

Haiti, roots of the conflict and future development

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Introduction

Haiti was the world's first free black republic born from the Independence war in 1804. Thorough its democracy problems and basically everything from the indemnity they had to pay to France for their freedom and independence to the nowadays situation, it brought instability into the political system together with the distrust in its politics, stagnation of economy and to the top of it, the development of the whole country was stopped. Despite of everything, it is quite interesting how big is that difference between the Dominic Republic development and Haiti, which is not developing and is in crisis even today. However, Haiti after the natural disasters, which are also part of the problem for them, got help from the United Nations, known as a stabilization mission with the goal to ensure and secure stable environment and so, prepare it for future more stable political system and politics. The problem was that this mission with the aim to help and stabilize its catastrophic situation, contributed to even worse process of reparation. Cholera was introduced, which affected one third of Haiti's population and killed 10,000 people and more. In my research I was trying to identify Haiti's internal conflict and through several methods develop possible outcomes of their future and policy direction. Because of that I started this research with the Independence war of 1804 and through analysis of its policy till nowadays situation, I came up with modest profile of this country.

Geography

The capital of Haiti is Port-au-Prince and it is situated in the western third of the Hispaniola Island in the Caribbean Sea, the other part is sharing with another country which is Dominican Republic. Haitian population is almost entirely descended of African slaves, and it became after the United States, second country free from colonial rule, but first free as a black republic (Asante, 2011).

The island was best known for huge sugar plantations and coffee or tobacco production. Haiti was known before independence war as Saint Domingue and it became the richest colony of French Empire, because of cheap land, African labour and capital from Europe. But because of the independence war, it changed rapidly on the country which is accompanied with poverty, massive economic problems, social and political also.

Furthermore, natural disasters contributed to the stagnation of the Haitian economy and development also. There were several earthquakes in the past, which destroyed Cap-Haitien 1842 and Port-au-Prince in 1751 and in 1770. But in the January of 2010, more than 222,570 people perished and over 1.3 million people lost their home because of the earthquake with 7.0 magnitude. Natural disasters are not predictable, but in the Haitian society played huge role, because of decline on life standards. In addition, Haiti is nowadays considered as the poorest country in the western hemisphere. In absolute poverty lives four-fifths of population and three-fifths are unemployed and underemployed. In the country, there are few corporations active, but Haiti has been depleted during the colonial era and its intensive exploitation (Ferguson, 2018).

Historical Background

Early history of the Haiti island started when Christopher Columbus founded this land during his first voyage. The land was ruled by the Spain till the 17th century. Island was named Saint Domingue and slave population was the largest in the Caribbean. Then it became after competing claims land of France. More than 30,000 manacled Africans, during the period 1785-1790, were each year imported. Saint Domingue was becoming more and more African, despite the community of free coloured or white immigrants (Geggus, 2002). Because of that, the independence war had great impact on all the free communities in the Caribbean, but mainly on African.

The independence war in Haiti had its roots in the French revolution of 1789, and it contributed to the destruction of them as a colony. Ideals of French revolution were liberty, equality, fraternity and it should lead to codification and legal protection of human rights (Dash, 2004). But unfortunately, it did not apply on its colonies, because if it did, it would have destroyed the greatest profit from the Saint Domingue Island in the Caribbean, which was the richest colony of the French Empire. But as a French society was inspired by the declaration and protection of the human rights from British society, so did society in the Caribbean. In the 1804 was declared independence and the island was renamed as Haiti. France recognized its independence only in

1825, because after all it was the richest colony and as an indemnity, Haiti had to pay 150 million francs, till the 1887, but it was fully repaid only after eighty years, which stopped the process of Haiti as independent and free country (O'Neill, 1993). Instead of building schools, roads, developing economy, Haiti had to paid for its independence. According to Pierre-Louise (2011), with the absence of necessary elements in development of Haitian society such as educational system and boycott of their community, Haiti was left behind which contributed to revolutions, military coups, economical, social and political instability. From the other viewpoint, it contributed to the slow development, poverty and to the overall stagnation of its society nowadays in the 21st century.

