected to join over the next few years. A broadening of the industrialized country grouping, in other words, will alter this declining trend.


3. The classic work on this complex stage 2 of rural/urban migration is by Michael P. Todaro, Internal Migration in Developing Countries (Geneva: International Labor Organization [ILO], 1976).

Notes to Chapter 3

1. Much of the first two sections of this chapter are drawn from the author’s earlier work, Haiti and the CBI: A Time of Change and Opportunity (Miami: University of Miami Press, 1985).

2. This interpretation is contained in David Nicholls, From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour, and National Independence in Haiti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). On p. 213, he quotes Duvalier, close to death, confessing to a close friend, “Mon gouvernement n’a pas été ce que j’avais projeté” (My government has not been what I had planned).

3. Because the Haitian population grew by about one-third from 1980 to 1995, the $187 million figure for 1980 would have to rise to about $250 million in 1995 to maintain an equivalent per capita level of aid. The annual level of aid to Haiti after the initial emergency recovery program in 1995 is estimated in chapter 9 to be approximately $300-$400 million per year. Moreover, because a much larger share of total aid is devoted to humanitarian relief following the devastation of the 1991-1994 crisis, a smaller share than in 1980 goes to longer-term development projects.

5. The violence and corruption of the François Duvalier presidency evoked a number of in-depth assessments of Haitian political leaders by foreigners.

From the most widely read, *Papa Doc: The Truth about Haiti Today* by Bernard Diederich and Al Burt (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), pp. 11 and 28: “It is a historic truth that politicians always promise the peasant the most and deliver the least. . . . Haitian governments have always been governments of men, not institutions. Contacts are all important. Since all spoils go to the President and his friends, it is impossible to be apolitical. . . . Traditionally, politics has been the fastest and sometimes the only way up the socio-economic ladder.”

From Robert I. Rothberg, *Haiti: The Politics of Squalor* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1971), p. 370: “Haiti is not ready for representative government. The necessary ingredients . . . are missing. . . . Haitian leaders have failed to exhibit behavior which, put most simply and tritely, may be called ‘honorable.’”

From Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier*, pp. 246–247: “Authoritarianism on the part of the government and political irresponsibility or apathy on the part of the mass of the population have gone together in independent Haiti. . . . No government in the history of Haiti had done anything significant to improve the lot of the masses and this was not the criterion by which a regime was judged.”

From Heinl and Heinl, *Written in Blood*, p. 6: “Deep in the psyche of Haiti . . . lies a violence that goes beyond violence. That this is so is demonstrated by nearly five centuries of history dominated at every turn by death and terror.”

**Notes to Chapter 4**


2. Bangladesh is another country where vigorous family planning programs have reduced the fertility rate despite continuing widespread poverty.


4. Dr. Guy Theodore is a retired U.S Air Force colonel who upon retirement returned to his native town of Pignon to found and develop the hospital. It is a striking example of how Haitians returning from the diaspora can make important contributions to Haitian development.
5. The 1986 field study, *Haiti: Country Environmental Profile*, was conducted by an interdisciplinary team headed by Marko Erlich. The quotation is from p. 30.

6. The report is from Carol Herget, founder and director of Village of Hope in the Cul de Sac. Further information about this extraordinary mission to bring education and health care to poor Haitian children can be obtained by writing to Carol Herget, c/o ANNEX 161, P.O. Box 591108, Miami, FL 33159-1108.


8. Inter-American Development Bank, *Emergency Economic Recovery Program: Haiti*, Report of the Joint Mission, January 1995. The figures for agriculture and other sectors cited are limited to the $668 million initial emergency program and do not include additional commitments up to the $1.2 billion level, as explained in chapter 7.

9. This short- to medium-term increase in population growth from improved health care can be very significant. For example, Haiti and the Dominican Republic had about the same population growth rates in 1994, 2.3 and 2.2 percent respectively, even though the 6.0 fertility rate in Haiti was much higher than the 3.3 rate in the Dominican Republic. The offsetting factor was Haiti’s very high mortality rate of 19 per 1,000, more than triple the rate of 6 in the Dominican Republic and two to three times higher than all other countries in the Western Hemisphere.

10. Although two-thirds of the Haitian population is rural, only about 20 percent of GNP derives from agriculture. Even allowing for some service sector output in the countryside, the one-quarter estimate is conservative. See U.S. Department of State, *Background Notes: Haiti*, March 1995. Wage rates in assembly industry have generally been four to five times higher than those for farm labor.

### Notes to Chapter 5

1. There has been considerable flow back and forth between rural and urban areas, further increasing the communication effect.

2. This was the experience of the author upon return in January 1995 after an 11-year absence.


### Notes to Chapter 6

1. The first Haitian boat people arrived in south Florida in 1963 and were promptly returned to Haiti. No further boat people were detected until the early 1970s, and the flow gathered momentum toward the end of the decade. A full analysis of Haitian migration through 1989 is contained in

2. In keeping with current practices of disclosure, it is noted that the author negotiated the 1981 agreement and signed it on behalf of the U.S. government.

3. This and following quotes related to the Bush executive order can be found in hearings before the House Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, June 11 and 17, 1972, “U.S. Policy Toward Haitian Refugees.”

