

DIPLOMATIC-MILITARY COOPERATION IN OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR

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General Studies

by

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Since its inception over two hundred years ago, the United States has employed its armed forces in operations other than war more than twice as often as it has for total or limited war. It is during these operations, where one more often than not finds the solution in the simultaneous application of diplomatic and military power, that the relationship between these two instruments of power is the most tenuous. These operations require soldiers and diplomats who understand diplomacy and the use of military power. They must possess the willingness to set aside institutional biases and the ability to act across traditional boundaries. The central research question is: How has the United States integrated these instruments of power at the operational level during these operations? To help answer this question, this thesis will review the interaction of the military leadership and ambassadorial staff during two Cold War-era operations other than war--Lebanon (1958) and the Dominican Republic (1965-66). It will explore the challenges encountered by these men as they developed working relationships and solved complicated crises. The conclusion will tie these historical examples to contemporary operations and provide military and diplomatic leaders an insight to the requirements of their mission.

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

DIPLOMATIC-MILITARY COOPERATION IN OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR, by
MAJ James W. MacGregor, 96 pages.

Since its inception over two hundred years ago, the United States has employed its armed forces in operations other than war more than twice as often as it has for total or limited war. It is during these operations, where one more often than not finds the solution in the simultaneous application of diplomatic and military power, that the relationship between these two instruments of power is the most tenuous. These operations require soldiers and diplomats who understand diplomacy and the use of military power. They must possess the willingness to set aside institutional biases and the ability to act across traditional boundaries. The central research question is: How has the United States integrated these instruments of power at the operational level during these operations? To help answer this question, this thesis will review the interaction of the military leadership and ambassadorial staff during two Cold War-era operations other than war--Lebanon (1958) and the Dominican Republic (1965-66). It will explore the challenges encountered by these men as they developed working relationships and solved complicated crises. The conclusion will tie these historical examples to contemporary operations and provide military and diplomatic leaders an insight to the requirements of their mission.

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I assumed this challenge not with any great expectation that I could enlighten anyone but myself and with no aspirations that I could add significantly to the universal body of knowledge. It was a challenge pursued in the interests of learning how to research, improving my skills as a writer and critical thinker, and broadening my understanding of our military and its missions. If I have accomplished any of these goals, it is because of the patience, mentorship, and wise counsel of Dr. Larry Yates. He pointed me in the direction of a worthwhile subject and helped focus my research efforts. Out of a busy schedule teaching and working on his own projects, he took the time to read, correct, and read again the drafts I provided him.

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ACRONYMS

AID	Agency for International Development (U.S. State Department)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CINCSPECOMME	Commander, Specified Command Middle East (Admiral James L. Holloway, United States Navy)
COMUSFORDOMREP	Commander, United States Forces, Dominican Republic (Lieutenant General Bruce Palmer, United States Army)
CNN	Cable News Network
GNR	Government of National Reconciliation
IAPF	Inter-American Peace Force (originally Inter-American Force)
IRC	International Red Cross
ISZ	International Security Zone (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic)
LOC	Line of Communication
MAAG	Military Advisory Assistance Group
MOOTW	Military Operations Other Than War
OAS	Organization of American States
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
SPECOMME	Specified Command, Middle East
USFORDOMREP	United States Forces, Dominican Republic
USG	United States Government

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the statesmen and the soldier is one of the oldest in organized government. Yet, despite the timelessness of this relationship and the best intentions of individual men and women, the statesman and the soldier on many occasions fail fully to understand each other and, at times, even seem to work at cross-purposes. There is a complicated interaction of two very different tools of foreign policy. Where the diplomat relies on his powers of negotiation and the art of compromise to achieve his objectives, his antithesis, the soldier, usually achieves objectives through the application or threatened use of force. Both know they need the other to succeed, but frequently do not fully understand how to combine their talents effectively. The result is frustration, angst, and, occasionally, failure.

Perhaps anxious to improve his understanding of this relationship, the professional soldier might refer to Joint Publication 1 (JP1), *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States*. Here, he will read that the military must integrate its actions “with those of the civil authorities responsible for the other instruments of national power.” Seems logical; even the most inexperienced soldier understands the importance of integration, of working together. However, in a later passage, JP1 says “military activities . . . fall under the oversight of the US ambassador and the country team, *with command authority over US forces remaining under a US military commander,*” and Joint Publication 0-2, *Unified Action Armed Forces*, makes the “Ambassador . . . responsible to the President for . . . all US Government (USG) elements . . . *except those under the command of a combatant commander.*” How does this apparent separation of authority affect the integration of the instruments of power? Because no joint publication provides an answer or tells the soldier what the diplomatic-military relationship should look like, the soldier might turn to historical precedent for insight.¹

In 1967, Robert McClintock, a career diplomat frequently found at the center of Cold War American foreign policy, said, “Limited wars . . . will characterize the last half of the twentieth century.” He went on to say that more so than total war, “limited war is political.” McClintock said navigating between these crises required talented diplomats leading “a symphony orchestra in which the Ambassador gets a harmonious response” from its members (meaning the foreign policy team, including the military). General (Retired) Bruce Palmer, who led the American military effort in the Dominican Republic and later viewed the Vietnam War as the Army Vice Chief of Staff, said, “most successful statesmen and diplomats have recognized that the key to the art of negotiations lies in the fundamental relationship of diplomacy and force. The two must work hand in glove. . . . Diplomacy and force are not black-and-white alternatives, but must be closely intermeshed for the best prospects for success.”²

Writing without the benefit of joint doctrine, but experienced in operations they called limited war, both men--diplomat and soldier--clearly understood the need for the integration of the military and diplomatic instruments of power. Still, though agreeing that an integrated effort was essential, they would not always be in agreement on who should be in charge of crisis management. McClintock obviously felt that the ambassador is the conductor, not a member of the orchestra he described. On the other hand, Palmer would argue that there were times, particularly early in a crisis, when military necessity should take precedence over political considerations. How does the soldier reconcile the differences of these two points of view? Most soldiers, if not all, would agree with Palmer more so than McClintock. But is this right? Or does it contribute to a narrow and inflexible focus? If Palmer is correct, where is the crossover from military to political necessity he speaks of?³

According to Joint Publication 5-00.1, *Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning*, the “complex political-diplomatic environment of many MOOTW [Military Operations Other Than War] environments, where it may be difficult to distinguish between bystanders, enemies, and

interagency players, only serves to underscore the importance of clearly focusing on the strategic objectives.” It says the military commander must know when the “military force is the main effort and when it is acting in support of some other instrument of power.” Certainly, success relies on the ability of the military commander and the ambassador to make this assessment, but where do they learn to make this assessment and how did they arrive at one in the past? What if they do not agree?⁴

To address these questions and to put current doctrine in perspective, this paper will study two crises--Lebanon (1958) and the Dominican Republic (1965)--that the United States decided to solve through the integration of its diplomatic and military instruments of power. Why choose these two cases when so many more recent and well-publicized examples (Panama, Haiti, Somalia and Bosnia) exist? In part, the attraction is their place in history. Both happened long enough ago to provide substantial historical documentation, yet neither remains politically or emotionally sensitive. In addition, there is intrinsic value in comparing and contrasting two events so closely connected in time. Despite their vast geographical differences--one in the continuously contentious Middle East and the other in America’s “backyard”--there are similarities. Both crises involved ideological struggles, real or perceived, within a Cold War context. In both cases, American participation took the form of a stability operation in which the support or establishment of a pro-Western, anticommunist government was the primary objective. Both allow the study of the operational level of leadership, including an ambassador, senior military commander, and special presidential envoy. Finally, both are success stories--the first, Lebanon, enjoyed a fairly stable government for over two decades following the U.S. intervention, while the second, the Dominican Republic, remains politically stable to this day.

There is some inherent risk in excluding more recent examples. Certain aspects of these types of operations have changed significantly since the end of the Cold War. Combatant commanders, well known to Congress and foreign leaders, wield immense influence and power

within their areas of responsibility. Instant news, by way of CNN and the Internet, has blurred the line between the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war and, therefore, changed the environment in which diplomats and soldiers operate. What has not changed is the fundamental responsibility of diplomats and soldiers to execute the foreign policy of the United States.

Military operations other than war complicate the life of the soldier. They are not missions of choice. More diplomatic and political than military, they require soldiers at all levels of command to increase their understanding of the diplomatic instrument of power. Unlike the warfighting mission soldiers train for and where, for the most part, they can focus fully on combat, they now find themselves increasingly involved in police-like activities, information warfare, and civil affairs, while politically restrained in their use of force. A failure to understand this crucial fact can lead to missteps that increase the likelihood of mission failure.

That both of the crises discussed in this study ended peacefully is a credit to the diplomats and soldiers involved and to the way they worked together. To understand their shared responsibilities and how they formed effective relationships, this thesis will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What documents, plans, or guidance defined their roles?
2. Where did these roles overlap and where did they come into conflict?
3. How effective, or not, was the relationship between them?
4. What techniques did they use to resolve or prevent disputes or conflicts?
5. Which lessons did they learn that apply to today?

To answer these questions, this thesis focuses on decisions, actions, and relations at the operational level--the ambassador and the specified or joint task force commander. For two reasons, the decision to focus on this level was simple. First, it is at this level that significant on-the-ground policy coordination first occurs between the diplomat and the soldier. At the tactical level, the diplomat and soldier coordinate to propose or execute, but not to make policy decisions.

At the strategic level, domestic and interdepartmental politics, which are not within the scope of this paper, become dominant considerations. Secondly, those who function at the operational level are professionals whose careers, spanning decades, form their perspectives. Also, not one of the men in this study was a political appointee.

There are challenges to the detailed study of these men. Like many historical studies, the conclusions drawn depend, to a large degree, on books, documents, and messages written by the participants. Given the personal integrity of the men involved in these two cases, one can assume the information they present is, from their perspective, factually correct. However, it is harder to determine if they painted an equally accurate picture of how well they worked together. While stark differences of opinion, anger, and dislike are difficult to conceal, writers often forget, or ignore, seemingly trivial disagreements. Unfortunately, these trivial differences and their solutions may be as important as more complex differences to understanding the relationships between the men involved. Without third-party accounts or interviews with the participants, a degree of the human element is missing. Its loss may, or may not, be significant.

The intent of this thesis is to show how, in two case studies, diplomats and soldiers executed their shared responsibilities for foreign policy. Understanding this should help us bridge the gap between understanding and applying our doctrine. Liddell Hart said: “History is a catalogue of mistakes. It is our duty to profit by them.” While true, not all history is about failure. Success stories, like the American interventions in Lebanon and the Dominican Republic, offer valuable lessons to those who chose to closely study them.⁵

¹United States Department of Defense. Joint Staff. JP 1, *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2000), I-4 and I-5; and United States Department of Defense. Joint Staff. JP 0-2, *Unified Action Armed Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2001), viii. Author added emphasis.

²Robert McClintock, *The Meaning of Limited War* (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967), xii and 208; and Bruce Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean: The Dominican Crisis of 1965* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1989), ix.

³Lawrence Yates, *Power Pack: U.S. Intervention in the Dominican Republic, 1965* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, 1988), 96.

⁴United States Department of Defense. Joint Staff. JP 5-00.1, *Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2002), II-6.

⁵United States Army, Command and General Staff College. Student Text, C600, *Evolution of Modern Warfare, Term I* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: 2002), 21. Liddell Hart quoted by Jay Luuvas in Reading 1A, *Military History: Is It Still Practicable?*

CHAPTER 2

OPERATION BLUE BAT: LEBANON, 1958

When President Dwight Eisenhower ordered the deployment of troops to Lebanon in July 1958, he deployed them into a complex and unstable situation. Trying to counter the rising tide of Arab nationalism and the growing influence of the Soviet Union in the Middle East, he acknowledged intervention had risks--alienating the Arab states or provoking the Soviets--but to do nothing could damage American credibility with its friends and cause a loss of influence in the region. His challenge was to balance the application of military and diplomatic power to resolve the crisis, yet avert a regional or general war.¹

Concerns over the stability of the region had been building as dramatic changes occurred in the Arab world. Arab nationalism itself was on the rise. During World War Two, Middle Eastern countries sought more autonomy from the colonial policies of Europe--primarily those of France and the United Kingdom. Emboldened by American calls for the self-determination of all people, independence movements in the Middle East gained so much steam during the war that their efforts were irreversible by the end of the war. By 1946, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt were independent. Though anxious to choose their own paths in the world, all remained friendly to the West. Two events, the establishment of Israel as a state and the rise of Nasserism, changed all this.

In 1946, in addition to granting independence to its colonies, the United Kingdom withdrew from its mandate in Palestine, and the United Nations partitioned the area into a Jewish and a Palestinian state over the objections of every country in the region. Two years later, immediately after Israel proclaimed statehood, the first Arab-Israeli war occurred. The turmoil this conflict caused produced a significant number of displaced, mostly Palestinian, persons. When they left areas occupied by the Israelis and arrived in one of the surrounding Arab countries--Egypt, Lebanon, or Jordan--they changed the political and demographical landscape of

their new homes. These changes, coupled with anger over Western support for Israel, increased hostility between Western countries and the Arab populations of the Middle East.

This hostility intensified when Gamal Abdul Nasser took center stage as the principal spokesman of the pan-Arab movement in 1954. After participating in a revolt against the Egyptian government in 1952, Nasser consolidated his position until he was the undisputed ruler of the country. He brought to the international scene a more militant form of Arab nationalism known as Nasserism. These beliefs were hostile to foreign, but particularly Western, influence in the Middle East as well as any influence exercised by pro-Western Middle Eastern governments. As the Soviet Union and Western blocs jockeyed for influence around the world, but increasingly in the strategically important Middle East, Nasser sought a united and neutral position for his country and its Arab neighbors. However, in 1955, when Iraq joined several non-Arabic states (including the United Kingdom) in the Baghdad Pact, a defensive arrangement, designed to counter the possibility of Soviet military aggression, any hope for Arab unity evaporated. The region split into pro-Western (Iraq and Jordan) and pro-Nasser (Egypt and, after 1957, Syria) governments with the Christian-led Lebanese government leaning toward the pro-Western camp.²

Demographically, Lebanon was unique. Unlike its neighbors, it had been largely Christian until after World War Two. Despite the growth of the Muslim population from the minority to the majority by 1948, the Lebanese government continued to function under a power-sharing agreement that favored the Maronite Christian populace. Signed in 1943, the *National Covenant* informally divided power along religious fault lines. Accordingly, the President was a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim, and the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies a Shi'a Muslim. The Chamber allocated seats based on the proportion of each group in the populace. This allocation of seats favored the Maronite Christians, because it used census data from 1932, data collected before the size of the Muslim population surpassed that of the Christian. Because of this imbalance, governmental decisions in Lebanon required compromise

more so than in any other system in the region. Ruled by Christians, yet populated by Muslims, each group was further subdivided along familial and geographical lines, as the country itself struggled to find its identity. It joined its Arab neighbors in the war against Israel; later it chose a moderate position as it mediated between Iraq and Egypt in their disagreement over the Baghdad Pact.³

Following Israeli raids into the Gaza Strip in 1955, Egypt purchased Soviet-bloc weapons to modernize its armed forces. In 1956, frustration over the increasingly close ties between Egypt and the Soviet-bloc led the United States and United Kingdom to retract their promises to help build the economically vital Aswan Dam on the Nile River. With his estrangement from the West complete, Nasser immediately sought increased military, economic, and technical aid from the Soviets. Perhaps emboldened by their support, Nasser launched his most aggressive move against Western influence in the region. In July, after forcing the last British troops out of the Suez Canal Zone, he nationalized the Canal. Ostensibly done to raise money to build the Aswan Dam, to the British and French there was no reason good enough. Turning to Israel, which agreed to initiate hostilities with Egypt, the United Kingdom and France used this new conflict as a pretext for intervention. Publicly committed to restoring order, their real objective was the removal of Nasser. All they succeeded in doing, however, was to raise Arab hostility towards the West to new levels. Though the United States condemned the invasion and brokered a withdrawal, in much of the Arab world America was regarded as guilty by association. Unable to see how its own failures contributed to the estrangement, the United States and its Western allies assumed Nasser was drifting into the Soviet sphere of influence.⁴

To counter the perceived ramifications of a close Nasser-Soviet relationship for the region, the United States Congress, in January 1957, adopted Joint Resolution 117 to “promote peace and stability in the Middle East.” Commonly called the Eisenhower Doctrine, it clearly identified as vital to the interests of the United States the “independence and integrity” of Middle

Eastern countries. It authorized economic and military aid to countries facing “armed aggression from any country controlled by international communism.” With the passage of the Resolution, the United States tried to convince Middle Eastern nations that the real threat to them was Soviet expansionism and not American, French, or British imperialism. Despite these efforts, American support for Israel, long painful memories of colonialism, and the recent experience with British and French troops all contributed to a popular Arab hostility that made it practically impossible for most of the governments in the region to consider accepting assistance from the United States. Consequently, only one Middle Eastern country--Lebanon--welcomed the new policy.⁵

However, even in Lebanon, acceptance of the Doctrine was not universal. Christian President Camille Chamoun knew the rise of Arab nationalism threatened Christian power in Lebanon and sought Western aid to stem its tide. The Muslim opposition, still angry that Chamoun had decided not to join other Arab states and sever diplomatic relations with Israel after the Suez incident, opposed any attempts to align the country with the West. Furthermore, they feared his real motive for accepting the Doctrine was to garner Western support for his bid to stay in power. Chamoun had rigged the 1957 parliamentary elections against his opponents and subsequently indicated that he would seek a constitutionally prohibited second term. He would not have been the first Lebanese president to make such an attempt, but his political opposition was determined to see him fail. In this system so dependent on coalitions and compromise, the Chamoun government slowly lost cohesiveness and credibility throughout 1957 and early 1958. With the government largely powerless by 1958, Chamoun hoped his army would settle any internal crises he faced.

