

# Impact of Haiti upheaval felt in the United States



PHOTO: WADE NASH

Harold Eustache, who moved to the U.S. from his native Haiti in 1972, believes President Jean-Bertrand Aristide has failed to deliver reforms to the Caribbean nation.

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Haiti is the poorest country in the Americas, and also has the hemisphere's highest AIDS rate.

"He fooled a lot of people," Eustache, 50, says. "A lot of people were counting on him. I want democracy to survive, but I think he should resign."

Haiti's history suggests that may become Aristide's fate. The country has "a rich tradition of rebellion," said Jennifer Leigh Disney PhD., a political science professor at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, S.C. That history, which stretches back to Haiti's independence from France and coupled with recent economic and social distress could topple the government.

"Opposition is coming from different places," said Disney, an expert in Third World rebellions. "When poverty is so deeply entrenched, it takes people taking to the street to effect change. And it's not just the poor."

Haitians have kicked out their share of dictators. The French were expelled when African slaves fought for their freedom. In the 1990s, uprisings ultimately forced dictator Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier from power. Independence is one thing, Eustache said. Creating a stable democracy is another.

"I'm very disappointed in Aristide as a president," said Eustache, who owns a pharmaceutical sales training company. "Haiti is the first black republic and the first to get its independence through its own actions. We should be a model, but we haven't gotten our act together."

The United States, which restored Aristide to power in 1994 after a coup forced him from power, may have started his downfall. Aristide's Lavalas party, whose Creole name means "cleansing flood," has been accused of election fraud that has held up international aid since 2000. Opponents also accuse him of turning his back on the poor.

"He kind of came in with an approach to help the poor and downtrodden," Disney said. "Whenever the United

States gets involved, it's a double-edged sword. I've always wondered if Aristide is a man of the people since he was put back in power."

Eustache believes the U.S. has an obligation to broker Aristide's removal so Haiti can elect a new president.

"I don't think they knew what they were doing" when Aristide was restored to office, he said. "They were duped, and so was I."

Noting that Haiti's history includes helping America in its revolution for independence from Great Britain, human rights activist Jesse Jackson said the U.S. should restore humanitarian relief and loans approved for health care, drinking water and education there.

"If the U.S. can spend billions for 'nation building' and democracy in Iraq, so must it invest in democracy in Haiti," he said. "U.S. support for democracy must be consistent, yet the contrast in U.S. policy toward Iraq and Haiti cannot be ignored."

Disney isn't sure American political or military influence will be brought to bear. With opinion polls showing waning support for President Bush's decision to invade

Iraq, the U.S. isn't likely to finance another potential hot spot.

"Because of the situation the United States is in now because of our position internationally, the administration may not be interested," she said. "It would be because of some larger political or economic or national security interest."

Andy Polk, spokesman for U.S. Rep. Sue Myrick (R-N.C.) called Haiti's situation "very unfortunate" but offered few expectations in terms of America's options.

"She just hopes that the situation will come to a

peaceful conclusion," he said.

Duvalier and his father, Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier, were ruthless dictators, but provided Haiti with stability and order, said Eustache, who grew up as the son of an army colonel in Cap-Haitien, Haiti's second-largest city. As discord with Aristide grows, so has his determination to quell the uprising.



Myrick

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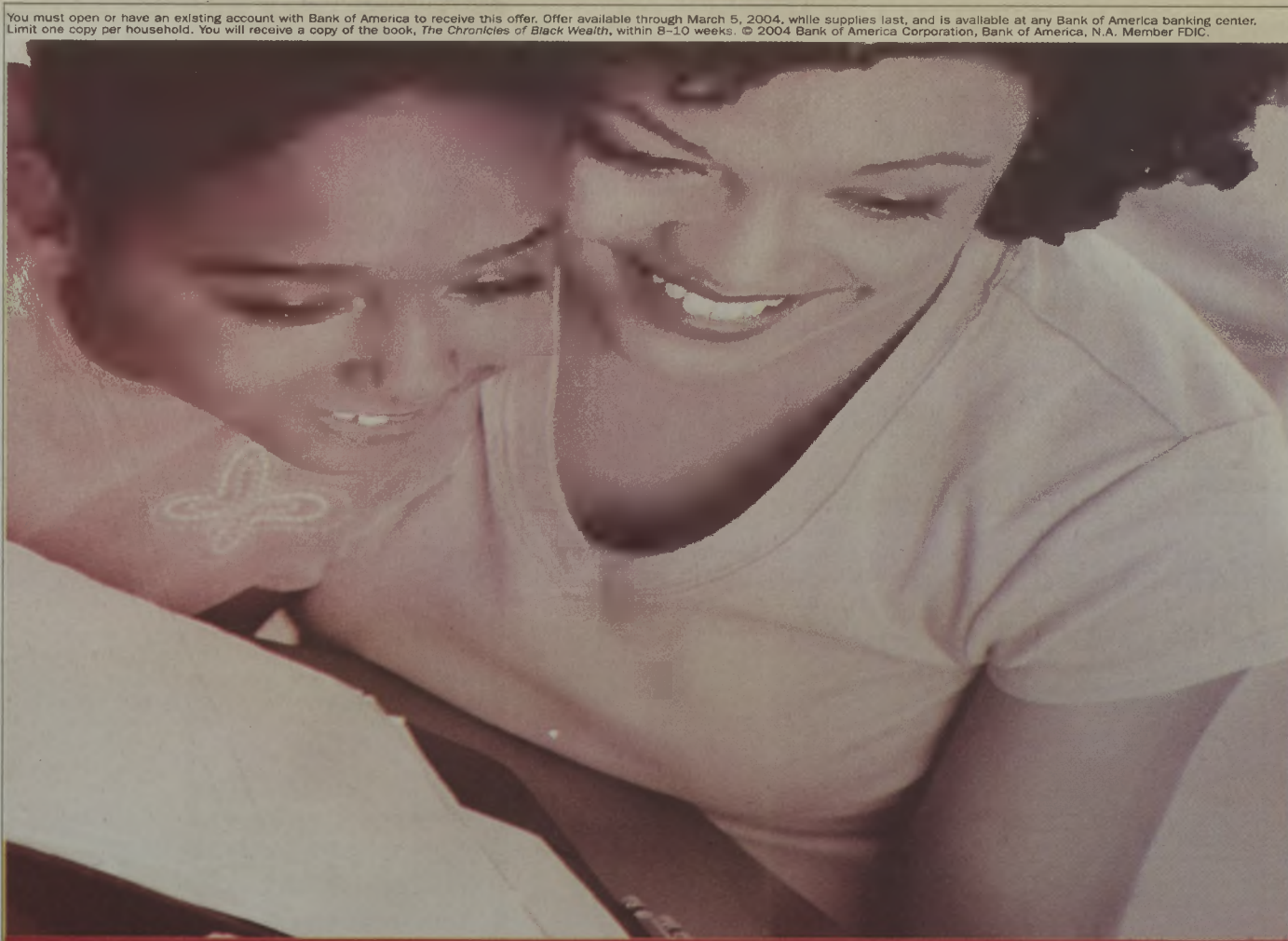
Transmitting HIV could become a crime in South Africa under a proposal which was heard last month by a government justice committee last month and was unopposed.

AIDS is still incurable and is therefore "a death sentence," said Johnny de Lange, an MP for the ruling African National Congress party and the parliament's portfolio committee on justice and constitutional development.

People who have HIV/AIDS "should accept responsibility for their actions," he said.

He also referred to a case in the UK in which a South African man was convicted of "biological grievous bodily

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