4. This statement before the subcommittee on June 11, 1992, was by Brunson McKinley, deputy assistant secretary of state, Bureau for Refugee Programs, and former U. S. ambassador to Haiti.


7. The Haitian government may have an international obligation to accept repatriated nationals, but this issue has not been addressed publicly by either government.

8. In view of the large and growing numbers of U.S. residents of Haitian origin, a separate listing in the 2000 census would be useful. The current classification for the Western Hemisphere lists several countries and “other Hispanic,” none of which apply to Haitians.

9. The Haitian population in the United States was estimated at 800,000 in the early 1980s by Michel S. Laguerre in American Odyssey (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1984), 24. This would have since grown to the roughly 1 million level, the figure generally cited for the mid-1990s.

Notes to Chapter 7

1. The “Strategy of Social and Economic Reconstruction,” dated August 22, 1994, was prepared as a basis for discussions with the aid donor country before President Aristide’s return; the January 3, 1995 “Emergency Economic Recovery Program,” a report of a joint donor mission to Haiti in November 1994, was prepared by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

2. Official linkage to the dollar could take the form of adopting the U.S. dollar as the legal currency, as has been done in Panama, or by severely limiting the role of the Haitian Central Bank to foreign exchange conversion at the official rate—a “caisse de conversion.” Haiti, in fact, did adopt the latter course for about 60 years through the late 1970s. Inter alia, the elimination of discretionary borrowing and guarantees by the Haitian Central Bank would close off another historic source of public mismanagement and corruption.

3. The term “Taiwan of the Caribbean” was used by journalists in the early 1980s and received official recognition by USAID Administrator M.
Peter McPherson in testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on April 22, 1982, when McPherson stated that closer trade ties with the U.S. market would “make the prospects for Haiti as the ‘Taiwan of the Caribbean’ real indeed.” The Hong Kong analogy goes a step further in emphasizing the free trade experience based on a hard-working labor force and labor-intensive industry.

4. In a presentation at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., on September 8, 1995, Haitian Prime Minister Smark Michel stated that $500 million of the $668 million aid package had already been disbursed. The $600 million figure is an estimate through the end of 1995. The $400-$500 million figure for aid actually disbursed into the economy is also an estimate and is based on the level of quick-disbursing emergency relief, subtraction for the arrearages payments, and partial disbursement for project assistance. The “at least 25 percent of GDP” estimate is derived from a level of GDP officially cited at $2 billion, which some observers view as considerably overstated.

5. For a case study of economic aid to a country becoming counterproductive along these lines, see Ernest H. Preeg, Neither Fish nor Fowl: U.S. Economic Aid to the Philippines for Noneconomic Objectives (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1991); a broader discussion of budget support versus longer-term project assistance is contained in Ernest H. Preeg, “The Aid for Trade Debate,” The Washington Quarterly 16, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 99–114. A noteworthy example of aid budget support out of control in Haiti occurred in the spring of 1991 when the Haitian budget actually went into surplus for up to $30 million because of a confluence of various aid flows, the AT&T payments, and higher than anticipated customs revenues. The appropriate action for the aid donors would have been to cut back on cash transfers and perhaps shift the funds to longer-term project assistance. But before the aid donors could act, the Aristide government reportedly spent the money through “discretionary accounts,” which, inter alia, could have helped pro-Aristide candidates in the National Assembly and local election campaigns during that period.

Note to Chapter 8


Notes to Chapter 9

1. International donor strategy in sub-Saharan Africa in the late 1980s was that market-oriented reforms should come first and democratically based political reform later, but the sequence was reversed in the early
1990s; many East Asians believe that a high degree of authoritarian government is needed until the industrialization process is well advanced, and that only then can democracy take hold, as has been the experience of South Korea—the successful case of demography-driven development introduced in chapter 2; the Western Hemisphere is most firmly committed to democratic rule as the preferred political basis for economic development at all levels.

2. Aristotle explained: “The true forms of government, therefore, are those in which the one, or the few, or the many, govern with a view to the common interest; but governments which rule with a view to the private interest, whether of the one or of the few or of the many, are perversions.” The perversions were (1) tyranny, which serves the interest of the monarch only, (2) oligarchy, serving the interest of the wealthy, and (3) pure democracy, serving the interest of the many. His preferred form of government, “polity,” equates with modern constitutional or liberal democracy. The Politics, Book III, Chapter 7. The applicability of these precepts to contemporary Haiti is obvious.


4. The Haitian-Dominican border covers difficult terrain and is infamous for cross-border contraband, which would become much more lucrative in an eastbound direction to the extent that Haiti implements its free trade objective.

5. The foreign policy justification for the Haitian embargo, moreover, was in part directed elsewhere. In an exchange between a senior U.S. official and private-sector representatives, the official explained that even if the planned embargo did not work in Haiti, as the private-sector representatives predicted it would not, it was still necessary as a dissuasive measure against military coups elsewhere in the hemisphere, as was concurrently threatened in Venezuela.

Notes to Appendix A


**Notes to Appendix B**

1. Statistics regarding Haitians in detention or processing are from the *1993 INS Statistical Yearbook*, and INS internal sources.