



# Haiti & The United States Political- Economic Connections



# The Beginning of Foreign Puppeteering by The U.S. Government

## U.S. Occupation of Haiti

Due to its highly profitable economic output, Haiti was once the richest country in the Caribbean. Driven by capitalism and economic growth, the U.S. began to form reasons to occupy Haiti. The U.S. also realized that Haiti's geographical location held strategic military use. Worrying that Haiti could be overtaken by foreign powers, the U.S. began increasing its presence in 1911 to dictate and maintain its influence over the people of Haiti and its government.



## Control of Haiti's Political Landscape and its Economy

Between 1911-1915, seven Haitian presidents were either overthrown or assassinated. This led to instability in Haiti. The U.S. president at the time, Woodrow Wilson, used Haiti's instability to increase U.S. military presence. This act was used as a disguise to hide the United States' true intent, prevent foreign invasion, and protect its financial assets, Haiti. The Haitian-American treaty of 1915 paved the way for the United States to gain control over Haiti's finances and intervene in Haiti's governing when deemed necessary.



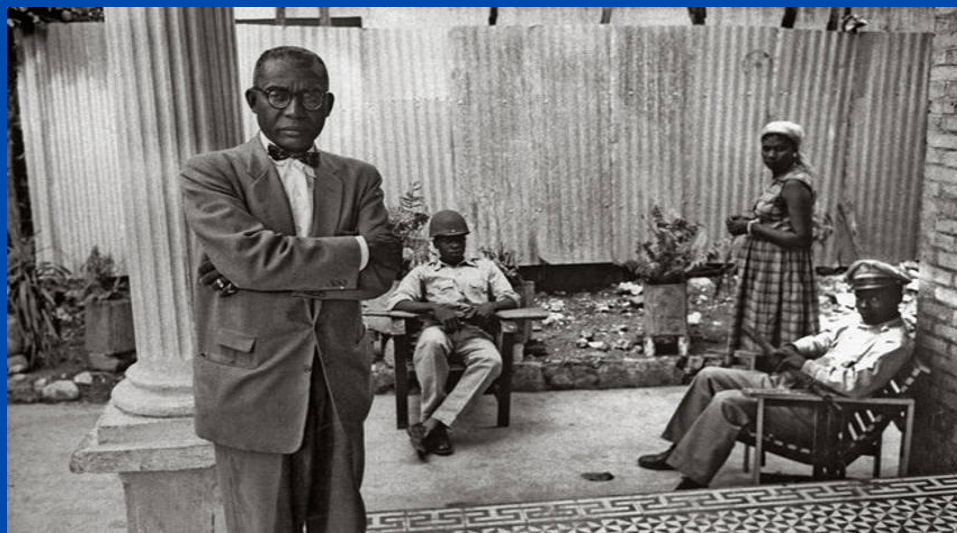
## Exploitation of Forced Labor

While US military officials were strategizing ways to utilize Haiti in the early 1900s, US entrepreneurs eagerly waited to create plantations. Once the green light was given, US companies entered and deprived Haitian workers of their land. Forced labor was used to produce raw goods for international trade and build roads that military forces could use to fight Haitians who revolted. A combination of emotions and forced work led to a peasant rebellion from 1919-1920. Reacting to claims of abuse in 1921, the US Senate intervened to help reorganize power within Haiti. A stable and prosperous period followed, but then a series of uprisings and strikes in 1929 led to the beginning of U.S. withdrawal from Haiti.



# Revisiting an Authoritarian Regime 1957-1990

In 1957, Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier took power over Haiti with military support. What followed soon after was a period filled with terror, repression, and total control over Haiti. Those who opposed his way of ruling were either abducted, tortured, or killed. Victims included activists, students, and opposing politicians.



This is an image of Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier standing against a pillar.

*Robert W. Kelle. "Francois Duvalier (1957)". Created in May 1957. Accessed on May.9<sup>th</sup>, 2023.*

[https://ekohaiti.com/image/?\\_sf\\_s=papa%20doc](https://ekohaiti.com/image/?_sf_s=papa%20doc)

Papa Doc was previously part of a U.S.-sponsored program to eliminate an infectious disease in the 1940s. His adoption of an anti-communist agenda as president eased the process of building relations with the United States. When the U.S. embassy openly endorsed Papa Doc, he responded at his first press conference by announcing his admiration of the United States. What followed soon after were direct financial aid payments to Haiti from the U.S.: \$7 million in 1959, \$9 million in 1960, and \$15.5 million in 1961.

