

## Helping to Plan for Regime Change and Occupation

A group of high-level North American, Latin American [and European] diplomats had secret meetings in Canada to plan President Aristide's removal from power and a foreign military occupation, according to an article by Michel Vastel (*L'Actualité*, March 15, 2003).

The "Ottawa Initiative on Haiti," wants regime change there before the January 1, 2004 bicentennial of Haiti's independence, the article says.

The "Ottawa Initiative" nicely complemented calls for Aristide's extra-constitutional removal by the election-allergic, U.S.-backed Democratic Convergence opposition front in Haiti.

Vastel's account of the meeting was vague about how a military occupation would unfold, saying

"No decision has yet been taken, but in French diplomatic circles, they say that there has been talk of a sort of guardianship, as in Kosovo.... Even if the UN doesn't want this kind of intervention leading to military occupation, this might be inevitable until elections are organized."

Denis Paradis was particularly intent on bringing change to Haiti saying: "If Canadians treated their animals the way Haitian authorities treat their citizens, they would be placed in prison."

Ironically, Paradis did not speak against the Bush administration's blockage of \$500 million in aid and loans to Haiti that contributed greatly to the dire straits of Haiti's people.

**Source:** "Canadian Officials Initiate Planning for Military Ouster of Aristide," *Haiti Progres*, Mar. 5, 2003.

### Participants included:

- **Denis Paradis**, Secretary of State for Latin America, Africa and the Francophonie, Canada.
- **Pierre Pettigrew**, Foreign Affairs Minister, Canada.
- Two U.S. State Department officials: **Mary Ellen Gilroy** and **Otto Reich**, the "Continental Initiatives" representative and long-time coup plotter.
- **Luigi Einaudi**, Assistant Secretary General, Organization of American States, USA.
- **Maria de Avila**, Foreign Minister, El Salvador.
- **Pierre-André Wiltzer**, Minister, High Representative for Security and Conflict Prevention, France.
- **Roger Dehaybe**, Administrator General, International Organisation of the Francophonie, Belgium.
- Unidentified official, the European Commission.

*One year before U.S., French and Canadian troops, helped oust President Aristide and replaced his democratically-elected government with a puppet regime, our Liberal government organized a secret, high-level meeting of North American, Latin American and European powerbrokers to discuss possible regime change in Haiti. Their planning session, called "The Ottawa Initiative on Haiti," also discussed the occupation of Haiti by foreign troops. This international event was held at the government's Meech Lake conference centre near Ottawa, between January 31 and February 1, 2003.*

### The Ottawa Initiative

By Anthony Fenton

According to the original internal communiqués for the "Ottawa Initiative on Haiti"—obtained through Access to Information Act—the meeting was supposed to address "the current political situation in Haiti." Notably, the affair was "envisaged to be of a restricted and intimate nature." This, "in order to facilitate a free exchange of views and brainstorming among the invited participants."

Nowhere among the invitees were there any Haitians. Aristide government officials were only told about the meeting after Denis Paradis leaked the details of it to *L'Actualité* reporter Michel Vastel in March 2003.

Paradis said Aristide's possible removal, the potential return of Haiti's disbanded military, and the imposition of a Kosovo-like trusteeship on Haiti, were discussed at the meeting.

**Source:** "Canada's Growing Role in Haitian Affairs (part I)," *Haiti-Progres*, Mar. 21, 2005.



Denis Paradis, MP,  
host of the  
"Ottawa Initiative"



Brave Haitians risking death flashed 5 fingers at pro-democracy rallies to symbolize their government's right to complete its 5-year mandate.

### Five Years!

By Richard Sanders

During a visit to the Dominican Republic in April 2003, then-Prime Minister Jean Chrétien echoed the view of "the Ottawa Initiative" when he

"declared that the 'international community' should not have to wake up with Aristide in power on January 1, 2004, Haiti's bicentennial."<sup>1</sup>

Chrétien's call to curtail Haiti's elected government two years before its mandate ended, echoed discussions of the "Ottawa Initiative" to oust Aristide by January 2004.

If foreign-backed rebels had kidnapped Chrétien and overthrown his government because of the Liberal sponsorship scandal, would anyone have approved a U.S.-led force, followed by UN troops, to occupy Canada after a violent, regime change?

