

# HAITI: A CASE STUDY OF THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE AND THE EFFICACY OF NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE CRISIS

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In 1990, a military coup ousted the democratically-elected president of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The United States led the international response to the coup, Operation Uphold Democracy, a multinational military intervention meant to restore the legitimate government of Haiti. The operation enjoyed widespread support on many levels: the United Nations provided the mandate, the Organization of American States (OAS) supported it, and many countries participated in the multinational force and the follow-on United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH). International, regional, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) worked with the multinational force and later the UNMIH to restore the elected government and to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Haiti. This article focuses on the latter aspect of the international response—the delivery of humanitarian aid. It closely examines the methods of interorganization coordination,<sup>[1]</sup> with particular attention given to the interaction among NGOs and the United States military. An examination of that relationship indicates that the infrastructure the military used to coordinate with the NGO community—the Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC)—was critical to the success of the humanitarian mission. Because both the military and the humanitarian community will probably have to work together again in humanitarian assistance operations in response to civil strife, each community must draw on the lessons of past operations to identify problems in coordination and to find solutions to those problems.

## II. THE STORY

### A. *Haiti's History: 1462-1970*<sup>[2]</sup>

Modern Haitian history began in 1492 when Christopher Columbus landed on Haiti near Cape Haitien on the north coast of Hispaniola.<sup>[3]</sup> At first, the island was an important colony and the seat of Spanish government in the New World, but Spain's interest in Hispaniola soon waned. While Hispaniola drifted under Spanish administration, the French began colonizing the Haitian island of Tortuga, then Cape Haitian. The establishment of the French West India Company lent a sense of seriousness to French intentions for the western half of Hispaniola, which they called Saint-Dominique, which is not to be confused with today's Dominican Republic. In 1697, Spain ceded Saint-Dominique, now Haiti, to the French by the Treaty of Ryswick. During the hundred years of French colonization, the backs of 700,000 black African slaves carried Saint-Dominique into great prominence. As the French colony became the richest in America,

providing sixty percent of the world's coffee and forty percent of British and French sugar, its productivity engendered a caste system that shattered French domination and set the stage for the social discord and political exploitation that remain today. The French slave owners and their black concubines produced a new class, "the mulattos," also known as *gens de couleur* or *affranchis*. This new class's social status rested between those of whites and blacks. In spite of institutional discrimination against them, many mulattos became wealthy land owners, establishing a viable class unto themselves.<sup>[4]</sup> Cruel and abusive racial discrimination, however, was the hallmark of French colonization in this three- tiered society of whites, mulattos, and blacks.

In the fifty years or so leading to the 1791 slave revolution in Haiti, black slaves began to react to the abusive treatment of their masters. The continuing racial strife bolstered by the inspiration of the French revolution contributed to the outbreak of a revolution. During this period of civil war, Toussaint L'Ouverture emerged as the dominant black leader. The slave revolution virtually eliminated the white population and degenerated into a ten- year entanglement of atrocities known as the "War of the Castes." French commissioners representing the new French National Assembly appointed Toussaint Commander-in-Chief of all forces. American President John Adams's support of Toussaint, in the form of arms and ships, helped to consolidate his power. In May of 1800, Toussaint captured the port of Santo Domingo and established control over Hispaniola. By 1801, he had become a military dictator and governor for life. Then, in 1802, Napoleon Bonaparte once again seized control over Hispaniola, but the French lost interest in it when war between Britain and France resumed in Europe in 1803. Under pressure from the ravages of yellow fever and harassing guerrilla forces, the French commander fled the island. A small French presence remained in the former Spanish colony of Santo Domingo until 1809, when the Spanish briefly resumed control.

Haiti proclaimed independence on January 1, 1804. The world's first free black republic was to be characterized by racial hatred and corruption. The United States did not recognize the new republic until 1862 because of its own divisive racial problems. The black leader Jean Jacques Dessalines, emerged as the new leader of Haiti. He despised the remaining whites and set about slaughtering them. In 1805, he crowned himself Emperor of Haiti, maintaining a corrupt and licentious court. His empire soon came apart, and he was hacked to pieces by supporters of a mulatto- led rebellion. Dessalines' rule left a legacy of renewed conflict between blacks and mulattos and the international isolation of Haiti. After Dessalines, the desperate competition between blacks and mulattos manifested itself in the eventual division of Haiti: a northern kingdom under black Henry Christopher (King Henry I of Haiti) who ruled harshly from a Cape Haitian palace and a southern republic under mulatto Alexandra Petion's laissez- faire rule at Port-au-Prince.<sup>[5]</sup> After Petion died in 1818, the republican senate selected the commander of the Presidential Guard, General Jean- Pierre Boyer, as the new president for life. With King Henry's death in 1820, Boyer was able to consolidate Haiti and establish a government remarkable only for the relative stability that a twenty-five- year- rule provided. Under Boyer, the economy stagnated and the division between blacks and mulattos widened. Boyer's rule gave way to a series of twenty-two heads of state

between 1843 and 1915, when the United States invaded Haiti. During this period, only one president served his full term of office.[\[6\]](#)

The United States's first intervention in Haiti came in July 1915, when then Haitian President Guillaume Sam executed 167 political prisoners and was subsequently torn to pieces by an angry mob. The spectacle of parts of Guillaume Sam carried about on the streets of Port-au-Prince by the mob sparked a Washington decision to intervene. On July 28, U.S. Navy and Marines landed in Port-au-Prince to take control of the government of Haiti. Even before that spectacle, the Wilson Administration had considered the occupation of Haiti a means to prevent European intervention in the hemisphere. At issue was the U.S. policy of protecting the newly built Panama Canal. Specifically, the Administration was concerned by German interest in Haiti as a site for a coaling station. The gathering storm of World War I added a sense of urgency to the drive to quell German initiatives in Haiti.[\[7\]](#) Except for local social and governmental institutions, U.S. control over Haiti was complete.[\[8\]](#) U.S. civilians advised key government officials and U.S. Marine Corps officers served as provincial administrators. The United States maintained a figurehead presidency as well as sway over the Haitian legislature when it was not dissolved.

When World War I was over, the rationale for occupying Haiti became less compelling, and finally in August 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt began the withdrawal of the Marines. The United States transferred authority to the Haitian military (the Guard), the only institution created by the Americans that remained viable after their withdrawal.[\[9\]](#) This Guard was a Mulatto-led force which became very repressive and the guardian of the elite interest in Haiti.[\[10\]](#) The twenty years that followed the American occupation brought by the return of presidents of insatiable personal ambition, brutal repression of political opponents, censorship of the press, manipulation of the legislature and the constitution, and corruption. During this period, the Haitian Army dominated political life, selecting presidents and effecting four coups between 1946 and 1957. The military influence over Haitian politics lost ground with the decisive win of Francois Duvalier in the presidential election of 1957. From the beginning, Duvalier's regime was fraught with trouble. A coup against him in 1958 convinced Duvalier to take measures to undermine the power of the military establishment. He fired the chief of staff of the armed forces and created a Presidential Guard. This palace guard became an elite unit within the military responsible directly to the President. Duvalier then dismissed the general staff and replaced senior officers with men loyal to him. Duvalier promoted black officers over mulatto officers, causing increased decay in the previously mulatto-dominated army.[\[11\]](#)

Duvalier's most damaging impact on the influence of the army was his creation of a militia named the Volunteers for National Security. Among the Creole-speaking people, this militia became known as the *tonton macoutes* (bogeyman). This phantom militia enabled Duvalier to extend his authority into rural areas where the majority of Haitians live even today.[\[12\]](#) Duvalier established control at both the top and bottom of society. He created his own elite by means of intimidation, bribery, extortion, and government rackets. In the provinces, he exploited voodoo practices and beliefs, gaining support of

voodoo sorcerers and developing a grassroots intelligence net. Estimates indicate that the *macoutes* killed approximately 40,000 people and drove thousands more into exile.[\[13\]](#)

Duvalier consolidated his power through misappropriation of U.S. aid, money, patronage, and the forced emigration of activist elements. The use of terrorism marked his regime. Duvalier's rule spanned the most intense Cold War competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, the establishment of Soviet-supported communism in Cuba, and the Cuban missile crisis. The United States, as it did in many situations, accepted the corrupt and repressive regime in part because it was strategically located adjacent to Cuba and was perceived as a bulwark against communism. The United States wanted to see order preserved, not only because of the Cold War, but also for fear that a lack of order would result in a large immigration of Haitians to the United States. Since 1934, U.S. policy had reflected fear of heavy immigration, but it became a major motivating force behind U.S. Haitian policy in the 1970s when the phenomenon of boat people first occurred.[\[14\]](#)

### **B. *Haiti and the Genesis of the Recent Conflict: 1971 to the Present***

In 1971, Francois Duvalier died, and his son, Jean-Claude, popularly called Baby Doc, continued the Haitian presidential tradition of misappropriation and disregard for the problems of the Haitian people. As economic conditions worsened and hunger and malnutrition grew commonplace, the basis for revolt was brewing. A plot against Duvalier by General Henri Biampy and Colonel William Regala succeeded in ousting Baby Doc from Haiti in February 1986.[\[15\]](#) A flare-up of violent rioting ensued, with little improvement. Many of the structures established by Duvalier, including the *tonton macoutes*, continued to exist into an era dubbed "Duvalierism without Duvalier."[\[16\]](#) The one percent of the population—those who controlled a vast amount of the country's wealth—also controlled the country.[\[17\]](#)

Encouraged by the international community, the army suppressed the fledgling revolution. A National Council of Government (CNG), made up of three civilians plus Biampy and Regala, was formed. The CNG took direct control of the military and the Haitian government. A civilian figurehead president headed the government at most times. The establishment of the CNG initiated a period of fraudulent elections, repressive dictatorships, and paper presidencies which brought minimal remedy to the conditions spawned during the Duvaliers' regimes.

Between 1986 and 1989, democracy began to take hold on a grassroots level. About 284 national and local organizations formed the National Congress of Democratic Movements (*Konakom*).[\[18\]](#) Another group called "the Group of 57" emerged in June of 1987 as the army attempted to thwart democracy and the electoral process. The Catholic church supported these movements, and a little known leftist Catholic priest, Jean- Bertrand Aristide, emerged as the voice for "a new Haiti." He was repeatedly targeted for assassination, including a September 1988 attack on his church.[\[19\]](#) Aristide preached tirelessly against the Duvalierism of the earlier decades.[\[20\]](#) By September 1988, Lieutenant General Prosper Avril, then head of the military government, initiated the

restoration of constitutional authority to control the military. This action brought about intense opposition from several right-wing parties that feared a military takeover. General Avril was replaced by an army commander for three days until a judge of the Court of Cassation (Supreme Court), Ertha Pascal-Trouillot, could accept responsibility as provisional President on March 13, 1990. The “government” mandated Pascal-Trouillot to hold presidential elections. Although violence and terrorist attacks marked the several months of campaigning by opposition candidates, the ensuing December general elections were peaceful.

On December 16, 1990, the Haitian people participated in what many consider the first true democratic election in Haiti’s history. Approximately 1,500 observers from the OAS, the UN, and other agencies assisted in this democratic process. The era of “Duvalierism without Duvalier” seemed to be ending. The U.S. congressionally-funded organization, National Endowment for Democracy, together with the State Department, had provided over \$12 million for financing the elections.<sup>[21]</sup> The United States was pushed hard for a democratic solution to the problems which plagued Haiti.<sup>[22]</sup> Haitians elected Aristide to the presidency with sixty-seven percent of the popular vote. Aristide achieved victory by turning to the masses with a goal of purging Haiti of the *macoutism* which had controlled the country since the Duvaliers. In his campaign efforts, Aristide extended the meaning, and thus the hatred, of *tonton macoute* beyond the Volunteers for National Security to include anyone who did not accept his populist philosophy.<sup>[23]</sup>

Aristide’s unexpected victory (he had been urged to withdraw by a former president of the United States, Jimmy Carter, due to lack of funds and political awareness) resulted from strong support from the masses of the Port-au-Prince slums and from large numbers of intellectuals who supported his calls for vengeance against the Duvalierists who remained in the country. His margin of victory insured his success in the election without requiring a run-off election with Marc Bazin of the National Alliance for Democracy and Progress, who gained only 14.2 percent of the popular vote.

