



U.S. Embassy diplomatic cables (Haiti)

U.S. Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson outlined President René Préval's work experience in private industry, his foreign policy agenda, personal ethics and the scope of narcotics trafficking in Haiti.

March 1st 2007 (released on 11-30-2010):¹

“He went into the bakery business with several friends in the mid-1970, including Michele Pierre Louis, a renowned patron of Haitian arts, and through her met Aristide. Preval's bakery was successful, but destroyed by associates of the military after the 1991 coup d'etat. Among the many incidents of conflict between the right-wing and Aristide supporters, Preval apparently holds a special grudge against those who destroyed his business.”

Telling remark that MREG can certainly relate to!

“His priority on the bilateral agenda is to leverage and extract the most assistance for Haiti on his own terms and to tap into the wealth and resources of the Haitian-American community in the U.S.”

“For the most part, however, Preval does not seem closely connected to or interested in Haitian communities abroad.”

“As the president of a small, poor nation in the shadow of the American behemoth, he clearly believes that the U.S. has far greater obligations to Haiti than the other way around, if, in fact, Haiti has any obligations at all.”

“We believe that in terms of foreign policy, Preval is most interested in gaining increased assistance from any available resource. He is likely to be tempted to frame his relationship with Venezuela and Chavez-allies in the hemisphere in a way that he hopes will create a competitive atmosphere as far as who can provide the most to Haiti.”

“Indications regarding Preval's own attitude toward corruption are mixed. During his first term, Preval either tolerated or was forced to accept gross abuses on the part of close associates of Aristide. In either case, Preval has exhibited a non-confrontational approach with passivity toward difficult issues as the hallmark of his political career. Preval maintains a reputation for personal honesty.”

16 June 2009 (released on 11-30-2010):²

“Préval's fixation on drug trafficking reflects both a growing frustration with the inflow of drugs into the country's political process and irritation that his government is unable to address something that could indeed pose a personal threat to his future after the presidency. Shunning all GOH (Government of Haiti) responsibility for the problem, he looks to hand it over to us.” His anger over “drug trafficker Guy Philippe, even his reactions to the April (2008) riots” stemmed from a “very real fear that politics will prohibit him from returning to private life in Haiti after his presidency.”

Préval's overriding goal was to “orchestrate the 2011 presidential transition in such a way as to ensure that whoever is elected will allow him to go home unimpeded.” Worried about “his life after the presidency” (based on conversations with him) and that he “would not survive in exile” — it was “a matter that looms large” for him. “His concerns seem real, given Haiti's history, albeit somewhat overblown at this point in time.”³

INCSR 2007 (U.S. State Department report embargoed until March 1st 2007)

The 2007 International Narcotics Control Strategy report had summarized that “rampant” and “pervasive” corruption was found “in almost all” Haitian public institutions. Facilitated by a “dysfunctional judicial system” — “money laundering activity” and other financial crimes (including “real estate transactions”) were “linked to the drug trade.”⁴

“In 2002, Haiti formed a National Committee to Fight Money Laundering, the Comité National de Lutte Contre le Blanchiment des Avoirs (CNLBA). The CNLBA is in charge of promoting, coordinating, and recommending policies to prevent, detect, and suppress the laundering of assets obtained from the illicit trafficking of drugs and other serious offenses. Created in 2003, the Unité Centrale de Renseignements Financiers (UCREF) is the financial intelligence unit (FIU) of Haiti.”⁵

With Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)-led Sensitive Investigative Unit (SIU) support (signed agreement), the GOH Central Financial Intelligence Unit (UCREF) and its Financial Crimes Task Force (FCTF) investigated “money laundering and corruption cases.” One of those showcased notary/2010 presidential candidate Jean-Henry Céant:

“The IGOH (Interim Government of Haiti) created an Anti-Corruption Unit and a commission to examine transactions conducted by the government from 2001 through February 2004. The commission published its report in July 2005. In early 2006 Presidential elections took place. Neither the IGOH nor the new (Préval) government have prosecuted any cases based on the information provided in the report.”⁶

“A magistrate ordered the release of funds frozen by UCREF as the result of its investigations into money laundering and corruption and briefly jailed (in 2006) the director of UCREF (on unknown charges) when he refused to do so. Over \$1.4 million were eventually released by the magistrate to the suspected money launderers.”⁷

