

LESSONS FROM THE MARINE INTERVENTION IN HAITI,
1915-1934

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ARTS AND SCIENCE

by

PETER J. STRENG, MAJ, USMC
B.S., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1981

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
1995

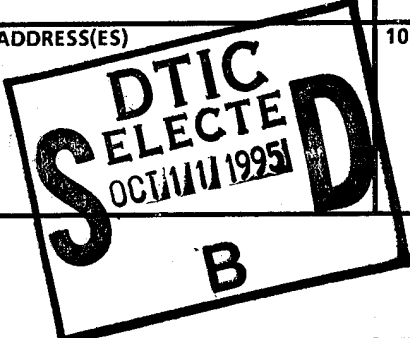
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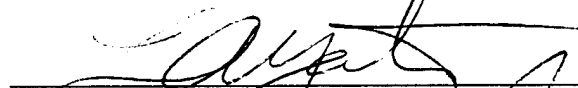
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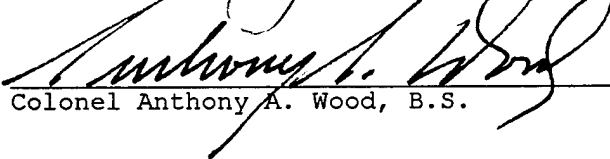
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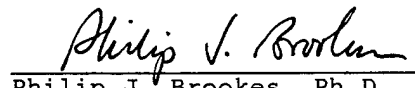

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ABSTRACT

LESSONS FROM THE MARINE INTERVENTION IN HAITI, 1915-1934 by MAJ Peter J. Streng, USMC, 93 pages.

This study examines the Marine intervention in Haiti from 1915-1934, its impact on the development of current and emerging MOOTW doctrine, and its lessons for future U.S. involvement in military operations other than war.

From 1915 to 1934, the United States of America was actively involved in armed intervention in Haiti. During this period, expeditionary elements of the United States Navy and Marine Corps conducted varied operations in Haiti to include combating insurgents, rebuilding infrastructure and organizing and administrating the national police force. Since World War II, the United States has committed military forces throughout the world to conduct an increasing number of similar operations. The diversity in the scope and nature of these types of potential military operations is staggering.

This study will examine the operations conducted by the Marines in Haiti, discuss the impact of the experiences gained from the Haitian intervention on the development of current and emerging U.S. MOOTW doctrine, and the relevance of the Haitian intervention for the types of operations that U.S. forces may find themselves committed to in the future.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From 1915 to 1934, the United States of America was actively involved in armed intervention in Haiti, a small, largely underdeveloped republic on the western end of the island of Hispaniola. The intervention was long and controversial. For over 19 years, expeditionary elements of the United States Navy and Marine Corps conducted varied operations in Haiti to include combating insurgents, rebuilding infrastructure, and organizing and administrating the national police force.¹

Since World War II, the United States has committed military forces throughout the world to conduct an increasing number of similar operations. These operations are now characterized by Joint and U.S. Army doctrine as military operations other than war (MOOTW). Recent examples include the U.S. interventions in northern Iraq, Somalia, Rwanda, and again in Haiti. A cursory examination of the political, social, cultural, religious and economic instabilities throughout the world indicates numerous potential trouble spots ripe for military intervention. There are several regions in the world where the United States may eventually commit its military forces, if not to protect its own national interests, then to participate as a leading member of the world community. The diversity in the scope and nature of these types of potential military operations is staggering.²

As joint doctrine in this realm of military operations continues to evolve and the frequency of involvement increases, careful analysis of previous interventions becomes essential in preparing to undertake such operations. This research will show that there is much to be learned from the successes and failures of past U.S. experiences in MOOTW and, in particular, the Haitian intervention.

The Research Question

The primary question that will be answered by this research is: what lessons for future U.S. military operations can be learned from the Marine Corps' 19-year occupation of Haiti from 1915 to 1934? To answer the primary question, three subordinate questions will be addressed. First, what operations did the Marines conduct in Haiti? Second, what impact did the experiences gained from the Haitian intervention have on the development of current and emerging U.S. MOOTW doctrine? Third, what relevance does the Haiti intervention have for the types of operations to which U.S. forces today may find themselves committed?

Background or Context of the Problem and the Research Question

For much of the early part of this century, the United States was actively involved in the economic and political affairs of four Latin American and Caribbean countries³ to further U.S. political interests, put-down revolutionaries, check or prevent European expansion, and protect American lives or property. For many of these interventions, the U.S. Marine Corps was the force of choice, or at least the most readily available force, when diplomacy was impractical or ineffective.⁴

During these interventions, U.S. forces were involved in a wide variety of military operations. Many were limited in scale, accomplished with limited resources, and often without benefit of clearly articulated objectives or intent. At the time, there was little or no existing doctrine to guide the Marines in accomplishing the wide spectrum of operations in which they found themselves involved. As this thesis will demonstrate, the evolution of the current MOOTW doctrine owes a good deal to the experiences gained during these operations.

There are substantial similarities between the world's emerging conflicts and what U.S. forces have faced throughout this century. Currently, there are numerous countries where famine, political instability, cultural and religious conflict, and social collapse are expanding beyond control and developing into situations that may eventually require outside military intervention, if not to solve the particular problem, then at least to contain the situation to prevent the destabilization of whole regions of the world. Recent military operations undertaken in several countries indicate the variety and complexity of these operations.⁵ Furthermore, the status of the United States as the world's dominant economic and military power has increased the chances of U.S. direct military participation in the kinds of problems that are simmering around the globe.⁶

This study will show that the operations conducted in Haiti between 1915 and 1934 are indicative of the types of potential U.S. involvement in future military operations such as peacekeeping, peace enforcement, counterinsurgency, and nation assistance. An analysis of the Marine Corps' 19-year occupation of Haiti will highlight valuable

lessons that will apply to future U.S. involvement in operations other than war.

Definitions

The definition of certain doctrinal terms is essential in order to place the Haitian intervention in the context of current doctrine. Unless a term is service unique or more clearly defined in one of the service manuals, the joint definition will be used.

The first term that must be clearly defined is MOOTW. MOOTW are operations to deter war, promote peace, and support civil authorities. An essential aspect of MOOTW is that they are driven by political considerations. While that statement applies to virtually any endeavor undertaken by military forces, MOOTW are more sensitive to such considerations due to the overriding objective to limit potential hostilities.⁷ Furthermore, it should be noted that the acronyms MOOTW and OOTW are synonymous.

There are several specific operations that fall under the umbrella term of MOOTW. For this research, the two primary types are nation assistance and peace operations. Nation assistance is defined as civil and/or military assistance rendered to a nation by foreign forces within that nation's territory during peacetime, crises or emergencies, or war. The assistance is based on agreements mutually concluded between the nations involved. Nation assistance programs include, but are not limited to, security assistance and foreign internal defense.⁸

Security assistance refers to programs designed to provide defense materials, services, and military training to foreign nations in order to further national policies and objectives.⁹ Foreign Internal

Defense (FID) is the participation by military agencies in any of the action programs taken by another government to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency,¹⁰ where insurgency is defined as an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict.¹¹ Support to counterinsurgency involves assistance to a government in the military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions it undertakes to defeat insurgency.¹²

Peace operations encompass two types of activities: those that are predominantly diplomatic (preventative diplomacy, peacemaking, peacebuilding), and those that are predominantly military (peacekeeping and peace enforcement).

During an emerging crisis, preventative diplomacy is used to prevent or limit violence. Peacemaking refers to a diplomatic process -- often backed by military force or threats -- that arranges an end to a dispute and resolves issues that led to the conflict. Peacebuilding concerns post-conflict diplomatic and military actions designed to strengthen and rebuild governmental infrastructure and institutions in order to avoid a relapse into conflict. Military activities in support of preventative diplomacy and peacemaking may include military to military relations, security assistance operations, preventative deployments, and shows of force.¹³

For this study, the two military activities -- peacekeeping and peace enforcement -- are of primary interest. Peacekeeping is a military operation undertaken with the consent of all major belligerents, designed to monitor and facilitate implementation of an

existing truce or cease-fire and to support diplomatic efforts to reach a long-term political settlement.¹⁴ In contrast, peace enforcement is the application of military force, or the threat of its use, normally pursuant to international authorization, to compel compliance with resolutions or sanctions designed to maintain or restore peace.¹⁵ Neither should be confused with peacemaking, which is a diplomatic process that arranges peaceful settlements to disputes and resolves issues that lead to conflict without the direct use of military force.¹⁶

A final essential definition is that of military civic action. Military civic action is the use of primarily indigenous military forces on projects useful to the local populace in areas such as education, training, public works, agriculture, transportation, communications, health, and sanitation, and in other areas contributing to economic and social development. Civic action also serves to improve the standing of the military forces with the population. U.S. forces can (and do) conduct both unilateral and combined civic action programs.¹⁷

While the emphasis and methods of the three concepts are different, there is an important link between peacebuilding, nation assistance, and military civic action. All have complementary elements with the common goal of yielding long-term solutions to political, social and economic problems that are the root of national crises.

Limitations

The Marine occupation of Haiti lasted 19 years. A careful analysis of every operation over the entire period would be impractical and, more importantly, miss the point of this study. This study will

examine in detail those specific operations that are similar to the categories of nation assistance and peace operations and shed the most light on current U.S. doctrine and operations.

For the most part, the actions in Haiti were conducted by smaller than company-sized elements. Routine reporting by the Marines was uncommon.¹⁸ While some of the larger operations are reported in great detail, there is little documentation linking the smaller actions to an overall operational plan. Sufficient information is available, however, on the efforts to pacify the indigenous insurgent elements, the administration of the social and governmental institutions, and the establishment of the national police force, to draw the conclusions necessary to complete this study.¹⁹ Unfortunately, the combat reports and official records that provide an important source of the type of information suited for this kind of analysis are archival documents that, due to constrained resources, could not be obtained. An additional obstacle is that some of the doctrinal publications used for this analysis are currently being re-written. The new editions of FM 100-20 and Joint Pub 3-07 have not been completed at the time of this research. Likewise, the last update to current Marine Corps doctrine (FMFM 8-2) is dated 1980. The Small Wars Manual, perhaps the best source of practical doctrine for these types of operations, is not official doctrine at all. Despite these limitations, sufficient material is available to conduct an analysis of the intervention.

Significance of the Study

Operations other than war are not new to the armed forces of the United States. However, the pace at which our military forces

continue to be involved in active intervention is quickening. While the primary focus of U.S. forces is to fight and win the nation's wars, America's military increasingly operates around the world in an environment that may not involve combat in the fullest sense.²⁰ Military intervention in Northern Iraq, Somalia, Bangladesh, Rwanda, Bosnia, and again in Haiti indicate the frequency and variety of the types of operations the U.S. military can expect to be involved in as the "new world order" develops and if America's leadership role expands. It is becoming evident that scarcity of resources, crime, overpopulation, tribalism, ethnic and religious conflict, and disease are rapidly destroying the social fabric of the less-developed nations of the world.²¹

There is a great deal of practical experience to be gained from careful analysis of past experience generated during this century. Those experiences are especially useful because they often encompassed a wide variety of operations under various political and social circumstances over an extended period in very different conditions and environments.

The Marine intervention in Haiti is a particularly useful example since it involved the conduct of a variety of military operations over almost two decades. Also, it involved a military force, trained primarily for combat, conducting mostly non-traditional military activities, in a situation similar to what awaits U.S. forces today in a number of regions in the world.

Literature Review

There are three broad categories of literature available on this topic. First are the sources that chronicle the Marine intervention. Second are the joint and service doctrinal publications that describe the principles and methods of conducting MOOTW. Third are writings that describe the effects of the continued crumbling of the social, economic, political and cultural structures within the lesser-developed regions of the world -- regions where military involvement by the U.S. may eventually occur.

The first category consists of materials that describe, review and analyze the Marine intervention in Haiti from 1915 to 1934. These sources include various histories by and about the Marine Corps, published articles in several professional military journals about the operations, personal recollections and correspondence by Marines who took part in operations, government documents and records of congressional inquiry into the occupation, background analyses of U.S. foreign policy in the region, and published histories of Haiti and U.S.-Haitian relationships.

Of the histories about the U.S. Marine Corps, Allan Millett's Semper Fidelis: The History of the U.S. Marine Corps, Clyde Metcalf's A History of the U.S. Marine Corps, Robert Moskin's The U.S. Marine Corps Story, and Robert Heintz's Soldiers of the Sea, The U.S. Marine Corps, 1775-1962 are indicative of the works that chronicle the intervention from a Marine Corps perspective. Generally speaking, they are pro-Marine and, in many cases, cover little new ground or provide few unique insights. Heintz's perspective has an interesting slant since he was not

only a Marine, but he also served as a military advisor in Haiti from 1958 to 1963. Moreover, both he and his wife co-authored another excellent work on the history of Haiti that is also cited in this research. Millett's book offers probably the best overall summary of the intervention in a single chapter, but it tends to be confusing as, in the same chapter, he compares operations in Haiti with those conducted during the same period in the Dominican Republic.²²

There are several articles published in professional journals that offer insight into details of the operations conducted in Haiti during the period. Many of the articles were written by Marine and naval officers in publications such the Marine Corps Gazette and Proceedings. While they tend to be somewhat one sided, they do offer the degree of detail on specific operations and tactics needed to complete this research. For balance, articles written by correspondents for several periodicals offer insight from other than the official U.S. military perspective. Herbert Seligman's article, "The Conquest of Haiti," in The Nation, and Ernest Gruening's, "Conquest of Haiti and Santo Domingo," from Current History, are typical examples in that they try to describe the intervention from the Haitian perspective. Typically, they illustrate the building resentment by the Haitian people over the course of the occupation.²³

Of the personal recollections and correspondence by Marines who took part in operations in Haiti, the most useful are those that discuss the implementation of policies and how operations were conducted. Published correspondence, both personal and official, by Smedley Butler, one of the brigade executive officers and eventually the first "police

chief" of Haiti, are particularly valuable. Similarly, the memoirs of Generals William P. Upsher, John A. Lejeune, and Alexander A. Vandegrift all have valuable insight into the intervention and are well documented both in their official biographies and collections of personal papers that are available. Overall, these sources are key in understanding the conduct of operations in Haiti from the perspective of those who either planned or executed them.

