

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB SPEAKERS PRESS CONFERENCE WITH RAYMOND JOSEPH

SUBJECT: HAITI: RECOVERY EFFORTS AND OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

MODERATOR: ALAN BJERGA, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

LOCATION: NATIONAL PRESS CLUB HOLEMAN LOUNGE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

TIME: 1:00 P.M. EDT

DATE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2010

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**ALAN BJERGA:** Good afternoon, and welcome to the National Press Club for our Speakers Press Conference. My name is Alan Bjerga. I'm a reporter at Bloomberg News and President of the National Press Club. We're the world's leading professional organization for journalists, and we are committed to the future of journalism by providing informative programming and journalism education and by fostering a free press worldwide. For more information about the National Press Club, please visit our website at [www.press.org](http://www.press.org).

And on behalf of our members, I'd like to welcome our speaker and our guests in the audience today, as well as those who may be watching on television. We're looking forward to today's speech and afterwards, I will ask as many questions from the audience as time permits.

But first, a few words about our speaker. His Excellency, Ambassador Raymond Joseph of Haiti, made it to the National Press Club today, as did all of you, despite the blizzard conditions of the past several days, to give his assessment of the recovery efforts in Haiti and the outlook for his country's future following the 7.0 earthquake that struck his nation just last month.

The winter blizzard of 2010 pales in significance compared to the massive earthquake that devastated Haiti one month ago tomorrow, leaving more than 200,000 dead. We have all seen the visual images of the widespread destruction in Haiti and at the same time, have read countless stories exemplifying the human spirit as people struggle to survive the natural disaster and look to the future.

In many ways, our guest today is himself a survivor. He lived 19 years in New York in exile under a death sentence imposed in absentia by the authoritarian regime of the late François “Papa Doc” Duvalier, who was enraged by our guest’s radio broadcasts and writings against the dictatorship. The former *Wall Street Journal* writer co-founded with his brother the first crusading commercial *Haiti Weekly* based in Brooklyn; and after that, and through several government posts, became his country’s ambassador to the U.S. in October 2005. Since last month’s earthquake, Ambassador Joseph has worked day and night coordinating relief efforts with his government in Port-au-Prince and the Haitian community in the United States, meeting with State Department officials and representatives of international relief organizations. We are pleased that he can give his one month assessment of the earthquake’s aftermath and the outlook for Haiti’s future at the National Press Club today. Welcome, Ambassador Joseph. (Applause)

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you my friends for being here. I'm here especially, I should disclose, because of a lady in the front row here called Jen Duplaine (?). She has been a very good friend of my wife, Lola Poisson, who has been quite a help to me since my coming here in 2004. As the President said, in 2004 I came here as the Chargé d’Affaires. And in 2005, I think, I was doing a pretty good job so they elevated me to ambassador.

Well, since we are in the home of journalists, I thought that we’ll take a minute to remember those journalists who have fallen in Haiti. There are 23 of them. I’ll ask for a minute of silence, please. Thank you.

Tomorrow will be exactly a month since the earthquake hit in Haiti. The latest figures from the government, the Minister of the Interior, Paul Antoine Bien-Aime, just gave it yesterday. It’s 217 dead, counted. That was up from 212, I believe it’s mentioned, on February 4<sup>th</sup> by the Prime Minister. I still think the figures will be higher. I think about 250,000 because there are a lot of people under the debris, and some of the places have not been totally searched.

It hurts me a lot when I have to talk about what has happened in my country. At the same time, I feel that the story of Haiti needs to be said, it needs to be told. You know, Port-Au-Prince, the city of two million that was built for 150,000, was a monstrosity. And today, nature has done what we could not do as politicians. The people are clearing out Port-au-Prince and going into the hinterland. And as of today, about half of the population, about one million, have already left and have gone mainly into the northern part of Haiti. And it’s not on plateaus. The map of Haiti is this way, see, that's the map of Haiti right here. And Port-au-Prince would be there, and the northern part would be here. And this is the area that was hit, from Port-au-Prince down to the southwest peninsula. The destruction in that area has been tremendous. And it will take us a little while to rebuild and to do it in the proper way.

So, a month after the devastation, where are we? We're still in the recovery stage. We're still picking up bodies and an occasional living one, as happened just on Saturday.

