The U.S. Haitian Intervention of 1994

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Haiti is a country that has experienced a history filled with an increasing level of conflict since Columbus discovered it in 1492. This paper will be focusing on the year 1994 and the United State’s intervention in Haiti. It will concentrate on the period between 1990 and 1995 as the 1994 intervention was caused by the events of these previous years. This time period has provoked much talk in the literature on the way that the United States handled the intervention and the ethics of the United State’s engagements prior to 1994. This paper will explain how the actions of the United States under Presidents Bush and Clinton have assisted in creating Haiti’s current situation and the reasons for the United State’s invasion. The United States and Haiti have had a long history of relations. A brief history of the United States and Haiti is needed to fully understand the happenings of 1994.

The United States has been trading with Haiti since the beginning of the 19th century. Haitian gained its independence from France in 1804; however, the United States failed to recognize Haiti as an independent nation until 1862. From this time until 1915, the United States increased its trade and warships in Haitian waters in order to protect its citizens in Haiti. In 1915, the U.S. Marine Corps invaded for the purpose of establishing a more stable government. During this invasion, the United States created a constitution for Haiti and this document was met with much resistance from its people. This constitution required the U.S. Marine Corps to create and train a Haitian army, which was later named The Armed Forces of Haiti, or FADH. Later, a group that worked closely with the army, Front for Advancement and Progress in Haiti (FRAPH) was formed. Before the U.S. Marine Corps left Haiti in 1934, they selected a president, Stenio Vincent, who later declared he was a dictator. The Unites States pressured him to retire and a former Haitian ambassador to the United States, Elie Lescot, came to power in 1941. Lescot was

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overthrown 5 years later by FADH and Dumarias Estime succeeded him. Estime, who was
overthrown himself 4 years later by the FADH, was replaced by Paul Magloire, the leader of the
military coup. After being met with much resistance from Haitian authorities, Magloire fled to
the Unites States and Francois Duvalier, with the support of the military, was elected to power in
1957. Duvalier decided to create his own private security force using the militia and presidential
guard. This became known as Volunteers for National Security, or VSN.3

Although Duvalier ordered thousands of killings of those who did not support him, the
United States supported his rule as he was against communism, was pro-United States, and had
been democratically elected. His son, Jean-Claude, succeeded him in 1971 after his death.4 Jean-
Claude continued the corrupt rule that his father had implemented and thousands of oppressed
Haitians fled Haiti for the United States in hopes that they would be granted asylum.5 The United
States, under President Jimmy Carter, refused to recognize them as refugees, and instead labeled
them as immigrants who were subject to deportation. The ability for Carter to do this resulted
from the 1980 U.S. Refugee Act, which separated those fleeing from economic insecurity with
those in poor political situations. Therefore, these Haitians were considered as solely lacking
economic security, although their actual intention was to escape the abuses of Jean-Claude’s
regime.6

3 John R. Ballard, Upholding Democracy: The United States Military Campaign in Haiti, 1994-1997 (Connecticut:
4 Ballard, p. 33-35.
5 Farmer, p. 118.
http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,_.WRITENET,_.HTI,,3ae6a6c30,0.html. Internet. Accessed on March 21,
2013.
In 1981, Regan’s administration continued to make it difficult for Haitians to receive refugee status in order to get past U.S. Coast Guard Ships. The United States didn’t favor the Duvalier regimes, yet it tolerated them and made no efforts to intervene because the regime was still viewed as better than one that was communist. After realizing that Jean-Claude’s rule was failing, the United States collaborated with the FADH to remove him from power in 1986 and safely flew him out of Haiti on a plane. The National Council of Government (CNG) was formed with the help of the United States to provide a government with the intention of pleasing both the Duvalier supporters and non-supporters. However, the CNG, under Henri Namphy, acted more as a continuation of the Duvalier’s corrupt regime. The United States then pressured the CNG for new elections in 1988, resulting in the election of United States-supported Leslie Manigat. However, Manigat’s relationship with the army became poor and a military coup overthrew him, giving Namphy a second term. Namphy again promoted corruption, failed to recognize the constitution, and was overthrown by a coup and succeeded by the United States-supported Prosper Avril. However, Avril was overthrown by a United States-supported coup in 1990 because he refused to hold free elections and rejected the constitution. Ertha Pascal-Trouilliot became the interim president until the elections of 1990.

