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OUT OF THE ASHES: What Next for the UN in Haiti?

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After it had been devastated by three hurricanes in September 2008 Haiti was moving forward in 2009. The country was slowly showing signs of recovery. Private investments had started to return. The assembly sector was creating new jobs. On the day before the earthquake struck Port au Prince a public television program about failed states highlighted Haiti's progress and suggested that it had turned the corner toward a more sustainable economy. Then disaster struck.

As the dust clears from the rubble that is now Port au Prince the United Nations announced that governments and aid agencies rebuilding Haiti should save at least 10 percent of the money collected to rebuild Haiti for future disasters. This request for a disaster set aside underscores just how vulnerable Haiti is after a 7.0 earthquake on the Richter scale leveled Port au Prince in what must be the worst natural disaster in the history of the Western Hemisphere.

This catastrophic earthquake will prove the ultimate test of the willingness of the government of Haiti to rebuild, in spite of its lack of capacity to really govern. With all the major seats of government destroyed, the National Palace, the Justice and Finance Ministries, the Parliament, and so many other structures

gone, it will take a tremendous effort on the part of the surviving leaders, civil servants and the international aid agencies to put Haiti back together.

Ironically, just months before, in October 2009, Haiti's recovery was palpable as the UN Special Envoy, former U.S. President Bill Clinton, brought 400 business leaders to Port au Prince to chart the course of Haiti's future by working toward commitments to invest, create new jobs, and to restore agriculture and trade. There was even movement on expanding tourism with several new hotel chains starting operations in Haiti. The cruise line, Royal Caribbean, expanded operations in Haiti by supporting a crafts village, and brought its new ocean liner to

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Labadie on the northern coast of Haiti, infusing cash and jobs to the economy. These cruise ships are continuing to operate in spite of the earthquake since the northern claw of Haiti was not affected by the quake.

This is a pivotal moment for Haiti. Not only has this latest and most horrific natural disaster captured the world's attention, but it has also impacted the thinking of those Haitians who want to see a nation rebuilt with some strategic vision that does not repeat the failures of development that have stymied Haiti for generations. This is a moment to rebuild that will finally allow some of the best planning and technology to come to the aid of this beleaguered nation. This is also a moment when Haiti may finally reconcile with its neighbor, the Dominican Republic, as that nation has come to the aid of so many survivors of the January 12 earthquake. Is this a moment for a new beginning?

If Haiti is to "build back better," as UN Special Envoy Bill Clinton advocates, then it will take a new approach to security and development that works to end corrupt practices of the past, ensures the participation of its citizens in the decisions related to reconstruction, and works with the UN and other international agencies to ensure that the framework agreed to by the

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government of Haiti is funded and implemented in a timely manner. This is certainly a 10 year project, but the process of reconstruction has already begun.

International Assistance and the Reconstruction Dilemma

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon told the UN General Assembly that the organization had three priorities in responding to Haiti's needs. First, the management of a humanitarian relief operation, especially in light of the government of Haiti's near total institutional collapse; second, providing security for the immediate future with the UN Peacekeepers; finally, rebuilding for the future. Ban said "we must help the Haitian government reconstitute itself. . . And we need to turn the disaster into opportunity."

This ambitious agenda was especially poignant given the UN's own tragic loss of life when its headquarters collapsed during the earthquake. In its single greatest loss of life 70 UN staff perished and 146 were unaccounted for as of January 22nd. Most of those who died were civilian staff members of the UN. (According to UN official figures there were 12,000 UN workers on the ground when the earthquake hit).

What is stunning in the case of Haiti is the global solidarity that has emerged in response to the UN's emergency appeal. Of the \$575 million requested in a UN Flash Appeal just four days after the earthquake, \$334 million has been contributed and pledged. This money will be used to cover 3 million people for six months. The money will go for food, water, shelter, and emergency medical care. The UN and the

United States also signed a memorandum of understanding about the division of labor for the current phase of activities, so that the UN would manage the humanitarian operations and the U.S. would provide security and additional logistics to the mix.