For a 28-year-old man to have lived more than three weeks, and he came out alive, this is a miracle.

A month after this big earthquake, we still have some people complaining that the aid has not reached them. However, the U.S. Ambassador, Mr. Lewis Lucke, just reported yesterday that despite what's being said about the government, about corruption, he has not seen that. Not this time. I'm not saying that everything is hunky-dory. However, this time the Haitians seem to have been working together to do the right thing. And the government which a lot of people said was absent in the first three days, has been working pretty well. Every morning, there's a meeting of the cabinet and the Minister of the Interior leads it, beginning at 7:30. By 8:00, the Prime Minister comes; at times, it's the President. And all in all, there is a normalcy coming.

And so, when people say the government doesn't exist, the U.S. is running the show, we are here to say no, the U.S. is not running the show. Just as President Obama said from day one, the U.S. is coming to support the Haitian government. And the U.S. is not an invading force, neither an occupation force. We have had people from all over and the U.S. military that have been in control of the airport has made sure that airplanes coming from places far away, from countries that you would not expect like Tehran, from Venezuela, from Cuba, are cleared immediately just so we do not have this criticism that they did not open the airports to us.

That still does not stop some people who have agendas and who say that the U.S. is blocking them. Well, on that score, I am completely satisfied that the Haitian government is cooperating very well with everybody, and I am satisfied that the U.S. is doing what it should do to make life better for the Haitians.

Do you know, the U.S. responded right away. On January 12<sup>th</sup> when the earthquake hit, we did not know where the officials were. I couldn't talk to anyone. And you would expect that. The same thing would have happened here in Washington, D.C., if the White House were flattened, the Congress and the banks and the FBI, the CIA. Yes, you have better structure in this place. Somebody may have called from New York, but your leadership, your political leadership, your economic leadership, your security leadership, won't have been there. That's what happened in Haiti. A smaller place, it doesn't have all the resources of the United States. However, we got together, and now we want to go forward.

How are we going to go forward? First of all, we are getting help and getting suggestions from all sorts of people who are experts in construction, experts in this and that. And the only thing we're telling them now, "That's good. We are going to get all your information, we have a base of the expertise and the personalities that we'll call on." However, this time, we will have to sit down with everybody and discuss this future of Haiti. And the future of Haiti is not only Port-au-Prince. In fact, in the past, Port-au-Prince has become the Republic of Port-au-Prince in contradiction to the Republic of Haiti. And everything happened in Port-au-Prince. And what happened, especially by dispersing the people, will help us to perhaps organize the Republic of Haiti.

Certainly, the people who have moved in the countryside, who have moved in the towns far away from Port-au-Prince and who are now being put up in tents, and let me stop about the tents here, you know. The President of Haiti has called for about 200,000 tents for the displaced one million people. Venezuela came through with about 30,000, and the report I got this morning, 28,000 have been distributed. We're getting donations of huge tents. Now, we are trying to find the football fields that are not operational to set them up. I have three large tents, 28,000 feet, that should be arriving in Haiti and that could be used either for schools or for government buildings, or for hospitals.

So, come back to the tent cities that are springing up around the countryside. I think the development program of Haiti will have to look at these places where the tent cities have been put up to create new, modern cities. Cities that will be built according to codes. And Port-au-Prince itself will be streamlined. I don't think that we'll be able to tell people not to build in Port-au-Prince anymore, but certainly Port-au-Prince cannot be rebuilt the way it was, with these flimsy boards all over the place, with no streets, no gutters, nothing. So, that's what I say should be happening, and we will not start reconstruction until the conference is held in New York at the end of March at the United Nations. And after that conference, then all of these people who are coming to us now and saying, "Here, we want to do this, here we want to do that," we'll probably know how to direct them.

But that's for the physical. But I think the mental is going to take much more time. That's the reason why I want to tip my hat to the First Lady of Haiti, Elisabeth Preval, who started a program, speaks for the children. And who is working with psychiatrists and also social workers to deal especially with the children of Haiti who are suffering all kinds of traumas. And speaking about children of Haiti, a lot of people think that the children of Haiti are just like cattle. And that they can come in and pick them up and leave and do whatever they want. I'm quite sure you're aware of the 10 "missionaries" who came and got some 33 children. They were going to do good things for them, put them in an orphanage in the Dominican Republic until they were stopped at the border. And I've gotten a lot of pressure from various groups in America about releasing these people. I'm quite sure they'll be released. But at the same time, I think the world has been put on notice that Haitian children are not cattle. And for those who said there was no government in Haiti, I'm quite sure the arrest of these people, their trial, proves that the government exists, the government is doing its work.

