

Aristide's Second Fall from Power: A Case of US-France Policy Cooperation

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April 2006

On 29 February 2004, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the democratically elected president of Haiti was overthrown in a coup. In the days leading up to his overthrow, as a rebel group swept through the country from its base in the Dominican Republic, discussion within the foreign policy communities in the United States and France revolved around the question of whether these powers would intervene to protect Aristide's regime, or allow it to fall. As things turned out, France and the US pursued very similar policies in this period, with both countries choosing not to provide assistance to Aristide's regime. Moreover, there is even some evidence to suggest that France and the US achieved a degree of policy cooperation on this matter. All this is of particular significance because it occurred in the year following the US' March 2003 invasion of Iraq. The rhetoric from both sides of the Atlantic in the run-up to that war would suggest that France and the US were the bitterest of allies, unwilling to work together despite their formal links through organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Group of Eight. Yet, as noted, the case of Haiti stood in sharp contrast to this outlook, and thus deserves a closer examination. In this paper, I will undertake to explain each country's policy towards Haiti and show that shared objectives led to policy alignment and cooperation. In the case of the United States, I will show that while racism does not explain Haiti policy, as some prominent analysts have suggested, the longstanding issue of illegal Haitian migration leads the US to want to promote stability and economic growth in Haiti, which it believes will reduce refugee flows. To achieve this, however, the US has sought to institute in Haiti a form of democracy that is incompatible with Aristide's populist politics that, in its view, breeds instability and prevents economic growth. With respect to France, I will argue that illegal migration from Haiti to the French Antilles, which, again, could be resolved by instituting a more stable regime in Haiti, combined with France's irritation at Aristide's demands for debt repayment relating to slavery,

provide some of the motivation for its behaviour. However, I will also note that a key explanation of French policy is expediency: with Aristide's regime becoming increasingly weak over the 2000-04 period, and with the US very much opposed to supporting Haiti, France likely found it worthwhile to play along, rather than further antagonize the US in the post-Iraq invasion period by pursuing an opposing policy.

From Rivalry to Cooperation

Over the last century, Haiti's position vis-à-vis France and the United States has changed markedly. In the years before the beginning of the First World War, Haiti served as a point of significant rivalry between the two Great Powers. In the context of the Monroe Doctrine, President William Howard Taft employed "dollar diplomacy" to try to ensure that Caribbean states remained more or less financially secure and independent of European financial interests. The US fear was that a financial crisis in the Caribbean and Latin America region could lead to intervention by European states if one of the latter's financial interests were jeopardized. In such a situation, a rival European power could use the crisis as an excuse to remain in the region for an extended period of time and threaten US interests in the area, such as full, open access to the Panama Canal and its approaches for American ships. In the words of Walter McDougall, "[s]o long as Caribbean states were permitted to fall into anarchy, the navies of Europe would have an excuse to penetrate America's sphere of influence and defence perimeter."¹ These kinds of concerns were certainly reciprocated by France, which also wanted to protect its regional

¹ Walter McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American encounter with the world since 1776* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997) 115.

interests. As Brenda Plummer has observed, “France needed an independent Haiti to ensure that the United States did not completely engulf the anticipated Panama Canal trade route.”²

The above rivalry contrasts markedly with French and US policy towards Haiti in the contemporary period. Today, neither France nor the US is particularly concerned with the other’s level of dominance in the Caribbean basin. Quite the opposite, there is a detectable level of policy alignment and, perhaps, even cooperation between the two powers when it comes to what to do about Haiti. Indeed, in a November 2004 “Letter to an American Friend” published in the *Wall Street Journal*, then French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier explicitly cited Haiti as a case of France-US cooperation in world affairs.³

France-US Policy Alignment and Cooperation

What exactly are the substantive elements of US-France policy alignment⁴ and cooperation? The period to be examined begins with the disputed legislative elections of May 2000, when seven Senate seats (out of 32) were awarded to Aristide’s Fanmi Lavalas party by the Electoral Council despite the fact that the respective candidates had only gained pluralities, not majorities, of the vote.⁵ It should be noted, however, that these elections were nonetheless described by a monitoring group from the Organization of American States (OAS) as a “great success for the Haitian population, which turned out in large numbers to choose their local and national

² Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Haiti and the Great Powers 1902-1915* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988) 148.

³ Published in longer form in *Le Monde*: “Letter to an American Friend” (English translation), 10 November 2004.

⁴ It is possible to characterize alignment as cooperation, in other words, to equate the two (i.e., two states may agree to cooperate by aligning their foreign policies.) However, because the documentary record of US-France cooperation vis-à-vis Haiti in the relevant period is far from complete, I will distinguish alignment from cooperation to allow for the (very plausible) possibility that the two countries may have aligned their policies without necessarily agreeing to do so.

⁵ It is worthwhile to note that even if all seven Senate seats had been won by opposition parties, Lavalas would still have had majority control of the Senate.

governments.”⁶ This vote was followed by the presidential elections of November 2000, when Aristide again won with 90 per cent support, but most opposition parties boycotted this election because of the earlier controversy.

Soon after the May vote dispute, both France and the US (along with other donors, like Canada) were quick to reduce their aid flows to Haiti’s government, and redirect significant amounts of aid to “civil society” groups, as a way of forcing Aristide to address the Senate seat issue. Furthermore, after the presidential elections, the US imposed eight conditions that had to be met by Haiti for the restoration of aid. While Aristide showed some resistance to the conditions initially, by February 2002, two years before the second coup, under mediation from the OAS and CARICOM, he appears to have adjusted to the impositions. At a CARICOM meeting between Caribbean foreign ministers and American Secretary of State Colin Powell that month, the ministers announced that Aristide had already met six of the eight conditions, including successfully demanding the resignation of the seven controversial Senators, and that the remaining two conditions required cooperation from the opposition in order to be fulfilled.⁷ Despite these efforts on Haiti’s part, the US and France remained opposed to restoring aid support. Over the next two years, France and the US continued their sour relations with Haiti, and increased their public criticisms of Aristide’s government.

Just to be clear, it should be noted here for the sake of clarity that Aristide’s government became increasingly repressive over this period of time, and much of the criticism leveled at it by French and American diplomats was not unjustified. Yet, some observers have argued that the

⁶ As quoted in: Peter Hallward, “Option Zero in Haiti”, *New Left Review*, 27 (May-June 2004).