Though elected by a large majority, Aristide had difficulty in governing from the beginning, in part because he did not control the legislature and in part because members of the status quo resisted him.<sup>[24]</sup> He did attempt to gain greater control over the army by removing the old guard and appointing more reform-minded officers in their stead. On January 7, 1991, Dr. Roger Lafontant, the Minister of Interior under the Duvaliers and head of the *tonton macoutes*, while claiming the support of the army, seized the presidential palace. Dr. Lafontant vowed Aristide would never become president. The head of the army, General Herard Abraham, declared that his troops would not go against the constitution. Within twelve hours, the coup was over and the army had captured Dr. Lafontant. Later during Aristide’s presidency, Lafontant would be assassinated in prison.

The aborted coup attempt gave birth to two significant insights. First, a sense of hope actually existed, as witnessed by the fact that the army, after assisting in a free and democratic election, chose to support the president-elect over the coup leaders. Second, a deep sense of frustration was also present, as evidenced by the fact that the people went on a rampage: street violence broke out shortly after Aristide was elected.<sup>[25]</sup>

Aristide's apparent sanctioning of his own followers' violence against political opponents reinforced the coolness of support from the United States government.<sup>[26]</sup> Nevertheless, having survived this first crisis, and with a semblance of support from the army, Aristide was sworn in as President of Haiti on February 7, 1991. In his inaugural address, President Aristide announced the removal of six of the seven members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who had been associated with the old order. In their place, he appointed officers whom he believed were reform-minded. In July 1991, in an attempt to gain greater control of the army, Aristide dismissed General Abraham and replaced him with General Raoul Cedras, who had been responsible for security during the December elections.

Aristide also tried to gain some control over Haiti's 562 administrative units, which were traditionally run by military section chiefs who held complete control over the unit. Aristide ordered the section chiefs to give up their arms and to become accountable to local civilian authorities. By leaving the rural communities to themselves, "a law and order vacuum was created which allowed old scores to be settled, revenge to take place, and chaos to reign."<sup>[27]</sup> Old section chiefs suffered the *Pere Lebrun*, a tire filled with gasoline and set ablaze around the neck of the victim. Aristide also imposed a high tariff on all imports to reduce foreign competition with products produced at home, and he attempted to "repatriate" funds from businessmen.

Aristide's actions aroused great suspicion in the former ruling elite. His critics came from the right, left, and center of the political spectrum and even included elements of his own electoral coalition. Suspicions increased when he refused to submit the new Haitian Armed Forces (FAD'H) commander's<sup>[28]</sup> name to Parliament for full confirmation, failed to sign the commissions for the new members of the FAD'H General Staff, and set up a Presidential Security Service, composed of civilians and soldiers who were trained by foreign advisors.<sup>[29]</sup> Many politicians thought that Aristide's government had failed to live up to its democratic promise. They accused Aristide of seeking dictatorial powers, crushing democracy, and using violence to further his goals; in short, they believed that Aristide was positioning himself to become a dictator.<sup>[30]</sup>

On September 30, 1991, seven months after the election of Aristide, the military, led by General Cedras, commander of the army, and Colonel Michel Franois, head of the capital's police force, deposed Aristide. Aristide left the country for political asylum—first in Venezuela and later in the United States.<sup>[31]</sup> An enlisted man's rebellion against Aristide propelled the coup, and soldiers seized the government. Soldiers forcibly recalled as many assemblymen as they could locate, and, amid gunfire, persuaded 29 of 110 assemblymen to sign a resolution that the presidency was vacant. The army then appointed Supreme Court Judge Joseph Nerette as the new civilian president of Haiti. Ironically, the leaders of the coup were the same officers Aristide had promoted in hopes of reforming the military. Many have claimed that Cedras was a mere figurehead for an alliance between old guard forces in the army and upper and middle classes.<sup>[32]</sup> This alliance tolerated Aristide for seven months, but feared that further consolidation of the first democratic regime in the country's history would irreversibly threaten their privileges.<sup>[33]</sup>

The army's official justification for the coup, however, was that Aristide was positioning himself to become a dictator. Many said that the president was an apprentice dictator who was forming his own security service similar to the *tonton macoutes*.<sup>34</sup> General Cedras has said that "Aristide created enormous instability with . . . fiery speeches, which finally provoked a corrective movement for democracy."[\[35\]](#)

### C. United States Political Climate and the Exodus of Refugees from Haiti

U.S. intervention in Haiti evolved from a complex set of U.S. domestic and international political considerations. Political events and protracted diplomatic engagement impacted the operation in Haiti in a myriad of ways. The repression perpetrated by Haitian soldiers against their own people increased dramatically following the military coup. Murders, abductions, tortures, and politically motivated arrests were common. This systematic violence and abuse of human rights caused a massive exodus of Haitian refugees, most of them supporters of Aristide.[\[36\]](#) Many of these refugees fled to the United States in small—often unsafe—boats. Of these, many were intercepted by the U.S. Coast Guard, while many more sank.[\[37\]](#) When the Coast Guard intercepted boatloads of refugees, it took them to the U.S. military base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. At Guantanamo Bay, some were selected to enter the United States, where their requests for political asylum could be processed. The vast majority, however, were returned to Haiti. This practice of interdiction and forced repatriation became the target of intense criticism from NGOs and other human rights organizations. These organizations argued that the forced repatriation violated both international law[\[38\]](#) and United States law which prohibits *refoulement*, or return, of persons fleeing (in good faith) persecution in their country of origin.[\[39\]](#) In *Sale v. Haitian Centers Council, Inc.*,[\[40\]](#) organizations representing Haitian refugees, many of whom had been detained at Guantanamo, sought a temporary restraining order, arguing that the Executive Orders commanding the forced repatriation of Haitian refugees interdicted "beyond the territorial sea of the United States"[\[41\]](#) violated Article 33 of the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the Immigration and Nationality Act of the United States. Rejecting that argument, the U.S. Supreme Court held that neither law applied to actions taken by the Coast Guard on the high seas.[\[42\]](#) Further, the Court found that the president's power to repatriate refugees without papers and who had been intercepted on the high seas is not subject to restriction, and that the right not to be subject to *refoulement* applies only to aliens physically present in the United States.[\[43\]](#)

Of course, Aristide denounced this decision and the policy of intercepting and repatriating the so-called boat people. President Aristide issued his communique after officials found four corpses of Haitian refugees, including two children, on the beaches of Florida.[\[44\]](#) Concurrently, criticism from within the United States intensified.[\[45\]](#) In March of 1994, a group of congressmen (particularly members of the Congressional Black Caucus), artists, and leaders of the black community launched a campaign to change U.S. policy. The group denounced President Clinton's policy as racist and asked for the removal of Lawrence Pezzullo, the State Department's Special Advisor on the Haitian crisis, for his perceived lack of leadership and commitment in ending the crisis in Haiti and among the Haitian immigrant community.[\[46\]](#) Thereafter, tension continued to

heighten. On April 11, 1994, the Executive Director of the Trans-Africa Group, Randall Robinson, began a hunger strike in opposition to the policy of forced repatriation while the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights visited Haiti and continued to document the atrocities being perpetrated there.[\[47\]](#)

At the end of April, President Clinton changed U.S. policy when 411 refugees, intercepted four miles from the coast of Florida, were admitted into United States territory. It was not until May 8, however, that President Clinton officially announced the end of the policy of summary and forced repatriation. At that time, a system for conducting interviews aboard ship was established, whereby refugees could establish their political refugee status. Persons who did not qualify would be returned to Haiti. As part of the change in policy, Lawrence Pezzullo resigned and was replaced by former congressman and President of the United Negro College Fund William Gray.[\[48\]](#)

Almost immediately, the number of intercepted persons increased dramatically. On June 28, the Coast Guard intercepted 1,486 Haitians and on that same day President Clinton announced that the Guantanamo military base would once again be used to process refugees. Guantanamo had a capacity of only about 12,500, but the U.S. interdicted as many as 34,000 refugees during the period from October 1994 to March 1995.[\[49\]](#) In view of the enormous migration of refugees, U.S. policy changed yet again. On July 5th, President Clinton announced that the United States would no longer consider persons intercepted at sea as candidates for political asylum. Only persons who obtained that status while still in Haiti would be considered. Refugees intercepted at sea would be accommodated at the Guantanamo military base or at other refugee camps until other countries received them or until the crisis came to an end.[\[50\]](#) Unfortunately, the situation of the refugees at Guantanamo was becoming increasingly tense. On August 13, following hours of demonstration, hundreds tried to flee. The demonstrations were called to demand political asylum in the United States or, alternatively, that the United States invade Haiti. The refugees also demanded better living conditions in refugee camps.

The miserable living conditions in the camps were notorious. The Centers for Disease Control warned government officials of the increased risk of tuberculosis and other infectious diseases in such close and inadequate quarters.[\[51\]](#) During the demonstration, numerous refugees and twenty U.S. soldiers were wounded.[\[52\]](#) One commentator likened Guantanamo to a “rights-free zone” where de facto political refugees were detained in military camps behind barbed wire without due process rights of any kind.[\[53\]](#) The government held hundreds of Haitian men, women, and children with credible claims of political persecution in Guantanamo because they tested positive for HIV.[\[54\]](#) One such refugee told a tale of isolation. After his HIV status was known, he and others who had tested positive were taken to a remote part of the camp where they “shared their sleeping quarters with rats, snakes and other animals.”[\[55\]](#) Another, a woman, described the conditions there as crowded and unsanitary, often endangering small children. She said that when the Haitians complained and began demonstrating, some were beaten and jailed; she claimed that she had been shackled to a commode for two hours after a protest. Of course, government officials disputed the claims of mistreatment by the military.[\[56\]](#)



### III. THE INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS

#### A. *The International Response to the Coup*

As tensions were building within the United States and within the Haitian refugee community, other nations and international organizations showed a willingness to respond to the military-backed coup. United States and international policy focused on restoring the elected civilian government. U.S. aid programs and packages, supplemented by the European Community, France, Japan and Canada, totaling approximately \$400 million dollars were suspended. The OAS, which within four months prior to the coup had declared all thirty-four of its members as democracies, responded rapidly and authorized the organization's foreign ministers to adopt any measures deemed appropriate to end the coup.<sup>[57]</sup>

The United States took a multi-pronged attack against the Cedras-led government. This policy included refugee control, detailed in the previous section, and partial freezing of Haitian assets<sup>[58]</sup> in the United States. Initial negotiations began in 1991 with representatives of the National Assembly of Haiti meeting with President Aristide in Cartagena, Colombia. The Haitian army maintained veto power over the talks. As a precondition to Aristide's return, they insisted that President Aristide face criminal charges. Aristide, on the other hand, insisted on a military reform program. The OAS proposed naming an interim prime minister, restoration of Aristide as president, and formation of a new government. This proposal was rejected by the Haitian National Assembly representatives—out of fear of the military, some argue.

Some progress in the negotiations was made at meetings held January 7- 8, 1992, when President Aristide and the representatives from the Haitian Assembly agreed to the nomination of Rene Theodore for Prime Minister. On February 23, 1992, President Aristide and representatives from the National Assembly of Haiti appeared to agree to the following terms: (i) to return Aristide to the Presidency; (ii) to separate the police from the military; (iii) to a general amnesty; and (iv) to the ratification of a new Prime Minister. Two days later, President Aristide and Prime Minister designee Rene Theodore agreed to start to organize the government and set the stage for Aristide's return.<sup>[59]</sup> However, on March 19, 1992, the National Assembly of Haiti failed to ratify the agreement. Amid a turbulent session which was likened to a "professional wrestling exhibition,"<sup>[60]</sup> enough conservative members left the session, eliminating the ability to create a quorum. Therefore, the conservative president of the assembly, Djean Belizaire, closed the session without a vote on ratification. For the moment, the agreement appeared as if it had little hope of ever reaching a floor vote.