Once that's done, I'm quite sure that compassion will be shown, because according to our own investigation, at least these people were not really traffickers. But what about the others who may have decided to come in any time and grab all the kids? So that's the reason why I understand that today, even as of today, the judge in the case will ask for release of the people, even on parole, but I'm quite sure that that will be done.

And I think it shows that the Haitian government wants justice, but justice with compassion. And at the same time, we are telling the would-be traffickers, don't try it. You'll be properly arrested and prosecuted. That's for the children.

Now, what about the women of Haiti? You know, usually people think that Haiti is really a machismo place. But it is not really, it's the women of Haiti who are in charge of commerce. If you go to that place, you see the women coming with the loads over their heads, they're going to markets, they're the ones who control the money. However, still men dominate that society. My wife happened to have felt the need for working with women and children. And three years ago, she told me, "It's not enough for me to be the wife of an ambassador. I want to work also with the women and children of Haiti." And so she began the work in the city that has been hit very strongly, the city of Petit Goave. And with the help of women here influencing Washington, they are doing something for the women on March 11<sup>th</sup>, a great event, at the Hebrew Congregation here in Washington, D.C., specifically to deal with the problem of women.

Just to tell you that we are trying as much as we can to cover a lot of ground. And in short, I think that's what I can tell you as a report on the first month after the earthquake. And I will open up to questions.

**MR. BJERGA:** And thank you very much for your time. We have several questions from people written beforehand and at this, anticipating your event. The first question deals with the current weather. There have been heavy rains in Haiti. There have also been snowstorms on the east coast. How do the rains in Haiti complicate relief efforts there? And has aid been slowed at all by the inclement weather we've had in the United States in recent days?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** The people who have the tents at the Champs de Mars. Champs de Mars is a large park surrounding the national palace that collapsed. Those people this morning have the first demonstration against the government because they said the government has not done what it should do fast enough by having tents for us. They were in makeshift tents and a lot of them were crying, "We are getting wet. We don't know what to do with the kids." I think this is going to force us to do things a little faster. And perhaps that will send a message to the international community that the tents that you promised should be arriving a little faster.

As far as the snow affecting us here, even I have been affected. And I said perhaps it's solidarity with the Haitian people that I was 40 hours without electricity right here in Chevy Chase, Maryland. So we suffer, but this suffering that we have is really nothing in comparison to what they are suffering in Haiti. But I can tell you that the government is taking this very seriously and they're compelling us to do much more, much faster.

**MR. BJERGA:** But the recent weather has not in any way affected aid flows or materials getting to Haiti?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** Again?

**MR. BJERGA:** But you're saying that the snowstorm has not affected the flow of any relief materials to Haiti?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** No, the snowstorm over here hasn't affected Florida, it hasn't affected the Dominican Republic, hasn't affected the aid coming from the south and even from Europe. So the medicine is arriving, the food continues to arrive and there is better coordination of the airport and the roads have been cleared.

**MR. BJERGA:** You mentioned the first demonstration this morning in Haiti. As frustrations have grown on the ground, there have been some people who are wondering if the president could have a more active public profile. What can you say to either frustration?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** The President of Haiti is a shy man and he likes to work behind the scenes. The first lady of Haiti, Elisabeth Debrosse Preval, has taken a front role and has done much more and is showing that. However, I think there's something else that people don't understand about the president, how shocked he was, he was shocked. I saw him two days after the event and he is not the same man I knew. However, he's getting over it, and I expect to see him a little more often in front of the TV. I want to see him in the field picking up the shovel, even symbolically. But remember, he's a very shy man.

**MR. BJERGA:** A question about the March 8<sup>th</sup> summit. Could you tell us a little more about some of the logistics that will be behind that event in terms of who will be there, what will be some of the key topics, and how the forum will operate?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** You said March 8<sup>th</sup> summit? I don't know, are you talking the same summit, the one in New York?