⁷ CARICOM, “Press Release on Meeting Between Caribbean Foreign Ministers and United States Secretary of State, Nassau, 7 February 2002,” 15 February 2002; available at: http://www.caricom.org/jsp/pressreleases/pres28_02.htm.

suspension of critical aid money and redirection of funds into highly politicized civil society groups (some of whom were led by wealthy business leaders) bears a significant part of the responsibility for the government's authoritarianism. As a *Boston Globe* article noted after Aristide's fall, the \$500 million aid cutoff that began in 2001 "left Haiti's government struggling to meet even basic needs and weakened the authority of [President Aristide]..."⁸ Moreover, in the words of a report by the International Crisis Group, "urban gangs received money, logistical support and weapons from the National Police because the [Aristide] government saw them as a bulwark against a coup."⁹ (Following his restoration to power in 1994, Aristide disbanded the country's feared military, leaving his government with only the police force for defence.)

Yet, the more desperate and authoritarian the Haitian government became, the more easy it was for France and the US to justify withholding restoring support, until the situation deteriorated to a crisis point in late 2003. After that, Aristide's government, near financial collapse and facing the very real prospect of an insurrection from rebels based in the Dominican Republic, was on its last legs, and only a quick foreign military intervention would be able to save it. Both the US and France remained on the sidelines, however, not providing any assistance as the rebellion began in early February 2004. As Yasmine Shamsie comments, "where the opportunity to toss a life preserver to the flailing government existed, the key actors (the USA, France and Canada) stood by idle allowing a regiment of well armed paramilitaries to determine the country's fate."¹⁰

To be sure, the US and France both voiced their opposition to a coup against Aristide less than two weeks before he was overthrown. On 17 February, for example, Secretary of State

⁸ As quoted in: Paul Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2006) 384.

⁹ International Crisis Group, "Can Haiti Hold Elections in 2005?", *Latin America/Caribbean Briefing No. 8*, 3, August 2005, 4.

¹⁰ Yasmine Shamsie, "Building 'low-intensity' democracy in Haiti: the OAS contribution," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 6 (2004) 1112.

Powell told the press that “[w]e cannot buy into a proposition that says the elected president must be forced out of office by thugs.”¹¹ France, meanwhile, indicated that it would be willing to participate in an international intervention mission. Following an emergency meeting, Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin announced that France was working with a number of other countries, including Canada and Brazil, “to consider the feasibility of a peacekeeping force that would deploy if the conditions allowed because of an end to the fighting.”¹² But that was precisely the problem. While both the US and France claimed to oppose a coup carried out by a few hundred “thugs”, neither country was willing to deploy a small military force to protect Aristide’s government. Indeed, it might be argued that the US and France wanted to see Aristide go, but did not want to be seen as supporting a rebellion composed of unpredictable elements who, once in power, could prove to be an embarrassment.¹³

For the record, it should also be pointed out here that there are many Haiti observers who believe that these rebels were funded and armed by the United States, perhaps through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). As one editorial in the *Miami Herald* put it: “Is it simply a coincidence that the United States recently sold the Dominican Republic 20,000 M-16s and that the rebels are now toting M-16s and rocket-propelled grenade launchers? Where did those weapons come from?”¹⁴ While there is still no public evidence that can confirm this charge, it is not implausible that the CIA may have extended support to the rebellion. Indeed, it has been revealed that during the 1991-94 period, the CIA had developed links with the brutal

¹¹ Christopher Marquis, “US Declines to Use Force to Put Down Haitian Strife,” *New York Times*, 18 February 2004.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ The *New York Times* provided a good account of three key leaders of the rebellion: “The rebel leaders include Guy Philippe, 35, a former police commissioner with a record that Human Rights Watch considers “dubious”; Louis-Jodel Chamblain, a former paramilitary officer who has been accused of numerous political slayings; and Jean-Pierre Baptiste, a convicted killer who had been a local leader of an anti-Aristide force known as Fraph.” See Christopher Marquis, “Ignore Haiti? Tell That to Politicians in Florida,” *New York Times*, 29 February 2004.

¹⁴ “Hands off policy toward Haiti is simply wrong,” (Op-Ed) *Miami Herald*, 29 February 2004.

paramilitary organization FRAPH¹⁵, even paying its leader, Emmanuel ‘Toto’ Constant (who presently lives freely in Queens, New York), \$500 a month as an informant.¹⁶ Moreover, there are also indications that the CIA knew ahead of time that Constant was organizing the demonstrations at the Port-au-Prince harbour in October 1993, which prevented the advanced landing of the *USS Harlan County* that carried the American troops and Canadian police officers who would form the United Nations mission in Haiti (UNMIH), yet did not try to deter him from doing so.¹⁷ Asked on CBS’ *60 Minutes* whether the local CIA station chief had asked him to stop the demonstration, Constant replied: “Absolutely not. He never told me anything like that,” adding that “I guaranteed him that the demonstration was simply a media frenzy that I wanted to create. That has nothing to do – no life was threatened.”¹⁸ Whatever the ‘truth’ of this matter, the point being made here is that additional research and archival declassifications may very well confirm that the US actively supported the rebels that ousted Aristide in 2004.

Anyhow, the exact level of intergovernmental cooperation between France and the US remains unclear at present. The publicly available documentary record is scant in details, though it is reasonable to expect more to be uncovered in the next few years. What is known at present is that in the period of the coup, there was a detectable degree of high level diplomatic collaboration between the US and France. Moreover, following Aristide’s fall from power, Secretary of State Powell along with his French counterpart, Dominique de Villepin “spoke on the phone several times” about what to do with the deposed leader, agreeing that he should be sent to a French military base in the Central African Republic. And it is known that when

¹⁵ Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti.

¹⁶ See: Center for Constitutional Rights, “CCR Warns of Threat of Mass Murder in Haiti and the Return of FRAPH,” 18 February 2004.

¹⁷ This was the first attempt at bringing Aristide back to Haiti. The agreement achieving this was signed at Governor’s Island, New York, in July 1993.

¹⁸ As quoted in: Philippe Girard, *Clinton in Haiti* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004) 45.