With the backing of the army, Marc Bazin was appointed Prime Minister, to form a new government of "national consensus" on June 2, 1992.<sup>[61]</sup> Bazin considered himself as the best mediator between Aristide and the army. Though the OAS and France were opposed to negotiations under Bazin, the United States demonstrated greater acceptance in supporting continued negotiations. By September 1992, new negotiations resulted in an apparent agreement between President Aristide and the army, which would allow foreign

observers (democracy monitors) into each of the nine administrative regions of Haiti. The observers' objective was to reduce political violence and facilitate the restoration of the elected government.

On January 18, 1993, the military-backed government of Haiti called for an election to select ten senators and four deputies. Aside from the ruling coalition headed by Prime Minister Bazin, the election was boycotted by the major political parties and by the general population. Most voters were soldiers or government employees, but the majority of people remained off the street for fear of being coerced into voting. In addition, bus and motorcycle transportation ceased as a protest against the election. Jean- Claude Bateux, the socialist leader who had worked for the return of Aristide, said “[a]ctually, the people voted today—a massive vote of contempt.”[\[62\]](#)

By mid-April 1993, Aristide was willing to offer political amnesty to his opponents in the army leadership. General Cedras and army-backed Prime Minister Bazin indicated their willingness to step aside and let Aristide take the helm. Yet, growing support for an independent committee to investigate war crimes and address the harm done to thousands of victims resulted in leaving open the possibility of criminally prosecuting army leaders. On June 16, 1993, the UN Security Council passed a binding resolution imposing an oil embargo on all petroleum and arms sales to Haiti and ordering a freeze on overseas financial assets of Haitian officials and business elite. Sanctions took effect on June 23, 1993.[\[63\]](#) However, negotiations throughout the summer of 1993 were successful in moving the nation toward a resolution of the conflict between Aristide and his opponents. With the help of a UN negotiating team, in addition to the support of France, the United States, Canada, and Venezuela, an agreement between Aristide and Cedras was signed on July 3, 1993, at Governors Island, New York (the “Governors Island Accord”).

Under the Accord, Aristide would nominate a new prime minister who would be accepted by the Haitian Parliament. The parliament would pass an amnesty law for the military involved in the coup against Aristide. Afterwards, Cedras, Police Chief Michel Franois, and other military leaders would resign. Aristide then was to appoint new military leadership and return to Haiti on October 30. On July 17, Parliament approved the Accord and on August 30, 1993, Robert Malval, a moderate businessman, became the new Prime Minister of Haiti. The installation of Malval as Prime Minister took place in the Haitian Embassy in Washington, D.C., so that Aristide could participate in the ceremonies.

#### **B. *Joint Task Force Haiti***[\[64\]](#)

After signing the Accord, the UN Security Council passed Security Council Resolution 867[\[65\]](#) on September 23, 1993, authorizing support for the transition from Cedras to Aristide. Consequentially, an expanded UN mission which began as an “observer mission” continued. The more general UN mission in Haiti had begun in September 1992 with the arrival of eighteen observers to monitor and report on human rights abuses. The number of observers grew to 200; they were known as the International Civilian Mission.

U.S. military personnel constituted the majority of these observers.<sup>[66]</sup> The advance team, mostly reservists, flew in thirteen days later.<sup>[67]</sup>

The expanded UN mission had two purposes. The first purpose was to monitor and retrain the police while simultaneously removing them from military control. This aspect of the mission comprised the International Police Monitors, and again, U.S. military personnel.<sup>[68]</sup> The second purpose, known as Joint Task Force Haiti, was to conduct military training and to provide both humanitarian/civic action programs in support of Haitian democratization, under UN operational control.<sup>[69]</sup> The Joint Task Force consisted of 599 United States and 110 Canadian military personnel.<sup>[70]</sup> From the beginning, the operation was led by the United States.

To carry out the civic affairs programs, Joint Task Force Haiti designed civic action projects, including health and engineering programs, designed to create “small but sustainable improvement in the lives of the Haitian people.”<sup>[71]</sup> The Joint Task Force sent teams of medical and engineering experts to work directly with Haitians. Five Canadian and thirty-six Americans who were specialists in community health, preventive medicine, entomology, and environmental health, worked with officials from both the Ministry of Public Health and the University of Haiti. Joint Task Force personnel taught Haitian health service providers how to develop health training programs in the field. As these programs intensified, the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion of the U.S. Army was to organize four direct support teams and deploy into outlying regions.<sup>[72]</sup> Engineering civic action programs also involved members of Joint Task Force Haiti to make direct contact with Haitian ministries of Education, Public Works, and Health, as well as with individual Haitian engineers. The group’s primary goal was to build eight schools and one hospital in the Port-au-Prince area. The U.S. Navy Seabees were the lead organization, working with the Canadian Air Force engineers and the Public Works Ministry of the Haitian Military.

Field grade officers of the U.S. Army Reserves’ 358th Civil Affairs Brigade were appointed to serve as liaison officers with five separate entities: The Deputy for Peacekeeping Operations at the UN, the U.S. Embassy in Haiti, the International Police Monitors, the International Civilian Mission and the General Staff of the Haitian Military.<sup>[73]</sup> The Joint Task Force Commander met with liaison officers every day. The liaison officers alternated days at the meetings and were instructed to organize each meeting around a theme. During these freewheeling exchanges, the Joint Task Force Commander tested his ideas on a friendly audience before implementing them in the field. Each liaison officer discovered that agencies were eager for a direct channel of communication with the Joint Task Force Commander. The reservists with a civilian background assisted in the functions of the assigned agency. For example, at the U.S. Embassy in Haiti, the embassy staff was initially overwhelmed with the added requirements of the Joint Task Force. The liaison officer immediately assisted the embassy. Furthermore, an International Civilian Mission liaison officer used his “civilian” status to defuse hostility to “all things military” by focusing on his previous volunteer work with the Red Cross. In another example, a reservist who was also a district attorney in Philadelphia relied upon his prosecutorial background to form a good

relationship with the Royal Canadian Police who were part of the International Police Monitors.[74]

In spite of its planning and apparent positioning, Joint Task Force Haiti was not a success. Civic action projects were continually thwarted by members of the Haitian military who were more interested in acquiring modern weapons systems than conducting any meaningful relief operations. At coordination meetings, Haitian military members “filibustered, withheld information and denied having the authority to take any constructive action.”[75] In addition, U.S. military and diplomatic planners erroneously assumed the Governors Island Accord granted consent. Furthermore, the Haitian military was fearful of reprisals by Aristide if he returned, while Aristide continued to make inflammatory speeches, further entrenching the old guard factions opposed to his regime.[76] When the military planners and strategists determined that the permissive environment was unyielding, the force package that was on the ground (civil and military officers) was simply not the force that could be reconfigured to meet the changing environment.[77]

Early in the fall of 1993, in preparation for implementing the Accord, the United States sent a team of 193 U.S. and twenty-five Canadian troops, engineers and trainers, to Haiti aboard the *USS Harlan County*. This group preceded the 1,267- person UN police and military mission to train Haitian police and army and rebuild the Haitian infrastructure, as agreed under the Accord. Arriving in Port- au- Prince, the *Harlan County* was greeted by an angry mob and denied entry to the dock. After a day long standoff, on October 12, 1993, the *Harlan County* was ordered to depart Haiti. Inside Haiti, the departure of the *Harlan County* was perceived as proof of weakened U.S. resolve to implement the Governors Island Accord.[78] Violence increased sharply. The French then quickly withheld a contingent of *gendarmes* that were scheduled to join the International Police Monitors, the Canadians withdrew, and, in addition to the rapid departure of support personnel, on October 16, 1993, the advance team of Joint Task Force Haiti was extracted.[79]

Three days prior, on October 13, the UN Security Council voted unanimously for Resolution 873[80] to reimpose the oil and arms embargo and to freeze the Haitian military authorities’ financial assets abroad.[81] Although the United States Department of Defense (DOD) did not favor the use of U.S. troops in Haiti, a twenty- member planning cell was established at the U.S. Atlantic Command (USACOM) to prepare for such a contingency. On December 22, 1993, the United States informed the Haitian military leaders that unless they stepped down by January 15, 1994, the fuel and arms embargo would be expanded, but the deadline passed without response. In the following weeks, “the U.S. government wavered, uncertain about Aristide’s’ ability to govern or his commitment to reconciliation. Policy focused on building support for a broad, moderate coalition within Haiti. The United States briefly considered whether Aristide should step aside in favor of a figure more acceptable to Haiti’s business elite and military.”[82]

By the early Spring of 1994, the DOD, which continued to oppose the use of military force in Haiti, began to assess alternatives. But, DOD did begin to examine the after-

action reports of lessons learned from Operation Just Cause in Panama and Operation Provide Hope in Somalia. Secretary of Defense Perry instructed the department to begin interagency planning for operations in Haiti.<sup>[83]</sup> Then, as described above, in March, U.S. political forces, particularly leaders of the black community and members of the Congressional Black Caucus, began aggressive lobbying against the administration's policy of repatriation of Haitian refugees and delaying the restoration of Aristide.<sup>[84]</sup> Opposition to the use of force was based on a number of factors, including reluctance to commit the military to another nation-building exercise and a belief that military action could not solve the underlying problems that contributed to Haiti's crisis. However, on April 22, 1994, the administration announced its intention to seek a total economic embargo of Haiti and stated that the use of force was an option.<sup>[85]</sup> This decision was likely influenced by the domestic political climate as well as a desire to promote democracy in the hemisphere and to restore national credibility diminished, perhaps, by the abortive attempt of the *USS Harlan County* to enter Haiti the preceding fall.

On May 5, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 917<sup>[86]</sup> demanding the resignation of the Haitian military leaders and instituting a global trade embargo and other financial and travel restrictions. On June 8, OAS adopted a resolution to reinforce the embargo.<sup>[87]</sup> Only food, medicines, and humanitarian relief supplies were exempted. With the strong possibility that hostile military action would take place, USACOM tasked the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (SOCOM) at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, to develop a plan (Plan 2370) for a military operation to forcibly remove the Haitian military and enable the restoration of President Aristide. The Agency for International Development (AID) began to develop plans to assist in this effort as well. Soon thereafter, USACOM instructed the Army's 10th Infantry Division (Mountain) at Ft. Drum, New York, to develop an alternative plan (Plan 2380) for permissive entry into Haiti to be used in the event that the Haitian military voluntarily ceded power. "The Coast Guard became actively involved in the planning for the military operation for the first time in August" and "[e]lements of a multinational force began training in Puerto Rico to support the transition."<sup>[88]</sup> A composite battalion from the Caribbean Community nations composed of military personnel from Jamaica, Barbados, Antigua, Trinidad & Tobago, Belize and the Bahamas was assembled and trained there under the command of a Jamaican officer. Troops from Bangladesh and Guatemala also trained in Puerto Rico.<sup>[89]</sup>

On July 5, 1994, without warning, the Cedras government expelled the International Civilian Mission from Haiti. On July 30, the last commercial aircraft left Haiti, and with it, Haiti's isolation was complete.<sup>[90]</sup> Thereafter, on July 31, the UN Security Council voted in favor of Resolution 940<sup>[91]</sup> which authorized the use of "all necessary means" to restore Aristide, and authorized the creation of a multinational force for that purpose.<sup>[92]</sup> The UN mandate had three primary objectives: to neutralize armed opposition and create a secure environment for restoration of the legitimate government; to restore and preserve civil order; and to be prepared to pass responsibility for military operations in Haiti to the UNMIH.

