

Canadian Diplomacy at Odds with Democracy & Truth

By Richard Sanders

Jamaica's Prime Minister, P.J. Patterson, spoke out strongly against the coup that deposed President Aristide, saying it



P.J. Patterson

"sets a dangerous precedent for democratically-elected governments everywhere, as it promotes the removal of duly-elected persons from office."¹

Patterson is the Chair of CARICOM, the Caribbean Community whose 15-member states all adamantly refused to grant diplomatic recognition or support to Haiti's

coup-installed regime.²

The African Union, which includes 53 member nations, also refused to recognize the legality of Haiti's "interim government," saying Aristide's "removal" was "unconstitutional."³

Expelled from his country, Aristide went into exile in South Africa. He was warmly welcomed by Nelson Mandela, whose party—the African National Congress (ANC)—quickly endorsed CARICOM's diplomatic initiative against Haiti's illegitimate regime. The ANC also launched a campaign to restore Haitian democracy which called on the UN to lead:

"an international effort, with the involvement of regional bodies like ... CARICOM, to ensure the unelected interim government ends the political persecution of Lavalas members and supporters, releases all political prisoners, ends all illegal arrests and summary executions and ensures the disarmament of all illegally armed groups and individuals.... The constitutional order must be restored, which should include ...the return of all exiles, including President Aristide."⁴

South Africa's president, Thabo Mbeki, criticised the UN Security Council's Resolution on Haiti that established the mili-



Thabo Mbeki

While rebels attacked police and government offices across Haiti, Canada refused to help but instead put diplomatic pressure on President Aristide. When the coup succeeded, and a puppet regime was installed, Canada rewarded it with official recognition. Canada then used every trick in the diplomatic book to support Haiti's unconstitutional regime and to cover for its violent excesses. Our prime minister and top cabinet members led official visits to Haiti. During reciprocal visits to Canada, the top politicians in Haiti's illegal regime were welcomed with open arms and smiling photo ops.



Hugo Chavez

tary force (MINUSTAH) in which Canada became so involved:

"What was and is strange and disturbing about this Resolution is that it is totally silent on the central issue of the unconstitutional and anti-democratic removal of the elected Government of Haiti. It says nothing about the notorious figures who achieved this objective, arms in hand, killing many people."⁵

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who was almost overthrown in a U.S.-led coup in 2002, condemned Haiti's puppet regime saying:

"We don't recognize Haiti's new government.... The president of Haiti is named Jean-Bertrand Aristide and he was elected by his people."⁶

These 69 governments, representing a third of the world's countries, not only refused to recognize the so-called "interim government" of Prime Minister Gerard Latortue, they also joined in demanding an international investigation into the circumstances of Aristide's departure.⁷

Canada's Response

Despite their efforts, Haiti was given immediate recognition by the U.S., France and Canada, which then provided military, financial and diplomatic backing. Nik Barry-Shaw, of Haiti Action Montreal, noted that Canada used:

"every diplomatic means available... to provide legitimacy to the installed government. High-level officials, such as Paul Martin, Pierre Pettigrew and Denis Coderre,...made numerous visits to Haiti since the coup to 'underline Canada's support of the interim government.' Canada... organized and hosted international conferences with the Latortue government and chided other nations to disburse their aid more quickly. Paul Martin...even chastised CARICOM ...leaders for their refusal to recognize the installed government and their continued calls for an independent investigation into the removal of President Aristide."⁸

Other examples of Canada's disregard for democracy in Haiti abound. For example, Martin's junket in support of the coup-imposed regime in late 2004, was the first visit to Haiti by any Canadian Prime Minister. While there he "alluded to widespread demands... for the return of Aristide" by stating "that reconstruction in Haiti should not be based on 'nostalgia for the past.'"⁹

When asked in March 2004 about CARICOM's call for an investigation into the coup, Kenneth Cook, Canada's Ambassador to Haiti, said:

"As far as I'm concerned, there is no evidence of a kidnapping. I don't have a position on the request to the UN by the CARICOM...for an investigation into the circumstances of the removal of Aristide. If there were

[an investigation], it should be brief in order not to interfere with the task of rebuilding the country.”¹⁰

Another reason Canada’s government would prefer a “brief” investigation, is that any indepth study would surely find deep Canadian complicity in the coup.

