“FREEDOM IS NOT WON WITH FLOWERS:”

An Operational Analysis of the U.S. Occupations of Cuba (1906), Haiti (1915), and Nicaragua (1927)

Leo McMahon

Primary Thesis Advisor: Professor Stephen Kinzer
Second Reader: Professor Tyler Jost
Honors Seminar Instructor: Professor Claudia Elliott

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Date 4/25/23

Stephen Kinzer

Stephen Kinzer, Thesis Advisor

Date_____

_____

Tyler Jost, Second Reader

Approved by

Date_____

_____

Professor Susan Moffitt
Director of Academic Programs

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I have read and understood Brown University's *Academic Code* and pledge that this thesis fully respects the principles of academic integrity defined in the code, including that the research conducted for it was carried out in accordance with the rules defined by the University's Institutional Review Board for research involving human subjects.

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ABSTRACT

Why have great powers sometimes been able to occupy weaker countries and at other times, using similar tactics, lost to a few poorly armed insurgents? Most scholarly theories of counterinsurgency propose best practices against insurgencies inspired by Maoist protracted warfare theory. But the wide variation in outcomes among cases in which counterinsurgents followed these best practices suggests that insurgent organization and strategy exert equal influence on victory and defeat as counterinsurgency strategy. I argue that for insurgent movements with low levels of bureaucracy, leaders' autonomy and the difficulty of replacing them make leadership – rather than civilians or fighters – the insurgents' center of gravity. I propose a model of leadership decapitation in which only those insurgencies whose leaders are highly motivated to fight and are able to evade capture or assassination will win their campaigns. This model is based on detailed case studies of the U.S. occupations of Cuba (1906), Haiti (1915), and Nicaragua (1927), which current theories of counterinsurgency theory do not fully explain. This research contributes to a more accurate understanding of the outcomes of these interventions and of the variety of forms insurgencies can take.

Keywords: Insurgency, counterinsurgency, decapitation, military leadership, Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

IS NICARAGUA SPANISH FOR VIETNAM?

The eight most violent insurgencies of 2022 have killed at least 56,000 people this year (Table 1).[1] These wars compose eight of the ten deadliest conflicts worldwide and yet only a handful of the dozens of insurgencies which currently impact countries as disparate as Afghanistan and Colombia, Iraq, and Mozambique.[2] On average, these conflicts have lasted ten years (Table 1), and the killing shows no indication of slowing down. For example, despite their longevity, the insurgencies in the Sahel and the Democratic Republic of Congo are escalating.[3] Moreover, new civil wars in Ethiopia and Myanmar broke out in 2020 and 2021, respectively, joining the crop of decade-old jihadist insurgencies. Although it attracts little attention in the United States,[4] the fighting since the coup d'état which overthrew Myanmar's democratic government has exceeded the rate of killing in every global conflict this year except the Russo-Ukrainian War since.[5]

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[1] Almost certainly an underestimate, as the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) includes only events recorded by media and government reports and limits its purview to acts of violence. Deaths from disease, starvation, and other secondary effects of conflict are missing. "ACLED Dashboard," *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project*, accessed October 13, 2022, https://acleddata.com/dashboard#/dashboard.

[2] If one were to add the Mexican War on Drugs to my count, nine of ten conflicts would qualify as insurgencies. Ibid.

[3] Calculated by comparing the average recorded deaths per year for the duration of each conflict with the deaths recorded in 2022. Ibid.

[4] Google Trends, "Myanmar (Burma), ukraine, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria," accessed October 14, 2022, https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=2022-04-01%202022-10-14&geo=US&q=%2Fm%2F04xn_,ukraine,%2Fm%2F0jdd,%2Fm%2F0d05q4,%2Fm%2F06vbd.

[5] "Dashboard," *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project.*

Table 1: Eight Deadliest Insurgencies of 2022

Conflict	Origin Year	Confirmed fatalities, 2022	Confirmed fatalities since origin
Myanmar Civil War	2021	16,000	21,000
Boko Haram Insurgency	2011	9100	98,000
Sahel War	2012	7700	33,000
Yemeni Civil War	2014	5500	160,000
Ethiopian Civil Conflict	2020	5300	18,000
Aftershocks of Second Congo War	2003	4900	55,000
Al-Shabaab Insurgency	2006	4000	67,000
Syrian Civil War	2011	4000	120,000

Source: Origin years from the Center for Preventive Action, "Global Conflict Tracker," *Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed October 13, 2022, https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker. Confirmed fatalities from "Dashboard," *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project*; and Department of Peace and Conflict Research, "Uppsala Conflict Data Program," *Uppsala Universitet*, accessed October 14, 2022, https://ucdp.uu.se/exploratory. I have rounded the numbers in this and the following column to avoid an unrealistic impression of precision. Other datasets (like the Uppsala Conflict Data Program) give different numbers from ACLED, and ACLED's scope includes only a portion of conflict-related deaths.

The narrow emphasis on deaths in the preceding paragraph understates the effects of insurgencies on the contemporary world. These conflicts are responsible for a wide range of harms to combatants and civilians. The United Nations found in 2021 that 2.3 million Yemeni children under five years old were "acutely malnourished" as a result of military interdiction of supplies and a collapse of the country's economy.[6] Out of a prewar population of 21 million,[7] seven million

[6] UN News, "Millions in Yemen 'a Step away from Starvation,'" *United Nations*, September 22, 2021, https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/09/1100782.

[7] "Population, Total – Syrian Arab Republic," *The World Bank*, accessed October 14, 2022, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=SY.

people have fled Syria, and another seven million are refugees within their own country.[8] The jihadist group Boko Haram has abducted thousands of Nigerian schoolchildren.[9] And these are only a few of the most notorious consequences of contemporary insurgencies. Such conflicts inevitably cause some degree of physical and psychological injury, sexual violence, disease, hunger, and myriad other afflictions.

As a result of the grave human costs of prolonged insurgencies, it is vital to understand how these conflicts can best be brought to an end. The U.S. occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan have brought this question to the fore within Western academia.[10] Not only have multiple academic and professional journals devoted themselves to the study of insurgency,[11] but non-specialist academic and policy venues, particularly in the U.S., have studied insurgency with an intensity not seen in more than half a century.[12] Nevertheless, this research has suffered from its narrowness of focus, which others have criticized on the basis of several criteria.[13] The particular gap in the

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[8] "Syria Refugee Crisis Explained," *USA for UNHCR*, July 8, 2022, https://www.unrefugees.org/news/syria-refugee-crisis-explained/.

[9] "More than 1,000 Children in Northeastern Nigeria Abducted by Boko Haram since 2013," *UNICEF*, April 13, 2018, https://www.unicef.org/wca/press-releases/more-1000-children-northeastern-nigeria-abducted-boko-haram-2013; and "Nigeria: Eight Years after Chibok More than 1,500 Children Abducted by Armed Groups," *Amnesty International UK*, April 14, 2022, https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/nigeria-eight-years-after-chibok-more-1500-children-abducted-armed-groups.

[10] Steven Metz, "Rethinking Insurgency," in *The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, ed. Paul B. Rich and Isabelle Duyvesteyn, (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2012), 33.

[11] "Aims and Scope," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, accessed November 7, 2022, https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=fswi20; "About," *Small Wars Journal*, accessed November 7, 2022, https://smallwarsjournal.com/content/about.

[12] Christopher Paul, et al., *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013), xvii.

[13] Two examples: Brett Friedman, "No COIN for You? The most Stagnant Debate in Strategic Studies," *War on the Rocks*, January 30, 2014, https://warontherocks.com/2014/01/no-coin-for-you-the-most-stagnant-debate-in-strategic-studies/; and David H. Ucko, *Counterinsurgency and Its Discontents: Assessing the Value of a Divisive Concept*, (Berlin: Siftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2011).

scholarly discourse which I intend to address is the discussion's lack of broad historical context. If scholars are interested in historical insurgencies, they generally take case studies from Cold War conflicts between communist guerrillas and U.S.-backed governments.[14] As a result, we have little sense of whether the conclusions scholars have drawn about insurgency are relevant to campaigns involving non-Marxist insurgents.

This thesis intends to help answer the question of the extent to which existing theories provide enduring explanations for the outcomes of diverse types of insurgencies. To do so, my thesis contributes to the accumulation of historical knowledge about a series of understudied insurgencies: the armed resistance to U.S. occupation of Caribbean nations from the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898 until President Franklin Roosevelt's 1934 withdrawal of U.S. marines from the region. In analyzing a diverse selection of conflicts from the region and era, I ask the question: What explains the degree to which U.S. military forces were successful at suppressing armed insurgencies in the Caribbean from 1906-1934? Conversely, what explains the degree to which insurgent forces were unsuccessful in ending U.S. occupations? These case studies provide opportunities to test proposed theories of insurgency and counterinsurgency against data outside the sample from which these theories arose.

I argue that the primary determinant of the outcome of early twentieth-century insurgencies in the Caribbean was whether occupying forces were able to incapacitate the leadership of the rebel movement. Where the U.S. was able to coopt rebel leaders, as in Cuba, or to assassinate them, as in Haiti, insurgent movements collapsed rapidly. In contrast, the Nicaraguan insurgency's ability to maintain a committed and surviving contingent of commanders frustrated the U.S. effort to suppress the rebellion. This conclusion suggests the importance of understanding the unique

[14] Metz, "Rethinking Insurgency," 33.

command structures which insurgencies adopt. In other words, Nicaragua is not Spanish for Vietnam, and scholars of insurgency would benefit from weighting the internal variation in insurgent movements' organization more heavily in their models.

An examination of the literature suggests that existing theory lacks the history to understand these conflicts, and existing history lacks the theory needed to explain their outcomes. If existing theories of insurgency and counterinsurgency cannot account for the outcomes observed in the Caribbean small wars, that would be a worrisome indication that our conclusions about Cold War insurgencies may not be generalizable. While insufficient on its own to fully explain why some insurgencies succeed and others fail, this thesis represents a necessary contribution to a research agenda of creating a comprehensive historical understanding of insurgency. Only through substantially fulfilling this research agenda can scholars improve their understanding of what factors are contingent upon the specific historical circumstances of the Cold War and which are more likely to be enduring characteristics of future insurgencies.

SIGNIFICANCE

There are both theoretical and practical benefits to research on the determinants of victory and defeat in the Caribbean insurgencies against U.S. occupation. Theoretically, study of these wars (as well as others) allows testing the applicability of contemporary insurgency and counterinsurgency theory to conflicts besides the Cold War. These Caribbean insurgencies are particularly well suited to research because of their lack of theoretical study and their resonance with the kind of small-footprint occupations common in the twenty-first century. Practically, a better understanding of historical insurgencies would aid combatants in both insurgent and counterinsurgent forces by providing examples of decisions faced by their historical predecessors

as well as lessons learned. Since U.S. soldiers are already studying these wars in search of lessons to apply to their own conflicts, they would benefit from a theoretically sophisticated history supported by a thorough review of the empirical evidence.

Theoretical Significance

The theoretical literature on counterinsurgency presents two core ethe: population-centric counterinsurgency, which argues that insurgencies are competitions for the support of the local population, and enemy-centric counterinsurgency, which argues that winning the support of the population is secondary to the task of attriting or demoralizing insurgents. In the U.S. and U.K., these competing understandings have become opposing camps in a bitter argument over the direction of national strategy.[15]

These camps have risen, however, in a historical context shaped by the success of one insurgent doctrine, the Maoist approach to protracted warfare. In brief, this doctrine uses the advantages of "terrain, climate, and society" to defeat a materially stronger established power.[16] Protracted warfare follows a strategy of gradual escalation toward a decisive conventional victory but whose determinative phase consists of the growth of a guerrilla movement embedded in a rural population.[17] Insurgencies which follow some version of this strategy constitute the bulk of historical research on not just insurgency but also on attempts to overthrow governments in general. Except for the 1917 Russian Revolution and the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the most studied of these

[15] Mark Stout, "Keep Fighting: Why the Counterinsurgency Debate Must Go On," *War on the Rocks*, December 3, 2013, https://warontherocks.com/2013/12/keep-fighting-why-the-counterinsurgency-debate-must-go-on/.

[16] Mao Tse-Tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Brigadier General Samuel B. Griffith USMC (Ret.), (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1961), 42.

[17] Mao, *Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Griffith, 41-43.

attempts by Anglophone academic journals in the twentieth century are all examples of protracted warfare: the 1978-1979 Sandinista Revolution, the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the 1979-1992 Salvadoran Civil War, Mao's own activities in China, and the thirty-year struggle for an independent and communist Vietnam.[18] Recent scholars have investigated the degree of similarity of various current insurgent groups to revolutionary Maoist organizations, and while some jihadist groups follow a similar strategy (with different ends), many have alternative strategic rationales and organizational structures.[19]

This thesis attempts to fill one of the historical gaps left by previous scholarship's narrow focus on Maoist-style insurgencies. I use a selection of understudied insurgencies to test theories developed for the purpose of explaining the outcomes of later protracted wars. This thesis will therefore conform to Stephen Van Evera's definition of a theory-testing thesis[20] and will use case studies to test the predictions of existing theories of insurgency and counterinsurgency. A historical research agenda can determine the robustness of current theory to unconventional conflicts which will not always follow the model of protracted warfare.

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[18] Colin J. Beck, "The Structure of Comparison in the Study of Revolution," *American Sociological Association* 36, no. 2 (2018): 134-161, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0735275118777004.

[19] Edward Stoddard, "Revolutionary Warfare? Assessing the Character of Competing Factions within the Boko Haram Insurgency," *African Security* 12, no. 3-4 (2019): 300-329, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19392206.2019.1668632; and Paul B. Rich, "How Revolutionary Are Jihadist Insurgencies? The Case of ISIL," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 27, no. 5 (2016): 777-799, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09592318.2016.1208795.

[20] Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 90.

Practical Significance

Understanding the enduring causes of insurgency's success or failure has actionable consequences for practitioners of both insurgency and counterinsurgency. For many policymakers and combatants, the human costs examined at the outset of this thesis are not the most important consequences of an insurgency. These actors often have motivations more powerful than the desire for immediate safety and comfort, and they prove it by their willingness to kill and to die for their beliefs. For example, not all Burmese feel so strongly, but the approximately 60,000 guerrillas fighting for democracy or federalism and those career soldiers defending the military junta certainly do.[21] And, consequences for those caught in the crossfire aside, the victory of an insurgency (or the suppression of one) can have a transformative impact. Successful insurgencies deposed the Nepalese monarchy in 2006,[22] achieved the independence of Kosovo in 1999,[23] set Ireland on what now seems a probable path to reunification,[24] and established an Islamic emirate in Afghanistan in both 1996 and 2021.[25] Not all insurgencies produce such decisive results, but these examples indicate that a strategy of insurgency can empower a nationalist, revolutionary, or jihadist group to change their society over the opposition of the established power structure.

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[21] Andrew Selth, "Myanmar's Military Numbers," *The Interpreter*, February 17, 2022, https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/myanmar-s-military-numbers.

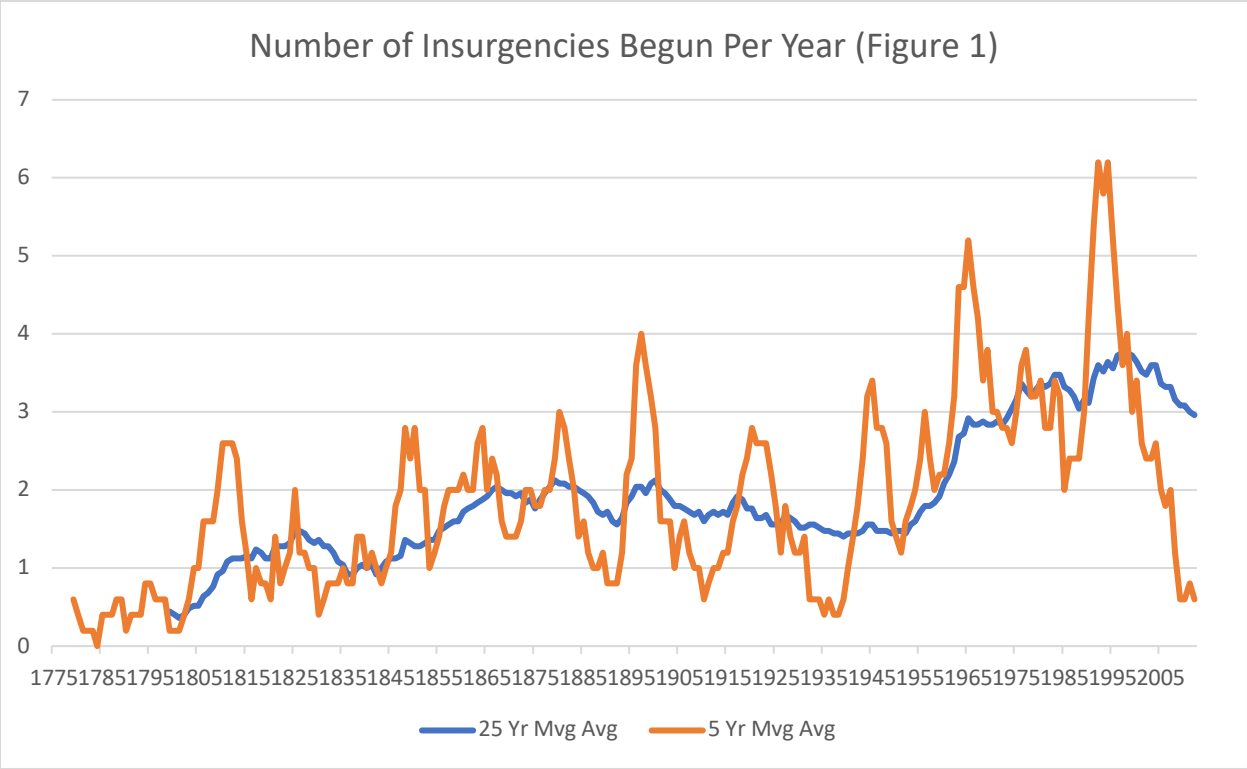
[22] Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2010), 293.

[23] Ibid, 287.

[24] Note the changing evaluations of the Good Friday Agreement from 2013 to 2022. Paul, et al., *Paths to Victory*, 328; and Daniel Finn, "Has Sinn Féin's Day Come?" *Jacobin*, Summer 2022, 99-100.

[25] Paul, Clarke, and Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*, 189; and Furqan Khan, "The Afghan Conundrum: Taliban's Takeover and the Way Forward," *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, August 31, 2021, https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/2759350/the-afghan-conundrum-talibans-takeover-and-the-way-forward/.

Taking this lesson to heart, opposition groups across the globe have increasingly turned to insurgency to achieve their aims. In historical perspective, the incidence of insurgencies has been increasing steadily since the beginning of the Cold War (Figure 1). While the number of new insurgencies fluctuates year to year, the nearly 12-year average duration of a post-Second World War insurgency has kept the number of active insurgencies both steady and high.[26]



Source: Bruce E. Segal and Joe Mako, "Invisible Armies Insurgency Tracker," *Tableau.com*, September 4, 2019, https://public.tableau.com/views/BESegalsversionofMaxBootsInsurgency-Database/MaxBootsInvisibleArmyTracker; data from Max Boot, "Invisible Armies Insurgency Tracker," *Council on Foreign Relations*, April 18, 2013, https://www.cfr.org/wars-and-warfare/invisible-armies-insurgency-tracker/p29917.

Despite the return of conventional warfare in Ukraine and of great power competition between the U.S. and China, which might suggest a decline in the salience of insurgency, there are reasons to think that insurgencies will continue to spread. Food shortages were a substantial contributor to

[26] My calculations. Ibid.

the wave of insurgencies following the Arab Spring,[27] and the war in Ukraine is intensifying another global food shortage.[28] The disruption caused by global warming is another potential accelerant to guerrilla warfare.[29] While their causes extend far beyond food and climate concerns, the nascent conflicts in Myanmar and Ethiopia suggest that some people still perceive guerrilla warfare to be an attractive solution to their problems.

Particularly relevant to audiences in the U.S. as well as most directly addressed by the case studies in this thesis is that subset of insurgencies formed by contested great power occupations of foreign countries. Even as the prevalence of insurgencies continues to increase, the era of large-scale foreign occupations against guerrilla opposition seems to be in abeyance. While a Russian conventional victory over Ukraine (or a number of even less likely scenarios) could reverse the trend, there are no major campaigns between guerrillas and a foreign occupying power. Given American public skepticism of the wars in Iraq[30] and Afghanistan,[31] no upcoming presidential

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[27] Troy Sternberg, "Chinese Drought, Bread and the Arab Spring," *Applied Geography* 34 (May 2012), 519; and Giulia Soffiantini, "Food Insecurity and Political Insecurity during the Arab Spring," *Global Food Security* 26 (September 2020), 100400.

[28] "War in Ukraine Drives Global Food Crisis," *World Food Programme*, June 24, 2022, https://www.wfp.org/publications/war-ukraine-drives-global-food-crisis.

[29] Katharina Nett and Lukas Rüttinger, *Insurgency, Terrorism and Organized Crime in a Warming Climate: Analysing the Links between Climate Change and Non-State Armed Groups*, (Berlin: Adelphi, 2016), 46.

[30] Hannah Hartig and Carroll Doherty, "Two Decades Later, the Enduring Legacy of 9/11," *Pew Research Center*, September 2, 2021, https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/09/02/two-decades-later-the-enduring-legacy-of-9-11/. The poll contacted 1466 adult residents of the U.S. by landline and cell phone from March 7-14, 2018. The margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points. Respondents were asked whether "the US made the right or wrong decision in using military force in Iraq."

[31] Katherine Schaeffer, "A Year Later, a Look Back at Public Opinion about the U.S. Military Exit from Afghanistan," *Pew Research* Center, August 17, 2022, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/08/17/a-year-later-a-look-back-at-public-opinion-about-the-u-s-military-exit-from-afghanistan/. The poll contacted 10,348 adult non-institutionalized residents of the U.S. who were participants in Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel. The margin of error is plus or minus 1.6 percentage points. Respondents were asked whether "the U.S. mostly succeeded or mostly failed in achieving its goals in Afghanistan."

administration seems likely to complete George W. Bush's alleged plan to overthrow the governments of six countries after defeating Saddam Hussein.[32]

Instead, we see a rise in small-footprint interventions executed by a few special operations and advisory personnel. Outlined as U.S. policy in 2012, these interventions aim to achieve their missions at a minimal political and financial cost.[33] As a result, the U.S. has withdrawn from Afghanistan and from conventional combat in Iraq but maintains 3400 troops in Iraq and Syria to combat the Islamic State.[34] Twelve thousand U.S. military personnel remain in the Middle East and North Africa, with much of their mission to fight jihadist insurgencies in the region remotely and through local proxies.[35] France is equally enthusiastic about the possibility of fighting small wars with only commandos and foreign legionnaires in the Sahel.[36] Even Russia has experimented with specialized contingents of advisors and mercenaries in Syria.[37] While insurgency remains as important as ever, the counterinsurgency practice of the great powers has in some ways returned to the wars of limited contingents which they preferred before the Cold War.

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[32] "US 'Plans to Attack Seven Muslim States,'" *Al Jazeera*, September 22, 2003, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2003/9/22/us-plans-to-attack-seven-muslim-states.

[33] Jonathan Schroden, "What Does 'Small Footprint' really Mean?," *War on the Rocks*, March 13, 2014, https://warontherocks.com/2014/03/what-does-small-footprint-really-mean/.

[34] Michael A. Allen, Michael E. Flynn, and Carla Martinez Machain. "Global U.S. military deployment data: 1950-2021," *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, accessed October 14, 2022, https://meflynn.github.io/troopdata/index.html.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Michael Shurkin, "France's War in the Sahel and the Evolution of Counter-Insurgency Doctrine," *Texas National Security Review* 4, no. 1 (Winter 2020/2021), https://tnsr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/TNSR-Vol-4-Issue-1-Shurkin.pdf, 36.

[37] Pavel K. Baev, "The Impacts of the Syrian Intervention on Russian Strategic Culture," *George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies*, June 2019, https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/security-insights/impacts-syrian-intervention-russian-strategic-culture-0.

A proper understanding of these prewar conflicts is important to policymakers not simply because of their theoretical relevance to contemporary and potential conflicts but because practitioners are already learning from the early history of insurgency – and not always drawing well-informed conclusions. While the U.S. Marine campaigns in the Caribbean have now been mostly forgotten, their legacies survive in ghostlike and idiosyncratic ways, influencing thought and policy from beyond the grave. For instance, the standard English translation of Mao Zedong's *Guerrilla Warfare* is Samuel Griffith's version originally published in 1961. Griffith was a veteran of the Marine-led Nicaraguan Guardia Nacional from 1931-1933 and a participant in the campaign against the Marines' most successful guerrilla opponent, Augusto César Sandino.[38] Griffith became interested in Maoist guerrilla warfare techniques as a result of his personal experience fighting guerrillas, and he wrote his translation in 1940-1941 while stationed in Guantánamo Bay.[39] As a result, when Anglophone readers study Maoist guerrilla warfare, they read a translation filtered through Griffith's experience fighting a different sort of insurgent organization without the context needed to understand the relevance (or even existence) of that experience.

Contemporary histories of the insurgencies in the Caribbean have also left their mark on twenty-first century counterinsurgency practice in ways that can be improved upon. The revised edition of Max Boot's *The Savage Wars of Peace*, a history of the United States's "small wars" (a term for conflicts against non-peer combatants, frequently used to describe U.S. military campaigns in the Caribbean), touts its influence on U.S. military personnel serving in the Global War on Terror. Boot tells of meeting numerous field officers in Iraq and Afghanistan who had

[38] Peter Y. Ban, *Brigadier General Samuel B. Griffith II, USMC: Marine Translator and Interpreter of Chinese Military Thought*, 2012, Masters thesis for the Marine Corps Command and Staff College, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA600767, 26.

[39] Ibid; and Mao, *Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Griffith, 37-38.

been reading his book. Many of them read *Savage Wars* as part of the curriculum of their professional military education.[40] Boot also claims that his book was in part responsible for inspiring the "Anbar Awakening" of Sunni tribes frequently credited with turning the tide against the insurgency in the Iraq War.[41] Unfortunately, Boot's research of the small wars about which he writes is generally limited to the synthesis of other historians' work, so his analysis depends upon the health of existing historiography. In the case of Caribbean small wars, I have previously identified the state of historical knowledge as lacking. Moreover, Boot tends to draw maximalist and unconventional conclusions from his studies. The lesson he draws from the British occupation of modern-day Pakistan, for instance, is that the U.S. should be willing to keep troops in Afghanistan for as long as a century – regardless of their ability to win.[42] If practitioners are going to learn from history, they should learn the best history possible, and such a resource is not yet available for the Caribbean small wars.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Case selection

In this thesis, I consider the U.S. occupations undertaken in the Caribbean as a phenomenon lasting from the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898 to the U.S. withdrawal from Haiti in

[40] Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, (New York: Basic Books, 2002), xiv.

[41] Ibid, xv.

[42] Max Boot, "Why Winning and Losing Are Irrelevant in Syria and Afghanistan," *The Washington Post*, January 30, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/the-us-cant-win-the-wars-in-afghanistan-and-syria--but-we-can-lose-them/2019/01/30/e440c54e-23ea-11e9-90cd-dedb0c92dc17_story.html.

1934, frequently termed the Banana Wars. Victory over Spain secured U.S. hegemony in the Caribbean Sea and inaugurated the nation's first occupations of entirely foreign territory.[43] Following President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy and accelerated withdrawal of marines from Haiti, the U.S. did not occupy another Latin American country until the 1965 intervention in the Dominican Republic.[44] Despite many differences among the causes and conduct of the occupations, this set of military interventions between 1898 and 1934 were experienced as a continuous process for the U.S. The U.S. military progressively adapted its behavior and doctrine in response to individual occupations and deployed these adaptations in successive interventions.[45]

I chose the three interventions in Cuba (1906-1909), Haiti (1915-1920), and Nicaragua (1927-1933) because the characteristics of each show the range of conflicts within the era and region and because they best show the evolution of rebel and U.S. strategies as each grappled with an opponent with an increasingly sophisticated understanding of guerrilla warfare. As I demonstrate in the chapters devoted to each case study, in Cuba, the rebel forces barely tried to oppose the superior U.S. Army of Cuban Pacification. In Haiti, rebel *cacos* fought two wars against U.S. Marines with little success. But in Nicaragua, Sandino developed a strategy of outlasting U.S. occupation. Only the superior endurance of the American-trained but Nicaraguan-manned Guardia Nacional deprived Sandino's rebellion of ultimate victory.

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[43] Lester Langley, *The Banana Wars: An Inner History of American Empire 1900-1934* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1983), 3-5.

