



Haiti: The Gangs of Cité Soleil

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For Haiti, the new century began marked by instability, with Jean-Bertrand Aristide at the center of political controversy. In 2000, Aristide returned to power for his second term as president, but in 2004 a U.S.-led multinational force (MNF) intervened to quell a swelling tide of violence, and he was chased into exile. The United Nations returned to Haiti with another massive mission: to sustain the security established by the MNF, provide humanitarian assistance, and put in place the groundwork for future development. In 2006, in yet another round of national elections following a period of violence, René Préval was elected for a second term as president of Haiti. The decade ended with the devastating earthquake of January 2010, with a death toll estimated at 200,000, a refocusing of Haiti's immediate priorities, and yet another new government.

The period of 2004-7 saw gang activity that posed a profound threat to the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). While this examination touches other illicit structures, it zeros in on the gangs of Cité Soleil: their power, structure, motivation, and linkages to the political class; and the resulting impact they had on the country's politics, security, economics, and everyday life.¹ We then address the measures MINUSTAH took to confront the gangs, how the gangs were subdued only to reemerge, and the lessons learned.

Because issues of justice, crime, human rights, and economics are central to conflict resolution, the lessons learned in Haiti have wider implications for future international interventions.

The Causes of Conflict in Haiti

The violence that has both marred and shaped Haiti's history since independence over two centuries ago has been largely internal. Intrastate violence, fueled by corruption and motivated by race, religion, economics, or politics in basic struggles for power, is the country's history. Often at the center of the conflict have been illicit power structures (IPS), propagating violence to gain or sustain power, supporting the regime, co-opting the justice system, and endangering the public. In recent decades, whenever the international community has intervened in Haiti to establish security, furnish aid, and create an environment suitable for development, IPS have confounded progress.

François "Papa Doc" Duvalier (president 1957-71) and his son Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" (president 1971-86) exercised repressive dictatorial control through the formal structure of the military, and the informal structure of the Tonton Macoute. The latter was created specifically to counter any threat the military might pose to the dictator.² In the 1990s, as Haiti took its first steps toward democratic government, the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti (FRAPH) emerged as a violent counterforce to Aristide's populist Lavalas Party, supporting the military regime that overthrew Presi-

¹ Cité Soleil is the most infamous "bidonville," or slum area, of Port-au-Prince.

² The Tonton Macoute later became the Milie de Volontaires de la Sécurité — as if the new name might confer some measure of legitimacy.

dent Aristide and terrorizing Aristide supporters during his exile.³ In response, voodoo-inspired *zenglendos*, (a Creole term for bandits, robbers, rapists, and other violent criminals), emerged to counter the military and support the exiled Aristide. Apart from this IPS, however, organized violence was typically the domain of those supporting Haiti's dictators.

The end of the Cold War also ended Haiti's strategic importance as neighbor to Soviet-supported Cuba – a situation that had brought discreet U.S. support to both Duvalier governments. Jean-Bertrand Aristide emerged as a champion of the poor, challenging the country's political and economic status quo and playing an important role in ending the Duvalier regime. Aristide's popularity translated into political support for his Lavalas (Avalanche) Party, which swept to a landslide victory in 1990, in Haiti's first truly democratic exercise, following the U.S.-supported exile of Jean-Claude Duvalier. As president, though, Aristide quickly alienated the country's economic and political elites. In 1991, a military coup – Haiti's historically preferred method for transfer of power – halted Aristide's first term as president. He was deposed by General Raoul Cédras, commander of the Haitian Armed Forces, or Forces Armées d'Haïti (FAd'H), and spent most of his presidential term in exile. His overthrow initiated steps toward U.S. intervention.

Although the U.S. government no longer had a compelling strategic interest in Haiti, the invasion of Florida shores by refugee "boat people" escaping Haiti's poverty and violence at the end of the Duvalier era was catalyst enough for intervention. Preaching violence and anti-Americanism, Aristide thus began undermining the foundation of his foreign support, which had hoped for democratic success in Haiti, the western hemisphere's first black republic. After the Cédras coup, violence increased and the flood of refugees to the United States drew worldwide attention. Diplomatic intervention failed to remove Cédras from power, and the U.S. government considered stronger measures. Given Aristide's evident anti-Americanism, the U.S. security strategy amounted to keeping Haitians in Haiti.⁴

In October 1993, the USS *Harlan County*, a tank-landing warship, with military, police and governmental advisers aboard, was sent to Port-au-Prince, supporting the first step of a planned UN-sanctioned intervention. But the Clinton administration, facing the real possibility of an armed confrontation and after the recent loss of American lives in the "Black Hawk Down" incident in Somalia, ordered the ship back to sea the next day⁵. The incident, a diplomatic retreat, was politically embarrassing for the United Nations, the United States, and the international community generally. After months of UN-sanctioned embargoes and stalled negotiations, it seemed that no action short of armed force would see Cédras relinquish control and let the democratically elected president return to office.⁶

³ FRAPH was a paramilitary organization with support inside the military and among political conservatives opposing Lavalas. Haitians understood FRAPH as merely the latest in the line of politically backed gangs that existed to gain and hold power by violence or the threat of it.

⁴ The end of the Cold War changed U.S. strategic interest in Haiti. The impoverished "boat people" arriving in Florida certainly had an important economic and political impact, but Haiti was also ripe to become a staging area for South American cartels trafficking drugs to Miami, New York, and Montreal.

⁵ Peter J. A. Riehm, "The USS Harlan County Affair," *Military Review* 77, no. 4 (1997), www.questia.com/library/journal/1P3-23556725/the-uss-harlan-county-affair.

⁶ Walter E. Kretchik, "Planning for 'Intervasion': The Strategic and Operational Setting for Uphold

In July 1994, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 940, calling for the application of all necessary means to dislodge the Cédras regime. The resolution envisioned a multinational force composed primarily of U.S. military, followed by the UN Mission in Haiti (UNMIH). In September, after a diplomatic mission led by former U.S. President Carter negotiated the Cédras regime's departure, U.S. forces moved into Haiti, leading the MNF. With security restored, UNMIH relieved the MNF, intending to usher in a period of development, capacity building, economic recovery, and political stability.

Aristide spent most of his first term as president in exile, and though he was returned to office, the remainder of his term quickly expired. Constitutionally, he could not serve consecutive terms as president, and in the next election (1996), René Prével, prime minister under Aristide, was elected president. Aristide nonetheless managed to wield much influence and power. As he awaited his next political opportunity, Haiti's poor continued to recognize him as their real leader.

The Peace Process

The next few years seemed to promise peace. There were no external threats to security, and the United Nations had a significant military presence. America led bilateral donors that made significant contributions, and the international media were attentive and supportive. A new democracy seemed to be emerging. There was reason for optimism over Haiti's future.

But as the twentieth century drew to a close, optimism for sustainable progress waned. The Haitian government seemed frozen on important constitutional, justice, finance, and tax reform issues. Aristide, though out of office, maintained power and influence, as measured by the public adoration and media attention he attracted. As other crises arose globally and competed for aid and development money, the international donor community grew weary of the political inaction and wasted money and effort. A political paralysis set in, where all parties seemed to serve self-interest first, and all opposed the Aristide left. Aristide's aspirations for another term as president, leading the Fanmi Lavalas Party, promised ongoing confrontation and political blockage.

In 2000, Aristide was again elected president. The victory was protested as fraudulent, boycotted by opposition parties, and openly dismissed by Haiti's economic elites, presaging continued government paralysis and political confrontation.⁷ As in his previous term, opposition to Aristide continued to grow, and by early 2004, political violence and armed uprisings were again threatening the country's security. Following another U.S.-led multinational intervention, Aristide resigned his position as president and was ushered from the country, this time to serve his political exile in South Africa. Aristide claimed that his resignation was only to quell the violence and avoid bloodshed, but

Democracy," in *Invasion, Intervention "Intervasion": A Concise History of the US Army in Operation Uphold Democracy*, ed. Walter E. Kretchik, Robert F. Baumann, and John T. Fishel (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1998), 35-40.

⁷ Earlier in 2000, an overwhelming Lavalas Party victory in parliamentary elections brought charges of widespread fraud. This ignited the opposition against Aristide. When decisions were made restricting candidates qualified to proceed to the second electoral round, it all seemed contrived to limit challengers, and the political opposition intensified against Aristide.

later he would accuse the diplomatic community of orchestrating his “kidnapping.”

With a backdrop of violence, corruption, and exploitation, Haiti was afflicted by clear security gaps. Aristide had disbanded the military in 1995; the police force, still in early development, was ineffective and fragile; the justice system simply did not function; and the coastline and border were largely open and unprotected. Haiti was and is the poorest country in the western hemisphere. Distribution of wealth overwhelmingly favors a tiny percentage of the population, racism (brown or “blancs” versus black) is prevalent, and economic opportunity remains absent. For the poor, these realities were underscored by the political isolation, once again, of their champion, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. All this was, in many ways, the outward manifestation of illicit power as wielded in Haiti.

Assessing Haiti’s Illicit Power Structures

Although this chapter focuses on the gangs of Cité Soleil, an understanding of other groups that wielded illicit power is important to understanding just how they exerted power and how they affected the peace process and society generally.

The Former FAd’H

First among the other illicit structures is the former Haitian army, or FAd’H. The exile or decommissioning of its leadership in 1994 saw the FAd’H evolve as an illicit power structure, with particular support in the northern and central provinces. Government inaction in addressing issues of military pensions and retraining for unemployed soldiers caused grievances to fester. By 2004, the failed performance of elements of the Haitian National Police (HNP) became a cause for former soldiers, dressed in makeshift uniforms, to take up weapons, march publicly, and declare themselves responsible for local security.⁸

Ex-FAd’H activity was thus sometimes rationalized as filling security voids left by the fledgling HNP. But when peaceful protest and political lobbying failed, ex-FAd’H members turned to criminal activity. Their numbers actually grew as unemployed men, too young to have been part of the military that was disbanded years earlier, signed on in hope of opportunities with an organization that enjoyed some small measure of legitimacy. In time, they began to act illegally, committing thefts, robbery, and violence.

In Haiti’s northern and central regions, the ex-FAd’H was prominent in the uprising of 2003-4, which led to Aristide’s most recent exile and second unfinished presidential term. The visible presence of the ex-FAd’H as an armed force, even though of questionable capacity, challenged the Government of Haiti’s (GoH’s) legitimacy, particularly in outlying locations such as Cap Haïtien, Hinche, and Gonaïves.