The elections of 1990 and the military coup in Haiti led to the later United States intervention in 1994. Jean-Bertrand Aristide decided to run for president out of the “historical necessity to stop reactionary forces from legalizing their continued hold on privilege and to

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8 Ballard, p.41.
10 Ballard, p. 43-45.
empower the marginalized poor majority.” 11 The name of the support group he formed while running was called the Lavalas. Aristide won the election against a United States-supported candidate with overwhelming support and took office in 1991, putting the Lavalas government into action. 12 Although Aristide did have the support of many Haitians, there were still many Duvalier supporters that did not agree with how he wanted to rule. After returning from a trip to New York to speak to the United Nations seven months after coming into office, a group of FADH soldiers ordered by General Raoul Cedras attacked Aristides house, arrested him, and flew him out of Haiti to exile; first to Venezuela and later to the United States. Cedras then declared himself as the one in power and set up a de facto government. 13

After failing to reinstate Aristide, the Organization of American States (OAS) declared an embargo on Haiti and all foreign aid, which made up of 40 percent of the nation’s budget, was suspended. According to the General Assembly Resolution 46/7, this cutoff also included humanitarian aid. 14 President Bush imposed his own embargo enforced by the U.S. Navy in addition to proposing to freeze Haitian assets in the United States. The purpose of imposing international sanctions was implemented to show the disapproval for the military coup with the underlying intention to restore democracy in Haiti. 15 The United States, at first, seemed to be determined on doing what they could to reinstate Aristide back to office, as both the United States and the OAS “pledged to return Aristide from exile.” 16 President Bush specifically expressed the desire “to see President Aristide return to power,” but then quickly changed the focus of his administration by condemning Aristide of promoting human rights abuses during his

12 Dupuy, p. 155.
13 Farmer, p. 179-183.
14 Ibid., p. 29.
15 Girard, p. 19.
16 Ballard, p. 50.
regime. Many U.S. Officials backed this accusation by claiming that Aristide relied on mob violence to sustain his rule as president and these views of distrust towards Aristide were further expressed through those in the media. However, many say that Aristide “creat[ed] a much greater sense of security in Haiti during his first term than there ha[d] been in years.” Human rights monitors also add that Cedras regime undermined the progress Aristide had made during his time in office in regards to improving the human rights situation.

The United States overall failed to strictly adhere to the trade embargo it imposed and its leakiness proved to be enough to benefit the Haitian elites. The Haitian military also ending up benefiting from the embargo because it controlled the black market, unlike the poor, who suffered from the high prices. In addition, there was a large increase in the drug trade during this time, as the Haitian military leaders allowed the holding and shipment of these drugs to North America. In 2002, industries in the United States pressured the Bush Administration to allow the trade of their products with Haiti, which further assisted the military by providing them with supplies. The Bush Administration’s goal for Haiti was for it to “return to civilian rule but without Aristide and with the military as a dominant institution.” It aimed to do this by stalling progressive action by working with the military junta to make sure it rejected deals that involved the return of Aristide. Alvin Adams, the U.S. ambassador, pressured Aristide to find a new prime minister and to lift the embargo, but Aristide refused to call for an end to the sanctions until his

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19 Taft-Morales and Seelke, p. 3.
20 Farmer, p. 193.
21 UNHCR.
22 Farmer, p. 193.
23 Dupuy, p. 177.
24 Ibid., p. 139.
return date to Haiti was recognized. Coup authorities then blocked Aristide’s first choice for prime minister and he was forced to nominate a Communist Party leader, Rene Theodore. In 1992, the United States forced Aristide to accept a Protocol of Accord that “call[ed] for an amnesty for the army and the putchists, respecting all postcoup parliamentary legislation…and [to lift] the embargo after Theodore is ratified as prime minister and [form] a government of ‘national consensus.’” Although it recognized the Haitian presidency as being held by Aristide, there was no mention of when he could return to the country within the protocol. A few months later, FADH used violence to disrupt the ratification of the Protocol of Accord. The Haitian de facto government then made U.S.-supporter, Marc Bazin, the new prime minister of Haiti without receiving any consent from Aristide or his supporters. Because of this, Aristide created his own commission to represent him in the country.