“In 2006 the UCREF assisted the U.S. in at least three major investigations. The UCREF also assisted the IGOH in filing the first-ever civil lawsuit in a U.S. court for reparation of Haitian Government funds diverted through U.S. banks and businesses (Aristide era). However, the lawsuit was dropped shortly after the new (Préval) government took office (inducted on 14 May 2006)”⁸

Not one single investigation “out of hundreds” conducted by UCREF and FCTF since 2004 had been prosecuted by 2007.⁹

The Financial Crimes Task Force “under the auspices of the Central Bank and the Ministries of Justice and Finance, charged with identifying and investigating major financial crimes and coordinating with the UCREF in recommending prosecutions,” was “not recognized” by the Préval government. It subsequently became “dormant.”¹⁰

Haiti was “a major transit country” for “a thriving contraband trade” (cocaine) to the United States, Canada and Europe. Traffickers transported shipments with speedboats to strategic locations for concealment in the cargo of coastal freighters at various seaports (1,125 miles of coastline). Consignments were also moved overland to the Dominican Republic (220-mile land border) for couriers who boarded commercial flights.¹¹

“The number of drug smuggling flights from Venezuela to Hispaniola increased by 167 percent from 2005-2006. Approximately one third of these flights went to Haiti (making offshore air drops or using clandestine airstrips).” There were “46 suspect drug flights from Venezuela (in 2006), where a permissive environment is allowing smuggling aircraft to operate with impunity.”¹²

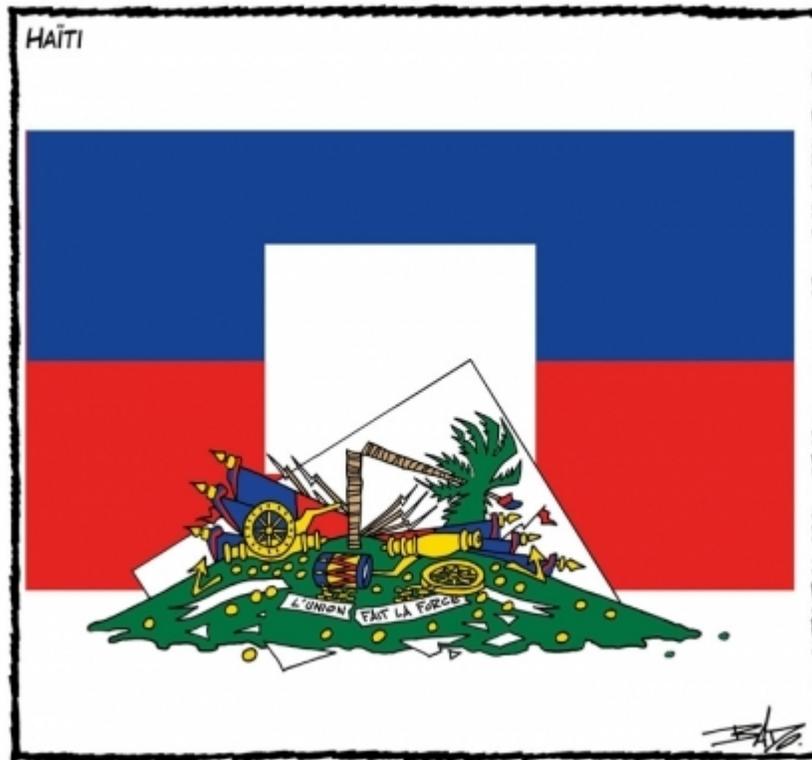
INCSR 2009 (embargoed until 27 February 2009)

Traffickers “continued to use small aircraft (during 2008) to make offshore air drops of illegal drugs (in Haiti) as well as land deliveries using clandestine airstrips (29 of them had been identified). Suspect drug flights from Venezuela increased at least 15 percent in 2008 following on the 38 percent increase officially recorded in 2007 (rates may be much higher).” New trends emerged including “more daylight air drops (flights following the Haitian-Dominican Republic border further north).”¹³

Detecting “an increase in the frequency of air smuggling of cocaine” from Latin America to Hispaniola, the U.S. Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S) also estimated that aircrafts originating from Venezuela “conducted 91 drug airdrop flights” across the Dominican Republic during 2008 (along with maritime deliveries via go-fast boats and commercial shipping).¹⁴

