

Dear Colleagues,

Please find below the mainstream news on Haiti for August 1 – September 6, 2007.

Haitian journalists launched an independent commission, led by Reuters Haitian correspondent Guy Delva, to investigate killings of Haitian journalists. The commission's first order of business will be reopening the investigation of radio journalist Jean Dominique, murdered in 2000.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon made his first visit to Haiti on August 1st. In anticipation of the Sec. General's visit, the AP story praises the UN's role in controlling the gangs over the last year and obscures the UN's role as aggressors responsible for excessive use of force and several massacres of innocent civilians in Cite Soleil. "Today, blue-helmeted soldiers no longer get shot at or need to launch large-scale raids into slums in search of gunmen." This article, like others, fails to hold the UN accountable for the multiple charges of excessive use of force and murder of innocent civilians during their 'large-scale raids.'

Meeting for the first time in Haiti, defense ministers from nine Latin American countries with UN peacekeepers in Haiti voiced support for extending the UN peacekeeping mission for one more year. The extension is expected to be approved by the UN Security Council on October 14th.

The Los Angeles Times' Carol Williams article "Former Haitian leaders begin to stir" spotlights Haiti's former leaders, dictators and military rulers, their whereabouts and desire to return to Haiti. Williams portrays all of Haiti's former 'leaders' return as a potential threat to the current existing stability. The 'threat' posed by all former leaders, except Aristide, is somewhat credible given their narrow support base generally more supportive of returning a military and less enthusiastic about the democratic process. "What, if any, political ambitions these men might nurture remain a mystery, but Aristide openly aspires to returning and reigniting his following." Grouping Aristide among Haiti's other non-elected leaders obscures the fact that his return to Haiti continues to have widespread 'ignited' support. The LA Times article closes with 'independent analyst' Mark Schneider of the International Crisis Group discouraging return of all of Haiti's former leaders claiming that would 'disrupt the security situation' failing to mention that security situation was initially 'disrupted' by Aristide's departure.

The AP/International Herald Tribune covered Reverend Gerard Jean Juste's brief return to Haiti on August 17th. Father Jean Juste left Haiti in January 2006 for medical treatment in the U.S. for leukemia. The article mentions that he was cleared of murder charges but indicted on weapons possession and criminal conspiracy "charges that Jean-Juste denies and that international human rights [groups] have alleged were politically motivated" not to mention that there has never been any credible proof of these charges. In contrast to 'analyst' Mark Schneider's comments above, Father Jean Juste claims Aristide's return is necessary to "heal the deeply divided country."

The Economist article “Taking on the gangs” again exaggerates the actual role gangs play in Haiti’s security and violent problems. The article mentions that despite hundreds of detained suspected gang members corruption among government officials and Haiti’s wealthy elite, weak judicial, police and penitentiary capacity are significant obstacles in providing a long term cure to all of Haiti’s security problems. Wealthy businessmen such as Franck Cine of HaiTel (recently arrested on bank fraud charges in connection with the collapsed Socabank) and former rebel, media darling and presidential candidate Guy Philippe (his home raided by DEA agents on drug trafficking charges) are finding less impunity under the Preval/Alexis government.

The government of Switzerland extended the freeze of Jean Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier’s Swiss bank accounts (valued at \$6.3 million) for one additional year. The extension was granted following “assurances by Haiti that the Caribbean nation would initiate proceedings against Duvalier ‘in the near future’ – a necessary step for Switzerland to confiscate the funds.”

Miami Commissioners recently proposed a “Marshall Plan” for Haiti. The idea, reminiscent of the 1947 aid plan for the reconstruction and repair of post WW II Europe would provide a similarly “massive infusion of food, infrastructure, aid, technical help and trade preferences” to boost Haiti’s economy and propel more rapid improvements in quality of life.

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1. Haiti forms commission to help solve journalist slayings

The Associated Press

IHT

August 10, 2007

<http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/08/11/news/CB-GEN-Haiti-Slain-Journalists.php>

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: Haiti has created an independent commission to speed up stalled investigations into the slayings of journalists in the impoverished nation.

Eight journalists have been killed in the Caribbean country since 2000, and the notoriously weak and corrupt justice system has yet to convict anyone in the deaths.

The nine-member body, made up of Haitian journalists, will review each case and issue public reports on ways to move the investigations forward, commission president Guy Delva said Friday.

"We want to push the justice system to act. If there are obstacles to these cases, we want to know what they are, who is responsible and how to fix them," said Delva, a correspondent for the Reuters news agency and the head of a Haitian press freedom group.