Within the United States government, interagency working groups were established with Joint Task Force level coordination. Plans for military intervention moved forward under both Plan 2370 and Plan 2380 during August. Then, in September 1994, a third plan that fell between the forcible and permissive entry plans was developed. This plan was ultimately used when the forces entered Haiti on September 19. Military planners had almost a year to develop these plans. In addition, the 10th Mountain Division, the core of the multinational force and experienced in peacekeeping operations, had adequate time to provide its soldiers specific training for the mission. The long period of planning and training was a significant factor in the ultimate success of the operation.[\[93\]](#)

### ***C. Operation Restore Democracy***

The multinational force (with some 20,000 American military personnel and other military personnel from 15 other countries[\[94\]](#)) was supposed to be dispatched in the early morning hours of September 19, 1994.[\[95\]](#) However, an eleventh hour peace mission by former President Jimmy Carter, Senator Sam Nunn and the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colin Powell, convinced Cedras to leave peacefully.[\[96\]](#)

Ironically, Raoul Cedras initiated the negotiating process that ultimately led to his own resignation.[\[97\]](#) Carter received a letter from Haiti's de facto foreign minister, Charles David,[\[98\]](#) who said General Cedras wanted to talk to someone as the threat of the American invasion grew.[\[99\]](#) Carter received the letter earlier in the week of Clinton's warning speech. Carter replied that Cedras should call him and when he did, the idea for the Carter mission to Haiti was conceived.[\[100\]](#) Carter then contacted Senator Nunn and General Powell, both of whom shared his feelings about resolving the Haiti crisis. By Friday of that week, President Clinton officially authorized the mission.[\[101\]](#) The three arrived in Haiti on Saturday at noon. Late in the night of September 18, as airborne forces from Fort Bragg were en route to Haiti, the deal was forged.[\[102\]](#)

#### ***1. The Civil Military Operations Center***

Accordingly, with very little advance notice, the multinational force transformed to a humanitarian mission with its primary objective to "restore democracy" to Haiti by ensuring the peaceful return of President Aristide. Once the U.S. military arrived in Haiti, Civil Military Operations Centers (CMOCs) were established[\[103\]](#) in Port-au-Prince and Cape Haitien, consistent with United States doctrine and practice for peace operations.[\[104\]](#) According to doctrine, a CMOC is a "coordination center established and tailored to assist the unit CMO (civil military operations) officer in anticipating, facilitating, coordinating, and orchestrating those functions and activities pertaining to the civil population, government, and economy in areas where armed GOs (governmental organizations), IOs (international organizations), NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), and PVOs (private voluntary organizations) are employed."[\[105\]](#) Generally, the CMOC functions and structure include an interface between all NGOs and military forces and a diverse set of civilian agencies including staff members from the various service components, USAID, AID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance/Disaster Assistance Response Team (OFDA/DART) and UN agencies.[\[106\]](#)

In Haiti, the CMOC was under the operational control of the Combined Joint Task Force, and was located within the military compound of the Joint Operations Center.[\[107\]](#) Special Operations Forces and civil affairs reservists conducted most of the civil and military operations.[\[108\]](#)

In Haiti, however, the CMOC did not function as the primary interface between the military and the NGOs. Rather, the CMOC dealt with the more traditional military functions of a peace keeping operation, for example, dealing with displaced civilians and clearing the field.[\[109\]](#) The primary interface between the military and the NGOs and governmental organizations was the Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Center (HACC).[\[110\]](#) The HACC was located outside the Joint Operations Center in the spaces of the USAID. It literally was in a big broom closet that was cleared out so that reserve army personnel had office space in which to work. The HACC's purpose, as part of the larger CMOC, was to act as a liaison with all the international organizations, such as the UN Deputy for Peacekeeping Operations, USAID, OFDA, as well as the NGO community.[\[111\]](#) Working along with the HACC, the OFDA/DART advised and coordinated the U.S. Military's humanitarian assistance activities with USAID/HAITI, the UN system in Haiti, and the various NGOs in the country.[\[112\]](#)

Interestingly, a joint publication, one of the authorities on humanitarian operations, describes the HACC as a higher-level coordination facility. According to that publication, the HACC is designed to assist the Commander in Chief (CINC), and is a forum where the unified command, agencies of the U.S. government, and relief organizations can coordinate operations. The Joint Task Force has the option of creating a CMOC or a Humanitarian Operations Center (HOC), which is described as a policy making body and which may evolve into an "international coordination center" most closely focused with the UN.[\[113\]](#) The Joint Publication instructs military commanders to use the term CMOC as the Joint Task Force and lower-level center for NGOs to make contact with the military. In Haiti, the HACC functioned as the CMOC should. Use of different terms, like HACC and CMOC, can create confusion for military and NGO personnel who have worked together on earlier operations.[\[114\]](#) And, in fact, many of the NGOs seem to have been confused by the term "HACC." "Many of them had experience in working through the CMOC in previous operations and therefore sought to make coordination [sic] there again."[\[115\]](#) According to Captain Chris Seiple, the Army made a tactical error in using this structure. The term CMOC had gained a level of recognition and familiarity with the NGOs (based on the operations in Somalia and Rwanda) and then the Joint Task Force in Haiti used a different term for the place the NGOs were to go to seek military assistance. While the military may understand these concepts, the NGO community most likely does not, and that misunderstanding can lead to real problems for NGO/military coordination as it clearly did in Haiti.

Prior to the deployment of the multinational force, the U.S. State Department met with InterAction, a coalition of U.S. private relief, development and refugee-assistance organizations to discuss the relief aspect of the mission in Haiti.[\[116\]](#) Interaction is made up of more than 150 organizations working in more than 160 countries.[\[117\]](#) Representatives of the constituent organizations meet together to establish cooperation

and standards of conduct.[\[118\]](#) During formal InterAction meetings in Washington, the CEOs of constituent agencies discussed various country activities. It is through this high-level coordination that various American based NGOs determine where other NGOs are operating, what their agendas are, and how NGOs can coordinate their activities to avoid overlap. InterAction also sponsors a variety of subcommittees or working groups that study various issues. Specifically in the Haiti crisis, an InterAction working group was formed which handled issues such as advocacy, media, refugee and disaster relief.[\[119\]](#) During its meeting with InterAction, the State Department instructed the NGOs to contact the HACC directly.[\[120\]](#)

Ironically, however, the military planners were unable to include NGOs and other governmental organizations in their plans. Because the mission was planned as a hostile entry until the eleventh hour, military planning was classified. Therefore, neither the military nor the NGOs and governmental organizations were able to coordinate prior to the multinational force's entry into Haiti.[\[121\]](#)

Two CMOC operations were in Haiti: one in the operations (J3) civic action section of the Joint Task Force Headquarters in Port-au-Prince (the Joint Operations Center), and the other in Cape Haitien as a part of the 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (L1) Headquarters.[\[122\]](#) The HACC in Port-au-Prince, however, was the meeting place for the NGOs. The HACC in Port-au-Prince would take requests for assistance from the NGO community and submit them to the CMOC. The HACC in Cape Haitien only comprised two individual officers. The CMOC in the Joint Operations Center had little contact with the NGO community. It coordinated requests for assistance with the operations officer (J3) at the Joint Operations Center to determine feasibility.[\[123\]](#) These requests were answered in writing and within forty-eight hours.[\[124\]](#) As of October 26, 1994, the CMOC was acting on 173 outstanding requests.[\[125\]](#)

Before the CMOC and HACC were established, military personnel received a briefing indicating that the NGOs that were already on the ground would handle food distributions. Based on their experience in Somalia, the military determined that they were not as efficient in distributing food as the NGOs, which had pre-established distribution networks. When the military distributes food, it tends to generate crowds, and in the words of Major John Cummings, "only the tough guys who can push their way to the front of the crowd get the food."[\[126\]](#)

Based on the assumption that there would be many NGOs in theatre that would be able to conduct food distribution and other relief efforts, the military made plans to integrate the NGOs into the distribution effort. However, this assumption turned out to be incorrect. The NGO community was different in Haiti than it had been in Somalia. In Somalia, there was an immediate need for relief supplies to prevent starvation and disease, whereas in Haiti, the NGO focused on long term development. Developmental NGOs have a slower operational cycle than the relief NGOs (who operate in crisis mode). So, when the containers of food arrived in Port- au- Prince, there were not enough relief NGOs to handle the distribution.[\[127\]](#) When the CMOC and HACC established their operation immediately in Cape Haitien after September 19, 1994, much to the surprise of the



military personnel, no NGO personnel were present. Instead, military personnel found empty office space. It was not until about one month after the establishment of the CMOC and HACC that the NGOs reappeared. There was, however, a missionary from the St. Vincent Foundation under the control of a Catholic nun in place. Major Cummings indicated that the St. Vincent Foundation had received support, including food for distribution and barbed wire to protect the food stores.[\[128\]](#)

The CMOC began its operations by directly contacting local governments. Military personnel secured and protected the city hall in Cape Haitien and the Mayor's office so that the Mayor could conduct business. All local government organizations received supported. A new police station was opened in City Soleil.[\[129\]](#) The supply of fuel by the military to the Haitian Public Works Department permitted the garbage trucks to pick up garbage that was building up in the town. In addition, engineering support was given to enable the local power plant to resume delivery of power.[\[130\]](#)

According to one NGO, PACT, working in Haiti,[\[131\]](#) there were and are approximately 2,000 NGOs operating there. Although the exact numbers are uncertain, we were told that there were somewhere between 20- 100 NGOs in country after the arrival of the forces.[\[132\]](#) According to PACT, many of the NGOs operate "without the sound structures to coordinate and monitor the multitude of activities in which they are involved."[\[133\]](#) This is confirmed by a US AID report stating that NGOs have been hampered both by general public sector neglect of infrastructure and by the embargoes.[\[134\]](#)

NGOs in theatre prior to the departure of General Cedras were suspicious. Any NGO operating publicly would have needed Cedras' support. Those NGOs were viewed as corrupt. The NGOs not supported by Cedras were either not functioning or were operating in secret and under intense pressure from the government. NGOs which did function were forced to pay bribes.[\[135\]](#) Because of the intelligence capabilities of the Special Forces operating in the area, CMOC personnel were able to distinguish easily between the legitimate and illegitimate NGOs.

## ***2. Evaluating the Haiti CMOC***

In Operation Uphold Democracy, humanitarian activity and support to NGOs was not a primary focus of the military forces deployed, but was more of a supporting effort. The primary goals of the force that landed in Haiti were ensuring that the Haitian armed forces and police complied with the Carter-Cedras accords; protecting U.S. citizens and interests, protecting the interests of designated Haitians and other countries' nationals, restoring civil order, assisting in the reorganization of the Haitian armed forces and police, and assisting in the transition to a democratic government with the return of President Aristide.[\[136\]](#) Operation Uphold Democracy's focus, therefore, was different from some of the previous peacekeeping operations, such as Support Hope and Restore Hope. This undoubtedly led to some of the problems experienced by the CMOC/HACC personnel and the NGO community.

The CMOC in the Joint Task Force Headquarters had virtually no contact with the NGOs. Instead, the HACC was the meeting place for the NGOs. The HACC sent for support from there to the CMOC in the J3.[\[137\]](#) The functions of the CMOC in Port-au-Prince were to receive and process requests from various NGOs, to maintain and provide linguists[\[138\]](#) to forces in the Joint Task Force, to collect and process open-source and J2-provided intelligence related to civil-military and civic action operations, maintain a running CMO estimate for the J3 civic action officer, and to receive and analyze unit situation reports for civil-military operations-related information. The Cape Haitien CMOC worked with the Mayor's council, committees of justice, ministers and other Haitian organizations. It also established trust and climate reconciliation, electricity, water and sanitation, air traffic control; humanitarian assistance and mail flights, fresh water production, and port operations.[\[139\]](#) The civil-military operations activity in Haiti was aimed to convince the Haitian people that the United States, and later the UN, were there to help. The purpose of the assistance was to show the world the progress which is possible under a democratic government.[\[140\]](#)

The first substantial Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) publication on Haiti indicates that military planners developed the HACC with the knowledge that some NGOs were reluctant to work with the U.S. military. Many NGOs interviewed for this article echoed this attitude. U.S. military planners felt, based on previous experience with many of the NGOs, a HACC would be less objectionable to them, and therefore, beneficial.[\[141\]](#) According to the military personnel, the main reason for the HACC was to ensure the NGOs did not have to come into the Joint Operations Center because the operations center was a secure environment.[\[142\]](#) Operation Uphold Democracy demonstrates the need for a consistent doctrine on peacekeeping operations and CMOCs specifically.