“Drug trafficker” Guy Philippe (singled-out by U.S. Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson) was still on the DEA wanted list in 2010. Leader of the paramilitary uprising that unseated Aristide on 29 February 2004, his political advisor and confidant, Paul Arcelin, had met (in Canada) Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Health and Intergovernmental Affairs) on 5 February 2004 — to discuss “the reality of Haiti.”¹⁵

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Pierre Pettigrew (quick study) then smugly buried the *Godbout Estate* file on March 1st 2005 out of deference to *Haitian dogma!*¹⁶



Guy Badaux (Bado), *Le Droit* (Ottawa), 12-20-2010

Footnote

An estimated 12 000 NGOs and church-sponsored charities operated in Haiti — the largest concentration of aid groups per capita worldwide. “Critics argue constant aid (for 50 years) has hurt Haiti, creating a culture of dependence and relieving the government of its responsibilities to the point where it can no longer meet them (and in fact never did). Others say aid is actually a business perpetuated to enrich those who deliver it.”¹⁷

Questioned as to why little had changed one year after the 12 January 2010 earthquake, Canadian Red Cross spokesperson Sophie Chavanel defended their relief activities by suggesting that they were dealing with complex “land issues — who owns it, can it be purchased at a reasonable price, can the rubble be removed.”¹⁸

The virtually intact *Résidence Godbout* was offered at no charge to Canadian Red Cross officials on 16 January 2010. Ideal for a hospital or emergency center, they inspected the property on 21 January and expressed their desire to utilize it for staff accommodations on 23 March — but were unwilling to upset squatter/criminal Patrick Torres!

“Profiteering by Haiti’s tiny and notoriously corrupt elite has reached epic proportions.”¹⁹

Denis O’Brien (chairman of the Irish-owned cell phone company Digicel, Haiti’s biggest foreign investor) told Reuters in an interview that “most members of Haiti’s ruling class have done little to help, seeking only to profit on the back of their nation’s catastrophe: ‘There’s very few of the elite families that are doing a lot for Haiti. They’re making massive profits on the importation of goods, products, services, everything... Profiteering at a major scale is going on here.’”²⁰

Gesturing toward an annex behind the demolished presidential palace where Préval worked, Hyacinthe Benita, 39, lamented: “He’s never done anything for us, he’s never come to see us at all. They look at us like animals.”²¹

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¹ Classified secret by Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson.

² Classified confidential by Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson.

³ A presidential elections review by the Washington-based Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) titled *Haiti’s Fatally Flawed Election* (held on 11-28-2010) reported “massive irregularities.” Co-author Mark Weisbrot stated: “I don’t see how any professional observers could legitimately certify this election result.” Jessica Leeder, *The Globe and Mail*, Port-au-Prince, 01-09-2011.

⁴ United States Department of State, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, 03-01-2007, Volume 1, Drug and Chemical Control, pp. 208-209 & Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes, p. 198.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes, pp. 198-199.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Volume 1, Drug and Chemical Control, p. 209 & Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes, p. 199.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes, p. 199.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Volume 1, Drug and Chemical Control, p. 208.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes, p. 199.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Volume 1, Drug and Chemical Control, pp. 208-210.

¹² According to the U.S. Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S), United States Department of State, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, 03-01-2007, Volume 1, Drug and Chemical Control, pp. 208-209.

¹³ United States Department of State, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, 02-27-2009, Volume 1, Drug and Chemical Control, pp. 301-304.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Volume 1, Drug and Chemical Control, pp. 233-236.

¹⁵ MREG Web site, Governance Oversight, section 1, p. 9 (endnote N° 45), p. 11 (endnote N° 67) & section 5, pp. 6-10; Drug traffickers were also behind the 2008 riots in Les Cayes (where Guy Philippe evaded capture on 07-16-2007) according to International Crisis Group, Chris Hawley, *USA Today*, 02-09-2010.

¹⁶ Exactly one year to the day (paradoxically) after coup-leader/narcotics-trafficker Guy Philippe triumphantly entered Port-au-Prince with his accomplice Paul Arcelin!

¹⁷ René Bruemmer, *Montreal Gazette*, 01-08-2011.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Allyn Gaestel and Tom Brown, Reuters, Port-au-Prince, 01-12-2011.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*