Rather than exposing the coup that deposed Aristide—Haiti’s most popular President—Canada’s idea was to promote his supposed crimes. As our Ambassador to Haiti, Claude Boucher, who “is known to be close to elements within the elite Group of 184”¹¹ (see pages 47-49), told the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas:

“We hope...Aristide is going to disappear... I believe...he should never come back.... We hope [an inquiry into his alleged corruption] will show Aristide is guilty of so many criminal actions.”¹²

Harold Lavendar, a Vancouver activist, writer and editor, said he encountered *apparent* ignorance about many basic facts surrounding the coup.

“Canadian officials...seemed clueless about the details of Aristide’s removal and ...U.S.-supported repression. One Canadian diplomat told me, ‘Really, we have little of our own intelligence on Haiti. We rely on the

U.S. for that.” (emphasis added)¹³

Another activist/writer said Paul Martin “quickly accepted Aristide’s resignation, without knowing its circumstances.”¹⁴ But was Martin really so completely out of touch with reality?

Within two days of the coup, Aristide got the word out that he had been threatened and kidnapped by U.S. Marines: “I was kidnapped,” “I did not resign,” and “Tell the world it was a coup.”¹⁵ Anyone searching the internet quickly finds over 100,000 references to his being kidnapped.

We would be naive to think that key players in the Canadian government did not know this even before the word spread online. Canada, after all, had helped to plan, organize and carry out the coup. Canadian special forces even secured the airport from which Aristide was forced out of Haiti.

So, although top Canadian politicians may *seem* to be lacking intelligence on matters in which they are obviously deeply embroiled, it is much more likely that they are just *feigning* ignorance. To Canadian lawmakers who make such preposterously phoney claims of innocence, after committing grave crimes, we must say: *Ignorance is no excuse for breaking the law!*

References

1. Robert Nolan, “Helping Haiti,” *Global Views*, Mar. 4, 2004.
2. “CARICOM leaders won’t recognize Haiti,” *UPI*, July 26, 2004.
3. “Aristide’s ‘Removal’ from Haiti ‘Unconstitutional’: African Union,” *Agence France Presse*, Mar. 9, 2004.
4. “Campaign for the return of democracy to Haiti,” *ANC Today*, May 13-19, 2005.
5. Thabo Mbeki, “Haiti after the Press went home,” *ANC Today*, July 23-29, 2004.
6. “Haiti - Crisis continues,” *People’s Weekly World Newspaper*, May 6, 2004.
7. Thalif Deen, “Haiti: U.N. Awaiting Formal Request for Probe,” *InterPress Service*, Mar. 10, 2004.
8. Nik Barry-Shaw, “Malign Neglect or Imperialism?,” *ZNet*, Oct. 24, 2005.
9. Tim Pelzer, “Canada plays big role in propping up Haiti regime,” *People’s Weekly World*, Jan. 6, 2005.
10. Tom Reeves, “Canada in Haiti,” *ZNet*, June 7, 2004.
11. Anthony Fenton, “Ecuador’s New Canadian Ambassador Helped Plan Haiti Coup,” *The Narcosphere*, Dec. 6, 2005.
12. Jean St-Vil, “Fair Elections in Haiti,” *ZNet*, Aug. 26, 2005.
13. “Haiti Occupied,” *Latin American Connexions*, Summer 2004.
14. Marie-Jeanne D’Haïti, “Canadian Complicity in the Haitian Crisis,” *Haiti Progrès*, May 25-31, 2004.
15. “Aristide Kidnapped,” *Democracy Now.Org*, Mar. 1, 2004.

Haiti Advisor, Denis Coderre, Serves up the “Baloney Defence”

By Richard Sanders

Denis Coderre, who was Prime Minister Martin’s special advisor on Haiti, completely dismissed international human rights reports documenting abuse in Haiti, calling them:

“propaganda reports, which are just not telling the truth. If you talk about the report from the University of Miami, it’s disgusting.... And...some people...talk about repression of our own police force. That’s *baloney*; that’s not true.”¹ (emphasis added)

Coderre, however, “presented no evidence and refused to address any of the facts, interviews, photographs, or other damning context, in these so-called ‘propaganda reports.’”²

This was not the last time Coderre blurted “baloney” when confronted with facts about Canada’s role in the coup and its bloody aftermath. When asked on CBC radio to respond to comments by Patrick Elie (a Haitian,

pro-democracy activist and former Aristide cabinet minister), Coderre cried: “that kind of politics is totally *baloney*, I mean this is not true, he’s lying.”³ (emphasis added)

When asked: “Are you dismissing everything he says as mere propaganda?... He says he’s talking for the people who live there,” Coderre interrupted with a response that began: “Yeah, yeah, right, yeah right. We can, you know, it’s, it’s *baloney*.”⁴

But no one should take such outbursts personally. Coderre has a history of serving the “baloney defence.”

