

HAITI: The Macoutification of Martelly's Power

Martelly Mustering Haitian-American Hit Squad in Miami?

By [Kim Ives](#)

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In the past few months, while headlines have focused elsewhere, Haitian President Michel Martelly has been quietly resurrecting the intelligence and security apparatus that existed during Haiti's neo-Duvalierist military rule (1986-90) and the coups d'état of 1991-94 and 2004-06.

Martelly has placed in key security posts former Haitian Army officers, policemen, and death-squad paramilitaries, many of whom were part of the small "rebel" force which spearheaded the Feb. 29, 2004 coup d'état against then President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.



Former Police Chief Godwork Noël, part of Martelly's Palace Guard, has traveled with Martelly to Chile, among other places



Former Police Chief Jacky Nau, now chief of Parliament's security and attached to Martelly's Palace Guard

Meanwhile, former and would-be soldiers, who have been training in up to ten military camps around Haiti, began to rise up this past week to demand that the Haitian army – demobilized since 1995 – be formally reestablished, which was a Martelly campaign promise.

There are also credible reports that Martelly is mustering in Miami a militarized "hit team," headed and manned by Haitian-Americans who have served in the U.S. military. A well-placed source told *Haïti Liberté* that the Haitian-American soldiers will target outspoken critical senators who have led the campaign to determine whether Martelly is a U.S. citizen, and hence fraudulently in power.

One of the most ominous developments is Martelly's restoration of the National Intelligence Service (SIN), which had been an Armed Forces of Haiti (FADH) spy unit created and funded by the CIA in 1986 under the military junta of Generals Henri Namphy and Williams Regala. The supposedly counter-narcotics unit was "engaged in drug trafficking and political violence," wrote Kathleen Marie Whitney in her extensive 1996 article "SIN, FRAPH, and the

CIA: U.S. Covert Action in Haiti” in the Southwestern Journal of Law and Trade in the Americas. “However, the CIA continued to give up to \$1 million a year to SIN, which is responsible for using their CIA training to spy on [former president Jean-Bertrand] Aristide’s supporters and for murdering up to 5,000 members of democratic movements from 1986 to 1991.”

“[T]he unit evolved into an instrument of political terror whose officers at times engaged in drug trafficking, American and Haitian officials say,” wrote Tim Weiner in the [Nov. 14, 1993](#) New York Times. Emmanuel “Toto” Constant, leader of the FRAPH death-squad, claimed to have been part of the SIN.

The SIN was led by Col. Joseph Baguidy, Jr., who in 1987 led the soldiers who fatally shot in the head democracy activist Yves Volel as he carried out a peaceful one-man protest in front of Port-au-Prince’s Police headquarters, holding the Haitian Constitution in hand.

The SIN was finally disbanded in 1996 by former president René Préval.

However, Joseph Baguidy, Jr. is back today as a leading member of the newly reestablished SIN.

Baguidy was one of the founders and original leaders of the 2004 Dominican Republic-based armed “rebel” movement launched during Aristide’s second term, newly uncovered U.S. Embassy cables from the period reveal. The cables, obtained through Freedom of Information Act requests, are presented in the [new book](#) “Paramilitarism and the Assault on Democracy in Haiti” by Jeb Sprague, due to be published later this year by Monthly Review Press.

The new SIN is headed by another former FADH colonel, Irvin Méhu, alias “Ti Méhu,” who was prominent in the 1991 coup d’état against Aristide and was accused by an investigating judge in the Aug. 28, 1994 machine-gunning of Father Jean Marie Vincent. In a Sep. 15, 2003 ruling, Judge Jean Sénat Fleury indicted Méhu along with fellow FADH officers Jackson Joanis and Hérold Cloiseau as “material authors” in the ambush assassination of Father Vincent outside his home in Port-au-Prince. But almost two years later, an appeals court dismissed the charges against Joanis (although the judges never named Méhu in their ruling) and the case to prove Méhu’s role in Vincent’s murder was buried.

The National Network to Defend Human Rights (RNDDH) condemned the “incoherence of the judges” who dismissed the case in a Jul. 6, 2005 [report](#) entitled “Father Jean -Marie Vincent Assassinated a Second Time.”

The Appeals Court ruling “constitutes an eloquent testimony to the lack of seriousness that characterizes the treatment of criminal cases before the courts,” the RNDDH wrote. “The system reveals its ineffectiveness and inefficiency for all to see. The order of Judge Sénat Fleury that sent 11 presumed assassins (material authors, intellectual authors and accomplices) of Jean-Marie Vincent before a Criminal Court ... [and] nine years of investigation carried out by four Examining Magistrates have been reduced to nothing by the single fact that the Clerk did not sign the Closing Order. What sort of justice is this?”

Key to the sinking of the case, the RNDDH points out, were the “contradictory declarations of Youri Latortue,” then a police officer. The Court gave Latortue immunity from prosecution to be a witness in the case, but he should have been among the accused. “How did

[Latortue] really help the Court, since no light was shed on the crime?” asked the RNDDH report. “What legal clause gives the Court the authority to place a witness above all suspicion? A witness who has lied, moreover!”

