

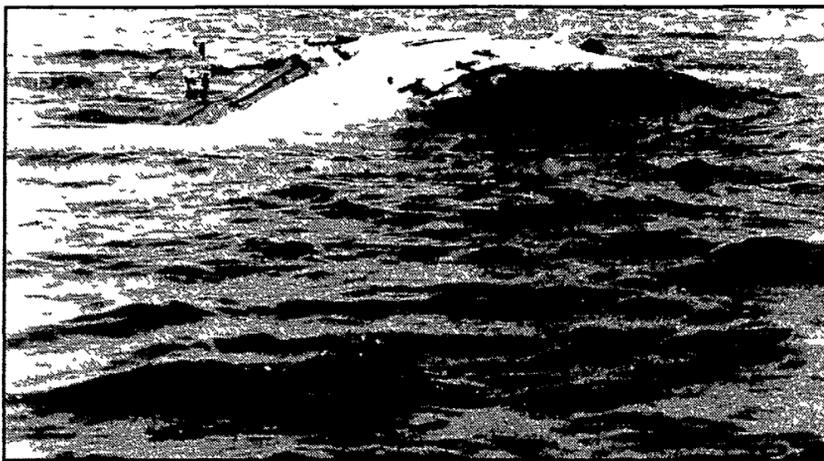
# Haiti invasion gets no support from theory, activists

By Patricia Zapor  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Military intervention in Haiti might succeed in removing the de facto rulers, but will do more harm than good to the struggling democracy movement, say several Catholic observers of the country's politics.

President Clinton in early July sent warships and 2,000 Marines to the waters off Haiti. He previously had made it clear military action was an option for forcing out the officers who have ruled the country since a 1991 coup.

U.S. adviser on Haiti William Gray said as the troops were moved that no invasion was imminent. He emphasized that he expects Haiti's military rulers to step down before the end of the year without armed intervention.



AP/Wide World Photos

A man's body floats alongside a refugee boat that capsized off the coast of Port-au-Prince July 5. About 150 refugees are believed to have drowned in the accident.

facts of war would produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated.

In the case of Haiti, even the economic sanctions meant to force the de facto rulers to step down haven't been sharply tested, he added.

"The church here would — as would the church there — have a very hard time squaring any military action," Quigley said. Haiti's Catholic bishops have called for an end to the trade embargo, saying it is more harmful to the already suffering poor people than to the rulers it is meant to force out.

Wilfrid Suprena, coordinator of Haitian issues for Pax Christi USA, said military action to push out Lt. Gen. Raoul Cedras, head of the military, Port-au-Prince Police Chief Michel Francois and their key allies would be a disaster for his homeland's grass-roots democracy movement. Leaders would be unable to organize and rebuild a government under those conditions, he said.

Given time to rally grass-roots leaders and bring together others who have fled to exile in the United States or France, the Haitian people would be in a position to support Father Aristide on his return to power, believes Suprena.

"If the international community can force the military to stop the repression, and quickly, the grass-roots leaders can regain strength and the transition can be easier," said Suprena.

Networks organized around Haiti's Catholic parishes remain strong despite the killing of thousands of Father Aristide's supporters and the exodus of thousands more to safer places, said Sister Healy.

Although most Haitian bishops have not supported Father Aristide's political involvement, the parish-based organizations that helped make him the country's first democratically elected president survive.

"The local church democracy movement is alive and well in Haiti," Sister Healy said.

Pax Christi, the church-based international peace movement, is among organizations pressuring the White House to seek solutions other than military intervention, whether by the United States alone or a multinational force.

Former Pax Christi USA president Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton of Detroit in mid-June joined the first of a series of weekly protests at the White House of U.S. policy on Haiti.

Still, some polls showed support growing among the American public for the United States to take the lead in forcing the de facto rulers out.

But Mercy Sister Mary Healy, executive director of the Washington Office on Haiti, questioned whether the administration's stated motive of protecting the 3,000 to 4,000 U.S. citizens there is a legitimate reason to send in Marines.

"The fact is most of the Americans who are there decided by the time the airlines pulled out that they were in for the long haul," said Sister Healy. In keeping with the trade embargo, U.S. airlines ended all flights to Haiti in June. Many Americans left behind are working with relief agencies providing food and other care to the poor.

Sister Healy said Haiti's people and their ousted president, Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, oppose military action that they fear would cost their country the freedom of an independent nation.

Neither the particulars of Haiti's situation nor the Catholic Church's teachings on "just war" would justify U.S. military action in Haiti, said Thomas Quigley, Latin American Affairs director for the U.S. Catholic Conference's Department of Social Development and World Peace.

"The moral question has not been raised much," said Quigley. Among the church's criteria for evaluating moral justification for war are questions of whether all other means of ending a conflict have failed and whether the ef-

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