[44] Alan McPherson, *The Invaded: How Latin Americans and Their Allies Fought and Ended U.S. Occupations*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 259; and Ivan Musicant, *The Banana Wars: A History of United States Military Intervention in Latin America from the Spanish-American War to the Invasion of Panama*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1990), 362.

[45] Keith B. Bickel, *Mars Learning: The Marine Corps' Development of Small Wars Doctrine, 1915-1940*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001), xi.

These case studies provide an ideal means of testing theories because they encompass the full range of outcomes achieved in Caribbean insurgencies from 1906-1934: from bloodless suppression of armed resistance to hard-fought stalemate. In addition, these three campaigns each last no longer than six years and were of large enough scale to leave extensive documentary evidence behind. Further, because the theoretical literatures on insurgency and counterinsurgency have usually failed to incorporate the Banana Wars in developing theory, these case studies provide rare opportunities to perform tests on a sample exogenous to the theory-developing data.[46]

Methods

To understand the outcomes of early 20th century U.S. occupations of Caribbean nations, I use the method of historical case studies. Since I am attempting to understand the causes of a phenomenon, case studies are best suited to explaining how the actions of the participants affected the outcomes of their conflicts.[47] Because the period I am studying is too distant to interview or survey participants, it is necessary to follow the form of the historical case study, which limits research to documentary evidence.[48] In order to gain the best understanding of actors' decision-making and the development of such a highly interactive event as a war,[49] I use process tracing to follow the stimuli and responses which shaped each side's actions during each conflict.

In order to test theories of insurgent and counterinsurgent strategy against my case studies, I combine my process-tracing methods with longitudinal comparison between similar cases.

[46] Van Evera correctly notes that researchers generally know too much about the cases they study to perform proper blind tests, but, even though this is not a true blind test, my cases are blind *to the scholars developing theory*. Van Evera, *Guide to Methods*, 45.

[47] Van Evera, *Guide to Methods*, 54-55.

[48] Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2003), 7.

[49] Van Evera, *Guide to Methods*, 64-65.

Because the independent variables I am trying to explain (insurgent and counterinsurgent strategies) express themselves through sequences of interactive choices over time, my study must be longitudinal. A set of tactical choices at any single point in time would not allow an accurate characterization of each side's strategy.[50] Because my dependent variable, the outcomes of insurgencies, varied across the selected region and era, a between-case comparison can help identify likely causal factors of variation. Although the similarity of my cases' antecedent conditions creates a favorable environment for comparison, the inevitable lurking variables separating each case make mere comparison between cases a weak test of theory.[51] As a result, I focus my analysis on process-tracing each case, which, because of the likelihood for identifying unique explanatory theories, provides a strong test of theory under particular antecedent conditions.[52] I identify the unique intermediate predictions of five paradigms of counterinsurgency, as well as the protracted warfare paradigm of insurgency and two of its offshoots. Chapter Two contains a table denoting the unique characteristics of each paradigm and the predictions for its successful deployment.

For the most part, my evidence is textual and archival, using U.S. government archives, personal accounts and firsthand analyses recorded elsewhere, those Spanish-language sources translated into English, and, for aspects of the history less crucial to my analysis, the secondary scholarship. Fortunately, the archival material on this subject is relatively extensive, particularly on the conduct of U.S. Marine operations, many of the records of which have survived. Much

[50] This is especially relevant in testing protracted warfare (which I explain in further detail in Chapter Two) as protracted warfare explicitly demands opposite tactics in each of its three stages. Looking at only one point in time would lead to an incorrect characterization of insurgent strategy.

[51] Van Evera, *Guide to Methods*, 57.

[52] Van Evera, *Guide to Methods*, 65.

material is online at various government websites or the convenient sandinorebellion.com.[53] For that material which has not been digitized, particularly valuable are the records stored at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. The most complete records are those of the Army of Cuban Pacification, but many records of the Caco Wars and Sandino's rebellion are stored there as well. The National Archives' U.S. Marine records are supplemented by the extensive archives located at the Marine Corps University in Quantico, VA. These documents contain not only a trove of factual information about my three case studies but also private correspondence indicating some of the rationales for decisions commanders made, an especially useful consideration for my process-tracing approach.

Understanding the behavior of rebel movements presents a more difficult evidentiary challenge. Even in Spanish and French, less documentary evidence survives from organizations with less bureaucratic support than the U.S. military. Since I do not read Spanish, my options are more limited still. Many of Sandino's writings have been translated, and scholars such as Alan McPherson have provided other Spanish-language sources, but the evidence remains sparse, so I rely on the secondary literature for much of this content.[54]

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter Two traces the evolution of scholarship on insurgency along two tracks. The first synthesizes the theoretical literature on the causes of success and failure in insurgencies from the perspectives of both insurgents and counterinsurgents. The second examines the existing

[53] Michael Schoeder, "The Sandino Rebellion," accessed November 7, 2022, http://www.sandinorebellion.com/.

[54] Augusto César Sandino, *Sandino: Testimony of a Nicaraguan Patriot*, trans. and ed., Robert Edgar Conrad, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); and McPherson, *The Invaded*.

theoretical explanations for the outcomes of my three case studies and notes their divergence from the broader theoretical literature. Chapter Three establishes the strategic context for U.S. intervention in Cuba, Haiti, and Nicaragua and examines the domestic political contexts of those three countries immediately prior to U.S. occupation. Chapter Four presents and analyzes the abortive resistance to the Second Occupation of Cuba in 1906. Chapter Five does the same for the First Caco War in Haiti from 1915-1916. Chapter Six contrasts these case studies with Sandino's rebellion in Nicaragua from 1927-1933, the only Caribbean insurgency to fight the U.S. Marines to a draw. Chapter Seven synthesizes my conclusions from the comparison of these three case studies and suggests lessons learned for practitioners and future research for scholars.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The debate over successful strategies for insurgents and counterinsurgents is an extensive and spirited one. An extensive body of theory has developed the strategy of revolutionary protracted warfare. A parallel literature has struggled to produce a similarly successful strategy to defeat guerrilla warfare. These theorists have generally divided themselves into camps based on whether they support or oppose counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine as practiced in the Iraq War. These camps, however, are excessively confining, and I have divided theorists into paradigms based upon their essential recommendations. Usually ignorant of these theoretical debates are the historians of early 20th century U.S. interventions in the Caribbean.

The chapter begins with an elucidation of a few of the more contested terms necessary for my analysis of insurgency. It then proceeds to present the scholarly explanations of victory and defeat in insurgencies. First are the theorists of insurgency, as all theories of counterinsurgency arise from encounters with insurgency. Second follow the various camps of counterinsurgency theory, with an identification of their key theoretical disagreements. Third, I examine historians' explanations of the outcomes of the small wars in Cuba, Haiti, and Nicaragua and demonstrate their *ad hoc* and undertheorized approaches. Finally, I note some productive attempts toward aligning the relevant history and theory – and the still-extant gaps. I then show how this thesis contributes toward expanding the study of insurgency beyond reliance on a few historically atypical cases.

CONCEPTS

Insurgency

The term insurgency derives from the Latin *insurgo*, which means "to rise up." Romans used the word in quotidian situations but also to describe an attempt to seize political power from a position of weakness.[1] I use it as my preferred term to describe any attempt by a political movement to overthrow a political regime which at any point utilizes the tactic of guerrilla warfare. On occasion I will use another term like "small war," "irregular warfare," or "rebellion" as synonyms for "insurgency," but insurgency's relative clarity, expansiveness, and value-neutral connotations make it the best word to describe the phenomenon.

This definition is in line with other theorists', but my usage is intentionally inclusive as I wish to remain agnostic about the precise nature of an insurgency before using process-tracing to determine insurgent strategy. David Galula, for example, describes insurgency as "a *protracted struggle* [his italics] conducted methodically, step by step, in order to attain specific intermediate objectives leading finally to the overthrow of the existing order."[2] Such a definition, however, applies only to the Maoist formulation of protracted warfare and its cognates. The numerous irregular conflicts conducted without a methodical revolutionary plan vanish.

The attempt by the Iraq War-era U.S. Army and Marine Corps is stronger: "an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and

[1] Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, from *Logeion*, accessed December 20, 2022, https://logeion.uchicago.edu/insurgo.

[2] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 1964), 2. Galula's colleague Roger Trinquier does better to avoid the term entirely and uses *modern warfare* to describe the protracted warfare he studies. Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 1964), 5-6.

armed conflict."[3] Subversion is a nebulous term, but its emphasis on movement capacity and essential opposition to established power is sound.[4]

Counterinsurgency

Much simpler than "insurgency," counterinsurgency is any set of techniques used by an established government or its allies to defeat an insurgency. FM 3-24's definition is again sensible: "Those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency."[5] The unnecessary "and" (better as an "or") certainly encourages its readers to take a nation-building view, but its dependence on "insurgency" is quite correct. Counterinsurgency cannot exist apart from insurgency.

Some skeptics of FM 3-24 and other popular will-focused approaches to counterinsurgency will use the term (often abbreviated to COIN) to describe only those strategies which their ideological adversaries propound.[6] Such a narrow definition is not helpful except for those who have concluded that there are few differences between fighting insurgencies and conventional wars. Otherwise, what would we call the (wide variety of) techniques developed to defeat insurgencies?

[3] *United States Department of the Army, The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual : U.S. Army Field Manual No. 3-24, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), Glossary-5.*

[4] My understanding of "subversion" is an attempt to weaken an incumbent government, which would make this definition somewhat circular. For example: R.J. Spjut, "Defining Subversion," *British Journal of Law and Society* 6, no. 2 (1979): 254–61.

[5] U.S. Army, *FM 3-24*, Glossary-4.

[6] See: Douglas Porch, *Counterinsurgency: Exposing the Myths of the New Way of War*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Operational Analysis

In contrast to "insurgency" and "counterinsurgency," I use the term "operational" in a strictly limited context: the analytical scope circumscribing the decisions made within a single campaign. "Operational" limits my analysis to choices made during the campaign by commanders responsible for that campaign. In other words, I exclude the broader international policy choices of the United States (though they may have contributed significantly to the outcomes) in order to focus on the decisions of strategic method which most closely test the paradigms I am studying. When I use "operational," I do not mean to imply an "operational level of war" distinct from strategy and tactics, a formulation with dubious theoretical support.[7] Each use of "operational" could be replaced with a use of "strategic," keeping in mind that the "grand strategic" portion of strategy is absent from my analysis.

PROTRACTED WARFARE: MAO AND BEYOND

While people have waged what could be called insurgencies for millennia across the globe, Mao Zedong's writings on his struggle against Japanese occupation of China created a self-conscious and transferrable theory of insurgency for the first time. Since near the beginning of recorded history, historians have described opposition to empire in the form of hit-and-run attacks by rebels hiding among the local population.[8] In general, these guerrilla techniques enjoyed only occasional success, especially when superior military technologies enabled European empires to

[7] Brett Friedman, *On Operations: Operational Art and Military Disciplines*, (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2021), 8-10; and Justin Kelly and Mike Brennan, *Alien: How Operational Art Devoured Strategy*, (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, vii-viii.

[8] Max Boot, *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2013), 16-18; and Gérard Chaliand, *Guerrilla Strategies*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982), 1-2.

conquer much of the globe in the 18th and 19th centuries.[9] Moreover, these guerrillas, usually illiterate, produced nothing in the way of an organized body of theoretical literature.[10] But in the 1930s, Mao, then commanding a modest force of communist guerrillas, began writing a series of doctrinal essays setting out the strategy of a protracted people's war. This approach would allow a weak army eventually to defeat a stronger opponent under the proper circumstances and implementation.[11] Mao's unexpected success against both the Imperial Japanese Army and his far better equipped domestic opponents, the nationalist Kuomintang (KMT), inspired potential guerrilla fighters in other countries to read Mao's theory.[12]

Mao's essential idea, which forms the core of protracted warfare theory, is that a militarily weak combatant can cede victory on the battlefield in exchange for the time and political opportunity to develop one's own forces and degrade the opponents'.[13] The strategy calls for a policy developed in three stages: in the first, to conduct a fighting retreat deep into friendly territory to exhaust the enemy; in the second, decisive phase, when the enemy offensive has reached its maximum extent, to wage a ferocious campaign of guerrilla warfare in the enemy rear to retake

[9] Ivan Arreguín-Toft, "How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict," *International Security* 26, no. 1 (2001): 96.

[10] With the exception, perhaps, of the works of T.E. Lawrence, British advisor to anti-Ottoman Arab rebels during the First World War. Lawrence's writings were perceptive about the vital roles of politics, time, and space but had little influence on insurgencies beyond the World Wars. T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran, & Co., 1936).

[11] Mao Tse-tung, *On Protracted War*, May 1938, from Marxists.org, accessed December 20, 2022, https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_09.htm.

[12] John Shy and Thomas W. Collier, "Revolutionary War," in Peter Paret, ed. *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1986), 845-846.

[13] Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith, (New York: Praeger, 1961), 42.

the countryside and attrit the enemy; in the third, when friendly forces have surpassed the conventional strength of their opponents, to launch a final rapid offensive.[14]

Guerrilla warfare, although it typifies only the second stage of protracted warfare, represents the key contribution of Mao's theory to revolutionary groups. Where previous revolutionary groups had placed their hopes in urban uprisings[15] or spontaneous peasant revolts,[16] Mao understood that the weaknesses of his conventional and guerrilla forces required them to work together – and to bide their time.[17] As important as military activities, Mao argues, are a revolutionary movement's political organizing. A revolutionary army must maintain high morale and strict discipline, win the support of the vast majority of the people, and undermine the will of its enemy.[18] Unique to Mao's theory is his emphasis upon the political organization of the people. He recognizes that political support both provides a nonterritorial base for mobilization and enables guerrillas to operate behind enemy lines.[19]

Mao's analysis of politics, time, and space assisted protracted warfare's second strategist, Võ Nguyên Giáp, to win a thirty-year long struggle for an independent, communist Vietnam. Giáp and his collaborator Ho Chi Minh learned directly from Mao's writings and applied his principles

[14] Mao, *On Protracted War*.

[15] Shy and Collier, "Revolutionary War," 828-829.

[16] In Mao's cutting phrase: "History shows us many examples of peasant revolts that were unsuccessful, and it is fanciful to believe that such movements, characterized by banditry and brigandage, could succeed in this era of improved communications and military equipment." Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare,* 107-108.

[17] Ibid, 69.

[18] Ibid, 90-93.

[19] Mao's famous simile describes the people like water and guerrillas the fish inhabiting it. Ibid, 93; and Mao, *On Protracted Warfare*.

to the unique circumstances of the Vietnamese liberation struggle.[20] Giáp located his French and American opponents' weakness in the lack of commitment to the struggle in Indochina. For policymakers, every soldier stationed or dollar spent in Indochina weakened national Cold War commitments in Europe. For common soldiers, the lack of a cause for which they were willing to die created conditions of low morale.[21] In addition, premature offensives against more fearsome opponents than the KMT forced returns to earlier stages of the protracted war.[22] But these variations on the Maoist theme, by maintaining the central tenets of Mao's theory, proved its adaptability and created a distinct school of revolutionary theory for future insurgents to adopt.

Other communist revolutionaries, frustrated by protracted warfare's need for decades of destructive and indecisive bloodshed, developed two heresies against Maoist orthodoxy: *foco* theory and urban guerrilla warfare. The controversial characteristic of Mao and Giáp's theory was its emphasis on the primacy of political organization. Their movements – and many other successful insurgencies – first recruited and trained activists with organic ties to the people and through them won the active and organized support of much of the population.[23] This progression required a cause supported both broadly and deeply among the people and many years to develop effectively.

In response to the swift victory of Fidel Castro's forces in Cuba, his colleague Che Guevara proposed *foco* theory, which advocated the use of violence by a small band of guerrillas to catalyze

[20] Shy and Collier, "Revolutionary War," 846.

[21] Võ Nguyên Giáp, "The Big Victory: The Great Task," in Jay Mallin, ed., *Strategy for Conquest: Communist Documents on Guerrilla Warfare*, (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1970), 183-184.

[22] Shy and Collier, "Revolutionary War," 848-849.

[23] Chaliand, *Guerrilla Strategies*, 14-16.

the political support whose painstaking cultivation Mao urged. Guevara's theory argues that properly evasive tactics can ensure the survival of a guerrilla force and that "bases of support… will appear."[24] In practice, every one of the 200 Latin American *focos* attempted failed, and Che himself died in Bolivia, betrayed by a local informant.[25]

The other response to Mao's patient strategy emerged in the person of Carlos Marighella, the Brazilian communist who invented the doctrine of urban guerrilla warfare. Like Che, Marighella advocated immediate violent action by a revolutionary vanguard, protected by tactics of flight and intelligence.[26] Unlike Che, Marighella believed that revolutionary struggle beginning in the cities could provoke a government reaction brutal enough to spark revolt in a countryside uninfiltrated by any communist political organization.[27] Like Che, Marighella died proving his theory's limitations, and no guerrilla movement successfully implemented his strategy.[28]

COIN AND ITS DETRACTORS

In response to the theory of protracted warfare, Western defense intellectuals and practitioners crafted a range of alternative strategies. On one side of this literature stand the supporters of population-centric COIN, who argue that insurgencies won in struggles over local

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[24] Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, "Guerrilla Warfare: A Method," in Mallin, *Strategy for Conquest*, 276-278.

[25] J. Bowyer Bell, "The Armed Struggle and Underground Intelligence: An Overview," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 17 (1994), 115.

[26] Carlos Marighella, "The Initial Advantages of the Urban Guerrilla," in *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla*, from Marxists.org, accessed December 20, 2022, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marighella-carlos/1969/06/minimanual-urban-guerrilla/ch10.htm.

[27] Marighella, "Characteristics of the Urban Guerrilla's Tactics, in *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla*, from Marxists.org, accessed December 20, 2022, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marighella-carlos/1969/06/minimanual-urban-guerrilla/ch09.htm.

[28] Robert Moss, "International Terrorism and Western Societies," *International Journal* 28, no. 3 (1973): 420.

popular support.[29] On the other stand a variety of opponents who criticize COIN as ineffective, imperialistic, or both.[30] Still others seek to synthesize population-centric strategies with other methods.[31] No camp has yet applied their theories to the small wars the U.S. waged in the Caribbean before the Second World War.

Theories of counterinsurgency generally derive from priority toward one of five goals: destroying insurgent combat power (attrition), incapacitating key insurgent figures and organizations (intelligence), terrorizing the population into submission (barbarism), winning support of a few individuals (rational choice), or winning the support of the population ("Hearts and Minds"). The theories of Roger Trinquier, Edward Luttwak, Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, C.E. Callwell, and David Galula respectively, epitomize those approaches (Table 2).

[29] *United States Department of the Army, The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual : U.S. Army Field Manual No. 3-24, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); and David Galula, Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice, (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006).*

[30] Gian Gentile, *Wrong Turn: America's Deadly Embrace of Counterinsurgency*, (New York: New Press, 2013); and Douglas Porch, *Counterinsurgency: Exposing the Myths of the New Way of War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[31] Daniel L. Magruder, *Counterinsurgency, Security Forces, and the Identification Problem,* (London: Routledge, 2018), 20.

Table 2: Paradigms of Counterinsurgency

Paradigm	Key theorists	Key features	Intermediate hypotheses
Attrition	Callwell, Gentile	Few differences from conventional warfare, skepticism of COIN, emphasis on mobility, firepower, and will	Little active support from population, low insurgent combat power
Intelligence	Trinquier, Kitson, Magruder	Targeted killing, emphasis on effective over enthusiastic support	Destruction of insurgent political networks, killing of key individuals
Barbarism	Luttwak, Downes	Widespread killing of civilians, little focus on popular support or enemy forces	Low combatant casualties, neutral population
Rational Choice	Leites and Wolf, Popkin	Bribery, targeted killing	Demobilization of insurgents, secret cooperation by civilians
"Hearts and Minds"	Galula, *SWM, FM 3-25* (Petraeus)	Popular support the highest goal, nation-building	Low civilian casualties, cooperation between civilians and COIN

Sources: Colonel C.E. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1906; Gian Gentile, *Wrong Turn: America's Deadly Embrace of Counterinsurgency*, (New York: New Press, 2013); Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, tr. Daniel Lee (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964); Frank Kitson, Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency and Peacekeeping London: Faber and Faber (1971); Daniel L. Magruder, *Counterinsurgency, Security Forces, and the Identification Problem,* (London: Routledge, 2018); Edward Luttwak, "Dead End," in *Harper's Magazine,* 2007; Alexander Downes, "Draining the Sea by Filling the Graves: Investigating the Effectiveness of Indiscriminate Violence as a Counterinsurgency Strategy," *Civil Wars*, 9:4, 420-444; Nathan Constantin Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts*. (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1970); Samuel Popkin, *The Rational Peasant*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979); David Galula, Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice, (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006); *Small Wars Manual*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1940); and *United States Department of the Army, The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual : U.S. Army Field Manual No. 3-24, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).*

C.E. Callwell saw insurgency as simply one type of irregular warfare, to be defeated by bringing insurgent forces to battle through aggressive patrolling and holding objectives the insurgents want. He argues that the primary failing of most counterinsurgency leaders is insufficient offensive spirit; regular forces should hunt down insurgents at maximum tempo. Troops not pursuing insurgents should fan out methodically to render "it impossible for an enemy to exist in the country at all owing to no food or shelter being left."[32] While Callwell would prefer not to devastate an area so that a stable and prosperous peace can follow conflict, his strategy considers civilians only as targets which insurgents can be baited into defending.[33] To Callwell and his successors like Gian Gentile, Douglas Porch, and Ralph Peters, what wins counterinsurgencies is overawing enemy fighters or killing them in battle.[34]

The U.S. Marine Corps's *Small Wars Manual* differs from Callwell by advocating winning support – or "hearts and minds" – of the local population through a primarily civilian strategy, which the armed forces defend rather than lead. While most of the military tactics are mere updates of Callwell's guidance, the *Manual* propounds a starkly opposite view of insurgency's nature. The Marine view is that insurgencies exist because of fundamental economic, political, or social causes, "the solution of such problems being basically a political adjustment."[35] Therefore, destroying insurgent forces is not the solution. Rather, solving the sources of discontent in society will eliminate any motivation to wage a war. Counterinsurgent forces should help the government will

[32] Colonel C.E. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1906), 129-133.

[33] Ibid, 41-42, 145.

[34] Gian Gentile, *Wrong Turn: America's Deadly Embrace of Counterinsurgency*, (New York: New Press, 2013); Douglas Porch, *Counterinsurgency: Exposing the Myths of the New Way of War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and Ralph Peters, "In Praise of Attrition," *Parameters* 41, no. 4 (2004), 1.

[35] *Small Wars Manual*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1940), 1-9 f.

improve civilians' lives, be kind and respectful, and limit violence. Under this theory, the military's prime responsibility is to fight insurgents but, in their zeal to defeat guerrilla forces, must never undermine the political struggle to resolve the fundamental causes of rebellion.[36] Galula, David Petraeus, John Nagl, and the other supporters of "Hearts and Minds" style COIN see insurgency as essentially a struggle over local political support.[37]

Roger Trinquier, meanwhile, occupies a third position, combining the aggressiveness of Callwell's theory with the population-centric focus of the U.S. Marines to separate the guerrillas from the people forcibly rather than by persuasion. Trinquier argues that the first goal of counterinsurgency should be "to cut the guerrilla off from the population that sustains him."[38] The method should be the long-term occupation of settlements to dismantle insurgent political apparatuses while the best-trained soldiers patrol energetically to render settled territories untenable for guerrilla action and friendly guerrillas disrupt insurgent-controlled areas. Trinquier wants to win civilian "hearts and minds" by providing propaganda and social services only after the insurgency has been defeated. While guerrillas remain in the field, however, civilians must suffer "the frequently severe measures the forces of order are led to take" – including torture.[39] As long as counterinsurgency forces can defend cooperative civilians from guerrilla attacks, eliminate the political organization linking insurgents to the people, and prevent civilians giving aid to

[36] Ibid, 1-10 d-f, 1-14 a-c, and 1-15 l-n.

[37] Galula, *Counterinsuergency* Warfare; U.S. Army, FM 3-24; John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

[38] Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, tr. Daniel Lee (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964), 64-65.

[39] Ibid, 21 and 48-50.

guerrilla fighters, Trinquier, Kitson, and Magruder believe that even popular insurgencies will lose.[40]

To these theories I add my own analysis, based on the work of scholars in the school of leadership decapitation. This school has been conducting an analysis of the effects of killing or capturing leaders of covert armed groups on those groups' survival and has found mixed results.[41] While these scholars' work often conflates guerrilla and terrorist groups, I argue that under certain circumstances, decapitation can be highly effective in disabling insurgencies. The key condition here is bureaucracy, which Jenna Jordan identified as a significant variable in predicting the efficacy of decapitation. Since leading a covert armed group is an immensely difficult task without institutional support, leadership of groups with low levels of bureaucracy rely on leaders of great talent or personal connections.[42]

For insurgent movements with low levels of bureaucracy, leaders' autonomy and the difficulty of replacing them make leadership – rather than civilians or fighters – the insurgents' center of gravity. I propose a two-part model of leadership decapitation in which potential insurgent leaders must decide whether to fight (and face likely death) or disarm (which enables other forms of political activity or personal gain). For most leaders, this is an easy choice, but a certain percentage have a strong enough commitment to their ideological cause that they will choose probable death over disarmament. If they decide to fight, leaders gamble that they can

[40] Ibid, 64 and 71-72.

[41] Bryan C. Price, *Targeting Top Terrorists: Understanding Leadership Removal in Counterterrorism Strategy* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2019); Jenna Jordan, "Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark: Why Terrorist Groups Survive Decapitation Strikes," *International Security* 38, no. 4 (Spring 2014): 7-38; and Patrick B. Johnston, "Does Decapitation Work?: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Targeting in Counterinsurgency Campaigns," *International Security* 36, no. 4 (Spring 2012), 47-79.

[42] See Jordan, "Attacking the Leader."

survive capture or assassination. My model suggests that only those insurgencies whose leaders are highly motivated to fight and are able to evade capture or assassination will win their campaigns.

HISTORICAL

Few Anglophone scholars have studied the campaigns to defeat armed opposition in America's new protectorates. Most of the secondary scholarship on the Banana Wars is descriptive historical rather than social scientific work. Several historians have written narrative accounts of the 1915-1934 U.S. Occupation of Haiti,[43] much of which is invaluable in understanding the politics of the intervention. The historical literature on the Second Occupation of Cuba is somewhat thinner, given its brevity and lack of violence.[44] And a few historians have written on the entire set of Caribbean occupations as a unified whole.[45] These historians of the Banana Wars have, despite their small numbers, done excellent work scouring U.S. archives and personal records and creating a comprehensive and critical picture of the political developments in the

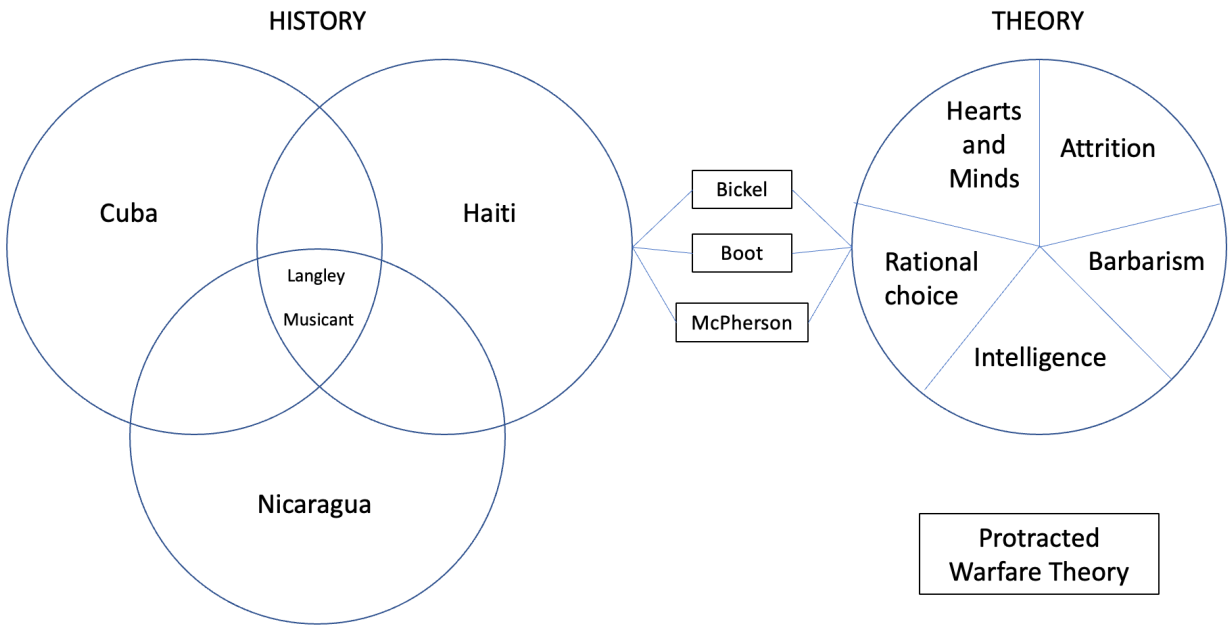
[43] Hans Schmidt, *United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934*, (New Brunswick, N.J. : Rutgers University Press, 1995); David Healy, *Gunboat Diplomacy in the Wilson Era: The U.S. Navy in Haiti, 1915-1916*, (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976); Robert Debs Heinl and Nancy Gordon Heinl, *Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People, 1492-1995*, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005); Léon D. Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies: A Century of American Occupation, Deoccupation, and Reoccupation of Haiti,* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2015); and Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Haiti and the United States: The Psychological Moment*, (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992).