The presence and activities of the ex-FAd’H, armed and threatening to future security, stimulated significant expenditure of time, effort, and funds toward strategies of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). The MNF and, later, UNMIH’s

⁸ The author, as UNMIH Police Commissioner with a mandate that included developing the Haitian security apparatus, was discreetly approached by Haitian political figures seeking support for a revitalized Haitian military, including a gendarmerie. Given Haiti’s history of military violence and control, the idea was patently unacceptable to the international community.

security forces were often preoccupied with public demonstrations and criminal activity by the ex-FAd'H, and the Haitian government was routinely reminded of promises not kept, and embarrassed by its inability to control such an unruly group. Behind-the-scenes elements of the government politicked for the military's return. The weaknesses and corruption that gripped the HNP were held up as evidence that the experiment in civilian policing was staggering and that a revitalized military would be a quicker and more certain solution to national security. Though the ex-FAd'H represented a much less violent threat than urban gangs, this illicit power structure was an important political, economic, and security distraction.

Having failed to gain support for ex-Fad'H causes, its acknowledged public leader, a former sergeant known as Ravix, aligned with Cité Soleil gangs in attacks against MINUSTAH and HNP. When Ravix died in a 2005 gun battle with the HNP backed by MINUSTAH, public support for the ex-FAd'H faded, and for a time its significance waned.⁹

Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime

After the Duvalier regime, Haiti emerged as a preferred transshipment route by South American drug cartels moving narcotics to markets in Miami, New York, and Montreal. Haiti was ripe to be exploited. Only 12 hours by "fast boat" from Colombia to a vast unpatrolled coastline, it had unregulated remote air strips, undeveloped policing partnerships with regional neighbors, inadequate border control with the Dominican Republic, shipping to North America through Cap Haïtien and air transport connection from Port-au-Prince, a largely cooperative poverty-stricken population, and international security forces otherwise engaged and concentrated in urban areas.¹⁰

In the early post-Duvalier years, the North American transshipment link in Haiti was made by Florida- and Quebec-based organized-crime groups. In time, the North American groups would reduce their work and risk by engaging newly emerging Haitian criminal organizations. Some of these became well known by the broader Haitian community and the international community for their links to Haitian politicians. The emerging narco-economy was damaging to Haiti's reputation as the country struggled in the early stages of democratic development and hoped to encourage international aid and investment. But narcotic-funded corruption was soon established—a reality bound to influence politics, economics, and social development for some time to come.¹¹

⁹ A long history of human rights violations against its own people contributed to Fad'H's being decommissioned. For 20 years, any idea of reinstating the Haitian military had no legitimate support. But today, after the 2010 earthquake, with the economy stagnant, UN-led development stalled, and HNP failing as a guarantor of public security, reestablishing the military has emerged as a subject of legitimate public debate. Haiti's younger population simply does not remember the Duvalier years or FAd'H's legacy of violence and fear.

¹⁰ Because of its horseshoe shape, Haiti has a disproportionately long coastline, stretching 1,100 miles, with prominent peninsulas north and south. By comparison, Florida has a coastline of about 1,350 miles. See Country Studies Program, "Country Profiles: Haiti," 2013, www.mongabay.com/reference/new_profiles/908.html.

¹¹ In 2005, organized crime orchestrated a mass escape from the National Prison. Officials were bribed, cells were left open, and hundreds of prisoners simply walked away. The additional burden on police resources from HNP and MINUSTAH, already fully engaged with the gangs of Cité Soleil, was enormous.

Haitian National Police

HNP was crippled by Aristide's return to power in 2001. It was still struggling to develop but had made undeniable progress since its creation only six years before. Then suddenly, senior police leaders were fired or resigned as Aristide installed his own leadership. By 2004, HNP's fragile foundation had collapsed. Progress was erased, and the organization tumbled quickly as some units became little more than violent street gangs. Certain elements supported all manner of criminal activity, including drug trafficking, robbery, murder, and kidnapping. The police, even while receiving important international assistance, contributed to the insecure environment impeding development in every sector. Moreover, without capacity or credibility and with a deservedly negative reputation in the region, HNP could not call on its neighbors for assistance or collaboration.¹² In many respects, HNP itself was fast becoming an illicit power structure.¹³

Private Security

The business of private security was a constant reminder of the insecure environment and of who actually held the money and power. Virtually no business in the country and virtually no residence occupied by anyone of any means was without armed guards. Although there was no regulation and no recordkeeping, private security companies were surely the greatest importer of weapons, ammunition, and security equipment, and perhaps the country's most important industry. While the absence of regulations and controls alone does not support consideration of private security as an illicit power structure, it was common knowledge that some industrialists engaged criminal gangs as private security for their businesses and factories or simply compensated gang leaders for a "hands-off" approach. This was a particular strategy in Port-au-Prince and the neighborhoods and industrial areas around Cité Soleil.

Gangs of Port-au-Prince

Gangs as instruments of power. As a Catholic priest in the "Baby Doc" Duvalier era, Aristide was a visible and vocal antipoverty activist with a strongly committed following among Haiti's poor. In the 1980s, he became widely known internationally. In time, though, his international celebrity turned to notoriety as he became known for his public

¹² Policing and crime control, even on a national level, is a matter of "neighborhood watch." Haiti had a less-than-stellar reputation in its Caribbean neighborhood and did not have positive policing relationships with its neighbors; particularly the Dominican Republic but also the United States, Cuba, and the Bahamas. Nor did it have a good reputation in the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police. Without regional partnerships, Haiti was defenseless in matters of international criminal intelligence, narcotic traffic, money laundering, weapons traffic, and illegal immigration.

¹³ When experienced senior police resigned or were fired after Aristide's return as president, their replacements were often appointees without experience or professional training and with suspect personal histories. When the United Nations returned in 2004 with a mandate to build capacity and aid the HNP operationally, vetting these suspect appointees was a top priority. Curiously, the HNP and GoH gave no cooperation. No one was removed from the HNP because they were inappropriately or illegally engaged, were not qualified, presented security risks, or were suspected of criminal history.

anti-Americanism, support for violent uprisings, and rumored involvement in the drug trade. He was defrocked by the Catholic Church, but his popular support among poor Haitians remained strong. Aristide facilitated organization of armed support among the poor, particularly in the slum areas of Port-au-Prince. This took the form of armed street gangs, led by young men who had grown up in the slums and under the influence of the priest Aristide. There has been little empirical research—and certainly no admissible evidence for any judicial proceeding—tying Aristide and Lavalas to the use of gangs as instruments of illicit power. Also, there is little admissible evidence tying prominent business leaders to the gangs. And yet, most who know much about Haiti regard both assumptions as truth—a reality that perhaps makes the gangs’ origins a question of “chicken or egg.”¹⁴

The gangs were characterized by unsophisticated leadership, opportunistic crime, and brutality. Promiscuous violence accompanying criminal activity was not uncommon and was intended to shock, threaten, and intimidate. While gang activity could be linked to public protests, general labor strikes, elections, or political events, the gangs’ real power derived from violence or the threat of violence. They were motivated by turf protection and group loyalty but also displayed characteristics of political objectives and criminal entrepreneurialism.

According to Max Manwaring of Strategic Studies Institute, first-generation gangs are traditional street gangs with a turf orientation. When they engage in criminal enterprise, it is largely opportunistic and local in scope. Second-generation gangs are engaged in business. Entrepreneurial and drug centered, they tend to pursue implicit political objectives. Third-generation gangs are primarily mercenary, but many seek to advance explicit political and social agendas. Thus, third-generation gangs find themselves “at the three-way intersection among crime, war, and politics.” While this categorization may oversimplify, it is useful as a broad picture of gang structure and development, emphasizing the complexity of the gang as illicit power in Haiti.¹⁵

Kolbe and Muggah aptly describe the relationship between Haiti’s gangs and its chronic instability:

What is most worrying, however, is that some of Haiti’s gangs—particularly those affiliated with organized crime, paramilitary, and private security companies—are tied to the country’s political elite. It is those with money and power who are most inclined to use gangs as a means of intimidating enemies and extending business interests . . . As everyone in Haiti knows, there are specific politicians, business leaders, and wealthy land owners who serve as the gangs’ chief patrons. Essential to diminishing insecurity associated with gangs, then, is a better understanding of these relationships and exposing them for all to see.¹⁶

¹⁴ For recent research on the gangs’ motivation, the relationships holding them together, and public perceptions, see Athena Kolbe, “Revisiting Haiti’s Gangs and Organized Violence,” HASOW International Conference Discussion Paper, June 4, 2013, www.hasow.org/.

¹⁵ Max G. Manwaring, “Street Gangs: The New Urban Insurgency,” monograph, Strategic Studies Institute, 2005, 6, www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=597.

¹⁶ Athena Kolbe and Robert Muggah, “Kolbe and Muggah: Haiti’s Gangs Could Be a Force for Good,” *Ottawa Citizen*, June 4, 2013.

In time, the gangs situated in and controlling slum neighborhoods of Cité Soleil came to be seen as the armed element of Aristide's populist Lavalas Party. If not created expressly to support Aristide and his Lavalas political movement, the gangs were certainly exploited for that purpose. Aristide had long known the five highest-profile gang leaders of 2004-5. The five, known as Amaral, Tu-Pac (2Pac), Bily, Labanye, and Dread (Dred) Wilme, were competitive and threatened one another but were known to fight together against the police, international forces, or rival gangs. A well-known and dominant gang leader in Gonaïves, Ti Will, was not known to venture openly into Port-au-Prince. Along with Ravix Ramissainte (the former FAd'H sergeant, with influence in Cap Haïtien and the interior provinces), these were the best-known gang leaders in the country.¹⁷

The gangs seemed to believe they responded to Aristide's direction as a counter to prevailing political and economic interests. Not that the gangs were actually controlled by outside forces, but they characterized themselves as antiestablishment champions of Haiti's poor. Gang activity included participation, or at least a presence, in political action and at public events. Wherever peaceful protests erupted in violence, or armed protesters suddenly appeared in a crowd, speculation arose that such acts were politically directed to provoke HNP into overreacting and initiating violence, thus discrediting the GoH and UNMIH.

Although the Cité Soleil gangs' origins were linked to the rise of Aristide and the politics of the Lavalas Party, and although the gangs were seen as an armed representation of Haiti's political left, they did not stand as one in support of any political or ideological position. Indeed, the gangs' motivation and what or who actually spurred them to act was not always clear. Much of what we think we know of the Port-au-Prince gangs' motivation comes from academic writings, media reporting, official reports of variously mandated international agencies, and statements and reports of the self-interested. An interesting source is to watch and listen to the gang leaders themselves using online and social media communication. Although the leaders do not share equal time and although some are more camera shy than others, the gangs' message and motivation becomes clearer.