Reflective of its society, the Lebanese army existed under the same conflict of political and religious differences. Commanded by a Christian, General Fu'ad Chehab, the rank and file was predominantly Muslim. Small, but well equipped and capable, the army was effective at protecting Lebanese borders. On the other hand, Chehab believed it would disintegrate if ordered

to act against the predominately Muslim internal opposition to Chamoun. As a result, he was determined to keep the army neutral in internal matters regardless of the severity of the threat. With Chehab unwilling to act, Chamoun would have little control over his army and no support in any internal crisis.⁶

As Lebanon struggled through its political crisis, events in neighboring countries increased American anxiety about Middle Eastern security. In 1957, King Hussein of Jordan, a pro-Western monarch, took decisive action against pro-Nasser extremists to protect his throne and assert his authority. To show support for him, the United States deployed the Sixth Fleet to the Eastern Mediterranean. That same summer, the United States joined Turkey and Iraq to protect the moderate regime in Syria against growing nationalist and communist sentiment. They would fail and their attempts, once exposed, further inflamed nationalists throughout the Middle East. Within months, Syria was lost to radical elements in a bloodless coup, and in February 1958, Egypt and Syria announced the union of their nations as the United Arab Republic. To the United States, it appeared that Nasserism, backed by Soviet aid, was gaining steam.⁷

In this atmosphere of instability, external pressure and internal strife placed Lebanon on the verge of civil war. That conflict began on 8 May 1958 with the assassination of an anti-Chamoun newspaper editor in Beirut. Beginning first in Tripoli and then spreading to Beirut, the revolt plunged the country into sectarian violence. Casualties mounted as the government and the opposition both sought to control the situation. Chamoun believed external elements, primarily Syrians, were influencing the revolt, even though opposition leaders at home had concluded the time had come for a general insurrection. Subsequently, the armed militia of several leading Lebanese families decided to remove Chamoun from power. Five days after the 8 May incident, some of these militia groups attacked the presidential palace. Soon afterwards, Chamoun told the American, British and French ambassadors that a request for support might be forthcoming.⁸

In response, the United States told Chamoun it would provide assistance if several conditions were met. The conditions included a requirement for Lebanon to file a formal complaint against external aggression with the United Nations and to gain the support of at least some of the other Arab states. In addition, Washington told Chamoun it would not intervene to help resolve the constitutional dispute concerning the length of his term set to expire in the fall. After Lebanon filed its complaint with the United Nations, the Security Council dispatched an observer group, the United Nations Observer Group in Lebanon, to “insure that there is no illegal infiltration of personnel or supply of arms or other material across the Lebanese border.” Perhaps as a result of limiting its operations to daylight hours, the mission found no evidence of an external influence in Lebanese affairs. It did achieve some success, however, as its presence contributed to the relaxation of tensions, and, by late June, an uneasy cease-fire was in place.⁹

On 14 July, events in Iraq would shatter the calm. Early that day, a pro-Nasser military officer led a coup against the pro-Western Iraqi government. Members of the coup brutally murdered the King, Crown Prince, other members of the royal family, and the Prime Minister. As Arab nationalists across the Middle East, including those in Lebanon, celebrated, rumors of an imminent coup in Jordan swept the region and Western capitals. Chamoun assumed he would be a target as well and saw a clear and present danger. He summoned the ambassadors from the United States, Britain, and France and formally asked for assistance. Jordan did likewise.¹⁰

By prior mutual agreement between the three major Western powers, Lebanon became the responsibility of the United States and Jordan that of the United Kingdom. France, sensitive to its colonial history in Lebanon, would make only a token show of force from the sea. What followed was the first major deployment of American combat power in a Cold War situation that fell short of actual war. Fortunately, an American and British contingency plan, called BLUEBAT, for such a deployment to the Middle East had been under development since 1956. Seemingly well prepared for action, the United States was able to put the first marines ashore

within thirty-six hours of the request for assistance. Within two days, two Battalion Landing Teams, with over 3,000 marines, were in Lebanon, and by early August, several thousand American soldiers deployed from Germany had joined the marines in and around Beirut. British deployments to Jordan occurred simultaneously.¹¹

With the introduction of American forces into Lebanon, the United States put itself squarely at the center of the Middle East crisis. Though President Eisenhower and his staff would make critical decisions designed to prevent the crisis from expanding beyond the region, it would be the effective coordination of American diplomatic and military leaders in Lebanon that would ensure that history judged the mission in a positive light.¹²

Failures in Coordination

When Chamoun had summoned the British, French, and American ambassadors in May 1958 and told them he might be forced to issue a request for their assistance, the United States took steps to prepare for intervention by repositioning the Sixth Fleet and amphibious marine units and by alerting some U.S. Army units in Germany. When a fragile cease-fire took hold in June, tensions seemed to dissipate, and these units returned to their normal duties. As a result, when the Iraqi coup occurred a month later, the Sixth Fleet and marines were sailing away from Lebanon and were not in position to launch a coordinated landing of the marines and their heavy equipment. No longer on an alert status, units in Germany would need even more time to marshal and deploy. Despite this, Eisenhower ordered landings to start within twenty-four hours.¹³

The next day at 1500, the lone Marine Battalion Landing Team (BLT) within immediate striking distance landed on the beaches south of Beirut. Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Harry Hadd, it landed without any heavy equipment and with limited surface ship support. Even more critical, Hadd did not know if anyone would contest the landings. Several rebel leaders vocally protested the United States intervention, and one, Saeb Salaam, had said he would “drive any Americans landing . . . into the sea.” Furthermore, though Hadd may have assumed the Lebanese

army would not contest the landings, none of his superiors ever confirmed this to him. He hoped the Lebanese army would be supportive, but the worst he expected was its indifference. His lack of situational awareness was indicative of things to come. However, in the end, the landings occurred with no armed resistance, and within a few hours, the marines had occupied defensive positions in and around the International Airport.¹⁴

Unbeknownst to the landing forces, or to people in Washington, Lebanese military support for the landings was not unanimous, with many elements of the army opposed to what they considered to be an invasion of their country. The American Ambassador, Robert McClintock, saw General Chehab just two hours before the marines came ashore. Chehab told McClintock that Lebanon was “on the brink of catastrophe,” and that the landings could push it over the edge. He had not been part of the decision to request support and clearly feared that the army would resist. Some of his officers had already suggested that they seize control of the government and fight the marines. Chehab asked that the marines stay on board their ships or, at most, to deploy small detachments to protect the American Embassy.¹⁵

Twenty minutes after the intervention began, with the beach secure and Eisenhower making a public announcement about the situation, McClintock sent his Naval Attaché to the landing site with a request for the marines to reembark their landing craft and return to their ships as Chehab desired. Hadd deferred a decision, but provided a boat to take the Attaché to Captain Victor McCrea, Commander, Amphibious Transport Squadron 6. McCrea denied the request on the grounds that he was not subject to the orders of the Embassy, but those of the “Sixth Fleet, who in turn was subject to the orders of CINCSPECOMME [Commander, Specified Command Middle East], who in turn was subject to the Chief of Naval Operations, who in turn was subject to the President.” The marines continued to land.¹⁶

Within thirty minutes, a second request from the Embassy arrived at the Marine command post. Contradicting the first request, this one originated with Chamoun who, fearful of

a plot by the army to assassinate him, demanded tanks from the landing force to protect the presidential palace. Hadd, believing his force too thin to fragment and the palace too close to a known opposition strongpoint, rejected the request.¹⁷

Ambassador McClintock would later characterize Marine and Navy orders as “extremely inflexible” and “in no way responsive” to the situation. Having only been in Lebanon for a few months, but holding twenty-six years of experience in the Foreign Service, McClintock understood the consequences of a misstep on these critical days. Were the Lebanese army to oppose the landings, or if there were a successful assassination attempt while the Lebanese government was under the protection of the marines, the crisis could spiral out of control and the United States could suffer a major public relations disaster.¹⁸

To McClintock, who clearly saw himself as the point man for American interests in country, the cause of this initial lack of coordination was evident. A State Department telegram sent several weeks before the intervention clearly placed the military under the control of the Ambassador with regard to “political matters.” When the military refused his requests, McClintock saw this as a violation of this guidance and asked the State Department for clarification. In response, the State and Defense Departments released a joint directive that described the purpose of the intervention and the role of the military in its execution. Like its predecessor, the directive required the military to provide liaison with the Ambassador and provided the Ambassador preeminence on all political matters. The new directive, however, did little to soothe McClintock’s frustration from the first day. He later complained of a “command vacuum of the first two days” and “no room for imagination” amongst the first military commanders at the scene. Though Hadd would have rejected that characterization, he agreed there was “on the part of both civil and military authorities a common lack of appreciation of the urgent necessity for coordinated planning and communications.”¹⁹

While the frustration McClintock experienced with these decisions may be understandable, no one in the military chain of command faulted the judgment of the two officers. Not surprisingly, Vice Admiral Charles Brown, Sixth Fleet Commander, and Admiral James L. Holloway, CINCSPECOMME, agreed with the decisions. McCrea ultimately had radioed Brown, who responded, “The decision to use [the] beach or harbor belongs to the commander at the scene.” Writing in 1962, Holloway noted the decisions were difficult ones, but in his “opinion, the only possible ones.” Notably, Holloway defended the decisions four years *after* he received the joint directive giving the Ambassador preeminence in “political matters.” One could conclude that he, like most military officers, did not consider the landings a political matter and would not have honored political requests until firmly onshore. McClintock, of course, viewed the landings as having enormous political ramifications.²⁰

More disturbing were the accusations of a “command vacuum” and lack of “coordinated planning and communications.” On the first day, Holloway, who would command all American forces in the region, was traveling from London en route to Lebanon. To complicate matters, his plane did not have the equipment necessary to allow communications with anyone in Lebanon. After the crisis, Holloway disputed the allegation of a vacuum, but acknowledged his staff on shore the first day was “pretty thin.” As a result, LTC Hadd had to juggle his tactical mission with other, equally critical tasks. As an example, late the first night, at a time when Hadd believed he needed to be on the beach with his marines, necessity called him to the Embassy for a meeting with McClintock and Chehab. To the Marine officer, this was a distraction that could not have come at a worse time.²¹

The lack of clear communications and coordination plaguing the first day is puzzling. Admittedly, less than thirty-six hours had passed between the formal request for aid and the landings. Constrained by time, even the best of staffs, diplomatic or military, would overlook some important details. For several reasons, however, the impact of this time crunch should not

have been as severe as it was. After all, work on BLUEBAT was two years old. Additionally, little more than ten months before the landings, Holloway, then serving in London as the Commander, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean, created Specified Command, Middle East (SPECOMME) to react to “distinct possibilities of an overthrow of the Jordanian government or a coup d’etat in Lebanon.” Finally, in that over two months had passed since Chamoun had first suggested he would need assistance, one could reasonably expect the Embassy and the Specified Command to have better focused their efforts. With so much consideration given to Lebanon, several questions emerge. What coordination did the military seek with the Department of State? What coordination occurred between the military command (SPECOMME) and the American Embassy in Lebanon? Could prior coordination have prevented, or mitigated, the frustrations of the first day?²²

Though little documentation is available on the planning process, military after-action reports suggest the cooperation between the State and Defense Departments before 15 July 1958 was incomplete. For example, the European Command pointed out that no Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) existed until twenty-three days after the landings. Even then, born under the strain of the first days of the interventions, the SOFA proved ineffective and unenforceable. The report suggested that, in future operations, the Embassy “should be able to immediately initiate negotiations” to draw up a SOFA whenever the United States makes a decision to act.²³

A second report, compiled by the Department of the Army, addresses concerns the Department of Defense and the Army had over securing overflight rights during the deployment of troops from Europe. According to the report, on several occasions during the planning process, military officials asked the State Department to negotiate overflight rights to support contingency operations in the Middle East. Citing “unfavorable political repercussions” in host countries and concerns that premature requests would “reveal U.S. intentions,” State refused each request. The

report blames complications concerning Greek and Austrian airspace during the deployment on this unwillingness to act earlier.²⁴

Finally, a civil affairs after-action report, which commended Holloway and his staff for creating a civil affairs annex to the operations order, criticized them for not publishing this annex until late September--two months after the landing. Though this after-action report highlighted numerous successes, it criticized the lack of detail and thought in Joint Staff, European Command, and Specified Command plans. These plans, it suggested, “require amplification, to include not only the combat aspects, but essential policy guidance and instructions concerning status of forces agreements, claims, military-embassy coordination, etc.”²⁵

There existed, among military planners and commanders, a belief in BLUEBAT as a “purely military operation.” This belief undoubtedly contributed to the lack of study and planning on political aspects of the mission. The resultant failure to gather political intelligence left the military inadequately informed initially (as Hadd had been on the beach). After landing, the military would receive help from the Embassy in collecting information on “the disposition of rebel forces, biographical sketches on rebel leaders, and personnel to contact” about rebel forces. All of this was available during the planning process--but no one in the military asked.²⁶

Given the success McClintock and Holloway would have working together during the crisis, it is surprising to conclude that the first time they met or talked was when Holloway landed in Lebanon on 16 July. He had received his first briefings on the Middle East in February and, by early July, expected action in Lebanon. Despite this, his personal records never mention planning sessions or discussions with any diplomatic personnel in Lebanon. The absence of these details is conspicuous, because Holloway did mention meetings with the Joint Chiefs in Washington and with an acquaintance at the American Embassy in London. This suggests no discussions occurred with anyone in Lebanon. McClintock, equally prolific in recording his experiences, is also silent about contact he may have had with Holloway or his staff before the landings.²⁷

There is a risk in drawing conclusions from circumstantial evidence, or the lack of evidence, from the planning phase. However, there are enough examples to suggest that strategic-level coordination between the State and Defense Departments was incomplete and operational level coordination between McClintock and Holloway was nonexistent. Several short brainstorming sessions, a technique Holloway favored for solving problems, might have identified issues to resolve immediately and those to resolve after the landings. More important, any dialogue might have enhanced understanding and mitigated the confusion all felt in the early hours of the landings.²⁸

The Band of Brothers

With the marines on shore, the intervention entered a new and, at least initially, dangerous phase. Early on the second day, a second BLT landed, and Holloway arrived on his flagship, the *Taconic*. By 0800 hours, Marine Brigadier General Sydney Wade landed to assume command of the marines in Lebanon. Before leaving for the Embassy, he ordered Hadd to move his force into Beirut to secure the docks and key bridges.²⁹

As McClintock would later describe the morning, “real disaster was averted by a hair’s breadth.” As the marines began movement in column formation from the airport to the city, Lebanese army tanks and artillery intending to stop the convoy occupied positions astride the road. At the same time, Chehab informed McClintock and Wade that he opposed having marines in Beirut and feared how his army would react. McClintock suggested Chehab accompany him to the roadblock in an attempt to defuse the situation.³⁰

At the roadblock, near a major road junction called Watermelon Circle, the Lebanese army and marines faced off in a tense, but quiet, showdown. Within minutes of the convoy stopping, first McClintock with Chehab in tow, and then Holloway arrived at the Circle. Though McClintock and Holloway both individually claimed that it was their personal involvement that was key to defusing the crisis, they did agree that a combination of diplomatic skill and military

muscle flexing succeeded in convincing the Lebanese to escort the marines into the city. With this agreement, the confrontation faded and the marine convoy peacefully entered Beirut.³¹

This encounter represented the first meeting between McClintock and Holloway. For the next several months, they would spend most of their time together. Once the harbor was secure, the *Taconic* pulled alongside the docks. It would remain there, as residence and command post for Holloway, for over two months. From this berth, Holloway was just a short ride by car to the American Embassy or to his units in the surrounding area. Holloway established a routine that included daily (and frequently twice daily) meetings with McClintock. They would meet together at the Embassy, on the *Taconic*, or in the offices of Chamoun and Chehab. As inadequate as pre-landing coordination had been, post-landing cooperation was close and efficient. Years later, McClintock would write that the diplomatic corps and military staff had become a “band of brothers.”³²

Unable to believe this degree of cooperation possible after first receiving reports of disharmony between the Embassy and military, Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles dispatched Robert Murphy, a confidant of the President and a respected Foreign Service troubleshooter with over forty years of experience, to Lebanon. Dulles told Murphy “to act in an advisory capacity” to Holloway and to “establish a smooth working relationship” between the military and the Embassy. Murphy then met Eisenhower at the White House. Presidential guidance on his diplomatic mission was vague and consisted mainly of tasking Murphy to promote “the best interests of the United States incident to the arrival of our forces” in the country. However, clearly indicating his own awareness of problems between the Embassy and the military, the President was less vague about his hope that Murphy could use his experience to improve relations “among our own military and diplomatic people, Lebanese military and Lebanese government.”³³

Whatever he expected, Murphy, when he arrived in Lebanon, found a “satisfactory working relationship between” McClintock and Holloway. Since Holloway had arrived, coordination between the military and the Embassy had improved. McClintock first reported this to Dulles in a telephone conversation the day Holloway arrived by describing Holloway as “first class” and telling the Secretary that he now had “excellent cooperation” with the Navy. Murphy repeatedly reassured Dulles that this was true. On 17 July, his first day in country, Murphy told the State Department that “excellent coordination” existed between the Embassy and military command. He confirmed this assessment when, after leaving Lebanon in early August, he told the State Department that there was not “friction” between the Embassy and the military, but an “admirable cordiality and mutual desire to work together.” “All,” he said, “deserve credit for intelligent cooperation.”³⁴

There were many examples of such “intelligent cooperation.” Initially it focused on urgent matters. Shortly after defusing the situation at Watermelon Circle, McClintock provided a “general verbal briefing” to Holloway and assisted the deployment of marines in the city. Part of this task included placing marines at one of the more popular sniper targets--the British Embassy--at the request of the British Ambassador. Finishing a busy day, the two men directed their staffs to start SOFA talks with the Lebanese and to establish claims procedures for Lebanese nationals.³⁵

In the important matter of communications with Washington, McClintock agreed to share copies of all incoming and outgoing State Department telegrams related to the crisis with Holloway. He placed tremendous importance on drafting many of these telegrams and dictating correspondence with the military commander present. This teamwork extended to interaction with the press. According to Holloway, they agreed upon press rules of engagement and to joint press conferences “in full consultation and with complete mutual confidence.” From this point until the end of the mission, neither held an independent press conference.³⁶

On 21 July, McClintock, perhaps by military request, established the Embassy Liaison Office to coordinate between the Embassy, Lebanese public, and the military command. Staffed by twelve Foreign Service officers and a military liaison officer, this highly successful office conducted all negotiations with the Lebanese government on matters, excluding public affairs, relating to the American military. It managed Embassy contacts with American forces, facilitated military contact with local officials, and made the expertise and resources of the Embassy staff more readily available to the military command. Additionally, through this office, the public had daily access to the Embassy and military command.³⁷

Three days later, on 24 July, McClintock, Holloway, and Lebanese officials agreed to form the Lebanese-American Civil Affairs Committee. Including senior civil affairs officials from the Embassy, United States military, and Lebanese Ministry of Interior, this Committee received “commission status” through exchange of diplomatic notes between the two governments. Its charter included civil affairs policy planning, coordination of civil affairs activity, and monitoring of indigenous resources.³⁸

In after-action reports, both organizations received high marks. “Channelization and coordination of Armed Forces requests for Embassy services” minimized confusion and eliminated inconsistency. The Committee handled “claims, use of the public domain, use of indigenous labor” and other tasks like the accumulation of population and political data relevant to the military operation.³⁹