[44] Allan R. Millett, *The Politics of Intervention: The Military Occupation of Cuba, 1906-1909*, (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 1968); Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba Under the Platt Amendment, 1902-1934*, (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986); David A. Lockmiller, *Magoon in Cuba: A History of the Second Intervention, 1906-1909*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1938).

[45] Lester D. Langley, *The Banana Wars: An Inner History of American Empire, 1900-1934*, (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1983); Ivan Musicant, *The Banana Wars: A History of United States Military Intervention in Latin America from the Spanish-American War to the Invasion of Panama*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1990); and David Healy, *Drive to Hegemony: The United States in the Caribbean, 1898-1917*, (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

Caribbean nations under occupation. Particularly fierce debates have emerged over the motivations for intervention and degree of barbarism committed by U.S. forces.[46] Nevertheless, these narratives tend to overlook military events, to offer ad hoc explanations for U.S. military success, and to ignore the operational choices Caribbean rebels faced. Figure 2 illustrates this gap and the few works which have so far bridged it.

Figure 1: Tenuous Links between Existing History and Theory



CONCLUSION

A handful of works from the last two decades address a few of these shortcomings. Max Boot examines the military aspects with comparative context and counterinsurgency (COIN) theory.[47]

[46] Heinl, *Written in* Blood; Plummer, *Haiti and the United States*; and Schmidt, *United States Occupation of Cuba*;

[47] Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

While his historical instinct is instructive, and his works make excellent annotated bibliographies, Boot's reliance on secondary sources limits him alternately to repeating the insights of others and speculating without sufficient evidence. Keith Bickel's study of U.S. Marine doctrine contains the most thorough and perceptive military account of the intervention in Haiti, but he prioritizes doctrine over practice and U.S. over Caribbean forces.[48] As a result, Bickel's work provides a better explanation of how the U.S. Marines thought would win wars rather than why they actually did win or lose. Alan McPherson's groundbreaking studies of resistance to U.S. occupation form the best account of rebel behavior at a level above my focus on operational art.[49] Nevertheless, his writings are invaluable as a first step to understanding the strategies of Caribbean insurgents, which is perhaps the most flagrant gap in the Anglophone understanding of the Banana Wars.

Existing theory has not yet applied itself satisfactorily to cases similar to these interventions, and historians have failed to produce theoretically convincing analyses of these cases' outcomes. As a result, theory lacks the history to understand understudied conflicts, and history lacks the theory needed to explain their outcomes. As a result of lack of analysis of these and many other conflicts, insurgency and counterinsurgency studies should worry that its theories apply only to a narrow slice of historical insurgencies. Therefore, a more comprehensive and sophisticated study of a broader sample of irregular conflicts would not only provide historians with valuable insights into these particular wars but test the generalizability of counterinsurgency and insurgency paradigms across a variety of historical contexts.

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[48] Keith B. Bickel, *Mars Learning: The Marine Corps' Development of Small Wars Doctrine, 1915-1940*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001).

[49] Alan McPherson, *The Invaded: How Latin Americans and Their Allies Fought and Ended U.S. Occupations*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

CHAPTER THREE: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Before 1898, the United States possessed little experience of military intervention overseas. From 1800-1897, the U.S. Marines conducted 73 landings abroad, most notably against Tripoli in 1804 and Panama in 1885. Most of these landings, however, were minor affairs like the establishment of embassy guards or evacuations of American civilians during unrest. I summarize those landings which occurred in the Caribbean in Table 3. In contrast, the period from 1898-1934 saw 107 USMC landings, including multiple occupations of Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, Panama, and the Dominican Republic.[1]

The minor interventions before 1898 occurred in order to support a U.S. policy of – if not noninterference – limited engagement with its neighbors to the south. Since the 1823 announcement of the unenforced Monroe Doctrine, which marked the Western Hemisphere as "henceforth not to be considered as subject for future colonization by any European power," the U.S. had largely stayed clear of involvement in Caribbean politics.[2] Abortive attempts to annex Cuba and the Dominican Republic aside, U.S. activities in the Europe-dominated region remained mostly commercial until the war with Spain.[3] Even this commercial activity (and the naval

[1] Harry Alanson Ellsworth, *One Hundred Eighty Landings of United States Marines, 1800-1934: A Brief History in Two Parts* (Washington, D.C.: Marine Corps Historical Section, 1934).

[2] Peter H. Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, the United States, and the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 19.

[3] Ibid, 26-27; and Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States* (New York: Picador, 2019, 78.

operations to protect it) became important to U.S. and Caribbean economies only during the post-1865 U.S. boom. A growing and increasingly sophisticated U.S. economy created overproduction of agricultural and industrial products relative to domestic demand, which provoked frequent crises.[4]

Table 3: US Marine Interventions before April 1898[5]

Year	Country	US personnel	Duration	Purpose
1873	Panama	205	9 days	Protection of consulate, U.S. citizens, and the Panama Railroad Co.
1873	Panama	100	12 days	Protection of foreigners and their property
1885	Panama	~25	2 days	Protection of the Panama Railroad Co.
1885	Panama[6]	796	3 months	Protection of U.S. property, consulate, and persons; punitive response to insurgents' capture of U.S. envoys
1888	Haiti	46	1 day	Recovery of seized U.S. ship
1891[7]	Navassa	~40	19 days	Protection of U.S. citizens, property, and interests
1894	Nicaragua	~150	1 month	Protection of U.S. citizens and property
1895	Panama	~80	2 days	Protection of U.S. citizens and property
1895	Trinidad	250	1 day	Emergency fire fighting
1896	Nicaragua	35	3 days	Protection of foreigners
1898	Nicaragua	35	2 days	Protection of U.S. citizens and property

[4] Mark T. Gilderhus, David C. LaFevor, and Michael J. LaRosa, *The Third Century: U.S.-Latin American Relations Since 1889* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017, 11-12.

[5] This chart contains the complete collection of marine deployments to Caribbean or Central American countries between the end of the American Civil War and the beginning of the Spanish-American War. Many of the personnel were rifle-armed sailors rather than marines. Purposes are taken at face value from Ellsworth's official history, although the limited nature of most landings suggest stated reasons were (at least proximately) genuine. Of course, the repeated reminder of U.S. capabilities may have had coercive effects beyond the landings' limited scopes. Ibid.

[6] Panamanian numbers are from Jack Shulimson, *The Marine Corps' Search for a Mission, 1880-1898* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 60.

[7] Navassa was an uninhabited U.S-claimed island off the coast of Haiti. Marines landed to investigate the involuntary servitude of the black American phosphate miners working on the island. Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States* (New York: Picador, 2019), 55-56.

U.S. policymakers hoped to alleviate these crises by opening new markets to absorb U.S. exports. Latin American countries were particularly attractive markets because they exported agricultural products like sugar and coffee. Reducing tariffs with, say, Cuba would therefore not impose competitive pressure on U.S.-manufactured goods. But in the face of superior British trade ties, neither economic growth nor a newly active "New Diplomacy" succeeded in increasing U.S. exports to Latin America above $100 million annually.[8]

In the period before the war with Spain, U.S. foreign policy in the Caribbean addressed European commercial and military threats as a precondition for an effective regional economic engagement. The possibility of an isthmian canal became a prime concern for both trade and strategic reasons. In 1881, a French company began digging a canal in Panama, and in 1887 the U.S. Congress chartered a rival company to build a canal through Nicaragua.[9] Neither canal would make much progress until 1904, but it is no accident that every marine landing of longer than one day from 1865-1898 occurred in one of those two countries (Table 3). Instability in either country threatened foreign influence or a hostile government in a region of potentially vital naval and mercantile significance.

While an isthmian canal appeared remote, the prospect of a coaling station and naval base in the Caribbean presented another attractive strategic possibility to proponents of a strong U.S. Navy. Negotiations by the U.S. Secretary of the Navy to buy Môle St. Nicholas in Haiti and

[8] Lars Schoultz, *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 84-85.

[9] Panama would not become independent from Colombia until 1903. Before that date, canal builders navigated the variable political currents of the Colombian central government, Panamanian separatists, opposing factions in Bogotá and Panama, and interested foreign powers. David Healy, *Drive to Hegemony: The United States in the Caribbean, 1898-1917* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 25-26.

Samaná Bay in the Dominican Republic came near success in 1891 and 1892, respectively, when Haitian and Dominican popular outrage scuttled each agreement.[10] Only with the 1895 Venezuelan border crisis did the U.S. advance its position in the Caribbean relative to European powers. The longstanding border dispute between Venezuela and Great Britain (through its colony, British Guiana) reached crisis point not in the jungles of South America but along the Pacific coast of Nicaragua. An April 1895 British punitive mission against Nicaragua, which culminated in a two-week occupation of the port of Corinto, outraged U.S. policymakers, who saw Central America as their exclusive orbit.[11] U.S. Secretary of State Richard Olney sent a message to Britain demanding a neutral arbitration process over the Venezualan-Guianan border and declaring that "today the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition."[12] A message to Congress by President Grover Cleveland threatening war if Britain rejected arbitration convinced the British to back down.[13] The issue was mostly symbolic, and Britain won most of the disputed territory, but the U.S. had established its intention to be hegemon in the Western Hemisphere.[14]

[10] Healy, *Drive to Hegemony*, 31-32.

[11] As shown in Table 3, U.S. marines and sailors had occupied Bluefields, a Caribbean port in Nicaragua, for a month the previous year. The unrest which provoked their landing was caused by the British *withdrawal* from Nicaragua's Caribbean coast. Despite reference to the Monroe Doctrine, U.S. policy was the product of growing power, not the need to preserve established hemispheric norms. Schoultz, *Beneath the United States*, 111-113.

[12] Olney's most significant historical act was his violent suppression of the 1894 Pullman Strike as Attorney General. Healy, *Drive to Hegemony*, 34.

[13] Ibid, 34-35.

[14] Schoultz, *Beneath the United States*, 123-124.

Cuban War of Independence

The insurgency which had been roiling Cuba on and off since 1868 proved the opportunity for the United States to vindicate its newly assertive policy in the Caribbean. A Spanish colony since Columbus's arrival in 1492, Spain developed the island of Cuba as a slave economy producing sugar for export.[15] In 1868, the small sugar planters of eastern Cuba rose in revolt against Spain, motivated by their lack of political power and extractive Spanish taxation. Having seen the success of the U.S. federal government in suppressing a revolt of slaveowners by emancipation, the chief rebel general, Carlos Miguel Céspedes, freed his thirty slaves and encouraged other rebels to do the same.[16] Tens of thousands of Cubans, many slaves, joined Céspedes's rebellion hoping for an independent country free of slavery.[17]

Some U.S. politicians advocated for U.S. intercession on behalf of Cuban independence, but there was little political support for involvement in internal Cuban politics. Some politicians and businessmen in both Cuba and the United States had been advocating Cuba's annexation to its northern neighbor since the early nineteenth century. This faction, however, remained a minority in both countries.[18] U.S. intervention remained limited to less than diligent efforts to prevent Americans from running guns to the rebel armies.[19] Without foreign support, Céspedes's

[15] Permanent Spanish settlement began in 1512. Hugh Thomas, *Cuba, or the Pursuit of Freedom* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), xxi-xxii; and Allan Reed Millett, *The Politics of Intervention: The Military Occupation of Cuba, 1906-1909* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1968), 21.

[16] Ibid, 240-245.

[17] Ada Ferrer, *Cuba: An American History* (New York: Scribner, 2021), 131-132.

[18] For President James Polk's attempt to buy Cuba from Spain and Narciso López's filibustering expeditions to Cuba in the 1840s, see Thomas, *Cuba*, 209-214.

[19] Lars Schoultz, *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 79-80 and 125-126.

Liberation Army could not quite manage to drive Spain from their island. Regional and racial divisions undermined the rebel cause, and a Spanish offer of amnesty in 1878 ended the ten-year conflict which had cost 200,000 lives.[20] Successive, smaller wars of liberation broke out in 1879, 1883, 1885, 1892, 1893, and 1893 (again).[21]

In 1895, a collapse in the international sugar market inflamed continuing Cuban grievances against Spain and provoked the largest revolt against Spanish imperialism thus far.[22] Despite the early death of its leader, the great Cuban writer José Martí, this insurgency was more successful than any previous ones. General Máximo Gómez consolidated the rebel army under his command and pursued a strategy of guerrilla warfare targeting both soldiers and the property of big landowners and capitalists.[23] In February 1896, a new Spanish commander, General Valeriano Weyler, developed a comprehensive strategy for defeating the insurgency, including the mass "reconcentration" of civilians into garrisoned towns to prevent their aiding guerrillas. While somewhat effective in combatting the insurgency, the brutality of the policy outraged the Cuban and U.S. publics.[24]

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[20] José M. Hernández, *Cuba and the United States: Intervention and Militarism, 1868-1933* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1993), 11-15; Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 6; and Matthew White, "Ten Years War, Cuba (1868-1878)" *Necrometrics*, accessed April 14, 2023, http://necrometrics.com/wars19c.htm#10YrW.

[21] Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States* (New York: Picador, 2019), 65.

[22] The sugar crisis was the result of two factors: first, new competition from European sugar beets and, second, U.S. tariffs imposed on sugar in 1894. John Lawrence Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba, 1895-1898* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 26-27; and Mark T. Gilderhus, David C. LaFevor, and Michael J. LaRosa, *The Third Century: U.S.-Latin American Relations Since 1889* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017, 18.

[23] Hernández, *Cuba and the United* States, 24-25; and Tone, *War and Revolution*, 57-58.

[24] Tone estimates a death toll of 155,000-170,000 civilians owing to inhumane conditions in the reconcentration towns. That would mean Spanish counterinsurgency killed 10 percent of Cuba's population in two years. Weyler's moral defense, "everything is fair in war" persuaded few outside Spain. Tone, *War and Genocide*, 160 and 223-224.

This time, the U.S. government decided it had to involve itself in Cuba's insurgency. Since the beginning of the Ten Years War in 1868, U.S. consumption of Cuba's main exports, sugar and coffee, had increased 600 percent.[25] American companies owned $50 million of Cuban property in sugar, iron, mineral, and tobacco production and did $100 million of trade yearly by 1895.[26] Despite popular sympathy for Cuba Libre in the late 1890s, government officials agreed that Cuban independence would lead to a race war and the destruction of property, and the Cleveland and William McKinley administrations arrested rebels who tried to obtain arms in the U.S.[27] Moreover, the Venezuelan border dispute absorbed U.S. foreign policy in the Caribbean until 1896.[28]

Once Americans concluded that Spanish empire in Cuba was doomed, they began to consider intervention to end the fighting before the complete destruction of Cuba.[29] Under diplomatic pressure from the United States and military pressure from the Cuban Revolutionary Army, Spain ended reconcentration and offered Cuba autonomy at the beginning of 1898. The Spanish attempt to forestall an outright Cuban victory floundered before the competing pressures of the Revolutionary Army, which saw the measures as a sign Spain could no longer continue the war effort, and hardline Spanish residents of Cuba, who feared Cuban self-governance.[30] To dissuade Spain from altering its conciliatory policy and discourage loyalist Spanish riots and

[25] Schoultz, *Beneath the United States*, 84.

[26] Harold U. Faulkner, *Politics, Reform, and Expansion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), 222.

[27] Louis A. Pérez, *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 13-15; and Tone, *War and Genocide*, 43.

[28] See Chapter Three for more detail. Schoultz, *Beneath the United States*, 127.

[29] Faulkner, *Politics, Reform, and Expansion*, 223 and Pérez, *War of 1898*, 11-12.

[30] John L. Offner, "McKinley and the Spanish-American War," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (Mar. 2004), 55; and Ferrer, *Cuba*, 150-151.

mutinies, the U.S. Navy dispatched the battleship *Maine* to Havana in January 1898. Though Spanish authorities understood the implied threat, they gave *Maine* permission to moor in Havana harbor and sent their cruiser *Vizcaya* on a simultaneous goodwill visit to New York.[31]

Spanish-American War

While the *Maine* was still in Havana, the *New York Journal* published a stolen letter by Spanish Ambassador to the United States Enrique Dupuy de Lôme. The letter, which mocked President William McKinley's purported weakness and characterized painstaking Hispano-American negotiations as "only for effect," sparked a firestorm in the American press.[32] Dupuy's resignation had barely brought an end to that crisis when the *Maine* mysteriously exploded on February 15 with the loss of 258 American sailors.[33]

Despite some skepticism among explosives experts and administration officials, the official Court of Inquiry ruled in March that a naval mine had been responsible for the destruction of *Maine*.[34] Later analysis, including a seminal 1975 report by naval engineers Ib Hansen and Robert Price, has contradicted the judgment of the court, which neglected even to call expert witnesses. Evidence from eyewitnesses and photographs of the wreck indicate that the *Maine*

[31] H.G. Rickover, *How the Battleship Maine Was Destroyed* (Washington, D.C.: Naval History Division, 1976), 28-32; Tone, *War and Genocide*, 240; and Thomas, *Cuba*, 356-358.

[32] John L. Offner, *An Unwanted War: The Diplomacy of the United States and Spain over Cuba, 1895-1898* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 116-117.

[33] Louis A. Pérez, *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 16-17.

[34] Stephen Kinzer, *The True Flag: Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain, and the Birth of American Empire* (New York: Henry Holt, 2017), 33; and H.G. Rickover, *How the Battleship Maine Was Destroyed* (Washington, D.C.: Naval History Division, 1976), 69 and 76-77.

probably suffered a coal dust combustion in a bunker adjacent the six-inch magazine. A chain reaction caused that and other magazines to detonate with catastrophic results.[35]

The geopolitical consequences did not wait even the five weeks the Court of Inquiry took to release its report. On February 25, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt, without the approval of the President or Secretary, ordered Commodore George Dewey's six-ship Asiatic Squadron to sail for Hong Kong and prepare for war.[36] Soon after, Congress appropriated a $50 million blank check for "national defense."[37] Despite mounting war fever, negotiations with Spain appeared to succeed on April 9, when the Spanish government declared a unilateral "suspension of hostilities" in Cuba.[38] The Cuban Revolutionary Army, however, confident of victory, rejected any ceasefire without a guarantee of independence.[39]

Unable to forge a compromise and unwilling to allow full Cuban independence, McKinley stopped temporizing and asked Congress to declare war on Spain.[40] Intense congressional bargaining between legislators who supported annexing Cuba and those opposed added to the war resolution Senator Henry Teller's compromise amendment, which declared Cuba "free and

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[35] Rickover, *How the Battleship Maine Was Destroyed*, 89-91.

[36] Kinzer, *True Flag*, 35. Other scholars have claimed that Roosevelt's telegram to Dewey was in line with official policy. For weak and strong versions of that argument, respectively, see John A.S. Grenvile and George Berkeley Young, *Politics, Strategy, and American Diplomacy: Studies in Foreign Policy, 1873-1917* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 276-278; and Philip Zelikow, "Why Did America Cross the Pacific: Reconstructing the U.S. Decision to Take the Philippines, 1898-1899," *Texas National Security Review* 1, no. 1 (Dec. 2017), 43-44.

[37] Offner, *Unwanted War*, 129.

[38] Ibid, 174-176; and John L. Offner, "McKinley and the Spanish-American War," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (Mar. 2004), 59.

[39] Pérez, *War of 1898*, 17.

[40] Ibid, 78-80; and Offner, *Unwanted War*, 187-188.

independent" and promised "to leave the government and control of the island to its people."[41] McKinley signed Congress's resolution, including the Teller Amendment, on April 21 and declared the United States's first blockade against Cuba the next day.[42]

The ensuing Spanish-American War lasted less than four months. Roosevelt's prepositioning of the Asiatic Squadron may have been insubordinate, but the decision soon proved a military success. Commodore Dewey's squadron steamed into Manila Bay on May 1 and sank three of the surprised Spanish ships and disabled six others. The price of destroying Spain's Pacific fleet was only nine American sailors injured. But without a marine contingent sufficient to occupy Manila, Dewey settled for occupying the naval base of Cavite, near Manila.[43] While awaiting supplies and reinforcements, he established contact with Emilio Aguinaldo, leader of the Filipino nationalist movement, which Dewey provided with 2000 rifles.[44] Encouraged by U.S. support, Aguinaldo recruited an army to liberate the Philippines and had besieged the Spanish army in Manilla by June.[45]

In Cuba, a Spanish army of 200,000 regulars faced a U.S. effort to capture Santiago de Cuba. Despite the entire U.S. Army consisting of only 28,000 professional soldiers supplemented by 200,000 hastily trained volunteers, the land campaign was brief and decisive. One marine battalion landed in Guantánamo Bay on June 14 as a feint, and quickly seized the one well in the

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[41] Pérez, *War of 1898*, 21; and Ivan Musicant, *Empire by Default: The Spanish-American War and the Dawn of the American Century* (New York: Henry Holt, 1998), 186-187.

[42] Offner, *Unwanted War*, 190-191.

[43] Kinzer, *True Flag*, 41; and Musicant, *Empire by Default*, 541-542.

[44] At this point, Dewey had received no orders with regard to his relationship with the Filipino rebels or the future of the Philippines. Kinzer, *True Flag*, 44; and Musicant, *Empire by Default*, 550-551.

[45] Karnow, *In Our Image*, 113-115.

area with the assistance of Cuban guerrillas. Short on water, the numerically superior Spanish forces withdrew.[46] Gen. Calixto García, who commanded 15,000 Cuban insurgents in the southeast, secured additional landing beaches in Daiquirí and Siboney, where 25,000 U.S. soldiers landed in late June.[47] Cuban guerrillas also prevented nearby Spanish forces from reaching Santiago.[48] Spanish preparations in Santiago were insufficient for a prolonged campaign, and although the Spanish fought a few delaying actions (famously at Kettle Hill, where Theodore Roosevelt, now in command of a volunteer cavalry regiment, killed a fleeing Spanish soldier), U.S. and Cuban forces surrounded Santiago by July 3.[49] That same day, the Spanish Caribbean Squadron attempted to break out of Santiago and, in a repeat of Manila Bay, suffered complete destruction.[50] Two weeks later, the surrounded garrison of Santiago surrendered, and another U.S. expedition captured Puerto Rico with barely a fight.[51] Guam had already been taken; when the USS *Charleston* had arrived in June, the Spanish fort, unaware that war had been declared, apologized for failing to return the American salute on the grounds that the outpost had no ammunition. When apprised of the facts, Guam immediately surrendered.[52]

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[46] Jonathan M. Katz, *Gangsters of Capitalism: Smedley Butler, the Marines, and the Making and Breaking of America's Empire* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2022), 25-28.

[47] Musicant, *Banana Wars*, 25-27.

[48] Pérez, *War of 1898*, 86-88; David Healy, *Drive to Hegemony: The United States in the Caribbean 1898-1917* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 45; and *Historical Dictionary of the Spanish American War*, Donald H. Dyal (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), s.v. "García Íñiguez, Calixto (1839-1898)."

[49] Musicant, *Empire by Default*, 373-374 and 429-430; and Kinzer, *True Flag*, 54-55.

[50] Musicant, *Empire by Default*, 463-466.

[51] Pérez, *War of 1898*, 21-22.

[52] Kinzer, *True Flag*, 51.

An armistice on August 12, two months after U.S. troops had landed in Cuba, nearly put an end to the fighting.[53] The Spanish army in Manila insisted on holding a final mock battle on the 13th against the 11,000 U.S. soldiers who had reinforced Dewey's squadron.[54] Both Spanish and U.S. commanders, who had newly received orders prohibiting an alliance with Aguinaldo, preferred surrender to the United States rather than the Filipino rebels.[55] The Treaty of Paris, finally signed in December, forced Spain to cede Cuba, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam in exchange for peace and a $20 million payment.[56] The United States had lost 2500 soldiers, 85 percent of whom died of disease, and won the beginnings of an empire.[57] Despite the invaluable aid of both Cuban and Filipino forces, U.S. armies denied the rebels access to Santiago and Manila and prepared for a military occupation of both countries.

Philippine-American War

The ultimate status of Spain's former colonies was initially uncertain. By October 1898, the McKinley administration and the generals in Manila had come to support annexation of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam.[58] Some fanatical imperialists even supported repudiating the Teller Amendment and annexing Cuba.[59] On the other hand, fear of permanent annexation of the

[53] Healy, *Drive to Hegemony*, 48.

[54] Graham A. Cosmas, *An Army for Empire: The United States Army in the Spanish-American War* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1998), 197.

[55] 68 people died in this show battle. Ibid, 188; and Kinzer, *True Flag*, 65.

[56] Healy, *Drive to Hegemony*, 48.

[57] Matthew White, "Statistics of Wars, Oppressions and Atrocities of the Nineteenth Century," *Necrometrics*, last updated March 2011, http://necrometrics.com/wars19c.htm#SpAm.

[58] Zelikow, "Why Did America Cross the Pacific?" 52-54, 59-60, and 62-63.

[59] Kinzer, *True Flag*, 188-193.

Philippines motivated a diverse American anti-imperialist movement to oppose ratification of the Treaty of Paris. The Senate initially appeared likely to defeat the treaty, but the defection from the anti-treaty forces of the nation's most prominent anti-imperialist politician, perennial Democratic presidential nominee William Jennings Bryan, undermined the treaty opponents.[60]

In the Philippines, American and Filipino soldiers, who just a few months earlier had seen each other as partners in the fight against Spanish empire, established guard posts around Manila to monitor the line of contact between their armies. Inside Manila, orders from Washington replaced Commodore Dewey's support for nationalist Filipino institutions with direct American administration. Outside Manila, Aguinaldo's Revolutionary Government attempted to assert its legitimacy by building a competent administrative state. The revolutionary junta chartered local governments, established courts, schools, and a university, and appointed a congress (controlled by *ilustrados*, the Philippines's educated elite) to draft a European-style republican constitution.[61] Discussions between Aguinaldo and American General Elwell Otis lasted through January 1899, but the McKinley administration's support for annexation and Aguinaldo's determination to achieve independence hamstrung the diplomatic effort.[62]

When an American sentry killed a Filipino soldier and U.S. forces stormed the Filipino lines around Manila in response, whatever hope of negotiated autonomy had existed before vanished. The Philippines would win independence or suffer conquest.[63] Rallying around the flag,

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[60] Ibid. 108-110.

[61] Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, & the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 98-99.

[62] Colin D. Moore, *American Imperialism and the State, 1893-1921* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 65-66.

[63] Peace discussions in April and May 1899 between Aguinaldo and U.S. civilian commissioners over some degree of autonomy collapsed after objections from Gen. Otis and President McKinley. Karnow, *In Our Image*, 151-153.

wavering U.S. senators broke in favor of treaty ratification. By a two-vote margin, the Senate ratified the Treaty of Paris. With no Teller Amendment to restrain the American annexationists, the Philippines was left in legal terms to the McKinley administration's tender mercies.[64]

The Philippine Republic and the people of Luzon, however, did not surrender to the proclamation of the American Congress. With an army of 70,000, many veterans of two years' fighting against Spain, Filipino leaders believed they could prevent the United States from conquering the archipelago. The army's localized structure, lack of equipment, and experience in guerrilla warfare argued against fighting U.S. soldiers in pitched battle, but the *ilustrado* leadership believed a successful conventional campaign would win their cause legitimacy abroad.[65] This conventional strategy, however, was not successful. U.S. assaults on the Filipino trench lines surrounding Manila overwhelmed the defenders with rifle and artillery fire, and the Republican Army left 3000 dead when it retreated north.[66] American pursuit seized much of Luzon, but Aguinaldo's army remained intact, if battered, and the determined resistance of those soldiers inflicted 1800 casualties on the Americans in five months, as many as the Spanish had inflicted in all 1898.[67]

Weather, disease, and insufficient numbers delayed U.S. victory until the November arrival of 40,000 replacements, mainly volunteers recruited for two years of service in the Philippines.[68]

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[64] Kinzer, *True Flag*, 118-123.