After Aristide was elected, the number of refugees dropped by a third from those who had fled under the Duvalier regimes with less than 1,200 leaving. Following the coup in 1991, thousands more Haitians began fleeing the country to seek refuge in the United States because of the Haitian military’s violent actions on the poor and the supporters of Aristide. Over 38,000 were caught at sea only 6 months after Aristide’s exile. The U.S. Coast Guard began the reparation of these peoples because of President Bush’s policy that “did not view Haitians as refugees of oppression.” Bush ordered the determination of refugee status to take place at the

25 Ibid., p. 139-175.
26 Ibid., p. 176.
27 Ibid., p. 176-178.
29 Farmer, p. 189.
30 Gavigan.
31 Ballard, p. 51.
U.S. Naval base in Guantanamo Bay and Haitians were sent back to Haiti if certain criteria were not met. Even if some did meet the criteria, those with HIV/AIDs were detained in Guantanamo. In 1992, Bush issued the Kennebunkport Order, which refused to grant these Haitians political asylum screenings and instead, sent those who were caught back to Haiti. Although the military in Haiti was committing many human rights abuses, the Bush administration ignored this fact by claiming that these so called “boat people” were economic and not political refugees. Exploiting the purpose of the 1980 U.S. Refugee Act, made the interdiction of those fleeing possible. A CIA agent traveled to Haiti and reported back that there was no violence on citizens taking place and that the regime in power was not oppressing its people. However, this report did not contain truthful statements of the Haitian situation. Although the U.S. Second Court of Appeals ruled that the Kennebunkport order violated the 1980 Refugee Act, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected this finding and allowed the continuation of Haitians being forced back without a hearing. In 1993, Bill Clinton was elected as the new president of the United States. His campaign had focused on ending “Bush’s ‘inhumane’ policy of repatriating Haitian refugees.” However, in office, Clinton ended up implementing the same refugee policy as Bush because he was scared that he would be confronted with many more Haitians seeking asylum in the United States. Clinton also promised to restore Aristide to power in Haiti and believed that by doing this, the number of Haitian refugees would decrease.

During this time, the United States and the UN proposed the sending of a multinational peace force to Haiti, but the Haitian military rejected the plan and Marc Bazin resigned as prime

32 UNHCR.
33 Dupuy, p. 140.
34 Farmer, p. 203.
35 Dupuy, p. 178
36 Ibid., p. 140.
The de facto government slowly started to weaken following this resignation. Resulting from pressure from the Clinton Administration, Resolution 841 was approved, which imposed a mandatory global embargo on oil and arms supplies to Haiti and froze the assets of Haitian authorities. The UN further expanded Clinton’s sanctions by banning the ability to sell petroleum and military supplies to Haiti. This action eventually resulted in the willingness of Cedras to participate in negotiations with Aristide.

In 1993, both parties were pressured to sign the Governor’s Island Accord in New York. This accord attempted to remove the military power in Haiti and return Aristide as president while forcing Cedras to retire his position. Its purpose was to return Haiti to democratic governance with the participation of both Aristide and Cedras. The accord intended to remove all sanctions, allow for a new prime minister, police force, commander in chief of the FADH, and military amnesty. However, this was not the end result of the accord, as military leaders refused to step down and the embargo was lifted before Aristide could return to power. It did, however, result in the recognition of Robert Malval as Haiti’s new prime minister. After FRAPH members blocked the USS Harlan County ship from entering Haiti to prepare for Aristide’s arrival, the ship decided to retreat. Aristide was not able to return on the accord’s specified date and he rejected any further pleas to participate in negotiations.