At their foundation, the gangs exist as a social reality spawned by strong and influential personalities, abject poverty, and the lack of access or opportunity that is reality for most Haitians. There are few other options for young men of Port-au-Prince's bidonvilles. In the end, at least for now, the gangs of Port-au-Prince (and Cité Soleil) might best be described as politically *influenced* rather than politically *motivated*.

In an unusual cultural phenomenon, gang leaders gained a sort of "rock star" status in Port-au-Prince. Some local media catered to and fed this social status, creating a public profile and fostering reputations. The gangs' size, visibility, and, indeed, power gained from this public profile. Interviews, including live radio broadcasts, served no particular purpose but to boast of violent acts or threaten legitimate authority and frighten the public.

While gangs of some description were evident in all Haitian cities, it was the gangs of Port-au-Prince—and the gangs of Cité Soleil in particular, with a direct historical

¹⁷ The source was an NGO employee with a history of work in Haiti, who knew the gang leaders as children and had occasional contact with them as young adults and gang leaders.

association to Aristide—that were responsible for the violence that affected the country’s politics. Cité Soleil borders the Port-au-Prince industrial-commercial zone. The area, developed in the Duvalier era, became home to Haitians from around the country gravitating to Port-au-Prince in hope of finding work. Home to the city’s most impoverished, it is a small peninsula recovered from the sea and hemmed in by the water, Route Nationale (the national highway), the city’s industrial center, and the port. It is also very near the international airport. This geography makes the neighborhood of real tactical importance where internal security is concerned.

Aristide supporters saw the U.S.-led coalition that facilitated Aristide’s departure in 2004, and the UN force, MINUSTAH, that replaced it as invading and occupying forces. Before 2004, gangs almost never molested the international community. UN Police, foreign military, and aid and development workers traveled the country and operated at minimal risk. This may be because at that time, the (U.S.-led) international community had returned Aristide to power, hundreds of millions in aid and development dollars were available, and the possibilities for a new democracy still shone. Meanwhile, the gangs openly targeted the newly created HNP. (In 1996-97, on average, one police officer was killed every week.) The international community orchestrated Aristide’s 2004 exile; then came the MINUSTAH “occupation” of Haiti, previewing the international community as targets of the gangs.

Early in 2004, gang attacks against UN forces were tentative, probing hit-and-runs. By autumn, attacks became more frequent, much larger, and better coordinated and sustained, in the manner of guerrilla urban warfare. Small-unit assault techniques included ambushes, coordinated arcs of fire, and heavier small arms. When MINUSTAH did not respond with the same aggression as the MNF before it, gang attacks became much more aggressive, more frequent, and deadlier.

The gang structure. Street gangs were generally hierarchical structures with recognizable leaders, lieutenants, and soldiers. Leaders, born and raised in the neighborhoods where their gangs operated, were well known to the local population and were often identified by nicknames acquired in childhood. A unique characteristic of these gangs was the addition of young criminal deportees from the United States.¹⁸ Having grown up in North America and often without economic means or French or Creole language skills, and sometimes without close family ties in the country, they were lost in Haiti and easily recruited into gangs. Often, their only assets were their criminal connections and experience in North America and their own brand of street violence.

The size of each gang seemed to rise or fall with the leader’s notoriety. Jewelry, designer-labeled clothing, and cars separated gang leaders from the populations they controlled. Allegiances among the gangs were common as forces joined for attacks against police, international forces, or a rival gang. But alliances crumbled as fast as they formed, often ending in gang-on-gang violence. As often happens in the gang lifestyle, the greatest risk to gang members came not from the legitimate security forces but from ambitious subordinates and rival gangsters.

¹⁸ Hundreds of Haitians were deported from America, and fewer from Canada. Deportations from both countries were low key and handled discreetly.

Illicit gang activities. Most gangs were associated with the geographic area they occupied or with the leader they followed. They thrived on local criminal activity. Using Cité Soleil as a safe harbor, gangs moved in and out of the neighboring commercial zones to commit crimes. Robbery and hijacking were typical activities, and kidnapping became a thriving cottage industry. Rape was commonplace. The sad irony is that the poor bore the real brunt of gang violence. Violence was often so intense that humanitarian agencies could not provide service in gang-controlled zones or would not put their people at risk by venturing into hot areas. Even outside the high-risk zones, humanitarian organizations risked theft or robbery since their humanitarian supplies were of value to the criminal element.

Opposition to the peace process, use of violence, irreconcilable interests. The gangs viewed MINUSTAH as an occupying force: an extension of the MNF, which had managed Aristide's departure. Moreover, they saw it as supporting the country's economic elite, the interim government, and HNP, and fundamentally anti-Aristide and anti-Lavalas. The United Nations was rationalized as the enemy, and its continued presence meant that Aristide was being denied an opportunity to return to power.

Not that the gangs had any definite political position, but since they were willing to fight UN security forces to control their own turf, it is fair to say the gangs opposed stabilization – or, at least, the UN version of the process. There was no unified position, manifesto, or constitutional plan for reform. Demands for UN withdrawal and Aristide's return were messages heard most frequently, but there was no consistency of message and certainly no rallying cry among the gangs, which were very much centered on their individual leaders. The gangs did occasionally join for common purposes, such as to attack UN forces, but they generally competed for local control, and intergang violence was common.

Gangs were mercenary, too, in the sense that their protection was for sale. Even the economic elites recognized the value of having a gang for security where there was no legitimate alternative. Said one gang member: "We have always gotten money and political support from [name of wealthy business owner]. So we are accountable to him." The businessman is not named, but any citizen of Port-au-Prince could fill in the blank.¹⁹

Gangs were routinely hired to protect business interests in particular neighborhoods.²⁰ That antiestablishment, Lavalas-inspired gangs sold their services to the hated *gros mangeurs* underscores the indistinct, opportunistic nature of their motivation.²¹ They wielded power through violence, fear, and crime while professing to offer a measure of local "protection," authority, and control. With an array of small arms, Molotov cocktails, and, occasionally, grenades, the gangs waged a guerilla-style insurgency. Attacks against the HNP and UN Police and military were frequent, sustained, and deadly.²²

¹⁹ Kolbe, "Revisiting Haiti's Gangs."

²⁰ "Although ostensibly criminal in nature, the gangs of Port-au-Prince were an inherently political phenomenon. Powerful elites from across the political spectrum exploited gangs as instruments of political warfare, providing them with arms, funding, and protection from arrest." Michael Dziedzic and Robert Perito, "Haiti: Confronting the Gangs of Port-au-Prince," U.S. Institute of Peace, Special Report no. 208, Sept. 2008, 1.

²¹ A Creole term meaning "big eaters," referring to the economic elite.

²² Gangs were rumored to have mortars and rockets, but this was not verified. A 2004 grenade attack against the Provisional Electoral Council building was an isolated incident.

Analysis of the gangs' role in violence against journalists is also noteworthy. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), no suspicious deaths of journalists were reported when Aristide was out of office during 1994–99. At least eight journalists were killed during 2000–2007 – the years he returned to official power, continuing into the period of his second forced exile (which began in 2004). These were the years of peak gang violence. All the journalists were killed violently (seven by gunshot and one by machete). It is suspected that at least five of those deaths were directly related to the victims' work as journalists. In the other three cases, motive was unconfirmed. While no clear evidence ties violence against journalists to their reporting on Lavalas, Aristide, or the gangs, the stories, as reported, are cause for reflection.²³

For a period immediately following President Aristide's departure, the gangs' public image was elevated by the ongoing perception that they somehow represented the poor and Lavalas as the popular political movement. Over time, this view was discredited by the steady barrage of extraordinary and indiscriminate violence, with gang leaders murdering each other in turf wars or being killed or apprehended by local police and international forces. When the deaths of innocent victims increased right along with those of gang members, it seemed evident, especially to President Préval, that the gangs were little more than violent thugs whose interests were irreconcilable with the peace process – not political activists he wanted to negotiate with. After Préval's attempts to negotiate with gang leaders met with shocking episodes of violence in November 2006, he issued an ultimatum to “surrender or die.” There were no rules, and the environment had devolved into anarchy.

Even though MINUSTAH was not operationally effective immediately, its deployment threatened the gangs' safe havens and the freedom of individual members while also challenging Aristide's power. The violence grew so bad that the United Nations could not deliver aid or implement quick-impact projects (projects intended to give a small measure of immediate humanitarian and economic relief to the poor while demonstrating the intent to develop longer-term projects). The gangs, in their violent opposition to the United Nations, directly hurt the poorest of the poor – those they claimed to protect and represent. Finally, the view that the gangs opposed, or were being used in opposition to, the peace process has added credibility when we consider that UNMIH's presence in Port-au-Prince had gone largely unopposed by the gangs. But when MINUSTAH deployed in 2004, the UN presence worked against, not for, Aristide's return to power – the opposite of UNMIH's impact.

The Cité Soleil Gangs' Relationship to the Peace Process

MINUSTAH was tasked with a complex mandate that included helping the GoH establish and maintain security, provide humanitarian assistance, and create an environment conducive to development.

²³ CPJ, analyzing events surrounding the deaths, cites the victims' role as journalists as the likely motive for their murders. CPJ, “5 Journalists Killed in Haiti since 1992/Motive Confirmed,” www.cpj.org/killed/americas/haiti/.

Protection of Civilians

As with everything else in Haiti, the influence of gang activity varied depending on one's socioeconomic stratum. For the economic elite, impact was measured in terms of profit and productivity, freedom of movement, and the fear and risk of kidnapping. This small minority of the population reacted predictably. It was vocal in protest and active in its lobbying – in Haiti, of course, but also in the United States, Canada, and the United Nations. At home, groups such as the Chamber of Commerce discussed security concerns and protested UN ineffectiveness. When gangs threatened to fire on aircraft landing and taking off at the international airport, the threats had to be taken seriously.

But for the poorest people living in central Port-au-Prince, the impact was more direct. At the height of violence, local street markets did not open, and regional produce was not delivered. The few who could afford the meager cost of simple education kept their children home, and churches closed. Even those who stayed off the streets during times of extreme violence were not free of danger. Many were killed or injured when bullets ripped through the sheet-metal walls of slum dwellings.²⁴ Rape was a common tactic of power and control, and women were victimized and revictimized sexually, their only defense being to flee the zones of gang control. Many did flee, seeking assistance from international organizations outside their home neighborhoods, but where there were few opportunities to relocate to safer areas, victims were destined to return to their gang-controlled neighborhoods. Fearing retaliation and revictimization, they dare not identify their attackers.