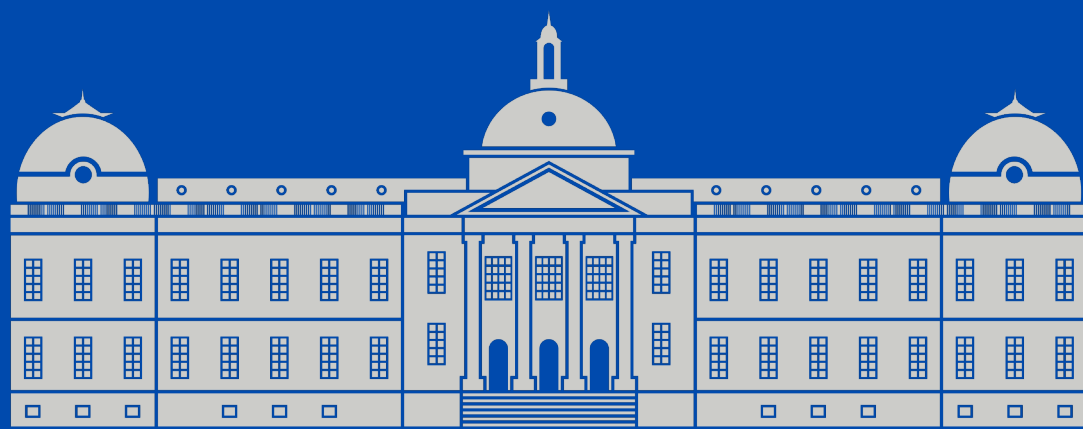
In addition, the U.S. began to supply Haiti with U.S. weapons. This included rifles, machine guns, and mortars. U.S. Government officials working in Haiti at the time were fully aware of the brutality of Papa Doc's regime. His ability to maintain stability within Haiti's government was rewarded with the U.S. being complicit while acts of violence against humanity were committed. In 1971, Papa Doc died due to health-related complications and was immediately succeeded by his son, Jean Claude, also known as "Baby Doc". A legacy filled with terror continued.

During his first speech as president, Baby Doc followed his father's playbook by openly admiring the U.S. Being ushered into power at the age of 19, he adopted an extravagant lifestyle leading some to believe his time as president wouldn't last long. The power behind Baby Doc's inheritance of his father's well-established system of suppression and elimination of opposition was underestimated.

Foreign investment from the United States continued. Between 1972 and 1981, \$584 million of financial aid was poured into Haiti with most of the total coming from the U.S. In the early 1980s, over half of Haiti's population was living on \$1.25 a day. Once foreign governments became aware of Baby Doc and his associates using the funds for personal gain, they began sending aid to private voluntary organizations. This allowed them to bypass Baby Doc's government. The U.S. warned Baby Doc that future payments would be jeopardized unless he improved the country's human rights record.

The regime responded by driving truckloads of Haitians who were unable to read from one polling place to another to vote in favor of keeping Baby Doc in power.

The official results were 99.98%, reaffirming Baby Doc as president. This ignited nonviolent protest amongst young opponents of the regime. In 1986, a popular revolt forced Baby Doc to flee Haiti to exile in France. From 1986-1990, Haiti was controlled by the subsequent neo-Duvalier military-led government.



### **Additional Resources to Reference**

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Francois-Duvalier>

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v05/d309>



# A Timeline of Coups, Interventions, and U.S. Efforts to Restore Democracy in Haiti 1990 - 2023

**1990**

Jean-Bertrand Aristide is elected as president in Haiti's first free and peaceful election. U.S. President George H.W. Bush endorsed an effort to ensure all parties would accept it as fair and promised aid for the new president.

**1991**

Aristide is ousted in a coup led by a Haitian military general, triggering sanctions by the U.S. and the Organization of American States in retaliation. Sanctions targeted oil and weapons and cut all trade (except medicine and food) and all non-commercial air traffic with Haiti.

**1994**

The U.S. enlisted support from Canada, the Netherlands, France, and the Dominican Republic to pressure Haitian military leaders more. 20,000 U.S. troops were sent to Haiti to counter the increasing repression by the Haitian military and prevent the reinstalling of Aristide as president.

**1995**

The U.S. takes measures to ensure free elections are held, agree to keep forces in Haiti until the end of Aristides' term and support transferring power to the newly elected government in 1996. UN peacekeepers begin to replace U.S. troops.

**2006**

The U.S. partially lifts an arms embargo that was imposed in 1991. The U.S. State Department stated this would allow exports of defense-related equipment and services to support security units within Haiti's government.

**2008**

The U.S. and World Bank announce extra food aid totaling \$30 MILLION dollars.

**2010**

A catastrophic earthquake strikes Haiti. The U.S. takes control of Haiti's main airport to ensure the orderly arrival of aid flights.

**2017**

The Trump administration (U.S.) cut USAID's humanitarian and development assistance to Haiti by nearly 18 percent in 2017 as part of more significant reductions to U.S. foreign aid but preserved funding for initiatives to reduce poverty, improve infrastructure and services, and promote democratic institutions.

**2018**

The Organization of American States (OAS) discusses the U.S. is committed to the people of Haiti and will continue to support free and fair elections in Haiti. It was admitted that the people of Haiti deserve the opportunity to elect their leaders and restore Haiti's democratic institutions.

**2019**

President Moïse, who faced accusations of political illegitimacy and growing authoritarianism, sparked protests across Haiti. The Trump administration supported Moïse, despite discontent from the people of Haiti.