Back in 1997, when Bloc Québécois MPs accused the Liberals of catering to Canada’s major banks that had bribed them with huge donations, Coderre interrupted saying: “Point of order, Madam Speaker. The member ...is always full of baloney.” The Speaker cut Coderre off saying MPs should be “more careful in their choice of words,” and then told them to con-

tinue “calmly and peacefully.”⁵

When accused of withholding information from a Commons’s immigration committee in 2002, Coderre said it was all “baloney and nonsense.”⁶

In 2003, Coderre dismissed concerns that a national ID card might erode civil liberties and help build huge government databases on Canadians, saying “that’s total baloney.”⁷

References

1. Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, June 14, 2005.
2. Anthony Fenton, “Have the Latortues Kidnapped Democracy in Haiti?” *ZNet*, June 26, 2005.
3. *The Current*, CBC, May 20, 2006.
4. *Ibid.*
5. House of Commons Debates, *Hansard*, Oct. 9, 1997.
6. “Minister says it’s ‘baloney’ he withheld detention centre plan,” CBC News, Dec. 10, 2002.
7. “Canada’s National ID Card Under Fire,” *Smart Card News*, Nov. 2003.

Pettigrew Met with Coup's "Political Mastermind"

By Richard Sanders

Paul Arcelin, a Haitian who lived in Canada for many years and taught at the Université du Québec à Montréal in the 1960s¹, played a central role in planning, carrying out and promoting Haiti's 2004 coup. On February 5, 2004, the very day that Arcelin's rebel colleagues began their coup-sparking assault on Haiti, burning down police stations and killing supporters of President Aristide, Arcelin was representing their cause in a one-on-one meeting with Liberal cabinet minister, Pierre Pettigrew.

The media described Arcelin as "political mastermind"² or "architect"³ of the coup, and as "political advisor"⁴ or "political lieutenant"⁵ to rebel commander, Guy Philippe. Arcelin fawned adoringly over him, saying he was "brilliant" and "the star" of the coup, which he called "Guy's show."⁶

Describing his own role, Arcelin said "I'm head of the political arm of the rebels."⁷ One of his main roles as "political spokesman"⁸ was PR. In his many media interviews Arcelin described, acceptably as possible, the political views of the murderous band of former military, police and death squad leaders who headed the rebel army.

So, what was Pettigrew doing with the rebels' political envoy? "I explained the reality of Haiti to him," said Arcelin, and Pettigrew "promised to make a report to the Canadian government about what I had said."⁹

As Foreign Minister, Pettigrew was an unabashed apologist for Haiti's brutal, illegally-installed coup government, voicing Canada's unblinking support for their two-year reign of terror.

After playing diplomat with Pettigrew, Arcelin soon had his boots back on the ground in Haiti where he basked in his role as rebel frontman. In early March 2004, he bragged: "We are the law and order from now on... We control the country."¹⁰ Using his media platform he said: "We need military help. We need more guns."¹¹ As for the guns they already had, many of which were supplied by the U.S., Arcelin "publicly boasted that the rebels will not disarm. Asked what they are doing



with their weapons, he said, 'We hide them.'¹² But, they did not need to hide them too carefully. Although later mandated to disarm these Haitian thugs, UN forces focused instead on helping Haiti's newly-militarised police to target the rebel's enemies, namely pro-democracy, Aristide supporters.