Humanitarian and development assistance. In the poorest slum areas of Port-au-Prince, where the poverty-stricken population depended on aid and humanitarian organizations, any disruption of service owing to gang activity was bound to have a dire impact. For example, in 2004, gang violence meant that tons of emergency aid (135 containers, or 2,500 tons), much of it destined to hurricane-ravaged Gonaïves, could not be moved from the seaport without an armed escort.²⁵ Agencies with long-standing reputations for independence, such as MSF, tended to have less difficulty accessing gang-held territory, as did organizations with good local contacts. But general access was undeniably restricted, freedom of movement impaired, and distribution of critical goods and services limited. UN-associated humanitarian agencies could not venture into gang-held territory without an overwhelming police or military presence. Even then, security from sniper attack was never certain. Where security could not be assured, services could not be provided, food and water distributed, or medical assistance administered, and development programs could not proceed as planned. The result was that the people who needed assistance most – those forced to live in the worst possible conditions – suffered most from the gangs' power to limit access to their territory.

²⁴ Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) reports that admissions for gunshot wounds fell from 1,300 in 2006 to 500 in 2007. Numbers for stab wounds, rape, and beatings continued to rise. In 2007, 2,847 patients were admitted for violence-related trauma. Not reported by MSF was the constant tension surrounding HNP's entering and searching MSF facilities for gang members being treated. HNP largely ignored pleas from MINUSTAH about this. MSF, "US Annual Report 2007, (Project Support – Haiti)," 24-25, www.doctor-withoutborders.org/news/allcontent.cfm?id=31

²⁵ Kevin Sullivan, "Beheadings Mark Haiti's Latest Misery," *Washington Post*, Oct. 8, 2004, 26, www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A16234-2004Oct7.html.

Governance. For the interim government, gang violence pushed security issues ahead of all political business. Exacerbating the situation, the HNP, the government's only security force, itself was a target of the violence, as was the United Nations, the main international player and partner of the GoH. Also, the government saw itself as restricted by its interim status, and largely powerless to make decisions that would reach beyond its limited tenure. The interim prime minister, Gérard Latortue, let the street violence overshadow his political responsibilities. He met with police and military leaders regularly and personally chaired security committee meetings. He was briefed routinely at the strategic level on plans, and at the tactical level on operations. He, rather than his ministers (of public security and justice), was the government's political face on security issues. The government and the United Nations were blamed for failing to take effective action, but in turn, the GoH blamed the United Nations for failing to be aggressive enough against the gangs and for failing to give HNP effective operational support.²⁶

Rule of law. HNP's considerable early development (1994-2000) largely ended after the core of capable executives and senior managers was dismissed or resigned in the presence of the new Aristide government in 2001.²⁷ When untrained and unqualified leaders replaced them, a culture of corruption began to consume the organization. Operational elements of the police were turned by the lure of drug money, facilitating narcotics transshipment from South America and Jamaica to North American markets.²⁸ Others facilitated or actually participated in kidnappings, often collaborating with the gangs in the process.²⁹

Even the legitimate HNP units cooperated with the UN partners only as it suited their purposes. The police, internally directed at the highest levels, often purposely evaded monitoring by MINUSTAH. HNP operations were often conducted without UN knowledge or sanction. In such situations, armed engagements with alleged "bandits" were a virtual certainty. Invariably, suspects were killed and civilians killed or wounded, but no known internal investigation or public accountability ever followed.³⁰

On the other side, gangs hunted police and bragged publicly of their murders. HNP had been a target of the violence since its inception in 1994. In 1996-97, on average, one Haitian police officer was murdered every week. While not all this violence could be attributed to gang activity, much of it was, and HNP took extrajudicial vengeance on

²⁶ By design and agreement, HNP and the United Nations were to work together in security operations. This was meant to ensure coordination, of course, but it included the mentoring and oversight implied by working together.

²⁷ Pierre Denize (director general), Ernst Mompoint (chief of administration), and Jessie Coicou (head of forensic science) were among those forced to leave. Leon Charles and Mario Andresol left HNP as young officers but were, in succession, named HNP director general after Aristide left the country.

²⁸ The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), actively investigating drug transshipment through Haiti, was well aware of HNP complicity with drug traffickers. The DEA collaborated only with specially vetted HNP officers, where their presence was necessary to facilitate an investigative action.

²⁹ MINUSTAH, investigating kidnappings in Port-au-Prince, discovered cases where the HNP "kidnapping unit" had facilitated or actually committed kidnappings. In other situations, HNP elements inserted themselves into investigations or negotiations, attempting to inflate ransom demands and helping themselves to a cut of the action.

³⁰ Where the United Nations felt compelled to intervene, HNP gave no cooperation and certainly no access to records or witnesses. Simply put, HNP would not subordinate itself to external scrutiny.

reputed gang members. At the time, UN forces and the international community were almost never targets of gang violence.

In a particularly horrific event in 2004, three young HNP officers were murdered and their bodies later beheaded, in an event that gang members (and local media) hyped as signaling the transformation of Port-au-Prince into Baghdad. In 2003 postwar Iraq, insurgent activity included well-publicized high-profile kidnappings and executions, including beheadings. Haitian gangsters, hoping to intimidate the GoH and MINUSTAH, threatened to turn Port-au-Prince into another Baghdad. Photos, held out to be the victims, are still online. Evidence suggested that the three HNP officers' beheading was postmortem, though the gangs still achieved their objective of shocking the public and influencing local media. The intent, of course, was to strike fear in the public, the international community, and the Haitian political leadership.

International Strategy and Its Impact on the Gangs of Cité Soleil

No international agency or group was affected more by the gangs of Cité Soleil than MINUSTAH. Ill-prepared to deal with the level of violence, the mission immediately fell short of mandated objectives and public expectations of its ability to provide security. Security (in Port-au-Prince particularly) became the all-consuming priority, and effort and resources were diverted from other stated objectives of the multifaceted mandate that included aid, capacity building, and human rights issues. Coordination between the UN military and police was inconsistent at best, and the United Nations had no executive authority to act independently of the Haitian government on security matters. Thus, the United Nations struggled to quell gang violence, and its ability to protect the civilian population was repeatedly called into question.

This does not mean that the United Nations was unaware of the gangs as illicit power structures, their attachment to Aristide and Lavalas, and their mercenary willingness to do the bidding of whoever paid. But information about the gangs, though generally considered true on some level, was generally unsubstantiated and certainly had never been exposed officially through the courts or even with credible people making on-the-record declarations. Even accepting that the gangs could be externally influenced, Aristide had been removed from the scene, the country's economic elites supported the international intervention, and the history of recent missions indicated that while the gangs were a potentially violent and disruptive influence, they had never before been a direct threat to UN personnel.

In fact, the United Nations was unprepared for the level and nature of violence soon to emerge. The security situation was expected to be a matter of establishing public order, in political circumstances similar to the insecurity that had characterized Haiti during its first brushes with democracy 15 years earlier: public disorder, large demonstrations and protests, both planned and spontaneous, and the violence and disruption to daily life and economic activity that sprang from these. To meet this need, Formed Police Units (FPUs) were recruited from police-contributing countries. Responsibilities included operational support to the GoH and institutional development through training, mentoring, and advising. Outside Port-au-Prince, FPUs were deployed to the historical political hotspots, including Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, and Hinche. The UN military

component, four times the police strength and seen as the mission's security foundation, was concentrated in Port-au-Prince but deployed widely to represent MINUSTAH throughout the country.

Expectations were high that the United Nations would be immediately effective in maintaining security established by the MNF. But shortly after the mission's launch, gang violence erupted, and the United Nations was criticized, publicly by the media and privately by the GoH, for its inability to respond quickly and effectively. Meanwhile, the UN mission administration and rollout was slow, and months after the Security Council resolution had passed, only a small percentage of the security resources had arrived in country.³¹ Not until six months after the mission began did the UN military determine that it had sufficient resources to assist in a major operation to establish a police presence in Cité Soleil. Though the military component outnumbered MINUSTAH police four to one, the military interpreted its role as limited to support and considered criminal gangs a police issue, outside primary military responsibility.

But the MINUSTAH police's capacity was also limited, and from their first patrols in central Port-au-Prince, they were under attack. Over a period of weeks, the intensity and sophistication of assaults increased. The FPU's were neither trained nor equipped for the urban guerrilla violence they faced. In the tight confines of urban Port-au-Prince, bulky armored personnel carriers were of limited value, and the FPU's had neither experience in "dismounted" armed patrol nor close-quarter battle skills required to fight gangs in densely populated neighborhoods.

The police component had been recruited as mentors and advisers and hailed from dozens of different countries. Thus, it was not a coherent operational force and had no equipment or training to deal with the insurgent-style violence. English and French language skills (the primary languages of the mission) among the police were limited, and, of course, MINUSTAH police operated without executive authority. At the same time, HNP often operated independently of MINUSTAH when it chose not to be constrained by an international presence. More generally, MINUSTAH was reluctant to engage gangs in pitched urban battles that were guaranteed to result in civilian casualties. International and local media criticism was relentless.

The violence was so extreme that police-contributing countries and the UN General Assembly representatives were concerned for the safety of their nationals, who were untrained and ill-equipped for the dangers of the mission. While some contributing countries considered withdrawing, and concern arose about whether renewed commitments were forthcoming, governments quietly put national restrictions on the roles for their contingents. These national caveats were rarely publicized but were not uncommon, even though restrictions generally contradicted the very mandate the contributing countries had pledged to support. Gangs quickly learned which contingents would not engage them, and they exploited this vulnerability with aggressive attacks.

The UN Security Council was soon preoccupied with the level of violence being encountered and the inability of the mission or the GoH to address it. Strong arguments were being made to change the MINUSTAH mandate and give it executive authority to

³¹ The UN secretary-general reported 240 police and 2,755 soldiers in country four months after the mission began. Interim Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, 30 Aug. 2004, www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2004/698.

engage in law enforcement. In an unusual step, the Security Council assembled in Haiti to assess the situation firsthand. In an equally unusual move, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) ordered a review of the UN military and police response to the mandate, investigating reports of mission shortfalls, including failures to integrate operations effectively.