#### ***D. Nongovernmental Organizations Involved in Haiti After the Coup***

To this point, we have focused on the military's infrastructure—the CMOC—and its efficacy. We now turn to an examination of specific NGOs and their work in Haiti in an effort to understand the NGO perspective of the Haiti operation. The authors obtained the information contained in this Section, unless otherwise noted, through interviews with NGO personnel both in the United States and Haiti.

##### ***1. Level of Involvement***

Our research confirmed that the NGOs in Haiti, to the extent that they remained in the country during the military coup, did not attempt to mediate the conflict, nor did they attempt to intervene in it in any way. Rather, the NGOs working in the country before, during, and after the coup seem to be focused solely on development and humanitarian aid and assistance, rather than on direct peacekeeping operations. According to Steve Sookikian of Childreach,[\[143\]](#) one of the developmental NGOs working in Haiti, Childreach considers itself neutral in conflicts and does not attempt to mediate between the belligerent parties. It only enters an area with the consent of the local government. Childreach has a contract with the Haitian government which permits it to exist. Mr.

Sookikian reported that Childreach did cooperate with the multinational force in providing information regarding various communities. Since Childreach is a community based developmental organization, it could provide information regarding the inhabitants of a particular area—for instance, who was “good,” who was “bad.” In return, the multinational force provided security for the Childreach operations.[\[144\]](#) Similarly, American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), another relief organization active in Haiti, will not mediate between belligerent parties nor attempt to intervene in a conflict in any formal way.[\[145\]](#) The same is true of Oxfam[\[146\]](#) and Save the Children.[\[147\]](#)

Although no one we interviewed claimed that an NGO would become directly involved in peacekeeping, many organizations provide aid in Haiti, with the three largest being Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE),[\[148\]](#) the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA).[\[149\]](#) A host of other American based NGOs are also providing relief or development assistance in Haiti.[\[150\]](#)

## **2. Coordination among NGOs**

Our research suggests that some level of coordination does occur among NGOs in Haiti, but it is rudimentary at best. The largest NGOs—CARE, CRS and ADRA—seem to be taking a lead in some instances, but not at all in others. CARE personnel related that during the Haitian crisis, CARE, CRS, and ADRA met and geographically divided the country to carry out a food distribution program. The lesson here is that the personality of NGOs are extremely diverse, ranging from very cooperative to extremely aloof. In the late 1980s, CRS developed a policy statement, *CRS Guidelines on Humanitarian Assistance in Conflict Situations*, which provided specific instructions on when CRS would get involved in relief, to what degree it would cooperate with other agencies, and under what conditions funding would be accepted from other organizations. The thrust of the statement allowed for some degree of cooperation as long as CRS would lose no freedom of action.[\[151\]](#) This perspective on cooperation was typical among the NGOs we interviewed for this paper.

Most commonly, what cooperation and coordination exists comes about through informal mechanisms and on the individual initiative of field officers on site in Haiti.[\[152\]](#) A representative of Oxfam stated that Oxfam relies on informal networks and mechanisms and on the initiative of persons in the field for coordination of activities at the local level. Representatives of Save the Children report the same kind of cooperation with local groups coming about through a grassroots approach to problems in Haiti. For Save the Children, cooperation occurs almost solely with local groups and through the initiative of field personnel.[\[153\]](#)

During the course of our research, we were told many times that there is no formalized NGO association in Haiti.[\[154\]](#) Rather, all the NGO representatives we spoke to said that all organization at the local level results from personal contact and initiatives of individual field offices. Childreach, AFSC,[\[155\]](#) and Save the Children work within a framework of community empowerment of indigenous organizations. Save the Children,

for example, has worked with community groups since 1985 to develop a comprehensive program in the Maissade Commune. Today, the program includes soil conservation, agroforestry, child survival, women's credit, literacy training, and an HIV/STD prevention program.[\[156\]](#) Oxfam supports a number of local grassroots organizations, including Peasants of the Far West, VETERIMED, ENFOFAMN, the National Church Commission for Justice and Peace, and Voices for Haiti, a U.S. grassroots advocacy network that monitors U.S. policy in Haiti.[\[157\]](#)

Another example of this kind of coordination is provided by AFSCO. Its action reports reveal that in the years prior to the coup, the interaction of the AFSC program with local leadership took place through coordinating committees established at the regional offices. The committees were responsible for oversight and short and long term planning for the AFSC program.[\[158\]](#) According to its public relations officer, AFSC also collaborates with international organizations such as the World Health Organization and the Haitian government. AFSC has also made arrangements for a future and ongoing collaboration with Haitian NGOs. AFSC claims to have led in the organizing efforts, taking advantage of its good line of communication with the Haitian government and other international organizations. Because it is an organization focused solely on achieving social justice, AFSC strives to make few political waves; this political neutrality has been a clear benefit to the organization. ITECA has participated in or led workshops with AFSC since 1989. In addition, AFSC plans to work in cooperation with CARE, The Haitian Group for Research, Action and Promotion, The Center for Research and Action for Development, The Group in Solidarity with Haitian Women, The Haitian Ecumenical Center for Action in Rural, and Urban Contexts, and The National Coalition for Haitian Refugees.[\[159\]](#)

From the responses we received, it seems that some of the NGOs consider themselves a "group" of organizations with common concerns and, consequently, have a basis for collective action. In a significant number of areas, more than one NGO is addressing the same subject or may have membership links with the same organizations or may solicit funds from the same range of bodies. Thus, even a low level of cooperation makes provision of resources more efficient. A number of NGOs seem to seek increased ties to other organizations to improve the cooperation that now exists. Those NGOs that are members of InterAction have made the most progress on forming alliances with other groups.[\[160\]](#) Apparently, high level international coordination is extremely beneficial.

### ***3. Reluctance to Cooperate***

Only one of the NGOs that responded to our requests for information, Christian Relief Services, actually described a reluctance to cooperate with other NGOs as the status quo among NGOs in Haiti.[\[161\]](#) Christian Relief has no staff in Haiti. Rather, it works with a number of local grassroots organizations, and has fostered these connections through local organizations and use of informal channels of communication.[\[162\]](#) It has worked with a well-known local group, Foundation for the Children of Haiti, headed by a Haitian nurse, Gladys Sylvestre.[\[163\]](#) Her organization encompasses a large orphanage, several outreach clinics, an overseas adoption program, a vocational training center and a

pediatric hospital. Ms. Sylvestre has been working for eight years to bring these services together.[\[164\]](#)

According to Ms. Sylvestre, excessive duplication of projects and wasted time and money in the NGO community in Haiti is a problem. She attributes part of this to the vast number of NGOs there and the fact that the government does not apply stringent criteria to groups who seek NGO status. Essentially, one needs only to file cursory paperwork to receive that status. Background checks are rare or nonexistent. Of relevant consideration, Ms. Sylvestre reported that cooperation among NGOs in Haiti is virtually nonexistent.[\[165\]](#) According to her, part of the problem can be attributed to the fact that NGOs, particularly American NGOs and peacekeepers, come to Haiti with certain expectations and plans, and are extremely reluctant to change them to fit the reality Haiti needs. Ms. Sylvestre was particularly hard on the CMOC set up during Operation Restore Democracy. Her organization became involved with the CMOC during that time, and although the idea was good, cooperation did not occur in practice. Ms. Sylvestre confirmed that there are no networks of NGOs in Haiti and that the large NGOs are not willing to set them up. Apparently, no directory of NGOs working in Haiti currently exists. This is important given the need to develop a notion of who is out there and what they are doing to foster cooperation.

One problem NGO personnel identified was the fact that most NGOs are run by Americans. Worried about politics and funding, these American NGOs exhibited reluctance to cooperate. They all admitted to a concern with maintaining independence, which is perceived as crucial for the continued funding of their activities. Each NGO needs to be able to claim that a project belongs to them to continue to receive funds. Therefore, they do not want to share credit. Ms. Sylvestre's organization is incorporated in California and maintains an American and Canadian office just to "play the game."[\[166\]](#) Finally, Ms. Sylvestre identified corruption and politicization of humanitarian relief as a large problem.[\[167\]](#)

#### **4. *Degree of Decentralization within the NGOs***

The NGOs which responded to our questions all claim to employ decentralized models of organization which grant field officers latitude and authority over decision-making.[\[168\]](#) They also claimed to grant independence to those organizations involving the donee populations in programs which address their basic needs. For instance, CARE, Childreach, and AFSC all claim to give latitude to field officers and to work with the indigenous populations to provide relief. Childreach field offices use a "community empowerment model" in providing education, health, and family livelihood development and in seeking out other indigenous NGOs.[\[169\]](#)

In Haiti, where communication within the country is not always efficient, this model ensures the identification of the sectors that require the most aid. Also, popular participation ensures the long-term sustainability of development and aid programs. Programs that involve locals allow them to be their own advocates and thus create projects and programs that are realistic, pragmatic and sustainable. This seems important

in Haiti, where the climate is one of fear and distrust of others. However, an overarching relief strategy and some institutionalized coordination to make provision of resources efficient and effective are missing. It seems that the most successful cooperative efforts have been made by those NGOs who have good relations with the Haitian government. To be successful, decentralized cooperation at the local and NGO levels requires supportive national development frameworks. For the Haitian government, cooperation with NGOs offers tremendous advantages. These organizations have proved to be efficient and reliable development partners with the ability to carry out development activities at the grassroots level. NGO knowledge and understanding of the local populations and their traditions and environmental conditions can and should be used to create broad popular support for programs.

## **5. Conclusion**

Many organizations that we contacted failed to respond, some even after indicating to the authors that they would. This leaves open the question of how much cooperation is actually possible among NGOs. What is abundantly clear is that the NGOs in Haiti need an information system to locate individuals and foundations for funding, to locate other NGOs working in the same areas and to disseminate information to the public. Radio is an important means of communication in a society like the Haitian one, with high levels of illiteracy<sup>[170]</sup> and low infrastructural capacity. Radio may be the only way that rural people can receive local, national, and international information. Because the outreach potential seems great, NGOs should try to secure a spot on local and/or national radio frequencies. Topics could include civic education, meetings and other events, and discussion groups for local organizations. Creole language radio has unusual importance in Haiti. Thirty-two radio stations operate in Port-au-Prince, seventeen of which offer new reporting. There is one government-owned radio and television station. Broadcast media tends to be either neutral or supportive of the government.

The NGOs in Haiti seem to be making a difference, but there is still vast room for improvement. The greatest possibilities for cooperation right now seem to come from the efforts of CARE and the other large NGOs. The smaller, grassroots organizations simply do not have the time, money, or modes of communication necessary to access other like-minded organizations. Communication within the country seems crucial to alleviating some of the problems facing those in the field.