[65] Brian McAllister Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 12-14.

[66] Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House, 1989), 143-144.

[67] Cosmas, *Army for Empire*, 312-313.

[68] Ibid, 314.

The additional forces allowed a double envelopment of Aguinaldo's main body by land and amphibious assault. In December 1899, the Republican Army dispersed with the loss of its artillery, supplies, and many soldiers. The conventional war was over, with the freedom of Emilio Aguinaldo and many of his guerrilla comrades the only consolation for the U.S. occupation of all Luzon but the mountains.[69]

The subsequent Filipino strategy of guerrilla resistance was better considered, but ultimately was able to achieve only the prolongation of the nationalist struggle. Guerrilla warfare was tailor-made to the capabilities of the Filipino nationalists, who possessed experienced partisans, support among a large proportion of the population across classes, and a large but decentralized clandestine civilian network.[70] The strategy relied upon its effect on U.S. domestic politics. Aguinaldo hoped a bloody and protracted war would swing frustrated voters to William Jennings Bryan in the 1900 presidential election. Barring that, heavy casualties might force the McKinley administration to grant the Philippines independence.[71]

The Republican Army divided its battalions into small, independent units and concealed them among the population, whose support Aguinaldo admonished his partisan commanders to win. Using an intelligence advantage garnered by civilian spies and partisans' lack of uniforms, the Filipinos replaced linear battles with booby traps, ambushes, and assassinations.[72] These asymmetric tactics initially baffled U.S. commanders, who stopped sending out patrols smaller than a platoon (about 40 men). Unfortunately for the cause of Philippine independence, the very

[69] Linn, *U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency*, 14-16.

[70] Ibid, 17-18.

[71] Ibid, 16; and Kramer, *Blood of Government*, 132-133.

[72] Karnow, *In Our Image*, 178.

decentralization which gave the partisans tactical initiative prevented them from coordinating their efforts against a weakened U.S. Army.[73]

U.S. policy was never consistent across the Philippines and alternated between two coercive extremes: sometimes and in some regions the U.S. tried to win the support of the Filipino people, elsewhere the U.S. intimidated civilians with campaigns of terror. The first tendency was represented by the "policy of attraction" advocated by William Howard Taft's Philippine Commission, the civilian occupation government.[74] The Commission and the U.S. Army initially promoted local governments, sanitation, education, and roads as part of McKinley's goal of "benevolent assimilation."[75] How seriously most American soldiers took their president's call "to win the confidence, respect, and admiration of the inhabitants of the Philippines" is suggested by the popular "Soldier's Song." Its refrain included the lines: "Damn, damn, damn the Filipinos" and "underneath the starry flag, civilize 'em with a Krag."[76]

The war dragged on through 1900 with increasing brutality but no sign of imminent victory for either side. A number of successful ambushes and a fall offensive ordered by Aguinaldo failed to undermine McKinley's support enough to swing the election to Bryan.[77] General Arthur

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[73] Perry D. Jamieson, *Crossing the Deadly Ground : United States Army Tactics, 1865–1899* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1994), https://search-ebscohost-com.revproxy.brown.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=35133&site=ehost-live&scope=site; and Bickel, *Mars Learning*, 30.

[74]Kramer, *Blood of Government*, 112.

[75] Only the road building remained a focus of U.S. effort after Arthur MacArthur took charge of the war effort. Linn, *U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency*, 20-21; and Bickel, *Mars Learning*, 34.

[76] Linn, *U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency*, 20. Krag refers to the Krag-Jorgensen rifle used by the U.S. Army and Marine Corps from 1894 to 1906. Longer lasting has been the song, which Marine officers continue to sing at semi-official banquets called Carabao Wallows. Ian Urbina and Chris Toensing, "In the Good Old Wallow Time," *The Baffler*, November 2002, https://thebaffler.com/salvos/in-the-good-old-wallow-time.

[77] Linn, *U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency*, 23.

MacArthur's December 1900 declaration of martial law codified the war's increasing cruelty by allowing punishment of guerrillas or their associates, a policy which soldiers interpreted as license to kill or torture at will.[78] Aggressive small unit patrols, the collaboration of many *ilustrados*, and the eventual employment of 7000 Filipino scouts and constables eventually turned the tide against the fragmented guerrilla forces.[79] U.S.-led Filipino scouts captured Aguinaldo in March 1901, and resistance on Luzon began to decline afterward.[80]

The war's most notorious atrocity occurred close to the conflict's end in response to a successful partisan attack on a company of U.S. soldiers in the village of Balangiga, on the central Philippines island of Samar. Samar, an island populated by Samareño speakers with little loyalty to the Republic based in Luzon, had remained largely peaceful in the first two years of the war, despite the efforts of one of Aguinaldo's top deputies, the Tagalog-speaking *ilustrado* Vicente Lukban. American soldiers' overweening attitude towards the Samareño population, however, proved Lukban's warnings about U.S. occupation correct. In September 1901, Lukban's partisans and the civilian population of Balangiga cooperated to surprise and kill 48 U.S. soldiers at breakfast.[81] The reaction of General Adna Chaffee, MacArthur's successor, was swift and merciless.

Chaffee ordered Brigadier General Jacob Smith's 6th Separate Brigade to subjugate Samar. Smith, an alcoholic, insubordinate, embezzling, and indebted veteran of the Ute Wars in the

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[79] Bickel, *Mars Learning*, 37-38; and Moore, *American Imperialism*, 107.

[80] Kinzer, *The True Flag*, 197-199.

[81] Katz, *Gangsters of Capitalism*, 90-93.

American Southwest, was unfit for the task in all but his enthusiasm for violence.[82] Smith ordered his command to confine all 250,000 Samareños to concentration camps, "to kill and burn; the more you kill and burn the better you will please me. I want all persons killed *who are capable of bearing arms* in actual hostilities against the United States," and to make the island "a howling wilderness."[83]

Among the troops tasked with fulfilling these orders was a 300-strong marine battalion under Major Littletown W.T. Waller, another brash and alcoholic long-service veteran.[84] Waller's efforts in the first three months were both largely successful and somewhat less brutal than his (illegal) orders mandated. The marines limited Lukban's partisans' food supply, collected the populations of the towns Balangiga and Basey into concentration camps, and even destroyed a partisan base camp in November.[85] Everything fell apart, however, when Waller attempted to march across the trackless island during monsoon season in utter disregard of logistical considerations. Setting out in December 1901 with a 90-man patrol, Waller ran short of supplies and decided to abort the march in less than a week. The patrol dispersed, and most of the marines and Filipino porters were rescued by an Army expedition three weeks after their ordeal had begun. Eleven marines died of exposure. More mindful of logistics, Army patrols used a chain of depots

[82] Ibid, 98; and Brian McAllister Linn, "'We Will Go Heavily Armed': The Marines' Small War on Samar, 1901-1902," in *U.S. Marines and Irregular Warfare, 1898-2007: Anthology and Selected Bibliography*, compiled by Stephen S. Evans (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2008), 44.

[83] Italics mine. Smith further clarified that "capable of bearing arms" meant any male over 10 years old outside a concentration camp. Thomas Schoonover, *Uncle Sam's War of 1898 and the Origins of Globalization* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), 92.

[84] Waller reappears in the following chapters as commander of the marines in Cuba in 1906 and Haiti in 1915. Linn, "We Will Go Heavily Armed," 44.

[85] Ibid, 45; and Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1980), 153-154.

to supply the patrols which captured Lukban in February and defeated the insurgency on Samar by April.

In his patrol's aftermath, Waller used a confession extracted by torture to accuse his porters of theft in implicit retaliation for his baseless suspicions of treachery. A Marine firing squad executed eleven – one for each dead marine.[86] When the American public learned of this atrocity, public outcry forced courts-martial of Smith, Waller, and other officers. Clear evidence of guilt notwithstanding, only Smith was convicted.[87] In a war which killed 200,000 Filipino civilians, Smith was an anomaly not for his brutality but for his carelessness in committing his crimes to writing.[88]

Counterinsurgency on Mindanao

The killings on Samar closed the chapter of organized resistance to U.S. occupation in the northern islands of the Philippines. In the Muslim regions of Moroland on the southernmost island of the archipelago, however, resistance was just beginning. Between 1899 and 1903, Captain John Pershing had immersed himself in Moro society, learned the language, and by careful diplomacy gradually won the support of many Moro *datus* (chiefs) for an autonomous relationship to U.S. occupation.[89] Conflict sprang up anew upon Pershing's return home and the appointment of

[86] Linn, "We Will Go Heavily Armed," 46-49.

[87] Katz, *Gangsters of Capitalism*, 104-105.

[88] 200,000 is the most widely accepted number, but some historians have suggested a death toll of 600,000 or 775,000. Matthew White, "Mid-Range Wars and Atrocities of the Twentieth Century," *Necrometrics*, last updated February 2012, http://necrometrics.com/20c100k.htm#Phil-Am; and Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire*, 103. For further evidence of the prevalence of U.S. war crimes, U.S. soldiers captured only one wounded partisan for every 15 killed, suggesting that U.S. troops shot many surrendering partisans (wounded or otherwise) and/or that many so-called partisans were actually murdered civilians. Karnow, *In Our Image*, 178.

[89] Sam Sarkesian, *America's Forgotten Wars: The Counterrevolutionary Past and Lessons for the Future* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 179

General Leonard Wood, the new governor of Moro Province, who annulled a treaty with the regional sultan, abolished slavery, and instituted a poll tax.[90] The Moros had almost no firearms, so they relied on close combat with swords and the protection of *cattos* (fortified houses).[91]

Campaigning revolved around U.S. attempts to locate and destroy *cattos* and Moro attempts to inflict unacceptable casualties on U.S. patrols. The latter were so successful that few patrols left their garrisons in less than company strength. The Moros had two advantages relative to other Filipino partisans: First, they possessed probably the most effective tactical system of any of America's guerrilla adversaries before the Second World War. Second, they were unyielding in their desire to preserve their way of life. Nevertheless, Wood's relentless campaign of destroying *cattos* and coercing *datus* to maintain the peace proved effective against the elite-led organized resistance. By the 1905 capture of the most powerful guerrilla leader, Datu Ali, the insurgency had begun to subside.[92] The final blow came the next year, when an expedition of American infantry surrounded Bud Dajo, a crater in which hundreds of Moros had fled rather than submit to U.S. rule. In what was euphemistically called the First Battle of Bud Dajo, U.S. soldiers killed 600-1000 Moros, including children.[93] With the most likely rebels exterminated, organized violence paused.[94]

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[90] Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire*, 104-105.

[91] Bickel, *Mars Learning*, 31-32.

[92] Ibid, 35 and 39-41.

[93] Only 21 U.S. soldiers died. Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire*, 105-107.

[94] While war between Moros and the U.S. would return in 1909, the U.S. Army was already withdrawing from Cuba by then, so any experience gained fighting the Moros in later conflicts is not useful for understanding the historical context from which the U.S. Army arrived in the Caribbean.

CHAPTER FOUR: CUBA

TO SUBDUE THE ENEMY WITHOUT FIGHTING IS THE ACME OF SKILL

The Teller Amendment prohibited annexation of Cuba, but a U.S. military government ruled the island until 1902, when a new statute, the Platt Amendment, granted Cuba limited independence. The Cuban Revolutionary Army did not initially disband, but its commander-in-chief General Máximo Gómez accepted the occupying forces, which had grown to 45,000 soldiers by the time the U.S. finally allowed Gómez to hold a victory parade through Havana in February 1899. Unwilling to fight a war against an occupying government which promised imminent independence, Gómez instead negotiated a veterans' relief fund of $3 million.[1] Beginning in May 1899, 33,000 Cuban soldiers laid down their arms for $75 a head. Some soldiers boycotted the payoff, but the organization of Cuba's only military force was eliminated.[2]

The initial occupation made few attempts to alter Cuban society, and the McKinley administration quickly directed the military government to prepare Cuba for formal independence. Maj. Gen. John Brooke saw his job as preventing Cuba from collapsing before it could recover from the economic and human crisis caused by continuous fighting from 1895-1898. Therefore, with little direction from Washington, Brooke valued order over reform and continued to enforce

[1] Gómez was allowed to parade only 2500 soldiers. About 150,000 spectators joined the celebration, an indication of the popularity of the revolutionary nationalist army. José Hernández, *Cuba and the United* States*: Intervention and Militarism, 1868*-1933 (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1993), 75 and 81.

[2] Ibid, 86-87; and Hugh Thomas, *Cuba, or the Pursuit of Freedom* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), 438.

unpopular Spanish colonial laws.[3] In December 1899, Secretary of War Elihu Root finally clarified U.S. policy in Cuba, which he declared to be the creation of a stable Cuban government and promotion of reform until that government could take power.[4]

Pursuant to this new focus, Root replaced the cautious Brooke with Brig. Gen. Leonard Wood, President McKinley's former doctor and Theodore Roosevelt's commander in the Spanish-American War. Wood was a fervent supporter of annexation and progressive reform. Root foreclosed the former but encouraged Wood's vision for the latter. Wood joked that "success in Cuba is so easy that it would be a crime to fail," and administration in fact achieved some signal successes.[5] The military government opened 2000 public schools in five months which enabled widespread primary education for the first time.[6] Other achievements included the establishment of a 1500-strong Rural Guard, the right to legal counsel, reduced corruption in the court system, and the eradication of yellow fever.[7] These achievements did not include improvement to Cuba's precarious economy. Wood ended a moratorium on mortgage payments and instituted a system of property rights accessible only to those who could pay lawyers, surveyors, and (illegally) local

[3] Allan R. Millett, *The Politics of Intervention: The Military Occupation of Cuba, 1906-1909*, (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 1968), 31.

[4] Ibid, 36.

[5] Wood went on to govern Moro Province in the Philippines. I mention his tenure there earlier in Chapter Three. Ibid, 36-37.

[6] Wood tripled the number of operating schools and increased the number of students sevenfold, but education stagnated after 1899. Cuba achieved universal primary education only after the Cuban Revolution in 1959. Thomas, *Cuba*, 446-447.

[7] Less successful were efforts to introduce common law procedures like jury trial and habeas corpus. Cuban lawyers trained in civil law scrapped these intended reforms. Ivan Musicant, *The Banana Wars: A History of United States Military Intervention in Latin America from the Spanish-American War to the Invasion of Panama* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1990), 48-49; and Hernández, *Cuba and the United States*, 108.

officials.[8] These reforms forced peasants off their farms and opened Cuba's real estate market to U.S. investors, who snapped up Cuban land at a bargain.[9]

Concurrent with Wood's reform efforts came his attempt to create a Cuban government friendly to U.S. interests. The military government restricted suffrage to Cuban-born men who were either literate, property owners, or veterans. As a result, 85 percent of Cuba's adult population was disenfranchised. Not content with picking the voters, Wood picked the winners of some races by ordering U.S. soldiers to stuff the ballot boxes.[10] In 1901, the Cuban electoral college selected Tomás Estrada Palma as president unopposed. His one rival, Bartolomé Masó, who ran on a campaign of unconditional Cuban independence, withdrew from the race when Wood packed the board of elections with Estrada Palma's supporters. Estrada Palma was the former chief of the revolutionary government-in-exile and lived in the United States until after his election. Perceived as a pro-U.S., centralist, and conservative democrat, Estrada Palma's wartime credentials advocating for Cuba and Gen. Gómez's endorsement won him support across the island.[11]

With a Cuban government capable of assuming governance of the country, the U.S. prepared the Platt Amendment to set the terms of U.S.-Cuban relations. The amendment gave Cuba independence but limited Cuba's ability to borrow or make treaties.[12] Its third article read:

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[8] Ferrer, *Cuba: An American History (New York: Scribner, 2021)*, 173-175.

[9] Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2003), 118.

[10] Lars Schoultz *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 145-146.

[11] Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 45-47; and Hernández, *Cuba and the United States*, 101.

[12] The agreement also leased Guantánamo Bay (and another base, soon abandoned) to the United States indefinitely for use as a naval base and coaling station. The U.S. Navy and some Americans in Cuba pressed for other territorial concessions, but the Cubans refused further concessions of their sovereignty, and the U.S. government was unwilling to force the issue. Richard D. Challener, *Admirals, Generals, and American Foreign Policy, 1898-1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), 95-98.

> That the government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty, and for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the treaty of Paris on the United States, now to be assumed and undertaken by the government of Cuba.[13]

Wood approvingly noted that "there is, of course, little or no independence left Cuba under the Platt Amendment."[14] In Cuba, the amendment provoked universal opposition, which Wood described as "emotional and hysterical."[15] Nevertheless, McKinley's reassurance, "That clause does not signify intermeddling or intervention in the Government of Cuba. [The U.S.] will intervene in order to prevent foreign attacks against the independence of the Cuban Republic, or when there may exist a true state of anarchy within the Republic," convinced many Cubans that independence under the Platt Amendment would be preferable to continued occupation or worse, annexation.[16] Cuban representatives incorporated the amendment into their constitution by a margin of one vote.[17]

The military government handed off its authority to the Republic of Cuba on May 20, 1902, leaving behind only the coastal artillery of three ports.[18] Under conditions of economic deprivation, President Estrada Palma's conservative and technocratic cabinet stayed the course, maintaining

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[13] "Platt Amendment (1903)," *U.S. National Archives and Records Administration*, February 8, 2022, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/platt-amendment.

[14] Stephen Kinzer, *The True Flag: Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain, and the Birth of American Empire* (New York: Henry Holt, 2017), 192.

[15] Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba under the Platt Amendment, 1902-1934* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986), 52.

[16] Ibid, 54.

[17] Ibid, 54-55; and Thomas, *Cuba*, 455.

[18] Musicant, *Banana Wars*, 51-52.

U.S. policies of sanitation, education, and public works while running a budget surplus which reached $25 million by 1906. A Congress deeply divided over parties, regions, and ideologies vetoed emergency public works spending but borrowed $35 million from a New York bank to pay veterans additional bonuses. Urban strikes and violent rural unrest barely impacted government policy.[19]

Politics became particularly contentious in this era because of the personal stakes involved. The threat of U.S. invasion prevented any policy which conflicted too strongly with the interests of foreign capital, so most Cubans stayed clear of politics. Whereas the truly rich sneered at political infighting and the masses engaged only sporadically, many middle-class Cubans were desperate for well-paying patronage jobs unaffected by the recession. Former military commanders and local elites carved up government payrolls among ambitious followers, a process which created vertical chains of obligation and a deemphasis in ideology relative to personal loyalty. Politicians could pass only those policies allowed by the United States, but they retained autonomy to reward their supporters and punish their opponents. The political arena became increasingly bitter as patronage displaced mass politics.[20]

By the 1905 elections, Cuba was still a poor agricultural nation of just over 1.5 million people, about a third of whom lived in the urban Havana Province.[21] In the cities, Spanish and *creole* (white Cuban-born) professionals and workers predominated. Cuba had many doctors, lawyers, and politicians but a shortage of technical professions. The rural population consisted mostly of *creole* and black peasants, who cultivated sugar and tobacco on tiny personal farms or

[19] Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 48-49.

[20] Pérez, *Under the Platt Amendment*, 90.

[21] Thomas, *Cuba*, 423.

the sprawling *latifundia* of the landowning elite. The peasants lived at the mercy of the sugar growing cycle. Harvest (*la zafra*) from January to May brought a tight labor market and high wages. Growing season (*el tiempo muerto*) meant unemployment. Spain had abolished slavery in Cuba only in 1886, so many black peasants had once been slaves, and the legacy of slavery offered black Cubans few economic opportunities. Per capita tax burdens were three times higher than in the United States, despite far lower incomes.[22]

Cuba was, however, attractive to foreign investment. Under military government, U.S. investments in Cuba doubled from $49 million to at least $100 million, mainly in tobacco plantations and sugar mills.[23] By 1905, the share of land owned by Cubans had declined to 25 percent. Cuba possessed political independence without economic sovereignty.[24] Cuba was a country of deep economic divisions between urban and rural and rich and poor, and foreign investments created the continual danger of U.S. intervention in Cuba's domestic affairs.

Crisis of 1905-1906

The elections of 1905 upset this order and set the United States on the path to invocation of the Platt Amendment's third article, which reserved for the United States "the right to intervene."[25] In preparation for those elections, Estrada Palma joined the conservative Moderate Party, replaced the technocrats in his cabinet with former generals, and purged opposition Liberals

[22] Cubans paid $12 on average in land taxes and tariffs. Americans paid only $3.55. Millett, *Politics of intervention*, 23-26.

[23] Thomas, *Cuba*, 446; and Schoultz, *Beneath the United States*, 192. In one example of strengthening economic ties, liquor exports from the U.S. to Cuba increased 2000 percent from 1897-1899 (from $30,000 to $630,000 annually). Schoultz, *Beneath the United States*, 146.

[24] Pérez, *Cuba and the United States*, 124.

[25] "Platt Amendment," *NARA*.

from their government jobs.[26] All the opponents of Estrada Palma's government, now including Gen. Máximo Gómez, radical nationalist Gen. José Miguel Gómez, and corrupt lawyer Alfredo Zayas, united under the banner of the Liberal Party. The Liberals drew more support from workers, peasants, and veterans, but historians dispute how significant the class and ideological divisions were relative to personal relationships and corrupt motives.[27]

The day before the September 23, 1905 provincial elections, police assassinated the radical Liberal congressman Enrique Villuendas. Intimidation and ballot box stuffing ensured Moderate victory. Liberal candidates won only in Santa Clara and Pinar del Río, where ascendent local party organizations could themselves cheat. Given the Moderates' ability to engineer favorable election results, the Liberals boycotted the December general election.[28] Estrada Palma received more votes than there were registered voters, and Moderates won every single elected office in the country.[29] Completely cut off from government pay, the now unemployed Liberal operatives began plotting to settle their scores with force.

The consummation of Liberal hopes to overturn the 1905 elections waited until the end of *el zafra* in the summer of the following year. Liberal Party activists were highly motivated by their need to regain access to the spoils of government, but their rural base of peasants cared more about the high pay of harvest labor than partisan politics. The only hint of the violence to come was a February attack on a Rural Guard outpost in the outskirts of Havana, in which a band of 30 rebels

[26] Hernández, *Cuba and the United States*, 117-118; and Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 50-51.

[27] Pérez, *Under the Platt Amendment*, 91; and Hernández, *Cuba and the United States*, 118-119.

[28] Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 52.

[29] Hernández, *Cuba and the United States*, 123.

killed two Guards and captured the post's arsenal.[30] The second inauguration of Estrada Palma and the beginning of *el tiempo muerto*, both in late May, accelerated plans for a Liberal *coup d'état* on August 19.[31] The plotters did not maintain operational security, however, and the government learned of the conspiracy and its main participants, who were the chief figures of the Liberal Party.[32]

Congressman Faustino "Pino" Guerra, a minor Liberal politician, jumped the gun on August 16, when he led hundreds of rebels against a Rural Guard post in the western province of Pinar del Río. Possibly believing Estrada Palma was about to preempt the *coup*, Guerra did not coordinate his attack with his compatriots. As a result, Estrada Palma's immediate orders to arrest Liberal Party leaders and conspirators was successful. Caught without warning, Miguel Gómez and almost every Liberal leader except Alfredo Zayas found themselves in prison.[33] The few surviving Liberal leaders managed to raise large armies of unemployed laborers in response to this polarizing news. Within a week, former guerrilla commanders had come out of retirement to lead a Constitutional Army of 2000. A second week brought the muster rolls to 14,000, mostly in Pinar del Río and surrounding Havana. The rebels followed a cautious strategy of coercion. They avoided high-intensity battles, limiting engagements with the Rural Guard to a few ambushes and raids. The Constitutional Army relied on its numbers and potential violence to convince Rural Guardsmen to remain in the cities. [34]

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[30] Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 52.

[31] Hernández, *Cuba and the United States*, 124.

[32] Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 59-60.

[33] Ibid; and Pérez, *Under the Platt Amendment*, 94.

[34] Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 60-62.

The Rural Guard found itself nearly completely incapable of maintaining government authority in the countryside. Its 1500 men, trained as police and Moderate enforcers rather than soldiers and dispersed in tiny groups across the country, barely tried to contest Liberal domination of the countryside. When they tried, they usually lost.[35] Estrada Palma tried to recruit 2000 additional Guards and form a Foreign Legion of Artillery to operate the government's machine guns. The Rural Guard found few recruits, however, despite high seasonal employment, and Estrada Palma had to institute a higher-paid irregular militia of Moderate veterans. Many of those who did sign up (or had done so before the rebellion) switched sides, providing a flow of rifles and ammunition to the Constitutional Army.[36]

The Constitutional Army took advantage of this weakness to threaten the destruction of private property, which the Rural Guard would have been helpless to prevent.[37] Such equivocation maintained the neutrality of foreign capital while undermining foreign powers' faith in the government's ability to maintain, in the words of the Platt Amendment, the "protection of life, property, and individual liberty."[38] Recognizing the centrality of U.S. policy, the Constitutional Army opened a press office in New York City and propagandized for U.S. intervention to fulfill the liberal guarantees of the Platt Amendment. One Liberal general told a newspaper that "we prefer to live under the shelter of the justice of a foreign power than submit ourselves to tyranny

[35] One exception was the killing of famed black general Quintín Banderas, whom Rural Guards hacked to death with a machete while he slept in Havana. Hernández, *Cuba and the United States*, 125-125.

[36] Ibid, 127; and Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 62-63.

[37] Pérez, *Under the Platt Amendment*, 95.

[38] "Platt Amendment," *NARA*.

under the flag which has cost us so much to acquire."[39] At the same time, Estrada Palma made repeated pleas from September 8-14 for U.S. intervention on his behalf, arguing that rebel forces could damage foreign property unless the United States restored order.[40] The temporary agreement of both leading Cuban political factions and the United States that U.S. power should be the arbiter of Cuban governance created a new understanding of the Platt Amendment. McKinley's reassurances about its limits forgotten, the Platt Amendment provided legal justification for military occupation at the smallest pretext.[41] Both parties wanted U.S. intervention, but only one could get what it wanted.[42]

Intervention

President Theodore Roosevelt worried about the consequences of intervention, but his cautious steps combined with Cuban politicians' desire for U.S. arbitration to produce a full-scale occupation of the island. Roosevelt's initial response to Estrada Palma's entreaties was to send two ships to Cuba. The gunboat *Marietta* arrived in the central Cuban port of Cienfuegos on September 11, 1906, and the cruiser *Denver* reached Havana the next day. The U.S. Navy gave the ships' captains permission to land sailors for the protection of U.S. property if needed. Commander J.C. Colwell of *Denver* landed 120 sailors with two machine guns and a field gun on

[39] Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 61 and 68; David Healy, *Drive to Hegemony: The United States in the Caribbean, 1898-1917* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 128-129; and Pérez, *Cuba and the United States*, 153-154.

[40] Pérez, *Under the Platt Amendment*, 96; and Schoultz, *Beneath the United States*, 198-199.

[41] Pérez, *Under the Platt Amendment*, 118-121.

[42] A third, neutral group of veterans under Mario Gárcia Menocal tried to avert U.S. intervention by negotiating a compromise, but Estrada Palma rejected their attempts to mediate. Hernández, *Cuba and the United States*, 128-129; and Richard H. Collin, *Theodore Roosevelt's Caribbean: The Panama Canal, the Monroe Doctrine, and the Latin American Context* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 531.

September 13 and Lt. William Fullam of *Marietta* landed 74 sailors and two machine guns the next day, to the delight of foreign planters, the government, and the Constitutional Army alike.[43] These actions did not, however, delight Roosevelt, who had informed the State Department on September 12 that "vessels sent to Cuban waters are under orders of the President, who will determine when and how they shall be used for the protection of American life and property."[44] Somehow the State Department failed to inform the Navy until after the sailors had landed. Even then, *Denver*'s captain slow-rolled the orders and waited an additional day to withdraw, which the Rural Guard used to organize the defense of the city.[45]

President Estrada Palma, however, refused to abet Roosevelt's attempted disengagement. When he saw that the U.S. sailors had withdrawn from his capital on September 14, Estrada Palma announced the resignation of his entire cabinet without replacement the same day. Cuba would be left without any functioning government whatsoever.[46] Roosevelt immediately sent three marine battalions (about 1200 men total), Secretary of War William Howard Taft, and Acting Secretary of State Robert Bacon to Havana to protect American interests and find a solution to Cuba's civil

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[43] Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 74-76; Challener, *Admirals, Generals, and American Foreign Policy*, 164-165; and Musicant, *Banana Wars*, 58-59. The sailors at Cienfuegos had a tense standoff with 350 soldiers of the Constitutional Army in a nearby town's railway station. The U.S. commander later realized that these rebels, who traveled by horse, not train, had intended to do exactly what he was doing: deny Rural Guards the use of the railway. The Moderate local government curried favor with the U.S. sailors too and offered obedience to U.S. orders. Lester Langley, *The Banana Wars: An Inner History of American Empire, 1900-1934* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1983), 40-41. Incidentally, Fullam was a strong opponent of the Marine Corps, whose abolition he advocated. His aggressive shore action with sailors may have been an attempt to discredit those officers who believed marines necessary for expeditionary landings. Robert Debs Heinl, *Soldiers of the Sea: The United States Marine Corps, 1775-1962* (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1962), 153-154.