MINUSTAH now found itself in an untenable position. Tasked with a complex mandate that included humanitarian assistance, establishing rule of law, development, and security, it needed to reexamine its capacity to support the GoH in quelling gang violence, as a first step to fulfilling the mandate. The safety of personnel, the viability of the mission, and the United Nations' reputation were at stake. Change was needed. To confront this existential challenge to the mission, MINUSTAH needed to consider a strategy that emphasized mission integration, intelligence and information management, personnel with the requisite skills and experience, and an improved partnership with the GoH/HNP.

Except for developing rule of law, progress was made toward implementing changes to the mission structure and operations before the end of 2005.³² The United Nations is a large, complex mechanism that does not change direction easily, however, and it would be over a year before most of the changes could be considered complete. Meanwhile, gang violence increased, and the United Nations' reputation became even more tarnished.

MINUSTAH and HNP undertook some halting operations in late 2006, but not until January 2007 was the MINUSTAH military contingent fully engaged in support of full-scale, coordinated offensive action against the gangs of Cité Soleil. The outcome of the new strategy to confront the gangs with overwhelming force aimed at crippling their ability to threaten the mission and the people of Cité Soleil is described in a Special Report published by the U.S. Institute of Peace:

UN military and police units working with the Haitian National Police moved neighborhood by neighborhood throughout, arresting gang leaders or forcing them to flee. Once the United Nations established that it was prepared to use superior force, resistance from the gangs quickly diminished. Gang members deserted their leaders and sought to blend into the population . . . By March 2007, the United Nations had regained control of Cité Soleil. Once the gangs had been flushed from their sanctuaries, with support from police-led operations by UN Police and the HNP, some eight hundred gang members were eventually arrested, and all but one gang leader was either apprehended or killed.³³

Finally, the operational processes and capabilities essential to confront the gangs were in place and successfully put into action. Each of the building blocks for the successful campaign against the gangs is described below.

³² Rule of law, an important component supporting justice development in parallel with the policing and corrections missions, was not advanced by MINUSTAH. It remains an important gap in the mission's accomplishments. In fairness, the GoH and Haitian judiciary have been entirely resistant to change—eager to accept development money but unwilling to venture toward public accountability and transparency.

³³ Dziedzic and Perito, "Haiti: Confronting the Gangs of Port-au-Prince," 5.

Mission Integration

The integrated mission, a concept identified in the United Nations' Brahimi report and intended for use by MINUSTAH to maximize its collective capacity, had not materialized. A review panel was convened on March 7, 2000, before the Millennium Summit, and tasked to review UN peace and security activities and recommend change. The report, named the "Brahimi report" for the chairman of the commission that produced it, noted that there was neither a standing UN army nor a police force. (Both were envisioned in the UN Charter.) As a result, peace operations have been ad hoc coalitions of willing states. The report identified many dysfunctions of UN peace operations, including shortfalls in personnel, skills and training, and intelligence capacities (all shortfalls experienced at MINUSTAH's start-up). Following the report, the UN Security Council adopted several provisions related to peacekeeping.³⁴

In 2004, MINUSTAH military and police were not working to a singular purpose and did not even interpret the gang threat similarly. The police did not have the capacity to deal with insurgent-like violence, and the military refused to consider the violence as anything but criminal behavior.

From the mission's beginning, efforts had been made to harmonize and coordinate security operations and provide support to the HNP. Committees were formed, meetings were held, and policy was written. Information exchanges, coordinated patrols, HNP and UN colocation strategies, and joint operations resulted, but with limited success. Mission integration was of such concern to DPKO that it dispatched General Maurice Baril, former head of the DPKO Military Division, to study the mission's security operations and integration.³⁵ Although the mission was on the path to integration, and policies and procedures were in place, the external review by Baril reinforced the need for a quicker pace and demonstrable commitment. In particular, the review proved to be the catalyst for the MINUSTAH military contingent to assume responsibility for a frontline role in confronting the gangs and for coordination, particularly with the UN police, to form an integrated mission response.

Inside the mission, better operational coordination was already in evidence with the creation and mixed staffing of the Joint Operations Centre (JOC) and the Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JMAC). These integrated units were tangible examples of integration emerging at the level of mission headquarters. But true integration was some distance off because national caveats continued to influence participation in offensive operations and because divergent opinions persisted about the nature of the gang threat. Simply stated, some contingents were willing to engage the gangs; others were not. And some military leaders continued to question the military's role in this nontraditional fight. And yet, in spite of the impediments, the mission was moving toward the desired integrated model.

³⁴ United Nations Rule of Law, Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (Brahimi Report), 2000, www.unrol.org/doc.aspx?n=brahimi+report+peacekeeping.pdf.

³⁵ Beyond the self-evident issues of mission integration, General Baril's study needed to consider some politically sensitive issues. Rumors of national caveats against armed engagement, and concerns over collateral risk and protection of civilians were widespread in the mission. Included was the fact of internal dissent where it was believed that certain contingents could not be counted on to protect mission colleagues during armed engagements. The results of Baril's inquiry were not widely published, but his visit and inquiries had the desired effect of changing attitudes among senior mission personnel.

In time, mission integration developed and matured. It would never be perfect, of course. (A mission of 50 or more contingent nations and diverse mother tongues, experience, and professional systems can never be perfectly integrated.) But as the months and years of the mission passed and new mandates were established, integration was no longer an evident impediment to progress against the gangs. Military and police resources (FPUs especially, with better equipment, training, and readiness to confront the violence of the mission) worked together in better harmony than during the inaugural mission mandate. With the arrival of a new force commander in early 2007, the potential for integrated military and police action against the gangs would be fully exploited.

Intelligence and Information Management

At inception, MINUSTAH had no intelligence and information management capacity. Typically, the United Nations has worked in countries where governments had used intelligence operations to torment civilian populations and prop up dictatorial regimes. Founded on the desire to maintain the reality and perception of neutrality, the United Nations had resisted engaging in intelligence collection. This impeded the capacity to conduct intelligence-led operations against threats from illicit power structures such as the gangs in Haiti.³⁶ In fact, though never sanctioned, intelligence collection has always been important to UN military operations and in supporting military-run joint operations centers. While the United Nations had officially resisted collecting intelligence, it was understood that military operations have always been supported by the collection of intelligence. Almost certainly, no mission executive ever refused to hear critical and perhaps lifesaving information merely because it may have been the fruit of military intelligence collection. UN Police collected operational-level intelligence unofficially, but with their limited resources and expertise, it was used discreetly and reported and exploited in very limited ways. During the 1990s, the UN Mission in Kosovo had successfully employed an intelligence capacity against criminals (and beyond military needs), but the success had not translated to doctrine, policy, or operational acceptance at the political level. Although mission intelligence was addressed in the Brahimi report of 2000, it may not have been until the 2003 attack against the United Nations in Baghdad that the United Nations awoke to the realities and need of protecting assets and conducting operations supported by real knowledge of the environment.

The same has generally not been the case for UN Police operations, however. This is due in part to the UN recruitment process, which, with the exception of FPUs, recruits individual police officers with generic skills, but not police units with collective capacities and organizational or operational systems.

The development of the JMAC in the MINUSTAH mission, beginning in late 2004, was a dramatic and progressive step that would have an almost immediate impact on

³⁶ “States have historically been opposed to granting the UN any intelligence-collection powers, fearing that such a role could lead to violations by the UN of national sovereignties, expressly protected by Article 2(7) of the Charter. UN officials adopted a similar stance during most of the UN’s history, seeking to shield the UN from any activity that could be interpreted as espionage by any of its members.” Melanie Ramjoué, “Improving UN Intelligence through Civil-Military Collaboration: Lessons from the Joint Mission Analysis Centers,” *International Peacekeeping* 18, no.4 (Aug. 2011): 469.

the mission's ability to fulfill the mandate. The unit was one of the first instituted in a UN mission and was created in the integrated model, with military, police, security, political affairs, and other units contributing information, personnel, and expertise.

Little was made of the fact that development of the MINUSTAH model of JMAC was in the hands of a civilian, Michael Center, who was responsible for security information coordination. Interestingly, this may have been important to the quick acceptance and success of the project internally, since one criticism of the integrated model had been that integration tends to be dominated by military components. Where the military is usually the largest component and brings organizational and institutional capacities to the mission, it tends to be relied on to provide capacity where mission capacity might not otherwise exist. While this seems both logical and practical, integration can be difficult where civilians may not work well in a military-dominated environment or where the military may fail to consider important civilian aspects of projects. Center, after launching the JMAC at MINUSTAH, was named deputy chief, under Heiner Rosenthal, a senior civil affairs manager with extensive experience in Haiti. Together, they broke new ground in policy, procedure, and practice of intelligence-led UN operations, and perhaps even more importantly, they contributed to civilian-led integration of the mission's security effort. After a year of serving JMAC development, Rosenthal returned to his civil affairs role. Another senior civilian, Phil Menez, was named chief of JMAC. With Center as deputy, he oversaw development of intelligence target and evidence packages as the groundwork for successful mission operations against the gangs.

Though JMAC's work was initially strategic, there was confidence that it could produce an accurate and professionally analyzed intelligence product. At a time when the mission was under extraordinary pressure to make greater contributions to combating politically affiliated gangs, the ability to collect, analyze, and report intelligence was an important breakthrough.

Two years later, in an unprecedented step (but one made absolutely necessary by the level of violence and the gangs' widespread political impact), JMAC received the authority and budget to recruit, develop, manage, and pay human sources. This made for effective intelligence-led operations and tactical success against the gangs of Cité Soleil in 2007.

Dziedzic and Perito describe JMAC's crucial role: "JMAC provided sophisticated target packages detailing the obstacles that UN forces would encounter (e.g., tank traps and areas of fierce resistance), along with photos for the identification of gang leaders. To free kidnap victims or apprehend gang leaders, they needed actionable intelligence. Real-time tactical intelligence about the locations of gang leaders or concentrations of gang members allowed MINUSTAH to mount intelligence-led operations to arrest them."³⁷

Rule of Law

Although "rule of law" refers to the full extent of law, regulation, systems, and administration of justice that serve a society, the focus here is strictly on the criminal justice system as it operated against illicit power in Haiti. In that sense and in dealing with the

³⁷ Dziedzic and Perito, "Haiti: Confronting the Gangs of Port-au-Prince," 8.

gangs specifically, the Haitian criminal justice system was entirely dysfunctional. The courts did not function routinely, and suspects languished in inhumane prison conditions, often without charge or even legal representation. The judiciary was widely considered corrupt. The codified law was archaic, lacking modern standards of procedure or evidence.