Military and Embassy cooperation extended beyond that required for a smooth military operation. A memorandum dated 29 July, written by Holloway, directed a staff member to form a planning group to organize aid, “such as a blood bank, hospital, and so on,” for the population. Holloway credited Special Envoy Murphy with the idea. While difficult to determine the results of the project, the short suspense Holloway set and the origin of the idea suggests Murphy

thought a little good will would go a long way towards generating much needed stabilization throughout the country.⁴⁰

Little more than two weeks later, records indicate the Americans were planning a second humanitarian program. On 13 August, Holloway forwarded to Major General Paul Adams, the American Land Forces Commander, a memorandum from the Embassy containing information he thought Adams could “tie in with the medical supply project.” Three days later, a report from Holloway to Admiral Arleigh Burke, Chief of Naval Operations, supported an Adams proposal to initiate a health relief program in northern Lebanon.⁴¹

Regardless as to how well they coordinated, McClintock, Murphy and Holloway quickly understood the key to resolving the crisis did not lie in their hands. McClintock always believed intervention was unwarranted “so far as Lebanon alone is concerned.” Soon after their arrivals Murphy and Holloway agreed. According to Murphy, all three American officials realized early on that the crisis “concerned personalities and rivalries of a domestic nature, with no relation to international issues.” “Communism was playing no direct or substantial part” and, excepting some arms smuggling, Nasserite propaganda, a small number of foreign commandos, and financial aid from Syria, regional interference in the crisis was not significant.⁴²

In a telegram sent to Dulles on 19 July, Murphy claimed military intervention seemed to have “brought no fundamental change in the local political environment.” He said the assumption that “the availability of our forces would relieve the pressure” on Lebanese military and security forces was invalid because, as discussed earlier, Chehab was not willing to act for fear of fracturing the army. The solution, Murphy believed, rested in using “whatever influence we can bring” to force Chamoun to withdraw his bid to modify the constitution. Parliament could then hold the presidential election as scheduled.⁴³

Holloway believed the key to resolving the situation lay with Chehab and his influence with the army. In London, Lord Louis Mountbatten, who knew Chehab personally from World

War Two, had spoken highly of him to Holloway. This positive opinion of Chehab grew with his commitment to integrating American and Lebanese forces. Within hours of the Watermelon Circle roadblock incident on 16 July, joint patrols were operating in Beirut streets. Chehab would refer to the day as a “historic occasion in Lebanese-American military cooperation.” This would have been equally true had Lebanese forces fired on the marine convoy.⁴⁴

Holloway and Chehab did not stop there. Chehab, the defacto commander of the Gendarmerie, provided six motorcycle policemen for escort duty with Holloway. The two forces swapped liaison officers and scheduled joint events--training exercises and social occasions. At the “Champagne de Triomphe,” Lebanese and American officers from all services “gathered and drank great quantities of champagne” in the name of friendship. After one social occasion on the *Taconic*, Holloway thanked Chehab for “inspiring operation of mutual confidence and friendship between our two countries.” Years later, Holloway wrote that he believed the “judgment, wisdom and objectivity” shown by Chehab was remarkable. He said he conveyed to Murphy and McClintock his belief that “he [Chehab] was the answer to Lebanon’s problem”⁴⁵

Convincing Murphy of this was critical. Calling Beirut “the most trigger-happy place” he had been to since Berlin in 1945, he was initially amazed that Chamoun had no control over the army. For months, Chamoun had failed to persuade Chehab to act against the Muslim opposition in their Beirut stronghold, the Basta. Chamoun was unwilling to relieve the general, as his insubordination warranted, because Chehab belonged to a politically powerful family and had, at least, kept the army neutral and intact. It was during discussions with Holloway that Murphy changed his mind and concluded that Chehab sincerely believed his army would splinter if forced to attack its countrymen. Murphy decided that the Lebanese army was “the only element which was holding the Government together.” If the army was the key to resolving the crisis, Chehab was the key to the army.⁴⁶

Despite this newfound sympathy for Chehab and the tenuous control the general had over the army, Murphy came to believe that the time had come for the army to become an active participant in resolving the crisis. Since Chamoun had been unable to convince Chehab to act, Murphy asked Holloway to try his hand with the general. Holloway did so on numerous occasions. In one of the first meetings, Chehab told Holloway that the arrival of the Americans had encouraged the insurgents in the Basta to pull back from Syrian influence and seek a political solution. Despite this positive attitude towards the Americans and his cooperation on virtually every other topic, Chehab remained unprepared to reduce the Basta. However, McClintock reported that with “patient improvement” of relations between Holloway and Chehab, Holloway would soon be able to “negotiate Chehab into a position of positive action.”⁴⁷

On 25 July, during a meeting among Chamoun, Chehab and the three American officials, Holloway finally convinced Chehab to take some action, albeit minor, against the Basta. As part of the agreement, Holloway promised to provide soldiers for static defensive positions then occupied by Lebanese troops. In addition, Holloway would arrange for Adams to cooperate with Chehab. All five men agreed a minor victory, long sought by Chamoun, would have a “salutary political effect prior to the elections.”⁴⁸

Chehab, citing fears of renewed rebel activity, never did launch his operation into the Basta. Some Lebanese government officials, failing to understand the unenviable position of the army, blamed this inaction for the continued violence. Just two days before the presidential elections, a car bomb exploded and, though failing to kill its primary target, Prime Minister Sami Solh, six people died. Solh, enraged by the attack, called Chehab a traitor, blamed him for the crisis (presumably for what he had not done), and demanded his dismissal. Solh then asked what role the United States would play if the army resisted a decision to remove Chehab. Murphy, with McClintock and Holloway present, told Solh that the uncooperative nature of some Lebanese leaders was needlessly complicating the situation and, in his opinion, the United States “would

prefer to remove our forces from the area” if it did not soon see more cooperation. Murphy made it clear--the United States supported Chehab above all others. Chehab stayed.⁴⁹

This incident reaffirmed the conclusion by the Americans that “whatever safety there is for us in this precarious situation lies with Chehab.” The current government “did not possess adequate authority to govern.” Presidential elections, no matter who won, needed to take place because prolonging the crisis, even for a matter of days, would make the situation worse, perhaps triggering a military coup.⁵⁰

Ironically, Chamoun had reluctantly reached the decision earlier in the week that Chehab was the only viable candidate for the presidency. The day before the election, 30 July, Chamoun told the Cabinet to support Chehab or he would resign. That same day, the positive effect of Murphy’s discussions with opposition leaders became evident when they assured Chehab they would lay down their arms if he won the election. The Cabinet, led by Foreign Minister Charles Malik, mounted one last challenge against Chehab. They sought American assistance in a military solution, but Chamoun and Murphy rejected their proposal. The next day, Chehab won the election, forty-eight to seven, on the second ballot.⁵¹

Though not immediately ending the violence, the Americans had achieved some measure of success. Creating an environment in which the Parliament could meet and conduct an election was no mean feat. American troops provided Murphy and McClintock added credibility and security as they crossed the countryside meeting with leaders of the various factions to nail down a political solution. These “warlords” included Saeb Salaam, leader of the Basta opposition, Kamal Jumblatt, a Druze chieftain, and Raymond Edde, a key Christian opposition leader. Murphy, McClintock, and Holloway they convinced the Lebanese there was no time like the present to find a solution because American forces would not stay much longer. Furthermore, they made it clear they would protect Lebanon’s territorial integrity and independence, but not participate in the civil war that would result if the Lebanese did not compromise. As much as the

Lebanese disliked the presence of American soldiers, they feared the chaos that would follow a hurried American departure even more so.⁵²

Time to Leave

With the election at hand, Murphy left Lebanon to explain the objectives of the American intervention to key regional leaders. In the space of two weeks, he would travel to Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and Ethiopia. His visit to Iraq would calm American concerns over the direction of the new government. In Egypt, he came to discover Nasser had gained respect for the United States *after* the intervention in Lebanon. Before meeting Eisenhower in New York, Murphy made additional stops in Greece, the United Kingdom, and France.⁵³

It was also time for American troops to begin thinking of their departure from Lebanon. On 31 July, the day of the elections, Dulles announced that the United States would withdraw its troops as soon as the Lebanese government requested their removal. A sense of history--no foreign army had ever left the region voluntarily--and a need to seize the initiative by avoiding the appearance of being pushed out, became the focus of the diplomacy in Lebanon. Murphy had departed, but McClintock and Holloway still faced the task of withdrawing American troops without upsetting the fragile calm after the elections. It again depended on Chehab.⁵⁴

Even as U.S. Army units from Europe continued to arrive, McClintock, Holloway, and President-elect Chehab began discussing their withdrawal. During an Election Day visit, Chehab told McClintock he was under intense pressure to make a public statement calling for the United States to withdraw. He had not done so, but unaware of the Dulles statement, asked if Eisenhower could publicly say that the "increased security situation" made it possible for troops to depart. Chamoun, however, was still the President, and he was not interested in a quick withdrawal of American forces. Still anxious over external threats, he wanted an international guarantee for the future of Lebanon, and he wanted American troops to stay until the guarantee was in place. He

asserted, more correctly than did Chehab as it turned out, that Lebanon was not yet out of the woods.⁵⁵

Despite the pressure to make a public statement about a U.S. withdrawal, Chehab privately wanted some American troops to stay, temporarily. When he finally did release a statement, sometime around 4 August, he told McClintock that he had left himself “elbow room in respect to time and manner.” McClintock concluded a request for withdrawal was not imminent, but did ask Chehab to meet with Holloway to plan a phased withdrawal. Though Holloway was not present at this meeting, the appearance of summaries in State Department and military message traffic supports the assertion that McClintock and Holloway shared information about it effectively.⁵⁶

On 7 August, McClintock, Holloway, and Chehab agreed on the symbolic withdrawal of a small number of troops. They believed a partial withdrawal would take the steam out of those Lebanese clamoring for a complete withdrawal and diffuse criticisms of the intervention leveled by Soviet and Egyptian propaganda. Chehab recognized the political value of the move, but stated his desire that it be nothing but a token force. As he attempted to form a government of “non-political figures,” he would use this gesture as a bargaining chip to pull concessions from those unwilling to cooperate before the Americans withdrew. The man once opposed to the intervention now sought to use the presence of American forces for the same political purposes as the man who had first asked for it.⁵⁷

With this, Holloway and his staff developed three courses of action--withdrawing one battalion, two to four battalions, or the entire force--and told the Joint Chiefs he would make a recommendation after meeting with McClintock and Chehab again. To prepare for the withdrawal of heavy equipment, he requested permission to keep in the port of Beirut those ships presently docked and unloading equipment and supplies. The Joint Chiefs approved this request.⁵⁸

According to the 11 August joint dispatch from McClintock and Holloway to the State and Defense Departments, Chehab said the withdrawal of one battalion would be good for Lebanon. Chehab believed the focal point of the “insurrection” was now in Beirut, in the Basta, as other, more moderate Muslim groups were actively encouraging Egypt and Syria to cease and desist from smuggling, infiltrating, and otherwise meddling in Lebanese affairs. Chehab said if these activities continued after the withdrawal of American troops, people could not possibly conclude the United States was the “occupying power.” At the same meeting, McClintock, Holloway, and Chehab also discussed the timing of the first troop withdrawal, coordination of the press campaign, and the current security situation. Chehab said the general security situation was improving and committed his government to pacifying the Basta through negotiation and direct action by the army.⁵⁹

In fewer than four days, a Marine battalion completed embarkation and left the country. Consistent with their earlier agreement, McClintock and Holloway coordinated and issued a joint press release on the withdrawal. Chehab claimed it had “lessened the stridency” of negative propaganda, and he proposed, guardedly, the withdrawal of a second battalion before his inauguration on 23 September. He remained comfortable with the security situation in Lebanon and with the results of the unofficial efforts aimed at securing non-interference pledges from Egypt and Syria. McClintock thought Chehab had come into his own as president-elect and could not be “more cooperative and sympathetic” with Holloway and his staff.⁶⁰

Then on 24 August, rebels from the Basta shot an American soldier. With this, the patience McClintock and Holloway had shown Chehab faded. Holloway demanded Chehab take military action against the Basta before the end of the day or he would do so with American forces. Chehab initially demurred, saying he had scheduled a meeting with rebel leaders for the next day, but then acquiesced. He directed the army to destroy several roadblocks on roads leading into the Basta. It did so, but within hours of the operation, the roads were blocked again.⁶¹

Having suffered its first and only fatality so soon after achieving its primary objective of ensuring the independence of the Lebanese government, the United States became more determined than ever to leave. By late August, Holloway and his staff had advanced plans to withdraw the force in three increments. A second battalion would leave on 15 September, a third on 1 October, and the remainder of the battle group by 15 October. Holloway and Adams had significant concerns about winterization of the force and the need to leave before the change in season. They used this timetable to try and convince Chehab to act soon to reduce the Basta.⁶²

In presenting this phased withdrawal plan to Chehab, McClintock and Holloway encouraged him to keep the plan secret so he could continue to use the withdrawal as political leverage with the Basta rebels. They proposed that Chehab approach the Basta leadership and tell them he would order an American withdrawal (which of course was already agreed upon) when he witnessed real progress in the security situation. Chehab agreed and was confident he could return the Basta “to a normal state” using a carrot--promising amnesty when he became president--and a stick--military action--approach to the problem. He also understood the time during which he would have American military assistance was ending.⁶³

As Chehab’s inauguration approached, American plans for withdrawal moved forward. Two weeks before the inauguration, Washington approved the withdrawal plan with only one small change. The change entailed leaving a small training force of about seventy men behind when the main body departed. This force would serve as a cover for a much larger force of two reinforced infantry companies. The token force and the reinforced companies would leave Lebanon after the British completed their withdrawal from neighboring Jordan late in October. A week before the inauguration, the Pentagon approved the loading of support units and heavy equipment. Finally, with less than a week to the inauguration, Holloway reaffirmed his intent to complete the withdrawal by 15 October.⁶⁴

While agreeing to the training force in principle, McClintock thought Lebanese approval would be difficult to receive. However, the desire to synchronize American and British departures from the region was strong, and the State and Defense Departments pushed the final departure date from 15 October to the end of October. Chehab accepted this change. Consequently, the United States began to withdraw its forces from Lebanon. The *Taconic* left its berth in late September. Holloway returned to London on 20 October and Adams deactivated Headquarters, American Land Forces on 25 October. It had suffered only one fatality. For the U.S. military, its mission in Lebanon was complete. McClintock would remain Ambassador and work with Chehab for three more years before getting a new posting to Argentina.⁶⁵

Referring to their success years later, McClintock said American senior officials, diplomatic and military, performed as a unified, coherent team. He said the relationship with Holloway was so “confident and complete” that “at no time was there any difference of opinion” between himself and Holloway. This meant he could pocket the joint State-Defense political directive giving him the lead on most matters in Lebanon.⁶⁶

Holloway, after his return to London, sent a letter to McClintock in which he expressed his appreciation for the “personal friendship, moral support and the gracious hospitality” of the Embassy. In a reminiscence of the affair, he fondly remembered the multi-service aspect of the mission and its ability to operate “in complete harmony and understanding with the Department of State and its representatives on the scene.”⁶⁷

Murphy and Holloway also had a close, professional friendship. In his memoirs, Murphy credits Holloway with the efficiency and “*éclat*” of the landings. He said, “close cooperation between the diplomatic and military sides of the American house contributed greatly” to ending the crisis. Calling Murphy the “Department’s great troubleshooter,” Holloway marveled how he and McClintock “seemed utterly fearless” as they traveled with minimal escort throughout the contentious countryside.⁶⁸

After-Action Review

As important as the American successes in Lebanon were, more important was the ability of the State and Defense Departments to take these successes, document them and their failures, and assemble lessons learned for future operations. Lebanon was just the first in what would become a long list of limited-objective American Cold War military contingency operations.

By early 1959, key Army commands had completed their reports. These reports, referenced throughout this chapter, addressed the need for more deliberate civil affairs (which included political matters) planning and prior coordination with the Embassy. They credited the professionalism and creativity of both Embassy and military officials as the reason this initial lack of cooperation evaporated shortly after the landings.

In 1962, the first personal accounts appeared in print. McClintock and Hadd provided their assessments of the operation in *Proceedings*, a professional journal published by the United States Naval Institute. Written from their individual professional perspectives, both articles were biased, but this does not diminish their value.

Hadd compliments Embassy officials and military leaders for the cooperation put in place after the landings, but suggests greater initial understanding between the two would have prevented the confusion he experienced on the beach. Early liaison, with State providing someone to serve on the military staff, and with Embassy access to military communications equipment would have helped. Hadd also thought exchanging pictures of key personnel would have aided the marines in the identification of key Lebanese civil, political and military leaders.⁶⁹

Hadd acknowledged State Department officials “were an invaluable aid to the military commander,” but the scarcity of these officials and restrictions on their movement could make future assistance difficult to attain. When this interaction does occur, “certain procedures” are necessary. “Just as diplomatic decisions must flow through a State Department channel--from the top down,” so, too, must military decisions flow within the chain of command. To improve

understanding, military and diplomatic schools, he wrote, should discuss operations like the one in Lebanon.⁷⁰

McClintock was confident military and diplomatic cooperation had saved the “integrity and independence of a small, free Arab nation.” Saying American and British action in the region was “undoubtedly decisive in preventing” the destruction of the Lebanese and Jordanian governments, he said that the United States had also demonstrated its resolve to support its friends. He, too, saw room for improvement in diplomatic-military cooperation.⁷¹

He presented two conclusions. First, there was a need for more flexible, high-level decision making in the initial stages. While he did not directly pose a solution, he gave the “diplomatic arm” credit for resolving the confusion of the first two days and clearly believed when doubt arises, the military should defer to the Ambassador. His second conclusion focused on the success resulting from the constant dialogue and exchange of information he had with Holloway.⁷²

After giving more praise to the “band of brothers,” he concluded by saying:

There can be no effective diplomacy without the existence of some form of power, whether military, economic or psychological. The use of military power in diplomacy can be either positive or negative. In the landing in Lebanon both elements of such power were present; but from the purely political view, the negative use of American military strength was the most effective at the time and the most lasting in long-range significance.⁷³

For the intervention to have been so effective with such a long-lasting impact required a degree of cooperation McClintock and others probably did not think possible when the marines landed. But only if the Departments of State and Defense acted upon the after-action comments of those involved could future operations begin as smoothly as the Lebanon operation ended. A failure to learn from Murphy, McClintock, Holloway, and Hadd would condemn the start of future operations to the same confusion and frustration that existed at the start of this one.