President Rene Preval pledged full support to the commission, the first of its kind in Haiti.

"The state must make providing justice a priority," Preval said at a ceremony to introduce the commission. "I think the journalists, working together with justice officials, can help reinforce justice in the country."

Delva said the body's first task will be to revisit the murder of Haiti's most famous journalist, Jean Dominique, who was gunned down along with a bodyguard outside his radio station on April 3, 2000. Dominique's life was chronicled in the 2003 documentary "The Agronomist," directed by American filmmaker Jonathan Demme.

The probe into his killing has been plagued by delays, missing case files and the resignation of two investigating judges who received death threats. Three early suspects have been killed, including one under mysterious circumstances in police custody.

Dominique's widow, Michele Montas said revisiting his case offers hope after years of frustration.

"He was a symbol that gave a voice to the voiceless, and that voice was silenced," said Montas, who once fled the country because of death threats and now serves as spokeswoman for U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. "So we're asking for justice for him and everyone else."

2. UN Head Visits Haiti to See Peacekeepers

Wednesday August 1, 2007

By STEVENSON JACOBS

The Guardian UK

Associated Press

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/worldlatest/story/0,-6821256,00.html>

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) - U.N. Secretary-General Ban-Ki-moon arrived in Haiti on Wednesday to observe an 8,800-strong peacekeeping force that has helped bring relative calm to the troubled country for the first time since a 2004 revolt ousted the president.

Ban's 24-hour trip comes as the U.N. Security Council prepares to renew the Haiti mandate in October. Ban is expected to ask for more specialized forces such as naval units to help the Caribbean country guard its coastline from weapons and drug traffickers.

The peacekeepers came to the impoverished nation in 2004 after a revolt toppled former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, sparking a long turf war against well-armed, slum-based gangs blamed for a wave of killings and kidnappings.

The secretary-general was greeted upon arrival by President Rene Preval but made no public statements.

Ban's visit, his first since becoming leader of the world body, comes as the U.N. force begins a slow transition from a military to a policing role - a move officials say is essential to maintaining peace as this impoverished Caribbean country rebuilds

Today, blue-helmeted soldiers no longer get shot at or need to launch large-scale raids into slums in search of gunmen. Neighbors simply call and give soldiers the gang members' location.

Despite the improved security, the top U.N. envoy to Haiti says it's too soon to begin pulling out troops.

“An early withdrawal right now would be a big mistake, 'big' with a capital letter,” Edmond Mulet recently told The Associated Press. “This is a time to hold on, to make this work this time.”

He said gangs, drug trafficking and poverty still pose a threat to the country and that peacekeepers would be needed at least until Preval's term ends in 2011.

Mulet, a Guatemalan who on Friday was appointed assistant secretary-general for peacekeeping operations, said the U.N. mission hopes to use more civilian police than soldiers but is hampered by a world shortage of trained, French-speaking officers.

The peacekeepers provide 85 percent of Haiti's security needs, but the government is working to eventually take over. The national police academy is preparing hundreds of recruits to bolster the nation's 6,000-police force.

Haiti is still struggling after a century marked by foreign occupations and the 29-year Duvalier family dictatorship.

Efforts to build an effective police force are still haunted by the specter of the Duvalier-era's bullying Tonton-Macoute security forces and armed gangs that emerged to defend Aristide.

Aid groups say the delivery of foreign aid to the poorest areas of Port-au-Prince is just starting because of red tape and logistical problems.

“Assistance is only starting to trickle into the capital, whose communes have still not perceived the start of a new era,” the International Crisis Group stated this month in a report.

Preval, a populist champion of the poor elected in 2006, authorized peacekeepers to take a firm hand and warned gangs “to disarm or die” before a crackdown earlier this year led to the arrest or killings of dozens of alleged gang members.

3. Latin American nations back 1-year extension of U.N. force in Haiti

The Associated Press

International Herald Tribune

September 4, 2007

<http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/09/05/news/CB-GEN-Haiti-UN-Peacekeepers.php>

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: Nine Latin American nations with U.N. peacekeepers deployed in Haiti voiced support for extending the mission for another year but declined to say when they would remove their troops.

The U.N. Security Council is expected to renew the mandate of the 8,800-strong, Brazilian-led force on Oct. 14.

On Tuesday, defense ministers from Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia, Guatemala, Peru, Uruguay and Paraguay traveled to Haiti to show their support for Haitian President Rene Preval, who last year authorized the U.N. force to take a firmer hand against street gangs blamed for violence.

