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EXCISE^P 31
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BACKGROUND

SETTING

- Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Haiti's first freely elected president, was ousted by a military coup September 30.
 - He is in Washington at the invitation of OAS Secretary General Baena Soares to address the October 2 Meeting of Foreign Ministers on the Haitian situation.
 - Aristide had just returned from the UN General Assembly when the coup occurred. He was to meet with the President October 8 during a private visit to Washington.
- He has harshly denounced the military leaders who removed him and pledged to lead a fight against them.

THE COUP

- The insurrection, reflecting deep military hostility toward Aristide, grew quickly from what appeared to be an isolated disturbance by enlisted personnel to a full-fledged coup, joined in by key officers.
 - The officer corps is described as "ecstatic" over the removal of Aristide, who they feared was creating a rival security force.
 - Despite earlier protestations that he would not cooperate with the mutineers, armed forces commander Raoul Cedras (an Aristide appointee) named himself head of a three-member junta. There are subsequent signs that Cedras wants to back away from this role.
- Aristide's life was in serious danger during the coup. He was roughed up and humiliated by the military personnel who seized him.
- Preliminary reports indicate a score of deaths, although there are reports of many more casualties. The situation is tense but quiet, punctuated by scattered gunfire. The populace remains indoors.

U.S. ACTIONS

- From the earliest hours of the mutiny Ambassador Adams maintained contact with Aristide and urged military leaders to support the government.
- We have strongly condemned the coup. We regard Aristide as Haiti's legitimate leader and have called for restoration of democratic rule.

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-2-

- All U.S. aid (including humanitarian assistance) to Haiti (\$66 million remaining from FY 91, \$95 million for FY 92) has been suspended.

INTERNATIONAL REACTION

- Other major donors including France and Canada have announced a suspension of aid.
- The OAS condemned the coup in a strongly worded resolution on September 30 that called for restoration of the Aristide government.
- The OAS invoked for the first time the automatic mechanism created earlier this year to respond to the extralegal removal of democratically elected governments.
- The Foreign Ministers who met under this mechanism created a delegation, headed by OAS Secretary General Baena Soares, to travel to Haiti and inform the perpetrators of the coup that they will be isolated within the hemisphere.
- The Ministers also agreed to take additional necessary and appropriate measures to restore Haiti's democratic government if the delegation is unsuccessful.

SAFETY OF AMERICANS IN HAITI

- There are some 7,000 U.S. citizens in Haiti. Most are dual nationals and American citizen children of Haitians, but there are 750 USG personnel and dependents, business people, and representatives of private voluntary organizations.
- There have been no threats against Americans, and Ambassador Adams has not concluded that an evacuation is needed.
- Nevertheless, the potential for mob violence--based on false rumors already circulated about our role in the coup--remains extremely high. Aristide can help by counseling calm.

ARISTIDE'S TROUBLED TENURE

- The military revolt dramatized and brought to a head resentment that had been building against Aristide in many quarters.

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-3-

- Confronted by lingering Duvalierism and a suspicious military, [Aristide invoked "people's power" and cultivated the support of Haiti's masses.] The continuing deterioration of Haiti's economy has also diminished the mass support he formerly enjoyed.

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