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Burden Sharing in Haiti, UN Dispatch

Despite its proximity to American shores, the conflict and UN peacekeeping operation in Haiti receives little media attention in the American press. Seldom is the question asked: "Could the United States be doing more in Haiti?"

However, despite being buffered from Haiti by the United States, the same cannot be said for the Canadian press. Sunday's *Toronto Star* asks that [very question](#) and features a series of in-depth articles that probe the wisdom of Canada's relatively sparse contributions to the United Nations force established to help local authorities battle urban gangs and put the impoverished nation back on its feet. The force, known in the French acronym as MINUSTAH, used to have a significant number of Canadian troops. But these troops have since redeployed elsewhere. Now, the only Canadians in MINUSTAH are a small contingent of civilian police advisors known as UNPOL.

UNPOL is operating 30% below capacity in Haiti, yet the country remains plagued by urban crime and vigilantism. This has caused some officials interviewed for the *Star* article to call for more Canadian personnel and troop contributions to MINUSTAH:

"Carlo Dade, an analyst with the Canadian Association of the Americas, known by its French acronym FOCAL, has just returned from Haiti. He says he believes there is a lack of urgency at the RCMP to get officers down to the country and he believes Canada has underestimated the task at hand... 'A problem in Haiti is going to show up in Montreal.'"

What is true for Montreal is also true for Miami, Boston, and many other cities with large diaspora communities. Haiti is just miles from the U.S. shores. And with American and Canadian troops extended elsewhere overseas, Ottawa and Washington have effectively outsourced the stabilization of their neighbor to the United Nations. In the long run, the price that North America would have to pay should Haiti experience a total collapse makes MINUSTAH a bargain.

Posted by Mark Leon Goldberg at [1:43 PM](#)

http://www.undispatch.com/archives/2006/11/burden_sharing.php