Chilean Defense Minister Jose Goni said the countries agreed to support a 12-month extension of the U.N. mission, which arrived in 2004 to restore order after a violent uprising ousted former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

“Our work (in the U.N. mission) has helped achieve a notable level of public security and that allows to begin thinking about ways to expand our work,” Goni told reporters after meeting privately with Preval and his Cabinet.

The officials did not address how long their troops would remain in Haiti. U.N. officials have said peacekeepers should stay at least until the end of Preval’s term in 2011.

It was the first time Latin American countries have gathered in Haiti to discuss the future of the peacekeeping force, which consists mostly of South and Central American soldiers and police.

The force’s current mandate covers mainly Haiti’s security needs, but Preval’s government has been pressuring the world body to funnel more resources into urgently needed development projects for new schools, hospitals, roads and sanitation and clean water.

4. Prominent priest returns to Haiti, urges countrymen to unite
The Associated Press
International Herald Tribune
August 17, 2007

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: A prominent Roman Catholic priest who was released from prison to seek medical treatment in the United States returned to Haiti on Friday and urged his countrymen to put aside differences and work to uplift the impoverished country.

About 200 supporters gathered at Port-au-Prince's airport to greet the Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste, who made his first visit to Haiti since leaving the country in January 2006 to seek treatment for leukemia.

"I just have to give all glory to God for allowing me to be alive so I could come back to my country," a healthy looking Jean-Juste told reporters after arriving from Miami.

The 61-year-old priest is an influential advocate for Haiti's poor and a prominent supporter of ousted former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who left the country in 2004 amid a rebellion.

In 2005, the U.S.-backed interim government jailed Jean-Juste on suspicion of involvement in the killing of prominent Haitian journalist and poet Jacques Roche. A judge cleared him of homicide but indicted him on weapons possession and criminal conspiracy — charges that Jean-Juste denies and that international human rights have alleged were politically motivated.

Jean-Juste did not address his imprisonment but called for several jailed supporters to be freed and for Aristide to be allowed to return to Haiti, steps he said were needed to heal the deeply divided country.

"I want to call for a change of heart and so we can find ways to move forward together," Jean-Juste said after addressing supporters at his St. Claire Church.

Jean-Juste has drawn comparisons to Aristide, himself a former priest, for his impassioned sermons and advocacy for the poor. The priest's supporters tried to register him as a presidential candidate for the 2006 elections, but authorities barred his candidacy because he was in prison.

5. Former Haitian leaders begin to stir
By Carol J. Williams
The Los Angeles Times
September 2, 2007

PETIONVILLE, Haiti — Out of sight, out of mind and now out of money, former Haitian dictator Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier has been quietly sounding out the possibility of returning home after 21 years in exile in France.

Former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, still visible and sufficiently flush to fuel his promotional machinery from South Africa, nurtures the hopes of his supporters that he will one day come back to lead this country.

Closer to home, three coup leaders and an ex-president live in the shadows, aging and ostracized but not to be counted out in the seemingly boundless potential for political disruptions in Haiti.

Even as Haitians enjoy a respite from violence for the first time in decades, political forces given up for dead are showing faint stirrings of life. Some analysts dismiss the phenomenon as irrelevant musings of yesterday's men, but others point out that history here tends to repeat itself.

Nostalgia for the Duvalier era has made itself apparent in recent months with the establishment of the Francois Duvalier Foundation preserving the memory of the exiled Duvalier's late father, a celebration of what would have been the elder tyrant's 100th birthday in April and a sellout memoir of the president-for-life titled "The Misunderstood."

"More and more people are talking about the Duvalier period with positive memories," said Daniel Suplice, a teacher and historian who was a childhood friend of and political aide to the younger Duvalier, who fled to France in 1986 as pro-democracy forces fanned international condemnation of his human rights abuses.

"When Jean-Claude left, the population expected changes for the better," Suplice said. "On the contrary, things have only gotten worse."

Rural Haitians were removed from much of the repression trained on dissidents in the cities, so they felt little benefit from Baby Doc's departure and "couldn't care less about so-called democracy," he said.

"I've heard that Jean-Claude wants to return, maybe not as president but as a citizen," said Rony Gilot, who was Baby Doc's information minister and wrote the recent biography of the father.