¹William B. Quandt, “Lebanon, 1958, and Jordan, 1970,” in *Force without War: U.S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument*, ed. Barry M. Blechman and Stephen S. Kaplan

(Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1985), 230; and Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc, 1964), 398.

²Jack Shulimson, "Marines in Lebanon, 1958" (Washington, D.C.: Historical Branch, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps), Section I, Political Background, 1-4.

³Roger J. Spiller, "*Not War, But Like War*": *The American Intervention in Lebanon*, (Leavenworth Paper No. 3) (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1981), 4; and Shulimson, 1-4.

⁴Shulimson, 1.

⁵"Joint Resolution 117 (to Promote Peace and Stability in the Middle East)," (1957).

⁶Spiller, 6-7.

⁷Quandt, 228-229.

⁸Spiller, 15.

⁹Robert McClintock, "The American Landing in Lebanon," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings* 88, no. 10 (October 1962): 66-67.; and Spiller, 16-17.

¹⁰Spiller, 17; and McClintock, "The American Landing in Lebanon," 69.

¹¹McClintock, "The American Landing in Lebanon," 69.

¹²The coup in Iraq and the subsequent British and American interventions in Jordan and Lebanon heightened fears of a regional or general war. Situation reports prepared for the Joint Chiefs captured a steady increase in tension as pro-Western nations, Turkey, Libya, and Jordan, mobilized to prevent the spread of the nationalist violence, and Egypt and Syria, distrustful of American and British intentions, mobilized in turn. Though the United States believed a regional war was possible, little credit was given to the concerns over a general war. Still, the Joint Staff readied for the worst. The Army prepared Honest John nuclear missiles for deployment and the Sixth Fleet readied its nuclear arsenal. As the Soviets increased training missions along the Turkish border, the Joint Staff concluded that Soviet "propaganda campaign . . . against western landings . . . have had the undesired side effect of inducing a mild form of war hysteria" in Moscow. Paul D. Phillips, "Situation Report on Lebanon (Number 12)" (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 25 July 1958).

¹³Spiller, 16 and 20.

¹⁴Harry A. Hadd, "Orders Firm, But Flexible," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings* 88, no. 10 (October 1962): 82.; and Spiller, 20.

¹⁵United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960: Volume XI Lebanon and Jordan* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 247-248 (hereafter referred to as FRUS); and Spiller, 20.

¹⁶Hadd: 84; and McClintock, "The American Landing in Lebanon," 70.

¹⁷McClintock, "The American Landing in Lebanon," 71; and Hadd: 84.

¹⁸McClintock, "The American Landing in Lebanon," 70-71. McClintock joined the Foreign Service in 1932 after graduating from Stanford. He held posts on all the inhabited continents and was Ambassador to three nations--Cambodia (1954-1956), Lebanon (1958-1961), and Argentina. He was a 1952 graduate of the National War College and served as the State Department advisor at the Naval War College. A skilled author and diplomat, he often wrote for the Naval Institute and published a book on the nature and future of the American experience in limited war. McClintock, "The American Landing in Lebanon," 77.; Robert McClintock, *The Meaning of Limited War* (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967), xii.

¹⁹McClintock, "The American Landing in Lebanon," 79; FRUS, 248-251; and Hadd: 85. It was this issue that triggered Washington to send Robert Murphy to Lebanon. The joint directive required military coordination with the Embassy on civil affairs and public relations activities and before making contact with local officials. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, answering a request for information from the White House, provided the White House a memorandum to answer questions about the relationship between Holloway and McClintock. This memorandum is consistent with the State communiqué. Paul D. Phillips, Joint Staff, Washington, D.C., to Andrew J. Goodpaster, The White House, Washington, D.C., July 16, 1958. Located in the White House, Office of the Staff Secretary Collection, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas.

²⁰Admiral Brown's remarks found at Shulimson, 14; and James L. Holloway, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Earl E. Smith, Annapolis, Maryland, 17 September 1962. Located with the Admiral James L. Holloway Papers, Syracuse University Library, Department of Special Collections. Originally aspiring to the Military Academy, Holloway instead became a wartime graduate of Annapolis. By all accounts an outstanding sailor, he served at sea during the World Wars, commanded the *USS Iowa* at the end of WW II, completed several high profile tours on the Navy Staff, and served as Commandant of the Naval Academy. A champion debater in high school, one officer said if Holloway was ever remembered for command, "it will be for his command of the English language." "U.S. Affairs - Armed Forces: Restrained Power," *Time*, 4 August 1958, 11-12.

²¹Holloway, Letter to Smith; and Spiller, 23-24.

²²Spiller, 7 and 10.

²³"Final Report on Critique on USCINCEUR Participation in CINCSPECOMME OPLAN 215-58" (Heidelberg, Germany: Headquarters, United States European Command, 12 December 1958), 28; and "American Land Forces after Action Report (Part III)" (Beirut, Lebanon: Headquarters, American Land Forces, 25 October 1958), 14.

²⁴"Lessons Learned from the Lebanon Operation, Tab D (Operational Lessons)" (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army), 4.

²⁵"Civil Affairs in the Lebanon Operation" (Washington, D.C.: Plans, Policy and Operations Division (CAMG), 19 January 1959), 3 and 14.

²⁶Spiller, 38-39.

²⁷James L. Holloway, *OPERATION BLUE BAT*, Transcript held by Admiral James L. Holloway Papers, Syracuse University Library, Department of Special Collections, 1-4.

²⁸“U.S. Affairs - Armed Forces: Restrained Power.”

²⁹Hadd: 86.

³⁰McClintock, *The Meaning of Limited War*, 110-111; and Spiller, 24.

³¹McClintock, *The Meaning of Limited War*, 111-112; and Holloway, Letter to Smith. In his account, McClintock claims he introduced the two commanders, made the suggestion they adjourn to a nearby military school, and then served as negotiator and interpreter. On the other hand, Holloway, in personal and published accounts, suggests it was his determination to occupy Beirut and his willingness to say so to Chehab that convinced the Lebanese to abandon their roadblock. As it would turn out, the threat had been very real. The Lebanese Air Force and local commanders had orders to interdict the convoy, though the directive did not originate from Chamoun or Chehab.

³²James L. Holloway, *Taped Interview (Tape Number 30 - 1958)*, Transcript held by his son, Admiral (Retired) James L. Holloway, III, Annapolis, Maryland, 1; James L. Holloway, *U.S.S. Taconic*, to Robert McClintock, Beirut, Lebanon, 8 August 1958. Located with the Admiral James L. Holloway Papers, Syracuse University Library, Department of Special Collections; and McClintock, “The American Landing in Lebanon,” 77.

³³Murphy, 398; and Andrew J. Goodpaster, “Memorandum of Conference with the President, Secretary of State and Ambassador Murphy,” in the Oval Office, The White House, 16 July 1958. Located in the White House, Office of the Staff Secretary Collection, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas. See also Note 19. A central player in the crisis, Robert Murphy brought forty years of diplomatic experience to Lebanon. A Wisconsin native, he joined the Foreign Service as a stenographer when the United States entered the First World War. His relatively nondescript career took a significant turn twenty years later when Franklin Roosevelt chose Murphy as his personal representative to French Africa after the fall of France in 1940. In this position, he was critical to Allied diplomatic successes leading to, and during, operations in North Africa. While building a formidable reputation as a presidential troubleshooter, he formed close relationships with the military leadership--Eisenhower, W. Bedell Smith, and George C. Marshall. Murphy, 1-4, v-vi.

³⁴FRUS, 262, 256 and 423.

³⁵Holloway, *OPERATION BLUE BAT*, 5; McClintock, *The Meaning of Limited War*, 113.; Murphy, 400; Holloway, *OPERATION BLUE BAT*, 12; and “Civil Affairs in the Lebanon Operation”, 5.

³⁶McClintock, “The American Landing in Lebanon,” 77; and Holloway, *OPERATION BLUE BAT*, 12.

³⁷“Civil Affairs in the Lebanon Operation”, 5; and “Final Report on Critique on USCINCEUR Participation in CINCSPECOMME OPLAN 215-58,” 29.

³⁸“Civil Affairs in the Lebanon Operation,” 5; and “Final Report on Critique on USCINCEUR Participation in CINCSPECOMME OPLAN 215-58,” 29.

³⁹“Civil Affairs in the Lebanon Operation,” 5.

⁴⁰James L. Holloway, *USS Taconic*, to Unknown, Beirut, Lebanon, 29 July 1958. Located with the Admiral James L. Holloway Papers, Syracuse University Library, Department of Special Collections

⁴¹James L. Holloway, *USS Taconic*, to Paul D. Adams, Beirut, Lebanon, 13 August 1958. Located with the Admiral James L. Holloway Papers, Syracuse University Library, Department of Special Collections; and “Memorandum for Chief of Naval Operations (Situation Report #52)” (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Navy, 16 August 1958).

⁴²Murphy, 404; FRUS, 216; and Murphy, 402-403. In fact, in a telegram to Washington after the coup in Iraq, McClintock recommended against “soportentious [sic] a step” as intervention. He found no military threat to Lebanon and believed Chamoun was seizing this opportunity to “bring about friendly military intervention.” McClintock acknowledged advantages the role intervention in Lebanon might play within the region. FRUS, 216.

⁴³FRUS, 333-334.

⁴⁴Holloway, *OPERATION BLUE BAT*, 12-13; and McClintock, *The Meaning of Limited War*, 113.

⁴⁵Holloway, *Taped Interview (Tape Number 30 - 1958)*, 1; Paul D. Phillips, “Situation Report on Lebanon (Number 11)” (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 24 July 1958); James L. Holloway, *Taped Interview (Tape Number 31 - 1958)*, Transcript held by his son Admiral (Retired) James L. Holloway, III, Annapolis, Maryland, 2; James L. Holloway, *USS Taconic*, to Fuad Chehab, Beirut, Lebanon, 22 July 1958. Located with the Admiral James L. Holloway Papers, Syracuse University Library, Department of Special Collections; and Holloway, *OPERATION BLUE BAT*, 12-13. McClintock, Holloway and Chehab discussed liberty areas for American forces around 7 August and Holloway would sign the AMLANFOR memorandum on 9 August. FRUS, 438; and Francis H. Patrick, “Pass and Liberty Policy” (Beirut, Lebanon: Headquarters, American Land Forces, 5 August 1958).

⁴⁶Murphy, 400-401.

⁴⁷FRUS, 352-353 and Note 352, Page 352.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 396-397.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 403 (Note 405) and 408-410.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 408-410.

⁵¹Ibid., 391 and 410-413.

⁵²Ibid., 412.

⁵³Murphy, 409-418.

⁵⁴McClintock, "The American Landing in Lebanon," 75.

⁵⁵"American Land Forces after Action Report (Part I)" (Beirut, Lebanon: Headquarters, American Land Forces, 25 October 1958), 11; FRUS, 415-416; and FRUS, 417-418. The 3d Medium Tank Battalion, 35 Armored Regiment arrived on 3 August. Additional support units landed throughout the first week in August, with some as late as 8 August. By that date, over 20,000 American soldiers, airmen, sailors, and marines were in the region. "American Land Forces after Action Report (Part I)," 11-12.

⁵⁶FRUS, 433. In the JCS Situation Report, Holloway reported he had been told by McClintock to determine what he could reduce. McClintock had told Holloway to expect a request from Chehab for the United States to withdraw. Paul D. Phillips, "Situation Report on Lebanon (Number 24)" (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 6 August 1958).

⁵⁷FRUS, 437.

⁵⁸Paul D. Phillips, "Situation Report on Lebanon (Number 25)" (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 9 August 1958). Originally sent in CINCSPECOMME Telegram 0724, 7 August, to Burke, this traffic took two days to appear in JCS situation reports. FRUS, 439, Note 432.

⁵⁹FRUS, 449-450.

⁶⁰Paul D. Phillips, "Situation Report on Lebanon (Number 30)" (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 11 August 1958); and FRUS, 476-479.

⁶¹FRUS, 522, Note 522 and 540.

⁶²Ibid., 520; and Holloway, *Taped Interview (Tape Number 31 - 1958)*, 1.

⁶³FRUS, 543-544.

⁶⁴Paul D. Phillips, "Situation Report on Lebanon (Number 57)" (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 10 September 1958); FRUS, 569; Paul D. Phillips, "Situation Report on Lebanon (Number 62)" (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 15 September 1958); and Paul D. Phillips, "Situation Report on Lebanon (Number 66)" (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 19 September 1958).

⁶⁵FRUS, 575 and 583; Holloway, *OPERATION BLUE BAT*, 14; and McClintock, "The American Landing in Lebanon," 77.

⁶⁶McClintock, "The American Landing in Lebanon," 77; and McClintock, *The Meaning of Limited War*, 115.

⁶⁷James L. Holloway, London, England, to Robert McClintock, Beirut, Lebanon, 5 November 1958. Located with the Admiral James L. Holloway Papers, Syracuse University Library, Department of Special Collections; and Holloway, *OPERATION BLUE BAT*, 14.

⁶⁸Murphy, 399; Murphy, 404; Holloway, *Taped Interview (Tape Number 30 - 1958)*, 1-2; and Holloway, *OPERATION BLUE BAT*, 12.

⁶⁹Hadd: 87.

⁷⁰Ibid.: 87-89.

⁷¹McClintock, "The American Landing in Lebanon," 77; and McClintock, *The Meaning of Limited War*, 116.

⁷²McClintock, "The American Landing in Lebanon," 79.

⁷³Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

OPERATION POWER PACK: THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, 1965

In the spring of 1965, the United States launched one of its largest Cold War deployments when it dispatched troops to the Dominican Republic to restore order after a populist revolt led to the collapse of the pro-Western Dominican government. This mission provided challenges altogether different from those found by servicemen in Lebanon seven years earlier. Longer in duration--it would stretch for over a year--intervention in the Dominican Republic required the application of power, not its mere presence. Applying this power wisely, and in a limited fashion, would test the skills of American diplomatic and military leaders. To begin to understand how the United States became involved in the Dominican civil war, one must understand the history of American interaction with its Latin American neighbors and the political concerns that President Lyndon Johnson faced when he decided to intervene in Dominican affairs.

History provides a long and troubled story of American involvement in the affairs of Central American and Caribbean countries. As early as 1832, when President James Monroe articulated what would later become known as the Monroe Doctrine, the United States made it clear that the security, stability, and economic vitality of the Western Hemisphere was critical to the peace and safety of the United States. Decades later, in 1904, President Roosevelt, worried that financial malfeasance in Central American and Caribbean nations would encourage European nations to seek payment by force or through land deals, made it clear that no nation could use the doctrine "as a shield to protect it from its own misdeeds against foreign nations." According to Roosevelt's corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, while the United States accepted its obligation to protect its smaller neighbors from European influence, this protection brought with it the right for the United States to intervene, if the policies of the threatened nation had given rise to the external threat. Under the provisions of this corollary, the Dominican Republic turned control of

its finances over to the United States in 1907. Nicaragua followed in 1911, and in 1915, the United States occupied Haiti for similar reasons.

Then, in 1916, President Woodrow Wilson ordered the first large-scale and decisive use of American force in the Dominican Republic. Concerned about German influence in the region and disappointed by the refusal of the Dominicans to establish a stable and popularly elected government, Wilson decided the only solution to the problem lay in American administration of the country. To that end, he intervened militarily established a military government headed by officers from the Navy and Marine Corps. In the eight years they administered the country, these officers instituted numerous reforms: public education, public health, transportation, and creation of an effective military force. Still criticism of American policy led to a negotiated withdrawal of American troops and the establishment of an elected Dominican administration in 1924.

Continuing political and economic instability between 1924 and 1930 led General Rafael Trujillo, commander of the Dominican National Guard, to overthrow the elected president in 1930 and to begin to eliminate all political opposition. Even though the Trujillo regime was notoriously brutal, it survived without American interference for nearly thirty years because it produced political and economic stability in the country and supported American policies during World War Two and the Cold War. However, by the late 1950s, the United States no longer considered historical Dominican support for its policies worth American support for Trujillo. During the Cuban revolution, the United States and Trujillo found themselves supporting opposite forces--the United States supporting Fidel Castro, who it thought would bring democracy to the island, and Trujillo supporting Batista, a fellow right-wing dictator. However, soon after Castro overthrew Batista, the United States realized that Castro was in fact a communist. Washington became concerned that if it did not remove Trujillo, a communist revolt similar to the one in Cuba might and therefore decided it might be better to act while it could still hope to control the outcome. In 1960, after Trujillo took steps to assassinate the Venezuelan

president who criticized him, the Organization of American States (OAS) severed ties--economic and diplomatic--with the Republic.

Within a year, three decades of brutality and the economic stagnation exacerbated by American economic sanctions motivated the Dominican resistance, with American assistance, to assassinate Trujillo. Though the assassination removed Trujillo from the scene, his brothers and other followers remained. Their attempts to regain power in late 1961 led to direct American intervention in the form of naval and airpower shows of force. Soon thereafter, a president, Juan Bosch, was elected and President John Kennedy resumed economic, diplomatic, and military ties with the Republic. In a hint of the concerns that were then driving American foreign policy, Kennedy believed the Dominican Republic was a “testing ground between the revolutionary ideology of Cuba and [the] democratic ideals of open societies.” He hoped it would be a model for other nations in Latin America to follow.¹

Unfortunately for the Republic, the reform-minded president it chose was not a skilled administrator or political leader. Bosch did publish a constitution and attempted other political reforms, but according to some in Washington, he was a “muddle-headed, anti-American pendant committed to unattainable social reforms.” Within a short time, he had accomplished the difficult task of alienating virtually everyone: the United States, the Dominican political left (for not reforming enough), and the Dominican political right (for failing to take a tough stand against leftist, procommunist radicals). Only nine months after his inauguration, the Dominican military, led by Colonel Elias Wessin y Wessin, a right-wing army officer, deposed Bosch. Wessin established a civilian government led by Donald Reid Cabral and played to American fears of communism. Three months after the coup and two months after President Lyndon B. Johnson took office, rumors of a possible left-wing counter-coup led LBJ to renew American ties and assistance. With respect to the Dominican Republic, Johnson was determined to minimize

American involvement, but was equally determined to act if the communists threatened to take power.²

Those Dominicans opposed to the coup against Bosch--because of their support for the constitution, if not the president, or because of ideological differences with the government--organized almost immediately after it occurred. The opposition groups were diverse and included professionals, politicians, and military officers. Economic success might have deflected support from the opposition, but drought and low prices on Dominican exports crippled the economy. Austerity efforts by the government proved disastrous and cost Reid what little support he had in the business community. By late 1964, strikes, protests, and marches were more common and the government was faltering. Fortunately for Reid, the opposition was also fragmented. Though some wanted a return of the elected Bosch government, still others wanted new elections. Despite this fragmentation, events came to a head in mid-April 1965 when Reid removed several officers connected to the pro-Bosch movement. Two days later, on 24 April 1965, a revolt in the capital city of Santo Domingo plunged the Dominican Republic into civil war.