**2020**

U.S. policy towards Haiti has included the use of penalties, judicial support for the investigation into Moïse's assassination, and extradition for those complicit in arms trafficking, gang violence, and drug trafficking.

**2021**

15,000 Haitians fled their country, crossing the Rio Grande to seek asylum in the US. The Biden administration (U.S.) continued to uphold Title 42, a public health order allowing for the immediate removal of migrants after a federal court in Louisiana blocked efforts to terminate it.

**2022**

The Biden Administration (U.S.) resumed the Haitian Family Reunification Parole program, allowing certain U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents to seek release for family members in Haiti.

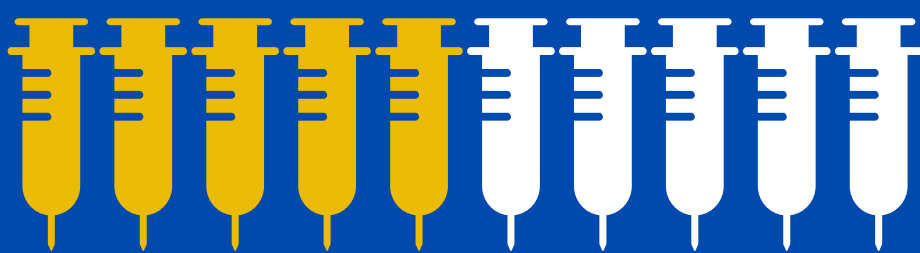
**2023**

The Biden Administration (U.S.) requested \$274.8 million in assistance for Haiti in 2023, up from the \$204.4 million provided in 2021, most of which would fund health and other development activities.

## U.S. Foreign Assistance to Haiti 2010-2021



Since the 2010 earthquake, the U.S. has provided Haiti with over \$5.1 billion dollars in aid. Focusing on areas such as reconstruction, development programs, post-disaster relief, and long-term recovery.



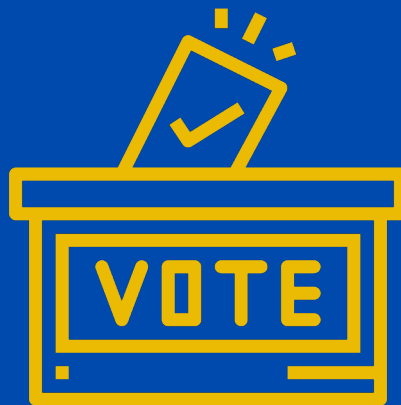
In 2021, the United States partnered with the Government of Haiti to deliver the first 500,000 doses of Moderna COVID-19 vaccines.



**Investigation assistance:** After President Moïse was assassinated, both the U.S. Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security joined forces to support Haitian authorities in investigating.



**Security assistance:** Between 2010-2020, the U.S. Provided \$312 million to strengthen the Haitian National Police and support the HNP school. One goal was to ensure that Haitian National Police are trained to effectively respond to civil disturbances while respecting human rights and maintaining peace and stability.



**USAID focuses on educating voters on electoral processes, promoting electoral transparency, ensuring inclusive voter participation, strengthening the competitiveness of political parties, and improving electoral administration. The organization has provided over \$3 million to strengthen The Consortium for Elections and Political Processes.**



**The U.S. provides urgent humanitarian aid through independent United Nations and non-government organizations. Areas of focus include the following:**

- **Improving access to primary health care services**  
- USAID is the largest health donor in Haiti, reaching over 4 million among Haiti's population of 11 million.
- **Improving nutrition by adding micronutrients to food**
- **Vaccinating children against diseases that increase the death of children under the age of five**
- **Ensuring pregnant mothers receive proper care**
- **Decreasing HIV rates and ensuring HIV care and treatment are provided during the covid-19 pandemic**
- **Rebuilding Haiti's national teaching hospital - USAID has contributed \$25 million to its construction and plans to provide an additional \$10 million toward its completion**



# Haiti's Montana Accord document

The Montana Accord is an approach for solutions to combat the crisis in Haiti. It was commissioned by a group of civic, political, and religious organizations and leaders after Haiti was left without a head of state due to the assassination of Jovenel Moïse. The document itself is a Haitian-formulated agreement, created on Haitian soil by its people; uninfluenced by foreign governments. One of its major provisions is a call for a provisional government to take over from interim Prime Minister Ariel Henry and conduct elections.

There are two obstacles standing in the way of a credible path forward. One is Ariel Henry refusing to step down from his position. He believes he can remain in office past the end of his mandate, sharing a similar belief to previous dictators. The other setback is the United States withholding its endorsement of the Montana Accord. Ironically, U.S. government officials are encouraging all Haitian political parties to reach an agreement.



Workers pack Haitian electoral ballots and other voting materials in Port au Prince, Haiti in 2011. Victoria Hazou. "DFS workers packaging Haiti election ballots in 2011". Created March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011. Accessed May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DFS\\_workers\\_packing\\_Haiti\\_election\\_ballots\\_in\\_2011.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DFS_workers_packing_Haiti_election_ballots_in_2011.jpg)

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