Villepin met with Powell in Washington in early February, the Haiti issue was discussed, though, again, it is not known what might have been decided at this meeting.¹⁹

Over the longer period prior to the coup, there have been a number of reports suggesting that both France and the US attempted to undermine Aristide's government in the months leading up to the rebellion. For example, a kind of quasi-official delegation from France arrived in Haiti in December 2003 to pressure Aristide to step down and lend support to the opposition that had coalesced under the leadership of businessman André Apaid Jr. This group, led by the French intellectual Jules Régis Debray and Foreign Minister Villepin's sister, Véronique Albanel, visited Haiti and, according to Aristide and his lawyers, who have filed lawsuits against the two, demanded that the Haitian leader remove himself from power.²⁰

American efforts, meanwhile, are said to have focused on supporting the opposition, which became emboldened and resistant to reaching a political compromise with Aristide. While this argument had been advanced in left-wing activist circles even before Aristide fell from power, it received a boost from an exposé published in the *New York Times* in January 2006, which was based on an extensive joint investigation in collaboration with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the Discovery Channel. The *Times* article cites the former US Ambassador to Haiti, Brian Dean Curran, as confirming several elements of this version of the story. According to Curran, the International Republican Institute (IRI), a 'democracy promotion' organization with close ties to the Bush Administration, began to support the opposition and counsel it to reject reaching a political agreement with Aristide. Importantly, the former Ambassador claims that the Bush Administration supported the activities of the IRI in Haiti. In fact, Curran became so concerned with the activities of the IRI that he cabled

¹⁹ Jean Michel Caroit, "How France Prepared for its Return to Haiti," *Le Monde* (English translation), 15 April 2004.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Washington to warn superiors that the organization's activities "risked us being accused of attempting to destabilize the government." This view is supported by the chief OAS negotiator in Haiti at the time, who says that "you had a constant undermining of the credibility of the negotiators [seeking political agreement between Aristide and the opposition]," in reference to US policy. Asked about these charges, Secretary of State Powell has countered Curran's position and claimed that the US never tried to undermine Aristide. Yet, his own Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere at the time, Otto J. Reich, contradicts Powell's assertion, stating that indeed "[t]here was a change in policy" which perhaps wasn't explicitly communicated to embassy officials like Curran.²¹ While it is well beyond the scope of this paper to fully sort out the contradictory claims presented here, there is certainly a strong case to be made in the context of how things actually played out in Haiti in February 2004 that the US at the very least ended support to Haiti and, at most, actively worked to destabilize the elected government, notwithstanding the earlier discussion of CIA support for the rebellion. In either case, it is not difficult to see how US and French actions towards Haiti reinforced each other. Let us now attempt to explain US policy towards Haiti, before turning to French motivations.

An Element of Racism?

A recurring element of American foreign policy is the notion of enemy images. While some foreign policy observers may be tempted to dismiss the argument that racialized enemy images have influenced contemporary US foreign policy towards Haiti, it is worthwhile to examine this issue explicitly before making a judgment as to its explanatory value, particularly so because Aristide, accompanied by many left-wing activists in North America and France, argue that US policy towards Haiti is ultimately racist. Aristide, for instance, has argued that the goal of French

²¹ All quotes cited in: Walt Bogdanich and Jenny Nordberg, "Mixed U.S. Signals Helped Tilt Haiti Toward Chaos," *New York Times*, 29 January 2006.

(and presumably American) foreign policy has been “to prevent a country of blacks from constituting a reference point for freedom,” a reflection of “pure racism”.²² In the US, meanwhile, Noam Chomsky has written that “[t]he element of racism in policy formation should not be discounted, to the present day.”²³ Moreover, while their voices are harder to hear, there is also reason to believe that many Haitians, especially Aristide supporters, believe that US and French policy is driven by racism. This view was reinforced just a few months before Aristide’s fall, when French and American diplomats refused to take part in the 18 November, 2003, commemoration at Vertières, on Haiti’s northern coast, where 200 years before an army consisting of freed Haitian slaves led by the national hero, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, defeated General Rochambeau’s French expeditionary force.

What, then, can be said about racism in America’s relations with Haiti? Historically, US policy and practice towards its disadvantaged southern neighbour has been heavily characterized by racist discourse. This characterization is confirmed by Michael Hunt’s careful study of the role of ideology in American foreign policy, where he notes that “Haiti, populated by descendants of African slaves, was repeatedly singled out as an example of what happened when dark-skinned people were left to run wild and to murder their masters and then each other.”²⁴ For example, Marine-General Smedley Butler, who led the 1915 expeditionary force into Haiti that marked the start of the 20 year American occupation of the country, quipped that Haitians are “shaved apes” who have “absolutely no intelligence whatsoever,” and are indeed “just plain low niggers,” while US Marine-Colonel Littleton Waller verified that “[t]hey are real niggers”, adding that “no mistake, there are some fine looking, well-educated polished men here, but they

²² As quoted in: Fabienne Pompey, “Haiti’s Former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide Rejects Accusations of Destabilization,” *Le Monde* (English translation), 14 October 2004.

²³ Noam Chomsky, *Year 501: The Conquest Continues* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1993) Ch. 6.

²⁴ Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987) 59.

are real nigs beneath the surface.” Such racist views extended right to Washington, with Secretary of State William Bryan expressing his bewilderment at blacks who could speak a western language: “Dear me, think of it, Niggers speaking French.”²⁵

The racist notions outlined above, to the effect that Black Haitians are incapable of handling their own affairs, may survive to the contemporary period and serve to inform a kind of modern version of the Roosevelt Corollary in US policy towards Haiti (though it is difficult to make reference to present day racist quotations to substantiate this). If Haitians cannot run their country – exemplified by ongoing instability – then the US reserves the right to intervene. But even if contemporary American policymakers harbour racist sentiments towards black Haitians, this does not necessarily imply that the US will pursue interventionist policies against Haiti. Instead, it may at most create a kind of permissive environment, where self-restraint against intervention is reduced. Indeed, a much more instructive possible explanatory variable that we should turn our attention to are the waves of Haitian ‘boat people’ who made their way to American shores over the last few decades and the effect of this on US policy.

