



Background: The native Taino Amerindians - who inhabited the island of Hispaniola when it was discovered by Columbus in 1492 - were virtually annihilated by the Spanish settlers within 25 years. In the early 17th century, the French established a presence on Hispaniola, and in 1697, Spain ceded to the French the western third of the island, which later became Haiti. The French colony, based on forestry and sugar-related industries, became one of the wealthiest in the Caribbean, but only through the heavy importation of African slaves and considerable environmental degradation. In the late 18th century, Haiti's nearly half million slaves revolted under Toussaint L'ouverture. After a prolonged struggle, Haiti became the first black republic to declare its independence in 1804. The poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti has been plagued by political violence for most of its history. After an armed rebellion led to the departure of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004, an interim government took office to organize new

elections under the auspices of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Continued violence and technical delays have prompted repeated postponements, and Haiti missed the constitutionally-mandated presidential inauguration date of 7 February 2006.

Geography Haiti: Location: Caribbean, western one-third of the island of Hispaniola, between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, west of the Dominican Republic. Area: total: 27,750 sq km. Area - comparative: slightly smaller than Maryland. Land boundaries: total: 360 km. Border countries: Dominican Republic 360 km. Coastline: 1,771 km. Climate: tropical; semiarid where mountains in east cut off trade winds. Terrain: mostly rough and mountainous. Natural resources: bauxite, copper, calcium carbonate, gold, marble, hydropower. Natural hazards: lies in the middle of the hurricane belt and subject to severe storms from June to October; occasional flooding and earthquakes; periodic droughts. Environment - current issues: extensive deforestation (much of the remaining forested land is being cleared for agriculture and used as fuel); soil erosion; inadequate supplies of potable water. Geography - note: shares island of Hispaniola with Dominican Republic (western one-third is Haiti, eastern two-thirds is the Dominican Republic). (CIA Factbook 2006)

Military Notes:

1943 Veh, Recce. M3A1 Scout Car.

Remarks: Between 1943 and 1946 the US supplied two M3A1s to Haiti as part of the Lend-Lease program (see US for vehicle details).

196x Car, Armd, 4x4. Commando V100.

Remarks: Haiti received six Commandos from the US as part of Military Aid program (see US for vehicle details). These vehicles were still in use as of 1988.