

REVIEW ARTICLE

American Occupation of Haiti, 1915 – 1934: The End of a Chapter in U.S. History of Imperialism and Caretaker Role in the Western Hemisphere

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Abstract

The 1915 - 1934 occupation of Haiti by the United States was originally aimed at determining, controlling, and maintaining her friendly governments in the western hemisphere, in pursuit of its doctrine of “manifest destiny”. The 1994 American intervention in Haiti although carried out under the auspices of the United Nations, following the UN Security Council Resolution 940 that authorized the multinational force from 25 nations, including the United States to enter Haiti and restore the government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide. However, implementation of the United Nations Resolution and the enforcement of international law were used as America’s reasons to invade Haiti, even though its main hidden national security and national interest reasons and agenda behind the invasion was to stop the wave of Haitian refugees streaming into Florida; an action designed to address American domestic policy and concerns. The Haitian experience, nevertheless, has shown that the United States in pursuit of her national interest and goals will be willing to intervene in any country, either unilaterally or in a multilateral or collective setting to achieve America’s foreign policy goals and objectives.

Keywords: Manifest Destiny, National Interest, Louisiana Purchase, European Colonialism, Imperialism, Organization of American States (OAS), Executive Order, UN Security Council.

1. Introduction

Haiti is an island nation located in the Northern Caribbean Sea about 600 miles from the Coast of Florida. As one of the most densely populated nations in the Western Hemisphere, it has a population of nearly 6.7 million people. About 95% of the Haitian population is of African descent while the rest is of mixed race or Caucasian ancestry. French and Creole are the official languages of Haiti. A tiny percentage of about 10% speak French while Creole commands a universal spoken status in Haiti. Although freedom of religion is an official practice in Haiti, Roman Catholic has survived as a state religion over Protestant religion. Voodoo tradition has also co-existed with other Christian religions.

Contemporary Haiti owes its genesis to the era of slave trade when the Spaniards used the Island of Hispaniola as a “jumping off point” to explore the rest of the Western Hemisphere. In 1697, Spain ceded the western third of Hispaniola to France which named it Saint Dominique. As one of the richest French colonies of the 18th Century, African slaves were introduced to cultivate the coffee and sugarcane plantations. Led by Toussaint Louverture, Henry Christophe and Jacques Dessalines, the African slaves revolted and established control over the Northern fringes of Saint Dominique. The defeat of the French is widely believed by historians as the main incident which gave impetus to the “Louisiana purchase” of 1804 when the territory of Louisiana was sold to the United States by Napoleon.

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This area was later renamed Haiti in 1804, when the black forces defeated the armies of Napoleon Bonaparte and declared its independence from France. Thus, Haiti became the first black republic and the second oldest republic after the United States to gain independence. Later, Haiti advocated a revolutionary ideology against European colonialism by assisting other Latin American countries in their fight for independence. Even, the United States received its assistance in the battle of Savannah during the American revolutionary wars against the British Crown.

After conquering the eastern Spanish speaking part of Santa Domingo in 1822, Santa Domingo seceded from Haiti to become contemporary Dominican Republic. Haiti since independence in 1804 has a history of violence and political instability. It has had several constitutions and successions of heads of state, many of who were either overthrown or assassinated in office, argued the U.S. Congressional Digest, September 1994. (1) The purpose of this paper is to compare and contrast the American 1915 and 1994 military interventions in Haiti, with respect to their nature, strategies, instruments, reasons and lessons learned.

When the United States was drawn into World War I in 1917, it used the Island of Hispaniola as a military base. By then, Haiti was ruled by a U.S. puppet regime, which ruled at the behest of American Naval Officers. The reasons behind American interventions in Haiti may have racial, economic and strategic overtones. Subsequent to the birth of Haiti as the second independent nation after the United States, many whites in America worried that the existence of Haiti would constitute a permanent threat to slave societies in the western hemisphere. According to Langley, Lester D. (1985), based on this consideration, the United States refused to recognize the sovereignty of Haiti until the civil war, despite its bilateral trade with Haiti dating back to the 1790's. (2)