The Migration Issue

Following the repressive François ‘Papa Doc’ Duvalier’s rise to power in 1957, the number of undocumented Haitian migrants to the US increased steadily year over year. By 1981, the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) reported that approximately 45,000 Haitians arrived on southeastern US shores without legal entry papers. In response, in September of that year, the Reagan Administration arrived at an agreement with the Haitian government to stem the flow of migrants. Under the deal, US Coast Guard vessels would patrol the Windward Straits and return any suspected illegal migrants to Haiti. By October 1984, this program had

²⁵ As quoted in: Chomsky, *Year 501*, Ch. 6.

intercepted 83 vessels and returned 2,458 Haitians back to their country, where they were often punished by the authorities for trying to leave.²⁶ Between 1981 and the first six months of 1991, moreover, some 22,000 Haitians were intercepted at sea and only 20 of these were allowed to step on US soil in order to make a claim for political asylum.²⁷ The next major wave of boat people began with the September 1991 coup against Aristide, which brought into power the Raoul Cédras military junta. During the period of its rule, which ended in October 1994, the military government along with FRAPH, its paramilitary counterpart, terrorized the population, killing and torturing thousands of Aristide's supporters, which led to an exodus of tens of thousands of Haitians seeking refuge in the US.

The documentary record reveals that US officials had a serious, though perhaps exaggerated, fear of being inundated by Haitian refugees. One Admiral who played a key role in the formulation of the 1994 intervention warned that “nine million Haitians off our shores *all* want to be your neighbours.”²⁸ Indeed, the George H. W. Bush Administration went so far as to break international law by directing the US Coast Guard, under Executive Order 12807 of 24 May 1992, to repatriate all Haitian refugees, regardless of whether or not they qualified for political refugee status.²⁹ It is in this context that racism may have some contemporary relevance. As one analyst notes, in the US Haitians “were seen as poor, illiterate, Creole-speaking, AIDS-ridden, Voodoo-worshipping Blacks with none of the anti-Communist affiliation that helped Vietnamese, Cuban and Eastern European migrants.”³⁰ Moreover, while

²⁶ See Josh DeWind and David H. Kinley III, *Aiding Migration: The Impact of International Development Assistance on Haiti* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1988) 29-33.

²⁷ Robert Lawless, *Haiti's Bad Press* (Rochester, VT: Schenkman Books, 1992) 130.

²⁸ Emphasis in original. Girard, *Clinton in Haiti*, 56.

²⁹ Executive Order 12807 is accessible through the US Coast Guard website at: <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-o/g-opl/AMIO/eo12807.pdf>. The EO provides that “the Attorney General, in his unreviewable discretion, may decide that a person who is a refugee will not be returned without his consent.” In practice, however, this clause was not followed, according to the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights. See Farmer, *Uses*, 225.

³⁰ Girard, *Clinton in Haiti*, 55.

the Clinton and Gore presidential campaign of 1992 claimed that it would reverse Bush's policy if elected, once in power this promise was quickly forgotten, with Clinton announcing that "we must not – and will not – surrender our border to those who wish to exploit our history of compassion and justice."³¹ (Still, it is important to not overemphasize the racism analysis. Certainly, it is difficult to make a strong case that President Clinton, for instance, was some kind of anti-black racist, having himself grown up in a black community; indeed, his support from America's black community was notably high and few questioned the integrity of his stand on the issue of racism.³²)

Given the above, it may be said that political stability and economic growth in Haiti are key goals of the US' Haiti policy. This was established as early as November 1981, when Secretary of State Alexander Haig Jr. met with a number of Haitian officials to discuss the migration issue and then stated that "there was agreement that the only lasting solution to this problem [of Haitian boat people] is to work together to improve economic and social conditions in Haiti so as to offer jobs and a better life in Haiti for all Haitians."³³ Similarly, a report prepared by USAID noted that "a lesser effort [than the total revamping of the economy] cannot be expected to make a measurable impact on the hemisphere's poorest nation nor upon the derivative problem of *illegal* migration to the United States."³⁴ These kinds of arguments were echoed ten years later during a congressional hearing on the same question. The Democratic Senator from Michigan, Carl Levin, noted that "[t]he only way to stem [immigration] is if somehow or other there is a democratic government in Haiti [which would presumably also facilitate economic growth] ... We can return them a lot more easily without facing the claims of

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 56-57.

³³ As quoted in: Dewing and Kinley III, *Aiding Migration*, 34.

³⁴ Lawless, *Haiti's Bad Press*, 117.

asylum.” In response, Undersecretary of Defense Walter B. Slocombe concurred: “That is our most direct and concrete interest...”³⁵

To reiterate, then, US policy towards Haiti has sought to build democracy and promote economic growth in the island state, as these could alleviate the conditions that were leading Haitians to flee their homes. As will be argued below, however, the US desire of inducing economic growth in Haiti by integrating it into the global capitalist market has led it to promote a very particular form of democracy that is at odds with the populist politics espoused by Aristide, and also helps explain the US’ more recent policy towards Haiti in the 2000-2004 period.

Before shifting to that matter, however, it should be noted that undocumented migration from Haiti was not a *pressing* issue for the US in early February 2004. The State Department spokesperson, Richard Boucher, told the press on 17 February, when the rebellion was well underway, that no increase in refugees stemming from Haiti had been detected by the Coast Guard. During the last week of February, however, there was a significant increase in the number of Haitians attempting to come to the US, and some 867 were repatriated, despite the violence and instability plaguing Haiti at that time. Now, although this was a relatively small refugee problem, there is no reason to believe that the US was not concerned that this *could* develop into a very serious issue if Haiti remained unstable. As Michael McCarthy, a Latin America specialist with the Council on Foreign Relations, noted at the time, “[t]he State Department hopes history doesn’t repeat itself, with boatloads of Haitians suddenly appearing on the doorsteps of South Florida, a potentially embarrassing political development for President Bush and his brother, Florida Gov. Jeb Bush.”³⁶ The argument presented here, therefore, is that this fear may have provided an impetus to ensure Aristide’s fall from power (and removal from Haiti) and the

³⁵ As quoted in: Girard, *Clinton in Haiti*, 56.