When Arcelin boasted that "in less than 25 days, we took control of two-thirds of the country and part of the capital," he added, "We planned it in a way that the world was surprised."¹³ Further detailing his *planning* role in the operation, Arcelin said he and rebel-leader Philippe "spent 10 to 15 hours a day together, plotting against Aristide": "From time to time we'd cross the border...to conspire against Aristide, meet with the opposition and regional leaders to prepare for Aristide's downfall."¹⁴

Many preparatory meetings also took place in the Dominican Republic (DR) where the U.S. International Republican Institute¹⁵ sponsored large, monthly meetings so Aristide's enemies could plot their return to power. At that time, Arcelin was "the official representative of the Democratic Convergence"¹⁶ in the DR. This was a key role because the Convergence was the main U.S.-supported, anti-Aristide group in Haiti, and the DR was the coup's staging ground. But not only was Arcelin "raising funds for the Convergence in the DR and in Florida," he was "also the main fundraiser for the rebels, both in Florida and in the DR."¹⁷

Back in 1991, when a coup deposed Aristide (just eight months after his first landslide election), the military junta "appointed [Arcelin] as ambassador to the Dominican Republic."¹⁸

The DR was crucial to the 2004 coup because it helped house, train and equip the rebels and provided the base for staging and fomenting their incursions into Haiti. For example, in May 2003, DR-based, Haitian rebels attacked a Haitian power plant, killing two workers, wounding two policemen, setting the facility ablaze, and cutting electricity to much of Haiti. On the previous day, five Haitians in the DR were arrested for an anti-Aristide coup plot. They included Philippe, Paul Arcelin and a former Haitian police academy inspector named Presler Toussaint. Released the next day by DR authorities,¹⁹ their criminal conspiracy continued unabated until—with the backing of the DR, the U.S., France and Canada, Aristide was kidnapped and his duly-elected government was replaced with a UN-enforced, puppet regime.

References

1. Sue Montgomery, *National Post*, Mar. 9, 2004.
2. Ibid.
3. Walt Bogdanich and Jenny Nordberg, "Democracy Undone: Mixed U.S. Signals Helped Tilt Haiti Toward Chaos," *New York Times*, Jan. 29, 2006.
4. Yves Engler, "Haiti After the Coup," *Z Magazine*, Oct. 2005
5. Montgomery, op cit.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Keith Jones, "Thousands march in Port-au-Prince against U.S.-backed coup," *wsns.org*, Mar. 6, 2004.
9. Montgomery, op cit.
10. David Adams, "Confusion rules Haiti; rebels rejoice," *St. Petersburg Times*, Mar. 2, 2004.
11. "Aristide still casts shadow in unsettled Haiti," *MSNBC.com*, Mar. 2, 2004.
12. Jones, op cit.
13. Montgomery, op cit.
14. Ibid.
15. Barbara McDougall, Canada's External Affairs Minister (1991-93), is on the IRI's Haiti International Assessment Cttee. See her "We cannot abandon Haiti again," *Globe & Mail*, Dec. 15, 2005.
16. "Interview with lawyer Brian Concannon on origins of most recent Haitian coup," *Flashpoints, KPFA Radio*, April 1, 2004.
17. Ibid.
18. Adams, op cit.
19. Gilbert W.Purdy, "The Theater of Coup," *Catalyzer Journal*, Mar. 13, 2004.

Canadian Conference Boosts Coup Regime

PM Paul Martin hosted Gerard Latortue, the "Acting PM" of Haiti's brutal, post-coup regime.



Latortue

Martin

Canada organized a conference in Montreal (Dec. 10-11, 2004) where top government officials including [acting] Haitian Prime Minister Gerard Latortue met Prime Minister Martin and Foreign Affairs Minister Pettigrew.

Although Martin called for "national reconciliation involving all of the players in Haitian society, including the Lavalas party," his government failed to invite Lavalas to the conference. Lavalas is the party enjoying support from the majority of Haiti's population.

Mario Dupuy of the Lavalas Communication Commission in exile said Canada invited people who were "falsely representing" Lavalas.

Source: Tim Pelzer, "Canada plays big role in propping up Haiti regime," *ZNet*, Jan. 10, 2005.

Prime Minister Paul Martin and "acting Prime Minister" Gerard Latortue held a joint, press conference in Montreal on December 11, 2004.

Latortue fended off questions from reporters about killings and arbitrary arrests and detentions in Haiti. "Nobody in this government has ever been involved in any violations of human rights," Latortue shouted in reply.

However, Latortue told journalists after a Sept. 30, 2004, rally in Haiti, "We shot them, some of them fell, others were injured, others ran away."