In 1911, a New York Banking interest represented by W.R. Grace and Company planned to construct a national railroad from Port-au-Prince to Cap Haitien on the northern coast. Because of political disturbances and mountainous terrain, large portions of the construction were never completed and the piece of work already finished was poorly done. Hence, in 1914, Langley, Lester D. (1985) also argued that the Haitian government ceased payment. As scandal about the project grew, the company demanded payment for

work done. But, "following the American intervention in 1915, a compliant Haitian president authorized payment." 3

Consequent to the death of Haitian President Jean Vilbrun Guillaume Sam in the hands of Haitian civilians on July 28, 1915, after an allegation that he ordered the torture and execution of Haitian nationalists bent on thwarting American imperialist designs on the Island, rumor had it that forces loyal to Rosalvo Bobo, an opponent of American presence in Haiti were about to take control of the government. In the words of Healy, David (1976), American Commander, Admiral William Banks Caperton was charged with the mission of not only to disarm and disband forces loyal to Bobo, but to make sure that "Bobo would not be president." 4

As American marines occupied the coastal towns of Haiti, a martial law was instituted. On top of that was the installation of a compliant government ruled nominally by Haitians. Later, a new Haitian President, Henri Dartiguenave acceptable to the United States was installed. Furthermore, the State Department composed a Haitian-American treaty that authorized American control of customs, houses, construction of roads and schools and the organization of a constabulary. According to Langley, Lester (1985) also, Haitian officials who were opposed to the idea of an American financial officer were either coerced or coopted. "Having obtained the assembly's approval of the treaty, Caperton recommended release of a \$1.5 million pending loan by the Banque Nationale to Dartiguenave's government." (5)

The Americans decided to rewrite the Haitian constitution based on Haiti's supreme law of 1889 which, argued Langley, Lester (1985), gave the national assembly the authority to amend Haitian laws. But, the Haitian legislative bodies which rejected the American draft constitution were disbanded while new ones were reconstituted. Even the plebiscite which attracted 5% of the Haitian population and aimed at legitimizing the action of the assembly was staged and supervised by the guard who hosted public barbecues to attract public attention. (6)

One implication of the American imposed constitution was not only the validation of the American occupation of Haiti, but it allowed foreigners to own property in Haiti: a practice that was forbidden historically. This in a way opened Haiti's vast agricultural land to American ownership and exploration. This

promising venture even became more attractive to the Americans by virtue of Haitian 1864 law which provided that instead of paying road taxes, Haitian could be conscripted by the government to work on public projects like roads. Such ancient practice was known as “Corvee.” It should be noted that Corvee, which is a French word is a form of unpaid and forced labor practice that is intermittent in nature and lasts for a limited period of time such as working a certain number of days each month or year.

Use of incentives was capitalized by the marines who wasted no time to embark on an ambitious task of constructing a road network linking Port-au-Prince with Cap-Haitien, to the north. The forced labor policy aroused wide spread resentment among the Haitian peasantry who disproportionately were separated from their families against the will to toil under the harsh and brutal working conditions. Despite the abolition of the “Corvee” in 1918, the practice, argued Sidney W. Mintz (1995) had become a rallying cry for the peasantry who escaped to the mountains to join cacao armies in their quest to defeat the occupation force of the United States. (7)

Nonetheless, cacao bands in the mountainous interior that had mobilized to bring down Haitian governments continued their harassment of the marine patrols. The marines adopted many strategies to disarm Haitian resistant fighters, including bribery of cacao chieftains and informers, and paying for surrendered weapons (cacao is a name given to a Haitian bird of prey). Those who refused to cooperate with this order were captured, tortured or executed. Moreover, American Marines organized Haitian constabulary (national police or Gendarmerie) composed mainly of Haitian peasants and commanded initially by marine officers for the maintenance of order and the suppression of cacao resistance.