**MR. BJERGA:** Yes.

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** According to what I know, it's later than that. It's around March 28<sup>th</sup> or 31<sup>st</sup>, it's around that. It is the international community, especially the donor countries, those who are going to pledge the billions of dollars, not millions, billions of dollars that will be needed for the development of Haiti. Besides the international community, there are going to be the international big players, the United States of course, France, Canada, Spain, and Brazil, Argentina. We are lobbying for representation of what I call Joe Common, because I don't think the development of Haiti should be overseen just by the big players. I think we should have some representation of the people. I don't know how it's going to be, but we're lobbying for that.

**MR. BJERGA:** How extensive of an ongoing international presence will be needed to provide adequate shelter and infrastructure for Haiti? What do you see the international role in the rebuilding of the country being in six months, one year, five years?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** You know, Haiti has had the presence of the United Nations now since 2004. And the United Nations, with the new situation, beefed up its presence by about 3,000 more. So, we have about 11,000 U.N. police and troops there. The United States has come in with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne and the figure for U.S. troops is between five and seven thousand.

Then, the Haitian national police, which was at 2,500 in 2004 when I came here, is now at 10,000. And the national police this time got kudos from the international press because the people of Haiti just clapped for the national police because the national police was there before the other people. And what makes it much more interesting is that they hadn't been paid yet, but they wanted the job. Don't forget that the first democratic elections of Haiti on December 16, 1990, security was provided by the Haitian armed forces. For some reason, the Haitian armed forces were destroyed and a vacuum was created. And that's why you had all the gangs and all the problems in Haiti.

What I'm trying to say, the Haitians can provide their own security. The Haitian armed forces were only 7,000 strong and they had a rule, a constabulary, of about 4,500. And they provided security for the first democratic elections. I expect the Haitian national again to own their own security. I can't tell you it's going to be in six months or in a year, but this time it's being done properly. The United Nations has been there since 2004 and have been working with the Haitian national police and we've created a secure environment. I know it is secure because in August, I went home on vacation as Joe Common. I didn't go as an official. I was picked up at the airport by my friend in the jeep, and we traveled all around and we were out in the street until three in the morning and the people were enjoying themselves. So security was coming not perfect, but almost, in Haiti.

**MR. BJERGA:** What has the Haitian reception been toward the U.S. military? And given that U.S. military involvement in the Caribbean has, in general, long been a sensitive topic, what impact does the ongoing U.S. military presence have on long-term U.S./Haitian relations?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** I don't think the U.S. military presence in Haiti will have a deleterious effect on Haiti. Yes, the U.S. had occupied Haiti from 1915 to 1934, and during that time a democratic intervention. In fact, it reinforced the old colonial structure. Yes, they built some roads, they built some schools. However, mentally they did not help the Haitian society.

This time, it's different. And it's not a long-term stay according to what I know, how the American administration is doing. What we need is not soldiers, we need developers.

**MR. BJERGA:** There has been news that a Haitian judge has said that the missionaries may be released. Of course, there is still the possibility of the prosecutor making recommendations in individual cases. What confidence do you have that the

missionaries ultimately will ultimately be released, and what would that say about U.S./Haitian relations?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** As I said in my introduction, I believe that the judge has done the right thing. As far as an appeal from the government, I am not in the judicial branch, I don't know what that will be. But, I think the lesson has been given to the world. And as I said, I hope compassion will be shown.

**MR. BJERGA:** What will your comment be on press and media coverage of the Haitian disaster in the last month? And how does it play toward building or perhaps detracting from support for relief efforts?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** I have to commend the press except for a few exaggerations. I think the media has done a very good job in portraying what's happening in Haiti. I hope that as we go from the front pages and from the glare of television, there will be some people still digging who are coming up with the stories over the next few months, even years. Who knows? Perhaps CNN might have a bureau in Port-au-Prince.