"The Misunderstood" sold out its initial 1,000 copies within days of its February release, and a larger second printing is due out soon. Gilot, who still talks to the 56-year-old Duvalier in Paris by phone every few months, attributes the unanticipated interest in the late dictator's story to a nostalgia for a lost sense of order and national pride, but not for the stifling of personal and political freedoms.

Gilot likens the newfound reflection on the Duvalier era to postwar Germans and Italians longing for the punctual transportation and crime-free streets they had under fascism.

Jean-Claude Duvalier inherited the presidency in 1971 after the death of his father, a country doctor who won a rigged election in 1957 and had himself proclaimed president-for-life seven years later. After Baby Doc fled to the French Riviera with untold millions from Haiti's coffers, Gen. Henri Namphy oversaw corrupt elections that brought the French-educated academic Leslie Manigat to the presidency in January 1988.

Four months later, Namphy ousted Manigat, only to be toppled himself before the year was out by Gen. Prosper Avril.

Avril embarked on a renewed campaign of repression, ordering the arrest and beating of political opponents and parading the bloodied men on national TV. As violence rose and a state of siege ensued, Avril was forced to resign and give way to the nation's first democratic elections since it became independent in 1804.

Aristide, then a priest renowned for rousing oratorical powers, won the presidency in a landslide but served only seven months in 1991 before Duvalier loyalists in the military and the disgruntled business elite conspired to back another coup, led by Gen. Raoul Cedras, who took over the helm as the coup-plotters' puppet.

After three years in exile, Aristide returned on the heels of a U.S.-led military invasion that chased Cedras into exile. But turmoil persisted, and Aristide armed slum gangs that attacked his opponents. The violence led to the return of exiled former military figures and betrayed gang leaders in a rebellion. Aristide was sent into a second exile, this time to Africa, in February 2004.

Cedras, 58, lives in obscurity on a Panamanian island, unlikely to return because of a prison sentence imposed in absentia for his alleged involvement in a massacre.

Namphy, 74, was last known to be taking refuge in the neighboring Dominican Republic.

The whereabouts of Avril, 69, are unknown since his escape from prison in the chaotic aftermath of Aristide's flight three years ago. Manigat, 77, came in a distant second in his bid for the presidency last year.

What, if any, political ambitions these men might nurture remain a mystery, but Aristide openly aspires to returning and reigniting his following.

"He is in good spirits because he knows he will come back and that we are fighting for that," said Maryse Narcisse, one of five directors of the Aristide Foundation, which bankrolls student stipends, aid for activists with his Lavalas Movement and political agitation for his repatriation.

Nearly 1,000 supporters marched on Aristide's 54th birthday in July to demand his return -- a shadow of the throngs that once backed the charismatic populist, but still a force for the fragile government of President Rene Preval to reckon with.

When pressed by Aristide supporters to invite him back, Preval has pointed out that there are no impediments to his predecessor and onetime mentor's return -- except the former president's own concern about pending charges of criminal drug trafficking and misuse of government funds while in office.

Apart from the Aristide activists and Duvalier's revitalized contingent, few Haitians pay much heed to the aging former leaders. Four teenage boys washing cars at a parking lot in this upscale suburb of Port-au-Prince said they knew nothing about the former dictator in France and shrugged when asked about Aristide's future.

But independent analysts said that any blast from Haiti's troubled past could endanger the country's fragile peace.

"I don't think there's any question that return of either of them would be disruptive at this point," Mark Schneider, Latin America analyst for the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, said of Aristide and Duvalier. "We've only had one year of permanent elected government after the transition period, and it seems to me it would be quite unfortunate for them to arrive and create rumors that would inevitably disrupt the security situation."

6. Taking on the gangs

Aug 29th 2007

The Economist Intelligence Unit

http://www.economist.com/agenda/displaystory.cfm?story_id=9718607

Haiti has been plagued for several years by violent crime and armed gangs, and the problem has persisted even after the inauguration of the current president, René Préval, in May 2006. However, the more rigorous approach adopted late last year by troops of the Mission des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en Haiti (Minustah, the UN Stabilisation Mission in Haiti) and the Police Nationale d'Haiti (PNH, Haitian National Police) has resulted in improvements in the security situation, in particular in the capital, Port-au-Prince.

After the anxieties created by several years of politically motivated and criminal violence, the population is enjoying a welcome period of relative calm. The incidence of crime, including kidnapping for ransom, have greatly decreased and residents of many parts of the capital, who had for months endured a de facto curfew at dusk because of the fear of violence, have now largely resumed normal social and commercial activities in the early evening. When he marked one year in office on May 13th, Mr Préval, during a press conference on May 13th, expressed satisfaction with the improved security climate, noting that the establishment of security was an indispensable condition for his government's objective of increasing investment and creating jobs.