[44] Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 76.

[45] After this incident, an untrusting Roosevelt required the Navy to inform the State Department of every order relating to Cuba. *Marietta*, with no cable to the State Department, received the order not to land without presidential approval only after Roosevelt authorized intervention. Challener, *Admirals, Generals, and American Foreign Policy*, 165-166.

[46] Schoultz, *Beneath the United States*, 199.

war.[47] Taft and Bacon negotiated a truce with ease but found support for Estrada Palma impossible given the illegitimacy of his election, the military strength of the Constitutional Army, and the popular support for the Liberal Party (estimated at 80 percent of Cuba's population).[48] The Liberals' gambit began to pay off the more challenging the straightforward policy of enforcing order under the established government began to appear.

Taft, who took the lead over the more junior Bacon, attempted to steer a moderate course between support for the Moderates and Liberals, but Estrada Palma's refusal to concede anything to his opponents pushed Taft to support a second U.S. military government in Cuba. Hoping to avoid expanded intervention, Taft proposed a compromise position on September 24 backed by twelve warships and 2000 Marines on standby in Havana harbor. Taft proposed letting Estrada Palma serve out his term as president in exchange for the rapid reelection of all congressmen and provincial and local officials, which all observers assumed would result in a landslide for the Liberal Party. The Constitutional Army would disarm and receive amnesty in return.[49]

A delegation of Liberal negotiators led by Alfredo Zayas suggested they would be likely to accept these terms, but Estrada Palma's government, dismayed that the intervention they had requested was instead empowering their political opponents, refused. No amount of U.S. cajoling could persuade them otherwise.[50] The Moderates preferred anything to Liberal rule, and the

[47] Taft appeared in Chapter Three as president of the Philippine Commission which ruled that country during the Philippine-American War. Harry Alanson Ellsworth, *One Hundred Eighty Landings of United States Marines, 1800-1934: A Brief History in Two Parts* (Washington, D.C.: Marine Corps Historical Section, 1934), 62; and Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 78-79.

[48] Pérez, *Under the Platt Amendment*, 99-100; and Hernández, *Cuba and the United States*, 131.

[49] Ellsworth, *One Hundred Eighty Landings*, 62; and Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 96.

[50] David A. Lockmiller, *Magoon in Cuba: A History of the Second Intervention, 1906-1909* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1938), 54-56. As an indication of the bitterness emerging between the Moderates and the United States, when Taft told Estrada Palma that "there comes a time when patriotism demands a sacrifice,"

Liberals felt no less strongly. Military government was the second-best outcome for both. As long as U.S. occupation was an option, no independent compromise was possible. Taft could choose between occupying Cuba and letting the two parties fight out their civil war over U.S.-owned plantations and sugar mills.[51]

Estrada Palma's resignation on September 28, 1906 made Taft understand his choices and provoked immediate military occupation.[52] Taft's primary mandate during his failed ten days of negotiations had been to avoid embroiling the U.S. military in a prolonged counterinsurgency campaign in Cuba. The U.S. Army General Staff had been working on contingency planning for Cuba since the year before, and it suggested a protracted campaign of thousands of U.S. soldiers to fight the guerrillas. The General Staff contemplated sending all 40,000 Regular soldiers in the United States, which many of its officers doubted would be sufficient. Brig. Gen. Franklin Bell, Chief of Staff of the Army, warned President Roosevelt that guerrilla warfare in Cuba would be "one of the most difficult operations in the world."[53] Taft agreed, writing his wife that "some $200,000,000 of American property [would] go up in smoke in less than ten days."[54] Even as Taft

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Estrada responded: "I do not intend to take any lesson in patriotism from you." Pérez, *Under the Platt Amendment*, 101-102.

[51] Many historians have taken Roosevelt's reluctance to resort to military intervention to mean that Roosevelt was forced to intervene against his will. I think a more accurate assessment would be that Roosevelt wanted to maintain U.S. interests in Cuba at the lowest price possible. Cuban self-government offered the possibility of U.S. hegemony without the financial costs of occupation or counterinsurgency. Roosevelt was eager to reap those benefits, but he was unwilling to sacrifice U.S. property or strategic interests to do so. For a useful summary of the historiography on this point, see Healy, *Drive to Hegemony*, 132.

[52] Lockmiller, *Magoon in Cuba*, 56.

[53] Best known for his establishment of concentration camps in the Philippine-American War, Bell had some expertise on the challenges of counterinsurgency. Allan R. Millett, "The General Staff and the Cuban Intervention of 1906" *Military Affairs* 31, no. 3 (Nov. 1967), 114-116.

[54] Hernández, *Cuba and the United States*, 134.

bowed to the inevitability of establishing a military government, he continued his attempts to dissuade armed opposition to U.S. occupation.

Occupation

Taft declared himself provisional governor of Cuba on September 29, 1906 "only long enough to restore order and peace and public confidence, and then to hold such elections as may be necessary."[55] His proclamation, addressed "to the people of Cuba," reassured them that government buildings would continue to fly the Cuban flag, that civilian administration would continue, and that Cuban courts would still operate (with exceptions). Taft noted, however, that these symbolic gestures existed "in so far as is consistent with the nature of a provisional government established under the authority of the United States."[56] In other words, Taft hoped for a military occupation with a light touch – but not so light to prevent Taft's dispatch of 2000 marines under the command of Col. Littleton W.T. Waller to capture the treasury and other key sites in Havana.[57] To back up Taft's declaration, 800 additional marines and 6000 soldiers embarked on ships bound for Cuba.[58] The Army struggled to find manpower not otherwise occupied, but the General Staff's contingency planning paid off with a much more rapid deployment than had been possible in 1898.[59]

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[55] William H. Taft, Proclamation of September 29, 1906, from Lockmiller, *Magoon in Cuba*, 57-58.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Waller appeared in Chapter Three as the "butcher of Samar." Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 101-102; and Lockmiller, *Magoon in Cuba*, 57.

[58] These were two marine battalions, ten infantry battalions, and four cavalry squadrons (about 120 men each), with supporting machine guns, artillery, engineers, signals operators, and medical personnel. Ellsworth, *One Hundred Eighty Landings*, 62; and Musicant*, Banana Wars*, 63.

[59] Robert L. Bullard, "The Army in Cuba," *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States* 41 (Sep.-Oct. 1907), 152-153; and Millett, "General Staff," 116-117.

With marines in the capital and no rival claimants to the government of Cuba, Taft turned to the disbandment and disarmament of the Constitutional Army. The first task proved surprisingly easy. The second proved less so. The Liberals had achieved the immediate objectives when Estrada Palma resigned and Taft, who seemed sympathetic to the Liberal perspective, announced that he would supervise elections. Armed resistance to occupation would serve no purpose. The same night Taft announced the provisional government, the delegation headed by Zayas signed a letter drafted by Taft pledging to "lay down their arms, return to their homes, restore the property which was taken by them for military purposes and which is now in their possession" in exchange for amnesty and a political settlement resembling that which Taft had proposed before Estrada Palma's resignation.[60] Taft appointed a commission under Brig. Gen. Frederick Funston composed of U.S. Army officers and Cuban veterans who had stayed neutral in the 1906 civil war to supervise disarmament of the Constitutional Army.[61]

While the Disarmament Commission prepared its work, Taft's chief objective was to keep all parties happy enough with the occupation to forestall armed resistance. For his part, Estrada Palma left Havana for Matanzas and retirement.[62] The beaten Rural Guard posed little threat, but

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[60] William H. Taft and Robert Bacon, "Report of William H. Taft, Secretary of War, and Robert Bacon, Assistant Secretary of State, of What Was Done under the Instructions of the President in Restoring Peace in Cuba," (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1906), 464; and Ralph Eldin Minger, "William H. Taft and the United States Intervention in Cuba in 1906," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 41, no. 1 (Feb. 1961), 85.

[61] Ibid. Some Liberals later joined the commission, and they consistently denied any withholding of arms in their reports. José de Jesus Monteagudo and Charles Hernández, to Eugene Ladd, October 30, 1906, in Taft and Bacon, "Report,"527-528. Funston had one of the most remarkable careers in the U.S. Army at the time. A botanist by training, he sailed to Cuba in 1896 to join the Cuban Revolutionary Army, whose artillery he commanded against Spain. This unique experience won him the colonelcy of a volunteer regiment in 1898. He won a Medal of Honor in the Philippines and personally led the unit of scouts who captured Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo. No other officer had as distinguished a record in counterinsurgency fighting as he. Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 4.

[62] Estrada Palma declined Taft's offer of U.S. naval transport to Matanzas. Ibid, 519.

Taft confirmed the position of its commander, Maj. Gen. Alejandro Rodríguez and raised his salary. The Rural Guard acknowledged the provisional government's authority and received U.S. Army advisors to supervise its activities.[63] To counteract the Rural Guard's widespread unpopularity, Taft rotated its detachments to new regions in hopes of alleviating acrimony between Cubans and individual Guards.[64] Taft maintained many other Moderates in their well-paying positions.[65] Those Moderates whom Taft had not placated with continued government employment agitated not against the United States but in favor of annexation. Without U.S. military presence, the Constitutional Army was likely to take control of the island by violence, so the Moderates had no interest in Cuban independence. Their party was in such disrepute after the election rigging of 1905 and their incapacity to maintain a sovereign Cuban government that they disbanded in November 1906. The remnants, backed by sugar and tobacco interests, advocated for U.S. annexation or protectorate.[66] Resistance to occupation would not come from that quarter.

The Constitutional Army was even easier to mollify, as they viewed U.S. intervention as a step toward Liberal victory in fair elections. Prominent Liberals fundraised to build a statue of President Roosevelt and held a banquet in honor of Cdr. Colwell of *Denver*. They capped these celebrations with a victory rally in Havana on October 15. Less prominent Liberal sympathizers shared some of these feelings. When Pino Guerra's column returned to Pinar del Río, they joined the welcoming crowd in shouts of "Viva los Americanos. Viva la Paz! Viva Taft y Bacon! Viva

[63] Hernández, *Cuba and the United States*, 143-144.

[64] Allan R. Millett, "The Rise and Fall of the Cuban Rural Guard, 1898-1912," *The Americas* 29, no. 2 (Oct. 1972), 199.

[65] Taft and Bacon, "Report," 463-464.

[66] Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 160 and 169.

Mr. Roosevelt!"[67] Taft encouraged these sentiments by writing Liberal leaders that he would give preference to Liberal candidates for government positions as long as Moderates dominated the bureaucracy.[68]

Many Cubans opposed U.S. intervention in their nation's internal affairs, but those voices lacked the armed force to resist. Even among those outside Cuba's main political factions, however, criticism of the occupation was surprisingly limited. That is not to say that Cubans supported U.S. imperialism, but the independence granted by the Platt Amendment lacked so much in the way of independence that it was not clear that the presence of U.S. troops was much more oppressive. The tenor of most nationalist Cuban analysis was cynical and resigned. One of the few vocal Cuban opponents of occupation, intellectual Enrique José Varona, diagnosed the occupation as the outcome of Cuba's economic subservience to foreign capital. He dismissed Taft's arbitration as the attempt to do whatever expedient for the preservation of foreign investments.[69] Journalist Roque Garrigó, on the other hand, blamed Cuban "adulterers of the system now marvelously full of their bastard ambitions, their stupidities, and their frauds" for bringing about intervention.[70] Neither represented major political or armed groups, though their critiques would resonate as dissatisfaction with U.S. occupation mounted.

Under the circumstances of general acquiescence to the landing of U.S. forces, the disarmament itself was an anticlimax, accomplished in two weeks without bloodshed. Maj. Eugene Ladd supervised disarmament in western Cuba, which he completed in a rapid sequence of

[67] Ibid, 107.

[68] Taft and Bacon, "Report," 466.

[69] Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 110; and Hernández, *Cuba and the United States*, 138-139.

[70] Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 109.

negotiations with the two commanding Constitutional generals in the area, Pino Guerra and Loynaz del Castillo, who ordered their subordinates to comply with all Ladd's requests.[71] Their approximately 10,500 men turned in only 1567 rifles, "almost all of [which] were unserviceable, and the men had very little ammunition."[72] One of Castillo's subordinates, Gen. Ernesto Aspert, later told historian David Lockmiller that his brigade hid all its functioning rifles, especially those owned by individual soldiers.[73] Near Havana, Gen. Castillo's men and the irregular Moderate militias turned their rifles over to Maj. Gen. Rodríguez's Rural Guard, which acted in close cooperation with Maj. Ladd. Gen. Guerra's corps returned under arms to Pinar del Río, where they received a jubilant welcome and meals at the provisional government's expense before Guerra gathered their rifles and handed them over to a company of U.S. marines on October 8.[74] Just one week separated the first meeting of the Disarmament Commission and the demobilization of all militias and Constitutional Army forces west of Santa Clara. Castillo, Guerra, and Rodríguez had all proved eager to end the crisis, and the party discipline of Cuban patronage politics ensured that their subordinates complied.[75]

[71] Castillo, one of the Liberals most suspicious of U.S. aims, apparently secretly told his soldiers to keep their weapons, knowing that the provisional government would not press a point which might cause insurrection. When U.S. soldiers remained in Cuba, Castillo organized the "Constitutional Militia" in 1907. This militia was aimed at intimidating Moderate Cubans and avoided confrontation with government forces. Ibid, 105 and 177; and Ladd to Funston, October 9, 1906, in Taft and Bacon, "Report," 522-526.

[72] Ladd to Funston, October 9, 1906, in Taft and Bacon, "Report," 522-526.

[73] Lockmiller, *Magoon in Cuba*, 67.

[74] Ladd to Funston, October 9, 1906, in Taft and Bacon, "Report," 522-526.

[75] The provisional government rewarded Rodríguez with permanent command of the Rural Guard and Guerra with command of a new Cuban Army. They did well to embrace Taft's peace offer rather than fight alone against the U.S. military and their Liberal comrades. Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 237-238.

In Eastern Cuba the disarmament proceeded almost as quickly under the supervision of Cuban generals, some neutrals in the 1906 uprising, others active leaders of the Constitutional Army. In Camaguey, provincial Liberal party leader Lope Recio mustered the 1500 soldiers there out by October 8.[76] The neutral Gen.Tomás Padró Griñán and the Liberal Gen. Francisco de Paula Valiente disarmed Santiago nearly as quickly. Only the 700 Constitutional soldiers in Manzanillo took a few days longer.[77] Liberal Gen. José de Jesus Monteagudo and neutral Col. Charles Hernández took some time longer to disarm the Liberal stronghold of Santa Clara, but they too finished disarmament within two weeks of the Disarmament Commission's inauguration.[78]

The Disarmament Commission demobilized 25,000 Constitutional Army soldiers, almost all within a week. 3,153 rifles were recovered almost all nonfunctional, a statistic which implies that only 13 percent of Constitutional Army soldiers were armed, although Ladd counted 1900 rifles in a brigade of 3000 in Pinar del Río.[79] These results, however, were good enough for Taft to issue a general amnesty on October 10.[80] The 1906 civil war was over. Only two engagements between U.S. and Cuban forces are recorded in this period, both in Camaguey. The first occurred in September before disarmament, and the skirmish began and ended with one marine clubbing a

[76] Taft to Roosevelt, October 8, 1906, in Taft and Bacon, "Report," 489; and Lope Recio to Magoon, October 15, 1906, in Taft and Bacon, "Report," 526-527.

[77] Taft to Roosevelt, October 8, 1906, in Taft and Bacon, "Report," 489; Tomás Padró Griñán and Francisco de Paula Valiente to Ladd, October 30, 1906, in Taft and Bacon, "Report," 528-530.

[78] Monteagudo and Hernández to Ladd, October 22, 1906, in Taft and Bacon, "Report," 527-528; and Ladd to Magoon, November 8, 1906, in Taft and Bacon, "Report," 530-532.

[79] Ladd to Magoon, November 8, 1906, in Taft and Bacon, "Report," 530-532.

[80] William H. Taft, "Amnesty Proclamation," October 10, 1906, in Taft and Bacon, "Report," 533-534.

Constitutional Army officer's head with his rifle.[81] In the second, a government militia attacked a group of disarmed former rebels. U.S marines arrived to protect the unarmed men.[82]

While less remarked in official reports, the disarmament of the irregular Moderate militias was crucial to the operation's success. Near Havana, one militia's intransigence about disarmament proved the major delay to the demobilization of Castillo's army. When the militia's Rural Guard superiors forced them to disarm, so did Castillo's soldiers. Ladd averted another confrontation in Pinar del Río by rerouting a train transporting a Rural Guard detachment commanded by a personal enemy of Pino Guerra.[83] A similar situation seems to have delayed disarmament in Santa Clara.[84] U.S. occupation allowed the mutual demobilization possible only in an environment where each faction believed itself protected from retaliation by its political opponents.

Two disputes confused the process of disarmament: whether disarmament extended to personal weapons and what to do with the requisitioned horses. Some Constitutional generals asked permission for their soldiers to keep their personal firearms or compensation for disarming.[85] Taft denied these requests but admitted it unlikely in practice that U.S. forces could confiscate soldiers' personal property. He merely maintained the right in case more comprehensive disarmament would be needed later.[86] It is clear that the provisional government implicitly

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[81] Albertus W. Catlin, *With the Help of God and a Few Marines: The Battles of Chateau Thierry and Belleau Wood* (Yardley, PA: Westholme Publishing, 2013), 119-120.

[82] Lope Recio to Magoon, October 15, 1906, in Taft and Bacon, "Report," 526-527.

[83] Ladd to Funston, October 9, 1906, in Taft and Bacon, "Report," 522-526.

[84] Taft to Roosevelt, October 8, 1906, in Taft and Bacon, "Report," 489

[85] Taft and Bacon, "Report," 521 and 532.

[86] Ibid, 465.

accepted the charade of disarmament because, unlike in the Philippines or Cuba itself after the Spanish-American War, Taft offered not a cent of payment for the surrender of a firearm. The provisional government and the Constitutional Army each pretended that Cuba had disarmed in order to make peace seem permanent, but the U.S. pacification strategy rested not on disarmament but on achieving the continued acquiescence of Liberal leadership.

The other matter under dispute was the fate of the thousands of horses the Constitutional Army had commandeered during their insurgency. Prioritizing a quick demobilization of the insurgents, Brig. Gen. Funston ordered the issue of certificates giving temporary claim over the horses to the insurgents, hoping to sort ownership out after the Constitutional Army had disbanded.[87] Unfortunately, the certificates were translated or printed incorrectly, and they incorrectly indicated that certificate holders owned the horses. Once the mistake had been made, Taft and the commission decided it impossible to recover the horses without "great trouble."[88] Taft did insist that the provisional government reimburse the former owners, the cost of which he inaccurately estimated as $500,000.[89] Taft's frustration with the incident may have precipitated his firing of Funston, who unexpectedly departed Cuba October 13.[90] Taft's misgivings about the violation of property rights aside, the horse certificates provided an unofficial means of rewarding Constitutional soldiers for returning home peacefully.

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[87] With no records kept, determining ownership of the 8000 horses would have been a lengthy process – as well as one likely to have alienated thousands of armed Constitutional Army soldiers. Frederick Funston to Charles Magoon, October 13, 1906, from Taft and Bacon, "Report," 521-522.

[88] Taft to Roosevelt, October 7, 1906; and Taft decree, October 10, 1906, both from Taft and Bacon, "Report," 488 and 521.

[89] The actual cost was $300,000. Ibid; and Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 106ff.

[90] Alternative theories for Funston's sacking include either his popularity or animosity with his old comrades in the Liberal Party and his energetic but disorganized leadership style, which may have irritated Taft. Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 106-107; and Musicant, *Banana Wars*, 64-65.

The new leadership and the bulk of reinforcements dispatched after Estrada Palma's resignation arrived after demobilization was almost complete. Two U.S. infantry battalions landed in Havana on October 6 and encamped outside the city. Civilian lawyer Charles Magoon relieved Taft as provisional governor, and Brig. Gen. Franklin Bell replaced Funston on October 13.[91] The rest of the 5600-strong Army of Cuban Pacification embarked for Cuba on October 10 and finished disembarking on October 29.[92] Three days later, half of Waller's marine brigade withdrew.[93] The symbolic end to the Cuban crisis had already come on October 24, when the provisional government dumped all the captured arms into the Gulf of Mexico off Havana.[94] Bell's Army of Cuban Pacification, prepared to fight a bitter counterinsurgency campaign, found that Taft and the Liberal leadership had done their job for them.

[91] Musicant, *Banana Wars*, 64-65.

[92] Taft renamed this force from the Army of Cuban Intervention to sound less threatening. Millett, *Politics of Intervention*, 121-122.

[93] Ellsworth, *One Hundred Eighty Landings*, 62.

[94] Lockmiller, *Magoon in Cuba*, 81.

CHAPTER FIVE: HAITI

IN DREAMS OF FREEDOM UNFULFILLED

Ever since Haiti declared its independence from France in 1804, its people have striven to preserve their freedom and their nation's independence against constant external pressure. In the eighteenth century, Haiti was the world's largest slave market, a French colony whose sugar and coffee exports accounted for two thirds of French international trade. Haiti was the most profitable of all European colonies. Its prosperity rested on the exploitation of the labor of 500,000 slaves by the colony's tiny white population of 30,000.[1] Haitians won their freedom from France at the conclusion of a desperate twelve-year struggle – the only successful slave revolution in history – which culminated in the destruction of a 60,000-man French army in 1803 and the massacre of the former slave owners and other whites two years later.[2] Despite Haitian precautions against killing British or U.S. citizens, white reaction to the massacre and the implied precedent for other colonies isolated Haiti diplomatically and economically after independence.[3] Haiti's fellow American republic, the United States, recognized Haiti's independence only in 1862.[4] An extortionate indemnity to the former slave owners, which French diplomats extracted in 1825 under the guns

[1] C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), ix.

[2] Ibid, 369-373.

[3] Ibid, 373-374.

[4] Hans Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1971), 30.

of a squadron of French frigates mired Haiti in an inextricable debt trap.[5] This concession may have averted a French reconquest attempt, but the resulting debt would expose Haiti to foreign coercion and eventual U.S. occupation.

Just before U.S. occupation, Haiti was a country of about 2 million people, mostly independent subsistence farmers. Just 100,000 lived in Port-au-Prince, the nation's largest city and capital. The vast majority of the population were black peasants who followed the syncretic Catholic and West African faith of Vodou (often spelled Voodoo) and spoke Haitian Creole (Kreyòl), a language composed of mostly French vocabulary and West African grammar. As a result of the Francophone education system, Kreyòl speakers were illiterate. About 3 percent of Haitians composed the urban mixed-race ("*mulâtre*") elite, who spoke French, practiced orthodox Catholicism, and learned the humanities in French-modeled schools.[6]

Most peasants owned their own land and grew their own food and often coffee or other cash crops to sell for whatever they could not make themselves. Agricultural productivity, however, stagnated throughout the nineteenth century, the result of low rates of domestic reinvestment in farming technology A growing population without commensurate productive growth strained living standards.[7] France was the largest market for Haiti's goods, buying 50 percent of Haiti's exports in 1913. Haitian consumers, however, imported 75 percent of foreign products from the U.S.[8] The third country with significant involvement in Haiti's economy was Germany, which

[5] Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012), 100-102.

[6] Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 19-22. I should note that color and class correlated only partially, though *mulâtre* and black are often used informally to characterize the division between urban elites and the peasantry. See David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour, and National Independence in Haiti* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996).

[7] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *State against Nation: The Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990), 84.

[8] Ibid, 32-35.

traded little with the Caribbean nation but whose businesses provided services to Haitian business. The 210 Germans and Germano-Haitians who lived in Haiti in 1915 owned public utilities, wholesale merchants, and wharfs, and the Hamburg-American Line had a near monopoly on shipping to and from Haiti.[9]

After independence, Haiti struggled to develop a stable, competent governing structure accountable to the desires of its population. France had governed the colony with just 500 government employees, whose opposition to black interests and general incapacity left little infrastructure for successful governance.[10] From 1806-1915, 24 presidents ruled Haiti, of whom seventeen were overthrown in revolutions, two retired after a full term, and eleven served for less than a year.[11] Elections were characterized by low turnout (in 1888 only 800 votes were cast in Port-au-Prince, a city of 50,000 inhabitants) and voter intimidation by soldiers and local elites.[12]

Presidents lasted only so long as they could maintain the support of the irregular paramilitary groups known as *cacos*, who used a combination of political connections, popularity in their hometowns, and physical force to periodically install a new president.[13] In 1915, there

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[9] Ibid, 35; and David Healy, *Drive to Hegemony: The United States in the Caribbean, 1898-1917* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 75.

[10] These 'revolutions' were really more like *coups d'état* than truly revolutionary events like the 1791-1803 Haitian Revolution, whose memory these later putsches tried to invoke. Revolution, however, is the established term for the phenomenon in Haiti, despite the limited popular participation in and reforms following most. James, *Black Jacobins*, 35.

[11] Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 27.

[12] Dubois, *Haiti*, 170-171.

[13] The origin of *caco* is believed to be an onomatopoeic spelling of a raptor cry. Ivan Musicant, *The Banana Wars: A History of United States Military Intervention in Latin America from the Spanish-American War to the Invasion of Panama* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1990), 160.

were approximately 20,000 *cacos* in Haiti.[14] The *cacos* consisted of a diverse range of individuals, from peasants to professional bandits, and engaged in politics because of an equally diverse range of motivations, from presidential payrolls and the chance to loot Port-au-Prince to commitment to a president's political program. These were heterogenous groups with strong local ties and decentralized organization under chiefs who commanded small bands (directly) or small armies (indirectly through affiliated chiefs). To the extent that *caco* groups professed political platforms, they were usually personalist and regionalist rather than class-based. *Cacos* formed a part of the Haitian political establishment and became a political vehicle of the peasantry only in the aftermath of the 1915 U.S. invasion.[15]

In parallel to the *cacos*, Haiti's official military served as Haiti's *de facto* government administration. Local commanders ran local fiscal policy in addition to their security responsibilities. Despite rapid regime turnover, military personnel typically survived each change of government, which ensured some stability in local administration. Regional military departments used the threat of force to protect their autonomy. A new president would typically grant military commissions to some of his supporters but otherwise leave the military to its own devices.[16] The price of this decentralized continuity, however, was an incapacity for any national government to enact the reforms it was elected (or installed) to achieve. The result was a system of rapid presidential successions without corresponding policy adaptation.

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[14] Alan McPherson, *The Invaded: How Latin Americans and Their Allies Fought and Ended U.S. Occupations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 25.

[15] Ibid; and Trouillot, *State against Nation*, 95.

[16] One consequence of patronage commissions was a bloated officer corps, which numbered 13,500 in a military with only 7500 enlisted personnel in 1867. Dubois, *Haiti*, 169-170. Trouillot, *State against Nation*, 94.

Haiti's Early Twentieth Century Crisis

Three interwoven threads created the conditions for the U.S. occupation in 1915. The dysfunction of Haiti's governing system, U.S. business in Haiti (chiefly National City Bank and Haiti's National Railroad), who believed occupation would protect their property, and increased U.S. strategic interest in the Caribbean after the Spanish-American War. Before 1898, U.S. engagement with Haiti had been sporadic, if less than cordial. Owing to slave owner opposition, the United States recognized Haitian independence only in 1862, when Haiti agreed to provision Union ships hunting Confederate commerce raiders during the American Civil War. A handful of instances of gunboat diplomacy, in which U.S. warships attempted to intimidate Haiti, occurred from then until 1898, notably the 1891 attempt to coerce the purchase of Môle St. Nicholas.[17] As late as 1897, the U.S. stood by as Germany extracted reparations for damaged property from Haiti by threatening to bombard Port-au-Prince.[18]

Only after 1898 did the U.S. have the means to or interest in enforcing the Monroe Doctrine in Haiti. Both Germany and the U.S. involved themselves in Haiti's 1902 civil war, which started as an election but, when it became clear that the election would not be fair, devolved into violent conflict. German merchants were accused of financing the war, and German warships forced the Haitian gunboat *Crête-á-Pierrot* to scuttle, which helped swing the war to General Nord Alexis.[19] Worried by German activity, the U.S. sent its own warships to Haitian waters, including the gunboat *Machias*, which asserted the U.S. right to "protection of British, French, German, Italian,

[17] Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 30-31. For more detail on Môle St. Nicholas, cf. 37 of this thesis.

