

**Politics as Usual: How American Interventionism in Haiti Politicized
Humanitarianism and Human Rights**

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Abstract

Since the early 1990s, humanitarianism and human rights have melded in the American consciousness and become a prominent facet of our nation's foreign policy rhetoric, serving as an explanation, and even guise, for various military interventions over the past two decades. This paper explores how this shift in international relations has affected the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti, through the 1994 American invasion and the highly militarized 2010 earthquake relief efforts. These events embody the growing use of humanitarianism and human rights as forms of government, and highlight the American struggle to maintain a world order based on neoliberal economics and democracy. This paper does not denounce the overall legitimacy of foreign intervention, but rather seeks to understand how American interventions in Haiti have complicated the doctrines of humanitarianism and human rights as human development policies.

Over the past two decades, humanitarianism and human rights agendas have become defining characteristics of American foreign policy, particularly when responding to political tumult and natural catastrophes in weaker states. Given the geographical and historical relationships between Haiti and the United States, this nation serves as a critical medium through which to assess this shift in American foreign policy. In 1994 and 2010, the United States army entered Haiti in response to real humanitarian

crises generated by a complex military coup d'état and natural (earthquake) disaster, respectively. Though these interventions represent responses to genuine human rights violations and humanitarian crises, the militarization and politicization of these events challenge the legitimacy of humanitarianism and human rights as forms of government. This paper will begin with an examination of the changing nature of humanitarianism and human rights, and then focus on the history of American intervention in Haiti. Subsequently, the United States involvement in 1994 and 2010 will be examined as militarized responses to crises, with emphasis on how securitization measures and domestic politics and media have politicized humanitarian intervention in Haiti. Militarized humanitarianism represents an exertion of 'soft' power on the part of the United States, and demonstrates the growing use of humanitarian aid to ensure political cooperation among weaker nations (Mullings, Werner & Peake, 2010).

Humanitarianism and Human Rights

The human rights and humanitarian movements, though not synonymous, have been compared to "rivers that share a headwater and have flowed into each other for decades" in regards to their indivisibility in the context of American foreign policy (Barnett, 2011, p. 16). Humanitarianism, which has its foundations in Christian charity and Enlightenment-era notions of sympathy, came into prominence through the "civilizing" projects of the European imperialist era, most evident in missionary endeavors (Moyn, 2010). Though the ideal of dispassionate aid was important to missionaries in the 19th century, humanitarianism was, nonetheless, linked to European expansionism and thus heavily intertwined with national interests and boundaries. The human rights movement, on the other hand, only truly came into being in the 1970s with the explosion of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the idea that human rights transcend national boundaries (Moyn, 2010). Historian Samuel Moyn (2010) contends that the human rights movement "focuses on legal discourse and frameworks, whereas humanitarianism

shifts attention to moral codes and sentiments,” revealing the transcendent nature of humanitarianism and the more institutional character of human rights (p. 20).

Since the emergence of the modern human rights movement, humanitarianism and human rights have gradually converged as humanitarians attempt to “incorporate human rights analyses into their programs...coming to view their own enterprise as part of a larger process of ‘peace building.’” (Reiff, 2003, p. 22). This process is evident in the work of conventionally humanitarian organizations such as the International Red Cross and Oxfam, who now position their work within the framework of more lasting human rights initiatives. In Oxfam America’s 2010 Haiti progress report, the organization claims to provide much more than temporary relief for victims of the earthquake and cholera epidemics, describing its mission in terms of finding “lasting solutions to poverty and injustice.” Similarly, The American Red Cross (2011) promises “to build safer, more resilient communities” through development of “housing, health, water and sanitation services, livelihoods, and disaster preparedness,” demonstrating how humanitarian relief is now framed as a human development program. This shift from providing temporary, neutral relief to tackling root causes of suffering demonstrates how the new role of humanitarianism and human rights projects serve as a channel through which liberal values can be propagated globally (Barnett, 2011, p. 33). Despite the original separation between the humanitarian and human rights approaches to development, today they are “fused enterprises, with the former incorporating the latter and the latter justified in terms of the former” (Moyn, 2010, p. 221). Despite the acknowledged historical and conceptual differences between human rights and humanitarianism, these ideologies will be treated as equivalent as they are both ultimately “attached to the donor nations’ foreign policies and are used to further their diplomatic, and ultimately, economic ends” (Middleton, 2010, p. 25).