Following the USS Harlan County failure, the UN Security council declared that it would bring back the embargo if Cedras did not resign from his position. This threat caused the de facto

38 Dupuy, p. 179.
39 McFadyen and LaRamee, p. 79-80.
40 Dupuy, p. 145.
41 Ibid., p. 145.
42 Ballard, p. 52.
43 Dupuy, p. 145.
44 Farmer, p. 213.
45 Girard, p. 19.
government to respond with violent attacks on Haitians. The United States, in hopes of pleasing the de facto government, urged Prime Minister Malval to include coup supporters in his new cabinet. However, Malval soon stepped down from office after a failed attempt to coordinate a reconciliation conference between the opposing groups in Haiti’s government. After the date the Governor’s Island Accord required the military authority to leave power had passed, the leaders still remained in their positions. Aristide’s cabinet was also prevented from fulfilling their roles in the government. Following this realization, the United States, specifically the State Department and Clinton’s special envoy to Haiti, Lawrence Pezzullo, assisted in creating a plan for Aristide and Cedras to again negotiate. Aristide immediately rejected this plan and it was later discovered its purpose was to benefit the coup leaders.46

In 1994, Clinton’s attitude towards Haiti changed and he declared that more powerful action needed to be implemented towards Haiti in order for the United States to achieve their goal. The first step the Clinton Administration took after this policy change was to implement a complete economic embargo on Haiti with the inclusion of a naval blockade. In addition, it banned commercial flights coming from the United States, froze the assets of wealthy Haitians, and declared its full intention of using force against the Haitian military authority if necessary. The strengthening of sanctions was needed because instead of making progress in removing the power leaders in Haiti, the embargo that had been implemented in 1993 worked against the sanctions goal and expanded the trade through the Dominican border, which had not been closed off from trade. The military responded to the new sanctions by putting a Duvalier, Emile

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46 Dupuy, p. 155-180.
Jonassaint, into power and further repressing the citizens in Haiti, inspiring many more to flee the country.\textsuperscript{47}

As the political violence increased in Haiti, so did the amount of refugees attempting to get into the United States. The story of a mistreated Haitian refugee hit the news and sparked a 27 day media-displayed hunger strike against Clinton’s refugee policy. Clinton first responded by replacing Pezzullo with William Grey III as his new special envoy to Haiti.\textsuperscript{48} Following this, he attempted to deal with the situation by creating a policy which temporary allowed screened fleeing Haitians to safely reside at the U.S. Guantanamo Bay base and other nearby countries.\textsuperscript{49} The refugee influx was stated by Clinton as one of the most important reasons why it was necessary for United States to use force against Haiti in order to remove the military leaders from power and to restore Aristide’s democratic government.\textsuperscript{50} This was a significant development as it was the first time during the conflict that Clinton did not rule out the idea of the United States using force against Haiti.\textsuperscript{51}

Before this time, Aristide has been against military intervention saying “I have never asked for military intervention, nor will I.” His reasoning being that “we have no illusion that a military intervention would serve the purpose of restoring democracy, or justice to Haiti.” \textsuperscript{52} However, seeing that there was not much else that could be done, Aristide promoted the passing

\textsuperscript{47} McFadyen and LaRamee, p. 111.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., p. 109-110.
\textsuperscript{51} Girard, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{52} McFayden and LaRamee, p. 111-112.
of a resolution to implement U.S. force on Haiti in a letter that was sent to the UN Security Council.\(^{53}\) Clinton’s administration then assisted in getting the UN to adopt Resolution 940, “which authorized a multinational military force ‘to use all necessary means’ to oust the military junta and restore Aristide to the presidency.”\(^{54}\) This resolution also stated that Haiti, by posing a threat to the regions peace and security and “failing to comply with the Governors Island Accord” is subject to international intervention.\(^{55}\) Upon hearing of the Haitian military’s murder of a well-known priest, Father Jean Marie Vincent, Clinton publicly announced his plans for a U.S. intervention in Haiti. Although Clinton wanted to demonstrate the power of the U.S. military, he did not want to risk any American lives and ultimately did not want to use force to restore democracy if it was not needed.\(^{56}\)

The date of the invasion, known as Operation “Restore Democracy,” was discreetly planned for September 18\(^{\text{th}}\). However, on September 17\(^{\text{th}}\), the Clinton Administration sent in delegates to try once more to negotiate an agreement with the de facto government. Jimmy Carter, Senator Sam Nunn and General Colin Powell headed the negotiations with Cedras and the other Haitian military leaders. The next day, an agreement was signed, known as the Port-au-Prince Agreement, that proposed that the United States would enter Haiti in a peaceful manner. The military leaders only agreed to step down from power after being notified that the invasion had started and the U.S. Navy had already deployed their planes.\(^{57}\) On September 19\(^{\text{th}}\), over 20,000 troops entered Haiti without using force. Aristide was hesitant to comply with the Port-au-Prince Agreement as it called for the resignation of the coup leaders to not occur until

