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On Sept. 6, local news sources reported that President General Prosper Avril had ordered the arrest of street vendors of US dollars and big business executives who provide the funds for the black market. The value of the Haitian currency, the gourde, which traditionally has traded for five gourdes per dollar, had by Sept. 6 dropped to 40% of its former value against the dollar. The official rate of the gourde continues at five to the dollar. As a result of three years of economic decline and political instability, businesspersons have not been able to obtain US dollars at the central bank. A recent decision by the International Monetary Fund to raise customs duties and prices of subsistence goods such as flour and cement is contributing to tensions. Contraband between Haiti and the Dominican Republic appears to have been halted because of a crackdown at the Malpasse/Jimani checkpoint, one of the main border checkpoints between the two countries. In recent months, this checkpoint was the contraband route from the Dominican Republic to supply Haiti with a variety of basic commodities. (Basic data from DPA, 09/06/89)

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