With the fall of the Soviet Union, the paramount threat to American hegemony was eliminated, and humanitarian interests became a recurrent precursor for intervention. Humanitarian interests and rhetoric have since taken the place of anticommunism as an organizing principle for military intervention in the post-Cold War era (Reiff, 1999). Now the few menaces to neoliberal supremacy are weak and failing governments that do not fit into the international liberal order predicated upon by democracy and market economies (Belloni, 2007). Nations who do not fit this mold are now subject to foreign intervention, making armed intervention justifiable not only when nations pose a threat to international peace, but also when they are unable to provide sufficient protections, or rights, for their own people. Some contend that humanitarian intervention has, consequently, become a guise for “a Western agenda of containment that has little to do with humanitarian ideal originally used to justify the infringement on Westphalian sovereignty” (Belloni, 2007, p. 454). Humanitarianism is susceptible to appropriation because it is an ideology that “lacks rigid conceptual boundaries and is extendable,” meaning that the idea of providing relief and even emancipation are easily manipulated to suit political interests and evoke public support for interventionist policies (Barnett, 2011, p. 33). Over the past two decades, the ideologies of humanitarianism and human rights have increasingly been used by the United States in policy rhetoric, especially with regard to military and political intervention.

Haiti: A History of Intervention

International intervention has been significant political part of Haiti since a group of revolutionaries led by Toussaint L’Ouverture dismantled the French colonial regime in the late 18th century, and declared the independence of the first black republic in 1804 after decades of violence (Dubois, 2012). The United States outwardly opposed independence for Haiti, sparking the first instance of monetary aid to Haiti in favor of the colonial regime. Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson gave

slaveholders \$700,000 in an unsuccessful attempt to put down the slave rebellion of 1791. The Haitian Revolution drew much inspiration from the French Revolution, where proclamation of liberty and equality were accompanied by beheadings, riots and mass killings (Barnett, 2011). The fall of the plantation economy did not bring greater economic equality however, and a small group of landowners grew rich as the majority of subsistence farmers grew poorer, leading to continued political and social strife throughout the small nation. During the majority of the 19th century, the United States enforced a diplomatic and economic embargo upon Haiti to display its displeasure with the young black nation (Barnett, 2011).

The delivery of assistance to Haiti on the part of the United States emerged from imperial narratives of “civilizing” backward populations, which is linked to early notions of humanitarianism as perceived by religious missionaries (Barnett, 2011). This ideology especially gained prominence in the early 20th century when Woodrow Wilson used humanitarian notions to disguise designs for territorial expansion into the Caribbean and Central America, perceptible in his military occupations of Mexico, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Haiti (Middleton, 2010). In 1919, President Wilson invaded Haiti due to its failure to pay back certain debts to the United States, during which our government extracted natural resources through forced labor systems organized on behalf of the United States Army (Middleton, 2010). The United States continued to occupy Haiti until 1934, and maintained complete fiscal control over the country until 1947. This early precedent of military intervention illustrates how the United States has long used more publicly appealing visions of a unified humanity for its own economic and political benefit.

Haiti has long been plagued by unstable governments, authoritarian rulers and abject poverty, leading the United Nations to categorize Haiti as “facing a higher risk than any other country of failing to come out of poverty” (Morales, 2010, p. 2). Over half of Haiti’s population lives in extreme poverty,

defined as less than \$1 per day, indicating that the nation certainly merits outside assistance to address its persistent economic woes (Morales, 2010). Though the numerous non-governmental organizations working in Haiti are certainly important in providing relief to millions of people, the immense influence of foreign organizations threatens the autonomy of the government, leading many to call Haiti the “Republic of NGOs.” The immense resources and services brought to Haiti through foreign aid organizations have undermined the legitimacy of the Haitian government by “creating parallel [power] structures” and further denying the Haitian people the right to self-rule (Ferris, 2011, p. 70). The way in which aid organizations eclipse the national government becomes particularly acute during crises situations, when the Haitian government is often perceived as ineffectual or antagonistic to human rights interests.