By 1928, Haiti was run by President Louis Borno, an ally of the United States. Borno, at the behest of the United States, permitted the national plebiscite to alter the Haitian constitution of 1918 once again in order to allow his continuation in office. Borno’s popularity fell to its lowest ebb when the Haitian masses became convinced that he was a stooge of the United States. In 1929, public anger and resentment toward the regime grew. American High Commissioner in Haiti, Gen. John Russel preempted further disturbances by declaring a martial law. Sporadic clashes between the Haitian masses and the marines ensued. In riots in the city of Cayes, Haiti, the marines fired into converging crowds.

The United States in the 1930’s under President Herbert Clark Hoover appointed a bipartisan commission headed by Cameron Forbes, former governor of the Philippines to investigate the Haitian disturbances. While praising the material accomplishment by the United States in Haiti, the “Forbes Report” noted that the overall American goals set forth in the 1915 occupation were neither met nor attainable. Nonetheless, it was not a hidden fact that these were tough times globally. The onset of the Great Depression ushered in a new era of economic reality in which demand in Haitian products, especially coffee diminished in importance. The decline in coffee earnings exacerbated the economic and social relations, and fanned hostility toward government. Hence, Lester Langley (1985) also noted that the commission argued that the United States should not relinquish its obligation in Haiti, but made a number of recommendations, among which were separation of the military and civilian functions and responsibilities; an increase in the number of Haitians in government and their level of participation, and reduction in American involvement in Haitian domestic affairs. (8)

Henceforth, President Eustache Antoine Francois Joseph Louis Borno’s reelection bid was put on hold. It is worth noting that Joseph Louis Borno, a lawyer who bagged or earned his degree in 1890 at the Faculty of Paris, France later served as President of the Republic of Haiti from 1922 to 1930 during this period of American occupation of Haiti, 1915 till 1934. As Haitian nationalism flared, the appointment of a new American High Commissioner in Haiti was inevitable. Thus, the newly appointed Dana Gardner Munroe set in motion a new policy of “Haitianization” that prepared the groundwork of transferring political power to the Haitians in the October elections of 1930. As America’s supervision of Haitian political and economic system crumbled, the last marine departed Haiti after the official visit of President Franklin Roosevelt to Cap Haitien in October 1934. This event marked the end of a chapter in America’s history of imperialism and caretaker role in the western hemisphere.

2. Chronology of Regime Successions in Haiti

Following American military occupation of Haiti, which ended in 1934, was the election of a more enduring Francois Duvalier (Papa Doc) government after a year of uncertainty in which six administrations changed hand. Elected in 1957, Francois Duvalier’s

regime was marked by massive corruption and excessive repression, especially after declaring himself President-for-life in 1964. During this period, a small middle class emerged in Haiti which collaborated with the ruling elite to proletarianize the masses. Under the regime of Francois Duvalier, the notorious state force, the Tontons Macoute and the then Volontaires de Securite Nationale were formed.

One of the legacies of Francois Duvalier was his avowed commitment to bring about a shift of power from an established predominantly Mulatto elites to a new black middle class. In contemporary Haiti, the predominant African identity has endured through the preservation of the Creole language and the indigenous voodoo religion. These elements of Haitian culture tended to insulate the indigenous African population from the influence of the “aliens” which has been associated with Western culture.

The transfer of power from Mulattos to new cadre of black Haitian elites eliminated the mulattos as serious contenders for state power and the benefits of the state due to a number of reasons. One was that a nontraditional group of actors (blacks) had emerged; and in the words of Anthony P. Maingot (1995), the state served as the main source of spoil. (9) The social and political consequence of this power play is that it deepened class cleavages mostly between the black Haitian middle class and the Mulattos.

As the number of economic competitors grew, interclass and interethnic conflicts became increasingly fierce. The displaced elites hastened their resolve to undermine the government. Most of the Mulatto elites avoided paying taxes, relied extensively on corruption as a means of obtaining favor from public officials and repatriated scarce capital. Collectively, all these ill practices helped to undermine economic and political modernization Haiti. As the institutionalization of repression grew, it engendered domestic political tensions. The United States severed economic and military assistance to Haiti in 1963. The embargo was resumed in 1973 consequent to the death of Francois Duvalier in 1971.