**MR. BJERGA:** There has been recent confusion as to the actual estimated death toll with various numbers being given from 170,000 to 270,000. Today, we heard about 250,000. What are some of the challenges of making an estimate? Will there ever be a final, firm estimate? And does it really matter?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** I remember the second day after the earthquake when Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive said it will be up to 100,000. And people say, "Oh come on, he's exaggerating." And I remember I went on TV to say, "With a population of two million around Port-au-Prince, I think the 100,000 figure of the prime minister is within range." Today, as I said, we have counted much more than that. And will we know eventually how many? I don't know. With all those interred under some buildings be deterred, I don't know. And does it matter? I think it matters because those people who died are not flies. I hope we can give a good accounting for those who have disappeared. They have relatives. We'll be able to find out eventually how many disappeared.

**MR. BJERGA:** In the last month, there has been an incredible outpouring of aid and support from the international community toward Haiti. Are there any problems right now with absorption of some of that assistance? Is it being distributed effectively or is this something that needs to be calibrated more carefully over time?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** We can always have a better calibration over time. But as I said, Ambassador Lewis Lucke who is the U.S. AID overall coordinator of the aid, has said publicly that he has not seen any corruption. Are we doing it fast enough? Probably not. I have been asking the use of helicopters to ferry the aid to the areas in the back places where we have not reached. And some of them, we're dropping them, and I'm against dropping of the aid like that. Because when you do that, only the strong get it.



And I think we should do a better job of distributing the aid. They're trying. I hope it can be better yet.

**MR. BJERGA:** What is the biggest logistical challenge in aid distribution right now, and how are you working to overcome it?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** The big logistical problem is that the airport of Port-au-Prince is too small. I have suggested that two other airports, one in Cap-Haïtien in the north, up here, and the other one in Cayes down here be lengthened to receive larger airplanes. I also think that they could have another runway in Port-au-Prince who receive more aid. The other part is fixing up the port of Port-au-Prince that was damaged because I think by ship, we could get more aid. The port of St. Marc, which is about 45 kilometers from Port-au-Prince, I think, should also be used. And Cap-Haïtien, and all the other ports should be used because the aid is not going specifically to Port-au-Prince anymore. The people have moved out. So, I would suggest that that be done quickly so that the aid can be dispersed much faster.

**MR. BJERGA:** Also for a follow-up, what about the availability of Santiago de Cuba?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** What about the ability of Santiago de Cuba as another area? Well, perhaps that could be another place. However, we have found a better way. The Dominican Republic next door has put the airport of Barahona at the disposal of Haiti. So the Barahona airport, which is much closer than Santiago, is a sister airport to Haiti right now.

**MR. BJERGA:** Could you comment more on the Dominican Republic's involvement in assistance in the crisis?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** You know, the relationship of Haiti and the Dominican Republic has been a love/hate relationship for a long time. But I'm glad to say that the first person who came to my embassy on the 12<sup>th</sup> was the Dominican Ambassador, Mr. Saladin, whose embassy is a block away. And I also want to report that among the first responders in Port-au-Prince on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January, were the Dominicans. And the President of the Dominican Republic, Leonel Fernandez, who's a friend of President Preval, was one of the first chiefs of state to fly to Port-au-Prince in support. And the Dominicans have opened up their hospitals and even allowed some Haitians to come in and stay in the Dominican Republic during this period of distress for Haiti. So, this, again, situation is making for better friendship.

**MR. BJERGA:** We have several questions dealing with the rebuilding of the country. One is with the earthquake is, of course, an intensified involvement from the NGO community. In the long-term, does heightened investment from the NGO community possibly lead to a deterrence of private sector investment?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** You know, the NGOs came in to fill a void a long time ago. And the U.S. government, USAID especially for a long, long time, has been working with only NGOs. The Haitian government, as such, has not been getting direct aid from the U.S. And sometimes you hear people say, "Haiti got so many million dollars," and they didn't see where it went. Perhaps it's time to start looking at some NGOs before it was said the Haitian government that they said was corrupt, that's the reason they had to work with NGOs.

But with all these NGOs in the country, some of them unregulated, and this one doing his little business over here, this little business over there, we often don't know what the NGOs are doing. Some are doing very good work. I'm not saying all NGOs are the same. But in a country where you may have 10,000 NGOs and only about 450 are registered, expect a better coordination of NGOs, just as we are asking a better coordination of the international countries that are working in Haiti. Because NGOs cannot develop a country. They can do some work, but they cannot develop the country.