The case of the 1994 American led invasion of Haiti presents an instance in which the human rights abuses of Haitian government prompted intervention. The 1994 intervention has its origins in the 1991 military coup that overthrew Jean Bertrand Aristide, the first democratically elected president of Haiti (Abiew, 1999). Aristide’s populist politics were viewed as a threat to the entrenched military elite who ousted the president and killed hundreds of Aristide supporters in order to gain power, leading General Raoul Cedrés, Army Chief of Staff Phillipe Biamby and Chief of Police Michel Francois to gain control of the government in late September (Abiew, 1999). Though CIA involvement in the coup d’état was presumed, the United States released several statements deriding the military junta and led the Organization of American States in applying sanctions upon Haiti in 1993. The following year, the United States led the Governor’s Island Agreement in New York City, which offered to remove the sanctions on the condition that Aristide was restored to power. Though General Cedrés signed the agreement, increased violence against Aristide supporters and mounting evidence that the military junta had no intention of stepping down led to the reinstatement of the sanctions the following month through United Nations Resolution 873. By July of 1994, the United Nations asked the international community

to flex its military might through Resolution 940, which authorized the deployment of multinational forces to depose the regime (Abiew, 1999). Upon Aristide's return to power, the United States, along with other donor nations and organizations, pledged to donate \$500 million over 3 years to renovate Haiti's feeble education, health and sanitation systems. As of 2003, most of this aid has been withheld, furthering crippling Haiti's nascent democracy and setting the stage for the government's impotence in the face of the recent earthquake (Farmer, 2003).

On 12 January 2010, a deadly earthquake of 7.0 magnitude, with an epicenter just 16 miles west of Port-au-Prince in Léogâne, struck Haiti and caused over 200,000 deaths, 300,000 injuries, and left over 1 million individuals homeless (Hodge, 2011). The astounding number of fatalities incurred by the earthquake is indicative of the weak infrastructure and the already dire state of much of the Haitian population. Humanitarian operations in Haiti that have long been hindered by limited communication and transportation systems were further exacerbated by this devastating earthquake (Morales, 2010). Natural disasters in Haiti have consistently killed many more people than expected due to the impotence of Haitian institutions and infrastructure. For instance, Ferris (2011) points out that in 2008 both Haiti and Cuba were hit by hurricanes of similar strength, yet while only 8 people died in Cuba, over 700 died in Haiti, illustrating how the consequence of natural disasters reflects existing economic inequalities. Following the hurricanes, the president of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Luis Moreno, stated that no other country in the region was "as vulnerable to economic shocks and natural disasters" as Haiti (Morales, 2010, p. 2).

Militarized Responses to Humanitarian Crises: 1994 and 2010

Though the military coup of 1991 necessitated outside intercession, the nature of American actions and motives stands in contrast to a rhetoric that advocated human rights. In the months

following the coup, the Organization of American States (OAS) promptly denounced the military regime with what Abiew (1999) calls the “strongest resolution the OAS has adopted against any government” (p. 214). Indeed, the United Nations documented the egregious infringements of human rights in Haiti, including over 5,000 deaths, mass displacements of populations, and innumerable acts of violence against women and children, which included rampant rape, torture, and murder (Abiew, 1999). Despite the known suffering of the Haitian people, it was not until three years later that the international community - and the United States in particular - took action. When repeated condemnations on the part of the OAS, UN, and United States did not inspire the military rulers to step down, the OAS passed Resolution 841 in June of 1993, which put into effect a wide range of economic sanctions targeting government and non-government entities (Middleton, 2010).

The OAS hoped to use sanctions to speed up the transition back to democracy; however, these trade restrictions had devastating impact on the already brutalized Haitian population. Though the human rights violations perpetrated by the Cedrés regime certainly justified intervention, the sanctions implemented by UN Resolution 940 denied the Haitian government and people much needed financial capital. A Harvard University study released in November 1993 asserted that up 1,000 children died each month as a direct result of the sanctions imposed by the OAS, leading the researchers to conclude that “the human toll from the silent tragedy of humanitarian neglect [sanctions] has been far greater than either the violence or human rights abuses” (Berggren, Castle, Chen & Fitzgerald, 1993). American journalist Paul Rudenberg (1994) compared the embargo to “a series of B-52 cluster bombs dropped from 30,000 feet that is intended to be a ‘surgical strike,’” using a military metaphor to portray the political issues, rather than human rights concerns, imbedded in the implementation of sanctions (p. 18).

