



Haiti: A Case Study in Post-Cold War Peacekeeping

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Operation Uphold Democracy, the U.S.-led, multinational intervention that restored Haiti's legitimate government, can serve in many ways as a paradigm of post-Cold War peacekeeping, embodying a number of features that have marked other peacekeeping enterprises.

First, the operation proceeded in the sequence, initially employed before the 1991 Gulf War, of a UN Security Council "all necessary means" resolution followed by the creation of an ad hoc, multilateral coalition, which in turn fielded a multilateral force (MNF) that, in the Haitian case, was replaced by a UN peacekeeping force—the UN Mission in Haiti, or UNMIH. Second, the operation dealt with an internal, not an external, conflict.

Third, the objective of this operation was to restore a legitimate government and to provide temporary

security support to a society moving from authoritarianism to democracy. Finally, both in its MNF and UNMIH phases, the operation made a significant, although perhaps insufficient, use of international police to supplement the efforts of its military component.

Haiti: One Year After

At the height of the U.S. military presence, shortly after the MNF's initial deployment, over 23,000 American military personnel were stationed in Haiti. As of September 1995, there were 2,500 American soldiers, out of a total of 6,000 UN peacekeeping troops, and 800 UN civilian police, drawn from thirty-one countries. In February 1996, the mission of this peacekeeping force will be concluded. The troops will return home, having successfully completed a complex and challenging operation.

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About the Author...

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Completion of this operation has been keyed to two processes. The first of these has been the disbanding of Haiti's old institutions of repression and the creation of a new professional civilian police force, along with the reform of the judiciary. The second process has been one of democratic renewal and the constitutional transfer of power. This process involves the holding of local, municipal, parliamentary, and finally, presidential elections, so that by the time U.S. and other military forces leave Haiti in February 1996, the entire Haitian government structure, from the lowest to the highest levels, will be renewed, based on a new exercise of democratic choice, within the framework of the Haitian constitution.

Both of these processes are proceeding at a pace that should meet the timetable the United States and the United Nations have set for this peacekeeping operation.

Building New Institutions for Domestic Security

The first ongoing process to which the timing of the international peacekeeping effort has been tied is the dismantling of Haiti's old, corrupt, and repressive security institutions as well as the creation of a new professional civilian police force and the reform of the judiciary. This process is very much on schedule.

The Haitian Army has been disbanded. Over three thousand, or more than half, of its members have been demobilized. Most of these individuals are presently completing a six-month program of vocational training. Less than three thousand former members of

the Haitian Army remain as members of the interim police force. Several hundred of these interim police are being demobilized each month as new classes of the Haitian National Police are fielded. This demobilization will be completed by next February.

By that date, the Haitian National Police will have fielded five thousand new police officers. These young men and women have been selected in an open, rigorous, and competitive national process. They are receiving four months of intensive professional training in a Police Academy program organized by the U.S. Department of Justice and taught by professional law enforcement officers from France, Canada, and the United States.

The selection process for the Haitian National Police has drawn from the best Haiti has to offer. Tens of thousands of young men and women have competed for entry. In a society where less than twenty-five percent of the people are literate, the average educational level of the first police cadets was two years of college.

Alongside the Police Academy, the international community has also assisted the Haitian government in creating a new Judicial Academy. American, French, and Haitian lawyers and jurists are now providing instruction to Haitian judges and court administrators.

Democratic Renewal

As part of the second process, Haitians voted last June to elect two thousand mayors and municipal and county counselors, thereby providing Haiti with a comprehensive system of freely elected local

government officials for the first time in its history. On September 17, Haiti completed the second round in the election of members to its lower and upper houses of Parliament. Like the June 25 vote, the balloting was peaceful. Unlike the June 25 vote, it was both more orderly and better administered.

Later in 1995, Haitians will go to the polls to elect President Aristide's successor, who will take office next February. On September 18, President Aristide reconfirmed, "beyond a shadow of a doubt," his personal commitment to this transfer of power.

Economic Revival

The duration of the UNMIH has not been tied to any particular level of economic performance. However, in connection with last year's restoration of democracy, Haiti has received a truly massive level of international assistance, to which the United States has provided less than one-fourth of the \$1.2 billion in foreign aid committed to Haiti for 1995 and 1996.

As a result of both this assistance and the reforms put in place by the Haitian government, inflation has been halved, down from over forty percent in September 1994 to under twenty percent today. The Haitian currency remains stable against the U.S. dollar. Economic activity, which fell by twenty-five percent from 1992 to 1994, is now growing by over 4.5 percent per annum.

On Schedule

Haiti's economic renewal is tentative at best. Its new security structures are inexperienced and untested, and its democracy remains fragile. But, one year after the

American-led intervention, few would contest that the economic, political, and security situation in Haiti has dramatically improved. These improvements are continuing at a pace that is likely to permit the peacekeeping operation to conclude on schedule.

While acknowledging that the road ahead for Haiti is anything but smooth, this operation must be deemed a comparative success, one that is all the more surprising when one remembers the great trepidations that accompanied its launch. Indeed, any large scale international peace operation that begins peacefully, proceeds smoothly, and seems likely to end on schedule is so unique in the annals of peacekeeping that it justifies close study.

