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HAITI:

Junta Seeking Legitimacy

Junta leader Cedras is seeking to legitimize the ouster of President Aristide, but international pressure against the coup continues to build and could encourage domestic opposition to the regime.

Cedras claimed in a speech last night that the Army had to oust Aristide because his government had interfered in military affairs, condoned human rights abuses, and was becoming a dictatorship. Cedras also promised that the Army will safeguard the legislature;

Meanwhile, Cedras has directed police to shoot into the air to disburse "troublemakers," a policy he intends to continue another day or two. However, some soldiers are killing Aristide supporters and firing on gathering crowds, according to the press; at least 130 people are now dead.

Aristide has condemned the Army's brutality and vowed to return to Haiti. He accused Cedras of masterminding the coup and has called on foreign governments to cut off aid. Aristide reportedly plans to appeal for international support to restore his government at an OAS meeting today. Numerous foreign leaders already have suspended their aid, and some, such as Venezuelan President Perez, have endorsed military intervention under an OAS agreement passed last June.

Cedras presumably calculates that allowing the legislature to function would calm Haitian political leaders and head off calls for a popular uprising. Nevertheless, most politicians are likely to balk at working with the new regime; a few already have condemned the coup. Moreover, the military killings, apparently against Cedras's orders, suggest he may not have enough control over midlevel officers and enlisted troops to carry out his plans.

Emboldened by international pressure and Aristide's statements, domestic opposition probably will increase in coming days, especially if the military eases pressure. The new regime will lose much of the \$450 million in foreign aid pledged to the Aristide government over the next 18 months, which almost certainly ensures that Haiti's economic decline will accelerate.

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