Though the United Nations called for a multilateral military intervention in Haiti, no member states other than the United States offered to apply military pressure upon the junta. In order to uphold, and in effect legitimize, the United Nations resolution, the United States intervened unilaterally in Haiti (Gordon, 1996). The United States did not plan on acting alone in this case; Secretary of State Madeleine Albright announced to the United Nations National Press Club that “The United States is prepared to participate in this force and lead it, but we invite the participation of other states and expect to receive it” (Talking tough, 1994). The United States deployed battleships to the Haitian coast, which prompted a capitulation agreement from the Haitian government. The agreement initiated an American occupation in order to oversee and ensure the peaceful transition to democracy. By October of 1994, the U.S. military had 20,000 troops in Haiti, “a number that had formerly been envisaged only if the Americans carried out a full-scale invasion,” yet was now acceptable as a practical means of ensuring that democracy, and thus human rights, were restored to Haiti (Farah, 1996, p. A17). The U.S. military oversaw the return of Aristide to the presidency and continued to occupy Haiti until the United Nations Mission in Haiti took over in March of 1995 (Gordon, 1996).

Though U.N. Resolution 940 professed concern for the “systematic violations of civil liberties and the desperate plight of Haitian refugees,” closer examination of the intervention reveals that the main objective of the resolution was to reinstate Haiti’s democratically elected government (Abiew, 1999, p. 219). The 1994 intervention set a new precedent in international law because it was the first time the United Nations authorized a Chapter 7 invasion in the “absence of any threat to, or violation of, international peace. The authorization was based on ‘human rights violations and the need to protect democracy,’ elucidating the fused discourses of human rights and democracy” (Carey, 2001, p. 73). The use of such rhetoric for political ends emerged amidst a global trend towards armed humanitarian interventions since the Cold War, evident in United States involvement in Bosnia, Somalia and Iraq over the past two decades (Reiff, 1999). However, Gordon points out that in comparison to American

interventions in Iraq in 1990 and Somalia in 1992, the invasion of Haiti in 1994 was not a humanitarian intervention because the combating human rights violations were “not at the heart of the Security Council’s resolution to use force in this situation” (Gordon, 1996, p. 52). Indeed, the resolution did not profess any means of implementing or ensuring that human rights initiatives would be pursued after the restoration of Aristide.

At the heart of this anomaly in international law is the use human rights rhetoric to defend military action, which represents the larger integration of human rights into a global world order founded upon democracy and free markets. As journalist Elliott Abrams (1994) of *The Wall Street Journal* emphasizes, the U.S. occupation of Haiti reflected a perspective in which “Mr. Aristide’s return [is equated] with the achievement of human rights and democracy in Haiti” (p. A15). Indeed, the U.S. invasion was named “Operation Restore Democracy,” clearly confirming the primacy of political, rather than humanitarian, goals in this intervention. Though the reinstatement of democracy in Haiti was an admirable goal given the tyranny of the military junta, the conflation of the principles democracy and human rights in American foreign policy serves to politicize humanitarian actions and obfuscate American interests in Haiti.

In the case of the 2010 earthquake, the re-incarnation of humanitarianism as a catalyst for military endeavors emerged as a direct result from U.S. military invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, which were both framed as means of liberating native populations from despotic regimes (Hodge, 2011). While the earthquake in Haiti undoubtedly represented a humanitarian crisis, the responses to the disaster reveal the nascent militarization and politicization of the humanitarian process as adapted by the United States government. The United States Army took on this incredible challenge and much responsibility in acting as the first responder to the natural disaster. Granted even trained relief workers would struggle greatly to provide relief to the millions affected by the earthquake, the insistence that the U.S. Army

(which has relatively little experience in disaster relief) handle the post-earthquake operation suggests that the United States “finds it difficult to abandon its colonizing habit of mind,” to the detriment of effectively providing relief to those in need (Middleton, 2010, p. 44).

The relief program initiated by the United States Army resembled a military operation more than a humanitarian project, suggesting that the humanitarian enterprise has been integrated into a militarized conception of international relations. Just days after the earthquake, reporters on the ground likened the U.S. embassy in Port-au-Prince to a “nerve center for a giant, quasi-military expedition,” further suggesting that military and humanitarian discourses have been merged in American political consciousness (Hodge, 2011, p. 44). As Slavoj, Žižek, and Mladen Dolar (2002) acutely point out, “we thus no longer have the opposition between war and humanitarian aid: the two are closely connected, THE SAME intervention can function at two levels simultaneously” (p. 2). In this way, the victims of humanitarian crises are aggregated into the same category as enemies, evident in the Army Major Kelly Webster’s striking contention that “the similarities between COIN [counterinsurgency] and FDR [Foreign Disaster Relief] are innumerable...foreign disaster relief is counterinsurgency, only no one is shooting at you yet” (Hodge, 2011, p. 5). Collaboration with NGOs has become second nature for the military and represents a paradigm shift in which humanitarian crises and human rights violations have become a means for the United States to exert “soft power” over delinquent, or failed, states (Hodge, 2011). The normalization, and even celebration, of military action in the face of humanitarian crisis becomes glaringly evident in the media’s celebration of Sgt. Antonio Travis, who was included *Time Magazine’s* annual list of the top 100 most influential people in the world for his role as leader of the first military mission to Haiti just 30 hours after the earthquake (Sullenberger, 2010). The Department of Defense described the sergeant’s achievements in terms of gaining control over spaces and creating order out of chaos, which is framed as a necessary precursor to the delivery of humanitarian aid. The enhanced attention given to military efforts in the face of humanitarian crises threatens the integrity of aid work,