Haiti and the Historical Precedents

Perhaps the first lesson learned in mounting Operation Uphold Democracy was that Haiti was no Somalia, Bosnia, or Rwanda. Haiti is not a society of warrior nomads, who believe that no pickup truck is complete without a recoilless rifle mounted on its flatbed. On the contrary, Haiti is a society of pacific, largely unarmed peasant and urban masses that was terrorized by a small coterie of government-sponsored thugs.

Nor was Haiti a society in, or emerging from, a civil war. Deeply polarized socially, politically, economically, and even ethnically, Haitians nevertheless possess a strong national consciousness, a keen sense of common identity, and a deep pride in their unique culture. Neither was Haiti a failed state, one devoid of insti-

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tutions or structures of government like Somalia. At the time of our intervention, Haiti had a democratic constitution, a democratically elected parliament, a democratically elected president, and duly constituted courts.

In consequence, nation building, at least in the sense the term came to apply in Somalia, was not the international community's task in Haiti. Rather, the MNF, succeeded by UNMIH, had a more narrowly defined set of objectives, which include the following:

- Restoration of the legitimate, democratically elected authorities;
- Creation of a secure climate in which these achievements could function and democratic processes could resume their operation;
- Dismantlement of the old instruments of repression; and
- Assistance in the creation of a new set of professional and democratic institutions for security, including a new police force and a reformed judiciary.

These are the kinds of tasks that the United States had earlier undertaken on a unilateral basis in Grenada and Panama. These are challenges with which the United Nations has also coped, for example, in both Cambodia and El Salvador.

Last year, as the administration, the Congress, and the American people debated the wisdom of intervening in Haiti, we should have spent more time examining the record of those earlier examples of peacekeeping assistance to societies in transition rather than focusing almost exclusively on a "no more Somalias" debate. Unfortu-

nately, few can absorb more than one historical lesson at a time, and it is usually the most recent and most traumatic, rather than the most relevant, event that dominates our public discourse.

In both Grenada and Panama the United States successfully restored legitimate governments, assisting those governments in a process of democratic transformation from which neither has since turned back. Haiti is distinguished from these two operations principally in the unparalleled degree of regional, hemispheric, and international participation that the United States was able to secure for Operation Uphold Democracy and its UNMIH successor. Thus, as of mid-1995, troop and police contingents from well over forty nations have served with the MNF or UNMIH.

A Typology of Peacekeeping

It has become commonplace to divide post-Cold War peace operations into two categories. First, there is interpositional peacekeeping of the type long practiced in Cyprus, the Sinai, and the Golan Heights. Second, there is the newer, more robust peacemaking or peace enforcement of the type undertaken in Somalia and Bosnia.

Experience in Haiti suggests that there are, in fact, at least three distinct categories of post-Cold War peace operations:

- Interpositional peacekeeping,
- Peacemaking or peace enforcement, and
- Peacekeeping assistance to societies in transition.

This third category of peace operations might be preceded by the forcible restoration of a legitimate

government. In Grenada and Panama this was the case. In El Salvador such a step was not necessary. In Haiti the restoration of democracy was unopposed, but only by a narrow margin.

Whether a forced entry takes place, the role of the international peacekeeping force, once established, is to help provide for public safety while the old instruments of repression are dismantled and to help in the creation of new, professional, and democratic successor institutions. In terms of difficulty, this “transitional” peacekeeping falls somewhere between the other two categories.

Interpositional peacekeeping represents a familiar and relatively manageable endeavor. Peacemaking or peace enforcement is much more difficult, perhaps even impossible. The international community may never be able to dispose the power adequate to simultaneously suppress both sides of a conflict that neither combatant regards as even provisionally over. Peacekeeping assistance to societies in transition, or “transitional peacekeeping,” is highly challenging, but it is feasible.

Lessons Learned

The experience of Operation Uphold Democracy, and its UNMIH successor, demonstrates the following: First, a need exists for the closest possible integration of diplomatic, military, humanitarian, and economic instrumentalities.

Achieving such integration is intensely difficult. Nothing, in fact, limits the international community’s ability to mount complex peacekeeping operations more than the time and effort re-

quired of policymakers at the highest levels to achieve and sustain that degree of integration. The Haitian enterprise was, in terms of blood, almost cost free. In terms of treasure, it was relatively inexpensive. In terms of high level time and attention, the operation was, and remains, extremely demanding.

As one example, Haiti has received more high-level U.S. government visitors over the past year than the rest of the Western Hemisphere combined: one visit by the President, two by the Secretary of State, two by the Secretary of Defense, three by the National Security Advisor, four by the Deputy Secretary of State, at least half a dozen by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and many more at the sub-Cabinet level. No American government will embark on such an enterprise lightly. Perhaps no country, other than the United States, is presently capable of mounting, integrating, and sustaining a complex multiagency, multifunctional, and multinational enterprise on this scale.