³⁶ Michael Marx McCarthy, “United States Can’t Let Haiti Slip Into Abyss,” *Los Angeles Times*, 15 February 2004.

deployment of an intervention force that would install a new appointed government, which, in turn, would reestablish political stability, allowing for economic growth.

‘Low-Intensity Democracy’ Construction

Let us continue our analysis, then, by delving into a discussion of democracy, and what promoting this political system might mean in practical terms. Democracy and markets do not necessarily reinforce each other. One potential incompatibility between markets and democracy is that while (in theory at least) the economically efficient functioning of markets may require a national government to pursue certain policies – such as sharp reductions in social services and the ‘safety net’, privatization of public utilities, removal of protective tariffs – the public may in fact desire the precise opposite, and take to the streets to protest such policies. Indeed, an overly excited public, willing to undertake direct action against the state to pressure for change may not provide the necessary stability for the effective functioning of markets. This is what Samuel Huntington recognized in his 1975 essay, written for the Trilateral Commission, where he argued that the US (of the Vietnam War years) was experiencing “an excess of democracy” requiring “a greater degree of moderation”, and adding that “the effective operation of a democratic political system usually requires some measure of apathy on the part of some individuals and groups.”³⁷ The underlying argument offered by Huntington has been developed by William Robinson into a theory of democracy promotion efforts by the US.

The basic argument advanced by Robinson is that the US seeks to promote a form of democracy in which (transnational) elite economic interests inform state policy and where participation in the political system is limited to periodic elections. Importantly, between

³⁷ Michael Crozier, *The Crisis of Democracy* (New York: New York University Press, 1975) 113-14.

elections, the public does not have any effective mechanism by which to affect government behaviour. With respect to US foreign policy,

[t]he impulse to ‘promote democracy’ is the rearrangement of political systems in the peripheral and semi-peripheral zones of the ‘world system’ so as to secure the underlying objective of maintaining essentially undemocratic societies inserted into an unjust international system. The promotion of ‘low-intensity democracy’ is aimed not only at mitigating the social and political tensions produced by elite-based and undemocratic status quos, but also at suppressing popular and mass aspirations for more thoroughgoing democratization of social life in the twenty-first century international order.³⁸

Now, before proceeding any further, I would like to point out one significant issue with Robinson’s argument. While, as this paper will argue, the US has had an interest in suppressing “popular and mass aspirations for more thoroughgoing democratization of social life” in Haiti, it is important to distinguish ‘democracy’ from its important variant, ‘liberal democracy’. While Aristide and his Lavalas party were democratic in the sense that they received the vast majority of the vote in multiple presidential and legislative elections, there is a very strong argument to be made that Aristide’s regime fell short of qualifying as a liberal democracy. This distinction has been carefully assessed by Michael Coppedge in his study of Hugo Chavez’s rule in Venezuela, whose regime, like Aristide’s, has received strong popular support in multiple elections, but falls short of liberal democratic standards. As Coppedge observes,

there is a ... strand in democratic theory – liberalism – that call for limits on the sovereignty of a popular majority. If majoritarianism could be trusted never to undermine the basic procedures that make it possible to ascertain and give effect to the majority will, liberalism would be unnecessary. But the dominant strain of democratic theory for the past 150 years has assumed that majorities cannot be trusted.³⁹

³⁸ William Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy: Globalization, US intervention and hegemony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 6.

³⁹ Michael Coppedge, “Venezuela: Popular Sovereignty versus Liberal Democracy,” in Jorge I. Domínguez and Michael Shifter (eds.), *Constructing Democratic Governance in Latin America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2003) 176.

While the authoritarianism and repressive actions of the Aristide regime do not come anywhere near the level of abuses achieved by the two Duvalier and Cédras regimes – and may even be less than the repression carried out by the interim appointed government that has been in power since March 2004 – there were serious grounds for criticism of its behaviour.⁴⁰ In his public rhetoric, Aristide engaged in full-out class warfare, using incendiary speech to target the wealthy minority that controlled the country’s economic levers and had accumulated a long history of exploiting the masses. This kind of talk, employing elements of liberation theology, resonated extremely well with the impoverished majority and is what made him as popular a figure as he was, undoubtedly playing a key role in his extremely quick and unforeseen rise as a political force in the year leading up to the 1990 elections. In late September 1991, just before his ouster, Aristide was reported to have encouraged a crowd gathered to listen to him to engage in ‘neck-lacing’, where a tire is placed around a person and set alight: “if you see a faker who pretends to be one of our supporters ... just grab him. Make sure he gets what he deserves. You have the right tool in your hands ... What a beautiful tool we have. What a nice instrument...it smells good, and everywhere you go, you want to smell it.”⁴¹ Beyond the rhetoric, there were reports of Aristide’s supporters engaging in intimidation tactics against the opposition, though the degree to which Aristide bore responsibility for this is difficult to establish. The purpose of this discussion, nonetheless, is simply to point out that some of the claimed US opposition to a “more

⁴⁰ The high degree of repression carried out by the interim appointed government of Haiti since its installation by the US, France and Canada in March 2004 has been well-documented, but poorly acknowledged by the North American news media and the governments of the above intervening countries. See, for example, “Police, protestors clash during pro-Aristide protest in Haiti,” Associated Press, 24 March 2004; “Gunfire kills five people in demonstration in Haiti,” Associated Press, 27 April 2005; Joseph Guylor Delva, “Up to 25 killed as police raid Haiti slum,” Reuters, 5 June 2005. On political repression, see: Amnesty International, “Haiti: Arbitrary arrest/prisoner of conscience: Gérard Jean-Juste,” 27 July 2005; Larry Birns and John Kozyn, “Haiti – And You Call This an Election?,” Council on Hemispheric Affairs, 11 October 2005. On judicial repression, see: “UN official slams Haitian Courts,” Associated Press, 29 November 2005.

⁴¹ Said at a speech on 27 September 1991. As quoted in: James A. Hellis, “Haiti: A Study in Canadian-American Security Cooperation in the Western Hemisphere” in David Haglund, *Over Here and Over There: Canada-US Defence Cooperation in an Era of Interoperability* (Kingston: Queen’s Quarterly, 2001) 115.

thoroughgoing democratic life” might be attributed to a distaste for Aristide’s revolutionary style of politics, which thrives on populist ‘democracy’, but ignores principles of liberalism to varying degrees.