and invites investigation into the true intentions of “the new face of American foreign policy: armed humanitarianism” (Hodge, 2011, 3).

Securitization Measures and the Politics of Containment

Containment was a key concern in the American response to the humanitarian crises in 1994 and 2010, evident in the security measures taken to prevent further Haitian immigration to the United States. Efforts to contain the suffering within Haiti reveal the relationship between race, refugees and the attempt to maintain the neoliberal world order. Some scholars cite immigration, and not concern for human rights violations (Abiew, 1999). The degree of security measures adapted in these instances displays how race and poverty converge in the Western consciousness, thus conflating black poverty with criminality and positioning marginalized populations as inherent threats to international order (Mullings, Werner & Peake, 2011). The scope of security and containment measures taken in regard to these two events further reflects the continued American use of “humanitarian representation” to accomplish political goals (Watson, 2010, p. 16).

Though it would be unrealistic to expect the United States government to welcome an unlimited number of refugees from nations in crisis, the primacy of immigration concerns further illuminates the highly politicized nature of American aid work. Because of the political violence and repression perpetrated against civilians under the military junta, thousands of Haitians began seeking asylum in the United States, which prompted the government to take action in order to halt the inundation of Haitian immigrants (Abiew, 1999). The first missions of the U.S. Coast Guard and Navy broadcasted messages and distributed pamphlets in Creole along the Haitian coast warning the devastated populations not to attempt to make an escape by sea to the United States. These measures were taken before the United States invaded Haiti to topple the regime, and well in advance of any type of aid being delivered to the

Haitian people. The message asserted by the American military forces toward the Haitian people went as follows: “If you think you will reach the U.S. and all the doors will be wide open to you, that’s not at all the case. And they will intercept you right on the water and send you back home where you came from,” evincing the American preoccupation with protecting its national interests over providing much needed aid supplies (Mullings, Werner & Peake, 2011, p. 291). Attempts to limit immigration after the American invasion of Haiti perhaps made sense in that members and supporters of the military junta might have tried to escape the island in order to evade legal and political responsibility for the crimes against humanity. In any event, the elevation of immigration concerns over those of immediately addressing human rights violations was inappropriate, and elucidates the American use of “humanitarian representation” to accomplish political goals (Watson, 2010, p. 16).

The international community recognized the gravity of the situation in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake; UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon (2010) released a statement the day after the earthquake stating that “there is no doubt that we are facing a major humanitarian emergency and that a major relief effort will be required.” At the same time, the nation was portrayed as a “cauldron of poverty and violence” by the American media, which was used to justify the securing of the region through military measures before aid was delivered (Bornstein, 2010, p. 251). Just days after the catastrophe, the United States Congress made clear its “increasing concerns about security and potential for looting and violence” in a committee hearing on the disaster (Morales, 2010, p. 3). Of course, violence is common in the aftermath of natural disasters with women and children being especially vulnerable. Media and NGO sources recorded numerous cases of rape and sexual assault in camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), though many believe this reveals only a small fraction of the actual violence perpetrated against women after the earthquake, as the debilitated police force and justice system were not able to respond to post-disaster violence (Morales, 2010). Though there was clearly a need to establish and maintain order in the wake of the earthquake, American security

measures reveal greater concern for preventing immigration than ensuring the safety of earthquake victims.