The HNP operated in a rule of law vacuum, without internal control, judicial coordination, or public oversight. The need to confront corruption and internal criminality and vet the force was ignored. HNP made searches and detained and incarcerated people without legal authorization. The GoH and HNP largely ignored calls to take corrective steps or even minimally demonstrate intent to be more accountable and transparent. Where the police were believed to have used illegal means or excessive force against suspects or to have caused the wounding or death of civilians, UN calls to investigate were ignored. In sum, HNP operated outside the bounds of legal control and without independent oversight. To the extent that MINUSTAH police and military were mandated to support the HNP operationally, and where calls for transparency and accountability by the GoH/HNP were simply ignored, MINUSTAH, too, operated outside the bounds of criminal justice.

In 2004-5, as MINUSTAH began its mission, there were no legally trained UN personnel to advise the mission leadership, support UN/GoH operations, or support development efforts under the heading “rule of law.” Legal support to the mission, and especially to its police component, would have provided at least the appearance of legal accountability and the desire for transparency. Instead, the mission appeared tolerant of illegal or, at the very least, inappropriate GoH and HNP behavior and later even seemed supportive of the Préval “surrender or die” ultimatum. Although the presence of a legal team supporting the mission and, ultimately, the GoH would not likely have helped wrestle illicit structures to submission, it would surely have improved public perception, media reporting, and the UN organizational image.

A small team of judicial experts could have been deployed to provide legal advice in many situations. Selected prosecutions could have taken place in concert with Haitian legal experts, including judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, and court administrators. If the most heinous crimes could have been investigated and prosecuted, the strategy would have demonstrated the GoH’s desire and ability to operate within a justice system, rather than a willingness to operate outside it. In a mission focused on security and rule of law as the foundations of future development, legal support was vital – if not exclusively to fight illicit power, then certainly for the mission’s reputation and relationship with the GoH in that fight.

This need for a legal support team became even more relevant when, given the slow progress against the gangs, there were calls inside and outside the United Nations for the next UN mandate to include executive authority. In the absence of real operational capability and a functioning justice system, taking executive authority from a Haitian government that jealously guarded its sovereignty would have been entirely counterproductive to the mission’s objectives and the United Nations’ image. Only with a purposefully recruited and resourced rule of law program enjoying the full support of the Haitian Ministry of Justice could executive authority have been viable. In the end, the struggle against illicit power in Haiti was not supported with a rule of law capacity. The

UN Security Council resisted pressure to assume executive authority in Haiti, but it took no important steps to bridge the gaps where rule of law support was required. It became ever more difficult to demand accountability, transparency, and the primacy of human rights issues of the GoH and the HNP when the United Nations itself continued to work outside a justice system.³⁸

UN Police Competence

Another issue of concern in dealing with the gangs and their criminal-political linkages was the UN Police's skills and competence. Police officers on mission are generally identified for their generalist experience and a set of basic skills (e.g., minimum number of years' policing experience, proficiency with their firearm where applicable, ability to drive a standard-transmission vehicle, proficiency in the mission language, and an unblemished human rights record). In MINUSTAH, there was no effort to recruit personnel qualified to lead special operations, gather criminal intelligence, or support complex investigations into sexual violence, corruption, kidnapping, homicide, or counternarcotics – all operational challenges in Haiti. Other unmet needs included operational support skills in strategic planning, communications, and forensics.

There were no immediate solutions to the shortfall in specialized policing expertise. Contributing countries would need to be canvassed, and individuals with specific skills identified, for future rotations of personnel.

A singular example illustrates the situation. During the summer of 2005, MINUSTAH struggled to help HNP investigate several dozen kidnappings simultaneously. Most were perpetrated by gangs or gang affiliates, but some of the crimes involved rogue HNP elements. Victims came from any family that could pay a ransom. Where victims/families had the means, cases might be discreetly negotiated by international intervention firms. MINUSTAH established a kidnap investigation and negotiation support unit that almost immediately had dozens of active reported cases (suggesting there were always unreported kidnappings, negotiated without official intervention). The mission's only trained investigator with any experience in extortion investigation was a junior officer from Canada with no negotiation experience and little experience in major case management.

Meanwhile, the UN Police initiated an interim solution. The idea of a standing availability of police experts – a group that could plan new missions and support ongoing missions – was being considered. While the project had no official status, a small group of experts representing a range of experience and skills was identified and deployed briefly to support the mission in areas badly needing specialized expertise. While the short duration deployment amounted to a limited contribution, it was a positive step where the UN Police Division recognized that every effort was important in gaining ground against illicit power structures.

³⁸ Where the HNP operated outside the justice system and HNP leadership and GoH officials refused to publicly investigate police wrongdoing (including allegations of murder), it was hard to dispel the notion that government officials were supportive, if not complicit. Where the United Nations did not insist on greater transparency and accountability (and take appropriate action, such as having a legal team in place), it, too, was suspect. The media speculated freely and criticized openly, and public confidence in the United Nations, GoH, and HNP suffered.

A specific example of a competency shortfall was the Formed Police Units. Trained and equipped to deal with public-order issues (historically Haiti's largest security problem) they were ineffective where urban combat, countersniper, and close-quarter battle were the tactical challenges. What the FPU's lacked were special weapons and tactics (SWAT) skills and equipment. The original MINUSTAH component of six FPU's proved insufficient to meet patrol commitments in the gang-held areas of Port-au-Prince and provide general security in Haiti's largest cities. But the FPU's were invaluable where UN military support to the police was inconsistent or absent because gang criminality was considered strictly a police matter.

By 2006, FPU's in mission increased to eight, but more importantly, the long-awaited capability of a 40-person SWAT unit was added. Finally, MINUSTAH had an experienced, trained tactical response to deal more effectively with gangs in the densely populated urban environment. Although protecting civilians remained a challenge in densely populated Port-au-Prince, this new expertise surely reduced the risk of collateral injury and death to innocent civilians. In the 2007 operation in Cité Soleil, FPU's performed a range of decisive roles that preserved the peace process. Dziedzic and Perito reported:

In antigang operations involving MINUSTAH Police, FPU's performed a range of pivotal and often decisive roles, including crowd and riot control, hard entry, and high-risk arrest. The military contingent's initial foray into Cité Soleil on January 24 was placed in jeopardy when gang members organized a demonstration of unarmed civilians. An FPU with nonlethal riot control capabilities quickly dispersed the crowd . . . The forty-person SWAT team from Jordan that MINUSTAH incorporated within the FPU structure has been heavily employed in antigang operations. The vast majority of police-led operations involved the arrest of gang leaders or members as a prominent objective. FPU's were central to these highly successful operations, in particular the integrated use of MINUSTAH and PNH SWAT teams. Virtually all high-priority targets were brought to justice. For example, both the MINUSTAH and the HNP SWAT teams and an additional FPU platoon were assigned to Gonaives for two months to assist the FPU and other police assets assigned there in following up on the arrest of gang leader "Ti Will." All but one of the thirty most-wanted gang leaders from Gonaives were apprehended in that period.³⁹

We can only speculate about MINUSTAH's success against the gangs had the SWAT capacity been available earlier in the mission. Clearly, having the correct tactical capacity—combined, of course, with actionable operational intelligence—helped reduce the gangs' impact as illicit power structures, at least in the short term.

The MINUSTAH Police / HNP Partnership

Where the mandate of a multilateral organization is to provide support to a host state, partnership is an important strategy for both program implementation and sustainability. Success is often measured by indicators of cooperation and collaboration, extent of buy-in, and evidence of leadership commitment and demonstrated will to pursue necessary reform. In confronting the illicit power of the gangs, the security partnership

³⁹ Dziedzic and Perito, "Haiti: Confronting the Gangs of Port-au-Prince," 11-12. "PNH" is the abbreviation for "Police Nationale d'Haiti" (Haitian National Police).

between MINUSTAH security forces and the GoH and HNP was perhaps the most important consideration. Framing this partnership was the reality of a broad mandate but narrow mission capacity and capabilities. Further weakening the partnership formula, MINUSTAH had no executive authority, HNP had very limited capacity, the GoH closely guarded its sovereignty, and both the GoH and HNP often acted without consulting their supposed partner.

Few insiders would dispute that MINUSTAH began without the firm ground of mutual trust and confidence that mark a flourishing partnership. Despite the usual steps of joint planning, coordinating committees, public displays of solidarity, and professional relationship building, evidence of cooperation and collaboration was absent. It was common for MINUSTAH-led joint police operations to be delayed or canceled when HNP failed to adhere to plans. There was animosity when HNP felt that MINUSTAH was not aggressive enough against the gangs, and conversely, HNP received widespread criticism for excessive force resulting in collateral civilian casualties. When HNP did not receive unquestioning UN fire support for its operations, it would accuse the United Nations of being nonsupportive. HNP showed clear intent to conduct independent operations, avoiding constraints that a UN presence might impose or imply. Continuous relationship building and maintenance were required to encourage mutual trust and confidence.

Continuity among senior managers on both sides of the arrangement was also an important consideration for partnership building and management. The large number of key positions and personalities leading the partnership and influencing security issues contributed to the complexity. On the UN side, these included the secretary-general's special representative, military force commander, and police commissioner. On the Haitian side, the key players were the interim prime minister, ministers of justice and public safety, and HNP director general. As a minimum expectation, the UN senior leaders were in place for over a year. Their Haitian executive counterparts, however, changed regularly, to the partnership's detriment. The HNP director general and the ministers of justice and public safety changed in the first year of the MINUSTAH-GoH partnership. The prime minister was the only Haiti executive in place for the entire first year of the mission, but as an interim appointment, he had limited mandate and authority.

No matter how professionally the officials involved may approach the task, the trust and confidence building required for partnership depend on a degree of familiarity unattainable if key individuals change regularly. Also, language issues and cultural and professional differences were barriers to overcome, underlining the reality that partnerships cannot simply be scripted in mandate letters. They are living relationships that must be planted and nurtured before they can bear fruit.

Further, in security matters, including crime control and the risk of penetration by criminal enterprise, an island's geography usually demands effective partnerships. The Dominican Republic (Haiti's immediate neighbor), the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police (the regional partner), and the International Association of Chiefs of Police (the transnational connection) were opportunities for partnership where introductions, engagements, and memberships could have led to earlier and more productive relationships. The GoH and HNP had neither the positive reputation nor the capacity to partner internationally. The United Nations could have done

more in this respect by helping establish a measure of credibility, creating networking opportunities, and sourcing limited funding to bring HNP to the international table.⁴⁰

Reintegration of Former Gang Members

The successful campaign against the gangs in early 2007 created the need to deal with gang members after their leadership had been either jailed or killed. Typically, in the wake of a peace agreement, the United Nations considers a demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration program for former combatants.