There are numerous government documents and records of congressional inquiry available. While the actual combat reports outline in detail the operations conducted by the Marines over the course of the intervention, most of them (particularly the combat reports) are located in archives not readily accessible to a researcher at Fort Leavenworth. Fortunately, there are numerous secondary sources that incorporate some of these documents and reports. Of the records of congressional inquiry, the records of the 67th Congress in 1921 and 1922 deal directly with allegations of abuses, atrocities, and malfeasance by the Marines during the occupation and are readily available.

The numerous background analyses of U.S. foreign policy in the region and published histories of Haiti are generally the most balanced in describing the motives behind the intervention and the effects of the intervention itself. Key sources in this category are Arthur Millspaugh's Haiti under American Control, 1915-1930, Hans Schmidt's The U.S. Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934, James McCrocklin's Garde D' Haiti, Twenty Years of Organization and Training By the U.S. Marine Corps, and Lester Langley's The Banana Wars: An Inner History of American Empire, 1900-1934. These sources concentrate on the political and social

implications of the military intervention, which are key ingredients in MOOTW.

The second category of sources crucial to my research consists of the doctrinal publications that define, outline, and describe MOOTW. Included in this category are Joint Publication 3-07 (Draft, Joint Doctrine For Military Operations Other Than War), FM 100-5 (Operations), FM 100-20 (Current and Draft, Military Operations In Low Intensity Conflict), FMFM 8-1 (Counterinsurgency Operations), and the Small Wars Manual.

Joint Publication 3-07, the joint doctrine of the United States, corresponds well with FM 100-5, the cornerstone of the U.S. Army's warfighting doctrine, which includes a chapter on military operations other than war.

FM 100-5 is the U.S. Army's capstone operations manual. While chapter 2 describes fundamentals that apply to all military operations and has significance that will be discussed in this study, chapter 13 deals strictly with operations other than war and, in particular, the environment, the principles, and the specific activities involved in MOOTW.

FM 100-20 is the U.S. Army's manual that deals specifically with military operations in low intensity conflict. The current edition was published in 1990. At the time of this research, it is being rewritten to be more closely aligned with FM 100-5 and joint doctrine. Still, it is useful because it outlines and discusses considerations and specific operations that are short of war.

In the case of Joint Pub 3-07, the draft copy was used. It sets forth joint doctrine for the armed forces of the United States in military operations other than war (MOOTW). Primarily, it contains guidance for the exercise of authority by combatant commanders and other joint force commanders and prescribes doctrine for joint operations and training.

FMFM 8-1, which deals with counterinsurgency operations, is the only official doctrinal publication the Marine Corps has that is concerned with subjects closely related to MOOTW. It presents the doctrine, tactics, and techniques used by Marine Corps landing forces in counterinsurgency operations, including counter guerrilla operations. Unfortunately, the current edition is dated 1980, and it does not incorporate many of the changes that are reflected in FM 100-20, FM 100-5, and Joint Pub 3-07.

The Small Wars Manual, first published in 1940 and republished again as NAVMC 2890 in 1987, is the true Marine guidebook on how to conduct MOOTW. In fact, many of the lessons learned in Haiti were used to develop this manual. While dated in some aspects, it is an excellent operations and tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) manual whose roots are firmly planted in the practical experiences of the Marine Corps' involvement in MOOTW early in the century. This is a key source for this research, especially since it serves as the most useful conduit between the Marine operations in Haiti and current doctrine.

The third category of sources includes those that discuss recent and developing world-wide crises that will ultimately involve U.S. forces. Strategic estimates, Department of Defense studies, and

articles from professional journals are the most relevant sources in this category. Recent articles in Atlantic Monthly, Naval War College Review, Foreign Affairs, Current History, and Armed Forces Journal give excellent overviews of the current world situation and events that may lead to U.S. military involvement.²⁴

Research Design

The task of this study is to determine what lessons from the Marine Corps intervention in Haiti apply to potential U.S. involvement in future military operations. This will be accomplished by examining what happened in Haiti during the Marine intervention, showing the relationship between the experiences gained in Haiti and current and emerging MOOTW doctrine, and discussing the significance of the Haitian intervention for future involvement in MOOTW.

The Marine intervention in Haiti will be described from a historical perspective, using the various Marine Corps histories, published articles in professional military journals, personal recollections and correspondence by Marines who took part in operations, government documents, records of congressional inquiry into the operation, background analyses of U.S. foreign policy in the region, and published histories of Haiti. This discussion will include the background of events leading to the decision to commit the Marines, the political considerations involved, and the social implications. In the absence of primary source data, all information will be verified using multiple secondary sources.

Next, the relevance of the Haitian intervention for future MOOTW will be established by examining the relationship between current

and emerging doctrine and the conduct of operations in Haiti. Specifically, the critical link between doctrine and Haiti, the Small Wars Manual, will be developed and discussed. This analysis will focus on the how the fundamental principles of MOOTW derived from and relate to the conduct of operations in Haiti.

Finally, lessons learned will be drawn from the analysis of the Marine occupation of Haiti, relative to current doctrine and potential U.S. military interventions.

Conclusion

While the U.S. involvement in Haiti from 1915 to 1934 may not have been a particularly valorous event in Marine Corps history, the experience had a significant impact on how U.S. forces have and will conduct operations other than war. A careful examination of the events leading to the intervention and the 19-year occupation by U.S. Marines will show important lessons for U.S. military involvement in future operations other than war.

Endnotes

¹Hans Schmidt, The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1935, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1971), 1-5.

²Michael T. Klare, "The New Challenges to Global Security," Current History, April 1993, 155-161.

³Haiti, The Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Cuba.

⁴Allan R. Millett, Semper Fidelis, The History of the United States Marine Corps, (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 155-241.

⁵Ronald K. McMullen and Augustus Richard Norton, "Somalia and Other Adventures for the 1990s," Current History, April 1993, 169-174.

⁶Gaddis Smith, "What Role for America?" Current History, April 1993, 150-154.

⁷Joint Chiefs of Staff, Draft Publication, Joint Publication 3-07: Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1994), I-1.

⁸Ibid., GL-2-3.

⁹Ibid., III-5.

¹⁰Department of the Army, FM 100-20: Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1990), G-2.

¹¹Ibid., G-4.

¹²Joint Pub 3-07, GL-5.

¹³Ibid., GL-4.

¹⁴Ibid., GL-3.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷FM 100-20, G-5.

¹⁸James H. McCrokin, Garde D'Haiti, Twenty Years of Organization and Training By The United States Marine Corps, (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1956), 154.

¹⁹See Arthur C. Millspaugh, Haiti Under American Control, 1915-1930, (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1931), 1-190; Hans Schmidt, The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1935, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1971), 1-257; James H. McCrokin, Garde D'Haiti, Twenty Years of Organization and Training By The United States Marine Corps, (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1956), 3-235; and

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²¹Robert D. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy," Atlantic Monthly, February 1994, 44.

²²See Allan R. Millett, Semper Fidelis, The History of the United States Marine Corps, (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 178-211; Clyde H. Metcalf, A History of the United States Marine Corps, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1939), 371-407; Robert J. Moskin, The U.S. Marine Corps Story, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1987), 175-190; and Robert D. Heinl, Soldiers of the Sea, The United States Marine Corps, 1775-1962, (Baltimore: The Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1991), 234-246.

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²⁴See Robert D. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy," Atlantic Monthly, February 1994, 44-76; Shashi Tharoor, "Peace-Keeping: Principles, Problems, Prospects," Naval War College Review, Spring 1994, 9-22; Richard K. Betts, "The Delusion of Impartial Intervention," Foreign Affairs, November/December 1994, 20-33; Ronald K. McMullen and Augustus Richard Norton, "Somalia and Other Adventures for the 1990s," Current History, April 1993, 169-174; John G. Roos, "The Perils of Peacekeeping: Tallying the Costs In Blood, Coin, Prestige, and Readiness," Armed Forces Journal, December 1993, 13-17.

CHAPTER 2
INTERVENTION

Introduction

The Marine occupation of Haiti was the Corps' longest and also one of the most scrutinized and severely criticized undertakings.¹ Still, for over 19 years, Marines in Haiti were involved in actions covering a wide spectrum of military operations, many of which are now referred to as operations other than war. In attempting to deduce lessons for future U.S. involvement in operations other than war from the Haitian intervention, it is first necessary to understand what occurred in Haiti from 1915-1934.

Background

With a total area of 10,714 square miles, Haiti lies 48 miles east of Cuba and occupies the western third of the island of Hispaniola. It is a land of rugged mountains, plateaus, small isolated valleys, and coastal plains. The broken landscape has historically made communications difficult and tended to fragment the country. At the time of the first Marine landing near the capital city of Port-au-Prince in 1915, Haiti was a nation of approximately 2 million people. A combination of mulattos and blacks, the Haitians were the descendants of slaves who had rebelled against their masters and violently ended French colonial rule early in the nineteenth century.² Since that time, Haiti

frequently had been ruled by a succession of dictators, each in turn replaced by bloody revolt.

Between 1804 and 1915, the country experienced 100 coups and civil wars, causing 22 changes in its national government. With the exception of minor attempts at democracy, such as the creating of a powerless National Assembly, Haiti normally alternated between dictatorship and anarchy.

Haitian society was divided into two distinct groups, the mulatto elite and the black peasantry. The elite, comprising five percent of the population, dominated the capital city of Port-au-Prince and the nation's few large towns. The group was characterized as "an overeducated, underemployed minority that depended economically on business, professional work and . . . officeholding in the national government."³ The majority of the Haitian people, the peasantry, lived a life that was little different from that which they had experienced as slaves of the French. Living a below-subsistence existence, immersed in the practice of voodoo, plagued by disease, illiterate and held in contempt by the elite, the only chance for them to gain control of their own lives was through violence. The most notorious manifestation of this came in the form of marauding bands of Haitian bandits, known as *cacos*. Most active in the northern mountain areas of the country, *cacos* served as mercenary forces available to any ambitious politician who was willing to pay the price in order to use their force and intimidation to put him in office. In order for revolution to be successful, an aspiring president needed *caco* support. In return, if the coup was ultimately successful, the *cacos* would receive their payment, normally

from the national treasury.⁴ As time would pass and the payoffs declined, so did the *cacos'* support, resulting in a never-ending cycle of violence, revolution, and political strife.

Economically, Haiti was continuously on the brink of disaster. Between 1875 and 1915, various governments had borrowed \$26.9 million from French private investors and the French government. An additional \$1.7 million came from the foreign-controlled Bank of Haiti. Additionally, the country had defaulted on \$1.1 million in salary payments. Haiti's entire economic system was near collapse by 1915.

Politically, the country had been all but ignored by its most powerful neighbor. Haiti was officially recognized by the United States on June 5, 1862. In 1864 a U.S. - Haitian treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation was signed.⁵ With the exception of some discussion by the United States towards securing agreements involving the use of Haitian ports as coaling ports and naval bases, there had been little additional formal relationship between the two countries.⁶

While the United States was not interested in territorial acquisition in the Caribbean, it did feel that actions to enforce the Monroe Doctrine were justified. The potential for outside intervention was increasing, as the European powers sought to protect their significant economic interests in Haiti. In doing so, they did not necessarily accept America's exclusive claim to the region. On four occasions in the second half of the 19th century, the United States had warned France, Great Britain, and Germany to stay out of Haiti.⁷

When the Haitian government renewed loan negotiations with France and Germany in 1910, the U.S. State Department considered a set

of agreements that would give the United States control of the failing Haitian financial system. Since until this time there was little investment by American entrepreneurs in Haiti, the State Department insisted that any plan to reorganize Haitian finances would include American investors. The plan that would put America in control of Haiti's finances was being formulated in Washington by 1913.⁸

The situation was further complicated by President Woodrow Wilson who soon after becoming president in 1913, stated his refusal to recognize any government that took power through violence. Wilson saw America's role in Haiti as negotiating the end of civil war, establishing a legitimate provisional government, promoting free elections, and supporting the nation's armed forces to bolster a legitimate government against rebels. America's plan was communicated to Haiti in 1913.⁹

The U.S. strategy was anything but acceptable to the Haitians, who were not prepared to accept American domination. Despite the diplomatic sermons of the Americans and the threat of foreign intervention, Haitian politics continued with business as usual. Governments changed rapidly as violence and bloodshed mounted. From 1913 to 1915, Haiti went through several new presidents, each in turn supported by his own group of *cacos*.