Formation of a Haitian intelligence service to spy on Haiti’s democracy movement in schools and streets has been something of a pet project for Youri Latortue, who is now a powerful senator and perhaps President Martelly’s closest ally in the Haitian Parliament. Latortue is also accused by a witness, interviewed on video by a UN policeman, of having led the hit squad that killed Father Vincent. In secret U.S. Embassy cables provided by the media organization Wikileaks to *Haïti Liberté*, Latortue was described as a “mafia boss,” “drug dealer”, “poster-boy for political corruption,” and “the most brazenly corrupt of leading Haitian politicians” (see *Haïti Liberté*, [Vol.4, No. 50](#), Jun. 29, 2011).

In another Jul. 6, 2005 [secret cable](#), U.S. Chargé d’affaires Douglas M. Griffiths reported that “rumors are rife that the IGOH [Interim Government of Haiti](and specifically Youri Latortue) is building an ‘intelligence cell’ within the student movement for political ends.”

Meanwhile, Martelly has reintegrated former coup-making soldiers and police chiefs like Godwork “Gogo” Noël and Jacky Nau into key security positions, according to a former high-ranking security source who requested anonymity.

Noël and Nau are close associates of former soldier/police chief Guy Philippe, who ultimately led the 2004 coup’s “rebel” forces. All three men were part of a Haitian Army officer group known as “the Ecuadorians,” because they were trained during the 1991-94 coup in Ecuador by U.S. and Ecuadorian Special Forces. After the coup ended in 1994, they returned to Haiti and were made police chiefs, only to bolt from Haiti in November 2000 when caught plotting a coup against former Haitian President René Préval.

Last year, Martelly sought to integrate Noël and Nau into the Haitian National Police (PNH) again, according to our source. However, PNH Director Mario Andrésol opposed the move, and the two men were assigned instead as “consultants” to the Unit for General Security of the National Palace (USGPN). Jacky Nau is also chief of security at the Haitian Parliament.

Although Noël and Nau are only “consultants,” they are effectively the commanders of the USGPN. “The USGPN, although technically part of the police, is under the direct command of the President,” our source explains. “It is similar to the case of [former International Republican Institute agent who played a leading role in the 2004 coup] Stanley Lucas at the Haitian Embassy in Washington, DC. The U.S. State Department rejected his designation as Ambassador, so Martelly sent Lucas to Washington as a presidential consultant. But he has taken over the embassy from the Chargé d’affaires designated by the Foreign Ministry and is acting like the de facto ambassador. That is the same situation of Noël and Nau in the USGPN. They are all de factos.”

Meanwhile, former and would-be soldiers training around Haiti “are beginning to lose patience and have occupied for some time now several former military bases to remind President Martelly of his campaign promises to remobilize the army of Haiti,” reported the Haitian Press Agency (AHP) on Feb. 8. “Senator Francisco Delacruz [Central Plateau] also reports that former soldiers with their weapons have also retaken their base in Cerca-la-source,” on Haiti’s Central Plateau.

The next day, “Thierry Mayard-Paul, the Minister of the Interior, Local Authorities and

National Defense, invited the demobilized soldiers who have taken over the training camps of Carrefour and the Central Plateau to remain calm and go home,” AHP reported. “‘The government has not authorized anyone to take over these spaces,’ he declared.”

Meanwhile, Deputy Emmanuel Fritz Gerald Bourjolly, Vice President of the Commission of Justice and Public Security, said that “we do not agree that a group of people on behalf of demobilized soldiers take up arms in the street, shoot, and put people in a climate of insecurity and create a climate of terror,” adding that the police should “stop all those who are in the street carrying illegal weapons.”

But more weapons may be entering Haiti shortly. A well-placed source tell Haïti Liberté that a highly trained group of U.S. combat veterans of Haitian descent will arrive in Haiti shortly from Miami with the task of “neutralizing” outspoken critics of President Martelly. Haïti Liberté has been unable to confirm the report, but our source has proven reliable in the past.

The main obstacle to making this new repressive apparatus fully operational is money. “Méhu is complaining that he is ready to get to work but lacks the means to do so,” our source reports.

Méhu has been a leader of former soldiers since the Feb. 29, 2004 coup. In a meeting held in the Central Plateau town of Mirebalais on Dec. 25, 2004, “a group of former soldiers based in the Lower Central Plateau are demanding the setting up of a special force or an interim security force,” which would be headed by a “national security commission or a new Joint Chiefs of Staff [Etat Major],” according to Radio Métropole. Among the former FADH officers the soldiers proposed for the “new Joint Chiefs” : former Col. Irvin Méhu.

In June 2011, the RNDDH sent an [open letter](#) to President Martelly alerting him to the presence of “several ex-policemen of dubious morality” in his entourage. “Several former police officers including Godwork Noël, Jacky Nau, Gilbert Dragon, Carel Alexander and Will Dimanche, dismissed from the police force, have been integrated into your security while there hangs over them serious doubts about their alleged involvement in the illicit traffic in narcotics, human rights violations, and other wrongdoing,” the RNDDH wrote.

Méhu, Baguidy, Latortue, Noël, and Nau are just some of the prominent faces on the repressive apparatus being set in place by President Martelly. There are many lesser known soldiers and thugs being integrated and mobilized as well. Is this the restoration of a new corps for terror and repression comparable to Duvalier’s infamous Volunteers for National Security, better known as the Tonton Macoutes?

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