At the death of Francois Duvalier, he was succeeded by his son Jean-Claude Duvalier (Baby Doc), who continued most of his corrupt and repressive practices, but with a new tilt from the nature of his father’s political alignment. Jean-Claude Duvalier helped smooth the stained relationship between the black and Mulatto elite groups in Haiti. This social intercourse was made possible by the marriage between Jean-

Claude Duvalier and Michelle Bennett, the daughter of a prominent mulatto family. The relationship at the highest level gave impetus to Jean-Claude’s cooptation of the mulatto elites most of whom his father’s policies had alienated.

Jean-Claude Duvalier’s corrupt powers over the institutions of government came in the form of nationalizing the state economy. A chain of businesses was formed in the names of Duvalier’s friends and members of the Bennett family. With links to the state, these businesses enjoyed special privileges. They easily did business with international governments and transactions in hard currency (usually U.S. dollar) and opened bank accounts in overseas banks through which state financial resources were siphoned, and in some cases served as detours for skimming off foreign aid from donor nations and international agencies. After months of heated tension, his administration was engulfed by civil strife. On February 7, 1986, his administration collapsed when he fled to France. The departure of Jean-Claude Duvalier left a leadership vacuum in the body politics of Haiti which was later filled by Gen. Henri Namphy. An attempt by the Namphy regime to hold election on November 29, 1987 was marred by violence when gunmen alleged to be agents of the government (Tontons Macoute) opposed to any democratic process in Haiti opened fire, in the crowd of Haitian voters waiting to cast their ballots at the poll. Having postponed the November elections as a result of violence, Gen. Henri Namphy remained interim President until new elections were held in February 1988 in which Leslie Manigat was declared winner. Controversy clouded the Manigat election as accusation of voter fraud and other forms of irregularities tarnished the legitimacy of the experiment. In June 1988, Gen. Henri Namphy forced Leslie Manigat into exile and reinstated himself President.

Shortly thereafter in 1988, General Henri Namphy was toppled by Gen. Prosper Avril who promised a return to a democratically elected government. Notwithstanding new promises to improve Haitian economy, the national economy of Haiti continued to deteriorate. Further decline in the standard of living perhaps triggered the civil unrest of March 12, 1990 which led to the overthrow of Prosper Avril as he was on a brief visit to the United States.

In 1990, the provisional government led by former Haitian Supreme Court Justice Ertha Pascal-Trouillot who was born on August 13, 1943 and served as

the first woman justice in the Supreme Court of Haiti, assumed power by default. In the basis of coalition building by major Haitian political parties, a “government by committee” was born to oversee Haitian affairs. The ruling body, composed of 19-member Council of State appeared representative of Haiti’s regional and demographic diversity. The “Assembly of Concertation” pledged to organize a transition to a democratically elected government in presidential and legislative elections scheduled for November 4, 1990.

It was not until December 16, 1990 that a genuine democratic election was conducted. In what was regarded by international observers as Haiti’s first free and fair presidential election, Jean-Bertrand Aristide in a landslide defeated his opponents. The election was organized under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) with strong moral, technical, logistic and financial support and participation by the United States. About 200 observers from 22 countries were present. There was also a strong American contingent. The Carter Center of Emory University participated in monitoring the Haitian elections. Having won about 67% of the votes, Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide was inaugurated President of Haiti on February 7, 1991.

The Aristide Administration wasted no time to embark on sweeping economic reforms including the reduction of the size of government. The purging of the civil service, which formed the pillars of Haitian patronage system, alienated the business and civilian class. Also, attempts of his administration to curb the excesses of the Haitian army drew resentment from the ruling military elites. In the social front, the government sought to reduce civil violence by publicly condemning the practice of neck-lacing (a practice of instant justice in which a suspected person is burnt to death with a necklace of burning gasoline-soaked car tire). Also, Aristide tried to eradicate human rights violation by replacing the system of “chefs de sections,” (sheriffs) with elected officials. Even the American State Department human rights reports of 1991 and 1992 observed sharp decline in incidents of kidnapping and disappearances of opponents of the regime.