As noted by O'Neill (1993) in Haitian politics the army became the ultimate arbiter, with the overthrowing democracies and the governments as whole functioning organ in the society accordingly to its interests, it was quite visible. It could be seen on the presidencies in the Haiti, between years 1843 to 1915, there were twenty-two presidents of Haiti and only one of them have finished his term in office. During pre-war time-period, specifically 1911 to 1915, Haiti had six presidents. Four of them were killed and several coups were held in that time, which made Haiti very unstable even more. On the other hand, Port-au-Prince grew very fast, mainly because of the Germans coming to this island because of their interest to gain influence over the Caribbean (Gros, 2011). Following the situations, the United States occupation of Haiti started in 1914 and lasted until 1935, it was in years of World War I. For Haiti it meant loss of sovereignty, which was after the independence war in 1804, terrible for its society to be under the control of somebody else again.

Moreover, Garde d'Haiti was created by the U.S. marines from the older Haitian army. Garde was also trained, reorganized and more equipped, in other words, it was a thorough reconstruction. Together they had to face rebellions, protests, coups against the occupation of the United States. With the internal conflicts against U.S. occupation and external forces seeking for invasion in the Haiti, Garde had to become a force, which would be able to destroy everything that could endanger Haitian society, even Haitian society (O'Neill 1993).

With the 1946 revolution, Haiti entered more modern political era then ever before. Revolution happened after the Lescot's presidency (1941-1946), simply after he put into jail the Marxist editors of the journal named *La Ruche* (or *The Beehive*). After this act, teachers, students, shopkeepers, government workers and other civilians started protests, strikes in the capital and also in another smaller cities of Haiti. His position then became unstable so he resigned and his power was taken over by the three – member junta. Junta was known as the Military Executive Committee and consisted of Garde commander Colonel Franck Lavaud, Major Antoine Levelt, and Major Paul E. Magloire, commander of the Presidential Guard (O'Neill, 1993). Military Executive committee stopped free elections and after the elections to the National Assembly from the three candidates they gave presidency to Estimé, the safest candidate. Estimé's presidency did not end well, because after breaking Haiti's political traditions, military forced him to resign and then the same junta which came after the Lescot's presidency, came after the Estimé's presidency. Military rule was rooted deeply in Haitian society and political tradition and it was very hard to change. After the Estimé's overthrow Haiti announced first direct elections, which were won by Magloire.

After the Magloire's presidency in 1956, new dictatorship was established by François Duvalier, better known as Papa Doc. His presidency changed Haitian society completely, it reconstructed the idea of what presidency should look like. Haiti had even before problems with the army which controlled the presidents and could replace them if it was necessary, but during the Duvalier's presidency it was changed. He ensured its governance by getting rid of high-level commanders, also he set up new army for himself which was called *Tonton Macoute*. His idea of governing was set up on a negative view on previous human rights violation by U.S. occupation, which was highly racist, Haitian people were oppressed again, which in Duvalier left desire for the revenge on United States. Furthermore, the government took over the production in Haiti and have complete monopoly on all the factories and small entrepreneurs. The tyranny of the Duvalier was unbearable, mainly after the constitution was changed, and Papa Doc became lifelong president. The fear in the Haitian society was higher and higher, but it was not ideology at all. His governance was kleptocratic, because the republic was led by gangsters. After his death, his son Jean-Claude Duvalier, known as Baby Doc inherited presidency, which lasted for fifteen years and then was overthrow by the army. To the above, Duvalier era contributed to the retrogression of economic and social conditions of the country, since the educated and most skilled went into exile and investments into economy were almost negligible (Pierre-Louise, 2011).

Internal Conflict and Its Ideology

In 1991 was Jean – Bertrand Aristide democratically elected president of Haiti with 67% of the vote. Voter turnout like this is in the history of Haiti's elections considered as solid. However, after the eight months of his presidency, he was overthrow by military coup. After the short-lived first presidency, Aristide was trying to initiate investigations of human rights violation, carry out substantial reforms which should have increase

economy of the island, he wanted to bring military back under the civilian control and investigate into Tonton Macoute army, and brought them into trial.

Soon after that, the coup d'état happened, it was brief, and it deepened the political conflicts even more. Aristide went into exile and leading figure against him, Raoul Cédras, announced his victory with the words:

—Today, the armed forces find themselves obligated to assume the heavy responsibility to keep the ship of state afloat. After seven months of democratic experience, the country once again finds itself a prey to the horrors of uncertainty, with all Haitians we will bring the ship to port. (*The New York Times*. 1 October 1991. Retrieved 4 June 2017 – via *NYTimes.com*.)