In 1914 and 1915, the State Department offered to protect incumbent presidents with Marines if they and the Haitian congress would accept a treaty that would make Haiti an American-managed financial protectorate. Before negotiations could progress, however, rebels led by General Vilbrun Guillaume Sam occupied Port-au-Prince with a *caco*

army, scattering the elite politicians who had appeared to be ready to deal with Washington. In the meantime, the State Department concluded that French and German financiers had been supporting this new batch of rebels in an effort to hinder American economic control and that the Germans in particular were interested in a Mole St. Nicolas naval base.¹⁰

The newly self-appointed Sam government would not negotiate either the issue of the Mole St. Nicolas base or the question of making the National Bank of Haiti an American-managed institution. While the new government would accept U.S. troops on a temporary basis to restore order, it would not allow long-term foreign intervention.¹¹

The U.S. Navy Department had no small experience landing troops in Haiti. In 1913, American landing parties had been ashore 13 times, and in 1914, Marine ship guards had landed three times. On December 17, 1914, Marines from the USS Machias had escorted a National Bank gold shipment of \$500,000 from Port-au-Prince to a waiting gunboat for safe transit to New York. Twice, between August 1914 and January 1915, Marine expeditionary regiments sailed into Port-au-Prince harbor to deter a *caco* army that threatened the capital. Although neither regiment landed, officers on both occasions reconnoitered the city, knowing that they might someday conduct operations there.¹²

In the spring of 1915, Dr. Ronsalvo Bobo organized yet another *caco* army and took the northern town of Cap Haitien. In response, a Marine detachment landed on July 9 to guard foreign property. The potential for another civil war continued to develop until July 27, when a sudden coup by Bobo's supporters in Port-au-Prince sent Sam and his

henchmen running for sanctuary in the foreign legations. This final act, in conjunction with the growing threat of outside intervention and the Wilson Administration's willingness to intervene, tipped the scale towards U.S. invasion.¹³

The Marines Land

When the Marines arrived at Bizoton at 5:50 P.M. on July 28, 1915, they marched into conflict and confusion.¹⁴ The day before, July 27, 162 political prisoners in the Haitian National Penitentiary had been slaughtered on the order of the embattled President Sam. In revenge, an aroused mob had stormed the French Legation where Sam had taken refuge and hacked his body to pieces. Another crowd entered the Dominican Legation and killed the prison's commanding officer. Late in the day on the 28th, at the request of the State Department and on the orders of the Caribbean squadron commander, Rear Admiral William B. Caperton, a landing party of Marines and sailors from the battleship Washington, led by Captain George O. Van Orden, went ashore. Their mission was to restore order in the city and save the lives and property of resident foreigners. From Bizoton, they marched on the capital, suffered light casualties (two sailors killed by friendly fire), placed guards at the various foreign legations, and took charge of the city.¹⁵

From the outset of the intervention, the Wilson Administration debated the legal implications and wisdom of military intervention to bring peace to Haiti. Issues of how to legitimize the intervention, its length and scope, loomed large. In the meantime, Secretary of State Robert Lansing requested that the Navy send sufficient troops to control Port-au-Prince and the surrounding countryside. Caperton requested

Marines from Guantanamo, Cuba. By the next afternoon, the 24th Company had arrived. Americans and Haitians skirmished for the first time on July 30. Within 24 hours, five companies of the 2d Marine Regiment left Philadelphia, led by Colonel Eli K. Cole.

Initially, the Marine presence eased tensions in the capital. By the middle of August, Marines began the systematic occupation of Cap Haitien, Haiti's second largest city, and Port-au-Prince. Caperton ordered all Haitian soldiers out of the capital and the population disarmed. The Marines, working in cooperation with the newly established Revolutionary Committee, disarmed all Haitian soldiers,¹⁶ most of whom complied in the belief that the intervention was only temporary.¹⁷ There was some resistance and two Haitians were killed.

Concurrently, the United States began to apply a program to reform Haiti. The Navy Department ordered Caperton to encourage the Haitian congress to elect a new president, preferably senate president Sudre Dartiguenave, who had agreed to cooperate with the Americans. In opposition, the Revolutionary Committee openly supported Bobo, who was against the American intervention. On July 31, in an attempt to force the issue of who would control the government, a delegation from the Chamber of Deputies inquired if Caperton had any objection to their proceeding with the election of a new president. The admiral replied that he wanted a delay until order and stability had been more completely established. The Haitians complied with the request.¹⁸

Dartiguenave and Bobo became the two major contenders for the presidency. Dartiguenave was a distinguished lawyer, President of the Haitian Senate, and very popular among his congressional colleagues.

Bobo, supported by the Revolutionary Committee, was extremely well educated, widely traveled, fluent in several languages, and considered by many a patriot. Furthermore, he often provided his medical services to the poor and needy without pay. However, Bobo was viewed by the United States as unbalanced, an idealist and dreamer who was unsuited for the presidency. Moreover, Bobo was well known for his anti-American sentiments.¹⁹

Although Caperton made the capital a weapons-free zone, Bobo and his *caco* force of 1,500 dominated the outlying areas. Bobo's forces, anticipating that the Haitian Congress would elect his opponent, threatened to use force to prevent that body from meeting. As the Haitian congress tried to avoid an election and persuade the Americans to leave, Marine patrols methodically occupied key points around the city and continued to disarm the Haitian militia. With Marines standing by, the legislature elected Dartiguenave as president on August 12.

The price for American armed support was a ten-year treaty that put Haiti's customs under U.S. control and provided for a national constabulary to be led by American officers. Additionally, American engineers and public health officials would reform the public works and sanitation systems. In effect, Haiti would become an American protectorate. The treaty, which also prevented all foreign powers from buying Haitian land, was renewable for another ten years on demand by either side. Furthermore, acceptance of the treaty by both governments would give the intervention legitimacy. Dartiguenave's government

agreed to the terms on September 12, and the treaty was later ratified by both the Haitian and U.S. congresses.²⁰

Admiral Caperton, unsure of the situation and recognizing the potential for continued violence, recommended that vigorous action be taken to restore peace in Haiti. On August 4, Marines seized the Central Haitian Military Compound. The next day, three companies of sailors and Marines seized Fort Nationale, which in addition to its garrison was a major Haitian arsenal. Additionally, Caperton ordered all Haitian soldiers whose homes were not in Port-au-Prince to leave the city.²¹

The occupation force, the 1st Marine Brigade, was composed of the 1st and 2nd Marine Regiments and was commanded by Colonel L. W. T. Waller. By the end of August, the brigade consisted of 88 officers and 1,941 men garrisoning ten towns. For Colonel Waller's brigade, the initial phase of the intervention went smoothly. The Marines held Port-au-Prince and Cap Haitien without difficulty and continued to disarm the citizenry, patrol the coastal towns to keep the peace, and prepare for American control of the customs houses.

But the *cacos* were far from finished. No longer able to look to the government for support and with no prospect of income should they stage another revolution, the *cacos* became increasingly resistant to the American occupation. The situation, particularly in the north, became critical. There, *caco* leaders were endeavoring to extort bribes and were unwilling to disband and surrender their arms. In Cap Haitien, they began to invest the town and prevent market people and food from entering.²² Unwilling to submit to occupation and American influence,

the *cacos* soon forced the Marines into combat operations. They skirmished with the Americans at the port of Gonaives on September 7.

The offensive-minded Marines had no reluctance to fight the *cacos*. Learning that the Gonaives Marine garrison was besieged by a *caco* raiding party, Major Smedley D. Butler, Waller's executive officer, and Lt. Alexander A. Vandegrift sped there in a small boat. Subsequently, Butler led the local Marine detachment, the 7th Company, in pushing the *cacos* out of town. That evening, Butler learned that the rebels were burning the railroad, and he turned out the detachment again. The Marines, still in their underwear, raced down the street to the railroad and attacked the rebels. "It was the funniest fight I ever saw," Butler reported later.²³ Butler took 50 mounted men and pursued the enemy. He caught up with the rebel general and, as Butler told the story, pulled him off his horse and publicly disgraced him.

The First Caco War

In analyzing the situation after the first clashes with the *cacos* and perhaps relying on his experiences gained during the pacification of the Phillipines, Waller decided that a full-scale campaign to neutralize the *caco* insurgency was necessary before any long-term peace could be established. Admiral Caperton agreed and supported the Marines with a declaration of martial law and press censorship. Waller envisioned a campaign that was a combination of arms-buying and amnesty-granting, coupled with selective attacks against only the most militant leaders and their bands. To aid in control of the countryside and to establish lines of communications into the interior, much of the Marine effort would go into securing the coastal

towns and opening roads to a number of inland towns and villages. Waller acknowledged that the most difficult problem would be finding the *cacos* in their remote northern mountain strongholds.²⁴

Still, with a force of over 2,000 Marines, Waller was confident that his brigade could pacify northern Haiti, break up the *caco* bands and disarm the peasantry. With his bases secure, he ordered company-sized patrols into the interior. In many cases, *caco* leaders were willing to accept money and amnesty rather than face death or imprisonment. Some, however, were not as agreeable.

As Waller's second in command, Butler pushed an aggressive campaign to crush the *caco* opposition. He wrote much later, "A lot of north Haiti was burned before we got through."²⁵ At Cap Haitien, where Colonel Eli Cole commanded the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, *cacos* began cutting off the food supply and practically encircled the city. Cole tried to persuade their chiefs to put down their weapons but had little success. As a show of force, he sent out strong patrols of Marines. In one instance, a five-squad patrol was fired on. When two other Marine patrols fought their way through in reinforcement, the *cacos* were finally driven off, leaving 40 dead on the field. Ten Marines were wounded.²⁶

In late September, a disturbance was reported at Petite Riviere de l'Artibonite further south, and half a company of mounted Marines was sent out from St. Marc. In a fight with the *cacos* on September 26, Sgt. John Platt of the 24th Company was killed -- the first Marine to die in action in Haiti.

Later, Waller came north from Port-au-Prince with the 11th Company, landed at Fort Liberte, and marched to Ouanaminthe near the Dominican border, an area that had been the cradle of many Haitian revolutions. Waller stationed Marine garrisons at both the frontier town and at Fort Liberte.

More Marines were deployed into the northern areas that the *cacos* dominated. Cole and Butler moved their headquarters inland to the town of Grande Riviere du Nord and sent out strong patrols. Butler took out mounted detachments of up to 40 Marines on deep reconnaissance patrols into the mountains. A typical engagement²⁷ occurred after dark on October 24. While his command was leading its horses across a river in a deep ravine near little Fort Dipite, it was ambushed from three sides. Twelve horses were killed. The Marines fought their way to a defensible position a mile away. All night, the *cacos* kept up a poorly aimed fire; the Marines returned it only when the enemy closed in. At daybreak, the squads moved out in three directions and chased off the *cacos*. One squad of 13 Marines eventually took Fort Dipite and burned it and the houses nearby.

For the next few weeks, the Marines pressed the Haitians who repeatedly fought and fled. The *cacos* were driven back into their final retreat, an old French masonry fort called Fort Riviere on a mountain top south of Grande Riviere du Nord. During the night of November 17, a force of Marines and sailors surrounded the fort. At 7:50 A.M., Major Butler commenced his coordinated attack. The Americans took the *cacos* completely by surprise. Some of the rebels tried to leap the walls and were killed by the Marines' automatic rifle fire. The Marines of the

15th Company, accompanied by Butler, made the final rush across rocky bare ground and reached an opening in the fort's wall. Close-quarters hand to hand fighting ensued. In 15 minutes, more than 50 *cacos* were killed. Butler concluded the operation by blowing up the fort. The fall of the stronghold would signal the end of significant *caco* activity.²⁸

Executed primarily by the 2d Regiment, the pacification of northern Haiti proceeded with relatively little bloodshed and quick results. Marine losses in 1915-1916 were three killed, eighteen wounded; Haitian losses were larger, numbering about two hundred by Marine estimate. As the Marine patrols converged on the mountain areas, they worked primarily to destroy *caco* bases, but by the end of 1915 the Marines had also dispersed most of the *caco* bands and either killed or captured their chiefs.²⁹

With the termination of organized opposition, the first *caco* war came to an end. However, the ferocity of Waller's campaign and the appearance of unrestrained violence in the north was condemned in Washington, and the Marines were ordered to limit their activities to protecting peaceful inhabitants and themselves. Fewer encounters followed, and a period of relative peace began. In a final act of violence, on January 5, 1916, 75 *cacos* attacked the Marine provost marshals building at Port-au-Prince. Seven armed Marines and ten gendarmes armed only with clubs chased off the attackers.³⁰

Peacekeeping Duties

On December 31, 1915, there were 90 Marine officers and 1,846 enlisted men on duty in Haiti. They were garrisoned in 14 Haitian towns

and cities with detachments varying in size from 600 at Port-au-Prince to 33 at Limonade. All exercised a degree of military government in each community to include keeping the peace, administrating justice, and improving the health and welfare of the local populace.³¹

By 1916, the Marines had settled into routine occupation duties. Scattered among sixteen Haitian towns that had been garrisoned, commanders performed regular staff duties and supervised civil administration in their towns in conjunction with their normal command functions. The Marines quickly learned, however, that Haiti was not a tropical paradise. Malaria and other tropical diseases were common and the garrisons found little opportunity for relaxation. Sanitary conditions throughout the countryside were deplorable. The language and cultural barrier prevented much meaningful contact with the Haitians. Although there were only six documented cases of troop misbehavior in the first fifteen months of the occupation, incidents of public drunkenness and rowdyism provided the anti-occupation editors of a number of American newspapers with suitable material and fueled the political debate over the legitimacy of the intervention in Washington.