The donor community met on January 25th to parse out what will become the framework for coordination and an agenda in preparation for a meeting to be held in March 2009 at UN headquarters. The "friends of Haiti," the 20 countries who attended the meeting, did not pledge specific sums of money. But there was a consensus that this process of rebuilding would take as long as 10 years and would require sustained donations, investment, and debt forgiveness as part of the financial strategy for reconstruction. Also arising from the meeting was a consensus that Haiti's government would be the primary driver of the strategy, something that bilateral donors and aid agencies acknowledged as a central assumption for going forward. Canadian Prime Minister Stephen

Harper also noted that given Haiti's long history of corruption and diversion of donor funds, the reconstruction of Haiti would also require a more accountable and trustworthy system to ensure that the vast sums collected would be used for intended purposes. Haiti's

Prime Minister, Jean-Max Bellerive estimates that it would take four to five years to restore Haiti to where it was before the quake, and at least another 10 to put it on a path toward more sustainable development.

There are several reasons for optimism in the wake of such a disaster. We are seeing a more aggressive role by the UN and the donor community to help the government of Haiti solve its problems of extreme poverty and underdevelopment. Even before the earthquake the creation of the Office of the Special Envoy, headed by former U.S. President Bill Clinton and Paul Farmer, a well-known physician from Harvard who for 30 years has worked in Haiti with his Partners in Health, had raised the level of interest in finding a way out of Haiti's long-term problems. That office's immediate response to the earthquake, both in terms of fundraising and support of emergency needs sends a powerful signal to all, both in government and in the private sector, that Haiti is still open for business.

UN Assistance Program

John Holmes, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, noted that in the case of Haiti "we're straining every nerve to make sure that there are the right number of doctors, the right amount of drugs and equipment and field hospitals. . . . We're hoping that we'll be able to turn the corner there very soon." The UN noted that there were already 7 field hospitals on the ground, 18 Haitian facilities, and the U.S. Comfort, a 1,000 bed hospital ship was fully operational. Yet the needs are still great given the amount of injuries sustained by Haitians during the quake and also arising from the ongoing aftershocks that have rocked the city of Port au Prince.

According to UN estimates there are 3 million people who have been affected by this earthquake, approximately one-third of the population. Of this group 2 million will continue to need food and shelter for the next six months. Food and water distribution is very difficult because convoys are being attacked. UN Peacekeepers are working at distribution centers and protecting convoys moving around the city, but these soldiers will need supplementary help. U.S. Marines are also engaged in helping the UN manage both the logistical and security components of this lifesaving mission. Unfortunately, the World Food Program has been just forced to reduce its food deliveries from 20 to 5 due to lack of adequate security for aid workers.

More than 300,000 Haitians are living in tent cities in Port au Prince. There are at least another 200,000 persons living in other affected areas without shelter, water or power. Food supplies are coming in from the Dominican Republic, but most people cannot access the stores that have been reopened since they have lost their savings and have no money to pay for goods. Many places on the outskirts of Port au Prince still remain without food and water as there is no clear system of communication allowing a systematic distribution.

Haiti remains highly vulnerable even after the earthquake because in less than five months hurricane season will begin. The rainy season may start even earlier. It is now a race against the clock to provide more durable shelter for those left homeless. The frequency of weather-related natural disasters is on the increase, especially in the Caribbean where sea level rises will continue over the next decades. With so many people without shelter the drive to house people in more permanent tent cities, and temporary housing modules will be a priority. This situation, however, will also be exacerbated by the large number of Haitians who left Port au Prince for the countryside after the earthquake (estimates are around 200,000) who will also need assistance and most important, jobs.

The UN has already acknowledged that it will focus on the creation of a "Cash for Work" program through the UN Development Program to help Haitians help themselves. These short term quick impact jobs will focus on rubble removal, demolition, and reconstruction. The pay will be \$5 a day, above the minimum wage that was recently approved by the Haitian Parliament in the fall of 2009.

Rebuilding Haiti After the Earthquake – Three Big Wins

Hope is something tangible. After this earthquake the most effective way to renew a community is through a series of highly visible projects that engages local stakeholders into the planning, design and execution of such efforts. Putting people to work will be the primary focus of this first phase of reconstruction. Giving Haitians a voice in deciding how to rebuild will also be a central component of any successful development effort.