[18] Lester Langley, *The Banana Wars*, 1983, 123.

[19] Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 35; and Dubois, *Haiti*, 199-200.

Spanish, Russian, and Cuban interests" when it threatened to sink a Haitian gunboat.[20] After the *Machias* incident, the U.S. dispatched warships to Haiti every year until the occupation except for 1910.[21] Once again, internal Haitian instability combined with foreign manipulation and intrigue to undermine Haiti's independence.

With the inauguration of the Woodrow Wilson administration, U.S. government interest in Haiti escalated. In 1913, the U.S. once again attempted to buy Môle St. Nicholas.[22] Wilson's secretary of state, William Jennings Bryan, had run for president three times as a critic of finance. He proposed a plan to refund Latin American sovereign debts and another, as late as 1915, in which the U.S. would use its own creditworthiness to backstop those debts. Wilson rejected both plans.[23] Some historians have emphasized U.S. commercial interests in Haiti as motivation for intervention, but this case is overstated. In 1913, U.S. citizens had only $4 million invested in Haiti, only 0.32 percent of U.S. investments in the rest of Latin America.[24] Despite U.S. economic domination, Haiti, unlike Cuba or Mexico, was just too poor to matter to the U.S. economy. The occupation cost the U.S. government $3.2 million up to 1930 and tied down 20 percent of the Marine Corps, hardly a worthwhile expenditure to protect $4 million.[25] On the other hand, Bryan's ignorance of Haitian affairs left him vulnerable to the machinations of Roger Farnham, former

[20] Langley, *Banana Wars*, 123.

[21] Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 31.

[22] Lars Schoultz, *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy Toward Latin America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 231.

[23] Ibid, 47.

[24] Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 41.

[25] B.H. Fuller, "Cost of Occupation of Haiti," 1930, Haiti Reference Collection, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division.

journalist and vice president of National City Bank. Farnham convinced Bryan that U.S. interests demanded a strict and active policy toward Haiti, which exacerbated Haiti's financial difficulties.[26]

The most constricting problem Haitian leaders faced was their nation's increasing dependence on and indebtedness to foreign powers. The 1825 indemnity to France continued to undermine the promise of a truly independent Haiti, as subsequent refinancing attempts failed to reduce Haiti's debt to a manageable level. Despite a spotless record of repayment, the share of its government budget Haiti devoted to debt service rose from 25 percent to 67 percent from 1890 to 1914.[27] By 1915, the share had risen to 80 percent.[28] Haiti's financial room for maneuver was further constrained by its *Banque Nationale*, which was not Haitian at all but rather a syndicate of French, U.S., and German private banks, forced on Haiti as a term of its loan agreements with France.[29] From 1911 on, Haiti's own *Banque Nationale* and its U.S.-owned sponsors, National City Bank and Haiti's National Railroad, aimed to subject Haiti's customs (the national government's sole revenue source) to U.S. receivership. Such supervision would guarantee debt repayment from the increasingly fiscally incapable Haitian government.[30]

In August 1914, the *Banque Nationale* began denying Haiti's government its own funds. The next month, Haiti, whose reserves, operating funds, and currency were all held by the *Banque*

[26] National City Bank is now Citibank. An example of Bryan's limited and prejudiced view of Haiti: after being given a briefing on Haiti by the manager of Haiti's central bank before taking office, Bryan's only response was: "Dear me, think of it. N****** speaking French." Langley, *Banana Wars* 123; and Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 48.

[27] Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 32; and Dubois, *Haiti*, 175.

[28] Dubois, *Haiti*, 205.

[29] Healy, *Drive to Hegemony*, 151-152. U.S. diplomatic pressure on France forced a 50 percent U.S.-German stake in the venture in 1910. Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 45.

[30] Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 48-50.

Nationale, defaulted on its debts the next month.[31] President Oreste Zamor negotiated U.S. receivership over Haiti's customs and surveillance over its finances in exchange for access to *Banque Nationale* funds and U.S. protection, but Joseph Davilmar Théodore overthrew him in November. Théodore nearly negotiated a similar deal, but he retracted his offer when confronted by domestic opposition so violent Haiti's senate tried to kill the foreign minister when he proposed the idea.[32] In retaliation, Farnham asked Bryan to remove Haiti's gold from the *Banque Nationale* branch in Port-au-Prince. In December 1914, a detachment of 50 armed marines in civilian clothes from the *Machias* removed $500,000 in gold from the bank vaults and shipped it to New York City.[33] The next month, the *Banque Nationale* replaced its French tricolor with the U.S. flag for protection, an acknowledgement of the bank's entanglement with U.S. foreign policy.[34] Haiti's weak state left it vulnerable to financial coercion, which weakened state capacity still further and interacted with the U.S. strategic goal of defeating European influence in the Caribbean. The U.S. government would indeed stabilize a chaotic situation, but U.S. support for a destabilizing *Banque Nationale* was partially responsible for that chaos.

Zamor's deposition did not end Haiti's financial-political crisis. President Théodore soon found himself in the same predicament as his predecessors, and his efforts to win *Banque Nationale* support without conceding Haiti's autonomy came to naught. Out of funds, Théodore began issuing paper money to pay his troops, which neither the *Banque Nationale* nor local businesses

[31] Peter James Hudson, *Bankers and Empire: How Wall Street Colonized the Caribbean* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 102.

[32] Healy, *Drive to Hegemony*, 188-189.

[33] Hudson, *Bankers and Empire*, 102-104.

[34] Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 61.

accepted as legal tender. In the winter of 1915, northern *caco* forces allied under the leadership of Vilbrun Guillaume Sam, funding from German business, and the cautious support of the U.S. Navy. U.S. cruisers escorted Sam's army on its rapid February march south to Port-au-Prince, where he had Congress appoint him president.[35]

In office, Sam faced the same fundamental problem as Zamor and Théodore: the irreconcilable needs to pay the army and to avoid concessions to the U.S. which would cause a coup d'état.[36] Sam declined a customs receivership, but Dr. Rosalvo Bobo, Théodore's minister of interior and moderate nationalist, began an insurrection in the northeast with an army of 500-4000 *cacos*, motivated by Théodore's perceived sympathy for the U.S.[37] In Bobo's words: "To introduce into our country [U.S.] industries, its capital, its methods of work – is one of my most ardent and constant dreams. But to turn over to them custom houses and our finances, to put ourselves under their tutelage, never, never, NEVER."[38] When Sam's chief of police murdered 167 political prisoners on July 27, Port-au-Prince rose up in insurrection. Thirty of the prisoners' relatives and politicians dragged Sam from the French legation and dismembered him, later parading Sam's head around the city on a pike.[39]

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[35] Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Haiti and the Great Powers, 1902-1915* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 208-209 and 214.

[36] Sam's army required $24,000 per week from a treasury that was already almost empty. Ivan Musicant, *The Banana Wars*, 1990, 162-163.

[37] Plummer, *Haiti and the Great Powers*, 216-217 and Healy, *Drive to Hegemony*, 190.

[38] McPherson, *The Invaded*, 22-23.

[39] This was the first time in Haitian history a consulate's diplomatic immunity had been violated, an exception motivated by fear that U.S. marines would soon rescue Sam. Ibid, 23; William P. Upshur, "Memorandum for Lieutenant Colonel Metcalf: Chapter XIV (Marine Corps History) Twenty Years in Haiti," 1937, Haiti Reference Collection, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division.

New Secretary of State Robert Lansing ordered Rear Admiral William Caperton to land his 330 marines and sailors to occupy Port-au-Prince. The official reason for intervention was, as always, "to protect American lives and property." No foreigners had been killed or their property damaged, but the violation of the French and Dominican legations made such a claim believable to Lansing's domestic audience. The Navy had been planning for such a contingency in Haiti since July of the previous year, so, when given a chance to execute, the fleet was ready.[40] Caperton's deputy Captain Edward Beach instructed the Committee of Public Safety, an impromptu group of prominent Bobo supporters in the capital, that "a hostile reception of the Admiral's troops would endanger the city's existence."[41] The next afternoon (July 28, 1915), Marine Captain George Van Orden led his men ashore, just west of the capital.[42] Though few realized that evening, nineteen years of occupation were beginning.

Occupation of Port-au-Prince

The marines and sailors marched into Port-au-Prince as night fell, sacrificing the tactical advantages of daylight for the political goal of seizing the capital before rioting could damage further property or threaten the U.S. consulate. With Committee of Public Safety member General Erman Robin as a guide, the landing force established guard posts at the foreign consulates and

[40] Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 64-65.

[41] The Committee of public safety was often called the Revolutionary Committee. David Healy, *Gunboat Diplomacy: The U.S. Navy in Haiti, 1915-1916* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), 60.

[42] Ibid, 60-61; and Schoultz, *Beneath the United States*, 232.

bivouacked in the central marketplace.[43] The landing force had arrived with such haste that their intelligence was essentially nil. Marines inadvertently disarmed and detained General Robin. [44]

The marine detachment of the *U.S.S. Washington*, believing that Haitian soldiers were sniping at them, began firing into the buildings opposite them. The marines killed two Haitians and wounded ten others. Five were civilians.[45] Despite these killings, there is no evidence any Haitian soldiers fired on the advancing U.S. column. After the fact, Haitians unanimously denied any armed resistance to the initial occupation and maintained that the firing heard by U.S. forces had been in celebration of Sam's lynching. Major Smedley Butler, who arrived in Port-au-Prince in mid-August, blamed the sailors, but Van Orden's report is clear that the marines from the *Washington* were at fault.[46]

In the morning, Van Orden and Robin managed to keep an uneasy truce between Haitian soldiers and U.S. personnel as marines and sailors set up guards at the railroad station, customs house, foreign legations, and notable houses.[47] Sailors were responsible for another tragic incident on July 30, when a detachment of sailors in an orphanage machinegunned two of their comrades returning from guard duty.[48] There was still no resistance from the Haitians, however, who continued to bide their time when confronted with superior U.S. weaponry. Gelin Choute, a guard

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[43] Ibid; and George Van Orden, "Report of Landing Operations 28 July-4 August, 1915," September 22, 1915, Haiti Reference Collection, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, 2.

[44] Van Orden, "Report of Landing Operations," 2.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Upshur, "Memorandum," 2. Smedley Butler to Maud Butler, August 16, 1915 in Anne Cipriano Venzon, ed. *General Smedley Darlington Butler: The Letters of a Leatherneck, 1898-1931* (New York: Praeger, 1992), 153-154.

[47] Van Orden, "Report of Landing Operations," 3-4.

[48] One of the dead sailors, William Gompers, was the nephew of Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor. Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 67; and Upshur, "Memorandum," 2.

at the presidential palace, later told an interviewer: "Everyone fled. Me too. You had only to see them with their weaponry, their massive, menacing appearance, to understand both that they came to do harm to our country and that resistance was futile."[49]

Dr. Bobo's allies had every reason to suppose that their cooperation would be rewarded with the speedy withdrawal Adm. Caperton was promising.[50] After all, marines had landed in Haiti the year before and left within two weeks.[51] And the historical analogy most salient in the minds of Haitian politicians was the 1914 U.S. occupation of Veracruz, Mexico, where the marines had withdrawn after six months.[52] Moreover, while Bobo was not a supporter of U.S. intervention in Haiti, he was an advocate of austerity in order to secure Haiti's debts and the most popular politician in the country.[53] With the support of the Committee of Public Safety, which had hitherto worked productively with Caperton and Van Orden to keep the peace, Bobo had cause to believe he could work with the Americans. As a result, the Committee agreed to postpone presidential elections and disarm the Haitian soldiers in Port-au-Prince except for a few guards for government buildings. On August 1, the marines began confiscating firearms from all Haitian detachments in the city.[54] Port-au-Prince was occupied, but an autonomous Committee of Public Safety ran the city government, unarmed *cacos* established checkpoints around the city, and there were barely

[49] McPherson, *The Invaded*, 28.

[50] Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 71.

[51] George Barnett, "Annual Report of the Marine Corps," 1914.

[52] McPherson, *The Invaded*, 28.

[53] Ibid, 22 and 26; and Dubois, *Haiti*, 216.

[54] It should be noted that the army was nominally loyal to the former Sam government. The Bobo-aligned Committee of Public Safety may not have had much stake in its disarmament. Van Orden, "Report of Landing Operations," 4; and George Barnett, "Report on Affairs in the Republic of Haiti, June 1915 to June 30, 1920," 251.

400 marines and ill-trained sailors in the whole country. The main body of Dr. Bobo's *caco* army was still in the north but marching southward.[55] For a few days, Caperton and Bobo waited for their reinforcements.

The *U.S.S. Connecticut* broke the stalemate on August 4. Five companies of the Second Marine Regiment, numbering 550 men, disembarked in Port-au-Prince.[56] Caperton had his reinforcements, which he immediately set to work in seizing the barracks Casserne Dessalines, Fort National, and eight other barracks in Port-au-Prince. The marines captured 3000 rifles and 4 million cartridges and paid Haitian soldiers two dollars apiece to go home.[57]

These new marines found themselves little better prepared than those who had landed in July for Haiti or their assignments. Captain William P. Upshur recalled that officers knew so little about Haiti, despite their study of all available materials on the country, that the main information gathered was on Haitians' supposed mastery of "Voodoo" poisoning. This rumor, passed down to the enlisted men, caused one marine water collection detail to grab a Haitian and force him to drink water from a fountain "to see if he died." In the responsible sergeant's words: "we waited half an hour and he wasn't dead so I concluded the water would be all right to make coffee of for the Marines."[58] Among enlisted personnel, the cultural and intelligence preparation was even more

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[55] William B. Caperton to Secretary of the Navy, August 3, 1915, in *Annual Report of the Navy Department, 1920* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 252.

[56] *Annual Report of the Navy Department, 1915* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1916), 763; Harry Alanson Ellsworth, *One Hundred Eighty Landings of United States Marines, 1800-1934: A Brief History in Two Parts* (Washington, D.C.: Marine Corps Historical Section, 1934), 90; and Robert Debs Heinl and Nancy Gordon Heinl, *Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People, 1492-1995* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005), 385.

[57] Heinl and Heinl, *Written in Blood*, 385; and Caperton to Secretary of the Navy, August 5, 1915, *Annual Report of the Navy Department, 1920*, 253.

[58] Harold H. Utley, "The Tactics and Techniques of Small Wars: Part II – Intelligence," *Marine Corps Gazette*, 18, no. 2 (1933), 44. Lieutenant Adolph Miller contemporary diary noted a similar warning about Haitian poison. Mary

dismal. According to Private Faustin Wirkus, most of the marines – Wirkus included – did not even know Haiti was in the Caribbean before they landed there.[59]

The political situation, particularly the range of responses Haitians offered occupying marines, also perplexed U.S. personnel. While Radm. Caperton and Cpt. Beach had some prior experience engaging with Haitian elite politics, their expertise did not reach farther down the chain of command. Lieutenant Adolph Miller, who arrived in Haiti on August 4, wrote: "The natives all cheered and seemed very glad to see us, although quite a number of brickbats were heaved at us from dark places."[60] In response to a riot a few days later, Miller noted that "the Haitians are a highly excitable people and fly off the handle at a moment's notice."[61]

Wirkus, who arrived on August 15, described a quite different atmosphere: "We were not welcome. We could feel it as distinctly as we could smell the rot along the gutters… There was not a smile in sight. The opaque eyes in the black faces were not hostile. They were not friendly. They seemed as indifferent as the lenses of cameras."[62] These lines enliven almost every history of the occupation, but most historians miss Wirkus's later clarification, informed by fifteen years of service in Haiti, that "they were not indifferent. They were merely on the alert to find out where they stood with us."[63] Hans Schmidt argues that Haitians frequently threw their feces from their

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Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 79-80.

[59] Faustin Wirkus and Taney Dudley, *The White King of Gonave* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran, & Co., 1931), 13.

[60] Renda, *Taking Haiti*, 83.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Wirkus and Dudley, *White King*, 17.

[63] Wirkus, despite the sensational title of his autobiography, is one of the most thoughtful U.S. chroniclers of the occupation. He learned Kreyòl and lived among Haitians for years as an officer in the U.S.-established Haitian Gendarmerie. Wirkus and Dudley, *White King*, 20. Mary Renda is the rare historian who read through to this second quotation. Renda*, Taking Haiti*, 84-85.

windows onto passing marine patrols as a form of resistance, but this reading of Wirkus's book is tenuous. Wirkus mentions the danger of falling sewage, but he does not suggest malice. Accidental accidents seem more likely in a city with narrow streets and no sewer system.[64] Nevertheless, the size and passion of the demonstrations in early August indicate the fierce opposition of many Haitians to U.S. occupation. The marines lacked the context to understand Haitians' reactions to their presence. They knew little of the memory of French slavery, the intricate conflicts between the *Banque Nationale*, Davilmar Théodore and Guillaume Sam, or the popularity of Rosalvo Bobo. The success of the initial occupation was not the result of a culturally competent force or thorough intelligence preparation.

Consolidation of the Occupation

August 6 marked the decisive day of the occupation's first weeks. Dr. Bobo arrived with 26 of his generals in train to negotiate with Caperton over Haiti's future.[65] Bobo was still hopeful for a peaceful settlement, so when Caperton ordered all *cacos* to disarm and leave Port-au-Prince by 11 a.m. the same day, Bobo cooperated. Cpt. Beach told him that disarmament was a necessary condition to be a presidential candidate, so the doctor helpfully wrote his generals: "Lead your men into town and surrender your arms to the American Captain. Carry out my orders without

[64] Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 68; and Wirkus and Dudley, *White King*,

[65] William B. Caperton, "History of Flag Career of Rear Admiral W.B. Caperton, Commencing January 5, 1915," *Naval History and Heritage Command*, accessed April 3, 2023, https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/h/history-of-flag-career-of-rear-admiral-w-b-caperton.html, 64.

hesitation or restrictions in the name of our threatened country, which we should save at any cost and sacrifice."[66]

On shore, the people of Port-au-Prince turned out in the thousands to welcome Bobo to their city. *Cacos* and civilians alike flooded the streets, worrying the marines tasked with disarming Haitian forces in the city.[67] At 11 a.m., the marines began arresting all *cacos* remaining in the capital. Some *cacos* attempted to escape by fleeing into the gathering crowds. A few of their comrades in the crowd retrieved their hidden arms caches and fired at the marines.[68] The marines shot back, killed two escaping prisoners, and wounded several civilians.[69] The next day, a marine patrol captured a recalcitrant former Bobo commander and eleven of his men who had burned plantations north of the capital.[70]

Dr. Bobo's subsequent meeting with Caperton on August 8, however, went poorly when Caperton asked if Bobo would support the winner of the presidential election, even if he lost. According to Caperton's later testimony, Bobo shouted: "No one is fit to be president but me; there is no patriotism in Haiti to be compared with mine; the Haitians love no one as they love me."[71]

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[66] It should be noted that the town mentioned was not Port-au-Prince but the northern city of Cap Haïtien (often called Le Cap), whence much of Bobo's army originated. Further, Bobo's generals in the north declined his order to disarm. Those under the guns of marines in the capital had less choice. Ibid, 65.

[67] McPherson, *The Invaded*, 27; and Healy, *Gunboat Diplomacy*, 93.

[68] Caperton, "History of Flag Career," 66; McPherson, *The Invaded*, 27; and Renda, *Taking Haiti*, 83.

[69] Healy, *Gunboat Diplomacy*, 93; "Haitian Casualties since the Occupation of Haiti by the U.S. Marines," 1920, Haiti Reference Collection Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division; and Caperton to Secretary of the Navy, August 6, 1915, *Annual Report of the Navy Department, 1920*, 254.

[70] George Barnett, "Report on Affairs in the Republic of Haiti, June 1915 to June 30, 1920," 255; and Caperton, "History of Flag Career," 255.

[71] McPherson, *The Invaded*, 27. Caperton's account at the time was more measured. Bobo allegedly stated that he "would not assist Dartiguenave's government nor accept him if elected." Caperton to Secretary of the Navy, August 10, 1915, *Annual Report of the Navy Department, 1920*, 255.

Although Beach and Caperton respected Dr. Bobo's "patriotism, honor, and intellect," his independent attitude and hostility to liberal norms disturbed them so greatly Beach even questioned Bobo's sanity.[72] They resolved to find an alternative candidate.

Despite the tense relationship with the public, the thousand marines in Port-au-Prince had managed to decommission the Haitian army in the city, confiscate thousands of arms, and disperse the now mostly unarmed *cacos* to the outskirts without suffering one casualty from enemy action. Caperton's policy of placating Bobo, the Committee of Public Safety, and the commanders of the Haitian army had paid off in spades.[73] The Haitian elite's temporary paralysis prevented their forces from offering any resistance to the occupation until after the capital had been cleared and a full regiment of U.S. marines had been landed.

With Port-au-Prince cleared of military threats, Radm. Caperton turned his attention to the establishment of a pliant Haitian government. He had begun a search for presidential candidates before August 8, but his initial three choices (J.N. Léger, Solon Menos, and F.D. Légitime) all refused the offer. Léger's response was prophetic: "I am for Haiti, not for the United States; Haiti's president will have to accept directions and orders from the United States and I propose to keep myself in a position where I will be able to defend Haiti's interests."[74]

With Léger, Menos, and Légitime all out of the running, the only two viable candidates were Bobo and Philippe Sudre Dartiguenave, president of the Haitian Senate. Dartiguenave

[72] Of course, refusal to accept U.S. selection of one's nation's president does not constitute insanity. Moreover, Bobo's cautious maneuvering throughout the presidential election – and his subsequent refusal to join the *caco* resistance to U.S. occupation – suggests a more calculating approach than his demeanor portrayed. Caperton to Secretary of the Navy, August 5, 1915; and Healy, *Gunboat Diplomacy*, 94.

[73] I discuss the northern commanders of the Haitian army (Probus Blot and Darius Bourand) later. Senior Sam officials in Port-au-Prince were in no position to command soldiers after the disastrous events of July 28.

[74] Léger and Menos had both served as Haiti's minister to the U.S., seemingly now a key qualification for the presidency. Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 72; and Dubois, *Haiti*, 217.

promised to allow customs receivership, the cession of Môle St. Nicholas, a legal U.S. right to intervene. He further promised concessions to the *Banque Nationale* and the National Railroad.[75] The Navy sent Caperton a telegram stating simply: "The election of Dartiguenave is preferred by United States."[76] Such an official statement was nearly tantamount to election, but Dartiguenave could not take office until officially elected by the National Assembly on August 12.

The Committee of Public Safety made one final attempt to install Bobo as president, but Caperton's maneuvers of the last two weeks had defanged their capabilities. Bobo's supporters rioted on August 10-11, shouting "À bas les deputes! Vive Bobo."[77] Meanwhile, the Committee's *cacos* seized the telegram office and tried to dissolve Congress. Available forces, however, were few and poorly armed.[78] Marines soon dispersed the *cacos*, and Cpt. Beach threatened to execute Committee members if the election were disrupted. Bobo and his allies were outraged, but Committee member Charles Delva's reply to Beach reflected the pragmatism of the Port-au-Prince elite: "You win."[79] Caperton had outmaneuvered the Committee of Public Safety, and its members were unwilling to die for Bobo's election campaign.

On August 12, Congress elected Dartiguenave president without incident. Ninety-four deputies and senators voted for Dartiguenave and sixteen for Bobo. Thirty-one cast their ballots

[75] Ironically, the Môle St. Nicholas, which loomed so large in U.S.-Haiti relations up to this point, would fade into insignificance. With Guantanámo Bay and the rest of Haiti occupied, the Môle offered little to the U.S. or any foreign navy. Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 73; and Caperton to Secretary of the Navy, August 7, 1915, 255.

[76] Joseph Daniels to Caperton, August 9, 1915, 255.

[77] Heinl and Heinl, *Written in Blood*, 388.

[78] Healy, *Gunboat Diplomacy*, 109-111; and Caperton to Secretary of the Navy, August 11, 1915, 256.

[79] Healy, *Gunboat Diplomacy*, 111.

for other candidates.[80] Caperton's claim that "the Haitians themselves, without outside influence, had made [Dartiguenave] their president" was difficult to believe.[81] Congress voted for Dartiguenave in a building surrounded by 100 marines after listening to instructions from Beach that they would be allowed to vote only if they accepted customs receivership and financial surveillance and elected someone "whose abilities and dispositions give assurances of putting an end to factional disorders."[82] Marines escorted Dartiguenave to his inauguration, where he literally held Beach's hand during the ceremony.[83] Reluctant imperialist and Secretary of the Navy Joseph Daniels was more apt than Caperton in his assessment that Dartiguenave "was undoubtedly not the choice of the mass of the Haitian people but only of those who felt that intervention by America was essential."[84] But Haiti finally had a U.S.-friendly government, and the installation of functioning administration could begin at last.

Southern Haiti Occupied

The August 15 arrival of seven companies of the First Marine Regiment along with the headquarters of the First Marine Brigade under Colonel Littleton W.T. Waller gave the U.S. the

[80] Heinl and Heinl, *Written in Blood*, 389-390. Caperton reported only three votes for Bobo, but he counted only 116 votes of the 141 members of Congress. Since only those members of Congress whose credentials Dartiguenave had signed were allowed into the chamber, perhaps some of Dartiguenave's opponents were not permitted to vote. The sources I have are unable to fully resolve the discrepancy. Caperton to Secretary of the Navy, August 12, 1915, 256; McPherson, *The Invaded*, 29; and Healy, *Gunboat Diplomacy*, 113.

[81] Langley, *Banana Wars*, 132.

[82] Healy, *Gunboat Diplomacy*, 109-111.

[83] McPherson, *The Invaded*, 28.

[84] Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 74.

strength it needed to expand occupation beyond Port-au-Prince.[85] Waller has been mentioned previously as the perpetrator of atrocities in Samar and commander of the marine brigade of the Army of Cuban Pacification. By now one of the Marine Corps's most experienced practitioners of small wars, Waller had since commanded a marine brigade during the occupation of Veracruz.[86] Compared to his commander, Radm. Caperton, Waller was less sympathetic to both diplomacy and Haitians, whom he routinely derided in racial terms in his personal correspondence.[87] Accompanying Waller was his longtime mentee, Major Smedley D. Butler, mentioned earlier as a major figure in the Nicaraguan interventions of 1910 and 1912. Butler too was a veteran of numerous small wars, most recently under Waller in Veracruz, where Butler won a Congressional Medal of Honor.[88] 2000 marines under the command of their service's most experienced small warriors did not yet mean open war but enabled more direct control of the coast and greater coercion against Bobo's remaining generals.[89]

Now that he had troops to spare from the policing and defense of Port-au-Prince, Waller dispatched Butler's battalion (of about 350 men) to Le Cap and a company (about 80 men) to

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[85] *Annual Report of the Navy Department, 1915*, 763; and Ellsworth, *One Hundred Eighty Landings of United States Marines*, 90.

[86] Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1980), 173-174.

[87] Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 79.

[88] Butler attempted to return the medal when it was awarded in February 1916 on the grounds that he could "not remember a single action, or in fact any collection of actions, of [his] that in the slightest degree warranted such a decoration." He further argued that the awarding of 55 Medals of Honor for a minor engagement (including 37 to officers) was "an unutterably foul perversion of Our Country's greatest gift." Smedley Butler to Maud Butler, February 21, 1916 in Venzon, *Smedley Darlington Butler*, 163. Secretary Daniels ordered Butler to keep the medal. Hans Schmidt, *Maverick Marine: General Smedley D. Butler and the Contradictions of American Military History* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1987), 72-73.

[89] Keith B. Bickel, *Mars Learning: The Marine Corps' Development of Small Wars Doctrine, 1915-1940*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001), 70; and James H. McCrocklin, *Garde D'Haiti, 1915-1934: Twenty Years of Organization and Training by the United States Marine Corps* (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1956), 29.

Léogâne, just west of the capital.[90] On August 18, the State Department ordered Caperton to take control of the customs houses of Haiti's ten largest ports: Jacmel, Les Cayes, Jérémie, Miragoâne, Petit-Goâve, Port-au-Prince, St. Marc, Gonaïves, Port-de-Paix, and Cap Haïtien.[91] From then until September 16, 1915, marine companies landed at and occupied each of these ports.[92] Despite these reinforcements, Radm. Caperton felt his forces, however superior to the poorly armed and trained *cacos*, insufficient for the task of occupying the principal population centers of a country of 2 million people. Caperton wanted another regiment, but this request was denied.[93] To assist in his expanded mission, however, the First Brigade's Artillery Battalion, outfitted with infantry equipment, embarked for Haiti August 26, arriving in Port-au-Prince on August 31.[94] The pacification of Haiti would be a comparatively barebones affair; whereas the U.S. Army sent one soldier to Luzon in 1899 for every 35 Filipinos, the Marine Corps sent one marine to Haiti in 1915 for every 2000 Haitians.[95]

With most *cacos* in Port-au-Prince disarmed and few *cacos* active outside Dr. Bobo's bases of support in the capital and north, there was little organized resistance to the occupation of Haiti's

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[90] Waller to Major General George Barnett, August 16, 1915, in *Report of the Navy Department, 1920*, 256-257.