An additional problem was the insistence of the Haitians that the Marines be subject to Haitian law, not to Marine Corps military regulations. This issue, concern about the impact of the climate and sanitary conditions, and the antipathy of the Haitian people caused Waller to recommend that his brigade be replaced by a constabulary force before tensions between the Marines and Haitians would lead to serious problems.³²

Originally, the Haitian *elite* were pleased to have military protection from the *cacos*.³³ In spite of this, however, the actions of the Marines were far from popular with many of the *elite*, particularly among the politicians who had for generations ruled the nation for their own self-gain with little regard for the interest of the people. In contrast, while occupation was distasteful to most Haitians, the average Haitian was increasingly grateful for the presence of the Marines which permitted him to return to a more peaceful life.³⁴

Forming the Garde

The treaty of 1915 provided that a native constabulary would be organized and managed by U.S. forces. Although the Marine Corps had no prior experience in forming a native police force, it drew upon the U.S. Army's experience in the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.³⁵ Anticipating the mission as early as September 1915, Marine Corps Headquarters developed and provided organizational plans and cost estimates for the formation of a Haitian constabulary. In Haiti, the Marines had already begun to organize the local police. Even before the official proclamation was issued, Waller had assigned Major Butler as the *Gendarmerie* commander and had ordered him to organize the force as rapidly as possible. Butler initiated actions to abolish the Haitian army and consolidate the five Haitian police forces into a single national constabulary.

On February 1, 1916, Rear Admiral Caperton issued a decree that the newly established *Gendarmerie d' Haiti* would assume all military and police duties and that the Marine Brigade would be held in support. The Americans intended that the *Gendarmerie*, organized and trained by the

Marines, be an apolitical constabulary force that would establish and maintain the long-term internal stability of Haiti. A total of 120 Marines served as *Gendarmerie* officers -- captains served as colonels, first lieutenants as majors, second lieutenants as captains, and corporals and sergeants as lieutenants. By the time Washington ratified the treaty with Haiti early in 1916, Butler, with the authority of his imposing new rank as Haitian major general, had his constabulary with 1,500 enlisted men garrisoning 117 posts.³⁶

Meanwhile, the Marines were preparing the *Gendarmerie* to take over much of the job of keeping the peace. From the beginning, recruitment for the *Gendarmerie* was difficult; the Haitian police were universally hated as a result of their tradition of corruption and brutality. An effort was made to recruit and train Haitians as officers for the *Gendarmerie*, but the program failed because all young Haitians of "good families" who signed up found the instruction and duty onerous and unpopular, and soon resigned. Most of the gendarmes were therefore recruited from the urban unskilled masses; as a group they were illiterate, undisciplined, and irresponsible. Tests of 1,200 gendarmes revealed that 95 percent had syphilis, and many had hookworm and other diseases. Training was complicated by the language gap; none of the recruits knew English and the Marines knew no Creole and little French.³⁷

Marines would serve as the *Gendarmerie's* officers and noncommissioned officers. To attract dependable Marine officers and enlisted men to administer the *Gendarmerie*, the Navy Department arranged for the Marines to draw both Marine Corps and Haitian pay. By becoming

a *Gendarmerie* officer, a Marine noncommissioned officer could double his annual pay. Still, the frustrations and squalor of life in Haiti discouraged many. Similarly, it was difficult to find Marines who could speak French or who lacked substantial prejudice against blacks.³⁸

Gradually, the *Gendarmerie* officers procured arms, equipment and uniforms for the men and continued the tedious task of training and instruction. The gendarmes first performed routine city police patrols and garrison housekeeping but received little field training, law enforcement education, or weapons instruction. As the language barrier was gradually breached and the gendarmes began to demonstrate their dependability, training improved.³⁹ When better equipment, particularly surplus Krag-Jorgensen carbines, started arriving for the gendarmes, they gave a better account of themselves. Their numbers increased, so that a year later they totaled 2,533 Haitians and 115 Americans. Butler increased the pace of training and deployed many to interior posts. He also placed *Gendarmerie* detachments in charge of the national penitentiary, as well as local jails. Furthermore, he linked the Gendarme's posts with telephone lines. As the *Gendarmerie* continued to improve, Marine-led *Gendarmerie* patrols assumed many of the inland patrol routes from the Marine brigade and created its own administrative and logistical organizations.

Meanwhile, Haitian public opinion, particularly among the vocal and influential elite, became vigorously anti-American. These sentiments were fueled by stories filed by foreign journalists who flocked to the country. The Haitian elite increasingly came out against the American military occupation, especially as it increasingly

interfered with their capacity to exploit the country for their own self-gain. Their arguments against the occupation were made even stronger by the numerous cases of American incompetence, insensitivity, and even brutality. The occupation was becoming less and less capable of winning the hearts and minds of the Haitians.⁴⁰

To overcome Haiti's inefficient and corrupt political leaders, Americans took over the main executive posts of the government: customs, public works, public sanitation, and agriculture. The political situation in Haiti was further complicated by the friction that was developing between the civilian appointees of the President of the United States and the occupation's military leadership as a result of the division of American rule between the State Department and the Marine Corps. This growing rift significantly undermined the unity of effort necessary for the successful conduct of the intervention.⁴¹

As the *Gendarmerie* grew, Waller and Butler increasingly saw it as a viable force and as the chief instrument of enacting American social, economic, and political reform. So did the Haitian government, and for that reason, the *Gendarmerie* was soon the target of critics of the occupation, principally, the *elites*. Waller intended that the gendarmes preserve order without prejudice of social standing, but the uncooperative attitude of the *elite* irritated him. In an attempt to gain complete control of the situation, both he and Butler sought absolute authority over the *Gendarmerie* and attempted to free it from Haitian influence and State Department supervision.

In the absence of definitive guidance from either the State Department or the Navy, the *Gendarmerie* worked, under Butler's

direction, at cleaning up the cities, overseeing the repair of telegraph lines, improving irrigation projects, and taking charge of road building. In support of these programs, Haitian government officials invoked an antiquated French law that required all Haitians to donate their labor in lieu of paying taxes. The *corvee* system of forced labor quickly became a source of bitterness. Local officials used the system to get rich, and some gendarmes accepted bribes to excuse men from the road-gang lists. When the Marines arrived, Haiti had been virtually roadless. Using the *corvee*, they supervised the building and repair of 630 miles of road, and by the end of 1917, an automobile could travel the 180 miles from the capital to Cap Haitien in 14 hours, a trip that had taken three days on horseback.⁴²

The *corvee* continued to be a controversial issue. Supervised by the *Gendarmerie*, the *corvee* worked well when the laborers were well cared for and not used outside their own communities and when local Haitian officials did not misuse local funds. But the *Gendarmerie* bore the responsibility when the *corvee* law was violated. In some cases the reputation for abuse was deserved, for some officers thought their careers depended upon the number of miles of road they built and they sometimes drove their workers beyond the time and geographic limits set by the law.⁴³

By the time Butler left Haiti in 1918, the *Gendarmerie* was the principal agent of the occupation in its routine contact with the Haitian people. Unfortunately, the *Gendarmerie's* rise in social and political influence was more rapid than the growth of its professionalism. Its ascent was to cause problems for the occupation.

The *Gendarmerie* continued to have internal personnel problems, especially after the Dominican intervention of 1916 and the American entry in World War I the next year. As experienced Marine leaders were transferred from Haiti to meet these new demands, it was increasingly more difficult to find qualified officers, and supervision by those who remained declined. Since the *Gendarmerie* officers were recruited from the 1st Brigade, and the brigade's strength fell after 1916, there were fewer Marines to choose from. Moreover, despite indoctrination, some of the Haitian gendarmes could not resist using their status to exploit the common people or to settle personal scores by arrest or even murder. Relations with the *elite* remained especially strained. Few Haitians appreciated the *Gendarmerie's* enforcement of laws governing gambling, tax collection, licensing practices, firearms control, and criminal activities. Haitian politicians continued to badger the *Gendarmerie* for favors.

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, Brigadier General Eli K. Cole, who had replaced Waller as Marine brigade commander, faced a new National Assembly that was extremely hostile to American proposals for revising the Haitian constitution in order to give renewed legality to the occupation. The American version of the new constitution had been drafted by Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Franklin D. Roosevelt. In dictating the substantive and fundamental aspects of Haitian government on American terms, this draft constitution would become a political issue in the 1920 U.S. election campaign when the Republican Presidential candidate, Warren G. Harding, declared: "If I am elected I will not empower any Assistant Secretary of the Navy to

draft a constitution for helpless neighbors and jam it down their throats at the point of bayonets borne by United States Marines."⁴⁴

Conflict with the Haitian legislature reached a climax on June 19, 1917, when the National Assembly was pushing through a constitution that Washington felt was not supportive of American interests in the region. Cole instructed Butler, in his capacity as "a Haitian officer," to stop it. Butler went to President Dartiguenave and insisted that he sign a decree dissolving the legislature.

When no Haitian would dare take the President's decree to the legislature, Butler went himself. He was greeted with loud hissing. In support of their commander, the gendarmes on duty cocked their rifles. Butler ordered them to put down their weapons. He handed the decree to the presiding officer, who, instead of reading it to the delegates, began a tirade against it. The hall was in an uproar. Tables and chairs were thrown over, deputies shouted and surged forward. The gendarmes again prepared to shoot. Finally, the presiding officer rang a bell for order and read the decree, declared the Assembly dissolved, and directed the hall cleared. In that singularly climatic moment, power within the Haitian government was wrested from the Haitian political elite.⁴⁵

A constitution in the form desired by the United States was presented to a plebiscite without public discussion and under *Gendarmerie* supervision. The *Gendarmerie* had orders to turn out a large vote in favor of the constitution, but less than 100,000 votes were cast. Only 769 were negative, and even some of those were dubious. The whole procedure was "in essence farcical."⁴⁶

The Second Caco War

A new period of guerrilla warfare began on October 11, 1917, when the *cacos* rose again, primarily against the *corvee* system. There were incidents when road workers, forced to serve away from their homes and held beyond their obligated time, attempted to desert and were shot. In retaliation, several road gangs rebelled against their guards, with loss of life on both sides. Reacting to these incidents, the chief of the *Gendarmerie* suspended the *corvee* until mid-1918, but at least one *Gendarmerie* colonel in the interior refused to obey the order for two months. Incidents of rebellion in the mountainous northeastern and north central Haiti increased. Playing on native fears that the Americans would reintroduce slavery and offering a return to the old life of mercenary soldiering, the *caco* chiefs organized active guerrilla bands, numbering perhaps 5,500 men with a network of supporters twice as large.⁴⁷

Confronted with a potential rebellion, the Marines and the constabulary were ill-prepared to react effectively. Both were devastated by the Corps' participation in the fighting in France. Experienced officers and men were transferred, and their replacements were often hastily commissioned officers and harsh, untrained, and undisciplined enlisted men who thought they had joined the Marine Corps to fight the Germans. The brigade shrank to less than half its original size, well under 1,000 troops, which meant the Marine patrols were smaller and had to stay in the field for longer times. The Marines' mobility was limited to foot marches. Even if the rebels were ill-equipped and poor tacticians, their parity in mobility and their more

effective use of the inhospitable terrain were substantial advantages, and their ability to fade into the population gave them an anonymity that frustrated the Marines.

The first attack came at the home of Captain John L. Doxey, commanding the *Gendarmerie* district of Hinche in the heart of the mountains of central Haiti. The gendarmes beat off the attack, killed the *caco's* leader, and captured their second in command. He implicated three brothers who lived near Hinche. Two brothers were arrested and tried by Marine Corps provost courts. One was acquitted, but the other, Charlemagne Peralte, was sentenced to five years of hard labor and put to work sweeping the streets of Cap Haitien. This humiliation enflamed the European-educated Charlemagne Peralte's hatred of the *Gendarmerie* and its Marine leaders and would galvanize his efforts against them.⁴⁸

On September 3, 1918, Peralte escaped to the hills. Although Colonel Alexander S. Williams, now chief of the *Gendarmerie*, ordered the *corvee* abolished, Peralte soon gathered several thousand followers and became the most powerful and effective *caco* leader to fight the Marines. Peralte commanded in the north; his assistant, Benoit Batrville, directed the *cacos* in the center of the country. They operated in scattered groups and attacked *Gendarmerie* detachments to seize rifles and ammunition.⁴⁹

During one attack, a hundred *cacos* struck Hinche on October 17. On November 10, Peralte and 60 *cacos* raided the town of Maissade, northwest of Hinche. They burned the *Gendarmerie* barracks and other buildings, and ransacked the city hall.

The fighting went on sporadically for the next year. Peralte's forces spread throughout the north and central valley areas. During this period, some 20 engagements were fought by the fully committed *Gendarmerie*. Additionally, *Cacos* ambushed gendarme patrols, killed gendarmes repairing telephone lines, and conducted a major attack on Cerca-la-Source. Normally, the *cacos* ambushed small *Gendarmerie* patrols, blockaded roads, and disrupted the occupation's roadbuilding and sanitation programs. Although the *Gendarmerie* fought back, especially when led by American officers, the revolt spread. Unable to handle the situation, the chief of the *Gendarmerie* in the spring of 1919 asked for the total commitment of the 1st Brigade.⁵⁰

In March, 1919, the Marine Brigade was reinforced with four additional companies from Guantanamo, and the 4th Marine Air Squadron (VO-9M) brought in the first 13 aircraft. The brigade sent six companies to interior posts to reinforce the *Gendarmerie* and to begin more aggressive patrolling supported by air. Combined Marine-*Gendarmerie* patrols were constantly in the field. In July, Colonel Frederic M. Wise became the third chief of the *Gendarmerie*, commanding 2,500 Haitians and 112 Marines serving as officers.⁵¹

The counter guerrilla campaign in the back country was carried on with considerable aggressiveness but not much success. The Marines and the *Gendarmerie* sent patrols to clear the roads and locate the *caco* base camps. Typically, it was a war of *caco* ambush met with heavy Marine rifle and machine gun fire. Because the *caco's* weapons were old and few in numbers, large *Gendarmerie* patrols risked little in such skirmishes. Nevertheless, the *cacos* drew blood and retained enough

confidence to stay in the field. The number of jungle battles soared from relatively few contacts during the spring of 1919 to more than eighty during the summer. Despite their own huge losses, the *cacos* continued the war. *Caco* casualties, numbering as many as 500, were heavy enough, however, to convince the brigade commander that the war was going well for his forces.⁵² His optimism would be shattered in the next month.

