

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with President Ertha Trouillot of
Jamaica (U) ^{Haiti}

PARTICIPANTS: The President
James A. Baker, Secretary of State
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Robert M. Gates, Assistant to the President
and Deputy for National Security Affairs
Bernard W. Aronson, Assistant Secretary of
State for Inter-American Affairs
Alvin P. Adams, U.S. Ambassador to Haiti
William T. Pryce, Senior Director for Latin
American Affairs, NSC (Notetaker)
Carol Wolter, Interpreter

Ertha Trouillot, President
Kesler Clermont, Foreign Minister
Raymond Joseph, Counselor to the President

DATE, TIME May 24, 1990, 10:05 - 10:35 a.m. EDT
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President and President Trouillot met in the Oval Office.
(U)

The President: You come here with good reports about all you are doing to bring about elections and the performance of your government in the face of many difficulties which face it. We don't want to minimize the dimensions of the challenge you face. From the heart we want to try to be as helpful as we can to your government. Obviously, human rights are important. Free elections are important. Obviously you are committed. We welcome your invitation to technical assistance and observers for your elections. Bernie, have you had a chance to talk about the \$2.3 million aid package for elections? (U)

Mr. Aronson: Yes, we have talked about it. (U)

The President: I would only encourage the earliest possible date for elections. I think I saw a UN report that suggested that a September date was possible. Obviously that is a question for you to decide. The security situation is vital; it became the problem in the 1987 elections. Whatever you can do to create a positive security situation will be good -- I think that we have

a million in non-lethal military assistance. We hope that is to your satisfaction. You don't need a lecture. The more you do, the better we are able to help. What I want to do is hear from you. We care and have been able to help in food aid and other areas. But I want to hear from you. (Ø)

President Trouillot: In a few seconds you have captured the situation very well. The situation in Haiti is complicated. We have chosen not to postpone honest elections. We have encountered security problems. There were problems when I accepted the Presidency, but the Army and the civilian population have helped us and we have made progress. But to reach a state where the army is well developed to do its job, there are needs. The army has expressed certain requirements especially regarding logistics and communications. I think that the army would be more effective in the elections if it had proper equipment. We also believe the Army should include certain agents which would be trained and guided for service during the elections. They would not be a separate force. (Ø)

The President: What kind of agents are you thinking about? (Ø)

President Trouillot: These are people recruited from the population, directed by the army. They would be volunteers. (Ø)

The President: What would their purpose be? To calm down the situation? (Ø)

President Trouillot: They would be only for elections, to try to calm down the situation. The people need confidence. It would be helpful to have assistance in their training. (Ø)

The President: This is a difficult question and I don't want to embarrass you, you may not want to respond. Do you think the military will give you total loyal support or do you worry about it? (Ø)

President Trouillot: I don't have great concern because I have real confidence in the army. I think that it has shown its cooperation. (Ø)

The President: Good. That's important. (U)

President Trouillot: I think that this is very important to me. When I went to the army headquarters they said they would support me. But they said they needed equipment. (Ø)

The President: Do you appoint the Commander in Chief of the Army under your system? (Ø)

President Trouillot: Yes. The President can appoint the Commander, sometimes with recommendations. The President is also the Commander in Chief. (Ø)

The President: What other subjects would you like to discuss?
(U)

President Trouillot: We have established or are establishing a system for elections. We have established an electoral council to carry out this process. This is entirely independent. We hope that elections will be in September. Their work is done and there will be an electoral law in about five days to two weeks. A week after that a calendar will be promulgated and a date will be set for elections. (Ø)

The President: Have the French and the Canadians been able to help you? (Ø)

President Trouillot: Friendly countries such as France and Canada have shown cooperation. They have offered food and logistical support. They have also sent people to help the people who will be "peace agents". We would like to be able to have your help in this. (Ø)

Mr. Aronson: There is \$3 million for election assistance in the Panama/Nicaragua Aid Bill. (Ø)

The President: Can some of that be used to train peace officers?
(Ø)

Mr. Aronson: I think it could. (Ø)

