

~~Top Secret~~
~~NOFORN-NOCONTRACT~~

HAITI:

Military Ousts Aristide

The overthrow of President Aristide yesterday probably will usher in a new period of political turmoil and violence as the military leaders attempt to establish control over the country.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Aristide left Haiti on a plane provided by Venezuelan President Perez.

[REDACTED]

Until the rebels had trapped Aristide in the Presidential Palace, he had refused to negotiate with them, vowing to punish the mutineers and threatening senior officers if they could not control the Army.

Press reports indicate more than 30 people were killed and some 200 wounded in clashes between rebel troops and Aristide's civilian supporters. The mutineers indiscriminately fired on civilians to force them to retreat to their homes, and they closed most radio stations. Nevertheless, pro-Aristide mobs killed several perceived enemies, including center-left politician Sylvio Claude, and destroyed the homes of at least two rebel soldiers.

[REDACTED] Aristide's intransigence and threats to seek retribution—as well as the attacks against the homes of a few mutinous troops—evidently convinced soldiers not involved in the uprising that they could become targets for popular violence and therefore should support the rebels. The mutineers' willingness to fire on civilians probably cowed much of the populace that Aristide had relied on for protection.

The junta will have trouble establishing control, especially in the face of a factionalized military and likely efforts by radical leftists to incite the masses. US citizens may become targets of retaliatory violence; a US-run hospital reportedly was sacked, but there is no information on casualties. To establish some semblance of legitimacy, Cedras may try to persuade the rebel troops to allow the legislature to continue to function; he may also suggest turning the presidency over to the constitutional heir, Supreme Court president Andre Cherilus. Cedras probably would resist international efforts to reinstate Aristide, however, calculating that such a move would be rejected by the military.

[REDACTED]

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