Peralte was getting supplies from supporters in Port-au-Prince, and as his weapons improved, his attacks became more vicious and deadly. On October 7, he and 300 men invaded the capital itself. At the same time, a city mob had formed in Peralte's support. Warned of the *cacos'* approach, the Marines and gendarmes drove them from the city. The next day, the gendarmes assaulted Peralte's camp 15 miles from Port-au-Prince and scattered his men, but Peralte escaped again. The attack on Port-au-Prince jarred the Navy Department and renewed public attention to the occupation.⁵³

The Marine leadership was convinced at this point that the elimination of Peralte was the key to victory. The task fell to Major James Meade, the *Gendarmerie* commander in the north. Twenty-six year-old Marine Sergeant Herman H. Hanneken, a captain in the *Gendarmerie*, was assigned the mission. Using a combination of deception, shrewdness, and innovation, Hanneken plotted his attack. In an operation that was to become legendary in Marine Corps history, Hanneken and his small team infiltrated Peralte's camp, cornered and killed the *caco* leader⁵⁴

Later, Peralte's body was photographed and Marine patrols and observation aircraft flooded the country with prints to demoralize the

cacos. During the next week, more than 300 *cacos* surrendered to Hanneken.⁵⁵

Peralte's death ended the *caco* uprising in the north, but his assistant, Benoit Batrville, continued the *cacos* movement in the mountains of central Haiti. He gathered some 2,500 men, and part of his force raided the town of La Chapelle. With the new year, Colonel John H. Russell, now the Marine brigade commander, opened a campaign against him. The Marine brigade numbered 1,344 men plus the aviation squadron; the *Gendarmerie* numbered 2,700. Russell and hard-driving Lieutenant Colonel Louis McCarty Little instituted a system of rotating patrols, so that, as one tired, the next would take over and keep constant pressure on the rebels. Little would command all Marine and *Gendarmerie* operations against the *cacos*, thus giving the campaign more coordinated planning. The brigade also exchanged its short-service enlisted men and officers for veteran officers from France and regular Marines. In the face of rumors of urban revolt, the continued disruption of the economy, and a lack of cooperation from the Haitian government, the brigade stepped up its patrolling and soon penetrated the mountains to find the *caco* camps.⁵⁶

In January 1920, the Marine brigade and the *Gendarmerie* mounted a coordinated campaign of military and political action. Relays of patrols operating in carefully mapped and identified sectors chased the *cacos* with increasing effectiveness; in addition, the *cacos* received offers of amnesty, and in the next six months, nearly 12,000 gave up voluntarily. Marines tracked down the most important *caco* leaders and in May killed the last remaining chieftain. The patrols also destroyed

caco camps and supplies and rounded up rural villagers who supported the guerrillas.⁵⁷

On the night of January 14, 1920, Batrville boldly sent 300 men to attack Port-au-Prince. Although the assault was uncharacteristically well coordinated, half the *cacos* were killed, wounded, or captured.⁵⁸

On May 18, a patrol of 29 Marines attacked Batrville's camp. The main body of the patrol killed Batrville and dispersed the remaining enemy. With Batrville's death, the *caco* movement was destroyed.⁵⁹

While the campaign was not organized to spread general death and destruction, some atrocities were inevitable. The combination of racism and revenge, fueled by stories of mutilation and cannibalism performed on captured Marines, greatly affected some of the Marines and resulted in their harsh treatment of captured *cacos*. Similarly, the *Gendarmerie* was too inclined to shoot prisoners. The majority of incidents, however, involved enlisted men in off-duty hours and were not part of the pacification. When incidents did occur, punishment was normally swift and appropriate.⁶⁰ The most notable exception was Lieutenant Louis Cukela, a medal of honor winner as a sergeant in France, who personally executed one group of prisoners in the middle of a Marine Camp.⁶¹ As punishment, he was transferred to the Dominican Republic. When witnesses would testify, offenders were court-martialed; commanders were warned by Russell not to allow violations of the rules of war. Russell eventually restricted the use of provost courts and

reminded his brigade that its purpose in being was the maintenance of law and order.

The *caco* movement ceased in the late summer of 1920, the result of persistent military pressure. By the time it had ended, the occupation forces had killed at least two thousand Haitians at a cost of one hundred casualties to the Marines and the *Gendarmerie*.⁶²

Occupation Duty

Most of the 1920's were years of peace in Haiti. The Marine brigade was reduced to little more than 500 and was used to back up the *Gendarmerie*. For the 1st Brigade, the end of the *caco* war and the rejuvenation of the American occupation meant a reduction of responsibility. The brigade went into comfortable barracks in Port-au-Prince and in Cap Hatien. The Marines normally trained about a half a day and played sports the rest of the time. Occasionally, Marine patrols went into the countryside to remind the Haitians they still stood behind the *Gendarmerie*. Although there were sporadic incidents in which off-duty Marines became involved in fights with Haitians and military police, and although there was a predictable amount of drunkenness, the brigade officers kept their men under close supervision. Limited provost courts continued to operate to shield the Marines from Haitian civil justice and try the most obnoxious Haitian agitators, but the State Department ordered Russell to diminish the courts' activity to curtail American military interference with Haitian judicial affairs.⁶³

The *Gendarmerie* was beginning to overcome its failure to handle the *caco* revolt and its reputation for extracting tribute from the

people. It was also able to improve its arms and equipment: the Marine Corps lent it 4,000 Springfield rifles. Its performance and credibility with the Haitian people improved during the 1920s, and the State Department and Russell depended upon it to assume total responsibility for routine law enforcement. The *Gendarmerie* had been the governmental structure in rural Haiti. The increase of American civilians in the other treaty services allowed the *Gendarmerie* to free itself from some of its nonpolice duties. Its officers, however, were still supposed to serve as communal advisors and tax collection supervisors. The *Gendarmerie* also created its own coast guard patrol squadron and assisted urban fire departments. Over the next few years, opposition of the better Haitian families to their sons entering the service relaxed. Suitable officer recruits underwent a two-year course of training at the newly formed *Ecole Militaire*. By 1926, 53 Haitian officers were on duty.⁶⁴

For the *Gendarmerie's* American officers, service in Haiti remained challenging, profitable, and exhausting. The Marines were often the sole government representatives in the back country. Generally, their relations with the Haitian peasantry were good, especially as they mastered the Creole dialect, protected the people from unscrupulous Haitian officials, helped block land sales to foreign companies, and refused to interrupt local voodoo culture. The Marines, although annoyed by the peasant's penchant for petty thievery, found the masses more admirable than the *elite*. *Gendarmerie* officers, for example, served as unofficial justices of the peace to prevent the peasants from being victimized by the notoriously corrupt Haitian court

system. When they returned to the cities from patrols or duty at their distant outposts, usually exhausted and ill, the Marines enjoyed the creature comforts of the urban posts but generally disliked having to deal with the elite. Officers tackled their routine duties of training troops, writing reports, collecting intelligence, and struggling to keep their posts clean and healthy. Some collapsed under the strain and died of suicide or disease. Most were glad to rotate back to the United States.⁶⁵

In 1928, the *Gendarmerie's* name was changed to the *Garde d'Haiti* to reflect its military as well as police duties, and its self-generated role in influencing politics was greatly diminished. By then, it had about 200 officers and 2,600 enlisted men, and 46 percent of its officers in the grade of captain and below were Haitian.

The following year, the Marines had to deal with the last major crisis of the Haitian intervention. By now, Louis Borno had been president of Haiti since 1922, and there was a spreading demand for popular elections. But Borno announced that there would be no election in 1930 and that the president would again be chosen by the appointed Council of State, which had replaced the legislature dissolved in 1917 with Smedley Butler's help.

In this atmosphere of political tension, 200 students from the agricultural college outside Port-au-Prince marched on the capital on October 31, 1929 to protest the reduction of the allowance paid them for attending school. The strike spread, and in mid-December, protesting students, now 20,000 strong, were joined by government employees. There were violent clashes with the authorities and arrests were made. At

Cayes, 20 Marines with automatic rifles and machine guns routed 1,500 peasants armed with machetes and clubs. The Marines initially fired over their heads, but as the crowd advanced again, the Marines killed six and wounded 28. In other towns, mobs were handled without gunfire. Martial law was invoked and the crisis finally quieted down.⁶⁶

In the spring of 1930, President Herbert Hoover appointed a commission of prominent citizens to examine the United States' Haitian policy. After 17 days in Haiti, the Forbes Commission reported to the President on March 26, 1930. It praised Russell's efforts and the material progress that had been achieved. It recommended that the Marine brigade be gradually phased out of Haiti and that all the government services be rapidly turned over to Haitians. Hoover adopted the commission's recommendations. They were popular in both the U.S. and in Haiti, although many Haitians would have preferred the immediate removal of the Marines.⁶⁷

In May, Borno resigned and left Haiti. In November, elections were held, and the new National Assembly named Stenio Vincent as president. Russell was replaced by a civilian American minister. The *Garde d'Haiti's* American officers were withdrawn on August 1, 1934, and on the 15th, the 1st Marine Brigade departed from Haiti. The long occupation was over.

Summary

The scope of the Marine occupation was both broad and varied, from battling insurgency, to keeping the peace, training the national police force, and assisting in developing and implementing social and economic reforms of the nation. Unfortunately, while bringing a

temporary peace and effectively stabilizing the country for almost two decades, the occupation did little to effect long-term change in Haiti. An examination of the intervention does, however, provide the foundation to develop lessons for U.S. involvement in future operations other than war.

Endnotes

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- ¹³Ibid., 184.
- ¹⁴Testimony of RAdm. W.B. Capterton, U.S. Senate Select Committee, hearings, "Inquiry into Occupation and Administration of Haiti and Santo Domingo," 2 vol., 67th Congress, 2d Session, 1921-22, I: 289-421.
- ¹⁵Millett, 185.
- ¹⁶McCrocklin, 22.
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- ¹⁸Robert Debs and Nancy Gordon Heinl, Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People, 1492-1971, (Boston: Houghton, 1978), 408.
- ¹⁹Hans Schmidt, The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934, (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1971), 71.

²⁰Munro, 274-304, 333-351.

²¹David Healy, Gunboat Diplomacy in the Wilson Era: The U.S. Navy in Haiti, 1915-1916, (Madison: Univ of Wisconsin Press, 1976), 79.

²²Robert Debs Heinl, Jr., Soldiers of the Sea: The U.S. Marine Corps 1775-1962, (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1962), 174.

²³Lowel Thomas, Old Gimlet Eye: The Adventures of Smedley D. Butler, as told to Lowell Thomas, (New York: Farrar, 1933), 186.

²⁴Millett, 187.

²⁵Thomas, 186.

²⁶Moskin, 178.

²⁷The *cacos*' typical plan was to ambush the Marine patrols at night, isolate them from reinforcement and prevent their withdrawal, and attempt to kill the surviving patrol members one by one until daybreak, when the *cacos* would withdraw.

²⁸Thomas E. Thrasher, Jr., "The Taking of Fort Riviere," Marine Corps Gazette, 15.4 (1931): 33.

²⁹Millett, 187.

³⁰Moskin, 180.

³¹Clyde H. Metcalf, A History of the United States Marine Corps, (New York: Putnam's, 1939), 385.

³²Millett, 188.

³³Carl Kelsey, "The American Intervention in Haiti and the Dominican Republic," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 100 (1922), 136.

³⁴Heinl and Heinl, Written in Blood, 436.

³⁵The U.S. Army had organized, trained, equipped and administered national militias or police forces in conjunction with operations in the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. While those experiences had not been refined or developed as doctrine, much of the information was captured in letters and after-action reports that were made available to the Marine Corps.

³⁶Heinl and Heinl, Written in Blood, 434.

³⁷Metcalf, 389.

³⁸Schmidt, 146.

³⁹McCrocklin, 61.

⁴⁰Healy, 200.

⁴¹United States, Congress, Senate, Inquiry into the Occupation and Administration of Haiti and Santo Domingo. Hearings Before A Select Committee on Haiti and Santo Domingo, pursuant to Senate Resolution 112, 67 Congress, 1st and 2nd session, 2 vols (Washington: GPO, 1922), 1: 79-80.

⁴²Schmidt, 100.

⁴³Millett, 190.

⁴⁴McCrocklin, 74.

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⁵⁶Metcalf, 399.

⁵⁷McCrocklin, 121.

⁵⁸Barnett Report, para. 245.

⁵⁹Ibid., para. 269.

⁶⁰Senate Select Committee, Hearings 1: 423.

⁶¹Wise, 130-156.