The revolt, initiated by junior military officers, quickly involved several factions of the opposition, including civilians. Supporters of Bosch armed themselves and demanded his return, Maoist communists seized several small businesses, and other armed groups burned conservative political and newspaper offices. Within the first day, the national police no longer maintained law and order in Santo Domingo. Even military units not participating in the revolt refused to enter the city and suppress it. At the urging of the American Embassy, these units would sit on the sidelines until they could better assess the course of events. The confused nature of the revolt and the absence of several key officials, including the U.S. ambassador, from the Embassy made it difficult for the United States to gauge the direction and severity of the crisis. Reports from the Embassy, under the direction of Chargé d'Affaires William Connett, to Washington varied. On the first day, though unable to identify a single group responsible for the revolt, the Embassy

warned that communists seemed to be involved. The next day, 25 April, Connett telephoned Secretary of State Dean Rusk and told him that the so-called Loyalist forces, which claimed to represent the government, were “divided, ineffectual, and undecided,” while the opposition, or self-proclaimed Constitutionalist forces, controlled downtown Santo Domingo. Later, the Embassy was more optimistic and thought the Loyalists had the upper hand. Then, on 26 April, the Embassy told Washington that radical, leftist leaders were definitely gaining control of the revolt. With this report, and subsequent ones like it, American intervention in the Dominican Republic became increasingly likely.³

After Castro’s success in Cuba, the single greatest force driving American foreign policy in the Caribbean and Latin America was the determination to prevent a second communist state from developing in the region. According to Senator Fulbright, “The specter of a second communist state in the Western Hemisphere--and its probable repercussions within the United States and possible effects on the careers of those who might be held responsible--seems to have been the most important single factor in distorting the judgment of otherwise sensible and competent men.” LBJ provided the basis for Fulbright’s observation when he declared, “The United States cannot, must not and will not permit the establishment of another communist government in the Western Hemisphere.”⁴

There were, in fact, indications that the communist movement in the Dominican Republic had ties to external forces. As early as 1959, Castro had supported plans by exiled Dominicans to invade their homeland and overthrow the Trujillo regime. In 1965, the United States knew of a Soviet-Cuban pact to promote non-violent revolution throughout the Caribbean and had reports that fifty Cuban-, Soviet- and Chinese-trained agent provocateurs had infiltrated the Dominican Republic shortly before the revolt. Whether or not these agents existed or had anything to do with the revolt, the mere possibility of a communist plot dominated decisions made by the White House. Once the United States intervened militarily, it claimed it had done so to protect American

lives. Despite these claims, others suggested the United States would have intervened even “had there been no Americans to save if that had been considered necessary to forestall a rebel victory.” In fact, Johnson, exercising his prerogative under the Monroe Doctrine and reacting to the “Cuban Syndrome,” made the “only logical decision and . . . only logical choice.”⁵

The United States moved quickly. On 25 April, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, acting without specific presidential authorization, ordered naval and marine forces to position themselves off the Dominican shore to protect U.S. citizens in the Republic. The next day, the Joint Chiefs alerted portions of the 82nd Airborne Division to prepare for possible deployment to the Republic. However, intensified efforts by Loyalist army elements led President Johnson to hold out hope they would regain control. He thus delayed making a decision to intervene. With Ambassador Bennett’s return to the Dominican Republic on 27 April, this hope evaporated. Initially believing the Loyalists to have the upper hand, Bennett refused to mediate to save the rebels. Unhappy they could not get an agreement and believing they faced imminent military defeat, many of the moderate rebels left the Constitutionalist movement. With their departure, Bennett suspected the rebel movement would fall completely under the influence of communist leadership--it would become a “straight Communist and non-Communist struggle.” Whether or not this was true at the time, the Constitutionlists, under their new leadership, did reorganize and seize the initiative. By the next day, there was no longer, Bennett believed, any chance the Loyalists could win without American assistance. After receiving this assessment on 28 April, LBJ ordered the landing of American troops.⁶

A Solid, If Not Perfect Start

By the time President Johnson formally decided to commit U.S. troops to direct intervention, initial American military operations in the Dominican Republic had already been undertaken. On Monday, 26 April, Connett met with leaders of both factions and secured an agreement to use the Hotel Embajador, a luxury hotel in western Santo Domingo, as a collection

point for foreign nationals who wished to leave the country. With an agreement in hand, Connett set about making arrangements, through the State Department, for the evacuation of the several thousand foreign nationals expected to gather at the Hotel. According to his plan, at midday, 27 April, busses would carry the evacuees from the Hotel to Haina, a Dominican port, for evacuation by American warships to Puerto Rico. Two days earlier, the Joint Chiefs had ordered Task Force 44.9, under the command of Commodore James Dare, from Puerto Rico to the Dominican coast and told him to prepare for evacuation operations. By late 26 April, Dare was in position and ready to dispatch two ships and an unarmed control party into the harbor. Despite the preparations made by Connett and Dare, there was one last, but significant, obstacle to a successful evacuation--communications equipment.⁷

Before Dare and his Task Force arrived off the Dominican coast, it became evident that neither he nor the Embassy had any radio equipment that would allow each to communicate directly with the other. Without the ability to talk directly, Connett and Dare would find it virtually impossible to coordinate their efforts; the potential for confusion and disaster would increase dramatically. Relaying messages through the State and Defense Departments would work for only so long before becoming cumbersome and unresponsive. In desperation, Connett turned to Fred Lann, an Embassy employee and amateur radio operator. Using a ham radio, Lann made contact with TF 44.9 while it was steaming towards the Dominican Republic. For the next several days, this radio was the single most important piece of communications equipment available to TF 44.9 and the Embassy.⁸

Initially operating from his home, Lann would telephone the Embassy to pass or receive messages. To say the least, with the telephone exchange in the hands of the Constitutionals, this was a less than secure means of communication. Later, the security of the system would improve somewhat when the marines provided Lann and the Embassy with walkie-talkies. When machine gun fire chased him from his house, however, Lann briefly took his radio to the house of another

American. By 28 April, Lann was operating the radio from his car on the Embassy grounds. Though the marines provided their own radio equipment the same day, it proved incapable of reaching TF 44.9. As a result, Lann and his radio would remain in use until 2 May.⁹

Though their radio communications were less than optimal, Commodore Dare and the Embassy quickly developed a close and cooperative relationship. When Bennett returned from the United States on 27 April, several senior TF 44.9 leaders met him at the International Airport and escorted him to the flagship, the *USS Boxer*. Aboard the *Boxer*, Dare and Bennett discussed the evacuation operation and conditions on-shore.¹⁰

Though they had never met before, Dare, perhaps aware of the importance of his cooperation and flexibility, never once questioned or challenged the authority of the Ambassador. On two separate occasions, Bennett told Dare to do something not contained in the latter's orders. On both occasions, Dare would do so without question. The first occurred on the day the two men met. Sometime that day, either while on board the *Boxer* or from the Embassy, Bennett asked Dare to bring the flagship and another ship closer to shore so the Dominicans could see the ships were not involved in any hostile activity. Dare complied. To do so without colliding with Dominican patrol boats and inflaming the situation required several intricate maneuvers that "would turn any skipper's hair gray." To Dare, "it seemed almost as though the Ambassador had the conn." It is likely the events over the next few days only strengthened this feeling.¹¹

The next day, 28 April, Dare again demonstrated his willingness to support the Ambassador. Though Bennett had held enough hope in the Loyalist cause to refuse one of their requests for military assistance that morning, by late afternoon he reversed course and recommended to Washington an "immediate landing" of marines to protect the Embassy and the evacuees. Without waiting for an answer from the State Department, Bennett contacted Dare with the same request. Dare again acted without orders from his chain of command. As a result, before President Johnson even met with his staff and received the request for troops, over 400 marines

were ashore. By the end of the evening, Dare had landed almost 600 marines--far more than Johnson authorized. Clearly, Dare was comfortable enough with Bennett to demonstrate the cooperation the Ambassador needed at critical times.¹²

Unfortunately, the landing of the marines did not embolden the new junta the Loyalists had formed. While promising to launch a clean-up operation on Thursday, 29 April, the new self-proclaimed government was in fact losing key pieces of Santo Domingo. In an afternoon meeting with Dare and Marine Colonel George Daughtry, commander of the TF 44.9 marine contingent, Bennett told Dare to bring his ships and equipment closer to shore and prepare for a landing. A few minutes later, Bennett told Washington that he had ordered the landing of the rest of the marine contingent. Bennett also informed Washington of his plans to use the Military Advisory Assistance Group (MAAG) to provide operational advice to the junta.¹³

The MAAG and Embassy military attachés would become an important tool for the United States throughout the crisis. As an extension of American military assistance to the Dominicans before the revolt, MAAG and attaché officers had formed close personal and professional relationships with many senior Dominican officers. Though some later criticized the American officers for a lack of objectivity, none could deny their contributions. In the first days of the revolt, they provided the only military information and advice immediately available to Embassy civilians. In addition, the Chief, MAAG organized his personnel to conduct a variety of tasks from the mundane--Embassy generator maintenance--to the crucial--the establishment of an Embassy Coordination Center and appointment of liaison officers with the Papal Nuncio and Organization of American States.¹⁴

The Coordination Center, which consisted of 4-5 officers, quickly became the “voice and ears” of the Embassy. At first, the Center managed incoming telephone calls and radio traffic with the evacuation site and the Dominican National Police. With the arrival of the marines and, later, the Army, the Center assumed coordination duties between the military and the Embassy

staff. At the same time, the Center became the focal point for information arriving at the Embassy from the attachés and liaison officers. These liaison officers assumed duties with the various military commands--United States Forces Dominican Republic (USFORDOMREP) and the Marine Expeditionary Brigade--and diplomatic organizations like the Papal Nuncio and the OAS. The language and country skills resident in MAAG officers also proved to be a valuable asset throughout the intervention.¹⁵

By the time Ambassador Bennett sent his message Thursday afternoon recommending intervention, President Johnson had decided to significantly increase the role of the United States in the crisis. Johnson ordered the landing of additional marines--essentially approving the decision Bennett had made earlier in the day--and the deployment of two brigade combat teams from the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The division had been on alert and making preparations for departure since Sunday, 25 April. As confused as things were in the Dominican Republic, they were even worse at Fort Bragg. While his staff prepared the division ready brigade for movement, the division commander, Major General York struggled to understand his mission. None of his alert messages provided any indication of what he and his troopers could expect upon landing. To make matters worse, York felt that a "critical intelligence vacuum existed during the vital stages of the operation." The scope of the problem was potentially enormous.¹⁶

While York could not reasonably fault the Embassy for the lack of clarity in the mission statement he received, he included them in his criticism of the intelligence community and its support for his operation. Though some intelligence from the Embassy and Central Intelligence Agency did reach Fort Bragg, York considered the reports so alarmist and preoccupied with anticommunist issues that he placed little tactical value in them. Still other intelligence--like the suitability of what turned out to be a coral-covered field as an assault drop zone--proved to be completely inaccurate. In the days between receipt of the alert and deployment, York and his staff

gleaned what information they could from television and newspaper sources; they had received only ten intelligence summaries from formal sources.¹⁷

Of critical importance, from the start of the intervention to its end nine months later, was political intelligence--intelligence on key personalities and political factions. According to Lieutenant General Bruce Palmer, who replaced York as commander of all American forces in the Republic early on 1 May, the Defense Department had "scanty intelligence with respect to national leadership, personalities, political parties, fronts and military forces." Whatever information was available at the State Department, CIA, and Embassy was not available to the military *before* the landing of troops. To make matters worse, the Embassy and MAAG, which was headquartered outside the Embassy compound, destroyed all of their intelligence papers in the early days of the revolt; years of valuable information was lost.¹⁸

Lacking this information, it was inevitable that the military would make decisions that would complicate matters between the warring parties, between the United States and the Dominican people, or between the United States and Latin America. As an example, one senior diplomat complained that the use of San Isidro airbase, which was firmly in Loyalist control, as the reception area for American troops was proof to many rebels and the international media that the United States was not a neutral player. Clearly, "political considerations concerned with the uses of intervention forces were missing from contingency plans." Palmer agreed and added that the contingency plans did not consider an "appreciation for key places" or factors "that would have a significant bearing on the broader missions involving stability or peacekeeping operations." Palmer also suggested that this information was as important to his soldiers, who were performing tasks they had not been trained for in an environment that was unfamiliar to them, as it was to his leadership. "Soldiers," he said, "must understand the political objectives sought and the mission of the force."¹⁹

Palmer, York, and Bennett tackled this challenge with methods both obvious and ingenious and within days had created an atmosphere of remarkable cooperation. Almost immediately after senior military intelligence officers landed, they made contact with the Embassy officials and soon established an intelligence section adjacent to the Embassy. The Special Projects Division worked with the Country Team to develop counterintelligence dossiers from recreated and newly collected information. Their success was remarkable. While a shortage of political analysts initially forced the military to rely on the Embassy, background papers prepared by the military would later play a key role in OAS negotiations that began that summer.²⁰

Other means of closing the gap were less overt and administrative. In part to answer specific questions from the White House, but also to increase their own awareness, Bennett, Palmer, and the CIA Station Chief developed plans to use special forces soldiers to gather information on the activities of rebel groups outside of Santo Domingo. Unsure of how the Dominican people would receive troops on intelligence-gathering missions, many of these teams disguised themselves by using unmarked helicopters or those “marked with the Red Cross.” Some wore civilian clothes. On occasion, Embassy or Agency for International Development (AID) employees escorted soldiers on agricultural or economic survey missions. Maintaining their cover was difficult, but in the end, they accomplished their mission and satisfied concerned parties that the Dominican countryside was quiet.²¹

The Martin Mission

Early in the intervention, LBJ’s senior staff members became increasingly concerned that Bennett and his staff lacked the objectivity to deal with both sides in the revolt. Johnson therefore dispatched John Bartlow Martin to the Dominican Republic to provide a second assessment and to open a communications channel with the rebels. Martin, who had served as Ambassador to the country during the Bosch administration, had ties to some members of the Constitutionalist

movement and was highly regarded by the Dominican people in general. On Friday, 30 April 1965, Martin arrived in Santo Domingo unconvinced that the revolt was truly communist in nature. In fact, he was more concerned that the deployment of a large number of American troops, which by the end of the weekend would nearly equal the total number then in Vietnam, would lead to accusations that the United States was prepared to conduct the bloody kind of intervention the Soviets had conducted in Hungary in 1956.²²

Martin established contact with the Papal Nuncio, Bennett, York, and both warring parties as soon as he landed at San Isidro. After several short, intense arguments by both sides, Martin was able to convince General Wessin y Wessin, who, though not a member of the junta was the real source of its power, to sign a simple, concise cease-fire agreement. The two-line agreement guaranteed security to all persons and requested the creation of an OAS commission to arbitrate the conflict. Once Wessin signed, the junta members followed. With the rebel leader, Colonel Francisco Caamaño Deño absent, Martin and the rebel representatives agreed to seek his signature at a meeting the next day. The events of this meeting would lead to the most significant breach of diplomatic-military cooperation to occur during the intervention.²³

On Saturday, 1 May, Martin and the Papal Nuncio met with Caamaño at his headquarters to present him with the cease-fire agreement. To their surprise, they discovered the rebel leader had already signed the agreement and stated his intention to honor it. As a condition, however, he insisted that the American troops honor the agreement as well and not cross into his territory from the International Security Zone (ISZ) that the marines had established. He accused the United States of working with Wessin and the National Police in operations outside the boundaries of the Zone. Unbeknownst to Martin, the accusation was partially correct. Using the Loyalist base at San Isidro as a staging area, American troops were conducting operations in and around Santo Domingo that morning. Rebels killed two U.S. soldiers. Operating with virtually no situational awareness and no military advisor present, Martin produced an Esso map marked with the general

boundaries of the Zone and began to negotiate new boundaries. Though he reached an agreement with Caamaño, Martin would soon face intense opposition from an unexpected corner--the American military leadership.²⁴

York and the Joint Task Force Commander, Vice Admiral Kleber Masterson, had never been enthusiastic about the cease-fire negotiations. Both officers considered the cease-fire an impediment to preventing a communist takeover of the city and had little faith that the rebels would respect it anyway. Bennett, who had never been interested in dealing with the rebels, agreed that the timing was not yet right. In messages to Washington, he pointed out that the rebels controlled most of the financial district and key communications and media facilities in Santo Domingo. It was perhaps no accident that Bennett did not accompany Martin on his Saturday morning meeting with Caamaño. In any event, the changes to which Martin agreed only made matters worse from the perspective of the military command. From their point of view, “to have the military committed unilaterally to new boundaries and rules, and then fail to tell the military, was an unexcusable [sic] piece of madness.”²⁵

The most vocal critic of both the cease-fire and the new boundary changes was the new American land forces commander, Lieutenant General Palmer. The Joint Chiefs had ordered Palmer to the Dominican Republic on Friday, 30 April, and he arrived just after midnight Saturday morning. He learned about the cease-fire shortly after his arrival and quickly concluded that it made no sense politically or militarily because it “froze the situation in an inconclusive, ambiguous way” with American forces “widely separated and with no means to exert military pressure except by offensive action.” Furthermore, he agreed with Bennett that the cease-fire left many of the most important buildings of Santo Domingo in rebel hands. Finally, because there was a gap between the marines at the Embassy and the airborne troopers across town at the Duarte bridge (see Figure 1, next page), the cease-fire “left the loyal Dominican forces and the rebels” in contact and “free to get at each other’s throats.” Certainly the cease-fire had its

humanitarian benefits, but on military grounds, Palmer informed York that he “did not recognize any cease-fire at that time.”²⁶

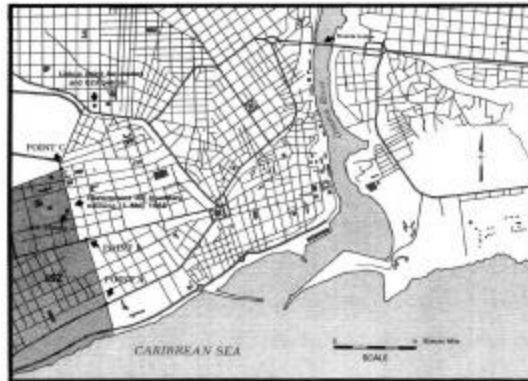


Figure 1. Downtown Santo Domingo with International Security Zone (shaded, bottom left), rebel-controlled areas in center and Duarte Bridge spanning the Ozama River (top center).²⁷