\(^{53}\) Ibid., p. 112.  
\(^{54}\) Fatton, p. 90.  
\(^{55}\) Dupuy, p. 158.  
\(^{56}\) Ibid., p. 159.  
\(^{57}\) Fatton, p. 95.
October 15th and it allowed for these “criminals” to get off free. With the promise that he would be reinstated as president, Aristide accepted the agreement and thanked the U.S. government for its assistance with the negotiations. A final detail of the Port-au-Prince Agreement was that it proposed that the implemented sanctions and the embargo on Haiti would be lifted immediately.58

After Haitian police and FRAPH members shot at Aristide supporters, the U.S. forces decided to further weaken the Haitian military and ordered the removal of military leaders two days earlier than previously stated. Cedras and the other coup leaders were flown out of Haiti by the United States and thirteen other coup participants were transferred to embassies in other areas. The assets of the coup leaders plus 600 other officers were unfrozen and the U.S. government decided to give Haitian military soldiers 5 million dollars in total. This was because they needed to be re-trained as they had been detained from returning to Haiti’s military after the invasion based on their past repression record. In addition, Cedras received 5 thousand dollars a month to pay for his three houses in Haiti.59 The lifting of sanctions was not done immediately as the agreement proposed. The persuasiveness of the United States assisted in the decision on September 29th by the UN to lift all economic sanctions on Haiti only after Aristide took office on October 16.60 Operation “Restore Democracy” was successful in ending the military government, restoring Aristide to power, and allowing the UN to take control of Haiti months

58 Dupuy, p. 159.
60 Dupuy, p. 159.
later. It did fail to promote long-term stability as it “never identified a clear objective to develop Haitian internal systems and did not foster Haitian involvement in modernization.” 61

The goal of dismantling the security forces was achieved, but the result was poor. The FADH was reduced from 7000 to 4000 and became the Interim Public Security Force’s (IPSF) temporarily as the FADH had the only trained personnel. With a 50 million dollar United States investment, The Haitian National Police (HNP) was then formed and trained separately from the IPSF in order to keep FADH members out of the HNP. However, the HNP was poorly trained and small in number. It had about 5,000 members controlling 7 million people, with very minimal assistance from UN peacekeepers. 62 As president, Aristide used the government’s aid money on “new ministries and instant gratification like backpacks for schoolchildren rather than investing in infrastructure.” 63 This resulted in the freezing of 100 million in aid and a loss of investment for Haiti. According to McGeary, “The economy has been dead in the water ever since.” 64 Aristide was not given any extra time as president to make up for the years he was in exile. He was also not permitted to run for a consecutive term as it was against the Haitian Constitution. With only one year left in his term, he soon had to let his ally, Rene Preval take power after winning the elections in 1996. 65

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62 Ibid., p. 31.
64 Ibid., p. 36.
The literature has produced different opinions on the 1994 invasion and on the actions the United States took during this time. There are many indications that confirm that the United States was primarily responsible for the military regime coming to power and for the present economic situation in Haiti. First, the United States implemented the creation and training of the FADH in 1915.66 The FADH members were those who participated and led the continuous coups that put corrupt and belligerent leaders in power. FRAPH, the front for FADH, was created after Emmanuel Constant helped throw Aristide out of office during the 1990 coup. He, along with other members, had been elected and put on the CIA payroll by an officer of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency. Constant was also said to have notified the United States before he organized the USS Harlem County incident.67

The Unites States intervention did not necessarily stem from a pure intention to restore Aristide’s rule and democracy in Haiti. The reason for its involvement was because of the overwhelming amount of Haitians seeking refuge in the United States as well as the aspect of using Haiti for business. The increasing flow of Haitian refugees created a large problem for Florida and the Caribbean and it was costing the United States millions of dollars in order for them to deal with the situation.68 Haiti provided cheap labor, petroleum, and was one of the largest assemblers of United States goods.69 A large amount of the United States clothing industry, especially its retailers, relied on Haitian factories for their clothing sales. Many companies suffered from the embargo and because of this, they put pressure on Congress to change the Clinton Administration’s policy with Haiti. In putting Aristide back into power, the