More than 500 alleged gang members were arrested by Minustah forces in the first six months of 2007, and hundreds more have been detained by the PNH. During July alone, the PNH announced it had arrested a further 171 people, 108 on charges of criminal conspiracy, 48 for murder, and 15 for involvement in kidnapping. The majority of alleged gang leaders are thought to be among those either arrested or killed while resisting arrest. Earlier in the year, the Minustah and PNH made a concerted effort to break up the larger gangs based in the sprawling Cité Soleil slum to the north of the capital, and the area has remained relatively free of serious crime, confounding expectations that gang activity would resume once the spotlight shifted elsewhere.

Expanding security operations

Later the security forces extended operations to other troublesome parts of the capital, and in May large numbers of alleged gang members were arrested in slum areas in the south-west of the city. On May 17th, the PNH announced it had arrested more than 20 members of the notorious *Lame Timanchet* (Little Machete Army), a gang responsible for many murders in the Martissant/Grand Ravine areas. The same month, the PNH carried out an operation in the nearby area of Carrefour, leading to the arrest of 121 people, including the alleged assassins of two police officers, killed in mid-May.

The Minustah and PNH also took action to counter gang activity in the central city of Gonaïves. Armed gangs had enjoyed near total impunity in the city since the anti-government uprising in early 2004, but an upsurge in violent crime in May, including the murder of Alix Joseph, a local radio journalist who had been reporting on the gangs, prompted a strong response from the security forces. In mid-June, following joint Minustah/PNH operations over several weeks, the Minustah's regional police commander, Jean-Jacques L'Hour, announced that 54 arrests had been made, and the former "no-go" areas of the city, Raboteau and Jubilee, were now freely accessible. On July 17th police announced the arrest of a Raboteau gang member suspected of participating in the murder of Mr Joseph.

Institutional failings persist

The arrest of large numbers of alleged criminals has led to a renewed focus on the failings of the country's penitential and judicial systems. A report produced by the International Crisis Group in early May warned that the country's overcrowded, understaffed and insecure prison system is on the brink of collapse, threatening a mass prisoner escape that would undermine recent steps to combat urban gangs and organised crime. The report stated that Haiti's 17 prisons hold more than 5,500 inmates, of whom less than 10% have been convicted. The National Prison in Port-au-Prince is filled to eight times capacity with 2,500 prisoners, but has only 25 guards. An earlier report by the US Agency for International Development noted that Haiti's courts have the capacity to handle a maximum 320 jury trials a year.

At the end of May, Minustah drew attention to the large number of people imprisoned without trial and the practice of bribing judges to get people released from prison. The Minustah's human rights section announced that at least six people were killed by mobs in a single week in July in different attacks, and that at least 105 people had been lynched

since 2005. In his address to the National Assembly in June, the prime minister, Jacques Edouard Alexis, said there would soon be improvements to the prison system, with 400 new prison officers due to complete their training.

Tackling corruption

Meanwhile, during an official visit to Washington DC to meet US government officials and business representatives, and again in an address to the Haitian people on May 18th, the public holiday celebrating the creation of the Haitian flag, Mr Préval announced a major initiative against corruption. In his Flag Day speech, the president vowed to root out corrupt police, customs agents, judges and legislators, whom he accused of enriching themselves at the expense of the ordinary people. Corruption has been cited as a major impediment to investment by Mr Préval, and his recent refocusing on the issue is a sign that, following successes in improving security, the government feels able to turn its attention to addressing the problem of endemic graft in public institutions.

In a high-profile action soon after these speeches, on June 6th, one of Haiti's wealthiest businessmen, Franck Ciné, the chief executive officer of the telephone company, HaiTel, was arrested, together with three other men. The four, who were all major shareholders in the collapsed Société Caribéenne de Banque (Socabank), were charged with expropriating deposits and fraud in connection with the controversial intervention in the bank's affairs by the Banque de la République d'Haïti (the central bank).

Drug trafficking targeted

With Haiti one of the main transshipment points for Colombian cocaine, drug-trafficking is also beginning to receive greater attention in domestic politics and foreign relations. While in Washington in early May, Mr Préval called for help from the US as the main source of demand for the cocaine that passes through Haitian territory from South America, in tackling the problem. Mr Préval cited drug-trafficking as one of the main factors contributing to instability and insecurity in Haiti. A few weeks later, on May 31st, one of the largest drug seizures in Haiti in years in the southern town of Léogane underlined the increased focus on the problem.