⁶²Metcalf, 401.

⁶³Millett, 209.

⁶⁴Ibid., 208.

⁶⁵John H. Craige, Black Bagdad, (New York: Minton, Balch, 1933), 195.

⁶⁶Moskin, 190.

⁶⁷Ibid., 190.

CHAPTER 3

DOCTRINE

Introduction

Just as U.S. warfighting doctrine is grounded in the principles of war, operations other than war also have principles that guide military action.¹ Understanding these tenets is critical since doctrine is the statement of how the armed forces intend to conduct operations.² Also, for the Haitian intervention to have relevance for future U.S. military involvement in operations other than war, it is essential to show how the fundamental principles of current MOOTW doctrine are related to the experiences gained during the Haitian intervention.

Small Wars

The underlying concepts of the conduct of small wars evolved largely from the Marine Corps' common experience gained in Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic before World War II. The principles gleaned from those interventions are the foundation for the Small Wars Manual.³ While it must be read in the context of pre-World War II politics and operational methods, an examination of the characteristics, guiding principles, and strategies described in the Small Wars Manual shows a similarity between the principles of the conduct of small wars and those of MOOTW.⁴ Indeed, the concepts and

principles discussed in Small Wars Manual were significant in the development of current and emerging U.S. MOOTW doctrine.⁵

The term "small war" applied to any one of a number of military operations of which the Marine intervention in Haiti was an illustrative example. In a small war, military force was combined with diplomatic pressure in the affairs of a nation whose condition was considered by the U.S. government as unstable, inadequate, or unsatisfactory for the preservation of life and/or for the protection of interests that Washington considered vital.⁶

The type of involvement might vary from relatively minor acts such as the assignment of advisors to assist in a nation's administrative affairs to the establishment of a complete military government supported by an active combat force. The scope of military operations could vary from simple demonstrative operations to military intervention in the fullest sense, short of declared war.⁷

The conduct of a small war was inherently tied to political policy, with military strategy more directly intertwined with -- and often subordinated to -- diplomatic strategy than was normally the case in major military operations during general war.⁸ Moreover, operations in a small war often took place concurrently with diplomatic efforts. In these circumstances the military leader would often find himself limited to certain courses of action so as to satisfy the overriding political and diplomatic requirements at play in a given intervention.⁹

Under the circumstances of a small war, the application of purely military force could not, by itself, restore peace and stability because the chaos was often the outward manifestation of deeper

economic, political, and social problems. Normally, the solution to such problems would require a political adjustment. Any military measures applied had to be of secondary importance and had to be applied only to such extent as to permit the continuation of peaceful corrective measures.¹⁰

The initial problem in virtually all small wars was to restore peace and stability, neither of which could be restored permanently without appropriate provisions for the social and economic welfare of the people. Consequently, the remedy had to emphasize measures that would permit the orderly return to normal conditions. In the case of belligerents standing in the way of peaceful resolution to the problem, the remedy might include the judicious use of force. Regardless of the means used, the likely solution would require a dedicated and long-term commitment.¹¹

In general, the overall concept of operations would include the military measures to be applied, including the part that the occupation forces would play in the economic and social solution of the problem. The same considerations had to be given to the part to be played by local government and the civil population. Furthermore, the unified efforts of the different agencies had to be cooperative and coordinated to the attainment of the common end. Both plans and forces needed to remain adaptable and they had to be prepared for modification as circumstances change.¹²

Military operations needed to be peaceful and altruistic to the greatest degree possible. The occupying force had to be strong enough to hold all the strategic points of the occupied country, protect its

communications, and, at the same time, furnish an operating force sufficient to overcome opposition wherever it might appear.¹³ When compelled to resort to combat operations, force had to be applied both energetically and expeditiously in order to overcome the resistance as quickly as possible. Once armed force was resorted to, it needed to be applied with determination and to the extent required by the situation.¹⁴

National policy and the precepts of civilized procedure demanded that dealings with peoples of occupied countries during the conduct of a small war be maintained on a high-moral plane. Military operations had to gain psychological ascendancy over the outlaw or insurgent element and retain legitimacy in the eyes of the populace.¹⁵

Small wars demanded the highest type of leadership directed by intelligence, resourcefulness, and ingenuity. Conceived in uncertainty, small wars were conducted often with precarious responsibility and doubtful authority, under indeterminate orders lacking specific instructions.¹⁶

Military Operations Other Than War

The purpose of military operations other than war are to deter war, promote peace, and support civil authorities.¹⁷ U.S. Army doctrine suggests that, most often, these operations are used to achieve national policy objectives without entanglement in an unplanned, undesired, or unnecessary war. Generally, they occur in peacetime and in the gray area of political-military conflict, either because no other means will work or because the national interest or threatened values, while important, do not justify the high costs of war.¹⁸

Similarly, joint doctrine implies that while all military operations are driven by political considerations, military operations other than war are more sensitive to such considerations due to the overriding objective to limit potential hostilities. During operations, political considerations must permeate all levels.¹⁹

Throughout the conduct of operations, the military is often in a support role to another agency, such as the State Department in humanitarian assistance operations. However, in other operations the military is the lead agency, such as in peace enforcement operations.²⁰

Regardless of whether or not the military is the lead agency, two important factors about political primacy stand out. First, all military personnel, from the force commander to junior leaders, must understand the political objectives and the potential impact of inappropriate military actions on them. To help avoid actions that might have adverse political effects, commanders must adopt courses of action that support the political objectives, even though those courses of action selected may not be the ones chosen under similar circumstances in war.²¹ Also, commanders must remain aware of changes in political objectives that may warrant a change in military operations. These changes may not always be obvious. However, commanders should strive, through continuing mission analysis, to detect subtle changes that, over time, may lead to disconnects between political objectives and military operations. Failure to recognize the changes in political objectives early may lead to military operations that do not support the attainment of political objectives.²²

MOOTW, Small Wars and Haiti

As indicated above, there is a significant similarity and definite link between the conduct of small wars and operations other than war. In comparing the principles of MOOTW, the tenets of the conduct of small wars, and the Haitian intervention, the relevance of the Marine experience in Haiti for future U.S. military involvement in operations other than war can be seen.

In operations other than war, the strategic, operational and tactical situation will present peculiar problems requiring the unique application of particular measures. Whether describing the conduct of the Haitian intervention, a small war, or MOOTW, the principles of war, in conjunction with the additional considerations of legitimacy, adaptability, and restraint, remain as the basis of operations.²³

Objective

Current and emerging U.S. doctrine states that the most basic tenet of all military operations is that they must be directed towards a well-defined objective. In attaining that objective, commanders must understand the government's strategic aims, set appropriate operational and tactical objectives, and ensure that these aims and objectives not only complement each other but, most importantly, contribute to accomplishing the mission.²⁴ Inherent in the principle of objective is the need for leaders, both political and military, to understand what constitutes mission success, and what might cause the operation to be terminated before success is achieved. Although defining mission success may be more difficult in MOOTW, it is important to do so to keep forces focused on a clear, attainable military objective.²⁵

Determining such objectives, however, is complicated by the political nature of the operations, and by the roles played by other governmental and non-governmental organizations.²⁶

The political objectives upon which military objectives must be based may not specifically address the desired military end state. Commanders should, therefore, translate their political guidance into appropriate military objectives through a rigorous mission analysis. They must also carefully explain to political authorities the implications of political decisions for capabilities and for the degree of risk to military forces.²⁷

A related matter of concern in operations other than war is "mission creep." This is the gradual and unplanned expansion of requirements put upon military forces in these situations. A certain amount of mission creep is inevitable. The objective is likely to change, expanding when opportunities present themselves and contracting when things are not going well. The objective in operations other than war is a political one and the military itself should not expand upon its assigned mission. It should measure its success by accomplishment of its part of the overall government purpose and its contribution to achieving policy objectives.²⁸

Combat in these circumstances must be viewed from the strategic perspective. In all combat in connection with operations other than war, decisive action is the domain of the political instrument of national power. It is used to create the necessary conditions of security in which political, social, and economic actions can progress. When combat is employed at this level, it must be secondary and

supporting to political action. Therefore, combat operations must be measured against their contribution to the political purpose and methods. This is inherent in the policy decision to pursue national goals by means of operations other than war.²⁹

The Small Wars Manual highlights these same points. In particular, the importance of political primacy is emphasized.³⁰ Similarly, the objective of the Haitian intervention -- to restore order, protect lives and property, and to prevent European interference in the affairs of a nation that the United States considered as being in its exclusive sphere of influence -- could fit either the small war or MOOTW definition.³¹

Unity Of Effort

Current doctrine recognizes that unity of effort is essential for every military operation. However, in MOOTW, achieving unity of effort is complicated by the numbers of non-military organizational participants, the lack of definitive command arrangements among them, and varying views of the objective.³² This requires that the force commander, or other designated directors of the operation, rely heavily on consensus building among all participating agencies and organizations in order to achieve unity of effort. Because MOOTW will often be conducted at the small-unit level, it is important that all levels understand the informal and formal military-civilian relationships.³³

The importance of unity of effort is also discussed in the Small Wars Manual. Specifically, the importance of the political/diplomatic process in the resolution of these kinds of conflicts is mentioned. Likewise, it was recognized that non-military

authorities would necessarily continue to exert considerable influence on the military campaign. The key consideration is that the efforts of all the participating agencies must be cooperative and coordinated to the attainment of the common end.³⁴ During the Haitian intervention, the lack of unity of effort between the appointed representatives of the Wilson Administration and the Marine leadership resulted in the desynchronization of the political and military efforts. Unity of effort was only achieved when a single appointee, General Russell, assumed the duties of coordinating all the related military, civil, and political activities in May of 1930.³⁵

Security

Current doctrine underscores how security enhances force effectiveness and freedom of action by reducing vulnerability to hostile acts, influence, or surprise. The inherent right of self-defense from the unit level to the individual applies in all operations. This protection may be virtually against any person, element, or group hostile to the operation. Commanders should avoid complacency and be constantly ready to counter activity that could bring harm to units or jeopardize the operation. Commanders should stay alert even in a non-hostile operation with little or no perceived risk. Inherent in this responsibility is the capability of rapid transition from a peaceful operation to a combat operation should circumstances change. It is important to plan for and posture the necessary capability to transition quickly to combat. Planning for a potential combat operation should be no different than planning for a combat operation.³⁶

Achieving and maintaining security in operations other than war may also involve the protection of civilians or participating agencies and organizations. The perceived neutrality of these protected elements may be a factor in their security. Protection of a group or organization by U.S. military forces may create the perception that the it is pro-U.S. Therefore, a group or organization may be reluctant to accept the U.S. military's protection.³⁷

The Small Wars Manual echoes the significance of security and specifically addresses the need to achieve and maintain security as well as describing techniques and considerations to do so.³⁸ In Haiti, while the Marines faced a generally ill-equipped and poorly organized insurgency, the enemy had many advantages. The Marines, never numbering more than a brigade and spread throughout the country at isolated posts, were able to maintain security by retaining the initiative against the *cacos* and by possessing the means and the will to use force at the appropriate place or time, not only to respond to violence directed towards them, but also to send a signal to those who might challenge them.³⁹

Restraint

Restraint, as discussed in current U.S. MOOTW doctrine, involves the prudent application of appropriate force or military capability. Generally, the use of force is limited to the minimum necessary to accomplish the specific mission in support of political actions. The desired end state may be jeopardized if there is unrestrained use of force: since a single act could cause significant military and political consequences, judicious use of force is

necessary. Restraint requires the careful balancing of the need for security, the conduct of operations, and the political objective. In MOOTW, the actions of military personnel and units are framed by the disciplined application of force, articulated by restrictive rules of engagements. Rules of engagement in MOOTW are generally more restrictive, detailed, and sensitive to political concerns than in war. Restraint is best achieved when rules of engagement are issued at the beginning of an operation and address most anticipated situations that may arise, minimizing subsequent changes that lead to confusion and mistakes.⁴⁰

Restrictions on the use of force affect commanders and soldiers at all echelons in different ways, depending on their perspective. At the strategic level, commanders must understand that military victory is not their goal. They must design campaigns and major operations so as to support the political method. This influences force allocation, rules of engagement, and determination of military objectives. At the operational level, commanders must translate the political purpose into specific supporting military missions. They must move slowly, carefully developing their legitimacy and cultivating moral dominance of the situation. At the operational and tactical level, restraint requires that commanders pass up short-term opportunities that might exacerbate long-term difficulties. For example, the destruction and capture of an opposing force is not justified if the action inflicts unnecessary death or injury to noncombatants or destruction of their property. Nor should more damage be inflicted on opposition combatants than is absolutely necessary. The tactical commander must remember that a political

solution will require accommodation even with forces with which he is currently engaged in combat. His purpose is not to destroy them (even though that may become necessary), but to convince them to change their behavior. For the individual soldier, restrictions on the use of force manifest themselves primarily as rules of engagement, usually more restrictive than those under which he has traditionally trained. Leaders must explain the rules of engagement to soldiers so that they honor their spirit as well as their letter.⁴¹

Military forces are not used to severe restraints on the use of their destructive power. In operations other than war, they must adjust to the environment and its special requirements. Moreover, commanders must realize the force's potential for many useful, but nontraditional, activities in support of an integrated national effort. This requires the mental agility to think in terms of small operations of long duration and to use imagination and ingenuity.⁴²