Palmer and York decided that the only way to close the gap between American forces was to establish a land corridor or “cordon” through the city. Palmer recognized he needed OAS and Embassy approval for this operation, but decided first to test the feasibility of the link-up by ordering a reconnaissance in force to confirm the location and strength of rebel positions. Most likely, it was this reconnaissance operation Caamaño complained about to Martin when they met that day. In any event, despite two American fatalities, the reconnaissance procured valuable information and identified a possible route from the 82nd Airborne Division sector to the Embassy. Later that morning, Palmer, who had been advised by Joint Chiefs Chairman General Earle Wheeler to “get close to Ambassador Bennett and coordinate” their actions, traveled to the Embassy and his first meeting with Bennett.²⁸

Because this meeting occurred after the reconnaissance operation started, it appears unlikely that Palmer had requested permission to launch the probe. Also unclear is whether or not Bennett and Palmer discussed it during their meeting. What is clear is that while Martin was

working with Caamaño on the details of the cease-fire, the general and the ambassador were deciding in principle that a permanent cease-fire was not yet appropriate. They also agreed that Palmer, anxious to position himself near the ambassador would occupy a building next door as his command post. Significantly, both men still suffered from technical communications problems--Bennett still had no reliable means to talk with Masterson, and Palmer had no means to communicate with his superiors in Washington. Though Palmer was concerned that he found Bennett and his staff in a "state of almost desperate activity," he respected Bennett and later pointed to this meeting as the beginning of a "close, warm relationship."²⁹

Palmer then set about trying to persuade Bennett (which was not difficult to do), Martin, (who held great sway in Washington), and key officers up the military chain of the importance of establishing the corridor at the earliest opportunity. In Palmer's mind, military considerations should outweigh political ones until the situation in Santo Domingo was more stable. Having said this, Palmer worked with Bennett in planning the route. In a phone call to the Joint Staff Director at the Pentagon, Palmer explained his intent to create an "international LOC to the ISZ which would allow overland access." A secondary benefit of the corridor would be to confine the rebels to downtown Santo Domingo and, because of the route Palmer proposed, put the United States in control of some of the key buildings--the post office, telecommunications buildings and some major banks--that were then in rebel hands. Based on the results of the reconnaissance, Palmer also developed an alternate route that followed a less risky path and "liberated" fewer key buildings, but would still accomplish the overland linkup and isolation of rebel forces.³⁰

Martin opposed any plan that involved occupying the downtown area with American troops. He recognized that some "military men considered the present U.S. military position tactically untenable" and conceded that they might be "right from a purely military point of viewpoint, though not from a political one." He thought the gravest danger then facing the United States lay in allowing the communists to provoke a massacre. That Martin had come to believe

that communists controlled the revolt was a significant departure from his position when he arrived in Santo Domingo, but it did not make him more willing to advocate carte blanche for the use of U.S. troops. He found the number of troops overwhelming and damaging to American interests throughout Latin America and found the attitude of the young soldiers and marines, so focused on killing an enemy whom they did not understand, upsetting.³¹

Martin did support establishment of a corridor along a less contentious route. As Palmer waited for approval from the military chain of command, Martin and Bennett urged the State Department to accept the alternate route. The Department in turn told Bennett to ask the recently arrived OAS commission for approval of this alternate route, but also told him the United States would establish the corridor with or without OAS approval. When Bennett and Palmer explained to the commission that there was currently not a safe route for movement for its members into the city, the OAS gave its reluctant approval. At 2045, on Saturday, 2 May, LBJ gave Palmer approval for the alternate route. The operation began just after midnight, 3 May, and was over two hours later (see Figure 2). Over the next few days, Palmer widened the corridor to increase the protection of the vehicles and people using the route.³²



Figure 2. Santo Domingo with International Security Zone (shaded, center bottom), rebel controlled areas (at right center), and ground corridor between American forces (dark shade).³³

Palmer considered the operation a stunning success and “one for the books--probably the first such operation at night in a hostile city.” Later, he called the establishment of the corridor the “key military move” of the intervention. With 80 percent of the rebel force trapped in downtown Santo Domingo, the general credited the corridor with putting Caamaño in “the vise of a trap which he knew would strangle him.” Accordingly, the rebel leader would be forced to negotiate or be starved into submission. Palmer also felt the corridor provided him a start point for launching an attack to destroy Caamaño and restore “law and order without delay” if he received orders to do so. President Johnson, satisfied that the threat of a communist victory had evaporated, would never order this attack. Palmer and his troops would soon become instruments of military leverage during the coming months of political negotiations.³⁴

Recovery and Reconciliation

With the corridor in place and warring factions separated, Palmer and Bennett, with a host of other American and foreign diplomatic officials that would visit the Dominican Republic, could focus on finding a permanent solution to the crisis. Though the solution would be political in nature, the welfare of the Dominican people was a prime concern and the key to its lasting success. The brief, but bitter civil war had disrupted an economy already operating under severe austerity measures. The people, especially those in the rebel-controlled areas of Santo Domingo, were hungry and lacked fresh water. To help, the Embassy and the military command coordinated a massive humanitarian effort that would last months.

On 3 May, the day Palmer established the corridor, the Embassy established food distribution points and passed out beans, flour, and milk. Simultaneously, Palmer was bringing into port a ship, the *Alcoa Ranger*, loaded with relief supplies. On the first day alone, the military, with Embassy assistance, delivered over seven tons of beans and condensed milk along the corridor. To inform the Dominican public about food distribution times and places, the Embassy established, and the military manned and maintained, seven radio stations throughout the country.

By the end of the month, the total relief effort exceeded 700 tons of food, a feat that Palmer insisted took close cooperation “between the military and of the Country Team” to accomplish.³⁵

Bennett and Palmer did not limit their humanitarian efforts to food distribution. In the first days, related efforts included medical assistance, sanitation, and support for charitable organizations. Later, the military Director of Civil Affairs, in close coordination with the Chief, MAAG, whom the Ambassador had appointed as his lead on civil affairs matters, coordinated a wide variety of projects from earthmoving to developing sports programs for Dominican children. At the same time, Palmer directed his Provost Marshal to coordinate the law enforcement activities of the military, Embassy, AID Public Safety Officers, and the Dominican National Police. While successful on the whole, the USFORDOMREP civil affairs officers did complain that Embassy staffers did not understand the military’s capabilities and acknowledged that they frequently found themselves “working on the same problem, seeing the same people, thus creating a certain amount of confusion.”³⁶

The challenges of coordinating civil affair activities would pale in comparison to those surrounding the diplomatic effort to reach a negotiated compromise to end the civil war and return the Dominican Republic to some form of stable government. After the fall of the Reid government on 25 April, both the Loyalists, under a junta led by Colonel Pedro Bartholome Benoit, and the Constitutionals, under Caamaño, claimed to represent the Dominican people. Two more administration changes in the next four months would bring to five the number of organizations that proclaimed their leadership over the Dominican Republic between 1963 and 1965. Though less violent, these two changes were no easier than the first three had been.

On 2 May, a five member OAS Commission arrived in country and began the search for a permanent solution. Though the cease-fire was several days old, violations by both the Loyalist junta and Constitutionalist rebels were frequent. On 4 May, the Commission proposed the “Act of Santo Domingo.” Though primarily a reiteration of the existing cease-fire, the Act guaranteed the

security of foreign embassies, required assistance with International Red Cross (IRC) food and medical relief efforts, and formalized establishment of the Security Zone (which now included the corridor). Also important was the OAS assertion that only Benoit and Caamaño, as heads of their respective “governments,” sign the Act. While granting the Constitutionalist government status seemed unwarranted to Bennett, the OAS by limiting the signatories clearly identified who the negotiating parties were and were not.³⁷

Still, Martin, Bennett, and Palmer knew the Benoit government could not last. Caamaño had made it abundantly clear that he would not negotiate with Benoit or any other person empowered by, or connected to, Wessin or his “criminal band.” Additionally, through friendships Martin had developed during his ambassadorship, the Americans learned that many Dominicans were opposed to both Benoit and Caamaño. To replace Benoit, Martin and Bennett chose General Antonio Imbert. Imbert was respected by many Dominicans for his role in the assassination of Trujillo and by others for his neutrality in the current civil war. Not popular with Wessin or his supporters, Imbert had remained uncommitted for most of the fight. After tapping Imbert to head the new government, Martin, Bennett, and Imbert selected Benoit (to curry support from Wessin) and three civilians to form the Government of National Reconciliation (GNR). Imbert became president on 7 May 1965. In the rebel zone, the Constitutionalist Congress met and elected Caamaño president of the new government.³⁸

For all concerned, the status of Wessin and his supporters remained a sticking point. Caamaño told Martin there was “no use talking as long as” Wessin stayed because Imbert was “not a free agent” with Wessin around. To compromise, Wessin told Palmer and Bennett he would resign for the good of the country, but only if other Loyalist officers, whom he considered to be less honorable, left first. Imbert, impatient with Wessin, acted first by luring the officers in question, minus Wessin, to the Dominican port of Haina and exiling them. For a few days, there seemed to be progress, but within a week, when it became evident that Caamaño had no

intentions of honoring his promises to exile certain rebel leaders, Wessin withdrew his offer to resign. To make matters worse, on 13 May, the GNR launched an attack that would cripple negotiations for weeks.³⁹

After his selection as president, Imbert became emboldened with the sense that he could become the savior of the Republic. He had convinced himself that a quick military victory over the rebels could end the crisis, and he thus initiated planning for just such an attack. In response to an increase of rebel activity north of the Security Zone and corridor, Imbert infiltrated his own forces into the area. Sporadic firefights, rioting and a cessation of most economic activity soon followed. Holding out little hope for a political solution, Bennett and Palmer recommended military action, perhaps led by American troops, to clear out the city north of the Security Zone and return it to government control. However, permission from Washington was withheld and Imbert soon decided to act on his own.⁴⁰

The first target Imbert chose to attack was Radio Santo Domingo (RSD). RSD had been in rebel hands since the first day of the revolt and once with the rebels realized that they could not win militarily, the station had become the weapon of choice for the Constitutionals. They used it to broadcast violently anti-American and antigovernment rhetoric throughout the country. Palmer coordinated deliberate jamming operations against the radio using his own airborne and ship-borne assets. On 10 May, Palmer and Bennett recommended the United States support a GNR special forces operation to sabotage the transmitter. Washington, however, ruled the operation a violation of the cease-fire and told Bennett and Palmer they were neither to prevent nor support it. Frustrated and out of options, Imbert launched an air strike against the main transmitter on 13 May. The next day, GNR special forces destroyed the alternate broadcast studio and transmitter.⁴¹

The effect was immediate and far-reaching. Soon after the air attack, which the United States had not expected, Bennett and Caamaño both protested to the OAS Commission. Within

days, the Martin mission collapsed. President Johnson, concerned that his opportunity to find a diplomatic solution was slipping away, ordered Martin to cease his attempts to reconcile Caamaño and Imbert and decided to send another negotiating team, headed by McGeorge Bundy, to the Republic. To Johnson, Imbert had become a liability; the U.S. president wanted a more moderate government formed and was willing to sacrifice the GNR to get it. With this attempt to shift American policy away from Imbert and towards neutrality, Palmer took steps to neutralize the Dominican air force and navy. Ironically for Imbert, the attack on RSD, which kept the radio off the air for less than twenty-four hours, cost him the support he needed the most--that of the United States.⁴²

Still, as the new American negotiating team looked for alternatives to the GNR, Imbert expanded his operation to clear all of northern Santo Domingo. Achieving success, yet frustrated with the shift in American policy, Imbert told Martin he would “denounce the United States and go it alone.” He became so hostile that some American officials were thankful they could leave a meeting at his house with their lives. Success also made Imbert increasingly unwilling to negotiate with Caamaño, just as the rebel leader was becoming more anxious to do so. Not until the end of his operation, on 21 May, was an IRC-sponsored cease-fire agreed upon and signed. Despite this new cease-fire, the Bundy mission had failed to find a permanent solution and returned to Washington.⁴³

As the second American peace mission collapsed and criticism of American policy intensified, LBJ sought relief through increased OAS participation. In late May, he said, “Out of the Dominican crucible the twenty American nations must now forge a stronger shield against disaster.” Clearly, he felt it was time for a multilateral effort, and he was willing to support the OAS to get it. In the end, it would be this multilateral effort in the form of a multinational military command and a new OAS committee that would restore stability to the Dominican Republic and its people.⁴⁴

Plans to create a multinational military command were underway early in the conflict. On 1 May, Ellsworth Bunker, American Ambassador to the OAS, expressed regret that “there was no inter-American force available” to respond to the crisis and suggested that the United States “would welcome the constitution of such a force as soon as possible.” In the Dominican Republic, the first formal discussions between Palmer, Bennett, and the first OAS Commission on the topic occurred on 6 May. Three days later, Bennett and Palmer forwarded their recommendations to the State and Defense Departments. Both men called for a U.S. commander of the multinational force, a combined staff and, to maintain American freedom of action, only partial participation by American troops. Secretary of State Rusk and Secretary of Defense McNamara quickly rejected both suggestions as inconsistent with the American desire to downplay the U.S. role. Furthermore, they believed that a multinational force “under OAS control was far more palatable” to the region than “one under U.S. control.” Accordingly, the OAS asked Brazil to designate an officer to command the force. Palmer would serve as deputy commander and as commander of the U.S. forces. Under this arrangement, U.S. troops would be subordinate to the Brazilian commander, General Hugo Alvim, but, through Palmer, responsive to orders from Washington.⁴⁵

Organizing and commanding this force created both challenges and opportunities. Latin American support was not as widespread as Johnson had hoped, but the first Latin American units did arrive quickly. Some arrived so quickly that there was “some awkwardness” as Palmer tried to coordinate their actions with those of U.S. forces before the multinational command was put in place. Without a multinational command, Palmer coordinated the actions of these forces, through Bennett, with the OAS. The Act Establishing the Inter-American Force (later renamed the Inter-American Peace Force, or IAPF), ratified by the OAS on 22 May, 1965, and signed in Santo Domingo the next day by military leaders from the seven participating countries, officially created the first multinational unified command in the western hemisphere.⁴⁶

Fielding the IAPF was one of the most significant achievements of American and OAS intervention in the Dominican Republic. The IAPF lent a semblance of international credibility to the American intervention, provided a multilateral effort to reach a solution, and served as proof the OAS could mobilize to meet a threat to regional security. Almost a dozen countries provided direct or indirect support (including logistical support or aid). The IAPF had certain capabilities, like the ability to establish direct liaison with Caamaño and other rebel leaders, which an American force did not possess on its own. The troops also shared cultural similarities with the Dominicans. The first multinational patrols, including Costa Rican, American, and Nicaraguan soldiers, occurred on 24 May. Shortly afterwards, the IAPF scored a diplomatic coup when it secured an agreement to demilitarize a hotly contested area surrounding the National Palace in Santo Domingo. Later, the OAS called on Latin American contingents, untainted by the charges of favoritism leveled by most Dominicans and outside observers against the United States, to investigate cease-fire violations. Though rebel forces would “pick on” Latin American units to test their resolve, over the next several months the IAPF generally performed well in combat situations and provided much needed leverage to the OAS Ad Hoc Committee.⁴⁷

The Ad Hoc Committee was the second OAS negotiating team sent to the Dominican Republic. The first, a five-man detail, had left the country in mid-May and had been, like its American counterparts in the Martin and Bundy missions, unsuccessful in arranging a political solution. The Ad Hoc committee, led by the American Ambassador to the OAS, Ellsworth Bunker, would be more forceful, more objective and more successful. Bunker, a prominent businessman and diplomat, made it clear upon his arrival that he “intended to tell Washington [which was not only the American capital, but the seat of the OAS] what should be done rather than the other way around.” Palmer was immediately impressed by Bunker and noted that the “arena is now almost purely political and psychological with the military furnishing the power back-up as the necessary muscle to force a solution.”⁴⁸

Despite being impressed by Bunker's credentials and manner, Palmer was not completely happy with the flow of information between himself, Bunker, and Bennett. He found himself "in the dark except for what Bunker or Bennett was willing to tell" him. Palmer said Bunker generally did well sharing or discussing aspects of the situation that directly applied to him as the American commander or IAPF deputy, but sometimes, Palmer wrote, he had to fly "by the seat of my pants." Not taking it personally, Palmer found it likely that Bunker withheld information from Bennett as well. Palmer saw the strain Bennett was under. Forced into playing "second fiddle" in his own Embassy, Bennett was cordial, but frequently at odds with Bunker. To Palmer, there was no doubt Bunker "was clearly in charge."⁴⁹

Before Bunker and his committee could offer its first serious settlement proposal, there occurred the worst violence since the landing of American troops in late April. Early on 15 June, the day after a national holiday, rebel troops fired on American and Latin American positions throughout the International Security Zone. Firefights raged all day until, after being unable to take decisive action for six weeks, the 82nd Airborne Division launched an attack into the rebel zone. Finding tremendous success, Alvim and York, both virulently anticommunist, wanted to rout the rebels completely, but Washington considered a rebel defeat politically disadvantageous. Palmer had the unpleasant duty to order a halt to the action. Still, by the time Palmer could restore the cease-fire on 16 June, the IAPF had seized 30 blocks of rebel territory, inflicted over 150 casualties, and detained 353 people at a cost of five killed and 41 wounded. A short time after this attack, Palmer relieved York without prejudice --he would later receive a third star--because the division commander had become too closely associated with right-wing Dominican military officers at San Isidro.⁵⁰

Two days after the fighting ended, on 18 June, the OAS offered its first settlement proposal to Imbert and Caamaño. Central to the proposal were plans to establish a provisional government and conduct OAS-supervised elections; both sides rejected it. Imbert considered

himself the head of the legitimate government and therefore saw no use for a provisional government. On the other hand, Caamaño, who was struggling to maintain unity among his followers, rejected a provisional government headed by Hector García-Godoy, the man the OAS proposed as the interim president. In rejecting the proposal, the only point both agreed on concerned the withdrawal of the IAPF immediately after the implementation of an agreement. In Palmer's assessment, both sides were firmly entrenched. He said the "outcome . . . depends on the actions of diplomats" and the ability of the OAS to "find and impose" a solution. In his opinion, which Bunker and Bennett shared, in civil war there "can only be one winner and one loser. Although Imbert is not a winner and shouldn't be considered so, Caamaño and his communist associates are definitely the losers." Both had to go.⁵¹