66 Farmer, p. 72-93.
68 Blum.
69 Farmer, p. 221.
United States hoped to be able to restore business and decrease the refugee population.\textsuperscript{70} For these reasons, the goal to restore democracy in Haiti was said to be “a mere rhetorical device used to ‘sell’ the invasion to domestic and international audiences.” \textsuperscript{71}

Aristide was anti-American and was disliked by Bush, the CIA, the Pentagon and many United States congressmen.\textsuperscript{72} It is known that the United States backed the military coup that removed Aristide from power. A Haitian official who supported the coup reported that the “US intelligence officers were present at military headquarters as the coup was taking place.” \textsuperscript{73} Its participants are said to have included CIA-backed death squads that had been previously involved in the violent acts of Jean-Claude’s regime.\textsuperscript{74} Two months before the coup occurred, a CIA analyst of Latin American affairs, Brian Latell, described Cedras “as one of ‘the most promising…Haitian leaders to emerge since the Duvalier family dictatorship was overthrown in 1986.’” \textsuperscript{75} During the 1990 elections, The National Endowment for Democracy and the USAID gave thousands of dollars to organizations such as Haitian Center for the Defense of Rights and Freedom. After the coup, this organization’s leader, Jean-Jacques Honorat, became the prime minister of the de facto government. Another recipient of the money, Radio Soleil, refused to broadcast Aristide’s message through their radio during his overthrow.\textsuperscript{76}

During Aristides election, in order to hurt his campaign, those who opposed him in Haiti declared that he had psychological issues. After Aristide was overthrown, the CIA was cited as

\textsuperscript{70} Girard, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., p. 28.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., p. 161.
\textsuperscript{73} Blum.
\textsuperscript{75} Blum.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.
the source behind a 1992 report of Aristide’s medical history claiming he had been seen for manic-depressive disorder and labeled him as mentally unstable. Aristide denied this report and later investigations on this claim found the CIA’s accusation and report fake. However, this projection of Aristide as being mentally ill acted against him in gaining United States support during the time of his exile and many felt that the president was not fit to be put back into power. When a member of the military junta was questioned about this rumor, he replied that “‘after the information about Aristide got out from our friends in the CIA, and Congress started talking about how bad he [was], we figured the chances of an invasion were gone.’” 77 The Clinton Administration was also said to have monitored Aristide’s choice in cabinet members when he was restored to power in 1994. Clinton’s Administration and other politicians put pressure on him to select Smarck Michel as his prime minister instead of Claudette Werleigh, who he favored, because of the fact that “she would seriously hurt efforts to obtain foreign aid and investment.” 78

Sanctions imposed before the intervention assisted in providing resources to FADH, which helped them continue the “massive campaign of terror, rape and murder against the population.” 79 The sanctions thus resulted in helping the military government and served no threat to these authority figures. The poor in the country, on the other hand, were deeply affected from the sanctions, thus causing the United State’s actions to be instead, harmful and inefficient. The United States embargo in 1994 cost Haiti its textile industry, which the United States assisted in implementing in the country during the Duvalier regime. In addition, 100,000 jobs

77 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
were lost and GDP fell almost 50 percent. After 1994, the economy of Haiti was severely
damaged and was just starting to recover when the 2010 earthquake hit.\textsuperscript{80}

The United State’s decision for intervention in Haiti during 1994 ultimately stemmed from
its own foreign affairs interests. Both the Bush and Clinton administrations lacked the intention
of putting Aristide back to power. United States organizations and agencies, specifically the CIA,
assisted in the overthrow of Aristide and the backing of the military government, which delayed
any progress for restoring democracy in Haiti. Although it was advertised as being the purpose
for the intervention, restoring democracy was not the true reason. The fact that trade relations
hurt industries and the refugee flow became overwhelming eventually caused Clinton to change
his policy in order to take action against the Haitian de facto government. This intervention and
the period of Aristide’s exile caused great harm to Haiti as a whole. It produced countless human
rights violations, damaged the economy, and made Haiti vulnerable for later coups and natural
disasters. These effects have immensely contributed to the extreme poverty and government
corruption that the country experiences today.

\textsuperscript{80} Crain, p. 17-39.
Bibliography