President Trouillot: We have other very urgent needs. In order to create the situation for elections we need to be able to give material aid to the people. We need to carry out certain minor projects of public works. The government has to take measures to try to find work for the people. Even if the U.S. gives assistance to help the election, we will need to find employment for the people to occupy them. This is a principal worry. I don't know if the U.S. Government could help us. This is important because the people need to have confidence. (Ø)

The President: Bernie, what would you say about that? (Ø)

Mr. Aronson: There will be \$10 million in Development Assistance in the Supplemental Assistance Bill which we hope to use for job creation. (Ø)

The President: That's why I asked about French and Canadian assistance. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: Our assistance package overall is about \$35 million. One half is PL-480 but there are other elements. What about the private voluntary organizations? (Ø)

Mr. Aronson: There is about \$40 million in all. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: So, overall, there is about \$76 million. (Ø)

Mr. Aronson: I think that one area where the UN and OAS can help is in a large observer delegation. In Nicaragua, this gave confidence to the voters. A large presence in Haiti would be helpful. (Ø)

The President: We certainly would do this if this is acceptable. (Ø)

President Trouillot: I don't know if this is the time to mention it, but our government is a short term government with a mission to have elections. So what we need is immediate or emergency assistance for our people now. This needs to be in time for the elections. (Ø)

The President: How do you see the elections shaping up? Do you see a lot of candidates. (Ø)

President Trouillot: After the electoral law is promulgated, we will invite all candidates to present themselves. They will be the ones who run according to the electoral law. (Ø)

The President: Are these national and local elections? (Ø)

President Trouillot: I can't fully answer your question. This comes under the electoral council which is an independent body. We want to have the elections as soon as possible. If the government is to organize elections, it could do so for presidential and legislative elections, and let it be left up to the new government to organize the municipal elections. There is a UN report which says that all elections could take place at the same time within four or five months. But in the Haitian context, I think it is better to have the presidential and legislative elections first. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: Is the date firmly set for September? (Ø)

President Trouillot: It is not set yet. That is up to the electoral council. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: But September is the target? (Ø)

President Trouillot: Yes, but we need to encourage the council. (Ø)

The President: The sooner that a date is set, the better. (Ø)

President Trouillot: I agree. (U)

The President: How long will you be here? (U)

President Trouillot: Three days. I will go on Saturday. (U)

The President: Are you going to Capitol Hill? (Ø)

Foreign Minister Clermont: This was done this morning. (Ø)

President Trouillot: We talked with key Congressmen, but I will not speak to the Congress as a whole. (Ø)

The President: It is a good thing that there is great support for you in the Congress. This is not always the case for people who visit this office. (Ø)

Have you warned the President what kind of questions she will get from the press outside? I think they will be good questions. (Ø)

President Trouillot: In any case, we want to encourage transparency (openness) and sincerity on all issues, so our answers will be the same. (Ø)

The President: I think I need to study under you for a while. We wish you well. I hope we will meet again. We want you to let us know if we can help further as you move toward elections. We have, regrettably, certain limits on what we can do, but this is important. We have a stake -- because our aspiration is for every country to have a maximum of freedom which comes from democracy which comes from free elections. We want you to succeed. We know that sometimes the U.S. gives the impression of being overpowering. We don't want to do that. We want to give you support.

President Trouillot: I think that this is a time for elections. Today, more than ever the support of the U.S. is important. Our relations are very good, and I value your advice. I want to say that your Ambassador is very active and gives us every support. (Ø)

The President: How are you received? (Ø)

Ambassador Adams: Very well. I went to a small town in the interior recently and was received very well. I got great applause when I spoke about elections. It took six hours to get back. One reason the people want elections is so that there will be changes, including better roads. (Ø)

Foreign Minister Clermont: Ambassador Adams is representing U.S. interests very well. (Ø)

Charge Roy Joseph: I want to say one thing. Ambassador Adams is well received not only in Haiti, but also by the Haitians in the United States, in New York and Washington. They get word of his speeches and appreciate them.

The President: We, of course, have full confidence in our Ambassador. (Ø)

-- End of Conversation --