During June, July, and August, as the OAS modified its proposal to find common ground both Loyalist and Constitutionalist followers protested, demonstrated, and occasionally shot at each other or the IAPF--anything to disrupt the process. Throughout the period, Alvim, Palmer, and the IAPF remained central players in the peace process. Alvim and Palmer met with the Ad Hoc Committee, specifically Bunker, and with Bennett frequently. Both Alvim, whose passionate anticommunism sometimes got the best of him, and Palmer were willing to include personal political assessments with their professional military advice. Neither approved of García-Godoy, whom they regarded as a leftist, and, in late August, when they felt the OAS had made too many concessions to Caamaño, they rejected any more changes to the security and military provisions of the proposal.⁵²

Of course, Alvim and Palmer also represented the "power back-up" to the OAS. Though the Committee never applied force against either side, it did on occasion direct the IAPF to seal off the rebel zone, to cut off its water or electricity, and to investigate possible GNR human rights and cease-fire violations. These investigations were critical to discrediting several key GNR leaders, including Imbert and Wessin, whom the OAS and García-Godoy wanted removed. The

IAPF also provided intelligence and psychological operations (in the form of leaflets and posters) to support the Committee. Finally, never used, but never far from the minds of the OAS Committee members were IAPF plans for the forcible pacification of the rebel zone.⁵³

After a summer of negotiations, which Bunker categorized as the “most difficult” he had ever conducted, the OAS presented a final settlement to all involved on 9 August. It contained two documents that brought the sides closer. The Institutional Act created a provisional government under García-Godoy and set a timetable for future elections. The Act of Reconciliation set out amnesty, demilitarization, and public security issues. Resolving differences concerning the future of communist leaders and unpopular Loyalist generals took three additional weeks of negotiations. For most of those three weeks, both sides, lacking faith in the process, spent much of their time going to enormous lengths to sabotage any potential agreement. It took tremendous discipline by IAPF troops to resist the temptation to respond to these provocations. On 27 August, realizing that Imbert was not going to compromise, the OAS asked Bennett and Palmer to tell the GNR military chiefs that the American and OAS position was solid and that “a solution to the impasse must be found.” Three days later, Imbert resigned and the GNR chiefs, Caamaño, and OAS committee signed the agreement.⁵⁴

On 2 September, Dominican soldiers returned to the Presidential Palace and assumed responsibility for the building, its grounds, and the occupant, newly installed President García-Godoy. With his installation, the Ad Hoc Committee tasked Alvim and Palmer to “establish, close friendly ties with the Dominican Armed Forces” and to recognize that the IAPF was no longer a neutral instrument, but responsible for the security of the provisional government. Furthermore, because the agreement demilitarized Santo Domingo and eliminated the rebel zone, the OAS dissolved the International Security Zone. Under an agreement reached between García-Godoy, Alvim, and Palmer, the IAPF withdrew to several camps and abandoned all checkpoints

and observation posts, except those needed to maintain supervision over Wessin and his troops at San Isidro.⁵⁵

Wessin required extra supervision. On 5 September 1965, two days after his inauguration, García-Godoy signed a decree dissolving the command Wessin held. In response, Wessin held a press conference on 6 September and made known his willingness to “lead the country and save it from communism.” García-Godoy went to the OAS and informed the Committee that he could not govern if Wessin remained in the country. Though García-Godoy wanted outside help, Alvim and Palmer convinced the OAS that it would be better if García-Godoy issued the orders himself and enforced them with his own troops. If this failed, the IAPF could intervene. García-Godoy relented and called a meeting with Wessin. At this meeting, which Bunker attended, Wessin agreed to depart, but requested time to settle his affairs. In reality, he had no intention of leaving and ordered his troops into Santo Domingo early on 9 September.⁵⁶

Alvim and Palmer knew which routes Wessin and his troops would use to reach Santo Domingo and had observation posts along them. As a result, they were aware of Wessin’s every move and reacted quickly. Finding junior level commanders less interested in a fight, Palmer convinced them to return to their base. The same day, García-Godoy asked Alvim and Palmer to get Wessin out of the country. What followed was an operation that Bunker later described as a virtual kidnapping. After isolating Wessin’s forces within their camps, Alvim and Palmer met Wessin at his house and told him bluntly that he was leaving the country. Under the protection of an IAPF “honor guard,” Wessin left that night.⁵⁷

The close cooperation that existed between García-Godoy and the OAS was critical in the coming months, but did not guarantee agreement between the two. García-Godoy clearly appreciated the IAPF and understood how important it was to the future of his government. He held frequent meetings with Bunker, Bennett, Alvim, and Palmer, visited US-run Dominican army training camps, and expressed his pleasure with the “close cooperation between U.S. and

Dominican forces.” However, many of the meetings conducted in the fall focused on the future of the Dominican military chiefs. García-Godoy, under pressure from Bosch and his followers, wanted the chiefs to leave, while Palmer and Bennett, seeking stability and considering the current chiefs the best available, opposed any immediate changes. As García-Godoy postured against his chiefs, Bunker and Palmer convinced the chiefs not to “take any rash actions.” Alvim, on the other hand, made it clear the IAPF would not fight to restore García-Godoy if a coup occurred.⁵⁸

As Bunker and Palmer maintained the peace between the president and his military chiefs, both men made arrangements to reduce the rebel stronghold. They proposed, and García-Godoy accepted, a plan to move all of the rebel forces from Santo Domingo into camps located in the countryside. This action occurred in mid-October and, though mostly successful, some hard-line rebels remained in their old zone. At the same time, Caamaño requested the reintegration of 282 of his men into the Dominican Armed Forces. Palmer and Bennett reviewed the list, determined that less than a quarter of the men had ever been in the military, and rejected it. In response to Caamaño’s demands and the continued presence of rebels in Santo Domingo, García-Godoy decided it was time to act against the left as he had against the right by removing Wessin. Therefore, he authorized the IAPF and his military to clear the former rebel zone. Much to his relief, this operation was also successful and, more important, peaceful.⁵⁹

Largely because of IAPF support, García-Godoy would survive several more significant disturbances or abortive coups before he truly stabilized his government and the country in February 1966. The most significant of these disturbances occurred in December 1965. It involved government troops and a group of rebels, including Caamaño, attending a funeral in the Loyalist city of Santiago. When shooting broke out between the two armed groups, García-Godoy authorized the IAPF to intervene. Upon arriving at the hotel the rebels had occupied, the American commander on the scene convinced Caamaño that the IAPF would safely evacuate him

and his followers and return them to their camp. Although rapid IAPF intervention averted a major crisis, García-Godoy and many rebels blamed the incident on the Dominican Armed Forces. Their hostility towards the military chiefs intensified and on 6 January, against the advice of Bunker, Alvim, and Palmer, García-Godoy issued a decree announcing the overseas assignment of the military chiefs, Caamaño, and certain other rebel officers. In one last protest, the military chiefs seized Radio Santo Domingo and broadcast pleas for support until convinced by Alvim and Palmer to abandon the building. By the end of February, those men whom García-Godoy had ordered out of the country had departed.⁶⁰

After a brief, spring campaign season, national elections took place on 1 June 1966, and the Dominican people, with record voter turnout, elected a moderate, Dr. Joaquin Balaguer. After overseeing the elections, the OAS Ad Hoc Committee ordered the IAPF to begin withdrawing its forces on 1 July and to complete the withdrawal within ninety days. At the end of that period, the Committee would cease to exist. Bunker departed on 9 August, and soon thereafter, the intervention in the Dominican Republic ended with the departure of the last American soldiers on 21 September--seventeen months after they had first landed.⁶¹

After-action Review

The success of the intervention, which secured stability for the Dominican Republic to the present day, did not come without cost. The United States lost credibility with its neighbors, as it violated its pledge of nonintervention and sacrificed decades-old promises to respect their sovereignty. The Johnson Administration lost credibility with the international and national media, which virtually never accepted American claims of neutrality and almost universally recognized from the beginning that the real fight was one against communism. Most important was the human cost. With the loss of 47 killed and 172 wounded American marines and soldiers, the U.S. military has a responsibility to learn from the experience and apply those lessons to future operations.⁶²

First, communications equipment was not available in the early days of the intervention to allow secure discussions between the American Embassy and the military command. The inability to communicate without relaying messages through the Departments of State and Defense complicated political-military coordination and could have been disastrous if a significant problem had arisen during the evacuation or landings. Desperate for a solution, some confidential traffic traveled over the public telephone system. This proved embarrassing when it became obvious the rebels were monitoring those lines. Even after Palmer arrived, it was days before reliable communications equipment was available.

Second, intelligence of a political and military nature was critical to the military effort, but was in short supply and difficult to obtain. In his after-action review comments, Palmer suggested that in a stability operation, the targets are the “leaders and key assistants of the various indigenous factions.” Knowing who those individuals are and how to attack them, with information operations or direct action, requires information best collected over time and an intelligence staff manned with political and economic specialists when a crisis is underway. There was no good reason for the lack of reliable intelligence within the Defense Department in late April 1965. Earlier that year, Atlantic Command had updated its Dominican contingency plan. It is reasonable to expect that plan to have contained an operational study of the country, but as York’s confusion demonstrates, such a study was either inadequate or missing. With an Embassy attaché section and MAAG in country able to forward information, there was no good reason for York and Palmer to be so unprepared when they arrived in San Isidro. Both criticized the Embassy, among others, for these shortcomings, but praised the solutions, support, and advice the Embassy provided once they arrived.⁶³

Third, the military found its marines and soldiers unprepared and unaware of what to expect or how to act in the noncombat portion of their mission. Deployed into confusion, most soldiers were never truly neutral and, from the start, they talked about “killing commies.” Many

arrived expecting to fight, but found themselves manning observation posts, receiving fire, and unable to return fire because of rules of engagement they never understood. None had been properly briefed about their mission and not a few asked aloud, “What are we doing here?” One exasperated marine asked journalist Tad Szulc if “you newspaper men can tell me which are the good guys here and which are the bad guys?”⁶⁴

The troops found it much easier to help the Dominicans than to identify “friendlies” and “unfriendlies.” They took great joy in distributing humanitarian aid--food, medicines and water--and providing medical aid. They maintained public utilities, did construction work, and established Armed Forces Radio Santo Domingo, which quickly became the most popular radio station in the city. In perhaps their strangest duty, soldiers from the 82nd Airborne briefly managed the Santo Domingo Zoo and cared for its residents. Palmer found it critical for his troops to understand the larger, political aspect of the mission and to be eternally patient and flexible. Knowing that their training had not prepared them for this mission, Palmer took great pride in their performance and their discipline under fire.⁶⁵

Finally, the “most profound lesson” Palmer and other military leaders took from their experience was “the necessity for the complete integration of the U.S. effort” and the importance of a commander’s ability to exercise judgment in both political and military fields. Palmer pointed out that “close cooperation is essential between the military command and U.S. government’s political representative to insure that political agreements do not jeopardize the military situation”--as they almost had when Martin modified the first cease-fire--and, conversely, insure that military actions do not interfere with political negotiations”--as they almost had when Alvim and York wanted to crush the rebels in June. Palmer found the situation, particularly in the first few days, extremely fluid and thought it “imperative for the U.S. commander . . . to maintain close contact with the U.S. Ambassador and other negotiating teams, and keep completely current on the political situation” inside and outside of the country.

According to a Marine history, “commanders, in addition to being competent in their own military fields, have to be prepared to take on the trappings of a diplomat.” Clearly, Palmer, who learned a great deal from Bunker and Bennett about the complexities in Latin American politics, understood this and his role in the mission.⁶⁶

While highlighting his own role and that of the IAPF in his after-action comments, Palmer did not withhold the credit due to Bunker and Bennett. He recognized, as everyone did, that by mid- to late May, the situation was “almost purely political” and was willing to submit his interests to those of the lead diplomat, Bunker. By the time Palmer left, he had “acquired an immense admiration” for the man who “single-handedly [sic] refused to let any obstacle impede” his search for a solution. He went on to say that “few people of any nationality would have had the courage and tenacity to persevere the way” Bunker did. About Bennett, Palmer would say it was he who “is the real hero.” Full of courage, intelligence, and tenacity, Bennett and his staff were worthy of “high praise.” In fact, Palmer thought history would record that the greatest progress occurred when he and Bennett “were allowed to team up” without the interference of the OAS or Washington. While lavishing this high praise on Bunker and Bennett, Palmer commended them for grasping “the true relationship between diplomacy and force,” at least as he saw it.⁶⁷

That these men--Bunker, Bennett and Palmer--overcame their differences and the challenges of the mission, speaks well of their professionalism and the mutual respect they felt for each other. Forced to wrestle with the fractionalized nature of Dominican politics, they mediated, negotiated, and coerced as a team. In the end, this relationship meant the difference between a Dominican Republic in turmoil and one able to repeat peaceful transfers of power for decades beyond 1966. As the three men learned from their mistakes, so to did they provide lessons for those involved in future low intensity operations.

¹Yates, 15.

²Ibid., 16; and Abraham Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 31. Quote from George Ball.

³Bruce Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 23. Quote from Chargé d'Affaires William Connett to Secretary of State Dean Rusk on 25 April 1965. For attitude of Wessin and other anticommunist leaders, see John Bartlow Martin, *Overtaken by Events* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966), 648.

⁴Michael A. Morris, "The Problem of Control of American Military Interventions: Vietnam and the Dominican Republic" (Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1971), 211. Taken from Morris, Senator Fulbright's comments in the Congressional Record. For Johnson's remarks, see Yates, 93.

⁵Morris, 198; Yates, 34; and Morris, 211 and 222. Quotes taken from Morris but originally published in Lyndon B. Johnson: The Exercise of Power by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak and Lyndon B. Johnson and the World by Philip Geyelin. See Morris footnotes.

⁶Palmer, 23; and Yates, 44-48.

⁷Yates, 41 and 37.

⁸Ibid., 39 and 111.

⁹Jack K. Ringler, *U.S. Marine Corps Operations in the Dominican Republic, April-June 1965*, (United States Marine Corps Occasional Paper Series) (Washington, D.C.: Historical Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1970), 15.

¹⁰Yates, 43.

¹¹Ibid., 44.

¹²Ibid., 48-49, 51; Ringler, 17; and Herbert Schoonmaker, *Military Crisis Management: U.S. Intervention in the Dominican Republic, 1965* (New York, New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 35-36.

¹³Yates, 66-67; and Ringler, 20.

¹⁴"Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume IV)" (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: Headquarters, United States Forces Dominican Republic, August 31, 1965), MAAG, 2.

¹⁵"Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume III)" (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: Headquarters, United States Forces Dominican Republic, August 31, 1965), MAAG, 2-5.

¹⁶Yates, 61.

¹⁷Ibid., 64; and "Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume II)" (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: Headquarters, United States Forces Dominican Republic,

August 31, 1965), Intelligence, 21. Specifically, Palmer and York blamed the military attaché and MAAG for inadequate ground reconnaissance. The field selected by the MAAG and designated as the drop zone for the airborne assault was totally unusable. Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 39.

¹⁸Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 149-150; and “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I)” (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: Headquarters, United States Forces Dominican Republic, August 31, 1965), Intelligence, 3.

¹⁹Martin, 662; Schoonmaker, 126-127; and Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 42 and 159.

²⁰Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 150; “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I),” Intelligence, 2-4 and 7; and “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part III)” (Fort Bragg, North Carolina: Headquarters, XVIII Airborne Corps, October 1, 1966), Intelligence, 3.

²¹Yates, 107-108; and Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 55-56.

²²Tad Szulc, *Dominican Diary* (New York, New York: Delacorte Press, 1965), 83; and Martin, 707 and 676. Palmer, on the other hand, thought the troop level was about right. Remembering the adage, “Don’t send a boy to do a man’s job,” he thought a large show of force would provide psychological and security benefits.

²³Martin, 663; and Yates, 84.

²⁴Martin, 669-670; and Yates, 85.

²⁵Yates, 85 and 81.

²⁶Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 37; and “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I),” Commander Summary, 7.

²⁷Yates, 89.

²⁸Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 37-38; and Yates, 86.

²⁹Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 41; and “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I),” Commander Summary, 8. Later, Palmer would suggest that Bennett took the coup, and the fact that it occurred when he was out of the country, personally. As a result, he had no intention of letting the rebels “wiggle out of its self-inflicted predicament.” Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 25.

³⁰“Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I),” Commander Summary, 9; Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 45.; and Lowenthal, 128.

³¹Martin, 676, 706, and 672. Specifically, Martin relates an exchange between two Marines on 1 May. According to Martin, when one young Marine told a buddy that he had

“almost got one today,” the buddy replied that he had “got his first one yesterday.” Martin remarked, “They had been so trained. What a world.”

³²Yates, 92-93; and Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 46-47.

³³Yates, 95.

³⁴Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 51; and Yates, 96. In fact, with the military situation stabilized, Washington was more concerned about the possibility that an “unforeseen incident” would complicate their efforts to find a political solution than they were of a communist victory. As a result, rules of engagement limiting military freedom of action became more stringent and less appreciated the soldiers. Yates, 140-143; and Schoonmaker, 86-87.

³⁵“Chronology of the Crisis in the Dominican Republic” (Washington, D.C.: Historical Division, Joint Secretariat, Joint Chiefs of Staff, September 30, 1966), 31; “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I),” Communications, 3; and “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume III),” Civil Affairs, 9.

³⁶“Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume II),” 48 “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I),” Force Operations, 14; and “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume III),” Civil Affairs, 10-11.

³⁷Martin, 688; and “Chronology of the Crisis in the Dominican Republic,” 36-37.

³⁸Martin, 665 and 680-681; and Yates, 113.

³⁹Martin, 685; and “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I),” Commander Summary, 12.

⁴⁰Schoonmaker, 111; and Yates, 114-115.

⁴¹“Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I),” Commander Summary, 11-12; and “Chronology of the Crisis in the Dominican Republic,” 48.

⁴²Martin, 694 and 685; Yates, 116; and Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 56-57.

⁴³Martin, 696.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 699.

⁴⁵Ringler, 41-42; and Yates, 149-150.

⁴⁶“Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I),” Commander Summary, 13; and “Chronology of the Crisis in the Dominican Republic,” 12.

⁴⁷“Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I),” Commander Summary, 15; “Chronology of the Crisis in the Dominican Republic,” 77; and “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part II)” (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic:

Headquarters, United States Forces Dominican Republic, January 16, 1966), Commander Summary, 1.

⁴⁸Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 87; and “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I),” Commander Summary, 16.

⁴⁹Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 88 and xi.

⁵⁰“Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I),” Commander Summary, 17.

⁵¹Yates, 160; and “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I),” Commander Summary, 17.