In contrast to American policy towards immigration in 1994, the United States government was more lenient towards possible Haitian immigration in the wake of the 2010 earthquake. In a show of goodwill, the Department of Homeland Security granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Haitians who were already residing in the United States at the time of the 2010 earthquake. However, this procedure required a \$500 fee, a payment most Haitian refugees could not afford (Mullings, Werner & Peake, 2010). The United States Congress released a statement just three days after the earthquake asserting that it would revise its TPS policy if Haitians “...begin to take to the seas to migrate to nearby islands or the United States,” clearly illustrating the American concern for keeping post-disaster immigration to a minimum. The urge to limit Haitian immigration is linked to interests in containing the distressed population, as if the chaos in Haiti might spread to the United States if asylum seekers were given granted protection (Morales, 2010, p. 14).

The security measures taken to prevent immigration and the rhetoric of violence used to describe the distinctly black populations in 1994 illuminates the relationship between “...racism, humanitarianism, and the ongoing process capitalist process” (Mullings, Werner & Peake, 2010, p. 282). Mullings, Werner and Peake (2010) liken American responses in Haiti to the African American communities devastated by Hurricane Katrina, which posited rhetoric construed around ideas of “criminalization, discipline and punishment” as the norm when planning and implementing humanitarian assistance black communities in crisis (p. 258). As with Hurricane Katrina, discourses of criminality dominated reports released immediately after the earthquake, with frequent reference to escaped prisoners of the national penitentiary which highlighted the “notion of uncontrolled black male threat associated with reports of gang rape,” which Mullings et al. believe to be historically rooted in

race-oriented fears of autonomous black communities (p. 285). Despite the palpable violence in post-disaster environments, the insistence on military securitization measures as a precursor to humanitarian assistance serves to further entrench stereotypical relations between blackness and criminality.

While the competing interests of providing aid and containing black populations taint the integrity of the United States army as a humanitarian agency, emigration from Haiti is a concern for both Haitians and North Americans. As of 2011, one in eight Haitians, and over 80 percent of Haitians with a college degree live abroad, revealing a great loss of human capital, which is essential in recovery efforts. The 1987 Haitian Constitution prohibits dual citizenship for Haitians living abroad, which denies the country access to the resources amassed by discouraging political and economic participation by émigrés. Further development policies should focus on creating a Haiti that residents are less likely to leave, and take measures to ensure greater participation of Haitians living abroad (Dubois, 2012).

Effects of American Domestic Politics and Media

Domestic politics and media play a significant, and often overlooked, role in American foreign interventions. Media coverage of humanitarian crises within Western nations has led to an oversimplification of the nature of international aid work, and help perpetuate narratives in which “the victimized local population is described as weak, helpless and non-white, while the rescuers are brave, generous, white Westerners” (Belloni, 2007, p. 455). Depictions of suffering abroad within the United States serve to not only obfuscate the unique aspects of each crises and victim, but also obscure the true catalysts and consequences of American military intervention under the guise of humanitarian relief. Perhaps more importantly, the temporary nature of media reflects the temporary nature of American aid abroad, taken attention away from the need for long term programs to ensure stability in Haiti.

Though support was mixed for the 1994 invasion, American media helped give the issue salience and thus catapult it to the top of foreign policy concerns. In what has been dubbed the “CNN Effect,” the media is known to bring moral salience to international issues through amplified coverage and exaggeration. Media is important in garnering public support for military intervention because “viewers exposed to repetitive television coverage of a particular problem generally become more convinced of its importance and the need for action” (Carey, 2001). During the Clinton administration, the human rights violations in Bosnia, Kosovo and Haiti were the most important foreign policy stories covered by the U.S. media. The Haitian refugee crisis became particularly prominent due to the “relentless television coverage of the Haitian boat people, the stories of atrocities, and the media’s demonization of the Haitian military junta,” which garnered public support for a military invasion from over half of the American population (Carey, 2001). Belloni (2007) argues that this type of media coverage serves to “dehumanize those who suffer in what has been termed the ‘pornography of pain,’” thus further detaching Western viewers from the victim with whom they are supposed to sympathize (p. 456).