Challenges facing Aristide in Haiti were nonetheless arduous. His attempts to steer Haiti away from its traditional alignments incurred him the wrath of his opponents. As an ardent critic of American foreign policy toward Haiti, Aristide tried to move Haiti

closer to its hemispheric contemporaries, namely the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean away from the United States. Also, his populist orientation as symbolized by his acceptance of voodoo as an authentic Haitian religion and his embrace of the radical “liberation” theology with its Marxist leanings made him an enemy of the Haitian capitalist class. This revolutionary ideology appeared to have found expression in the radical language of the “Lavas” movement which uncompromisingly advocates total redistribution of wealth in Haiti.

Writing in *The New York Review of Books* (1994), Michel-Rolph Trouillot noted that one of the biggest problems that faced Aristide’s government was the inheritance of a neo-colonial state economy. Here, the state relied on social elitism and political repression for its maintenance. The state was financed primarily by proletarian labor, while the rich were rewarded with import-export subsidies, tax exemptions and state-enforced monopolies. (10)

Despite Aristide’s successes in both the political and human rights arenas, the military headed by Gen. Raoul Cedras after charging that Aristide was “meddling in army affairs” overthrew the government on September 30, 1991. Cedras’ vendetta against opponents of his regime and sympathizers of Aristide gave birth to a new wave of repression that triggered massive Haitian refugee influx into the United States. The once localized Haitian conflict gained international significance.

3. American Responses to Events in Haiti

Less than a year after the election of Aristide in December 1990, in a democratic election, he was deposed by his Defense Minister General Raoul Cedras. The Bush Administration was determined to thwart the coup. Thus, the United States imposed a partial embargo on oil and arms which lingered for almost two years. During the presidential election, Bill Clinton vowed to reverse the Bush policy of returning the Haitian “boat” people to Haiti if elected president. The Bush policy toward the Haitian refugees was perceived to be both racially and discriminatory and contradictory because while the Black Haitian refugees were being turned away from landing on America’s shores, the Cuban “boat” people, predominantly non-black were being welcomed with open arms at the same time. Unfortunately, President Clinton temporarily continued to pursue the Bush policy of either turning back Haitian fleeing political

oppression back to Haiti or confining them in a quasi-concentration camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

On July 3, 1993, the impact of sanctions and other international pressures culminated in the signing of the Governors Island Accord in New York between General Raoul Cedras and Aristide, to set a time table for the latter's return to power. It was observed that Cedras agreed to sign the agreement in order to break the resolve of the international community. The accord among other things would permit the introduction of military contingents into Haiti in preparation for a smooth and orderly restoration and transition of government to the elected President, Aristide. The United Nations Security Council had voted on June 16, 1993 to impose stiff oil and arms embargo on Haiti.

As stated by Martin, Ian (1994), the Governors Island pact provided for the appointment of an interim prime minister by Aristide; suspension of sanctions; increased international assistance for administrative and judicial reforms; creation of a new Haitian police force; the modernization of its armed forces under the auspices of the United Nations; appointment of a new Haitian police chief; granting of amnesty; the retirement of Cedras as head of the military and the return of Aristide as President in October 1993. (11)

One of the few provisions of the accord honored was the appointment of Prime Minister Robert Malval, a wealthy Haitian businessman, who resigned in December 1993. But, the implementation of the provisions of the New York agreement was marred by disputes over the terms, technicalities and interpretation of the accord's languages. For example, despite the issuance of amnesty by executive fiat, Cedras insisted that a law be passed that could give him full proof protection rather than an amnesty which could be reversed by Aristide, or overridden by legislative action.

On the replacement of the police chief Michel Francois, the Cedras Administration refused to comply. It argued that Francois held a joint portfolio as both a career military officer as well as a police chief. Based on the rules and regulation guiding conditions of the former office, *Vanity Fair* (February 1994) reported that Michel Francois' resignation should be subject to only a military decision. (12)

The most dramatic evidence showing that the will of the United States and the international community was being defied with impunity came with the participation of the United Nations to enforce the

terms of the agreement pertaining to institution building in Haiti. On October 11, 1993, the American amphibious warship USS Harlan County which made a landing attempt with the first contingent of American and Canadian troops on a training mission to Haiti was refused landing rights. This first group of 218 American and Canadian military engineers was part of an international force of about 1,300 troops expected in Haiti to help retrain Haitian army and police, build roads and bridges and help maintain law and order.