Source: Roger Annis, "Against All Odds, Haitians Protest Illegal Regime, Foreign Occupation," *Seven Oaks Magazine*, Jan. 24, 2005.



Alexandre

Jean

In May 2006, Gov. Gen. Mich  lle Jean was greeted in Haiti by Boniface Alexandre, who took the presidency after Aristide was kidnapped in the 2004 coup.

The 2005 appointment of a Haitian-immigrant journalist, Mich  lle Jean, as Canada's Governor General, takes on a dark and ambiguous character. Has she been appointed to provide a blind behind which the Canadian government can take cover, to divert attention from its murderous complicity in Haiti? Canadians are going to have to ply Madame Jean with that question whenever she appears in public.

Source: Robin Mathews, "Canada Ltd. Murdering Haiti. Murdering Canadian Democracy," *Vive le Canada*, Oct. 18, 2005.

CARICOM Asked UN to Protect Haiti's Government

At a special session of the UN Security Council on February 26, 2004, U.S., French and Canadian diplomats brushed aside a plea from Jamaica's foreign minister, on behalf of the 15 Caribbean states (CARICOM), to deploy a multinational force to prevent the overthrow of Aristide's government by a fascist, heavily-armed rebel force, led by former officers of Haiti's disbanded army and the FRAPH death squad who had overrun much of the country.



K.D. Knight

Jamaica's K.D. Knight warned: "Immediate action is needed to safeguard democracy, to avert bloodshed and a humanitarian disaster."

Seconding his appeal was Bahama's Foreign Minister Fred Mitchell, who said: "It is difficult for us...to sit by idly, say-



Fred Mitchell

ing we support legal constitutional authority, and yet when the call comes from a member state to support that legitimate authority, we seek to rely on legalisms which amount to inaction."

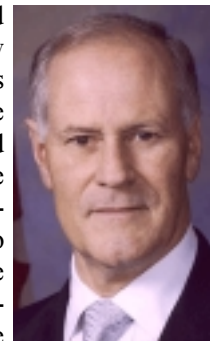
But U.S., French and Canadian diplomats were adamant that no force should be sent to prevent the overthrow of Haiti's internationally-recognized government until Aristide's government obtain the signature of the opposition Democratic Platform on a "power-sharing" agreement. They knew full well such a signature would never be given.

Source: Keith Jones, "U.S. and France target Haiti's elected president for removal," *World Socialist Web Site*, Feb. 28, 2004, <www.wsws.org>

On February 26, 2004, Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham called for President Aristide to step down, effectively parroting statements made that day by U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Graham essentially admitted in the *Toronto Star* ("Haiti Stability Essential, Martin Says," March 4), that the U.S./France/Canada intervention was meant to legitimise the coup:

"Once the U.S. and France said they would not go in as long as Aristide was there, we had to decide would we go in on the invitation of Aristide to prop up the Aristide regime... our judgement was we couldn't do that."



Bill Graham

Source: Stuart Neatby, "Canada's hidden role in Haiti," *Shunpiking*, April 6, 2005.

Clarkson's Diplomatic *Faux Pas* with Mr. Tippenhauer

By Richard Sanders

After a year as president of the Haitian-Canadian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCCI), Robert Hans Tippenhauer became Haiti's "ambassador" to Canada. Although Canada should never have accepted his "Letters of Credence," Governor General Adrienne Clarkson, welcomed him with smiles.¹

Although Haiti's constitution states that only elected presidents can appoint ambassadors (with the approval by Haiti's senate), Tippenhauer was recognized as ambassador at an officious Rideau-Hall event on June 29, 2005.² The regime he represented was unlawful and could not therefore legally appoint him as Haiti's ambassador.