⁵²Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 88; and “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part II)”. In a teleconference with President Johnson on 17 May, Palmer shared political and military assessments on the potential success of the Bundy proposal for peace. Throughout his after-action review summaries, Palmer provided military and political assessments of the situation as it developed. If his relationship with Bunker and Bennett was as positive as he suggests, it seems likely he was comfortable discussing these assessments with them as well. Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 58.

⁵³“Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part II),” Commander Summary, 1-3.

⁵⁴Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 97-98; and “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part II),” Commander Summary, 9.

⁵⁵“Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part II),” 10 and 13.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 14-15.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 15-16; and Ellsworth Bunker, interview by Michael Gillette, October 12, 1983, Interview 3, transcript, Lyndon Johnson Presidential Library, Austin, Texas. Accessed through internet on February 1, 2003.

⁵⁸“Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part III),” Commander Summary, I-2 and I-3; and “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part II),” Commander Summary, 19. Through the fall, Alvim became increasingly resistant to political direction from the OAS and hardened his anticommunist, anti-Godoy stance. Anxious to take aggressive action against the rebels, he complicated an already sensitive mission. Years later, Bunker remarked that Palmer had displayed great skill in handling Alvim and suggested that the American officer had missed his calling and should have instead been a diplomat. Things finally got so bad between Alvim and the OAS that Bunker decided there needed to be a change. After consulting Palmer and the Brazilian president, Bunker pushed through a change that maintained Latin American command of the IAPF, but by an officer of lesser rank. As a result, Palmer would leave as well. Alvim and Palmer left on 17 January. Ellsworth, Interview 3; and Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 130-131.

⁵⁹“Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part II),” 20-22, and 29-31.

⁶⁰Yates, 165-166, and 168; and “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part III),” Commander Summary, I-4.

⁶¹Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 135.

⁶²For more on the military-media relationship, see *Ibid.*, 64-68. Some suggest today’s adversarial relationship between the media and the military began with the confusion that existed between the official American policy of neutrality and actions journalists saw on the ground in Santo Domingo. The military did not set out to deceive the media, but found itself caught between the orders and public pronouncements of its civilian chain of command. Casualty figures vary from source to source. Those used are from Yates, 176.

⁶³“Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I),” Commander Summary, 19; and Ringler, 54.

⁶⁴Yates, 102; Szulc, 123.

⁶⁵Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 160-161.

⁶⁶“Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I),” Commander Summary, 3; Ringler, 54-55; and “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume III),” Doctrine 1, 3-4.

⁶⁷“Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I),” Commander Summary, 16; Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 101 and 141; and “Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I),” 22 and 24. Absent are any fond memories of Martin, whom Palmer labeled in his after-action review, a “well-known liberal.” It is likely that Martin, who never mentions Palmer in his memoirs, and Palmer found little to agree on. Nor should one assume the team agreed on everything. When Bunker proposed establishing a second corridor to divide the northern section of Santo Domingo in half, Palmer balked and would have gone to the JCS, “over the heads of U.S. civilian officials” in country if he needed to.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS

A careful study of the military interventions in Lebanon (1958) and the Dominican Republic (1965) reveals several common threads or lessons learned that remain applicable for future diplomats and soldiers. While there remain subsequent military operations other than war--most notably Bosnia, Haiti, Somalia and Kosovo--worthy of study, it is likely that they encountered many of the same that provide still more lessons for future study. There are solutions to these challenges, but because some of them are obvious, like the need for improved planning and training, and others are situationally dependent, they are not the focus of this chapter.

Many of the successes and failures in Lebanon and the Dominican Republic are remarkably similar. That the successes repeat themselves is a tribute to the professionalism of the diplomats and soldiers involved. On the other hand, the repetition of several significant shortcomings is unfortunate and provides evidence that the military does not always reliably apply from one mission to the next the lessons it should have learned. The most critical of shortcomings involve intelligence, communications and training issues--often the result of not anticipating or understanding the nature of missions with limited objectives. First, consider the intelligence challenge of operations other than war.

To the soldier or marine entering a combat situation, the common operating picture represents his understanding of the force he commands, the force he is opposing and the environment (terrain and weather) both will maneuver and fight in. By no means an easy task under the best of circumstances, developing this picture for operations other than war is immensely more complicated. Often lacking forward or rear areas, a clear means to identify friend from foe, an unambiguous objective, and a familiar culture, traditional orders of battle and operational concepts are of little use in this environment. At the height of the Cold War, the soldier was not focused on this kind of mission or the subtleties it requires. Besides the traditional

considerations, the soldier must also understand the cultural, religious and ethnic dynamics of the specific problem he must help solve. Even when, or if, he trained for operations other than war, it was virtually impossible for him to prepare for the specifics of every possible contingency. To the airborne trooper or marine, Lebanon and the Dominican Republic were just two in a long list of potential hotspots, and most military organizations did not possess the ability to be regionally or country focused. For this focus and mission-critical information, the soldier must rely on someone else, usually his diplomatic counterpart.¹

In Lebanon and the Dominican Republic, the coordination necessary to gain access to country-specific expertise did not occur before the introduction of troops. In 1958, despite two years of detailed, joint planning for operations in the Middle East--specifically Lebanon--and several months of increased tensions and instability, it appears as though the military made no effort to improve its understanding of the political-religious turmoil plaguing Lebanon. There were almost certainly no high-level discussions between the Specified Command and the American Embassy in Beirut. As a result, the marines landing on the beaches near Beirut had no idea how the Lebanese would receive them and no clear way of determining who was friendly and who was not. Likewise, plans for operations in the Dominican Republic, which were updated just before the intervention occurred, were notably devoid of political information. There were no descriptions of key personalities, key factions or contentious issues. Perhaps if this information had been in hand, the military, claiming a neutral role in the crisis, would have understood the complications created when the Army adopted, as its primary staging area, a base inextricably linked to an unpopular faction of the Dominican military. Given the complexity of the crisis, it should come as no surprise that many marines and soldiers never did understand their mission or the "enemy."

Part of the intelligence challenge was caused by force structure and resourcing problems. Every after-action review from Lebanon or the Dominican Republic addressed the significant

shortages of intelligence officers trained to conduct political, cultural, and religious assessments; they were also shortages of trained Arabic or Hispanic linguists as well. Though these officers existed at the national level or in other organizations, they were not available to units at the tactical and operational level. To fill the void, many units reassigned or retrained everyone they could. They quickly discovered, however, that developing an order of battle in Lebanon or the Dominican Republic was much more difficult than it would have been in Europe or Korea, and that on-the-job training alone would not fill the gap.

Fortunately for the military, the American diplomatic staffs in Lebanon and the Dominican Republic remained in country and provided invaluable assistance and guidance during the crises. In the hurried days immediately after the introduction of troops, the Embassy staffs provided critical information on the disposition of opposing forces, biographical sketches on key leaders, and contact lists. They helped in other ways as well. The embassies provided language support as the military struggled to field human intelligence or counter-intelligence teams from a limited supply of linguists, and given the natural limitations of a two-dimensional map, they helped the military understand the “lay of the land,” including significant or sensitive cultural and political areas. As Lieutenant Colonel Harry Hadd acknowledged years after he left Lebanon, the diplomatic staff, when it was available, was an “invaluable aid.” However, for this expertise to be invaluable, the military needed the desire, which it lacked during the planning and preparation stages, and the means, which it lacked during the landing stages, to access it²

Not surprisingly, given the lack of politico-military coordination done during the planning phase, there did not exist during the critical initial stages of intervention any secure means to conduct interagency communications at the operational level. Therefore, despite the advanced technology available to the United States throughout the Cold War period, in-country military-diplomatic coordination in the first days of each crisis occurred only when face-to-face meetings could occur or over non-secure radios and telephone systems. There are advantages to

face-to-face meetings, but in times of crisis, the disadvantages, unresponsiveness and inconvenience, seem to outweigh them. Only the fortuitous near-simultaneous arrival of Ambassador Robert McClintock and Admiral James Holloway at Watermelon Circle in Lebanon averted a potentially catastrophic incident between American and Lebanese troops. Any delay to McClintock's arrival would have left Holloway to manage the situation without the benefit of any diplomatic expertise. Furthermore, he had no means to obtain it rapidly. On the other hand, had Holloway arrived any later, McClintock may have lacked the "strongman" he needed to defuse the incident peacefully. Though no such incident occurred in the Dominican Republic, it is almost comical to consider Embassy employee Fred Lann relaying critical message traffic between the command ship *Boxer* and the Embassy via an amateur radio he operated from the front seat of a car parked on the Embassy grounds. Nearly forty years later, there is still no reliable, secure radio capability between American embassies and the United States armed forces.

Individual mission training was also a shortcoming in Lebanon and the Dominican Republic. With a watchful eye on Europe and Korea as well as increasing commitments to Vietnam, it is understandable that training focused on high-intensity conflict and not stability operations. Ready for combat on a nuclear battlefield, the soldier in Lebanon and the Dominican Republic faced entirely different challenges. He found himself constrained by rules of engagement he did not understand, facing an unfriendly, if not hostile, opponent he could not identify and assigned tasks he was not trained to perform. How many paratroopers ever imagined they would find themselves feeding and caring for animals at the Santo Domingo Zoo? As odd as it sounds, this mission was important to the Dominican people. American soldiers and marines have always performed admirably when called upon to use their ingenuity, but their criticism of the training and preparation they received for these missions are well placed and valid. After all, the lack of preparation and situational awareness led them to expect combat, not civil strife in

Santo Domingo. It is likely that future operations will involve the same challenges and the military must prepare itself for them.

Part of this preparation should include discussion, within the military and with members of the diplomatic corps, on the relationship between them in times of crisis. While Lebanon and the Dominican Republic provide examples of excellent cooperation and coordination after the introduction of troops, there occurred in their opening stages potentially serious disagreements between military officers and their diplomatic counterparts. Both involved a disagreement over who was in charge. In Lebanon, with marines pouring onto the beaches south of Beirut, there was a request from the ambassador not only to stop, but also to reverse the landings. The Marine commander and his Navy superior peremptorily rejected the request and noted, with some hostility, that the ambassador was not in the military chain of command. Likewise, in the Dominican Republic, Lieutenant General Bruce Palmer blatantly disregarded a ceasefire agreement, negotiated in good faith by a diplomatic representative of the United States, because it “froze the [military] situation in an inconclusive and ambiguous way.” There were times, he later wrote, when military considerations outweighed diplomatic ones.³

It is not the intent of this paper to say that these military officers were wrong in the decisions they made or the actions they took. On the contrary, it is very likely that most military leaders, from field grade to flag rank, would have made the same decisions. And despite the current educational and training emphasis on these types of missions, it is likely that many officers today would still reach similar decisions. The question remains, when does military necessity take precedence over political considerations and vice versa? Is there a correct answer?

The soldiers and diplomats involved in Lebanon and the Dominican Republic would almost certainly say there is a correct answer, though their answers would be different. Arguing their point of view, the diplomats would have pointed to various executive orders and joint State-Defense Department memoranda that had specifically assigned to them responsibility for all

political matters within the boundaries of their posting. There can be little doubt that McClintock considered the decision to introduce troops into Lebanon a political one. Therefore, he reasoned, the method and timing of their arrival was also political and subject to his direction. He expected the commander at the scene to accept the Embassy's recommendations and the Ambassador's grasp of the developing political situation. On the other hand, though the commander at the beach, Lieutenant Colonel Hadd, might have agreed that the *decision* to land his marines was political, it is apparent he did not consider the landing itself to fall under the purview of the ambassador and his staff. From his perspective, he was conducting a military, not a political, operation and would follow his orders until his military superiors modified them (which they did not do). He likely considered himself fortunate the landings went as smoothly as they did and did not relish the idea of trying them again in a situation that could be much less favorable.

In the Dominican Republic, the disagreement over the ceasefire was less contentious in large part because the diplomats and soldiers involved came to agree that it was flawed. Still, before finding common ground with his diplomatic counterparts, Palmer unilaterally decided the United States military would not abide by the ceasefire provisions and took steps to rectify a situation he considered to be militarily unfavorable. He knew the time would come when he would subordinate himself to the diplomatic effort, but in his mind, the security situation he faced did not allow for this transition. Until the transition occurred, and he noted in his after-action reports when it did, he placed military considerations above political ones. It is impossible to know what would have happened if the military action Palmer took had further worsened the situation. What if the diplomat who negotiated the ceasefire, Ambassador John Bartlow Martin, stuck to his guns and demanded compliance? Flawed or not, it was a legitimate agreement drafted under the auspices of the United States government. While Palmer may have eventually complied, or perhaps lost his command, it is likely a solution would have required State and Defense Department intervention. Without a doubt, that would not have been the ideal solution.

Again, it is not the intent of this paper to disparage any one person, but to point out that there remain unresolved issues between the diplomatic corps and military. It is, however, unfair to mention these unresolved issues without highlighting the numerous successes achieved during these complex missions. Once the frustration and confusion of the first days subsided, the diplomatic corps and military commands formed close bonds that creatively and efficiently solved situational problems. It is as important to study those lessons learned from their successes, as it is to study those learned from failure.

What cannot be overestimated is the value of professionalism and teamwork between the diplomatic corps and military command. As shown earlier, there were problems. However, years after the intervention in Lebanon, Ambassador McClintock, who would always remain critical of the “inflexibility” the military showed when it first arrived in the country, wrote of the strong bonds formed between himself and his military counterpart, Admiral Holloway. Likening their relationship to that of a “band of brothers,” a common military expression, McClintock credits military and diplomatic cooperation for saving Lebanon. Holloway likewise held McClintock in high esteem and marveled at the bravery and determination of the diplomats he served with. The sense of teamwork and mutual admiration was no less amongst the diplomats and soldiers who served in the Dominican Republic. Evidently, professionalism and a desire to do what is right can generally help overcome friction and pave the way for close cooperation.

Once underway, cooperation took many forms. Within a short period after the marines landed in Lebanon and the Dominican Republic, the Embassy staff and military command were closely linked. They accomplished this goal by establishing liaison offices, like the Embassy Liaison Office in Lebanon and the Embassy Coordination Center in the Dominican Republic, and collocating key military staff officers, like intelligence officers and military policemen, with the Embassy staff. There were frequent, if not daily, high-level meetings involving the ambassador, senior military commanders and staffs. Together they worked through countless issues--Status of

Forces Agreements, media relations and press statements, joint communications with the State and Defense Departments, liberty and pass areas for soldiers and support requirements (including generators, vehicles and communications gear). One of the most important areas of cooperation involved humanitarian assistance. Both Lebanon and the Dominican Republic were strife-ridden, poor countries whose people badly needed medical, economic and civil assistance. In the Dominican Republic, the United States distributed over 700 tons of food in the first month alone, and in Lebanon, much like the Dominican Republic, military medical teams and Embassy foreign aid workers made countless trips into the country delivering medical supplies and providing medical services in communities lacking doctors or nurses. According to Palmer, only the close cooperation “between the military and of the Country Team” allowed these things to occur.⁴

These tasks all set the stage for much more important, mission-critical aspects of diplomatic-military cooperation. In the final analysis, U.S. strategic success or failure in Lebanon and the Dominican Republic would depend on the accomplishment of the mission at hand. In Lebanon, this meant the creation of a safe and secure environment for the conduct of presidential elections. In the Dominican Republic, it meant the establishment of a democratic, pro-American government. In both, the political and military aspects of the crises were inseparable. Who best to speak to the statesmen than an experienced diplomat like Ellsworth Bunker or Robert Murphy? Likewise, who better to talk “man to man” with pivotal Lebanese or Dominican military leaders than Holloway or Palmer? They did so with great effect. However, despite the unique bond between men of like professions, this limited neither the soldier to military matters nor the diplomat to political ones. On the contrary, Palmer had a major impact on early negotiations concerning a provisional Dominican government (which he feared would be dominated by leftists), and it was Palmer who would say that the “most profound lesson” he took from his experience was the ability of the soldier to exercise judgment in both political and military fields in order to assist in the “the complete integration” of the American effort.⁵

Integrate the diplomat and soldier did their best to do. Though difficult at first, it did improve with time. Whether they played “good cop, bad cop” as McClintock and Holloway appear to have done at Watermelon Circle, or coordinated their approach to hard-line Dominican officers, the fact is that they learned to integrate their efforts. In both Lebanon and the Dominican Republic, the diplomats and soldiers coordinated the tone, content, and delivery of their message with repeated success. Never did their professional differences come between them and the fulfillment of their mission. As a result, it is unlikely there was ever any doubt, in the minds of the Lebanese and Dominican leadership with whom they negotiated, that the American position was united and focused towards the same objectives. On the one occasion when there was even a hint of disunity, Palmer relieved the officer in question.

Many years ago, Carl von Clausewitz wrote:

The personalities of statesmen and soldiers are such important factors that in war above all it is vital not to underrate them . . . It can be said, however, that these questions of personality and personal relations raise the number of possible ways of achieving the goal of policy to infinity.⁶

Though he was not addressing operations other than war, this observation is no less relevant than it is to total war. The interventions in Lebanon and the Dominican Republic were successful because the U.S. officials involved, diplomats and soldiers, were dedicated to the service of their country and the attainment of its national security objectives. They did not always agree; in fact, frequently they disagreed. Despite this, they coordinated, compromised, and worked through many challenges one might expect in similar contemporary operations. Future operations will have their own intelligence, communications, and training challenges just as Lebanon and the Dominican Republic did years ago, but there is no reason to repeat the mistakes of the past. With careful study, thorough planning and detailed coordination, future soldiers and diplomats can avoid some of these pitfalls. Then, with deliberation and patience, they can more fully focus on their responsibility to prioritize and integrate the diplomatic and military instruments of power.

Left unanswered is this question: What should Lieutenant Colonel Hadd have done when Ambassador McClintock asked him to reverse his landing operation? The answer to this question cannot be found in current military doctrine or in the pages of history. It is a leadership and “people skill” question whose answer can be found in the personalities of the key diplomatic and military leaders involved and the dynamics of their interaction. It therefore has, as Clausewitz wrote, an infinite number of answers, each potentially different from the last.

¹For more information on the preparations made by the American command in Europe for operations in the Middle East, see “American Land Forces after Action Report (Part I).” Notably, the plans were regionally focused and not specific to Lebanon. It is not possible to prepare specifically for every possible contingency a complex world of 180+ nations provides. It is unlikely the Division Ready Brigade at Fort Bragg was even regionally focused in 1965.

²Hadd: 87-89.

³Bruce Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 37.

⁴“Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume III)” Civil Affairs, 9.

⁵“Report of Stability Operations, Dominican Republic (Part I, Volume I)” Civil Affairs, 3.

⁶Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), 94.

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