An injection of hope is desperately needed today if Haiti is to move forward. A wide range of social issues must be addressed from lack of public education to inadequate medical care. There are too few opportunities to market local goods. And Haitians need technical assistance to create a cheap and effective source of energy for cooking, electricity. Rural transport must be expanded to provide the basis for program development in the aftermath of this catastrophe. Community action will be at the center of all these types of developments. The challenge in the coming year is to meet specific needs in a visible and sustainable manner that will engage all Haitians, and bring together a public-private partnership from the international community that includes foundations, corporations, and individuals.

Haiti needs three big wins. First, the government of Haiti must decentralize services from Port au Prince to other parts of the country. The mere act of decentralization will create jobs and with it the infrastructure to get from point to point, something that has been neglected for most of Haiti's modern history. Sec-

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ond, restoring public education to all who need it must become another priority so that children whose schools have been destroyed have an opportunity to keep on learning, even if the classroom is in a tent or under the sky. Before the earthquake 80 percent of all schools were in private hands, unregulated and costly. Public education had almost ceased to exist. The government of Haiti must ensure that every Haitian child is given the opportunity to learn, and that girls in particular have a chance to attend school. Third, rebuilding must begin the job of renewing the earth. In a country where 98 percent of the territory is now deforested, a national campaign to build up the soil, end the use of charcoal for cooking so that the few remaining trees are saved will help restore Haiti's agricultural economy to its rightful place. Environmental and energy security must be among the top priorities in this reconstruction effort. Not only will this focus create jobs, but it will also be a foundation upon which future generations of Haiti may develop a sustainable economy.

De facto decentralization started when many Haitians fled Port au Prince for the countryside in the days after the earthquake. But decentralization without planning or services can lead to greater instability. President Preval's announcement that the national palace will be rebuilt not in Port au Prince but in a new city closer to the border with the Dominican Republic could have a very significant impact on moving goods and services to a wider area, creating new jobs, and promoting investment in roads and related infrastructure. Along these same lines, rebuilding the ports, not only in Port au Prince, but in the South, near Jacmel, and also in the North around Cape Haitien, as well as along some of the cities like Petit Goave, or Saint Marc,

would allow the recreation of the old ferry service that once carried goods from the country to urban markets. There is great potential for this type of decentralization, and this type of service will be fundamental until adequate roads are rebuilt.

Making Haiti's economy green is certainly within reach. This should be a central feature of any new construction. Not only should new buildings take into account the need for adequate regulatory codes to prevent the types of destruction that occurred after the earthquake, but any new building must take advantage of the renewable technologies now available. Solar energy, aeolic and geothermal sources of power to provide clean energy to Haiti's citizens must be incorporated into the planning of any new project. Distributive energy solutions must also be considered for much of the country. Energy co-operatives could give every Haitian access to electricity. Alleviating energy poverty will be an essential component of the new Haiti.

Haiti's Immediate Security Needs

Since 2004, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, known as MINUSTAH, has been credited with providing Haiti

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with a security force that has permitted some of the new investment and government capacity that had long eluded Haiti. The earthquake will certainly put an even higher demand on the need for security as the humanitarian operations continue and reconstruction begins. Among the priorities for MINUSTAH will be its ability to support the development of the security sector, but also to ensure that in cities outside of Port au Prince there is adequate policing to prevent the spread of gangs, criminal organizations, or the expansion of illicit activities that have long plagued Haiti. In this rebuilding phase security will be the condition precedent for all other types of reconstruction activities. If Haitians feel that they cannot go out on the streets or if acts of violence like kidnappings and rape become the norm then there will be little willingness to rebuild. The MINUSTAH mission timeframe will be extended to accommodate the needs of the government of Haiti in the years to come. Security will remain central to that mission.