**MR. BJERGA:** You earlier spoke of some of the long-term trauma felt by Haitian citizens. How will you be handling mental health issues among Haitian citizens with an entire nation that would seem ripe for post traumatic stress disorder coming weeks and months after the actual event?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** You know, there are Haitian professionals in the field of health in the United States, a lot of them. And not only in the field of health, the IDB, Inter-American Development Bank, did a study about three years ago where it showed that 83 percent, 83 percent, of Haitian professionals are living abroad. And mainly the United States and Canada and France. I think a program to induce these people to come back home and help should be taken into consideration.

Also, a lot of nurses, Haitian American nurses in all the hospitals. You go to New York and they have Haitian nurses all over the place. Perhaps in the program to help rebuild Haiti, there should be a component to induce these people to come back. And I think that has been taken into consideration.

**MR. BJERGA:** Is there a plan to formulate or facilitate the return of Haitians to Haiti? And is that something that you have seen happening ad hoc already?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** Yes, there is such a plan, and the plan has begun with the government. The constitution of Haiti was the main impediment to the return of Haitians, or the involvement of Haitian Americans or Haitian Canadian, or whatever. The Haitian constitution said that if you took another nationality, you lost all your rights as a Haitian. Well, President Preval and the crop of politicians now working in Haiti have noted that the diaspora is a major asset, especially when you consider that they send \$1.6 billion, \$1.6 billion, to Haiti. That's a quarter of GDP. Well, the legislature that just ended voted some changes in the constitution. And one of the changes was for the multiple nationality of Haitians. So, once born Haitian, you never lose it, even if you acquire two, three more nationalities. I expect that this alone will be a door opening for them to return

home and if they are anywhere in the world, just like the Israelis, they will help rebuild their country.

**MR. BJERGA:** Tourism has been a major component of your national economy before the earthquake. What projections may you have for how the earthquake affects tourism, and how will you deal with the economic challenge of potentially less visits?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** Just about three or four days-- in fact, it was the Thursday before the earthquake, the *Miami Herald* wrote a major story about the hotel boom in Haiti. The Minister of Tourism, Patrick Delatour, has done a great job of opening up Haiti again to tourism. And it was in the northern part of the country that it began. I'm quite sure you must have heard that Royal Caribbean did two Caribbean tours, the Royal Caribbean tours, spent about \$50 million together with the Haitian government, to build a major pier in Labadee, Labadee, Haiti, northern Haiti. And that was inaugurated on the first week of December, I think it was the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December. And for that inauguration, Royal Caribbean came in with their largest ship, the *Oasis of the Seas*, 5,400 tourists and a crew of over 2,000. I think it's five football fields, this ship. My wife says I won't get on board. (Laughter)

Anyway, the scene was being prepared for tourism to come back to Haiti. It happened that it was in the northern part of the country that it started. I don't expect that that will change. But I envisage Haiti doing some great work with all the fortifications that were built over the years after independence to repel any invasion of France. And we have quite a few of them. You only know about the citadel because it's the major one on top of the highest hills near Cap-Haïtien. But besides that, we have many more. How would the world see Haiti if all these fortifications were rebuilt and hotels, bungalow-type hotels built around them and you invite them to come see what slaves, former slaves, had accomplished 200 years ago? More than 200 years ago? Then Haiti will become the Mecca in the Caribbean for tourism because-- I'm not speaking against the other islands-- they have surf and sand, but in Haiti, we have surf and sand and a rich history.

**MR. BJERGA:** Contributions to Haitian relief efforts have ranged from people texting on \$10 to the International Red Cross, to the example of a young man who was living in the streets of D.C. to gain a solidarity with the people of Haiti by raising awareness of the need for tents in Haiti. What are some of the most effective ways that people can contribute to Haitian relief efforts in ways to assure that their dollars are maximized and that they are sent to the destination they wish it to be sent?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** I could not tell you to what NGO you give your money. I know the Red Cross does work in Haiti. The World Vision does work in Haiti, Food for the Poor, and many others. And even we at the embassy of Haiti have the Embassy of Haiti Earthquake Fund. One thing I can tell you, our fund, every penny, goes to Haiti to put protection civile, the civilian protection, that does the work on the ground. And a lot of people have come to me and say, "We don't want to give to NGOs." I say, "Well, we were authorized to start this fund." Embassy of Haiti Earthquake Fund, going

to do a little commercial here; 2311 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C., 20008. Send us your support, your dollars, they will get to the right people.