[91] Remarkably, Môle St. Nicholas failed to make the list. With control of the whole country – and ability to deny any of it to potential adversaries – the economically insignificant port became strategically unimportant, whatever its qualifications for coaling warships. With Guantánamo Bay to support Caribbean operations and Port-au-Prince to supply ships around Haiti, the U.S. now had no need for another naval base. Robert Lansing to Joseph Daniels, August 18, 1915, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915* File No. 838.51/500a, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1915/d606. The manpower requirements of manning the seized customs houses severely depleted the U.S. Navy's Pay Corps, which struggled to provide an officer for each port in 72 hours. *Annual Report of the Navy Department, 1916*, 353.

[92] *Annual Report of the Navy Department, 1920*, 257-261.

[93] Healy, *Gunboat Diplomacy*, 139-140.

[94] *Annual Report of the Navy Department, 1915*, 763.

[95] Bickel, *Mars Learning*, 76.

coastline. Despite U.S. reports asserting that marines "landed without opposition," however, occupying forces had to navigate uncertain local politics. Caperton's description of Léogâne, for instance, as "occupied without resistance," masks a more complicated process of accommodation to foreign occupation.[96] Léogâne was commanded by division general Charlemagne Péralte, a former supporter of Vilbrun Sam who had defected to the Committee of Public Safety after Sam murdered one of his relatives in the July 27 prison massacre. Sam had rewarded Péralte's leadership of 1500 *cacos* in his capture of Port-au-Prince from Davilmar Théodore with command of a regiment and the administration of the district of Léogâne.[97] But on July 29, 1915, Péralte placed himself under the Committee of Public Safety and announced himself "waiting for your instructions."[98] When the marine company arrived by railroad, Péralte refused to let them leave the railway station without authorization from his president. Dartiguenave soon ordered Péralte to allow the U.S. occupation and then replaced him with a less defiant general. Telling his soldiers, "You all accept working with the Americans. I never will," Péralte returned home.[99]

Charlemagne Péralte and the other Haitian commanders who opposed U.S. intervention found themselves in a difficult position after August 15. Sam had appointed many of them after his rise to power, and many of these had more to fear from Bobo's revolution than U.S. occupation.

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[96] Caperton to Secretary of the Navy, August 17, 1915, in *Annual Report of the Navy Department, 1920*, 257.

[97] Georges Michel, *Charlemagne Péralte and the First American Occupation of Haiti*, trans. Douglas Henry Daniels (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 1996), 11.

[98] Charlemagne Péralte to the Committee of Public Safety, July 29, 1915, *Le Nouvelliste*, July 31, 1915; and Yveline Alexis, *Haiti Fights Back: The Life and Legacy of Charlemagne Péralte* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2021), 44.

[99] According to some versions of the story, Péralte had his soldiers bury their rifles before leaving. Given the generous rewards soon paid for handing in firearms and the low morale of conscripted Haitian regular soldiers, it is likely that most of these were confiscated anyway. Michel, *Charlemagne Péralte*, 15-16; and Dubois, *Haiti*, 223-224.

Those who had supported Rosalvo Bobo and his Committee of Public Safety now lacked the coordination and legitimacy of that national political movement. Péralte and his peers answered to a government installed by U.S. weapons, and each district commander possessed only a few hundred poorly armed soldiers who had not volunteered to wage war against a great power. Commanders in the south of Haiti faced the additional obstacle of the limited support in the region for Bobo's former candidacy. Dartiguenave was the first southerner to become president in 40 years, while Bobo's supporters championed him as "favorite of all the North."[100] As Haitian oral tradition vindicates Charlemagne Péralte's 1915 concession to the U.S., "wood cannot fight with iron."[101] Under the conditions in the geographically isolated southern ports, armed resistance was suicidal.

Despite his commitment to Haitian nationalism, Péralte was certainly no suicidal fanatic. In fact, the picture that emerges of his life before is one of a shrewd political actor. Péralte leveraged his family connections and military talents to forge a complex sequence of alliances with more powerful politicians, rising from diplomatic representative to a small town in the Dominican Republic in 1908 to command over a key district and garrison by 1915.[102] Moreover, Péralte, notwithstanding his outrage at U.S. violations of his nation's sovereignty and pledges that "I will raise up the people and send the Americans home," remained concerned with more material affairs.[103] He returned to his hometown of Hinche, in Haiti's Central Plateau, where he owned a

[100] Heinl and Heinl, *Written in Blood*, 391; and McPherson, *The Invaded*, 27.

[101] Alexis, *Haiti Fights Back*, 47.

[102] Ibid, 32-33.

[103] Michel, *Charlemagne Péralte*, 17.

large farm, mills, distilleries, and livestock.[104] Rather than penning provocative editorials, Péralte's letters to the Port-au-Prince *Nouvelliste* announced that his June paycheck had been lost and requested replacement.[105] Péralte's modest personal concerns should not discredit his courage and commitment to Haiti, which he would demonstrate during his 1918 revolt, but they do shed light on the motivations of Haitian military leadership in August 1915. Any commander interested in his survival, political power, or property faced a clear choice that month: disarm his soldiers and welcome occupation or fight an isolated campaign against 2000 trained and experienced marines. Charlemagne Péralte, whose ideological commitments up to this point reflected only a moderate nationalism, chose the former.[106] The vast majority of Péralte's colleagues made the same choice with less hesitation.

With Haiti's army standing down, nonviolent resistance in the south was widespread but ineffective, and violent resistance was sparse and disorganized. In Jérémie, a mid-sized southern port, Capt. Frederic Wise made an unarmed personal reconnaissance to ensure the cooperation of the district chief, who told Wise he resented the Haitian soldiers sent from the capital and would be happy to cooperate in disarming them. Wise's company captured the town without a shot fired. Writing fifteen years later, Wise recollected that the residents of Jérémie had no idea what to expect

[104] Ibid, 5.

[105] Charlemagne Péralte, *Le Nouvelliste*, September 6, 7, and 8, 1915.

[106] In his endorsement of Dr. Bobo's presidential candidacy, Péralte cited the most violent and sacrificial verses in the *Marseillaise* and Swiss national anthem, but tempered his opposition to occupation with the acknowledgement "that, to our shame, [America] has come to help us to maintain order and peace among ourselves, without having been invited." Passionate support for a united and independent Haiti is there, but so is a certain resignation to U.S. intervention as the natural consequence of Haiti's internal divisions. Charlemagne Péralte to the National Assembly, August 9, 1915, *Le Nouvelliste*, August 11, 1915.

from the marines.[107] At first, Wise wrote, "they didn't particularly fancy our arrival," despite their opposition to Dr. Rosalvo Bobo and his northern *caco* armies.[108]

While no violence occurred in Jérémie, the marines "encountered passive resistance from the start," including the resignation of the port's entire customs staff.[109] Nevertheless, the marines found a retired customs agent and recruited a new staff. For every Haitian who feared punishment as a collaborator by the next Haitian government, occupying forces were able to find another willing to accept his lucrative position. On September 27, a Haitian nearly decapitated Sgt. Edward Thompson in mistaken retaliation against another marine who had punched him.[110] The local government identified the assailant and assured Wise that he had acted alone, and the marines' abstinence from retaliation assuaged the people of Jérémie's fears. The marines' strict discipline and willingness to make common cause with the civilian administration enabled Wise's company to win the support of the district chief and town mayor, who helped disarm the Haitian garrison and govern the town peacefully.[111] Wise's success in coopting key officials depended on his ability

[107] Frederic May Wise, "The Occupation of a Haitian Town," *Proceedings* 57, no. 12 (Dec. 1931), https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/1931/december/occupation-haitian-town.

[108] Renda, *Taking Haiti*, 84.

[109] McPherson, *The Invaded*, 31; and Wise, "Occupation of a Haitian Town."

[110] Thompson was the only marine killed in southern or central Haiti until 1919. This lone surprise slashing attack was more tactically successful than the skirmishes with hundreds of *cacos* under Gen. Mizaël Codio in 1916 and Benoît Batraville in 1918. As occurred so often in fights between marines and *cacos*, the Jérémie attacker dropped his rifle to attack with a machete. The element of surprise here proved decisive but proved difficult to achieve in pitched battles. Wise, "Occupation of a Haitian Town;" and "List of Officers and Enlisted Men Who Lost Their Lives while Serving in Haiti," 1920, Haiti Reference Collection, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division.

[111] We would expect the mayor, who was skimming substantial sums from the municipal budget and apparently opposed the northerner Bobo and the central government, to have been an easy target for U.S. accommodation. Ibid.

to offer them continued authority and autonomy, which convinced them that cooperating with the U.S. occupation was the best deal available.

Most of the other Haitian ports acceded to U.S. occupation in a manner similar to Léogâne and Jérémie, in which an initial hesitation preceded key figures' acknowledgement of U.S. military superiority and the possibility of accommodation. Strikes, protests, and even sniping at U.S. marines often occurred anyway, but without local – let alone national – leadership, marines suppressed this resistance with ease. By the time Navy Paymaster Fred McMillen arrived in September at Petit-Goâve, a town of 10,000 about twenty miles west of Léogâne, a marine company had disarmed the Haitian army garrison without fighting. Unlike in Jérémie, most of the customs staff continued to work under U.S. supervision – despite an order from Dartiguenave's government forbidding civil servants from accepting orders from U.S. personnel. As in Jérémie, the marines gave the civilian administrators plenty of leeway in performing their duties.[112] McMillen complained of "exasperating delays due to labor troubles, carnival days, and the devastating fevers," but he eventually found willing tradesmen, sailors, and clerical staff.[113] Petty smuggling of salt and rum and the theft of navigational buoys occupied more of McMillen's duties than resistance to U.S. occupation.[114]

The North took slightly more time – and the use of marines in actual combat – but the killing or capture of a few *caco* chiefs: Josaphat Jean-Pierre, Benoît Rameau, and Mizaël Codio

[112] Fred McMillen, "Some Haitian Recollections," *Proceedings* 62, no. 4 (Apr. 1936), https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/1936/april/some-haitian-recollections.

[113] One of McMillen's clerks was apparently sending regular reports to the German Minister to Haiti, but McMillen kept him on "because he was an excellent penman and bookkeeper." Ibid; Renda interprets "carnival days" as the Haitian tradition of *rara*, or musical and theatric protest, which is a convincing explanation. Renda, *Taking Haiti*, 84.

[114] McMillen, "Haitian Recollections."

ended their groups' resistance. These leaders barely had a chance anyway, as the dominant political players all supported disarmament. The few nationalists who fought on alone paid the ultimate price.

National Reaction to Occupation

These acts of resistance received some encouragement from politicians in Port-au-Prince, but the Dartiguenave administration and its agents, whom Caperton had selected for their submissiveness, proved an ineffective foil to U.S. plans. Dartiguenave officially protested the illegal takeover of Haiti's customhouses and issued the aforementioned order for customs personnel to resign rather than take orders from the U.S. Navy, but he secretly asked Caperton to declare martial law.[115] Dartiguenave's opposition was for show. He tried to present an independent persona to the public, but he knew the constituents on whom his position depended most were not Haitian voters but U.S. diplomats. Caperton, who had been contemplating martial law ever since his superiors ordered him to capture Haiti's customhouses, obliged Dartiguenave's request the next day, September 3.[116] Initially limited to Port-au-Prince, Caperton soon expanded martial law to all areas under U.S. control in order "to preserve fundamental human rights."[117] These rights included speedy trial (by military tribunal), freedom of the press (provided the marines did not find any

[115] Healy, *Gunboat Diplomacy*, 149-150.

[116] *Report of the Secretary of the Navy, 1920*, 260; and Healy, *Gunboat Diplomacy*, 150.

[117] Ibid; and Dubois, *Haiti*, 219.

articles "false or incendiary"), and the right to move around Haiti (only if issued an internal passport by marines). They did not include the right to bear arms.[118]

The lack of legal basis for the U.S. usurpation of Haitian governmental authority, exacerbated by the declaration of martial law, convinced U.S. officials that a treaty between the United States and Haiti was necessary to continue the occupation. Dartiguenave negotiated for the least onerous concessions possible, but he had little leverage against the country which had made him president and could remove him from the presidency. Secretary of State Lansing instructed his top diplomat in Haiti to "discreetly and orally impress upon the President elect" that if he refused to sign a treaty, Caperton had the authority to put a different political faction into power or to establish a military government.[119] Negotiations continued slowly, but Dartiguenave was able to convince the American diplomats that he was acting in good faith, only constrained by the constitution, public opinion, and the need for Congressional ratification.[120] After the imposition of martial law, which Dartiguenave "unofficially" believed "greatly strengthened [his] position," and the resignation of the minister of public works and the minister of public affairs, negotiations moved quickly.[121] Haiti's new minister of foreign affairs signed the treaty on September 16, and the U.S. formally recognized the Dartiguenave government the next day.[122]

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[118] Bickel, *Mars Learning*, 79-80 and 85; Dubois, *Haiti*, 219-220. Caperton's proclamation was rote, much of it having been copied directly from the 1914 declaration of martial law at Veracruz. Schmidt, *United States Occupation*, 74.

[119] Secretary of State to Chargé Davis, August 24, 1915, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915* File No. 711.38/24, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1915/d455.

[120] Robert Beale Davis, August 30, 1915, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915* File No. 711.38/27, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1915/d458.

[121] Chargé Davis to Secretary of State, September 4, 1915, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915* File No. 711.38/28, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1915/d460.

[122] Healy, *Gunboat Diplomacy*, 158.

The Haitian-American Treaty, which institutionalized considerable impositions on Haiti's sovereignty, provoked strong opposition from nationalist Haitians. The treaty contained not only the customs receivership and financial surveillance demanded during Dartiguenave's election, but also a U.S. veto on Haitian foreign relations and the replacement of Haiti's military and police forces with an American-officered Gendarmerie.[123] Very likely, Dartiguenave was motivated by his lack of credibility among the Haitian people, who showed their disapproval of his leadership through subtle gestures like boycotting a Catholic service held in thanks for his election. But Dartiguenave signed it, and Haiti became a temporary U.S. protectorate.[124]

[123] "Draft of Treaty Between the United States and Haiti Concerning the Finances, Economic Development and Tranquillity of Haiti," in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915* File No. 711.38/36, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1915/d470.

[124] The usually politically neutral Catholic Church delayed the customary service held for any incoming Haitian president. Further, if we are to believe Dr. Bobo, the crowd at Dartiguenave's inauguration looked on in complete, gloomy silence. McPherson, *The Invaded*, 31.

CHAPTER SIX: NICARAGUA

FREEDOM WAS NOT WON WITH FLOWERS

The last in a long line of U.S. occupations of Latin American nations before the Second World War, the intervention in Nicaragua from 1927-1933 left a lasting mark on that country's history. U.S. Marines landed in Nicaragua during the Constitutionalist War because American property and lives were at risk from civil strife and the possible defeat of the pro-American president. The rebel forces soon laid down their arms except for one general, Augusto Sandino, who began a guerrilla campaign hoping to preserve his nation's honor with his death.

Sandino's unexpected flair for insurgent warfare turned that protest into a war the most powerful nation in the hemisphere could not win. On the other hand, the U.S. Marines approached the war with intelligence and the experience of decades worth of small wars. The Marines' skill in patrolling and in co-opting the support of the mainstream political parties prevented Sandino from winning either. When the Marines withdrew and Sandino disarmed, the Marines' protege Guardia Nacional seized power from the civilian government. The U.S. forgot the lessons it had learned in the occupation of Nicaragua, but Nicaraguans lived with the consequences for decades afterwards.

Nicaragua Background

The United States' practice of intervention into domestic Nicaraguan politics began not in 1927 but with the first U.S. property in the country and intensified with every threat to American profits or lives. Marines first landed in San Juan del Norte to end British harassment of Cornelius Vanderbilt's shipping company in 1853. William Walker, an American soldier of fortune, seized

the presidency in 1856 in an affront to the Nicaraguan nation so traumatizing that the country's two political factions, Liberals and Conservatives, formed a coalition that lasted for thirty years. The presidency of José Santos Zelaya, an anti-American Liberal, upset this peace. U.S. marines landed three times in the first four years of Augusto Sandino's life. Opposing this ever-looming threat would become the life purpose of Sandino (1895-1934), who would become leader of his country's resistance to U.S. occupation from 1927-1933.[1]

The U.S. government criticized Zelaya for encouraging non-American investment, for the corruption rampant in his administration, and his bellicose tendencies. When Zelaya increased tariffs to 30 percent in March 1909, local fruit growers went on strike against the U.S.-owned United Fruit Company. The strike convinced U.S. firms and the moderate Liberal governor of Bluefields, Juan José Estrada, that Zelaya had to go. These companies lent almost $1 million to Estrada through an intermediary, the Conservative politician Adolfo Díaz – then working as a secretary at the U.S.-owned La Luz Mining Company.[2] Estrada's revolt, though well-financed, was unsuccessful until Zelaya executed two American mercenaries, Le Roy Cannon and Leonard Groce. On the grounds of defending American life, President William Howard Taft ordered U.S. Marine Major Smedley D. Butler to seize Bluefields.[3] Butler, officially neutral, informed

[1] Harry Alanson Ellsworth, One Hundred Eighty Landings of United States Marines, 1800-1934: A Brief History in Two Parts (Washington, D.C.: Marine Corps Historical Section, 1934); and Bernard C. Nalty, *The United States Marines in Nicaragua* (Washington, D.C.: Historical Branch, G-3 Division Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1961), 2-4.

[2] Langley, Lester D., and Thomas D. Schoonover, *The Banana Men: American Mercenaries and Entrepreneurs in Central America, 1880-1930* (The University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 71, 81-83, and "An Open Letter to President Herbert Hoover, March 6, 1929," Augusto César Sandino, *Sandino, The Testimony of a Nicaraguan Patriot, 1921-1934*, trans. Robert Edgar. Conrad, comp. Sergio Ramírez (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Pr., 1990), 239.

[3] Butler will appear again in Chapter Five as the most successful field commander in the First Caco War and later commander of Haiti's Gendarmerie. His audacity in 1910 was the beginning of his legendary reputation within the Marine Corps. Langley and Schoonover, *Banana Men*, 85, 88-90.

government troops that, "because their soldiers were poor marksmen and might accidentally hit American citizens," they could attack Estrada's forces only if they left their weapons behind.[4] Within three months Estrada was president. Grateful for American support, he borrowed $15 million from U.S. banks in exchange for ownership of the National Bank of Nicaragua and the National Railroad.[5]

Under Estrada's successor, Adolfo Diaz, Nicaraguan politics became yet more unstable. In 1912, both Liberals and Conservatives opposed to the loan rebelled against Diaz, who called in U.S. marines to protect its own citizens and property. For a time under Maj. Butler, the marine forces maintained an uneasy neutrality while they cleared the railways of western Nicaragua.[6] Soon the U.S. government ordered the marines' mission expanded to suppressing the rebellion and occupying the country until 1925.[7] As a reward for the marines' services, the Bryan-Chamorro Treaty adopted in 1916 gave U.S. control over customs revenues, a canal concession, and basing rights.[8] A series of rigged elections kept Conservatives in power until 1924, when a fair election observed by marines saw a coalition between Conservative President Carlos José Solórzano and Liberal Vice-president Juan Bautista Sacasa take office.[9]

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[4] Musicant, Ivan, *The Banana Wars: A History of United States Military Intervention in Latin America from the Spanish-American War to the Invasion of Panama* (New York: Macmillan, 1991), 141.

[5] Nalty, *United States Marines in Nicaragua*, 6.

[6] Butler's fearless bluffing of superior rebel and government forces won him the enduring sobriquet "Old Gimlet Eye." Hans Schmidt, *Maverick Marine: General Smedley D. Butler and the Contradictions of American Military History* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1987), 48-50.

[7] Ibid, 7-9.

[8] U.S. Congress, Committee on Foreign Affairs, "Conditions in Nicaragua: Message from the President of the United States Transmitting to the Congress of the United States the Conditions and the Action of the Government in the Present Disturbances in Nicaragua," by Calvin Coolidge, 69th Cong., 2d sess. Cong. Doc. 633 (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1927), 7.

[9] Nalty, *United States Marines in Nicaragua*, 11.

Crisis and Constitutional War:

As soon as U.S. marines withdrew from Nicaragua in August 1925, the Conservatives began agitating for unified control of the government under their hegemony.[10] This agitation culminated in a coup d'état against President Carlos José Solórzano in March 1926. The resulting political conflict would bring about the most violent of the U.S. military interventions in Nicaragua. President Calvin Coolidge did not recognize the government of coup leader Emiliano Chamorro, whose accession to the presidency had been too blatantly illegitimate to condone.[11] Knowing that his tenuous position was doomed without U.S. support, Chamorro eventually resigned in favor of Adolfo Diaz, whom the Congress legally appointed and whom Coolidge recognized in November 1926.[12] Unsurprisingly, many Nicaraguans preferred an elected president. Former Liberal Vice-president Dr. Juan Bautista Sacasa organized a rebel Constitutionalist Army under General José María Moncada with the support of Mexico. These Constitutionalists demanded extralegal taxes from U.S. firms and killed an American in Puerto Cabezas, so marines landed at three points along the Atlantic Coast.[13]

Unsatisfied with this limited intervention, Diaz opened a propaganda campaign in Washington. Alleging an alliance between Mexico and international Bolshevism against

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[10] Lars Schoultz, *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy Toward Latin America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 262.

[11] Chamorro was apparently shocked by this decision, marveling that "they had taken the marines away. What was I to think?" Karl Bermann, *Under the Big Stick: Nicaragua and the United States Since 1848* (Boston: South End Press, 1986), 181-185.

[12] Coolidge, "Conditions in Nicaragua," 3-5.

[13] Nalty, *United States Marines in Nicaragua*, 13.

Nicaragua, Diaz and his allies demanded U.S. military defense of his regime.[14] A new chapter of Nicaraguan history opened when on January 10, 1927, President Coolidge transmitted to Congress a message approving Diaz's request for American military support. Coolidge cited the pleas of U.S. citizens, U.S. property, investment in Nicaragua's debt, Nicaragua's exclusive concession of the right to build a transisthmian canal to the U.S., and evidence of Mexican support for Sacasa as the justification for "a very definite and special interest in the maintenance of order and good government in Nicaragua."[15]

The same day as Coolidge's speech, 2000 marines occupied every major city in Nicaragua. Backed by this force, former Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson negotiated a basis for peace with President Diaz. The Stimson-Diaz plan ensured fair elections in 1928 supervised by U.S. forces, amnesty for all combatants, universal disarmament, Liberal representation in the cabinet, and the return of all property confiscated during the Constitutionalist War. General Moncada accepted this agreement as the Treaty of Tipitapa against Dr. Sacasa's will on May 4, 1927.[16] Following the treaty's signing, the belligerents surrendered 11,600 rifles, 303 machine guns, and 5.5 million cartridges, leaving the U.S. marines as the only armed force of any importance in the country.[17] Only two political actors resisted this settlement: Dr. Sacasa, who refused a cabinet position and

[14] Bermann, *Under the Big Stick*, 188.

[15] Coolidge, "Conditions in Nicaragua," 6-9.

[16] Nalty, *United States Marines in Nicaragua*, 14-16.

[17] The number of arms surrendered may be higher. Macak believes that these numbers apply only to Liberal armaments, but regardless of the precise totals, the large scale of the disarmament is significant. United States Department of State, *A Brief History of the Relations between the United States and Nicaragua: 1909-1928* (Washington: U.S. Gov. Print. Off., 1928), 53, and Lt Col Richard J. Macak, Jr, USMC, "Lessons From Yesterday's Operations Short of War: Nicaragua and the Small Wars Manual," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Vol. 80, no.11 (November 1996), 60-61.

fled the country, and Augusto Sandino, by this time a Constitutionalist general, who withdrew to Nueva Segovia with twenty-one soldiers to resist the American invaders.[18]

Sandino's Rebellion

When the marines landed, of the Constitutionalist forces' military leadership Sandino alone was willing to die in a poignant protest against U.S. imperialism. The immediate spark for Sandino's defection from the mainstream Constitutionalists was General Moncada's failure to keep his promise to consult his commanders before agreeing to any peace terms.[19] Sandino took this oversight as evidence that Moncada sold Nicaraguan freedom for personal gain, either in the form of money or promise of the presidency.[20] In May, Sandino struck out towards the northern department of Nueva Segovia, where rugged terrain protected him from immediate capture. It is clear that at this point, Sandino had no hope that he would actually defeat the 'pirate' marines. Accompanied by only 21 cavalrymen, Sandino told his father that he would try to emulate General Benjamín Zeledón, a Liberal who died fighting the marines in the 1912 uprising against President Diaz.[21] Even six months after his rebellion began, Sandino believed that "it was preferable to maintain our protest for as long as possible."[22]

[18] U.S. Department of State, A *Brief History*, 53, and Sandino, "The Origins of Armed Resistance Begun on May 4, 1927: Message to Gabriela Mistral," *Sandino*, 64.

[19] Sandino, "Origins of Armed Resistance," *Sandino*, 59-60.

[20] Sandino, "Letter to Froylán Turcios, March 14, 1928," *Sandino*, 188.

[21] Sandino so strongly identified with Zeledón that he dated his letters by "Year of the Anti-Imperialist Struggle in Nicaragua," beginning with Zeledón's 1912 rebellion. Sandino, "Origins of Armed Resistance," *Sandino*, 63-64.

[22] Sandino, "El Chipotón, or the Siege of El Chipote, 1927-1928," *Sandino*, 162.

Deeply pessimistic about Nicaragua's immediate future, Sandino believed that only uncompromising and violent resistance would begin the process of freeing Nicaragua. Writing to a Liberal colonel, Sandino declaimed: "Freedom is not won with flowers! It is with bullets that we must drive the enemy from power! The revolution is synonymous with purification!"[23] Sandino's justification was partly historical and partly on principle. He looked to the Pacific, where "the United States promised to give the Philippines their independence; they are still a subject people."[24] Those who agreed with him, Sandino considered "puritanical and honorable Liberals." Those who disagreed were "chicken Liberals (or eunuchs)" or "sell-outs of their country, in other words, Conservatives."[25] Only the unrelenting efforts of the first group could maintain Nicaragua's honor and sovereignty, even though they would likely lose the first round against the Colossus of the North.

Sandino's rebellion was nationalist, but Sandino was also the lone politician in Nicaragua to espouse a genuinely populist political program on behalf of the country's workers and peasants. Both the Liberals and Conservatives were regional parties representing different factions of the political elite. Liberals were developmentalist and skeptical of U.S. investment. Conservatives were friendlier to U.S. business and loans. Neither was a workers' or peasants' party. Sandino was different. He robbed the American-owned San Albino gold mine in the summer of 1927 and left a manifesto declaring that "I desire only the redemption of the working class."[26] While never as

[23] Sandino, "Letter to Colonel Félix Pedro Zeledón, October 21, 1927," *Sandino*, 116.

[24] Sandino, "Sandino in the Journal Articles of Beals, February-March 1928," *Sandino*, 179.

[25] General Sandino's political views are difficult to pin down for two reasons: he tended to exaggerate to great rhetorical effect but less accuracy, particularly in his public declarations, and his views contradicted each other frequently. This letter is perhaps the purest distillation of Sandino's early beliefs, though when some Conservatives began to oppose the occupation, Sandino's views towards them would soften. Sandino, "Letter to Dr. D. Castillo, August 26, 1927," *Sandino*, 91.

[26] Sandino, "Manifesto to Nicaraguan Compatriots, circa July 14, 1927," *Sandino*, 80-81.

integral to his rebellion as nationalist demands for sovereignty, as a condition of his surrender Sandino demanded that his country pass protective labor laws and defend the people against large businesses.[27] After the Treaty of Tipitapa and disillusioned with a politician class they saw as fundamentally illegitimate and opposed to the interests of most Nicaraguans, Sandino and his followers adopted a series of populist and anti-elite ideologies.