### Reference

1. Marie-Jeanne D'Haiti, "Canadian Complicity in the Haitian Crisis," *Haiti Progrès*, May 25-31, 2004.

# Canada's 5 Ds: Covering up "The Ottawa Initiative"

## Deny

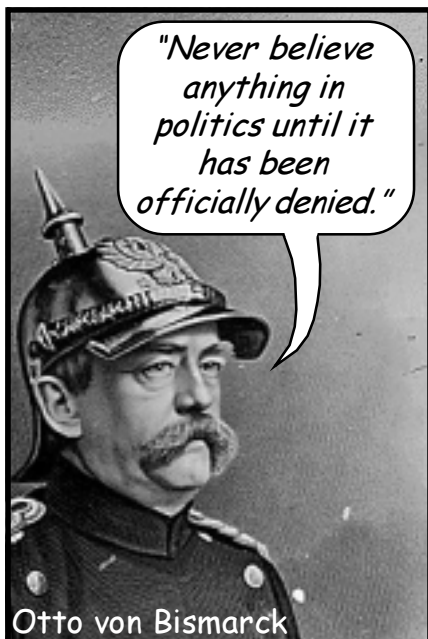
When Michel Vastel published in *Formation* [about "The Ottawa Initiative on Haiti"], Denis Paradis [the Secretary of State for Latin America, Africa and the Francophonie] and the Canadian government denied that they ever considered such things as [ousting Aristide through a military intervention, imposing a UN-trusteeship or re-instituting Haiti's military].

However, Vastel continues to stand by the original article, saying not only that Paradis told him the details but that French officials corroborated them.

During a September 11, 2004, interview, Paradis repeatedly invoked the notion that he was misinterpreted by Vastel. Paradis claimed that the meeting could, essentially, be boiled down to the "responsibility to protect," a Canadian-made "humanitarian intervention" doctrine.

Whether or not military intervention was discussed explicitly, as Vastel contends, or implicitly, as Paradis insists, the fact is that military intervention *did* take place, Aristide *was* removed, the Haitian army *was* effectively returned, and a de facto trusteeship *was* imposed on the Haitian people.

**Source:** Anthony Fenton, "Canada's Growing Role in Haitian Affairs (part I)," *Haiti-Progres*, Mar. 21, 2005.



Otto von Bismarck



The "Wilson House,"  
Meech Lake, Quebec

"The Ottawa Initiative on Haiti" was crafted  
at this Canadian government conference centre.

## Demote

After spilling the beans about the "Ottawa Initiative," Denis Paradis was removed from his post as Secretary of State for Latin America and La Francophonie, under whose auspices the international meeting was held.

## Damage Control

On August 24, 2004, Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade sent an email, that said:

"With regard to the initiative by the Honourable Denis Paradis, former Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa) (Francophonie), an informal consultation meeting on Haiti's political situation was held at Meech Lake from Jan. 31 to Feb. 1, 2003. This informal meeting was an opportunity for participants to reiterate their support for the Haitian people, the Organization of American States and for Resolution 822. At no time during the meeting was a regime change in Haiti considered."

The DFAIT e-mail appears to be little more than 'damage control' in response to the many calls that they and Denis Paradis received concerning Michel Vastel's revelations in a CBC broadcast on August 6, 2004.

**Source:** Anthony Fenton, "Engineering the Overthrow of Democracy; Canada in Haiti," *ZNet*, Aug. 26, 2004.

## Dissociate

On March 6, 2003, Kenneth Cook, who was then Canada's Ambassador to Haiti, sent a note to Christian Lapointe, the Director of the Caribbean and Central America and Andean Region Division within the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). (DFA Minister Pierre Pettigrew appointed Lapointe as Canada's next Ambassador to Ecuador.) The correspondence between Cook and Lapointe concerned a meeting that Cook had just had with Haiti's foreign minister. Most of Cook's letter is deleted, except for this surviving portion:

"In order to save credibility, [the Government of Canada] should clearly dissociate itself from the unacceptable declarations attributed without detour to Denis Paradis...or it would be uneasy for the Haitian government to dialogue in good faith and to deal without reticence with Canadian envoys."

## Delete

An officer within DFA's Access to Information and Privacy division said that there were about 1,000 pages of documents pertaining to the "Ottawa Initiative on Haiti" meeting. However, only 67 pages were released.

**Source:** Anthony Fenton, "Ecuador's New Canadian Ambassador Helped Plan Haiti Coup," *The Narcosphere*, December 6, 2005.