

Haitian police criticized for failure to curb crime

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — The country's new police force, composed of "recycled" soldiers and hastily trained boat people, is taking heat as crime rises and the United States plans to relinquish command of occupation forces.

Critics challenge the so-called interim police force's ability to control street violence and allow a fragile democracy to put down roots. Some question whether it even wants to.

A human rights report scheduled for release Wednesday charged that the force is made up of those least likely to uphold democracy — the military that ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1991, then butchered as many as 4,000 Aristide sup-

porters over three years.

The U.S.-led force that restored Aristide to power last year has failed "to establish and maintain a secure and stable environment," the report by Human Rights Watch-Americas and the National Coalition for Haitian Refugees said.

The force entered Haiti on Sept. 19, disbanded and disarmed the army and paved the way for Aristide's return on Oct. 15. On Friday, with President Clinton and U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on hand, U.S. forces will turn over command of the international mission to a U.N. force.

That force, charged with monitoring legislative elections in June and presidential

elections in December, will be led by an American. Of the 6,000 soldiers and police from at least 18 countries that make up the force, 2,500 are American.

The human rights report said U.S. officials erred from the outset when they opted against a civilian-based interim force, "apparently fearing that the recruits would contribute to a force biased in favor of President Aristide."

"In fact," the report said, "the U.S. government plan reflected an apparent U.S. desire to preserve whatever could be salvaged of the army, an institution with which the U.S. has had longstanding contacts and influence, and one seen as a check on President Aristide."

U.S. Embassy spokesman Stan Schrager denied that charge.

"The force has nothing to do with salvaging the old army," he said Tuesday. "Our only concern is that this (new) armed force does not threaten the stability of the new democracy."

The interim Haitian police force is in charge of crime control until at least March 1996, while a new U.S. and Canadian-run police academy trains a permanent police force of 6,000 to 7,000 officers. The first 375 cadets graduate in June.

The rights groups said the record of the interim police, which has been operating under U.N. guidance, is already troubling.

Cult members buy weird items, services

TOKYO (AP) — Members of the apocalyptic cult suspected in the Tokyo subway attack could rent a headset for \$10,000 a month that would supposedly synchronize their brain waves with those of their leader.

Or they could drink Shoko Asahara's blood for \$10,000.

New details emerged in press reports Tuesday about how the Aum Shinri Kyo cult demanded cash from members to pay for bizarre items and services.

The group is the prime suspect in the March 20 nerve gas attack on Tokyo's subways, which killed 10 people and sickened about 5,000. The cult has denied involvement, and no arrests have been made in connection with the attack.

According to the national newspaper *Asahi*, a "Blood Initiation" — in which members drink blood said to have come from Asahara — costs \$10,000. A "Bardo's Enlightenment," involving an intravenous injection of an unknown substance, costs \$3,000.

A small pin with the sect's logo engraved is less pricey at \$1,000.

For \$2,000, members could buy a 7-ounce bottle of "Miracle Pond," the leader's used bath water, said to have curative powers.

A ritual meant to enable a member to gain spiritual energy by touching the forehead of another member with a higher spiritual level cost \$500.

Israel, Russia launch satellite

PLESETSK, Russia (AP) — In a sign of growing cooperation between once-hostile nations, Russia launched an Israeli satellite on one of its rockets Tuesday but scientists lost radio contact before the craft reached orbit.

Hours after the launch, ground controllers were unable to reach the satellite and two others aboard the Start booster rocket, which originally was designed to carry nuclear warheads.

"Right now, it's a big piece of metal going around the Earth," said Yossi Shartiel, a satellite project organizer in Israel.

The launch of Israel's Gurwin-1 satellite, developed and built with the help of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union, was a sign of changing times.

It was launched Tuesday from Plesetsk, 550 miles north of Moscow, by a Start booster rocket. The Start is an offshoot of technologies used to build SS-25 nuclear missiles.

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Philip Morrison is professor emeritus of physics at MIT, a renowned lecturer and hosted the six-part PBS series *The Ring of Truth*. He is also co-founder of the field known as the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence (SETI). Morrison will use supercomputer animation to help us understand the role of gravity in composing the cosmos.

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