A Closer Look at US Efforts to Restore Aristide to Power

The argument implied above, namely that the US and France have sought to promote a form of ‘low-intensity’ democracy that was, and is, incompatible with the politics of Aristide and Lavalas, receives a potent challenge from the counterargument that if this were correct, then the US would not have launched a significant military operation to restore the former to power in 1994. Indeed, Aristide’s radical leftist politics have not been a mystery to any foreign observer from the earliest days of his rise as a populist figure in Haiti in the late 1980s and early 1990s. And, if anything, the so-called neoliberal ‘Washington Consensus’ reached its apex at some point during the first few years following the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is in this period that neoliberal policies were widely adopted across the hemisphere – the emergence of NAFTA, initiatives by Carlos Menem in Argentina, Alberto Fujimori in Peru, Carlos Andrés Pérez Rodríguez in Bolivia – and the world, with the emergence of the World Trade Organization in 1994. Why, then, in this context, would the Clinton Administration have elected to reinstate Aristide to power in apparent contradiction of the broader interest of promoting neoliberalism?

The answer to this question has three interrelated components. The first harks back to the refugee issue that has already been discussed above. As noted, during the years of the military junta led by Raoul Cédras, the number of Haitian refugees arriving in Florida jumped sharply, eliciting a desire by US policymakers to quickly restore stability to Haiti. How could such stability be achieved, though? Certainly, at the very least, Cédras and his entourage needed to be removed from power, but who would replace the former as the new Haitian leader? This leads us

to the second component of the answer. The US had to either appoint another interim leader – who would presumably end the repression and more or less support the implementation of a neoliberal program, while also organizing elections for a later date – or restore Aristide to the presidency. While the former approach may have been tempting – and is in fact what has happened since the February 2004 coup – it did pose serious challenges for US policymakers in 1994. Perhaps foremost among these challenges is that Aristide was the *democratically elected* leader of Haiti, having received 70.6 per cent of the vote in the December 1990 elections, making it difficult for the US to simply brush him aside. Indeed, a figure that could have been appointed to the leadership following Cédras’ removal might have been Marc Bazin, the former official from the International Monetary Fund who was the runner up in the 1990 elections and favoured by the US Embassy in those elections, but he only received a little over 12 per cent of the vote, rendering him vulnerable to the charge of lacking democratic legitimacy.⁴² As Clinton remarked in November 1993, while “Aristide may not be like you and me ... two thirds of the Haitians voted for him.”⁴³ Still, rhetoric aside, the record of the US’ international interventions is full of examples of it installing or supporting (or both) unelected leaders in countries across the globe. What may have made it particularly difficult to undermine Aristide in this instance was the precedent set by the State Department in 1990, when it welcomed Aristide’s electoral win, and the support the Haitian leader was able to count on from other US allies with relatively close ties to Haiti. For example, Canada remained strongly supportive of Aristide throughout the early 1990s, with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney maintaining his support for Aristide throughout the latter’s period in exile. Given these kinds of attitudes, and the role of the United Nations in devising a solution to Haiti’s problems, could the US really have just dumped Aristide into the

⁴² Bazin was viewed by US diplomats as being pro-American; see Girard, *Clinton in Haiti*, 14.

⁴³ As quoted in: *Ibid.*, 32.

wayside? The answer to this question is idiosyncratic to Haiti (at that point in time), or, at most, to countries that share the same kinds of geopolitical considerations to US policymakers as Haiti. Certainly, if Haiti under Aristide was perceived as posing a serious security threat to the US, then international (including previous American) support for Aristide could easily have been dismissed, and US policy would have decisively opposed the ousted leader's return.

My argument so far, then, is that given Aristide's democratic legitimacy and international support (including from the US) following the 1990 elections, there was a significant element of expediency involved in choosing Aristide as Cédras' replacement. Nonetheless, while in 1990 the US could only support a leader who won his power by working within a democratic process so lauded in official American rhetoric, in 1994, the US's support for Aristide's restoration could be dependent on additional conditions, given the centrality of the US military to any intervention mission. This leads us to the third component of our explanation reconciling the US restoration of Aristide and his radical left 'anti-market' politics with the former's own broad support for the neoliberal agenda.

As soon as Aristide was forced into exile, there began much discussion in Washington about how this reconciliation could be achieved and how Aristide could be kept under a certain degree of control. At one end, there were elements within the US government who distrusted Aristide so much that they did not even want to entertain the possibility of his return to Haiti, and began an active character smearing campaign against him. In one particularly well reported example, Aristide was accused of being "mentally unstable" by a Canadian 'psychiatrist' (who would later be found to have no registration with the Canadian Medical Association), and this

story was promoted heavily by Senator Jesse Helms, who opposed Aristide's restoration by US forces.⁴⁴

At another end, Alvin Adams, then US Ambassador to Haiti, along with other embassy staff and consultants, worked with the new *de facto* government (not officially recognized by the US) at OAS negotiations with Aristide. One memorandum produced by a US embassy consultant, and cited at length below, is quite instructive in understanding how Aristide could be kept in check:

other points of the deal [in negotiation with Aristide] should surely include some of the following: that if A [Aristide] returns it would not be until some time later (months away); that he could be impeached and sent back out; that time was permitted to enact new laws limiting some of his outrageous behaviours and that of his followers; that the Prime Minister become the real power of the government; that the Prime Minister be given adequate economic support to secure his position; that no Lavalas people be included in the new Government ... If A refuses to deal ... he is finished...⁴⁵

The above did not in fact play out fully as, for instance, the presidency remained the formal centre of power after Aristide's restoration and it was not until 1994 that Aristide was restored, but it does provide a good indication of how US policymakers wanted to ensure that if Aristide were reinstated, he would face enormous constraints on his behaviour.

As things played out, the 'restoration deal' that Aristide eventually secured in 1994 contained an important *quid pro quo* element to it, which was very much in the spirit of the cited memorandum. Specifically, Aristide had to buy into the standard package of neoliberal policies before being restored to power. This portion of the story unfolded at meetings in Paris in August 1994, where "the Haitian delegation to the World Bank signed away the economic independence

⁴⁴ See Farmer, *Uses of Haiti*, 289.