### **E. The United Nations Mission in Haiti**

Although the goals of Operation Restore Democracy were limited, the effort provided a secure environment in which a democratic government and a civil society could begin to develop. While the mechanisms for cooperation were not perfect, the CMOC structure may be as effective as any mechanism in the field today. The most difficult test posed was the transition from a U.S. dominated operation to a UN operation. The next section of this article discusses the hand-off of the mission by the multinational force to the UN Mission in Haiti (UNMIH). On January 30, 1995, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 975,<sup>[171]</sup> which terminated the multinational force mission. The transition to

UNMIH was to be made in March. UNMIH was authorized to recruit and deploy military contingents, civilian police and other civilian personnel. The Secretary General was authorized to deploy up to 6,000 military and 900 civilian police to continue the tasks of the multinational force.<sup>[172]</sup> The United States was able to help manage a reasonably smooth transition from the multinational force to the UNMIH in several ways.<sup>[173]</sup>

First, the United States was careful in negotiating the language of the resolutions to ensure clear objectives and an identifiable endpoint to the multinational force phase.<sup>[174]</sup> The bitter experience of Somalia heightened the determination that this transition be not only well-planned, but also well-executed. The commander of UNMIH, a U.S. Army major general, facilitated the transition. United States representatives worked with the UN on a variety of issues, ranging from military planning to recruitment of participating forces. At the urging of the United States, the UN created an advance team which worked closely with the multinational force for months prior to the transition.<sup>[175]</sup> The Secretary General's Special Representative was named, and the UNMIH staff was assembled and trained in the United States and in Haiti before the transition actually occurred.

In October 1994, the UN sent a sixty-person planning team to Haiti to work with the multinational force and U.S. planners from USACOM and the Joint Staff. The United States and the UN interchanged several ideas, leading to a mutually approved transition plan and a trusted UNMIH staff. "Politically, the experienced U.S. Ambassador provided continuity for the UN in understanding and dealing with the Haitians, working closely with both the MNF and the UNMIH."<sup>[176]</sup> The UN also contracted with the U.S. Army to provide predeployment training for UNMIH headquarters staff.<sup>[177]</sup> Because of this extensive planning, the force made no significant alteration in mission size, troop capabilities or quality of command.<sup>[178]</sup> The multinational force had been changing since February such that when the UNMIH assumed responsibility in March, almost all of the international forces were actually in place, thereby ensuring no gaps in security during the transition. Of a total of almost 6,000 military personnel in UNMIH, approximately forty percent were U.S. military, "providing a strong and positive psychological impression on the Haitian people that the United States was still actively involved in the mission."<sup>[179]</sup>

Since UNMIH has been in place, Haiti has continued its transition toward a constitutionally mandated national police force under civilian control, the *Police Nationale d'Haiti*. The newly established police academy, charged with training the civilian police, enrolled its first class in January 1995. The Ministry of Justice deployed these cadets at the beginning of June 1995, and classes of cadets have graduated each month thereafter. In September 1995, the UN/OAS International Civilian Mission commended the "clear determination of the Government to improve the quality and performance of judicial officials, and to supervise the conduct of the new security agents," which had already resulted in a dramatic decrease in the number of complaints. The timely conduct of presidential elections was an essential step in consolidating constitutional order in Haiti. The elections lead to Haiti's first ever transfer of power from one democratically-elected president, Aristide, to another, with the inauguration of President Rene Preval on February 7, 1996.<sup>[180]</sup>

#### **IV. A CLOSER LOOK AT THE NGO/MILITARY RELATIONSHIP: PLANNING**

The authors developed this section in large part from a book entitled *Interagency and Political-Military Dimensions of Peace Operations: Haiti—A Case Study* and edited by Margaret Daly Hayes.<sup>[181]</sup> Hayes' book documents a workshop organized by the National Defense University's Center for Advanced Concepts and Technology. The workshop brought together operators, researchers, planners and analysts to examine the Haitian experience from the military and the civilian side. Senior officials of both civilian and military agencies attended the workshop.

Operation Uphold Democracy had finite goals, particularly, to unseat the military dictatorship, to restore Aristide, and to turn the operation over to UN control within six months. The operation indeed accomplished these goals. Several factors led to this success. First, the operation underwent careful military planning with ample time to provide flexibility and a framework to accommodate the unexpected. The lessons learned in both Panama and Somalia were reviewed and incorporated as appropriate. Second, the Carter mission was successful in convincing General Cedras to step down, eliminating armed resistance and saving lives in the process. The U.S. military was able to shift smoothly from a forceful entry plan to an unopposed plan. Finally, the fact that the United States ran the operation for the first six months, and that the UN worked with U.S. leadership throughout the operation, made the transition to the UN both easier and smoother.

The transition, however, was not perfectly smooth. Interagency planning was slow, disjointed, and, until May 1994, lacked clear political guidance. "While civilian agencies were developing a 'comprehensive political- military plan,' major players continued to disagree on the goals until the final weeks prior to launching the mission."<sup>[182]</sup> Perhaps most importantly, the military was unable to integrate civilian counterparts into the planning process due to security constraints.<sup>[183]</sup>

##### ***A. Interagency Planning and Operational Coordination***

Vacillation in U.S. policy on Haiti in the year prior to the intervention caused much confusion in planning for the Haiti operation. Between October 1993 and May 1994, no agreement existed as to whether military force would be used.<sup>[184]</sup> The official U.S. position dictated the use of diplomacy to accomplish the departure of the Haitian military and the return of Aristide. Within the Administration, the National Security Council favored the use of force. Thus, USACOM began planning for military involvement even as the civilian leadership within the Department of Defense remained staunchly opposed. Until May 1994, when President Clinton announced that the administration would consider the use of force, USACOM's planning had been "tightly compartmentalized and confined to the military operation."<sup>[185]</sup> This situation carried on for far too long, contributing to needless delay and incomplete interagency coordination. Only when military intervention seemed inevitable did planning to integrate the military and civilian operations begin.



Failure of communication between strategic, operational, and tactical levels of the operations added to planning confusion. Strategic planning took place in the Executive Committee. Operations began in May under National Security Council leadership and included the Departments of State, Defense, Justice and Treasury, the CIA and AID. The Joint Staff represented USACOM who was conducting the operational planning.

“Serious operational level planning by different agencies began in June when interagency working groups and Joint Task Force- level coordination among the military units were established.”<sup>[186]</sup> OSD Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict (SOLIC) took preliminary steps to establish a CMOC in the spring of 1994 in response to Secretary Perry’s instruction to begin interagency planning. OFDA, the primary link to NGOs, began working with SOLIC during the summer, planning for a heavy increase in the delivery of food, fuel, medicines, and other relief supplies after the United States assumed control of the mission. AID’s Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) began planning in May.<sup>[187]</sup> Unfortunately, little operational level coordination existed between these agencies.<sup>[188]</sup> Again, until the 10th Mountain Division began developing the permissive entry plan in July, military and civilian agencies did not coordinate with one another.<sup>[189]</sup> In fact, interagency coordination at the tactical level did not take place until troops were actually in Haiti.<sup>[190]</sup> Moreover, civilian agencies were unfamiliar with civilian-military operational planning and with the idea of establishing precise lines of command and control and timelines for execution of projects.<sup>[191]</sup> A political- military operational plan attempted by the State, AID, Justice and Treasury during the late summer improved comprehension substantially “but was a far cry from the clarity and rigor of military planning.”<sup>[192]</sup>

The lack of operational planning among agencies led to problems throughout the mission. All aspects of the military operation itself went smoothly. Nevertheless, problems continued regarding “incomplete interagency coordination, military and civilian organizations’ mutual ignorance of counterpart culture and capabilities, and the inability of civilian agencies to surge in capacity to meet the additional effort needed to plan and conduct the operation[.]”<sup>[193]</sup> Clearly, to coordinate effectively, the military and humanitarian communities had to plan together. This requires them to negotiate a framework for cooperation, with rules and procedures in place well before the operation begins. Additionally, they should exchange information on capabilities and plans and organize a division of labor and functions. Such advance planning will expedite the operation once it begins and lay the groundwork for the efficient provision of aid.

### ***B. Confusion of Interagency Logistic Support***

Due to the use of three operational plans which initially confused the logistic support for the operation, the integration of civilian agency support was delayed and awkward. For example, AID officials could not get transport to Haiti. “Their [Department of Defense] points of contact deployed with the operation and left them with no ready Washington-based, working level access to the [Department of Defense] mobilization.”<sup>[194]</sup> Military transportation to Haiti for the civilian agency personnel was not planned, nor did the civilians even know how to gain access to it. In addition, some offices within the

Department of Justice—the Drug Enforcement Administration and the International Criminal Investigative Training and Assistance Program—agreed in Washington to provide programs and resources but failed to actually do so.<sup>[195]</sup> Instead, the U.S. military had to assume these functions and pay for them out of pocket. And finally, the State Department had the opportunity to engage the humanitarian community during its meetings with InterAction prior to the deployment of the multinational force.<sup>[196]</sup> However, instead of actually involving NGOs in the planning phase, those meetings merely disseminated limited information to the NGOs, thus proving to be a wasted opportunity for real coordination.

### ***C. Lack of Civilian Input in the Planning Phase***

Additional problems arose due to the failures in communication and coordination between civilian and military organizations responsible for rebuilding the Haiti infrastructure. For example, in Cape Haitien, the land and water force commanders coordinated responsibilities, but the civilian representative was missing. Thus, until well into the operation, no civilian was present to answer military commanders' questions about civilian assistance capabilities or assist with nation-building programs.<sup>[197]</sup> "U.S. military planners were surprised that their civilian counterparts were not immediately ready with nation-building programs."<sup>[198]</sup> Since military policy was not conveyed to NGOs, development planners did not understand military refusal to accept responsibility for civic action and nation-building efforts.<sup>[199]</sup> Consequently, due to the fact that the U.S. government had only begun to establish political-military planning and to integrate the military segment of a peace keeping operation with the civilian side, problems were considerable.

Finally, although many NGOs had only a skeletal staff in Haiti before the military operation, they did not adequately increase staff once the operation began. Unlike the military, civilian agencies do not have a reserve of personnel that can be sent into a crisis situation. In Haiti, the NGOs did not have enough personnel to coordinate and work effectively with either the military command centers or with military units in the field.

### ***D. Military / NGO Cultural Differences***

The military and NGOs have not learned to work together and are mutually suspicious. NGOs are concerned about potentially compromising their neutrality, or at least appearing to, if they interact with the military. Many organizations fear that if they cooperate with the military, they may be associated with it, or be perceived to be an instrument of some country's (or the UN's) foreign policy.<sup>[200]</sup> Thus, NGOs may fail to take advantage of a CMOC because they believe that they will best serve the "at risk" population by remaining neutral. Of course, some NGOs may actually have agendas that are antagonistic to stated U.S. security objectives or the U.S. military mission. In Haiti, for example, grass roots suspicion decreased when military personnel assisted the NGOs.<sup>[201]</sup> More civil affairs personnel stationed in Haiti would have helped in this regard. However, due in part to DOD concerns about nation- building after Somalia, they were not authorized.<sup>[202]</sup>

Cooperation between military and NGOs was significantly better on the relief side. The military observed, coordinated, and sometimes assisted with the delivery of relief supplies in coordination with AID/OFDA. U.S. Army Reserve civil affairs officers took over operation and control of almost every Haitian ministry, cataloguing the available assets, trying to get activities underway, and even directing activities.[\[203\]](#)

NGO and military expectations often differed, in large part because of incomplete coordination at the operational and tactical levels. Once the Haitian government collapsed, Special Operations units acquired even greater civil affairs responsibilities, “and for many months constituted almost the only civil administration.”[\[204\]](#) After the elections, mayors gradually reassumed control of government institutions and, thus, AID/OTI contractors and NGO personnel became active in the field. Special Forces personnel remained until early 1996.