But following the situations, the coup d'état was condemned by the U.N. General Assembly and the Organization of American States too, and besides the huge pro-Aristide demonstrations in the U.S., president Bill Clinton, with the support of the U.N., pressured the regime of the rebels to step down and in 1994 returned Aristide back into office (Maguire, 2009).

During his second presidency it was similar, because he was coerced to leave Haiti, based on rebellion which was first led by chimères, gang so called Artibonite Resistance Front, known also as the Cannibal Army led by B. Metayer (Dupuy, 2003). Soon they were joined by members of the Haitian army which was back then defunct and its other para-military death squad known as the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti and rural police chiefs known for human rights violation during Duvalier era and military governments (Sprague, 2009, 400 pp.). The rebel forces gained control very fast and then they headed to the capital Port-au-Prince to face Aristide, or even maybe endanger his own life, which was not protected by the U.S. anymore as it was said by the James Folly, U.S. Ambassador for Haiti. Which Aristide understood, and faced the choice between staying and being killed or leaving the country, which he in the 29th of February did.

After the Aristide's departure, the United States deployed Multinational Interim Forces (MIF), which were composed of troops from United States, France, Canada and Chile. (Walby, Monaghan, 2011) Furthermore, the Multinational Interim Forces where in June 2004 replaced by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, known as MINUSTAH, which as noted Dupuy (2003), were led by the Brazil troops with contribution of smaller countries of Latin America.

When Aristide was gone and not even close to the America, United States managed to approve Council of the Wise with the Interim Prime Minister Gérard Latortue, which was retired UN technocrat and businessman, also approved by the U.S., and with Boniface Alexandre as Interim President, which was used as a figure for the interests of the United States. The new interim government had time of 8-months, to managed new elections, which were then announced for October and November of 2005.

Departure of Haitian president Aristide, is still quite controversial, because United States tend to be blamed for it, as for kidnapping president, because he did not meet the requirements for leading country democratically. But United States denies managed coup d'état against Jean – Bertrand Aristide. Because they are highlighting fact, that he resigned voluntarily, without coercion, through the letter with his signature, which was back then sent from his exile and published. Which allowed United States and France to stop the investigations by the United Nations into Aristide's departure.

The only block in the United States plan, was Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which still did not recognize the Aristide's departure following Alexandre-Latortue government as in accordance with the Haitian constitution.

Following the situations, whether was the kidnapping true or not, United States and France allowed the opposition coalition, called Democratic Platform, which comprised of two broad coalition groups: Democratic Convergence and the Group of 184, to spur and stop the plan proposed by the CARICOM leaders and to resolve the situation in January of 2004 peacefully (Dupuy, 2003).

Firstly, United States denied the coercion on Aristide, because they would not tolerate an overthrow of democratically elected president, clearly. The status and attitude of United States was also taken by Canada and France, when they maintained the same. However, the violence continued and rebels gained more and more territory and were seeking for gaining power, the French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin announced that Aristide is responsible for all the crisis going on in the Haiti and that he should resign. Which became clear, that Aristide was after all circumstances, forced to resign.

As was noted by Dupuy (2003), creating alliances and shady deals was only show and "that for these governments and international organizations the issue has never been whether a government is democratically elected, but whether that government is willing to conform to their interests, especially those of the United States as the dominant power among them."

The interim government consisted of technocrats, who were not in the coalition opposed Aristide, or others, but few ministers, such as Foreign Affairs, Justice, Education, Culture, Social Affairs or Tourism, were

ideologically close to Democratic Platform, which was party supported by United States, France and Canada too. It was visible that external forces such as United States and its allies, were from the beginning close to opposition of president Aristide and were trying to weaken him as much as possible, because they backed the government united in the opposition against him.