MINUSTAH planned for and attempted a DDR program for ex-FAD'H soldiers involved in the unrest that precipitated Aristide's departure, though the project got no support from the interim GoH and failed unceremoniously. At the same time, the GoH made amply clear that it had no taste for negotiating with criminal gangs or their leaders. While the international community held out some hope for DDR as a component of the solution for dealing with the gangs, the Haitian government showed little desire to see it implemented, let alone sustained or its promises fulfilled.

Having succeeded with the security initiatives of 2007 but lacking GoH support for DDR strategies, MINUSTAH was challenged to find alternative strategies to solidify the security gains. A useful innovation was reorientation of the DDR strategy to a plan for community violence reduction (CVR). The new strategy involved activities intended to provide a peace dividend in communities where MINUSTAH took assertive action to counter gang influence. It began with Security Council Resolution 1743, which urged MINUSTAH to reorient resources devoted to DDR, toward community violence reduction.⁴¹ Targeting the environment where the gangs tend to thrive rather than just the gang members themselves, MINUSTAH developed a mechanism providing labor-intensive projects in violence-affected areas, addressing the gap between security operations and the arrival of humanitarian and development assistance and employment. Of the \$3.47 million budgeted for CVR, \$2.19 million was allocated to such labor-intensive stabilization projects.

The CVR strategy was a creative alternative to more established DDR ideas supporting the MINUSTAH mandate to create a stable environment conducive to future development. It provided tangible compensation to neighborhoods that had suffered terribly at the hands of the gangs, but it was also an interim solution intended to precede longer-term economic and job-creation strategies. Perhaps most importantly, CVR was a strategy that the GoH could support for its economic benefit but that (unlike DDR) did not directly reward members of criminal gangs by giving them access and opportunities unavailable to the average Haitian.⁴²

⁴⁰ Naturally, where the issue of border security is concerned, the implications extend beyond narcotics and weapons trafficking, money laundering, and immigration to include control of the movement of goods and services, and collection of taxes and tariffs.

⁴¹ UN Security Council Resolution 1743 (2007), Feb. 15, 1-4, www.refworld.org/docid/45fffb5f2.html.

⁴² Dziedzic and Perito, "Haiti: Confronting the Gangs of Port-au-Prince," 11.

Summary, Recommendations, and Conclusions

Summary

The United Nations misread the threat posed by the gangs of Port-au-Prince and Cité Soleil, anticipating an environment of public disorder as the principle security threat. The gangs' potential to derail the peace process was unforeseen, and though gang violence against the government and HNP had been evident for some time, such intense violence against the international community and the United Nations in particular was a new reality in Haiti.

The gangs threatened the civilian population (with the most vulnerable suffering disproportionately), HNP, the GoH, and the international community. They attacked MINUSTAH openly, aggressively, and routinely. UN strategy and preparations failed to consider the range of illicit structures in the environment, their power to disrupt, and former president Aristide's political-criminal nexus with the gangs, which constituted an existential threat to the mission.

The gangs of Port-au-Prince were violently opposed to the UN presence and the peace process it represented, and their interests were irreconcilable. The persistent gang violence in Port-au-Prince constituted a real threat to the GoH, the UN mission, and the relationship between the two. The strategy ultimately adopted was to confront this threat with overwhelming force and cripple its ability to threaten the mission and the peace process, and to protect the civilian population. By 2007, most of the initiatives proposed two years before were largely in place, and MINUSTAH was increasing its operational effectiveness. Most significantly, the military component was finally prepared to engage the gangs operationally, not as uniquely military threats or criminal threats, but as security threats beyond the operational capacity of the police alone and pervasive enough to threaten the future of the mission itself.

With the military contingent coordinated with the police and, more importantly, prepared to act with the same muscularity displayed by the multilateral force that preceded MINUSTAH, gang leaders and members were arrested in impressive numbers. Gang activity was reduced, violent criminals were taken off the street, the local economy moved again, and the people of central Port-au-Prince were safer. Also, the UN mission got a boost, for it could claim success after being criticized so strongly. Demonstrable evidence of operational progress also bolstered HNP's commitment to the partnership with MINUSTAH.

After three murderous years on the streets of Port-au-Prince, the results against the gangs in early 2007 seemed impressive. Key gang leaders were arrested, and 800 gang members were reportedly apprehended and incarcerated.⁴³ This is impressive in terms of operational success against the gangs, but the number alone is cause for reflection. By any accounting, there were certainly not 800 gangsters attacking UN security forces and killing HNP officers in 2005. So how many of these 800 were merely unemployed, uneducated, poverty-stricken young men with no prospects, who were "going along to get along" with the gangs on the brutal streets of Cité Soleil? Moreover, how many of the gang members arrested in 2007 had in fact been deported from the United States

⁴³ These were not the same gang leaders in place in 2005, however. By spring 2005, those leaders had all been killed or apprehended and replaced by their lieutenants-in-waiting.

or Canada? How many of those arrested and jailed were ever actually charged with a crime? And how many were ever convicted?

Since criminal justice in the country was dysfunctional and the capacities of the police (HNP and UN) alone were insufficient to dismantle the linkages between political elites and the gangs, there seemed no other solution to the violence but to neutralize the gangs in a military sense: removing them as a threat to the security of the country and the mission.

But this strategy's success cannot be judged without considering that the GoH refused to consider DDR for gangs and that President Préval declared his "surrender or die" ultimatum in response to his failed political intervention. Was this capture-or-kill response the only strategy available? Even accepting that only a suitably aggressive response could stop the violence, would other strategies have been potentially useful to prevent a reemergence of the gangs, or renewed violence in the future. If we consider that perhaps only a small percentage of the gangs were hard-core and represented the real power through their linkages to the elites, perhaps, over time, the rank and file might have been coerced away with alternative life choices. With a view to the longer term, perhaps new opportunities – new lifestyle alternatives, in fact – might have been considered to dissuade the next generation of potential gangsters.

Two years after the gangs were put down, Haitians suffered extraordinarily in the earthquake of January 2010. An estimated 200,000 were killed and two million displaced, Port-au-Prince was largely destroyed, and the limited progress that had been made in improving the lives of Haitian citizens was gone.⁴⁴ In a related extraordinary situation, the prison population walked away from the National Penitentiary when guards abandoned their posts. But UN reports from the months immediately following the earthquake do not suggest increased gang activity resulting from these prisoners' return to the streets. Indeed, David Becker, then coordinator of the Haiti Stabilization Initiative, recounts that after the 2010 earthquake, the gang leader known as "Blade" (for his habit of torturing enemies with razor blade cuts) and a lieutenant returned to Cité Soleil after escaping from the federal prison, intent on reestablishing their control. As they confronted local citizens working in a community mobilization group, the two were attacked from behind by workers wielding shovels. Other onlookers soon joined in, and the two gangsters were beaten to death and their bodies dumped in front of the local police station.⁴⁵

After the successes of early 2007, including the CVR economic program, we must consider that illicit power structures cannot be conquered merely by increasing operational capacity of security forces and getting gang members off the streets. Certainly, the operational focus on aid and assistance, and away from gangs and criminality, after the 2010 earthquake created an environment favorable to gang reemergence. But reemergence of the gangs did not follow that event automatically.⁴⁶ By the fall of 2012, though

⁴⁴ This death toll was an early estimate, repeated often enough that it was soon reported as fact. A precise figure will never be known, though it would no doubt be staggering.

⁴⁵ David Becker, National Defense University (coordinator, Haiti Stabilization Initiative, a US DoD-funded project), author telephone interview, Mar. 12, 2015.

⁴⁶ Robert Perito drew a picture of uncertainty and renewed insecurity: donors avoiding assistance to the government because of the perception of general dysfunction, 147 civilians and 5 police killed in the

MINUSTAH reported the gangs of Port-au-Prince to be active, dangerous, and again the source of real insecurity in the country. They engaged in narcotics and small-arms trafficking, racketeering, and turf wars, employing murder, kidnapping, and robbery as their methods.⁴⁷ Women, children, and the poverty-stricken population at large continued to be at greatest risk.⁴⁸ Adding to this gang-generated insecurity was public unrest about politics and the failed economy, and a renewed debate over the future of a Haitian military. Apparently, the security situation had changed less than many had thought, largely because the strategy to confront the gangs of Cité Soleil with overwhelming force addressed only one side of Haiti's illicit-power-structure equation. Perhaps not enough attention went to the root causes of the illicit structures and the factors that favored their existence.

No effort was made to understand how the gangs were controlled for political purposes or exploited by self-interested political or economic elites.⁴⁹ Although the United Nations was initially unprepared to deal with the gangs as a violent threat to the mission and the civilian population it was mandated to protect, it has remained both unwilling and unprepared to deal with the external forces that influenced the gangs. It had no jurisdiction, no independent executive authority, and no legal capacity to pursue those who conspired to use the gangs. The Haitian justice system was clearly dysfunctional, but with an interim government protective of its sovereignty, unsure of its constitutional footing, and resistant to external scrutiny, a justice reform partnership may have been impossible. Judicial pursuit of Aristide at the early stages of the UN intervention would certainly have been trumpeted as a ploy designed only to keep him from power, and would likely have inflamed the political situation. On the other hand, investigating the economic elites that exploited the gangs was a low priority where those same elites' cooperation was essential to national economic recovery. Still, other priorities paled beside the need to get a firm grip on the security situation before next steps in any direction.

Six years after the operational successes against the gangs of Cité Soleil, the only real change is that the United Nations, better organized, equipped, and committed to confronting the gangs, is no longer their primary target. The operational success of 2007 must now be qualified because security – fundamental to a peaceful existence and a favorable development environment – is unsustainable unless Haiti's institutions develop the capacity to control gang activity and hold elites demonstrably accountable when they attempt to exploit gangs as instruments of political power. Deficiencies in the rule

first months of 2012, reports of rising crime in Port-au-Prince, demonstrations by Aristide supporters, and reports of armed paramilitary training in defiance of the government. Robert Perito, "On Haiti: Current Situation," U.S. Institute of Peace newsletter, Mar. 2012, www.usip.org/sites/default/files/USIP%20on%20Haiti_March%202012.pdf.