Similarly, the motive of a small war was not material destruction. To avoid the negative effect on the political aims of an intervention, the avoidance of violence beyond what the situation required was an essential consideration. Control and restraint were paramount considerations in the conduct of a small war.⁴³ Likewise, while an almost paternalistic restraint in dealing with the peasantry did much to establish a benevolent relationship between the Marines and a majority of the populace, the degree of violence used against the *cacos* contributed to the public outcry against the intervention in America and alienated a large part of the Haitian population. Marine commanders attempted control the use of force in Haiti and published

special orders designed to do so. However, isolated but well publicized instances of brutality, and the belief that these incidents went unpunished, did much to develop the perception that the Marines dominated the country with an iron hand. This lack of restraint, whether perceived or real, was perhaps the greatest impediment to the long-term success of the intervention.⁴⁴

Perseverance

Perseverance entails preparing for the measured, protracted application of military capability in support of strategic aims. Some MOOTW may require years to achieve the desired results. The underlying causes of the crisis may be elusive, making it difficult to achieve decisive resolution.⁴⁵ It is important to assess possible responses to a crisis in terms of how each option will impact on the achievement of the long-term political objective. This assessment does not preclude decisive military action, but frames that action within the larger context of strategic aims. The patient, resolute, and persistent pursuit of national goals and objectives, for as long as necessary to achieve them, is often the requirement for success.⁴⁶

In a like manner, a small war might have occurred over a rather lengthy period especially in light of the complexity of the situation and impact of both political and social considerations. Furthermore, if a long-term solution was to be effected by military intervention under these circumstances, participating forces must be prepared to stay the course.⁴⁷ The Haitian intervention, an example of extreme perseverance, lasted 19 years, five presidents, continued through a world war, and covered a wide spectrum of operations. The intervention was unpopular

at home and abroad. Still, the Marines stayed the course until a satisfactory resolution (although not necessarily the solution) was effected.⁴⁸

Legitimacy

Sustaining the willing acceptance by the people of the right of the government to govern or of a group or agency to make and carry out decisions establishes legitimacy.⁴⁹ In MOOTW, legitimacy is a condition based on the perception by a specific audience of the legality, morality, or rightness of a set of actions. This audience may be the U.S. public, foreign nations, the population in the area of operations, or the participating forces. If an operation is perceived as legitimate, there is a strong impulse to support the action; if perceived as not legitimate, the actions will not be supported and may be actively resisted. In MOOTW, legitimacy is frequently the decisive element.⁵⁰

Legitimacy may depend on, among other things, adherence to objectives agreed to by the international community, suiting the action to the situation, and fairness in dealing with various factions. It may be reinforced by restraint in the use of force and the disciplined conduct of the forces involved. Finally, where no established or legitimate government or representative body exists, U.S. forces must use caution when dealing with individuals or organizations in order to avoid legitimizing them.⁵¹

Likewise, the Small Wars Manual describes how political affiliations or the appearance of political favoritism should be avoided. The best way to maintain legitimacy was by thoroughly

understanding the political dynamics of the situation and maintaining a strict neutrality in such matters.⁵² In Haiti, the Marines sought, at the insistence of the State Department, to force a political solution that was not necessarily supportive of the existing government, a government that was not necessarily legitimate. Also, while the Marines were generally supportive of the average Haitian, they tended to alienate themselves from the *elite*, a political and social force without whose help the intervention could not ultimately succeed. Throughout the occupation, there were reoccurring questions, both in America and in Haiti, concerning the legitimacy of the intervention.⁵³

Adaptability

In operations other than war, military personnel must work with people who may be socially or ethnically different and have attitudes or behaviors that conflict with their own. Whether those people are friendly or hostile, soldiers and Marines must learn to see things as others see them; knowing how others perceive things is the only way soldiers and Marines can anticipate their behavior. Moreover, military men must understand how their own perceptions are formed to avoid misunderstanding others.⁵⁴

Culture shapes perceptions, thoughts, and actions. Both U.S. national and professional military cultures demand action for its own sake, even when a passive presence may be more useful and action may be harmful. To communicate across cultures and understand other peoples, American soldiers must accept the fact of foreign perceptions and respect them. Similarly, military personnel must balance the rush to action with cultivated patience. Soldiers are trained to look for an

enemy to defeat in battle. If none is present, they are likely to create one, to their own great detriment. Likewise, any attempt to force American values and methods on another society may undermine American legitimacy as well as that of the people being supported. The United States must allow the supported party to form its own vision of a successful outcome and aid them in achieving it for themselves.⁵⁵

Adaptability, both in a social and operational context, was also essential in the conduct of a small war.⁵⁶ In Haiti, while operational adaptability demonstrated by the Marines offered perhaps the greatest lessons from the standpoint of effective tactics, techniques, and procedures, the Marines were hard pressed to overcome their social and cultural differences with the Haitian people and their contempt for the elite. This lack of social adaptability stood in the way of a successful long-term solution to the problems in Haiti.⁵⁷

Summary

The Haitian intervention has distinct implications for future U.S. involvement in operations other than war. Clearly, there is a direct relationship between the principles of current and emerging U.S. MOOTW doctrine and the experiences gained during the Haitian intervention.

More importantly, in examining the conduct of operations in Haiti in terms of these fundamental principles, the relevance of the Haitian intervention for future U.S. involvement in MOOTW becomes apparent. Certainly, the importance of political primacy stands out, and the fact that these operations require military force to effect what is largely a diplomatic and/or political solution. Likewise, the need

for military objectives to conform to and support political goals and policy becomes evident. Similarly, unity of effort between the diplomatic and military instruments in achieving the common end is necessary. Furthermore, the concepts of security, restraint, and legitimacy each have unique considerations yet are not mutually exclusive. A military force that achieves one at the expense of another is making a mistake. Finally, it is essential to recognize that, from the outset, these types of operations will require a long-term commitment in order to achieve a long-term solution. In MOOTW, as in most endeavors, half measures or partial solutions for expediency's sake rarely succeed.

Endnotes

¹Department of the Army, FM 100-5: Operations, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1993), 13-3.

²Ibid., 1-1.

³While there is no reference to it in the Small Wars Manual, there is evidence that Colonel C. Caldwell's, Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice, first published in 1899 and revised in 1906 influenced the authors of the Small Wars Manual.

⁴United States Marine Corps, Small Wars Manual, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1940), forward.

⁵Dr. John T. Fishel, Department of Joint and Combined Operations, interview by author, 26 January 1995, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth; and Mr. John B. Hunt, Corps and Division Doctrine Directorate, interview by author, 2 February 1995, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth.

⁶Small Wars Manual, 1.

⁷Ibid., 1.

⁸Ibid., 11.

⁹Ibid., 11.

¹⁰Ibid., 16.

¹¹Ibid., 16.

¹²Ibid., 16.

¹³Ibid., 15.

¹⁴Ibid., 13.

¹⁵Ibid., 13.

¹⁶Ibid., 9.

¹⁷Joint Pub 3-07, I-1.

¹⁸Department of the Army, Initial Draft, FM 100-20: Operations Other Than War, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1994), v.

¹⁹Joint Pub 3-07, I-1.

²⁰Ibid., I-2.

²¹Ibid., I-2.

- ²²Ibid., I-2.
- ²³Small Wars Manual, 8.
- ²⁴FM 100-5, 13-3.
- ²⁵Joint Pub 3-07, II-1.
- ²⁶Ibid., II-1.
- ²⁷Ibid., II-2.
- ²⁸Draft FM 100-20, 1-13.
- ²⁹Ibid., 1-14.
- ³⁰Small Wars Manual, 1-8.
- ³¹Munro, 260-265.
- ³²FM 100-5, 13-4.
- ³³Joint Pub 3-07, II-2.
- ³⁴Small Wars Manual, 11.
- ³⁵Munro, 256-262.
- ³⁶Joint Pub 3-07, II-3.
- ³⁷Ibid., II-3.
- ³⁸Small Wars Manual, 13.
- ³⁹Thomas, 52.
- ⁴⁰Joint Pub 3-07, II-4.
- ⁴¹Draft FM 100-20, 1-18.
- ⁴²Ibid., 1-15.
- ⁴³Small Wars Manual, 13.
- ⁴⁴Munro, 260-262.
- ⁴⁵FM 100-5, 13-4.
- ⁴⁶Joint Pub 3-07, II-4.
- ⁴⁷Small Wars Manual, 5-7.
- ⁴⁸Heinl and Heinl, Written in Blood, 433-436.
- ⁴⁹FM 100-5, 13-4.

⁵⁰Joint Pub 3-07, II-5.

⁵¹Ibid., II-5.

⁵²Small Wars Manual, 19.

⁵³Millspaugh, 37-50.

⁵⁴Draft FM 100-20, 1-23.

⁵⁵Ibid., 1-24.

⁵⁶Small Wars Manual, 8-9.

⁵⁷Heinl and Heinl, Written in Blood, 430-436.

CHAPTER 4

LESSONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The United States is one of the remaining world powers that possesses the resources to intervene and the influence required to resolve the emerging conflicts that threaten global security.¹ Whether the mission will be one of peace operations, support for insurgency, counterinsurgency, or nation assistance, success will require military forces to apply the fundamental principles of MOOTW, principles that were refined to a significant degree from the experiences gained from operations conducted by U.S. Marines during the early decades of this century.

Operations other than war and the conditions under which they will be conducted are not new to U.S. military forces. In Haiti in 1915, as in a number of countries in the world today, dissolution of the state, disenfranchised and polarized populations, poverty, crime, and human suffering contributed to the growth of internal turmoil that, in turn, led to regional instability.² It was not enough then, and will not be enough in the future, merely to separate the belligerents during the course of military operations. It will also require the restoration of, or improvement in, those aspects of the fundamental human condition that have been beaten down in many of these conflicts.

There are a number of lessons to be learned from the Haitian intervention. While most of the lessons are positive, there are a significant number that are not.

Just as every military operation must be directed towards a clear objective, the goal of the Haitian intervention was to restore order, protect lives and property, and to prevent European interference in the affairs of a nation that the United States considered as being in its exclusive sphere of influence. The implied tasks were to pacify the insurgent elements (the *cacos*), organize an internal force to maintain the newly restored stability (the *Garde d'Haiti*), and, in the process, improve the fundamental human condition of the populace. For the most part, operations conducted by the Marines supported and achieved those objectives.

Throughout the intervention, the Marines generally retained the overall aims of the government and set appropriate objectives, both military and political, that would accomplish those aims.³ Unfortunately, as is common today, commanders often had to form their own interpretation of their purposes, in the absence of clear directives or effective supervision from Washington. Nor did they receive guidance from the State Department as to the extent to which forceful methods could be applied. Yet, commanders by and large successfully translated the political aims of the Wilson Administration into appropriate military objectives.⁴ These are problems that modern commanders will have to contend with, and they should be prepared to do so rather than being overwhelmed by a lack of clear guidance.

Not suprisingly, without a clearly articulated end state, the Haitian intervention suffered from "mission creep." The gradual and unplanned expansion of requirements, many of which were generated by the Marines themselves, caused problems. While the overall objective did not change, mission requirements continued to expand until political intervention by the subsequent administrations reigned them in. In likely MOOTW scenarios, the inability of commanders to deal with mission creep brought upon by certain decisions can lead to a loss of purpose and, ultimately, mission failure. While mission creep cannot always be controlled by the military commander, at least he should not create situations, himself, that contribute to it.

The tendency of the Marines involved in the intervention and occupation of Haiti was to impose an "American" approach upon the Haitians with little regard or even understanding of their culture. After all, Americans had a long history of dealing with blacks; thus, the U.S. Government thought it knew what was best for Haiti.⁵

The Marines came to Haiti fully convinced that the American way of doing things was superior and the most efficient. Furthermore, they were convinced that their technology rich and pragmatically materialistic value system, once that it was understood and accepted, would in time replace Haiti's backwardness and inefficiency, and ultimately produce an economic paradise and long-term solution to the problems that had afflicted that nation.

The disregard for the elite was coupled with the tendency by many of the Marines to identify all Haitians as peasants, ignorant and uncivilized. This attitude, which developed into a kind of

institutionalized patronization of the population, greatly contributed to a strong resentment of the Marine occupation and did much to undermine the intervention.

Moreover, the cultural differences were further intensified because the Marines, like most Americans, championed the political tenets of democracy and egalitarianism and repudiated the concepts of elitism that were fundamental to the social and economic position of the *elite* in Haiti.⁶ However, the Marines failed to understand that the Haitians did not necessarily embrace these same fundamentals, at least not in the same way. As these concepts had a different importance in Haitian society, using them as a basis in forming a solution to Haiti's problems was a mistake.

There is still a tendency toward cultural arrogance that affects the ability of U.S. forces to conduct operations other than war effectively. Commanders must realize that in the long run, viable solutions are not necessarily American solutions. Rather, they must be solutions that fit into the social, cultural, political, and religious context of the problem.

Generally, the use of force by the Marines in Haiti was limited to the minimum necessary to accomplish the specific mission in support of political actions.⁷ As the Marines found out on a number of occasions, however, excessive use of violence almost always did more harm than good.

Marines controlled almost every aspect of the operations in country. In Haiti, the Marines became the "ad hoc" administrators of United States political, economic, and military concerns. Although,

with the exception of the latter, these responsibilities did not emanate from clear-cut authority from the White House or from the Secretaries of State or the Navy; the realities of ever-increasing attention by Washington to the war in Europe dictated that the Marines assume authority in these areas. However, as the occupation dragged on into the 1920's, the infusion of diplomatic officers and government officials caused the erosion of much of that autonomy. Dealing with this division of authority and responsibilities, particularly when they overlapped, was difficult for the Marines, as it will be for modern commanders. Clear-cut lines of command and division of mission responsibilities and unity of effort is essential.