In the March 1st and 8th of 2002, the United Agency for International Development (USAID) commissioned CID/Gallup to conduct public opinion polls (Brattberg, E., Rhinard, M., 2013). Despite the fact, that they were never published publicly, they confirmed that support for Fanmi Lavalas (FL), which supported Aristide, was 50 percent of the population that still favoured him even when the life conditions went worst and so did the economy of the Haiti (Einsiedel, Malone, 2006). President Aristide had on his side still many people, mainly women, poor, or less educated, from outside of the Port-au-Prince, which did not represented elites, but the base of the Haitian society (CID-Gallup n.d.).

The reason why Aristide's party FL could not participate in the new elections was clear, he still had the support from the outside of the capital, and because of that, it was threatening for DC, because it could very easily turn against them and loose. This political situation created in Haiti two classes, which were there even before Duvalier era, but the negotiations in the elections and parties DC and FL, made it more recognizable. The poor people, living mainly outside the capital were pro Aristide and on the other hand, there were technocrats in the interim government approved by the U.S. and the elites, supporters also of Duvalier, rich people.

Even through the efforts of him to equalize the Haitian society, the U.S. and backed coalition, were demanding his removal, and the international financial institutions imposed the foreign aid embargo on his government also, so he became the victim of his own politics, and had to leave, because of coercion of the external forces.

So that the development of the interim government of Latortue and its priority was to pacify the country by disarming both armed supporters of the Aristide – deposed president and the rebel forces of the defunct military and the FRAPH, to end the human rights violation, abuses and bring all those involved to the justice. The transitional government was supported also by MINUSTAH, with the goal to –ensure and secure stable environment within which the constitutional and political process in Haiti can take place|| (UN Security Council 2004). But both the interim government and the Haitian National Police (HNP), have pursued, persecuted, killed mainly Aristide supporters and the MIF or MINUSTAH where either on the side of the conflict and non-taking action, or joined some operations against them too (Dupuy, 2003).

To protect United States and its allies from the possible misunderstandings of the peoples, they created together the transitional government of the Latortue and Haitian elites, as a symbol of repression against Aristide. It was aiming to contribute to the credibility of the democratic United States, together with France, Canada, UN or the Organization of American States (Shamsie, 2004). In addition, the high-level officers from the Haitian Army were employed into staff of Minister Interior, soldiers were implemented into national police and so, full reconstruction of the army took place, which in practice, was weakened to not to overthrow the government ever again.

Development of the Conflict and Possible Outcomes

After the 2004 was Haiti in serious chaos and misery, after the intense political rivalry which was often devolved into violence, presence of the armed gangs and strong force known as Haitian National Police also contributed and eroded public safety. Following the situation, it resulted to the introduction of the U. N. Peacekeeping Mission called MINUSTAH, which was deployed in order, to provide immediate security and furthermore, it should help to create legitimate political process and, also to support democratic elections (Maguire, 2009).

However, despite all the plan As, the MINUSTAH mission has been there for thirteen years and introduced more problems than Haiti had even before. Cholera for example, mainly because of waste which leaked to the river (Katz, 2016). Thousands of cases of sexual abuse and exploitation which have gone unpunished, which many of them showed up only after the Oxfam scandal, which was charity that should provide help after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti but instead paid poor women for sex and more, abused them. In the country, where are aid organizations with the aim to provide help, shelters and so and after the catastrophic disaster as in Haiti, people had to rely on them. Because of that, the Oxfam scandal is even more sad and abominable (Hobbs, 2018).

Now the economy is going through some serious problems, cost of living is still been increasing very drastically over the last couple of years and this is on top of the recovery not just from the earthquake in 2010 but also hurricane Mathew from 2016 and political instability rooted deeply in its history. Because even in last 10 years or so there was a real collapse in electoral participation, that social contract between the government and its people has collapsed and the population no longer trusts in its politics or political system. In order, to change it, there needs to be recommitment to address the needs of a majority of this island.

Conclusion

The UN intervention did not achieve its stated goals but produced instead ironic effects (Zanotti, 2008). Because of that, we could argue that for Haiti there are no possible solution in its near future, because of devastation the whole land. On the other hand, we also cannot compare the developing Dominican Republic, its neighbour, because of the obvious different geographic conditions. All in all, Haiti maybe would be better without the UN peacekeeping mission, which contributed to their today's situation, and should rely on other help, which will not interfere into its independence. But in order, to change something, there should come also huge reconstruction of constitution of this country and, also its political system.

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