While trying to slip away from the ceremony, Tippenhauer was buttonholed by St. Vil who questioned him about the legitimacy of his ambassadorship. Caught off guard, he replied, "this is an exceptional case because we do not have a government—at that time. We did not have an elected government." St. Vil then pressed the case further by flashing a highlighted copy of Haiti's constitution, to which Tippenhauer stuttered: "As it now stands, the Constitution is somewhat ...uh! An exception was made."⁴

Besides heading an elitist Haitian-Canadian business association, what actually qualified Tippenhauer to be the illegal regime's "ambassador" to one of its occupying powers? Writer/activist Anthony Fenton fills in some aspects of Tippenhauer's background and the pedigree that made him more than acceptable to the Canadian government:

"Prior to the February 29, 2004, ouster of democratically-elected President Jean Bertrand Aristide, Tippenhauer was Jamaica's honorary consul in Haiti. His ideological leanings were apparent on March 15, 2004, when he 'resigned in protest against the decision by the Jamaican government to host...Aristide, which he reportedly described as a 'slap in the face' to the Haitian people.'" (*Radio Galaxie*, March 17, 2004.)⁴

Jamaica's affront, in Tippen-



hauer's view, was to allow Haiti's legitimate president to be reunited—on Jamaican soil—with his two, young daughters.⁵ Aristide had not seen them since he was kidnapped and flown to the Central African Republic by U.S. Marines in late February 2004.

Such posturing reveals Tippenhauer's ideological kinship with his well-known nephew and namesake, Hans Tippenhauer, a Haitian "sweatshop magnate" who was spokesman for the U.S.-funded Group of 184 which played a central role in rallying Haiti's business class (and their foreign allies) against Aristide prior to the coup. (See pages 47-49.) The Group 184 was "prominently led by two other white businessmen operating sweatshops in Haiti, Charles Henri Baker and the American Andre Apaid."⁵

During the 2006 presidential campaign, Hans Tippenhauer was "working with the campaign of Charles Henri Baker,"⁶ an industrialist widely "considered the main candidate of the wealthy elite," who reportedly won "7.9 percent of the vote."⁷

Along with Baker and Apaid, Hans Tippenhauer led Haiti's so-called "Democratic Convergence." He was also a member of the right-wing, Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies' "Caribbean Leadership group," and the National Association of Producers and the Manufacturers' Association of Haiti.⁸ and a major investor in the first joint U.S.-Haitian investment bank, PromoCapital.⁹

Despite these elitist credentials, the *Washington Post* passed him off as a spokesman for Haiti's masses. In late February 2004, as the U.S.-armed and trained rebel force ran roughshod over Haiti thereby creating a pretext for the U.S./Canada/France-led invasion and

coup, Tippenhauer was quoted as saying, "The Haitian people's voice today is very clear; they want Aristide to leave." And, according to Tippenhauer, Haitians greeted the death-squad-linked rebels as "freedom fighters."¹⁰

This catchphrase, which President Reagan used to great effect two decades ago to describe counter-revolutionary (*contra*) terrorists in Nicaragua and Afghanistan, was soon being applied to Haitian rebels by none other than Haiti's *de facto* Prime Minister Latortue, who echoed Tippenhauer's choice of terms "in front of then Canadian Ambassador to the Organization of American States, David Lee."¹¹

References

1. Letters of Credence. <www.gg.ca>
2. "Presentation of Credentials at Rideau Hall," June 24, 2005. <www.gg.ca>
3. St. Vil, Haiti's 'Ambassador' to Canada," *ZNet*, July 9, 2005. <www.zmag.org>
4. Ibid
5. Patrick Moser, "Furious at Jamaica welcoming Aristide, Haiti freezes diplomatic ties," *Caribbean Net News*, Mar. 16, 2004.
5. Anthony Fenton, "The Canadian Corporate Nexus in Haiti," *Haiti Progres*, June 16, 2005.
5. St. Vil, op cit
6. Jacqueline Charles, "For Haiti's Peasants, Democracy Measured in Steps," *Miami Herald*, Feb. 7, 2006,
7. Joseph Guyler Delva and Jim Loney, "Haiti names Preval president, enraging rival," *Reuters*, Feb 16, 2006.
8. Rob Lyon, "Haiti: Growing struggle against UN occupation." <www.marxist.com>
9. Profile: PromoCapital. <www.cooprativeresearch.org>
10. Kevin Sullivan, "U.S. Marines Fortify Haiti Embassy," *Washington Post*, Feb. 23, 2004.
11. Fenton, op cit.

Canada's Ambassador Calls for More, Deadly Raids

By Kevin Skerrett

Canada's ambassador to Haiti, Claude Boucher, demonstrated a remarkable indifference to Haitian suffering in a January 15, 2007, interview with Haiti's Radio Solidarité. Boucher offered unrestrained praise for the UN military forces currently occupying Haiti (MINUSTAH), and urged them to "increase their operations as they did last December."