Public opinion and media played a particularly important role in the government’s decision to intervene militarily in 1994, especially as President Clinton weighed “the effects [of foreign policy] on their political fortunes in upcoming elections” (Carey, 2001). Before the American-led invasion of Haiti, President Clinton’s ratings had fallen to the lowest levels of any U.S. president, largely due to his impotency in dealing with the grave humanitarian crises in Bosnia and Haiti. The timing of the American invasion of Haiti draws attention to the relevance of domestic election in foreign policy decisions. Bill Clinton authorized the American invasion of Haiti just two months before the mid-term Congressional elections, improving his approval ratings just in time for the election. Indeed, the United Nations had approved an invasion through Resolution 940 over two months before Clinton finally intervened, suggesting he took time to weigh the pros and cons of intervention. Unfortunately Clinton’s tactic could not prevent the Republicans from gaining control of the both the Senate and the House of

Representatives for the first time since the Eisenhower administration (Carey, 2001). Clinton's subsequent foreign policy initiatives in Bosnia did more to improve his ratings, the use of humanitarian intervention for political ends has become commonplace in American politics, leading many to view international law as a "consequence, rather than the regulator, of political conflict" (Carey, 1996, pg. 80). That is to say, Presidents Clinton's military intervention in Haiti was prompted by primarily domestic concerns in regards to the outcome of upcoming elections.

The increased use of media and technology to document and garner support for international humanitarian aid missions was particularly acute in the case of the 2010 earthquake. Improved technologies have played an important role in improving search and rescue missions, and other emergency relief operations on the ground. Ferris (2011) argues that social media has greatly improved emergency relief efforts, upgrading search and rescue operations while expanding opportunities for citizens of richer nations to donate their time and money to the relief effort. Perhaps most strikingly, the United States Army was able to use new GPS tracking devices to improve search and rescue operations, and procure real time information on conditions across the island. The Department of Homeland Security even created the Haiti Media Disaster Monitoring Initiative, which included public online forums, in order to best access how to address relief and rebuilding efforts (Morales, 2010).

While the importance of improved technology and media in improving relief efforts should not be discounted, many scholars have viewed the use of social media to elicit response from Western masses as a double-edged sword. Politics and media worked hand in hand in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake when the hyper mobilization of American media sources simplified the situation of those in Haiti. Haitians were removed from their "from the moral and effectual frames" and prompting "ethical publics" to coalesce "around the spectacle of need" (Bornstein, 2010, p. 250). The call for the mobilization of donors through the Internet and cell phones represented by an "international exhibition

of giving,” thus suggests that contributors cared more about the display of generosity than the intricacies of the specific situation at hand (Bornstein, 2010, p. 250). Donating to Haiti became fashionable in the months after the natural disaster, evident in the “Fashion for Haiti” campaign undertaken by luxury fashion designers and George Clooney’s telethon event, which helped raise over 60 million dollars for the relief effort (Kahn 2011).

While celebrities and popular media do play an important role in disaster relief campaigns, their efforts often sacrifice accuracy for in favor of emotive pleas for contributions. David Reiff (2003) argues that disasters are exaggerated by media sources and NGOs because “understatement is never viewed as a viable option” for aid organizations who must garner attention and support for their cause (p. 144.). The depictions of suffering on the part of the American media serves to oversimplify the humanitarian agenda and further indoctrinate stereotypes of rich, white nations, and the poor, black third world victims who need their help. In all, the latent role of domestic media and politics in eliciting support for foreign interventions illuminate the ways in which the humanitarian enterprise has been impacted by government appropriation.

Conclusion: Ensuring Human Rights in Haiti

Perhaps the most important means of mitigating the pernicious effects of humanitarianism is investing in the Haitian state. The domestic humanitarian movement so should be reinvented in order to promote informed, respectful, and longer-term aid solutions. To this end, Mullings et al. (2010) suggest a “people-centered” approach to development based upon a genuine commitment to supporting democracy and sovereignty in Haiti (p. 296). Through the travails of the past two decades, the Haitians have not give up their struggle to achieve democracy, meaning that outside intervention should emphasize the empowerment of pro-democracy movements within Haiti (Dubois, 2012). Human rights

are traditionally granted through state institutions, hence the creation of strong and stable Haitian government must precede investments in further human rights projects in Haiti.

Ideally, foreign aid would be funneled through a government chosen by the Haitian people, though help from abroad would most likely be needed to create such a government. Most importantly, however, is building trust in government institutions among the Haitian people. The recent conviction of eight police officers responsible for the massacre of prisoners at Les Cayes Prison in the immediate aftermath of the 2010 earthquake represents a “victory for the rule of law in Haiti,” and points to the possibility for institutional empowerment and reform (Sontag and Bogdanich, 2012). Cases such as this one serve as evidence that the Haitian government can be rebuilt in order to ensure dignity and justice for all, and offer a glimmer of optimism to the arduous process of renovation in Haiti.

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