On July 16th US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agents and Haitian police mounted two raids on the homes of alleged drug-traffickers. One of the raids targeted Guy Philippe, the former police officer, and leader of the rebel forces, which led to the ouster of former president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide (2000-04), in 2004. Mr Philippe, who was the presidential candidate for the Front Reconstruction National (FRN) in the February 2006 elections, was not at his home on the outskirts of the southern town of Les Cayes at the time of the raid, and evaded arrest. He later told local radio stations that he had nothing to do with drug-trafficking, and that the raid was politically motivated.

7. Swiss government extends freeze on former Haiti dictator's funds by a year
The Associated Press
International Herald Tribune
August 22, 2007

BERN, Switzerland: The Swiss government has extended a freeze on bank accounts linked to former Haitian dictator Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, an official said Wednesday.

The accounts, which were due to be released to Duvalier's family at the end of August, will remain blocked for a further year, government spokesman Oswald Sigg said after a meeting of the seven-member Cabinet in Bern.

They contain 7.6 million Swiss francs (US\$6.3 million; €4.7 million) that many in Haiti consider to have been stolen from public funds before Duvalier was ousted in 1986 — something he has always denied.

Swiss Foreign Ministry spokesman Jean-Philippe Jeannerat said the extension followed assurances by Haiti that the Caribbean nation would initiate proceedings against Duvalier "in the near future" — a necessary step for Switzerland to confiscate the funds.

Lawyers for victims of the Duvalier regime are trying to prevent his family from gaining access to the money, arguing it should instead be returned to the Haitian people.

A Geneva lawyer acting on behalf of two Haitians awarded US\$1.75 million in damages against Duvalier by a U.S. court in 1988 welcomed the Swiss government's decision.

Marc Henzelin said his firm also was informed Wednesday that a separate freeze of one of the accounts — imposed by a Geneva cantonal (state) court in May — had been confirmed by the local tribunal.

The court ruling affects only one of the accounts, "but almost all the assets are in this account," he said.

The Swiss government agreed in June to a limited, three-month extension of the freeze first imposed in 2002 to allow for further negotiations with the Duvalier family and to prevent any of the funds being returned to the former dictator — now living in exile in France — via a complicated chain of offshore trusts and companies controlled by his relatives.

Switzerland's supreme court ruled last year that an indefinite freeze on privately owned funds was unconstitutional. The case involved 8 million francs (US\$6.6 million; €4.9 million) deposited in Swiss banks by the former Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko.

8. Commissioners to propose 'Marshall Plan' for Haiti

Tue, Sep. 04, 2007

BY CHARLES RABIN

Miami Herald

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/americas/haiti/story/224692.html>

Call it the Caribbean Marshall Plan.

The two are cosponsors of a resolution that will be proposed at today's County Commission meeting. The resolution urges the federal government to "adopt a plan to rebuild Haiti similar to the Marshall Plan."

That plan, created in 1947 and engineered by then-Secretary of State George Marshall, led to four years and \$13 billion worth of reconstruction in Europe to repair war damage.

The resolution cites Haiti's status as the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, and notes that a quarter of the country's economy is money that islanders receive from overseas.

A Marshall Plan, the resolution says, could result in a massive infusion of food, infrastructure, aid, technical help and trade preferences.

"A Marshall Plan for Haiti could serve to jump-start Haiti's economy just as the Marshall Plan did in many regions of Europe, leading to several decades of growth and prosperity following World War II," the proposal states.

It directs the county's federal lobbyists to advocate its passage and asks the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs to include it in the 2007 and 2008 federal legislative packages.

South Florida has one of the nation's largest Haitian communities, estimated at more than 162,000 in the 2000 Census.

U.S. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Miami Republican, accompanied Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on a trip to Haiti in 2005, just before the country's elections. She said that despite the rampant crime and corruption that has hurt previous U.S. investment in the island nation, she's willing to make another go of it.

"The concept of a Marshall Plan for Haiti proposed by some of our local officials could serve as an instrument of growth and sustainable development," Ros-Lehtinen said.

Moss was out of town and unavailable for comment.

Sosa, the resolution's cosigner, said she realizes any help headed Haiti's way has to come from a hybrid of the actual Marshall Plan.

"I'm supporting Commissioner Moss based on the incredible needs of the Haitians," she said.