#### ***E. Military/NGO Command Arrangements were Ad Hoc***

Several other organizational and operational factors affected coordination among agencies. The first issue was leadership. Even though this was essentially a U.S. operation, who was in charge remained unclear. The military was the last to arrive in Haiti, well after civilian agencies, including UN advance teams.[\[205\]](#) Some NGOs had been working in Haiti for years, even undercover at times for fear of the Cedras government. When the military arrived, it looked in vain for the type of hierarchical structure to which it was accustomed. “Throughout the planning process, the military, clearly a dependent variable in the broad political game, was frustrated by the absence of a clear decision-making hierarchy and by the delays in decision-making. This carried over into the field implementation.”[\[206\]](#) However, because the NGO was not used to working with the military or to its clear chain of command, tensions exacerbated between the two groups.[\[207\]](#) In Haiti, the U.S. military operation was only part of a larger mission charged with restoring democratic institutions and rebuilding the Haitian economy. But despite the planned division of labor, many in the military “lamented that there was no one in charge of the over-all operation. They perceived a need for an operational level commander who would coordinate and direct all the agencies and forces involved.”[\[208\]](#)

This lack of direction, however, is not an unusual situation in humanitarian assistance operations. The military usually has little control over the NGOs because the NGOs are generally present before the military actually arrives. For this reason, the military must have a clear understanding of the humanitarian needs, who is meeting those needs, and what each NGO is capable of doing. Whether that leads to the military assuming responsibility is a matter of higher policy, but at least awareness of gaps in capacity is a starting point for adequate planning.[\[209\]](#)

In fact, interagency political-military planning for the Haiti operation occurred at a higher and more integrated level than in any previous similar operation. “Indeed, Haiti marked the first time in recent memory that the U.S. government had undertaken to develop a formal interagency political-military plan in advance.”[\[210\]](#) Military forces

were flexible, changing entry plans as the ground circumstances changed. Civilian and military forces cooperated after an initial period of confusion. And, with very few casualties or “unpleasant incidents,” the operation broke the debilitating control of a military dictatorship, restored the democratically elected leader, and created an opportunity for a new start.[\[211\]](#)

## **F. *Conclusions***

Many suggestions came out of the workshop on interagency and civilian-military planning. First, the U.S. government needs to develop civil-military planning procedures for emergencies like disaster assistance, humanitarian assistance, and peace-keeping operations. Participants believe that without a more formal interagency planning process, organization and execution of interagency missions will continue to be ad hoc and incomplete. Many workshop participants observed that political-military planning for civilian agencies needs to parallel military planning, but with less detail and greater built-in flexibility.

A second suggestion involves the necessity of a greater understanding of structural and operational differences between civilian and military organizations. Planning and surge capabilities, security requirements, and systematic coordination between organizations is crucial and must be addressed. Third, all workshop participants echoed the call for definition and communication of command arrangements before an operation begins. For instance, in Haiti, the Ambassador and Force Commander could have set up a combined war room, the U.S. Embassy could have increased its staff to handle additional responsibility, or a continental U.S.-based task force, responsible to the Ambassador, could have been established to facilitate interagency coordination.

Finally, workshop participants propose the institutionalization of political- military peace operation gaming exercises. Gaming would allow both civilians and military to learn how the other responds to complex emergencies and how each must modify expectations to accommodate different operating styles. Not only would such gaming exercises bring together different agencies to explore typical problems and solutions, but it would also facilitate currently non-existent dialogue. What seems clear from the above comments is that NGOs must understand the need for a comprehensive and integrated response to crisis, even if that necessitates subjugating their charter to the overall good of the mission. In turn, the military needs to understand that a linear mind set is insufficient to account for the myriad of scenarios that develop in a complex humanitarian operation. Both the military effort and the traditional tactical and combat operations center should focus on and support the CMOC. Here, a humanitarian intent would be the primary focus. Additionally, at the outset of the operation, the military needs to obtain a long-term understanding of the humanitarian problem and plan a military-to-civilian transition. To this end, the military and the NGO sector must strive to develop a shared understanding of the operation and a shared strategy for its completion.[\[212\]](#)

## **V. COMPARING THE HAITI CMOC TO OTHER CMOCS[\[213\]](#)**

In an effort to learn from the Haiti experience and to put the Haiti CMOC in context, this section of this article briefly describes CMOCs from three recent operations—Operation Provide Comfort in southeast Turkey, Operation Restore Hope in Somalia, and Operation Support Hope in Rwanda—and compares them with Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti. Each example provides further evidence that is fundamental to the success of any peacekeeping operation—efficient coordination of all actors involved, both military and humanitarian. Military commanders are in a unique position to facilitate an atmosphere of cooperation to achieve unity of effort. But the military and humanitarian relief workers do not enjoy an easy working relationship. While NGOs are accustomed to autonomy and operating according to their own charters and core values that often do not mesh with others, the military “is an instrument of national polity and follows its orders.”<sup>[214]</sup> A CMOC that functions smoothly as an operational interface between the military and both civilian and NGO agencies can provide coherence to the activities of the military, political, civil, administrative, legal, and humanitarian actors involved in conflict intervention.

#### ***A. Operation Provide Comfort (1991)***

Operation Provide Comfort provided support for and resettlement of Kurdish refugees who had fled into southern Turkey after a rebellion launched concurrently with the Gulf War. In 1991, the Kurds of northern Iraq rebelled against Saddam Hussein’s Iraqi government. The rebellion was very quickly quashed by the substantially more powerful Hussein, and the Kurds subsequently fled their homes. Then U.S. President George Bush ordered the U.S. military to assist the Kurds. President Bush’s April 16, 1991 announcement directed the U.S. military to stop the suffering and dying while stabilizing the refugee camp populations. They were further instructed to move the Kurds from refugee camps in the Turkish mountains to transition camps in northern Iraq, and to return the Kurds to their original villages. Bush stressed that the mission was humanitarian, not military, and that it was being undertaken in accordance with UN resolutions.<sup>[215]</sup> Thus, it was clear from the outset that humanitarian relief was the primary focus of this operation.

By April 22, 1991, the military structure needed to ensure that the movement of the Kurds back to their villages was in place. A Combined Task Force and two subordinate Joint Task Forces, Alpha and Bravo, were established to facilitate the mission. With very little—if any—initial NGO presence, the Special Forces in Joint Task Force Alpha, primarily responsible for the first aspect of the mission, became involved in traditional humanitarian relief operations like census taking, camp organizing, and food distribution. As NGOs began to arrive on the ground, the Special Forces handed these tasks off to them. Bravo worked hand-in-hand with NGOs in a loosely structured, ad hoc, but agreed-upon format to facilitate the eventual transfer of the Kurds to their traditional homes.<sup>[216]</sup>

There are several reasons why this operation was more successful than Haiti. First, during this operation, the humanitarian sector and the military encountered each other for the first time in the post-Cold War era. While traditional stereotypes certainly existed on both

sides at the beginning of the operation, they were overcome through one-on-one interaction. This did not appear to happen in Haiti. The coordination in the shared humanitarian purpose was extremely decentralized and informal. This led to the emergence of the structure and the foundation of comfort between communities. During meetings held at the Joint Task Force headquarters, Special Forces disseminated risk assessments which allowed the NGOs to determine where the greatest needs were, who was in the best position to fill those needs, and which NGO would eventually take the job.<sup>[217]</sup> At the same time, two officers from the Army and Air Force were assigned to serve as liaisons to the NGO community. These officers organized meetings of NGOs, which were voluntary and open to anyone, and became the military's point of contact with the NGOs. UN organizations and large NGOs in theatre, like CARE and Save the Children, regularly attended. The officers did not behave as if they were "in charge," which would likely have had the effect of offending the NGOs.<sup>[218]</sup> In addition to meeting with NGO representatives, the officers also interfaced with other military units to coordinate provision of relief. Captain Seiple attributes much of the success of the operation to there being multiple points of contact through which coordination took place. This CMOC was successful because it embodied a fluid process that maintained flexibility.<sup>[219]</sup> That flexibility seemed to be lacking in Haiti.

Second, the efforts of OFDA officials, who have decades of experience working with militaries around the world, also led to the ultimate success of the operation. OFDA officials were able to work with the military and the NGOs to create a humanitarian operation in the absence of any military doctrine on how to conduct such an operation.<sup>[220]</sup> Again, this kind of OFDA input was not part of the Haiti experience. According to one officer, the OFDA/DART team occasionally worked with the HACC in Port-au-Prince, but essentially, the HACC and DART teams functioned independently.<sup>[221]</sup>

Finally, the civil-military relationship in the Kurdish operation was successful because the NGOs established their own internal coordinating committee, the NGO Coordinating Committee for Northern Iraq to which OFDA officials were invited.<sup>[222]</sup> This committee provided another forum for NGO/military coordination to take place and for inter-NGO coordination, as well. This mechanism helped create a single NGO voice with which the military could coordinate. The committee was located in one of the refugee camps, and its material support came from the military. Adding immeasurably to the collaboration process, OFDA officials also lived in the camp. This level of cooperation did not exist in Haiti.<sup>[223]</sup> The relationship that developed between the U.S. forces and the NGO community gave the coalition forces the ability to pass the operation smoothly to civilian agencies, particularly the UN.<sup>[224]</sup> Interestingly, it was not planned from above but evolved on the ground.

## **B. *Somalia (1992-1993)***

The United States involvement in the UN-sponsored humanitarian intervention in Somalia can be broken down into three phases: Provide Relief (UNOSOM I), from August 15, 1992 to December 9, 1992; Restore Hope (U.S.-led multinational force,

UNITAF), from December 9, 1992 to May 4, 1993; and UNOSOM II from May 4, 1993 to March 31, 1994. Due to the sheer complexity of the intervention, closer examination is necessary: we focus here on the NGO/military relationship during Restore Hope, the UNITAF period. We found that the UNITAF period was a short-term success, achieving its basic goals. Its short-comings, however, prevented a more long-term solution to the problems facing Somalia.[\[225\]](#)

Recognizing that Somalia presented an extremely complex situation, then-Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, General Colin Powell, requested a civilian leader to complement the military commander, Lieutenant General Robert Johnson. Soon thereafter, former Ambassador to Somalia, Robert B. Oakley, was appointed as the President's Special Envoy.[\[226\]](#) Little planning had been done prior to the deployment of the multinational force, either by the UN or by the United States.[\[227\]](#) The U.S. military became involved in December of 1992, establishing a CMOC that was located with the UN's humanitarian coordination cell, the Humanitarian Operations Center (HOC).[\[228\]](#) Of course, NGOs had been in Somalia for years. Ironically, from the start, the mission lacked a cohesive humanitarian strategy. No UN planners were sent to Somalia to meet with the humanitarian sector prior to the arrival of the multinational force.[\[229\]](#) Thus, while many ideas and strategies existed, none was accepted by *all* of the actors in the intervention. There did not appear to be a united concept within the humanitarian community as to where Somalia should be within six months.[\[230\]](#)

To make matters worse, the U.S. military mission evolved from a purely humanitarian intervention—providing food—to one rooted in the provision of security and peacemaking.[\[231\]](#) Captain Chris Seiple notes that if there was any general understanding of the nature of the emergency in Somalia, it was that the famine required the safe delivery of food to Mogadishu and Baidoa. This understanding did not reflect the complexities of the situation, however. Many believed that the famine had broken by September of 1992 and what Somalia really needed was a comprehensive public health plan.[\[232\]](#) Unfortunately, the more simplistic assumption “led to the assumption on the part of the military that in some ways doomed the military/NGO relationship: that security is necessarily the military's only purpose in humanitarian relief operations and that security should be separated from the labor of relief.” An analyst from the Center for Naval Analyses read the military's mission statement[\[233\]](#) as making this clear:

The [military] would create a secure environment in which to deliver supplies by protecting the HRO [Humanitarian Relief Organization] distribution system, from the ports and airfields where the supplies entered the country, to the road networks over which the supplies moved to distribution points. The [NGOs] would get the supplies in country, transport them overland, and distribute them.[\[234\]](#)

Further, the sheer size and complexity of the mission contributed to the problems at hand.[\[235\]](#) The lack of a comprehensive strategy reduced the whole operation to an ad hoc, tactical attempt to treat symptoms of the more deeply-rooted problem in Somalia. There was also much confusion about the roles that the various institutional actors—the UN Secretary General, the Under Secretary for Peacekeeping, the Turkish Force

Commander., etc.—should play.[\[236\]](#) Due to these factors, the Somalian experience was very different from the Haitian experience, which was much more focused and directed.