Haitian National Police (HNP)

Rebuilding Haiti's National Police was one of the important security missions of MINUSTAH when it returned to Haiti in 2004. About a quarter of the police were corrupt by the time the government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide departed. It is also estimated that the old force was involved in 65 percent of

the crime in the country. With the support of many UN member states MINUSTAH returned to the drawing board, vetting the former members of the HNP who had been compromised in their work with drug traffickers and renowned for their corruption. A process of recruitment and training led to the creation of a new force that was working alongside UN civil police to help restore stability and security to Port au Prince and other areas of the country.

When the UN first started its police training project in their first intervention in 1994 there was a decision taken by the government of Haiti that funding for a force of only 5,000 police was available at the time, in spite of the need to have more police in a country of nine million people. This arbitrary decision set the stage for failure, a lesson that was learned when the UN returned in 2004.

After more than five years police reform was showing signs of success. There are close to 8,000 new police who have been trained since the return of MINUSTAH. Even more important has been that public confidence in the police force was growing. Before the earthquake a poll taken in Port-au Prince showed that 60 percent of Haiti's citizens approved of police performance. This was exceptional given the past history of the police in Haiti. Indeed, until the events of January 12th giving Haiti adequate policing capacity was an indicator used to determine the exit strategy for the UN mission. The goal of training between 9–11,000 police by 2011 was within reach.

After the catastrophic earthquake took the life of the head of the MINUSTAH leadership, which included the head of civilian police, Canadian Douglas Coates, there was a leadership gap that resulted in several days of chaos and disorganization. Surprisingly, however, member of Haiti's National Police began to emerge immediately after the earthquake. Policemen started coming out to direct traffic, to manage crowd control, directing water trucks, and guarding gasoline stations and cash delivery outlets. Many police are without their traditional blue and beige uniforms since these men and women had also lost their homes, family members, and worldly possessions.

According to reports from the field, there were about 2,500 officers in Port-au-Prince before the earthquake. At least 66 died and 50 were seriously injured during the quake. There are still 491 officers uncounted for. UN Deputy Police Commissioner who is now in charge of helping Haitians, Richard Warren, recalled that "in the old days, you ran away from the Haitian police, you didn't run toward them.....That has changed, and you can see the change with your own eyes."

Today the Haitian National Police may be the only presence of the state visible in Port au Prince. The chief of police, Mario Andersol, is working out of a makeshift office near the UN logistics base near the airport. This is especially important since the national government is so hobbled by the destruction of its offices, the death of so many civil servants, and the great needs that the al-

ready weak government will face in the weeks and months ahead. Several immediate problems with the HNP are coming to a head. First, those currently working have not been paid. They are relying on the good will of the aid providers for food and water for themselves and their families. But a means of paying them will be essential if these men and women are to remain supportive of the reconstruction. Policemen will also need arms and weapons since at when the earthquake hit it destroyed the main prison releasing 4,000 drug dealers, kidnappers, murderers and gang members on to the streets of Port au Prince. Violent crime will return unless some means is established for rounding up criminals before these individuals move out into the general population and cause further trouble. Unfortunately, a UN request for a prison ship was denied by the U.S.

The Future Role of the UN Mission: Haiti Rising

Almost three months to the day after the UN Security Council approved the renewal of the MINUSTAH mandate (UN SR 1892) the UN again is being tasked with one of the greatest nation-building efforts in the Western Hemisphere. The evolution of MINUSTAH's mission as a multidimensional peace operation is evident in the types of activities that it has undertaken since it was created in 2004. The nexus of security and development is evident in its work, with security being the primary mission, but not the only one.

With Brazil in the lead of this peace operation the statements by Brazil's foreign and defense ministers, Celso Amorin and Nelson Jobim, after the earthquake underscore this approach. Brazil proposed a change in status of the MINUSTAH to reflect that it would "economically pacify" Haiti. Minister Jobim further noted that the mission would focus on job creation, improving education, and reconstruction. He recommended a Lula Plan for Haiti, rather than the IMF's call for a new Marshall Plan.

That Brazil has taken this aggressive approach to rebuilding Haiti through the UN underscores the evolution of the role that the largest country in Latin America has played in this international operation. It also underscores the tension that many countries of the region feel with regard to sole U.S. ownership of the Haiti situation. This, however, is really a misreading of what President Obama has stated from the outset.