Ambassador Boucher's remark is an unmistakable reference to the December 22 attack by MINUSTAH and the Haitian National Police on the poor, Cité Soleil neighbourhood. It was marketed by its architects as an action against "armed gangs" that they blame for a recent spate of kidnappings. Launched at 4:30 a.m., this "operation" sent 400 heavily-armed troops in armoured personnel carriers (APCs), backed by helicopter gunships, into two densely-populated, residential areas of Port-au-Prince.

Quite predictably, and in keeping with previous such operations, the raid left at least 12 innocent civilians dead and over 30 others wounded, including numerous women and children. The report from Reuters filed late on December 22 showed photos of a row of dead bodies, as well as a wounded, young boy being carried by two distraught women. (See page 17.)

U.S. doctor John Carroll, spoke to eyewitnesses and victims of the attack in early January. They recounted that MINUSTAH helicopters shot at residents throughout the operation, and that UN APCs roared in before dawn and started shooting. The thin, corrugated tin walls of the housing were no match for their heavy automatic weaponry. The bloody result has been dubbed the "Christmas Massacre."

This military assault was carried out against a residential neighbourhood by the very military "peacekeeping" force that is charged with protecting that same population.

Neither of Canada's two na-

tional dailies reported the killings of civilians. The *Toronto Star* was the only paper that ran segments from a Reuters' report giving a casualty figure of only nine killed. No English language Canadian papers published the Agence France Presse (AFP) report indicating that at least 12 had been killed and "several dozens" wounded—for a combined casualty figure over 40. The only major Canadian paper running AFP's report was the relatively low-circulation *Le Devoir*.

Even AFP's higher figures may under-report the casualties. One Haitian human rights group, AUMOHD, reported 20 killed and provided an ini-



Canada's "Man in Haiti," Claude Boucher, publicly called for more UN military attacks, like the 2006 "Christmas massacre," that killed 20 or more civilians, using helicopters and vehicles like this.

tial list of their names. The weekly *Haiti Progrès*, citing eyewitnesses who said over 20 were killed, included a front-page photo of five victims.

A December 22 report from Agence Haitienne de Presse (AHP) cites residents who witnessed "very serious property damage" following the UN attack, and concerns that "a critical water shortage may now develop because cisterns and pipes were punctured by the gunfire." That day, AHP also published comments by Cité Soleil Red Cross coordinator Pierre Alexis, who complained that UN soldiers "blocked Red Cross vehicles from entering Cité Soleil" to help the wounded.

The MINUSTAH press office statement on December 26 denied they had interfered with the Red Cross and

refused to acknowledge any civilian casualties resulting from the operation.

The deployment of military force in districts where civilians are likely to be victimized is, in fact, a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. This cornerstone of international humanitarian law, obligates all parties to military engagements (or territorial occupation) to protect civilians.

It also prohibits collective punishment and military interference in the provision of medical assistance to the wounded. In other words, the "operations" that Canada's Ambassador Boucher unashamedly praised may constitute serious war crimes.

Worst of all, this praise—and the continuing silence from other diplomats in Haiti—has clearly been interpreted by MINUSTAH's leadership as a "green light" to continue launching reckless attacks in populated neighbourhoods where civilians are very likely to be killed. Before dawn on January 24, MINUSTAH launched an identical assault—APCs, helicopters, heavy weapons—against Cité Soleil residents. This time, both BBC and AFP reported five killed and 12 more wounded—including three women, one of whom died of her injuries.

Once again, MINUSTAH refused to acknowledge that any civilians had been killed or wounded by their operation, saying only that no MINUSTAH forces were injured, and "no definitive count could be made on the side of the criminals."

As long as MINUSTAH is able to issue statements such as this, which criminalize the entire population of Cité Soleil and other poor neighbourhoods, and so long as the Canadian Ambassador issues praise for such lethal operations, we should expect to see the body count rise in the coming days and weeks. It will be well worth watching the reactions of Foreign Affairs Minister Peter McKay and Prime Minister Stephen Harper to see if they share Ambassador Boucher's assessment.

Source: *Rabble News*, Jan. 31, 2007.