Inspired by their enthusiastic defiance, Sandino's army undertook an insurgency that far surpassed their own expectations and that ended only after the marines withdrew from Nicaragua forever. The first battle of the war, at Ocotal, was also the largest. About 500 of Sandino's men, now organized into the Ejército Defensor de la Soberanía Nacional de Nicaragua (EDSN), surrounded the USMC garrison there in a bloody night attack. In the morning marine bombers under the command of Maj. Ross Rowell launched history's first ever organized dive bombing attack and scattered the EDSN forces with heavy losses.[28]

Following the attack on Ocotal, Marine Maj. Oliver Floyd and 1st Lt. George O'Shea launched aggressive patrols across Nueva Segovia in search of Sandino's suddenly vanished column. They failed to make contact until October 9, when O'Shea's patrol was ambushed by 400 EDSN fighters while trying to rescue a crashed aircrew. Only adept maneuvering saved O'Shea from annihilation.[29] This engagement revealed the location of Sandino's base at El Chipote, and two columns converged on the EDSN. For the first time, a substantial contingent of Guardia

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[27] Sandino, "Proposals for an Agreement with José María Moncada, January 6, 1929," *Sandino*, 221-225.

[28] Captain G.D. Hatfield, "Attack on Ocotal, July 27, 1927," Accessed April 21, 2023, from http://www.sandinorebellion.com/PCDocs/1927/PC270720-Hatfield.html.

[29] Nalty, *United States Marines in Nicaragua*, 17-19 and First Lieutenant G.J. O'Shea, "Engagement with the Enemy at Sapotillal, Nueva Segovia, 9 October, 1927," Accessed April 21, 2023, from http://www.sandinorebellion.com/PCDocs/1927/PC271012-OShea.html.

Nacional (GN) accompanied the marines. The GN was the paramilitary national constabulary which the marines began organizing in the early stages of the occupation. At first a subordinate force commanded by marine officers and sergeants, the GN became the primary military force in the country by 1931.[30] This first expedition, however, did not go well. Sandino successfully used his position between the two enemy columns to strike each in turn, avoiding pitched battles but ambushing and harassing his opponents. When the two columns finally linked up, Sandino changed tactics and surrounded them both in the town of Quilali. A heroic effort by marine aviator Christian Schilt, who repeatedly landed on Quilali's short main street under fire and without functioning breaks, saved many lives, but the expedition retreated in failure.[31] Rowell's aviation squadron finally dislodged Sandino from his El Chipote stronghold, but the now wily guerrilla slipped away towards the Atlantic Coast.[32]

The momentum of the war reversed when Capt. Merritt Edson forced Sandino back into Nueva Segovia through a series of patrols along the Rio Coco border with Honduras. These patrols from April-August 1928 became legendary within the Corps for the skill Edson displayed commanding an independent light infantry patrol. A complicated series of maneuvers by marine units south of Edson blocked Sandino's access to the Atlantic Coast while Edson himself raced around Sandino's northern flank on canoes propelled by sympathetic Miskito rowers. Sandino

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[30] U.S. Congress, House Subcommittee on Navy Department Appropriations, *Navy Appropriation Bill for 1933*. 72nd Cong., 1st sess. Cong. (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off.), 1932, 109-113, and Nalty, *United States Marines in Nicaragua*, 21.

[31] Schilt won the Medal of Honor for his extraordinary heroism in this episode. Nalty, *United States Marines in Nicaragua*, 21 and "Christian F. Schilt," Arlington National Cemetery, Accessed April 21, 2023, https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Explore/Notable-Graves/Medal-of-Honor-Recipients/Second-Nicaraguan-Campaign-MoH-recipients/Christian-F-Schilt.

[32] B-2, 2nd Brigade, "B-2 Report, 17 Jan. 1928, 43A/3," Accessed April 21, 2023 from http://www.sandinorebellion.com/HomePages/airwar.html.

barely escaped across the Bocay River and had to retreat towards his home territory of Nueva Segovia.[33]

After this point, the war settled down into a rhythm of patrolling, ambushing, and aerial bombing, punctuated by an election every four years and by the gradual withdrawal of marine forces. Sandino tried once more to campaign in the east and center of Nicaragua, but marine bombing and a competent GN response forced him back into the northern strip of land in which he was so successful.[34] Sandino himself spent almost a year in Mexico soliciting weapons and funds but returned to battle disappointed.[35] The Mexican government had lent him $5000 and shipped some Thompson submachine guns and ammunition to his army, yet this gesture was insufficient to change the GN's superiority in funding and firepower.[36]

The elections too dispirited the EDSN, as vast deployments of marine and GN detachments (5700 USMC and 1900 GN personnel in 1928) guarded every polling station in the country from EDSN disruption and electoral fraud alike.[37] General Moncada won the 1928 election, and Dr. Sacasa won the 1932 one under similar circumstances. In the final months of Moncada's term, Capt. Lewis Puller, nicknamed the "Tiger of the Mountains," proved the worth of the GN in a series of patrols deep in the jungles of the Rio Coco basin and along a new rail line to El Sauce.

[33] Nalty, *United States Marines in Nicaragua*, 24-25, and Brooks, "U.S. Marines and Miskito Indians," 67.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Nalty, *United States Marines in Nicaragua*, 28.

[36] Sandino, "Letter to Pedro José Zepeda, January 25, 1930" and "Letter to Pedro José Zepeda, July 21, 1930," *Sandino*, 296, 341.

[37] U.S. Congress, House Subcommittee on Navy Department Appropriations, *Navy Appropriation Bill for 1930.* 70th Cong., 2nd sess. Cong. (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off.), 1929.

Losing only a handful of men, Puller's GN company killed dozens of EDSN guerrillas and threw Sandino decisively on the defensive.[38]

After six years of bitter guerrilla warfare, the whole conflict ended in an anticlimactic draw. When Dr. Sacasa became President on January 1, 1933, the last marines in the GN withdrew, and Sandino made peace on February 2 of that year. The terms of peace honored the patriotism of General Sandino but made no substantial policy concessions.[39] As long as marines occupied Nicaragua, neither they nor the EDSN were able to achieve victory, though both factions achieved some of their goals. The U.S. established a friendly government under Dr. Sacasa, now reconciled to U.S. interests, and Sandino achieved a withdrawal of U.S. troops he never expected to live long enough to see. At the time, what was remarkable was that a small band of patriotic peasants from a poor country declared war on the U.S. and didn't lose. Looking back on the U.S. unsuccessful legacy of counterinsurgency in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, what is remarkable is that a single marine brigade achieved more than 500,000 soldiers could in Vietnam. Both sides fought with admirable bravery and intelligence in a type of conflict still in its infancy and under gruelling conditions.

The war ended in a draw because both Sandino and the U.S. understood that insurgencies are won or lost based on the political support of the populace. The people of the northern departments supported Sandino because he was certain never to harm them and because they feared the marines. Sandino's first order when he entered a town was for his soldiers not to touch anything that didn't belong to them on penalty of death. And his guerrillas were disciplined enough to

[38] Nalty, *United States Marines in Nicaragua*, 28, 33.

[39] S. Calderón Ramírez, Pedro José Zepeda, H. Portocarrero, D. Stadthagen, Crisanto Sacasa, A. C. Sandino, and Juan B. Sacasa, "The Treaty of Peace," *Sandino*, 440-442.

obey.[40] The result was that the marines operated in hostile territory and could gather no human intelligence while Sandino enjoyed whatever supplies the local farmers could afford.[41] The brutality of the fighting in the northern departments never endeared the marines or Guardia to the people there, and as a result, those forces could never stamp out the rebellion.[42]

Outside Nueva Segovia and Jinotega, however, the marines' political activities were more successful. The Treaty of Tipitapa established a brilliant beginning to the campaign because it made both Liberals and Conservatives dependent on the good graces of the U.S. government. The Liberals, being a majority of the population, needed U.S. marines to prevent President Díaz from rigging the 1928 election, while the Conservatives needed the U.S. to defend their administration from Sandino.[43] The best marine officers kept this in mind throughout the war. Rowell took extraordinary steps to avoid civilian casualties. In February 1928 he even abandoned an opportunity to strafe Sandino himself because there were civilians nearby.[44] Edson, meanwhile, exploited the divisions between the Spanish-speaking nationalist EDSN and the Miskito- or English Creole-speaking people on the Atlantic Coast. His hard work forging alliances with the inhabitants of his area of operations paid off even years later when Miskitos formed an important

[40] Carleton Beals, "Sandino in the Journal Articles of Carleton Beals," 177-178.

[41] 1st Lt. George G. O'Shea, "Patrol to Quilali," September 4, 1927, Accessed April 21, 2023 from http://www.sandinorebellion.com/PCDocs/1927/PC270904-OShea.html.

[42] A blunt attempt to isolate the population from the EDSN by herding the farmers into Philippine-American War-style fortified villages, a program abandoned after just one month in the summer of 1930, likely did not make the marines more popular. A more successful effort to pay potential rebels to build roads in Nueva Segovia fell victim to Great Depression budget cuts in September 1930. Nalty, *United States Marines in Nicaragua*, 29-30.

[43] U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Withdrawal of Armed Forces from Nicaragua*. 70th Cong., 1st sess. Cong. (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off.), 1928, 2-3.

[44] Wray R. Johnson, "Airpower and Restraint in Small Wars: Marine Corps Aviation in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, 1927-1933," *Aerospace Power Journal* Vol. 15, no. 3 (Fall 2001), 32.

part of the GN intelligence network.[45] Faced with the opposition of both major political forces in the country and a large segment of the population in the otherwise natural guerrilla country in Nicaragua's eastern jungle, Sandino never succeeded in turning his low-intensity harassment campaign into a mass popular uprising.

Disarmament: A Failure for Peace, a Catastrophe for Nicaraguans

Though the immediate impact of Nicaragua's occupation was a draw, the implications of the Marine-created Guardia Nacional have ensured that Nicaragua changed suddenly and irrevocably in the two years following the end of Sandino's rebellion. By the end of the Marine occupation, the GN proved itself a capable military force. The Guardia suffered losses only a fraction the size of those it inflicted upon the EDSN and managed to maintain order across Nicaragua except in the northern departments.[46] Unfortunately for Nicaragua, the GN also proved itself an effective political force – more effective in fact than the civilian government.

Key to the Guardia's ascendence was its concentration of military force in its own hands. The process began before the GN's birth with the Treaty of Tipitapa, which stripped bare a country teaming with military equipment. The days of every departmental *jefe politico* possessing an arsenal ready for civil war were over.[47] And when the GN had seized all military weapons, it began restricting civilian ownership of firearms, without which guerrillas would find obtaining arms and ammunition difficult. In fact, the GN assessed that banditry (and guerrilla activity) would end only

[45] Brooks, "U.S. Marines and Miskito Indians," 67-69.

[46] Maj. Julian C. Smith et al., *A Review of the Organization and Operations of the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua* (United States Marine Corps, 1933), 42.

[47] 1st Lt. Ross E. Rowell, "Military Monograph of Nicaragua, 1916," Accessed April 21, 2023 from http://www.sandinorebellion.com/GNNPgs/GN-1916Monograph-Rowell.html.

when the supply of ammunition ran out. The result was that only small numbers of approved persons had access to firearms, which were otherwise kept under close guard in GN storehouses and armories.[48] The GN was unsuccessful in disarming Sandino's organization, but disarmament did reduce the ability of would-be Sandinos to follow his example in the future. When Sandino laid down his arms, the cycle of civil wars in Nicaragua was broken.[49] Only the GN still possessed any military strength.

The power thus concentrated in the hands of the Guardia Nacional prevented effective resistance when that constabulary decided to rule Nicaragua. The director of the GN, Anastasio Somoza Garcia, a pro-American but otherwise undistinguished Liberal, became insubordinate to President Sacasa soon after the government truce with Sandino.[50] And in February 1934 the GN, against Sacasa's orders, executed Sandino as he left the Presidential Palace and massacred Sandino's supporters on their agricultural collective in the Rio Coco basin.[51] Soon afterwards, Somoza appointed himself to the Cabinet and inaugurated an autocratic dynasty that lasted longer than 40 years.[52] Only another guerrilla war, undertaken by the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN), would unseat the Somocista dictatorship. When Sandinista guerrillas stormed

[48] Smith, *Review of the Guardia Nacional*, 58, 252.

[49] Even Sandino had limited military supplies. When the EDSN disarmed, it had only 6500 rounds of ammunition left. A.C. Sandino, Sofonías Salvatierra, G. Argüello, C.J. Rigoberto Reyes, J. Roiz R., Pedro José Zepeda, José Angel Rodríguez, and Ronaldo Delgadillo, "Act of Compliance, February 22, 1933," *Sandino*, 449.

[50] Sandino, "Telegram to the Delegates to the Peace Conference, January 27, 1933," *Sandino*, 436.

[51] Sofonías Salvatierra, "The Assassination of Augusto C. Sandino, February 21, 1934," *Sandino*, 494-497.

[52] Nalty, *United States Marines in Nicaragua*, 34.

Managua in 1979 and drove the last GN forces out of the country, Sandino finally saw the fulfillment of his dream of national sovereignty.[53]

Truly a small war, the final U.S. occupation of Nicaragua, originating in the complicated domestic politics of early 20th century Nicaragua and U.S. business interests in Central America, acquired outsize meaning through the pioneering tactics both sides employed. The evidence is fairly conclusive that President Coolidge intervened to protect American financial interests in Nicaragua, which included vast tracts of agricultural land, gold mines, and virgin forests for lumber. Though these investments were smaller than those in neighboring countries, the potential for future cultivation and the construction of a Nicaraguan canal made Nicaraguan stability and friendliness essential.

The fighting itself was on a miniature scale, predominantly platoon and company patrols, ambushes, and raids, conducted with elusiveness on the part of the EDSN and equal boldness on the part of the Marines and GN. The inconclusive outcome resulted from the political stalemate between government and insurgent. Sandino could never spark a popular insurrection capable of overwhelming the Marines and GN. Those forces in turn could never win enough popular support from the local populations of Nueva Segovia and Jinotega to deprive Sandino of supplies and intelligence. The U.S. solution – building a local constabulary to replace the Marines – worked in the short run but ended in military dictatorship. What at first looked like a simple operation to achieve a favorable peace in a banana republic lasted six years longer than expected on account of the determination of one man.

[53] The Cold War-era Sandinistas were not direct ideological offspring of Sandino. The FSLN was an explicitly socialist – and altogether more philosophically coherent – movement. But they certainly venerated Sandino's example of self-sacrificing patriotism and his hatred of American imperialism. Conrad, "Translator's Introduction," *Sandino*, 18.

Addendum to Chapter Six: The Legacy of Sandino's Rebellion for Counterinsurgency Theory

Strangely, the intervention in Nicaragua seems to have had little long-term effect on the United States. The coffee and banana crops remained safe for decades longer, but the U.S. reckoned surprisingly little with the first counterinsurgency war America failed to win. Many officers who served in Nicaragua, such as Maj. Harold Utley, commander of Marines on the Atlantic Coast, Maj. Ross Rowell, and Capt. Vernon Megee, Rowell's quartermaster, advocated learning from the successes and failures of the Nicaraguan campaign.

The result was the *Small Wars Manual* of 1940, a codification of the best practices used in Nicaragua, the first ever U.S. doctrine to prioritize the political dimension of warfare, and a counterinsurgency doctrine decades ahead of its time.[54] Unfortunately for the Corps, the high-intensity combat of the Second World War diverted attention from counterinsurgency theory. The veteran patrol commanders of the Nicaraguan occupation served creditably as battalion and regimental commanders in the Pacific Theater, where they used their jungle warfare experience to good effect.[55] By the time of the counterinsurgency campaign in Vietnam, the *Small Wars Manual* had been all but forgotten. Even Marine counterinsurgency planners were not aware of its existence.[56] Only in the post-Vietnam era has the manual returned to significance, sparked by the

[54] Macak, "Lessons From Yesterday's Operations Short of War," 60-61. In a nod to its heritage, one of the very few examples the manual provides is Edson's Rio Coco patrol. *Small Wars Manual*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1940), 10-2.

[55] Nalty, *United States Marines in Nicaragua*, 34.

[56] This obscurity is likely owed to the restricted classification the manual later received. Many of the company and field officers who would have benefited the most from learning counterinsurgency techniques were legally forbidden from doing so. Macak, "Lessons From Yesterday's Operations Short of War," 60-61.

Marine Corps's release to all interested soldiers in 1987.[57] The manual certainly doesn't contain all the answers to defeating insurgent forces. Were that the case, the Marines would have liquidated Sandino's rebellion. But a more serious engagement with its doctrine based on winning the political war against insurgencies might have proved more successful than the ultimate American approach in Vietnam of trying to attrit their way to victory.[58]

[57] John Phillips, "Foreword," *Small Wars Manual*.

[58] The USMC commanders of the GN knew that victory would not come through attrition when an insurgency retained popular support: "The killing of a few mozos has little effect on the number of their fighting forces." Smith, et al., *Review of the Guardia Nacional*, 252.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

This thesis has conducted detailed historical analyses of aspects of the U.S. interventions in Cuba, Haiti, and Nicaragua in order to answer the following questions: What explains the degree to which U.S. military forces were successful at suppressing armed insurgencies in the Caribbean from 1906-1934? Conversely, what explains the degree to which insurgent forces were unsuccessful in ending U.S. occupations? These questions are important by their nature, as much remains to be done to fully explain the lack of successful resistance to U.S. occupation in Cuba and Haiti and Augusto Sandino's ability to outlast his materially superior marine and constabulary opponents.

These questions are also important because they shed light on another question: Why have great powers sometimes been able to occupy weaker countries and at other times, using similar tactics, lost to a few poorly armed insurgents? Existing theory can explain many outcomes of insurgencies but cannot account for much variation between cases in which counterinsurgent forces follow similar best practices. My arguments about the importance of leadership restore focus to the diversity of movements, organizations, and strategies which fall under the umbrella term "insurgency." Theories benefit from specifying the contexts in which particular insurgency or counterinsurgency strategies operate and the interaction between opposing strategies. Those which do so will produce more accurate explanations of past conflicts and be more robust when analyzing the ever-evolving forms of insurgency.

In this thesis, I have argued that insurgent organization and strategy exert equal influence on victory and defeat as counterinsurgency strategy. For insurgent movements with low levels of bureaucracy, leaders' autonomy and the difficulty of replacing them make leadership – rather than civilians or fighters – the insurgents' center of gravity. I propose a two-part model of leadership decapitation in which potential insurgent leaders must decide whether to fight (and face likely death) or disarm (which enables other forms of political activity or personal gain). If they decide to fight, leaders gamble that they can survive capture or assassination. My model suggests that only those insurgencies whose leaders are highly motivated to fight and are able to evade capture or assassination will win their campaigns.

Findings

The main results of my research are as follows: First, existing theory poorly explains the outcomes of my cases. Second, persuading leaders not to fight was both common and successful. Third, decapitation of insurgent leadership usually ended effective resistance to occupation.

In the cases of Cuba, Haiti, and Nicaragua, I have found that popular support and the continued survival of most insurgent fighters, central to the theories of most counterinsurgency theorists, are insufficient to explain the observed results. In Haiti we saw widespread opposition to U.S. occupation without successful resistance. In Nicaragua, a portion of the public supported the U.S.-installed government, but Sandino fought the marines to at worst a draw. In none of the three cases was attrition high enough to seriously impact the insurgents' capabilities. Instead, we have seen either the voluntary disarmament of the potential guerrilla army or its involuntary disorganization upon the death or capture of its leader(s). This finding should not necessarily discredit any scholars' theories. I find substantial overlap with some of these paradigms, and others

may well explain situations in which my model is less relevant. These three cases, however, diverge from the expectations of existing scholarship.

Second, in all three cases an important cause of the outcomes was the ability of one side or the other to convince leaders that peace served their interest better than war. In Cuba, the U.S. forces were able to avoid combat entirely by providing persuasive rewards to those Liberal and Moderate leaders who cooperated in demobilizing their forces. In Haiti, the successful disarmament of the Haitian regular army and most of Dr. Rosalvo Bobo's *cacos* enabled the small number of marines to deal with the few holdouts. In Nicaragua, Henry Stimson's inability to ensure Sandino's compliance with the Treaty of Tipitapa created an opening for a protracted conflict. While my theoretical model focuses on insurgent leadership, Cuba is a case in which insurgents persuaded the interventionist leadership that fighting was not worthwhile. As a result, the Liberals were able to win significant concessions – though they had to resign themselves to three years of military occupation.

Third, when negotiation failed, leadership decapitation was usually successful. In Cuba, there was no fighting, so there was no need for decapitation. In Haiti, the forces of Benoît Rameau, Josephat Jean-Joseph, and Mizaël Codio all collapsed after their captures or deaths. In Nicaragua, the marines never succeeded in killing Augusto Sandino, and he was able to inspire continued resistance and maintain an organized fighting force.

Implications

The findings of this research suggest six more generalizable conclusions for theory and policy. First, a focus on insurgent organization offers fertile ground for explaining outcomes of insurgencies. Second, the military aspects of insurgency are impossible to understand outside their

political context, in which military force is but one of many tools. More practically, my findings suggest two major policy guides and two minor ones: First, decapitation can be highly effective under the right circumstances. Second, getting the first weeks of an occupation right are crucial for both occupier and occupied – after that reversing an opponent's momentum can be difficult. More tangentially, the evidence suggests: first, that cultural literacy matters less than one might think in winning a counterinsurgency campaign; and second, that high levels of violence against either combatants or civilians are not necessary for either side to prevail in an insurgency.

My focus on insurgent organization was crucial for understanding the outcomes of the insurgencies I studied when the leading counterinsurgency paradigms could not adequately explain events. The organizations of the Cuban Constitutional Army, the Haitian *cacos*, or Sandino's Army in Defense of the National Sovereignty of Nicaragua were nothing like the archetypical guerrilla movements like the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam or the Taliban. In fact, they were not much like each other, though they shared a lack of interchangeable bureaucratic structure and the ideal Maoist-type underground political network. But understanding the centralized patronage structure of Cuban politics or the autonomy of Haitian district commanders explained which leaders made decisions for others and what incentives existed for collaboration or resistance. Decision making often devolved to individual leaders, and learning what leaders can make decisions for insurgent organizations is key to understanding the circumstances under which potential insurgents will demobilize and those under which they will fight.

Related to a focus on organization, my research suggests that studying insurgency as a political phenomenon rather than a mostly military one points to the most important determinants of victory and defeat. Both U.S. policymakers, collaborationists, and anti-American insurgents understood that U.S. troops could occupy a country only for so long. In Nicaragua and Haiti, they

stayed twenty years, but two decades is not enough to remake any society by military force alone. With annexation off the table, the occupying forces empowered cooperative elites whom they hoped would support U.S. interests after withdrawal. In Cuba and Nicaragua, these were collaborationist Liberal politicians; in Haiti, they were urban economic elites.[1]

The political interplay between competing factions of national elites and the material interests which the more ideologically motivated insurgent leaders represented was often the primary center of attention for participants, with the U.S. as a powerful ally for some coalitions and a powerful enemy for others. The leaders, both Latin American and U.S.-American who understood these political dynamics were most successful. In proposing models of population-centric counterinsurgency, theorists should be careful to go beyond simplistic understandings of popular support resting on public works and "good governance." Politicians' and citizens' political commitments and interests go beyond competent government and demand engagement with the unique symbolic and material politics of each country.

Practitioners of insurgency and counterinsurgency should learn from the effectiveness of leadership decapitation in the Haitian conflict. Leadership of organizations is hard without bureaucracy. Most people lack the skills or political connections to be an Augusto Sandino or Pino Guerra. A lack of bureaucracy leaves an armed group vulnerable to decapitation, so developing a formal structure whose coherence depends on universalized principles of organization rather than the charisma or connections of one individual is essential for insurgent groups to survive. That

[1] In the long run, the factions who gained the most in Haiti and Nicaragua were ambitious junior soldiers in the U.S.-trained constabularies, who turned their military expertise on their U.S.-installed civilian leadership after the marines withdrew. Cuba avoided becoming a garrison state by virtue of having both a Rural Guard and a Permanent Army, but political instability encouraged two U.S. occupations in the decade after 1909. Richard Millett, *Searching for Stability: The U.S. Development of Constabulary Forces in Latin America and the Philippines, Occasional Paper 30* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2010), 68-69 and 97; and Allan R. Millett, "The Rise and Fall of the Cuban Rural Guard, 1898-1912," *The Americas* 29, no. 2 (Oct. 1972).

being said, a lack of bureaucracy is not a death knell for an insurgent group. Augusto Sandino's inspirational leadership was a tremendous asset to his army in a way possibly inhibited by bureaucratic standardization. But there was no guarantee that Sandino would survive the war. His skill in evading capture or assassination and his year-long sojourn in Mexico averted the worst, but Sandino had to get lucky every time. In February 1934, the Guardia Nacional got lucky once, and Sandino's organization had no capacity to take up arms again without his leadership.

A corollary to this point is the limited blowback I found from leadership decapitation. I expected to have to weigh the high costs of a "martyrdom effect" against the organizational benefits of assassination, but I did not find strategic consequences of such an effect. Certainly, the killings of Sandino, Codio, or Josephat outraged Nicaraguans and Haitians, but their organizations were so disabled by their deaths that they were incapable of taking advantage of popular sympathy.[2] I did find that persuading a leader to disarm was more effective than killing him, but the evidence suggests that the benefits of disarmament stem more from the leader's ability to induce his followers to disarm than any other factor.[3]

A second point for practitioners is the importance of decisive action in the immediate aftermath of intervention. The U.S. demobilized two armed factions in Cuba within a week – while the bulk of the occupying army was still en route to the island. Haiti was slower, but the marines were still able to disarm most Haitian soldiers and *cacos* before the few holdout Haitian nationalists decided to make a stand. In Nicaragua, Sandino's rapid flight to Nueva Segovia in the days after

[2] As an aside, Charlemagne Péralte, who graces the cover of this thesis but fought in a later war than I study, became the symbolic face of martyrdom when marines photographed his corpse lying against a wooden board. The image bears a resemblance to Christ on the cross and became a national symbol to Haitians, but his insurgency ended soon after his death.

[3] Hence the stronger hierarchy in Cuba produced more disarmament among lower-level commanders than the decentralized regional command structure in Haiti.

the Treaty of Tipitapa was signed enabled him to develop a base of operations before the marines could react to his rebellion.

Two final points on insurgency and counterinsurgency practice remain: First, cultural literacy is not necessary for effective counterinsurgency. The marines who landed in the Caribbean must have been one of the least culturally knowledgeable groups of occupiers in the twentieth century. We have seen Faustus Wirkin's testimony that most marines did not know Haiti was in the Caribbean and the abuses marines perpetrated on at least one suspected Haitian poisoner as the result of a Voudon scare. In Cuba, the situation was hardly better, where few officers possessed even a rudimentary understanding of Spanish.[4] Nevertheless, the political acuity of the senior officers sufficed to persuade and coerce the important local actors. As long as the most senior authorities understood the political situation, more junior personnel needed only to follow their instructions and excel tactically.

Second, indiscriminate violence or superior firepower did not determine the outcomes of these conflicts. Even if marines, constabulary forces, and insurgents were not always careful about avoiding noncombatant casualties, the total numbers of people killed or wounded in these conflicts were in the hundreds or low thousands, not nearly enough for full-scale campaigns of barbarism. Moreover, all forces were armed with essentially the same weapons: repeating rifles. The marines' were more modern versions, but machine guns, artillery, or other tools employed against later insurgent forces were not present in these conflicts. Politics, not hardware, dominated the strategic calculus in these conflicts, just as in more recent wars in Vietnam and Afghanistan.

[4] One caveat to the strategic unimportance of cultural literacy was in the constabulary units, where linguistic abilities in particular were vital. Robert L. Bullard, "The Army in Cuba," *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States* 41 (Sep.-Oct. 1907), 152-153; and Millett, "General Staff," 153.

Future research

The most needed future research on the subject of this thesis is not theoretical but historical. Not one of these conflicts has received the kind of comprehensive historical treatment they deserve since the 1960s. While some of the older scholarship is excellent, it nearly always lacks the integration of Cuban, Haitian, or Nicaraguan sources with U.S. archival resources. In particular, Roger Gaillard's seminal histories of the Caco Wars have never been translated into English.[5] Cuba and Nicaragua too have rich historical traditions not yet fully incorporated into English scholarship. Many modern historians have tackled particular aspects of these conflicts, but the picture presented is thus far kaleidoscopic.

Theoretically, the avenue I think likely to be the most interesting concerns the origins of insurgent organization and strategy. Understanding why armed groups organize the way they do is the logical next step from understanding how those organizations operate. In particular, given the body of literature devoted to the study of U.S. Marine and Army adaptation over the course of their interventions abroad in this period, a study of the influences different interventions had on the development of resistance to U.S. occupation should produce notable results.[6]

[5] See, for example, Roger Gaillard, *Les blancs débarquent, 1919–1934: La guérilla de Batraville* (Port-au-Prince: Roger Gaillard, 1981).

[6] Alan McPherson devotes some time to understanding transnational networks of resistance, but there is much more to do on the topic of military learning among the nodes of these networks. Alan McPherson, *The Invaded: How Latin Americans and Their Allies Fought and Ended U.S. Occupations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

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