The Marines did not have overwhelming force of numbers, but maintained security through technology, doctrine, discipline, and, at times, their willingness to apply force when the situation warranted it. Throughout the intervention there were never more than about 2,000 Marines in Haiti, and during most of this period, the number was nearer 1,000 due largely to the heavy manpower demands of the Marine Brigade in France. Often, the insurgents numbered as many as five times that number. Still, the Marines were largely successful in their military operations, partly because of the ill-equipped, poorly organized *cacos* and partly because of the skill in which the Marine intervention, especially from a purely military standpoint, was conducted.

Throughout operations, initiative was the key. Commanders stayed alert even in non-hostile operations and during periods where there was little or no perceived risk. The Marines were inherently capable of rapid transition from a peaceful operation to a combat

operation when circumstances changed. They continuously planned for and postured the necessary capability to transition quickly to combat. Thus the Marines were able to enhance their own force effectiveness and friendly freedom of action by reducing vulnerability to hostile acts, influence, and surprise.

While our current doctrine states that overwhelming force is an almost essential security consideration in the conduct of MOOTW, it will not necessarily be the case that U.S. forces conducting future MOOTW will have it. Command initiative and leadership, coupled with the techniques outlined above, are pertinent lessons.

The Marines understood the importance of restraint in that they were able, in most cases, to balance carefully the need for security, the conduct of operations, and the objective. The most senior commanders did understand that military victory could not achieve their ultimate goal, and they designed campaigns and major operations so as to support the goal. Therefore, they acted to develop their legitimacy and cultivate moral dominance of the situation. At the operational and tactical level, commanders often passed up short-term opportunities that might have exacerbated long-term difficulties.⁸ For example, the destruction and capture of the *cacos* or the use of the *corvee* could not be justified if the action inflicted unnecessary death or injury to noncombatants or destruction of their property. The lesson for today is simple: use force when necessary and without hesitation, but inflict no more damage than is absolutely necessary.

The tactical commanders in Haiti realized that the ultimate solution would require accommodation, even with forces with which they

were currently engaged in combat. They understood that it was not always the best alternative to destroy them (even though that might have become necessary), but to convince them to change their behavior. In an effort to control the use of force, particularly after an inquiry was conducted into cases of Marines allegedly using excessive violence, commanders published supplemental special orders that covered when the use of force was authorized. These "rules of engagement" were simple and straightforward and, most importantly, could be understood by every Marine. Unfortunately, they were published too late to prevent the damage from being done. Still, the lesson is clear. Specific rules of engagement are necessary to ensure not only the security of the intervening force, but also, to ensure restraint in the application of force, thereby preventing tactical mistakes that may have strategic consequences.

Campaigning in Haiti was conducted under extremely arduous conditions, with a minimum of direction. Out of necessity, operations against the *cacos* were carried out by small detached patrols, generally led by enlisted men, alone in a strange land, surrounded by a population they could barely understand, and expecting ambush by the enemy at anytime.⁹ Consequently, as far as the individual Marine was concerned, he was at war, and in the process of carrying out his orders, he realized that when contact with the *cacos* occurred, it was kill or be killed. Some atrocities and other abuses were committed by Marines, yet these acts were not widespread and were perpetrated by only a few individuals. Moreover, when the incidents came to light, action was taken where possible to bring the culprits to justice.¹⁰

The Marines were not accustomed to severe restraints on the use of their destructive power. In Haiti, they had to adjust to the environment and its special requirements. Moreover, the commanders had to realize the force's potential for many useful but nontraditional activities in support of an integrated national effort. This required the mental agility to think in terms of small operations of long duration and to use imagination and ingenuity.¹¹ Once again, the lesson for today is that imaginative leadership and military forces that are adaptable and flexible are the key to success in the conduct of operations other than war. Non-traditional application of military force must become the tradition.

The Marines were able to use force or its threat to coerce hostile factions to cease and desist from violent actions. They were prepared to apply elements of combat power to restore order, to separate warring factions, and to return the environment to conditions more conducive to civil order and discipline.

Success in Haiti, at least over the near term, required a credible military capability. Even though the intent was to avoid violence, the force had to include sufficient combat power. The show and demonstration of force had to be sufficient to convince the *cacos* that they could not afford to disregard the intervening force and its directives.

Tied to military effectiveness was the ability of the Marines to collect information about their enemy. Intelligence gathering became a strong suit for the Marines and should be considered as a major success. Intelligence must provide order of battle information

on all potential opponents. These may include regular national forces as well as irregular forces representing dissident factions. Tactics may range from conventional war to guerrilla operations and terrorism. Intelligence requirements, particularly those that will enable the force to understand the particulars of the civilian population, the culture and society, are essential and require a heavy reliance on low or no-technological collection assets.¹²

The Marines relied heavily on human intelligence for the necessary intelligence. Informers and Marines in the field answered many of the commander's questions. Information is important in any military operation. It is especially so when the intention of potential opponents is unknown and the commander must find a way to preempt violence before it occurs.

Psychological operations were a major force multiplier in Haiti. The Marines convincingly conveyed to the population that they would not harm them unless provoked. The Haitians were convinced early on that the best solution to their problems was to cooperate with the intervening U.S. force. More importantly, the Marines successfully communicated to the average Haitian that he stood to gain both individually and collectively if he cooperated. Psychological operations included "propaganda of the deed," by which the Marines demonstrated through their actions that they would support the well-being of the people and treat all parties even-handedly.¹³ Winning the hearts and minds of the population remains as a cornerstone to the successful conduct of operations other than war. Considering and using all the means available to accomplish this is absolutely necessary.

In Haiti, gaining legitimacy was conditionally based on the ability of the Marines to cultivate the perception by a specific audience of the legality, morality, and rightness of their actions. This audience was the U.S. public, the *elite*, the peasantry, and the *cacos*. Arguably, the Marines could never firmly establish legitimacy, either political, social, or practical, in America or Haiti.

The Haitian reaction to the American occupation was mixed. The vast majority of the farmers and peasants were pleased with the presence of Marines because of their suppression of the *cacos*. On the other hand, the *elite* who had lived by government graft were disgruntled because the occupation authorities virtually eliminated wholesale extortion and corruption by taking charge of the accounting and expenditure of government funds. Nevertheless, the occupation was distasteful to virtually all Haitians regardless of the benefits that accrued to the majority. This was so because Haitians treasured their independence and the occupation not only hurt their pride, it violated their sovereignty. Moreover, the majority of Americans on duty in Haiti possessed little knowledge or understanding of Haitian history, culture, and language; likewise, many of them harbored a sense of racial prejudice. Consequently, this ignorance and attitude of superiority reinforced the Haitian desire for the departure of the Anglo-Saxons. Racial antipathies were the causes of many of the difficulties which the United States military and civil forces met in Haiti.¹⁴

The Marines worked with people who were socially and ethnically different and who had attitudes or who acted in ways that conflicted

with what the Marines accepted as normal. There was failure at all levels to see things as the Haitians saw them. While some of this cultural intolerance was the product of the times, the lesson is that military organizations must properly prepare their soldiers for these cultural differences and how to understand how their own differing perceptions impact on the situation.¹⁵ This kind of training may be as important as any tactical exercise in preparing U.S. forces for MOOTW.

Culture shapes perceptions, thoughts, and actions. Both U.S. national and professional military cultures demand action for its own sake, even when a passive presence may be more useful and action may be harmful. To communicate across cultures and understand other peoples, American soldiers must accept the fact of foreign perceptions and respect them. Similarly, military personnel must balance the rush to action with cultivated patience. Soldiers are trained to look for an enemy to defeat in battle. If none is present, they are likely to create one, to their own great detriment. Likewise, any attempt to force American values and methods on another society may undermine American legitimacy as well as that of the people being supported. The United States must allow the supported party to form its own vision of a successful outcome and aid that party in achieving it.¹⁶ For the United States to be successful, a certain social and cultural maturity in its own society (both as a nation and as individuals) is necessary. Until Americans are able to develop this political altruism and couple it with preparatory training that enhances a military force's perspective in conducting these tedious operations, U.S. initiatives may never be successful.

Successes And Failures: Implications For The Future

In the final analysis, the actions by U.S. Marines brought about a real peace and the establishment of law and order to Haiti for the first time in several generations. As a result, the lot of the peasants improved. Individual security was greater. Revolutionary armies no longer roamed the countryside destroying crops. Personal property was not so readily stolen and houses could be safely built near the principal highways instead of being hidden away in the bush. Men no longer feared seizure for military service; they could return to daily pursuits. There was less poverty among the peasants, and many were able to purchase or lease small pieces of land.¹⁷

The *Gendarmerie*, which was organized by the Marines along military lines, markedly improved in its proficiency as a result of training and combat experience and came to serve as the rural constabulary and urban police; it also had charge of communal fire departments, trails, prisoners, and acted as agents for other treaty service departments in such matters as collecting information regarding land titles, road censuses, and the like. Officers acted as communal advisors throughout the country. Wherever there was a justice of the peace, a specially trained non-commissioned officer acted as public prosecutor.¹⁸

The Marines were quite successful in the discharge of their non-military duties; activities for which they were not trained. In one example, in 1916 according to Major Smedley Butler, the prisons were "vile beyond description" when turned over to the Americans. With a monthly allotment of \$8,000 from the American Financial Advisor, the

Marines started two industrial schools that the prisoners built themselves, and reorganized the prison system so that prisoners were classified according to offenses, were well fed, taken care of, and taught trades. Making all the clothing for the *Gendarmerie*, the prisoners not only made the prisons nearly self-supporting, but could save money themselves. Additionally, the Haitian Penitentiary, which was under Marine supervision, also became in nearly all respects a model institution.¹⁹

Before 1915, most of the countryside was inaccessible except on horseback, as the system of roads that had been built when Haiti was a flourishing French colony had been allowed to go to ruin. The road from Cap Haitien to the capital, rebuilt by the *corvee*, was finished in the summer of 1917. Between July 1916 and March 1918, about 470 miles of road were made passable for motor vehicles, and by the end of 1920, about 630 miles had been repaired or constructed. The antiquated telegraph system was replaced by local and long-distance telephone facilities connecting commercial centers. In Port-au-Prince and at Cap Haitien, automatic telephone exchanges were installed, and by 1920, operated at a profit. Further, the old French colonial irrigation systems were repaired and new projects for the irrigation of large areas of potentially productive agricultural land were studied and initiated; moreover, much had been accomplished toward the solution of the municipal water supply problem, especially in the capital.

Likewise, sanitary and medical conditions in Haiti in 1915 were barbarous. Sanitary procedures and quarantine regulations were adopted and vigorously enforced. A modern public-health laboratory was

established, which provided service to every physician in Haiti. Syphilis, one the three main diseases, was being successfully fought, and it was gradually becoming a less important economic factor. In addition to inspection of public markets, removal of garbage, street cleaning, and sanitary inspections, great strides were made toward exterminating malaria. Consequently, these developments in medical and health services gave the Haitians something previously nonexistent, resulting in a general improvement of the physical condition of the inhabitants. Furthermore, a number of Haitian doctors were sent to the United States and to Europe for additional training and upon return were promoted to responsible posts. Finally, under the direction of the Americans, a training school for Haitian nurses was maintained.

In examining the Haitian intervention, it becomes apparent that while the 19-year operation was a tactical success, the results were operationally ambiguous and a strategic failure. While some blame can be laid at the feet of those who conducted the operations, ultimately, the disconnect between the diplomatic and military instruments of U.S. power, a pattern that would carry on into the future, was the main cause. Also, the intervention can be viewed as one of many good-intentioned but misguided attempts to apply an American solution to a "foreign" problem. While much good was done by the Marines, particularly in terms of nation assistance, these efforts merely treated Haiti's symptoms, not its problems. These are the real reasons why the intervention failed to achieve a long-term and lasting solution. They still thwart U.S. efforts in these kinds of operations. Although the successes of the intervention did not result in a

permanent solution to the problems of Haiti, the greatest achievement, however, may be in the lessons it provides for future U.S. involvement in MOOTW.

Endnotes

- ¹Michael T. Klare, "The New Challenges to Global Security," Current History, April 1993, 161.
- ²Ibid, 155-160.
- ³Allan R. Millett, Semper Fidelis, The History of the United States Marine Corps, (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 241.
- ⁴David Healy, Gunboat Diplomacy in the Wilson Era: The U.S. Navy in Haiti, 1915-1916 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), 5.
- ⁵Munro, 259.
- ⁶Hans Schmidt, 146.
- ⁷Forbes Commission, 22.
- ⁸Thomas, 147.
- ⁹Montague, 234.
- ¹⁰Millet, 238-240.
- ¹¹Ibid., 230-240.
- ¹²Graham A. Cosmas, "Cacos and Caudillos: Marines and Counterinsurgency in Hispaniola, 1915-1924," New Interpretations in Naval History: Selected Papers from the Ninth Naval History Symposium Held at the United States Naval Academy, 18-20 October 1989, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 293-308.
- ¹³Ibid., 3-37.
- ¹⁴Forbes Commission, 1930, 3: 237.
- ¹⁵Draft FM 100-20, 1-23.
- ¹⁶Ibid., 1-24.
- ¹⁷Heinl and Heinl, Written in Blood, 400-407.
- ¹⁸McCrocklin, 117.
- ¹⁹Thomas, 81-90.

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