⁴⁷ Report of the Secretary-General, 22 Feb. 2010, para. 3, 21-22, www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2010/200. Many of those incarcerated were in prison for gang activities. When they walked away in the aftermath of the earthquake, escalating gang crime was anticipated, but it never really materialized. See also Report of the Secretary-General, 1 Sep. 2010, para 6, www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2010/446. Nine months after the earthquake, the United Nations still reported crime rates as essentially unchanged from the months preceding the earthquake and prison escape.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, paras. 24-26.

⁴⁹ Kolbe, "Revisiting Haiti's Gangs," 29. Kolbe makes the case for purposeful empirical research before we can really understand the relationships (historical and personal) that support and promote gangs, or know how to change the environment that feeds illicit power.

of law remain a critical vulnerability, systems of accountability need to be set in place, and systemic corruption must be tackled. Of course, free and fair elections will be a crucial indication that the country is on a better track.

Recommendations

In any conflict situation, establishing and sustaining a safe, secure environment is central to providing aid, humanitarian assistance, and a solid foundation for development. Where MINUSTAH's planning and preparations failed to recognize and then deal with the gangs as illicit power structures, the mission struggled.

The successful operations against the gangs of Port-au-Prince and Cité Soleil resulted from changes in intelligence collection and analysis, increased numbers and capacity of FPUs (particularly the SWAT team), more effective integration of operations (police/FPU and also JMAC and JOC), an improved partnership with HNP, and, especially, a committed military component. It is hard to imagine operational success if any one of these had been ineffective. While the Brahimi report addressed most of these features of mission structure, organization, and operations to some degree, they certainly bear mentioning again.

Intelligence-led mission planning. Threats in modern conflict continue to evolve in the dynamic environments where they emerge. These threats include illicit power structures, which appear in many forms and are motivated and operate differently. The first key to addressing such threats is to recognize their existence. One might say, "This is not your father's peacekeeping mission." And certainly in the case of Haiti, while we focused on the illicit power of the Cité Soleil gangs, we met with illicit structures in many corners. Mission planners must be alert to the dynamics of conflict environments, recognizing illicit power where it exists and understanding its impact. This is particularly sensitive where political or economic power brokers seek to exploit illicit power for their own purposes. Understanding the complex security environment and the sources and impact of illicit power demands current, accurate intelligence. Just as the 2007 success against the gangs required strategic intelligence to plan and tactical intelligence to achieve, mission planning requires current intelligence from all legitimate and available sources.

Skill sets appropriate to the tasks ahead. Once a mission's security environment is understood, recommendations can be made for recruiting, staffing, and operational planning. This suggests a new emphasis on finding the skill sets required by the job ahead. When we think about illicit power and the specific circumstances where it may manifest, as we found in Haiti, specific skill sets will be required if the mission hopes to respond effectively. Where missions are to include a patchwork of contributing countries, the selection of operational units, rather than unassociated individuals, from contributing countries must be a consideration. In dealing with the illicit power wielded by Haitian gangs, the utility of having a kidnapping, homicide, and sexual assault investigation capacity and a tactical SWAT capability from the start needs little elaboration. Where international police are not recruited as operational units or even for their special skills

or expertise, it is unrealistic to suppose that the mission will ever have the complement of experienced personnel required to address critical security issues.⁵⁰

Law enforcement accompanied by the full rule of law spectrum. Gang activity in Cité Soleil and Port-au-Prince caused considerable desperation for the GoH, the United Nations, and, of course, the victimized public. The result was tolerance for methods and actions generally unacceptable for security forces, including search without authority, arrest without warrant, and incarceration without showing cause. The security operations of 2007, in an environment of extraordinary insecurity, would not have been countenanced in an environment where the rule of law was in place. It was accepted that the law enforcement ends justified the means.⁵¹ The United Nations and its HNP partner could not continue to operate without external scrutiny and oversight. Given its mandate to support and develop the HNP, the United Nations could not demand accountability and transparency from the GoH and HNP while itself continuing to operate outside the usual boundaries stipulated by the rule of law.

The United Nations should have deployed a justice system task force in support of operations, demonstrating that law enforcement is only one component of the broader and more essential objective: development of the rule of law. Effective investigation and public prosecution of high-profile cases would have served to demonstrate the supremacy of the rule of law. This action might even have included the judicial pursuit of politically motivated conspirators and individuals criminally exploiting the illicit power of gangs. At the same time, the GoH's passage of emergency-measures laws would have provided political and judicial authorization recognizing an extraordinary security situation and the need for special powers. Since the UN mission had no executive authority, the GoH would have been seen to lead, which would have emphasized the link between security and justice as important to peace, security, and future development.

In addition to the principles that must be respected if a UN intervention is to advance rule of law, there is also a practical rationale for taking a holistic approach. It has long been axiomatic that justice system development is not possible without parallel effort in all associated sectors (police, judiciary, corrections, and legal code). Operational success in establishing security, whether generally or against illicit power structures specifically, will not likely be sustainable when any one sector of the justice system is ineffective. At the same time, rule of law approaches must consider the legal questions that affect the population most directly. Surely, issues of land reform, tax reform, and systemic corruption must get early attention in the rule of law spectrum of priorities. The consequences

⁵⁰ As of this is writing, the Police Division of UN DPKO is establishing a Strategic Guidance Framework, leading police-contributing countries in the overhaul of UN mission policing under the headings of "command and control," "operations," "administration," and "capacity building." The purpose will be to raise the level of professional policing in missions. This initiative should begin to address shortfalls documented during MINUSTAH and other missions.

⁵¹ In 2005, the author made a presentation on security issues and plans to the Port-au-Prince Chamber of Commerce. The economic elite of the country was well represented in a large audience that was clearly dissatisfied with "rule of law" approaches to combat the gangs. At the conclusion of the presentation, the audience gathered near the podium for follow-up questions and comments. A middle-aged woman, clearly of means, said in a calm but venomous tone, loudly enough for all to hear, "Why do not you just kill them all?" There was no shock, no surprise, and no reaction from anyone in the room but me.

of not taking a holistic approach to fostering the rule of law are well understood, and the international community's experience in Haiti since 1993 demonstrates this clearly.

The experience of justice system development (police, justice, and corrections sectors together as a system) in Haiti is a particular example. The international community's investments in police development are known to far outweigh the efforts and contributions elsewhere in the system. While there is still a long road to travel with police development, there has been virtually no progress in modernizing and reforming the justice sector and basically no investment at all in corrections. Where the Haitian police now operate in a justice vacuum, and where corrections operates a century behind the times, paralysis of justice system development may well be occurring, so that no sustainable progress in the broader legal system is possible until the sectors that lag behind can catch up.

Planning for long-term, sustainable success. Success against gangs and other illicit power structures in Haiti must be gauged with the measuring stick of sustainability. This will require a sturdy foundation: attention to fundamental rights and rule of law, a justice sector with transparent systems and accountability of process, fair and free elections, and an economy that provides life options and access to opportunities for the impoverished. The reemergence of gangs in Haiti, despite the tactical successes of 2007 and the UN operational changes that made success possible, signals that operational capacity alone—ability to “defeat” the gangs—is not enough to ensure sustainable success against illicit power.

MINUSTAH demonstrated a seemingly useful strategy in following up its operational success against the gangs with economic initiatives in the form of CVR projects. But since they had no sustainable impact (according to UN reports, gang violence has returned), do we now judge the CVR projects ineffective over time? Is it possible the CVR projects did not go far enough or, at least, were not tightly linked to mid-term and long-term community projects? It seems logical that any operational plan seeking to suppress illicit power over the long term must consider (a) the conditions that fostered the linkage between illicit structures and power (political and economic) and (b) how to alter those conditions going forward. Where participation in gang activity is related to security, economic access, and life opportunities, addressing those issues over the long term also seems vital to any strategy for reducing the power and impact of illicit structures.

The international community leading against illicit power structures. The purpose here has been to examine the Cité Soleil gangs' illicit power to threaten peace, and to identify the most appropriate strategy and the capacities required to combat them. The Haiti experience exposed weaknesses in the international response, including lack of capacity to conduct intelligence-led operations, shortfalls in skilled, experienced personnel, and inability to deliver integrated operations. At another level, the political players and economic elites who exploited the illicit power remained unchecked.

All this leads to a general lesson or, at least, a question for future consideration: what is the international community's responsibility in dealing with illicit power structures? Although MINUSTAH was initially unprepared for the existential challenge that gangs posed to the mission, over time it addressed the gaps that needed to be bridged to meet

the threat. In some respects, MINUSTAH recognized those gaps as HNP development needs, but it did not recognize them as immediate security threats that the mission itself needed to confront. Intelligence capacity, border integrity, major crime investigation, gender violence investigation, and protection of civilians fell short. Where such short-falls affect not only public safety but also the mission's effectiveness, is it not incumbent on the international community to take the lead, even if it is leading from behind, supporting weak and overwhelmed local institutions?

Conclusion

Where the international community proposes to support a state emerging from conflict, it must be prepared with expertise and capabilities to provide the necessary support. In Haiti, the UN mission was ill-prepared and caught unawares. Illicit power structures threatened peace and security so badly that the mission's pace, direction, and, indeed, credibility were affected. Although the mission addressed many operational and security gaps over time, early attention would have saved civilian lives and, moreover, created an environment where humanitarian assistance and sustainable development might be the actual focal points.

The potential for sustainable security was surely impaired by lack of progress in the wider context of rule of law. Also, following up the 2007 operational success, more could have been done to incorporate after-action strategies that considered economic conditions, access and opportunity, and sustainable development as factors influencing the very existence of gangs and other illicit power structures. Most critically lacking, however, was a strategy to fully understand and transform how hidden political and economic elites externally influence Haiti's gangs and exploit their power, contributing to insecurity and blocking development. Where such elites are held out to represent legitimate authority even as they are allowed to manipulate through a criminal underworld, the damage to public confidence, transparency, and the rule of law is devastating.⁵²

In the end, faced with extraordinary violence and mayhem during 2004-6, the United Nations demonstrated that it could marshal the necessary resources and take the measures required to bring the rampant power of illicit structures under control and establish security where there was none.⁵³ What it has so far failed to do is to prevent those same illicit structures from reemerging as impediments to sustainable progress in security and development.

⁵² Kolbe and Muggah, "Kolbe and Muggah: Haiti's Gangs Could Be a Force for Good."

⁵³ "The United Nations must be capable of mounting assertive operations to defend and enforce its mandates. The second lesson is that the United Nations has the means to succeed in these efforts, given the proper conditions, if it can summon the necessary will." Dziejcz and Perito, "Haiti: Confronting the Gangs of Port-au-Prince," 1.