⁴⁵ As quoted in: Robinson, *Polyarchy*, 300.

of the country,” in the words of one analyst.⁴⁶ In the plan, developed in consultation with donor countries, Haiti committed

to eliminate the jobs of half of its civil servants, massively privatize public services, ‘drastic[ally]’ slash tariffs and import restrictions, eschew price and foreign exchange controls, grant ‘emergency’ aid to the export sector, enforce an ‘open foreign investment policy,’ create special corporate business courts ‘where the judges are more aware of the implications of their decisions for economic efficiency,’ rewrite its corporate laws, [and] ‘limit the scope of state activity’ and regulation...⁴⁷”

Additionally, Aristide agreed to give up on a high-profile initiative undertaken during his first few months as president in 1991, in which the minimum wage in Haiti was to be raised from “\$3 to 4.80 a day, against the wishes of USAID.”⁴⁸ In other words, the model for economic growth that the US tried to implement in Haiti conformed to the same neoliberal schemes that it and the international financial institutions (IFIs) foolishly imposed on numerous developing countries in the 1980s and 1990s – a consequence of the blind adherence to the ideology of corporate capitalism. While the neoliberal model was certainly conducive to the interests of large multinational corporations, it hardly promoted the kind of economic growth that was needed to keep the Haitian masses out of poverty.

In any case, observing these developments, the World Bank’s Haiti desk officer at the time, Axel Peuker, acknowledged that the adoption of the neoliberal economic plan created “tension between the public image of Aristide” as an anti-market leftist and the “rather conservative approach, financial and otherwise” that he was acquiescing to. Quite so, after Aristide was reinstated in the fall of 1994, demonstrations protesting the abovementioned reforms were common on the streets of Port-au-Prince. Yasmine Shamsie notes, moreover, that

⁴⁶ As quoted in: Farmer, *Uses of Haiti*, 311.

⁴⁷ Allan Nairn, citing the official Haitian economic plan, entitled the ‘Strategy of Social and Economic Reconstruction’ in “Aristide Banks on Austerity”, *Multinational Monitor*, July/August 2004. Accessed 20 April 2006; available at: http://multinationalmonitor.org/hyper/issues/1994/08/mm0894_05.html.

⁴⁸ Girard, *Clinton in Haiti*, 23.

“[a] survey of the Haitian press” at the time showed “a widespread sense of disillusionment with the political process, especially among Aristide’s constituency, the country’s popular organizations.”⁴⁹ For Aristide, however, there was little room for maneuvering, given Haiti’s precarious finances. While it is unclear that Clinton would not have ordered the intervention if Aristide had not yielded to the ideals of the Washington Consensus, given the increasingly embarrassing abuses of the Cédras regime, it seems clear that critical aid money and loans would not be forthcoming without the Paris agreements. In return for agreeing to the neoliberal package, Aristide secured a long term financing program valued at \$770 million and there is little doubt that without this money he would not have been able to govern. In other words, the US could rest assured that once Aristide returned to power, he would be so dependent on foreign money for his government’s functioning that he would not revert to his original leftist policies. Was this a safe assumption, however?

The pressure exerted by the protesting masses in 1994 and 1995 against the government’s new socioeconomic programs soon led Aristide to cancel the privatization of nine state-owned firms that had been agreed to at the Paris talks and subsequent meetings. In response, the IFIs froze a \$100 million transfer while USAID stopped \$4.6 million in aid.⁵⁰ It is at this point that Aristide appears to have begun losing whatever respect he had left from foreign donors, including the US, who now established that Aristide could not be relied on to implement the dictates of the IFIs and provide a conducive environment for business. This is precisely what Harvard’s Haiti specialist, Robert Rotberg, noted during the lead up to the December 2000 elections, when Aristide sought his second term⁵¹ in office: if “he could figure out how to return

⁴⁹ Shamsie, “Promoting Low-Intensity Democracy,” 1101.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1114.

⁵¹ Haiti’s Constitution forbids the President from running for a consecutive term in office. Thus, Aristide ran for a second-term in 2000 after stepping down from power in 1996.

the market economy to Haiti” then “at the very least ... he’d make the U.S, Canada and others partners.”⁵²

It appears, therefore, that the record of US policy towards Haiti conforms to Robinson’s theory of ‘low-intensity’ democracy, as there was indeed an unsuccessful attempt to institute a socioeconomic system in Haiti that would limit popular democracy and promote the ideals of neoliberalism. Before proceeding further, it should be clarified that the argument advanced so far concerning the promotion of neoliberal policies is intended to explain American, not French, policy towards Haiti. Indeed, France has itself had a rather uneasy relationship with the ideology and practice of neoliberalism, and there is insufficient evidence to argue that it sought to promote market capitalism in Haiti. As Hubert Védrine has commented, the “ultraliberal market economy” is compatible “neither with French tradition nor French culture...”⁵³ As such, the remainder of this paper examines two issues that likely contributed to France’s desire for regime change in Haiti.

Haitian Refugees and the French Antilles

While the effect of Haitian refugees arriving in Florida on American foreign policy has been discussed in some detail in this paper, the French departments of Guadeloupe, Martinique and Guyane in the Caribbean region have also experienced relatively high numbers of Haitians arriving on their shores. During a visit to Guadeloupe in September 2005, the French Minister of International Cooperation, Brigitte Girardin, told the press that “[we] have a very serious problem of illegal Haitian immigration from Haiti to Guadeloupe, that represents a real risk of destabilization,” adding that some “6000 Haitians arrive each year in the French Antilles and I

⁵² As quoted in: Trenton Daniel, “Would Aristide back as president help poor Haiti,” *Reuters*, 15 October 2000.