Even, journalists and diplomats who proceeded to the shores of Port-au-Prince were met with hostility from several hundred poorly-armed Haitian angry protesters chanting anti-American slogans. The activities were orchestrated by the regime of Cedras. The United States Embassy fearing that its staff might be taken hostage in Haiti withdrew its presence. President Clinton immediately ordered that the ship depart from Haitian territorial waters to the United States naval base at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. The official Haitian explanation for this resistance was that the members of the contingent were in violation of the spirit and terms of the accord because they carried automatic weapons.

The disengagement of the USS Harlan County marked a humiliation retreat and defeat for American foreign policy. It also brought victory to the right-wing forces opposed to foreign intervention in Haiti. Moreover, the incident came to symbolize a turning point in the enduring international efforts to restore democracy in Haiti. All these factors, noted Pamela, Constable "conspired not only to prevent Aristide's return, but left Haiti in the repressive grip of the military and its supporters". (13)

American and United Nations' capitulation in the Haitian matter had its ripple effects. Following the decisions of Canadian Prime Minister Kim Campbell, who was embroiled in a tough election and responding to domestic public opinion in Canada, a second component of the international mission, the United Nations monitors left Haiti. Later, the third component of the international presence – the United Nations and the Organization of American States' civilian mission was withdrawn. This body has many human rights observers deployed throughout Haiti.

On September 8, 1993, armed civilians attacked and killed three civilians where the Aristide's appointed mayor was being sworn in. September 11, 1993

witnessed the killing millionaire businessman Antoine Izmerly, a close friend of Aristide. Izmerly was dragged out of church by armed men and executed. Shortly thereafter, Justice Minister Guy Malary, a key supporter of exiled President Jean- Bertrand Aristide was gunned down in broad daylight in the watchful eyes of the rightwing Haitian police, an assassination that shoot the entire country and the global community according to eyewitnesses.

America's weakness as demonstrated by the faith of the USS Harlan County opened the gate for a new wave of onslaught against the supporters and sympathizers of President Aristide on a magnitude without precedent. The world could no longer watch as the level of repression escalated to an intolerable degree. Perhaps, such events convinced both American and UN officials that the Haitian quagmire could not be resolved diplomatically without some use of force.

Amidst all the reports about gross violations of human rights in Haiti, President Clinton on May 8, 1994 supported tough economic sanctions to bring down the Haitian dictatorship. Through American leadership, the UN Security Council on May 21, 1994 passed Resolution 917 imposing stringent sanction on Haiti. On May 26, 1994, the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nation and of the Organization of American States Mr. Dante Caputo met with President Balaguer and reached agreement to close the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The meeting was necessitated by reports that the Haitian military was obtaining oil and gasoline smuggled across the border from Dominican Republic. These types of activities, if allowed to grow would gravely undermine the impact and effectiveness of the sanctions. Based on bilateral talks, the Dominican Republic agreed to the presence of international technical advisers.

On June 3, 1994, Argentina, Canada, France, the United States and Venezuela (friends of the Secretary General of the United Nation on Haiti) decided to unilaterally expand sanctions to cut off commercial air flights to and from Haiti and also ban financial transaction between each country and Haiti. On June 22, 1994, according to the U.S. Department of State Dispatch (1994), the White House announced the imposition of additional financial sanction to freeze the assets of Haitians in U.S. banks or their subsidiaries identified as giving support to the illegal regime of Cedras using the Executive Order that exempted humanitarian supplies. (14)

One of the most significant accomplishments of the Clinton Administration on the Haitian challenge was leading a successful effort to pass UN Resolution 917 which linked the lifting of sanction against Haiti to the retirement of General Cedras and the departure from Haiti of General Biamby and Lt. Col. Guy Francois who once commanded the elite Dessalines Battalion and who later died on September 14, 2006. The resolution called for arms and petroleum embargo on Haiti; severance of air services with Haiti; prohibition of travel privileges to Haitian military officers, civilian supporters of the regime and coup participants; and the blocking of their personal assets. While all these sanctions were not expected to bring Haiti to its knees immediately, they nonetheless helped to weaken its ability to survive economic sanction or pressures brought to bear by the application of military force. As time passed, the possibility of American intervention was becoming a serious option.