Obama said that "in this new century no great challenge will be one we can solve alone. In this humanitarian effort, we will work closely with other nations, so that our work on the ground is efficient and effective under what are very difficult conditions. We'll join with the UN and . . . we will partner with the constellation of nongovernmental organizations that have long and established record of working to improve the lives of Haitian people." This approach was also reinforced when Secretary of State Hillary Clinton noted that we want to be "partners and not patrons" when it comes to working on this effort in Haiti.

Brazil's effort to take the lead should be welcomed, but also watched to see how other countries in the hemisphere react to this expansion of the mission. It is no secret that Brazil has sought a greater role at the UN, and in particular a seat on the Security Council. These global ambitions are not lost on others in the region. Many policy analysts inside Brazil acknowledge that the country is still unable to provide a full range of development services. Where Brazil can play an invaluable role, however, is in the process of bringing the regional security actors who have contributed to the overall UN mission into a more long-term role in ensuring that Haiti's security is guaranteed by a multinational force that is diverse, and also a reflection of a regional commitment to democracy and stability for the long-term.

MINUSTAH has created a genuine Latin American dominated peace-operation in the Western Hemisphere under UN auspices. This is significant since the leadership of Brazil has shown a new dedication to peace operations while, at the same time, acknowledging the profound challenges to regional peace and stability that remain. This attitude has united governments around the tragic conditions of poverty and deprivation that characterize the situation in Haiti. MINUSTAH also has spurred a regional security consultation process comprised

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of defense and foreign ministers. The situation in Haiti can be supported by using the forum to discuss a broader regional security agenda. The recent creation of the Defense Council and the emergence of UNASUR, the Union of South American states, both reflect a deepening role by Latin American states in a regional geopolitical system that is independent of U.S. influence. Since efforts are in their formative phase, it is unclear how they will coordinate with U.S., Canadian, and European governments. There is evidence, however, that U.S. involvement in other parts of the world, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan, has provided an opening for regional actors to move into the space once dominated by the United States.

If MINUSTAH has been the driver of a wider agenda for peace and security in Haiti, it still remains unknown whether or not it will continue to serve that purpose as the mission evolves into a reconstruction operation of much longer duration. (MINUSTAH was tentatively scheduled to leave in 2011). Haiti's problems will continue as the nation's ability to govern itself and provide security for its population will require external security presence for some time. This earthquake and the hurricanes that devastated the island, undermine much of the economic progress that had taken root. Great challenges remain in the wake of these natural disasters. The UN presence, however,

will facilitate recovery along with others who have noted that Haiti is a long-term effort.

When the UN returned to Haiti in March 2004 former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan asked the central question about cases such as Haiti: "Should we have learned by now that outsiders cannot solve Haiti's problems? . . . For a time in the early 20th century it was a U.S. protectorate. Should it not now be left alone to sort itself out? The proposition is attractive only in the abstract. Haiti is clearly unable to sort itself out, and the effect of leaving it alone would be continued or worsening chaos. Our globalized world cannot afford a political vacuum, whether in the mountains of Afghanistan or on the very doorstep of the remaining superpower."¹

These powerful words are as relevant today as they were almost six years ago. They sum up the dilemma of peacekeeping in situations like Haiti, not only for U.S. policy there, but also in other parts of the globe that are affected by deep-rooted poverty, weak governance, and a set of development problems that cannot be solved without long-term commitment to financial and technical support. It goes to the core of how the U.S. will manage cases like Haiti that require not only security for the

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long haul, but also intensive investment in institutional capacity building and support to the private sector to promote trade and investment. The U.S. government still remains unable to muster an adequate civilian response to the needs of societies like Haiti. The UN is by far more capable of making long-term commitments through its various development and humanitarian agencies which understand the culture, and have international staff and the mandate to work in development over the course of the next decade.

What is important to take from this experience in Haiti is the capacity regional leaders hold to unite around a problem and to support a solution that works multilaterally with the UN. Whether this multilateralism will translate into the creation of a regional peacekeeping force to provide stability after the UN operation ends is unresolved. What is clear, however, is that collective security in the Americas will never be the same after MINUSTAH.

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