⁵³ Hubert Védrine and Dominique Moisi, *France in an Age of Globalization* (Washington: Brookings, 2000) 17.

worry that it is becoming a source of tension.”⁵⁴ There are at present about 30,000 Haitian migrants in Guadeloupe (including St. Martin), 8,000 in Martinique and about 38,000 in Guyane.⁵⁵ Because of the relatively small populations of the first two of these departments, roughly 425,000 and 400,000 respectively, they are at some risk of being destabilized as a result of excessive refugee inflows.⁵⁶ Stability in Haiti is thus a French preference, and it may be plausibly argued that Haiti’s continuous economic crisis, related primarily to Aristide’s poor association with the US, as shown above, led to the French view that it was more desirable to have a government in Haiti that had good relations with foreign donors and would thus be politically stable and have a higher chance for economic growth – conditions that would likely reduce the numbers of Haitians seeking better lives elsewhere. It is, of course, important to not overemphasize the significance of the French Antilles, representing three of France’s overseas departments vis-à-vis its 96 European counterparts,⁵⁷ in French policy formation. Certainly, it is not being argued here that French policy towards Haiti was driven by these refugee concerns, only that they likely provided the French with an additional reason for tilting towards the goal of regime change, which would presumably bring stability and economic growth to Haiti.

The Slavery Compensation Issue

Perhaps the most significant contentious issue between Haiti under Aristide and France revolved around the Haitian leader’s demand that France return reparations paid by Haiti to France in 1825 as compensation to French slave owners who had lost their plantations with independence in 1804. The payment, which led to Haiti’s recognition by France as an independent republic,

⁵⁴ As quoted in: Jean Michel Caroit, “L’immigration clandestine haitienne vers les Antilles françaises inquiète Paris,” *Le Monde*, 13 September 2005.

⁵⁵ Minority Rights Group International, *Migration in the Caribbean: Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Beyond* (London: MRG, 2003) 8.

⁵⁶ It should be noted, however, that Haitians play an important part of the economy in the French Antilles, providing cheap labour for the tourism and agricultural sectors.

⁵⁷ Including the split department in Corsica.

was made under threat of a massive French invasion. As Haiti's Bicentenary on 1 January 2004 approached, Aristide became increasingly vocal in his calls for the French to repay the debt, which, adjusted for inflation and interest, was pegged at the startling figure of \$21,685,135,571.48, roughly five times the size of Haiti's gross domestic product.⁵⁸

This demand, recalling what most observers would likely agree is a morally repugnant chapter from France's colonial past, must be especially vexing to French policymakers who may view themselves and their country as defenders of human rights and promoters of democracy, on a *mission civilisatrice*. Beatrice Heuser has written that "France's conviction ... whether under empire or republic, was fuelled by the conviction that France brought good things to its colonies" and that "[e]ver since, the French have seen their country as the lighthouse of human rights, which are to 'radiate' from it to the rest of the world."⁵⁹ If this is correct, then what a gadfly Aristide must have been to the French, who would rather have forgotten that their colonization of Haiti and subsequent demand for reparations had profound and devastating effects on that country's development. Not to say that this irking provides a full explanation of France's policy in Haiti, but that it surely precipitated Aristide's loss of support from the French, who likely feared similar demands from other former colonies.

One must also consider how this demand for reparations, tied as it was to the issue of slavery, may have been perceived in Washington. For some time, a number of African-American organizations have been pursuing reparations from the US government and corporations such as CSX, Aetna, and Fleet Boston, for the practice of slavery. In 2001, Randall Robinson, the

⁵⁸ See Amy Bracken, "Haiti steps up fight for \$22 billion from France," *Reuters*, 19 November 2003, and Sharifa Rhodes-Pitts, "Reparation Day," *Boston Globe*, 4 January 2004. Haiti's 2005 GDP (official exchange rate calculation, not purchasing power parity) stood at an estimated \$4.321 billion. See "Haiti", *CIA World Factbook 2005*, available at: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ha.html>.

⁵⁹ Beatrice Heuser, "Of Sibling Rivalry and Lovers Spurned: Franco-America Relations over Two Centuries" in David G. Haglund, *The US-France Leadership Race: Closely Watched Allies* (Kingston: Queen's Quarterly, 2000) 51.

founder and president of TransAfrica, a lobbying group focused on influencing US policy towards the Caribbean and Africa, published *The Debt*, which made a case for reparations that was widely read. Moreover, these moves have been accompanied by efforts in Washington led by Congressman John Conyers Jr. to create a government commission to study the issue, though efforts have been unsuccessful so far.⁶⁰ While the issue of slavery reparations occupies a relatively marginal position in American politics, there is nevertheless some reason to suspect that Aristide's calls for debt repayments were perceived as an additional irritation by US policymakers, much as was the case with the French.

A Confluence of Factors

As shown in this paper, there is reason to believe that US policy in Haiti is heavily driven by a concern over illegal Haitian refugee flows, which leads it to want to promote stability and economic growth in Haiti. What led the US to pursue the particular policy it did in the period leading up to the February 2004 coup, however, was the desire to institute a regime in Haiti that would not be led by a fiery populist like Aristide, and that would pursue an economic program – neoliberalism – that the US believes can lead to economic growth, which would apparently reduce the incentive of Haitians to seek higher incomes in the US. Meanwhile, the French likely found it expedient to align their policy with that of the US, which remained unshakably opposed to Aristide in the 2000-04 period. This option must have seemed particularly attractive from Paris given its similar irritation with Haitian refugee flows into the Antilles, and Aristide's embarrassing calls for debt repayment. Ultimately, as briefly noted at the onset, the 'efficient cause' for cooperation was likely Iraq: with trans-Atlantic relations soured over the US decision

⁶⁰ See Randall Robinson, *The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks* (New York: Plume, 2001); see also the unique coverage of this matter provided by DemocracyNow.org at: <http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=03/04/07/0255211>.

to invade in March 2003, France may have found it worthwhile to ‘get along’ with the US over the Haiti issue, given the two states’ confluence of interests.

What I stress is important to not forget when assessing these arguments, however, is that Haiti represents a fairly marginal case in contemporary US and French foreign policy. Notwithstanding the claimed CIA support for the 2004 rebellion and the activities of groups like the IRI, which were discussed earlier, in practice US and French policy in the lead-up to the February coup mostly amounted to not taking action, rather than taking action. That is, it involved *not* transferring aid money to Haiti, *not* extending diplomatic support to Aristide, and *not* providing an intervention force to protect Aristide’s regime. It was certainly the kind of policy that is much easier to pursue than an active one, which might require the deployment of a military mission or a major diplomatic initiative. Thus, while the case of Haiti does stand as an instance of France-US policy alignment and cooperation, it should also be understood as representing a case where the stakes were (and are) nowhere near as high as other areas of policy contention, such as Middle East policy.

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