President Bill Clinton argued George, Alexander I (1991), raised the ante when in July 1994 the United States secured a United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution authorizing the use of force as a last resort to remove Cedras and restore President Aristide to the Haitian throne. (15) In order to undercut this broad power, Senate Majority leader, Bob Dole (R- Kansas) with the support of Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont fought to evoke the provisions of the War Powers Act of 1973. The Act would require the approval of Congress before the President could take any military action in Haiti. The Senate could only approve a non-binding resolution in August 1994 calling for the president to seek consent of the Congress before engaging in any military adventure in Haiti.

On September 15, 1994, President Clinton gave a public address to the nation in which he made the case why the United States was leading the international effort to restore democratic government in Haiti. Among the points made by the president were to promote democratic rule in our hemisphere; uphold the reliability of the commitments to United States makes and that other make to us; and to safeguard the invasion of our border by refugees fleeing from political persecution in Haiti. The President also allayed the fears of Americans with his promise to withdraw the troops once the Aristide regime was restored, a new Haitian security force was trained and international peace-keeping force was deployed. He concluded, argued Smith, Gaddis (1995) with a warning to Cedras and his clique – “your time is up.” Leave now or we will force you from power.” (16)

With such harsh policy statement by President Clinton, it appeared certain that American troops would be introduced into Haiti. Shortly thereafter, President Clinton announced that in a last minute attempt to head off military action, he was sending a high-level delegation to convince Haitian military leaders to either leave or he would order American troops into action. Key members of the team included President Jimmy Carter, Senator Sam Nunn and General Colin Powell. According to the State Department, the delegation was given the mandate to discuss the “modalities” of the departure of Cedras and his aides. On September 18, 1994 the White House announced that the Carter Mission was successful and that Gen. Cedras had agreed to step down as soon as the Haitian Parliament passed and amnesty as called for by the Governors Island accord, but no later than October 15, 1994; and also agreed to accept the introduction of international coalition troops the following day. Based on the provisions of the UN Security Council Resolution 940, forces from 25 nations would enter Haiti to restore the government of Aristide.

According to President Clinton, Lt. Gen. H. Hugh Shelton was appointed U.S. Commander to direct the American operation as part of the UN contingent totaling 15,000. As President Clinton observed in his October 1994 speech regarding the possible U.S. invasion of Haiti, “this agreement only came because of the threat of the American force.” (17) The turn of events from military invasion to peaceful entry showed that U.S. coercive diplomacy in Haiti was a success.

4. Conclusion

The 1915 occupation of Haiti by the United States was aimed at determining, controlling and maintaining its friendly governments in the hemisphere, in pursuit of its doctrine of “manifest destiny”. However, it was a unilateral attempt to install the Presidency of Henri Dartiguenave, an ally over that of Rosalvo Bobo, following the death of Vilbun Guillaume. Also, in 1928, under the US support, President Louis Borno organized a referendum that nullified the Haitian constitution of 1918 that imposed a term limit. The Constitutional nullification allowed Borno to remain in office much longer. Even the government of Henri Dartiguenave was propped up with loans from Banque Nationale under the strong recommendation of American Admiral William Banks Caperton. The 1994 American intervention in Haiti was carried out under the auspices of the United Nations following the Security Council Resolution 940 that authorized

the multinational force from 25 nations, including the United States to enter Haiti and restore the government of Aristide. But, implementation of the United Nations Resolution

The enforcement of international law was used as America’s reason to invade Haiti, even though its main reason for invasion was to stop the waves of Haitian refugees streaming into Florida; an action designed to address American domestic concerns.

The Haitian experience, nevertheless, has shown that the United States is always willing to intervene in any country, either unilaterally or in a multilateral setting to achieve its foreign policy goals and objectives.

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