From the Gulf War to Haiti, the UN has been an essential instrument for mandating, legitimizing, and assuming residual responsibility for such operations. Yet with respect to Haiti, UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali was among the first to recognize that mounting such an intervention and seeing it through its initial stages was well beyond the UN’s capabilities. Boutros Ghali was, in consequence, the first to recommend the “all necessary means,” multilateral coalition route for addressing this crisis.

Second, a need exists for the synchronization of action by civilian

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and military instrumentalities. Peacekeeping is a true political-military activity in which both spheres—the civilian and the military—need to work together in closer interaction than is normally the case in either war or peace. In the former, diplomacy gives way to force. In the latter, the reverse is true. In peacekeeping, neither element can afford to get too far ahead, or fall too far behind, the other.

In its planning for Haiti, the U.S. government created, perhaps for the first time in its history, a formal political-military operations plan. The objective of this planning exercise was to impel civilian agencies toward the sort of precision, discipline, and forethought that military establishments routinely demand of themselves. The relative smoothness of Operation Uphold Democracy owes much to its comprehensive forward planning, and to the perhaps unprecedented intensity of civil-military cooperation which that planning helped to foster. Yet our civilian agencies were often hard put to meet the demand for timely action once this operation was launched.

USAID, for instance, had recently established an office especially to work with societies in transition, such as Haiti. Yet, USAID must, by law, follow procedures for the design and delivery of assistance that maximize accountability and cost effectiveness at the expense of speed, precision, and flexibility. In a military operation, where lives are at stake, where large sums of money are being spent, and where the duration of the operation is in some manner linked to the delivery of technical, economic, or hu-

manitarian assistance, these can be false economies.

Finally, the experience of Haiti demonstrated the desirability of a more extensive use of international police. Within a few weeks of the arrival of the MNF in Haiti, and once the Haitian Army had been disarmed, the international peacekeeping operation became a true “police action.” Had the international community, at that point, been able to mobilize several thousand civilian police to serve in Haiti, most of the then over 23,000 MNF troops in Haiti could have been more speedily returned home.

The UN tradition, however, is to limit the use of international civilian police in peacekeeping actions to monitoring, mentoring, and training, never permitting them to do actual policing. That function, to the extent it proves necessary, is performed by soldiers, and few military units have the training, equipment, or doctrine optimal for such missions.

In Haiti, we were able to break out of this mold to a limited degree. In the MNF, or first, phase, eight hundred international police monitors (IPMs) were deployed. In the UNMIH, or second, phase, a similar number of UN Civilian Police (CIVPOL) have been fielded. In both cases, where there was an absence of any effective Haitian capacity for law enforcement, these police units had, perforce, to engage in direct policing.

Additionally, following early and intense television coverage of the Haitian police brutalizing their fellow citizens within view of American soldiers debarking in Port-au-Prince, the MNF’s military police

component was quickly increased. These MPs proved highly effective in crowd control and other police functions.

The Haitian experience suggests that U.S. Military Police, along with U.S. Special Forces, are among those units best suited to participate in “transitional” peacekeeping. With the growth of peacekeeping as a mission for U.S. forces, our military authorities should consider further expanding such capabilities, of course taking into account the tradeoffs involved with other essential roles and missions.

There is, additionally, no reason why our military establishment should bear the full burden of providing such capabilities. Policing is essentially a civilian function. The international community has relied on its military to provide such capabilities in peacekeeping operations largely because it lacks civilian instrumentalities readily available for the purpose. This is particularly a problem for the United States, which unlike most other nations lacks a national constabulary, like the Gendarmes in France or the Carabinieri in Italy, upon which it can draw for such missions.

Both United States and the international community need to be more creative in devising ways to mobilize and use civilian police for peacekeeping missions where help in the provision of public safety, rather than monitoring of a truce or the enforcement of a cease-fire, is the primary objective.

Conclusion

One lesson of Haiti is the uniqueness of each peace operation. In

this case, the wisdom and moderation with which President Aristide approached his post-restoration tasks, his tremendous popularity, and the restraint which he was able to secure from the Haitian people have been a decisive element in the success of the operation. This is an element one cannot count on replicating elsewhere.

Peacekeeping will undoubtedly prove more difficult in lands more distant than Haiti, in societies more deeply divided and more heavily armed, and in countries with less-established national identities and less-developed institutions. Common to all such peace operations, however, will be the challenge of integrating the international community’s civil and military instrumentalities, and synchronizing a wide range of interfunctional, interagency, and international contributions. In this regard, Operation Uphold Democracy and its UNMIH successor have set a standard.

Ambassador Dobbins' remarks were delivered at the ISD Conference on DIPLOMACY AND THE USE OF FORCE: EIGHT CASE STUDIES, held during September 21–22, 1995, at Georgetown University. This conference examined the relationship between force (its use or the threat of its use) and diplomacy in the post-Cold War world. It did so through the examination of six actual and two hypothetical cases in which force was threatened or used in support of diplomatic objectives: U.S./UN intervention in Haiti, Russian action in Chechnya, U.S. intervention in Somalia, Russian interventions in the NIS, U.S. actions in Kosovo and Macedonia, potential French intervention in Algeria, potential Russian use of force in defense of Russian nationals in a NIS state, and NATO action in Bosnia.

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