And also, Haiti has shown in the past that it has some good managers. Today, coming back to the same ideas that we have good managers with transparency. So, trust us, we will do what's right with your money.

**MR. BJERGA:** How worried are you about relief fatigue? The snowstorm here pushed Haiti off the front pages. And in the coming months, it will be ever easier to forget. What is your long-term strategy to keep awareness alive?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** I have to say that this is the thing that haunts us all. And I'm glad to say that President Barack Obama, after his address to the nation on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January, he met me in the back for a photo op. and he referred the U.S. support. He said after the glare of the TV are all off, after Haiti is off the front pages, we are in for the long haul. And for the long haul, we are going to continue to work in the schools, in the churches, in the clubs, and you know, I was surprised. There's even a club of strippers just raised some funds for Haiti.

**MR. BJERGA:** We have just a couple of more questions, and actually, Mr. Ambassador, they both deal with you, so be prepared. But we have a couple of other matters to take care of. First, we'd like to note that this will not be the Ambassador's last time at the National Press Club this year. The Ambassador and his wife will be guests of honor at a Haiti Night that the National Press Club will be holding Thursday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, focusing on Haiti past, present and future. Also, as is the tradition at all National Press Club speakers events, we do have our one token of our appreciation for your being here today. We'd like to present you with the traditional National Press Club mug. (Applause)

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** Thank you very much. As if they know, I'm a collector of mugs.

**MR. BJERGA:** But we do have a couple more questions for you, Mr. Ambassador. The first one simply is so why were you sentenced to death by the Duvalier regime?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** You're opening Pandora's Box. I was in Haiti after I finished my college years. And I was doing Bible translation under the auspices of the American Bible Society in Haiti. And one afternoon, as the sun was going down, I was sitting at poolside, and a black dog walked in. You know, dogs go freely in Haiti. And the young man I was speaking to trained in Spain, married a Spaniard, so you know the level of the person I'm talking about. Turned to me and put his fingers over his mouth, and I understood. I stopped talking. And after we watched the dog cross the threshold of the property he said, "You understand these things?" I said, "Yes." He said, "You see that dog? That was a dog Duvalier sent to spy on us."

When he left that day, I had a headache. I said, "Duvalier is in control of this place." Because if this man, with his education can believe this sort of thing, think what the people believe. And I said, "And I cannot tell Haitians that dogs don't spy." By the way, the dog didn't have any mic under his neck or anything like that. It was a regular dog.

I said, "However, I can convince the Haitians that the dogs have switched allegiance. They're no longer working for Duvalier, they're working for me." So, I left Haiti and organized radio broadcasts from New York and infiltrated the palace of Duvalier and his ministries everywhere and had people all over the streets of Port-au-Prince and we were helped by a new technology, the new transistor radio came into being. And we had a massive distribution of transistor radios in Haiti. And this was short wave from New York every morning at 6:00. And we did so well that after a while, people started to look at the dog, the dogs and the cats, and wondering for whom they were working. When Papa Doc couldn't put his hand on me, although he tried, he did the next best thing. He condemned me to death in absentia.

**MR. BJERGA:** And for our final question, you have been both a journalist and a government official. What's tougher? What's more difficult?

**AMBASSADOR JOSEPH:** Well, I think I say that all the time, and I believe it, I think being a journalist and being a diplomat, it's a reversal of the coins. When I was a journalist, I liked to put people's secrets out and the scandals, I put them out. As a diplomat, I try to suppress them. (Laughter)

**MR. BJERGA:** Well, thank you for your candor and openness today, Mr. Ambassador. And thank you all for coming here today as well. I also would like to thank the National Press Club staff for organizing today's event, and to the NPC Library for its research. The video archive of today's luncheon is provided by the National Press Club's Broadcast Operations Center. Our events are available for free download on iTunes, as well as on our website. Nonmembers may purchase transcripts, audio and video tapes by calling 202-662-7598, or [archives@press.org](mailto:archives@press.org). For more information about the National Press Club, please visit our website at [www.press.org](http://www.press.org). Thank you, this meeting is adjourned.

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