The planning phase for Somalia was far worse than for Haiti. In the “planning phase of the operation, there was no operational-level contact between the U.S. military and the NGO community.” The Marines who landed in Somalia were simply given a list of NGOs present at the time.[\[237\]](#) Dialogue between the military and the humanitarian community did not begin early enough and coordination suffered as a result. Like the situation in the Kurdish relief operation, there was an Inter-NGO Coordinating Committee for Somalia formed in 1991, but it was unfortunately, not involved in the planning phase of the operation. Further, no Army Civil Affairs units were involved in planning for the operation, as they had been during the Kurdish relief operation. Finally, there was no NGO forum in Somalia itself. The CMOC was the only place for the military and the NGO community to interface.

The Joint Task Force in Somalia geographically organized the relief effort into nine Humanitarian Relief Sectors and established an HOC for each HRS. A CMOC was then established for each HOC. The HOC’s were directed by officials of UN relief organizations (and established by the UN prior to the arrival of the Joint Task Force) and each CMOC had a deputy director from the military. The HOC remained under the control of the UN at all times during the operation, while the CMOC was subordinate to the Joint Task Force J3, the operations officer. This arrangement arose for two reasons: “[F]irst, the UN organizations were given the task of organizing and conducting most of the relief effort and second, UNITAF wanted to portray the effort in Somalia as primarily [a] UN [effort].”[\[238\]](#) The HOC was the primary UN humanitarian operations cell. Here, the humanitarian community worked most closely with the military. The HOC functions included developing and implementing an overall relief strategy, coordinating relief strategies, coordinating logistics for humanitarian relief organizations, and arranging military support for relief organizations. Day-to-day coordination and details, however, were left to the CMOC.[\[239\]](#)

NGOs submitted requests for assistance to the CMOC. The CMOCs also provided UNITAF with a link to the NGO community. Their functions included validation and coordination of requests for military support, promulgating and explaining UNITAF policies to humanitarian organizations, providing daily security briefings, and acting as the coordinating agency among UNITAF, the NGOs, and UNOSOM headquarters staff.[\[240\]](#) The CMOC was located in a UN building, with the HOC ten miles from the Joint Task Force Headquarters. This arrangement was ideal for the NGOs, but meant that the CMOC and the Joint Task Force had difficulty communicating with UNOSOM Headquarters. Once again, however, the NGO/military relationship was plagued by persistent parochial perceptions and prejudices. The NGOs felt that the military was too secretive and did not want to be bothered by them. In actuality, many Marines thought that the CMOC was a ridiculous concept, and many military personnel thought that the NGOs were users who cooperated with the military only when they needed something.[\[241\]](#) The fact that the CMOCs were too decentralized was even more problematic. While the CMOC staff coordinated activities with Marines and NGOs, the



actors did not live and work together, as they had in the Kurdish relief operation. This lack of cohesion led to a lack of a comprehensive humanitarian strategy. This led the military to view security as a task of greater importance than humanitarian relief.

It is important to remember that significant humanitarian gains were made in Somalia. Working together, the military and the NGOs were able to provide food to the Somalis and stop the famine. There was a high level of mutual respect between the military and the humanitarian sector, and they worked well together, without the benefit of doctrine or past experience to guide them. On the other hand, many lessons exist from the problems caused by the lack of a clear mission statement and the lack of interagency and civil-military planning in the initial stages of the mission.

### **C. *Rwanda***

A plane crash on April 6, 1994 killed the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi, igniting a war between the Tutsi and Hutu tribes. This war resulted in a massive flow of refugees, numbering in the millions, into Burundi, Rwanda, and the surrounding countries of Zaire, Uganda, and Tanzania.<sup>[242]</sup> By July 14th, the refugee crisis had reached tremendous proportions. At that time, President Clinton directed the United States Commander in Chief Europe to deploy a Joint Task Force in support of humanitarian assistance operations already underway under the auspices of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees.<sup>[243]</sup> Military deployment began on July 22, 1994 and was complete by August 3, 1994. The Joint Task Force's mission was to provide assistance to humanitarian organizations conducting relief operations in theatre, in order to alleviate the immediate suffering of the Rwandan refugees.<sup>[244]</sup> By September 28, the crisis was under control and the capabilities of the NGOs were sufficient to meet the needs of the refugees.<sup>[245]</sup> Because the UN was in charge in Rwanda, with the U.S. military acting as a supporting player, NGOs had to go through the UN infrastructure in order to obtain U.S. logistical support. The UN prioritized these needs by utilizing the military CMOC. There was no "official" interface between the NGOs and the U.S. military. All NGO requests were given to the United Nations Rwanda Emergency Organization, which prioritized and gave them to the CMOC. The CMOC then provided logistical support to the NGOs.<sup>[246]</sup> Given its limited mandate, the U.S. military conducted a very successful, albeit small, operation, allowing it to withdraw in sixty days. The Joint Task Force recognized that it was not in charge, but rather was there to support the larger mission, given the UN's comparative advantage of logistics and infrastructure.<sup>[247]</sup> In this respect, the Haitian and Rwandan interventions differed significantly. The comparison, however, remains worth making.

In operational terms, the cooperation and coordination among the various participants was a success. The U.S. military's focus was on humanitarian need. U.S. officials defined the military's mission as providing air traffic and communications control for the necessary airfields, lending military security to airfields, providing surveillance aircraft to track refugees, deploying loading and unloading equipment, and establishing a purified water system. Further, the Commander of the Joint Task Force took the apparently unusual step of examining every speech and statement made by senior policymakers on

Operation Support Hope, and, from these, “he developed the intent of facilitating, not of doing.”<sup>[248]</sup> In other words, he clearly saw the U.S. military’s mission as one of assisting the NGOs. By being facilitators, the U.S. military could allow other participants to find their own niches preventing dependency on U.S. resources. This approach kept the mission sharply focused.<sup>[249]</sup> Further, with the UN and NGOs in place long before the U.S. military arrived, the United States role was very subdued. An experienced officer was chosen to be responsible for civil-military affairs. He sought NGO expertise before deploying by contacting officials of InterAction and MSF/USA to determine what the situation in Rwanda was like and what the needs were.<sup>[250]</sup> This was a huge step toward the ultimate success of the mission and it is this aspect of the mission that provides the biggest contrast to the Haiti operation.

There were three CMOCs established during Operation Support Hope.<sup>[251]</sup> One was located with the Joint Task Force Support Hope Headquarters. This CMOC focused its efforts on supporting the UNHCR and coordinating strategic and theatre airlift. The other CMOCs focused on humanitarian assistance, clean water production, and distribution. All three CMOCs supported UN organizations and coordinated support for NGOs. The CMOCs were subordinate to the Joint Task Force Commander. Each CMOC promulgated and explained Joint Task Force policies to the UN, NGOs, and other international organizations, and by all accounts, the relationship between the players went very smoothly. Each also provided information on Joint Task Force operations and security; received, validated, and processed requests for military support; convened and hosted ad hoc mission planning groups; and represented the Joint Task Force in various UN-hosted meetings.<sup>[252]</sup> The CMOCs in Rwanda were critical to the success of the Joint Task Force Support Hope and were a driving force in allowing the Joint Task Force to transfer the remainder of the humanitarian requirements to the UN and NGOs.

In summary, the CMOC activities in Rwanda were, in part, a reflection of the lessons learned in Somalia. Its operations were effective and flexible, which contributed to the ultimate success of the operation.

## **VI. BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE MODEL FOR A CMOC**

There are many dimensions to the relationship between NGOs and the United States military. Humanitarian operations are inherently political, and much of the success of the operation will depend on the ability of political, military, and civilian leaders to work together. The CMOC provides one institutional structure that may be used to address one aspect of a complex humanitarian emergency—the efficient and effective provision of humanitarian aid. A CMOC can effectively accomplish at least four tasks: (i) coordination with NGOs and other nonmilitary organizations; (ii) processing requests from those organizations; (iii) gathering information from and disseminating information to those organizations; and (iv) focusing the efforts of the nonmilitary organizations in a way that meets the objectives of the military commander. To arrive at an effective CMOC model, one must keep these tasks in mind.

### **1. *Clear Structure***

A clear structure is necessary if the CMOC is to accomplish its objectives. Civil affairs officers, because of their specific training, seem to be likely candidates for these tasks. These officers will be the first to make contact with the humanitarian community and may have only one chance to engage them. The commander should have sufficient “rank, experience, and credibility to communicate effectively with the chief of staff or commander of the headquarters the CMOC serves.”<sup>[253]</sup> Of course, the NGOs have their own leadership, policies, country offices, and field teams. They are not tied to any particular chain of command but rather respond to their own internal hierarchy. The U.S. military should be aware of this and integrate NGO leadership into its decision-making. Furthermore, because having good communication lines in theatre is absolutely crucial, the CMOC will most likely need to establish its own communication system.

The CMOC, however, must be more than merely a liaison. It must be an operations center in the true sense. CMOC personnel must have the authority to solve coordination problems, work with the NGO personnel, and make on-the-spot decisions. If they do not, different solutions will inevitably arise from the various centers of operation and the process for making decisions will become impossibly attenuated.

## ***2. Advanced and Joint Planning with Civilian Agencies and NGOs***

Looking at the operations briefly described above, some points become obvious. Perhaps if the U.S. military’s humanitarian strategy for Haiti had been well-defined, there would have been similar expectations among all the actors in Haiti. Collaboration and coordination between the military and the NGOs must occur prior to the intervention. If that is impossible due to security concerns or other military reasons, it must happen as soon as the actors are on the ground. InterAction can be used as a point of contact between the humanitarian community and the military. It also seems clear that exploring mutual expectations during the planning phase would have helped the mission. A phased and linked national process that addressed humanitarian, military, political, and economic concerns would have been helpful. If the CMOC in Haiti had been recognized by the international donor community and participants on the ground as the sanctioned center of humanitarian activity, perhaps the humanitarian part of the mission would have proceeded more smoothly. Where advance planning has taken place, this cohesion has occurred. Additionally, had the NGOs in Haiti developed mechanisms by which they could have spoken with a collective voice, as they did in several earlier missions, the CMOC in Haiti would have run more smoothly. The NGO community must be involved at the planning stage of any humanitarian operation to have input into the issues mentioned above. Early involvement of the humanitarian community would also have the effect of increasing the mutual trust that the military and humanitarian communities would have for one another.

The CMOC personnel should also conduct an information campaign to educate the military and the NGOs about one another. There should be a complete set of publications about the NGOs involved in the mission available for use by the CMOC personnel, NGO representatives, or other actors. This ensures that the NGOs and the military understand what assistance each could provide. By effectively utilizing the capabilities of NGOs, the

net capabilities of the United States, the UN, and the government of the host nation will be increased.

### **3. *Location***

The location of the CMOC is also crucial. It is best located very near military headquarters *if* that location is convenient for NGOs *and if* there are no security risks. Such a location would foster good communication and increase the likelihood that the NGOs would actually take advantage of the CMOC. Because the CMOC would serve as a clearinghouse for all humanitarian relief-related issues and a meeting place for organizations to obtain daily or weekly briefings on the status of the needs in the country, it should have a central location, as in Port-au-Prince, and the ability to process requests from the various NGOs for help with distribution support, security, communication support and other technical assistance. It should also be responsible for tasking field offices to fill requests. Lastly, it should have communications, program, and information officers.

### **4. *Flexibility***

Finally, the CMOC must be flexible and ready to change if its initial composition, location, or equipment is insufficient to its task.<sup>[254]</sup> It should also be “conducting its own information campaign to educate the military about NGOs and vice versa.”<sup>[255]</sup> A complete set of doctrinal publications should be available to the CMOC.

## **APPENDIX**

### **NGOS PROVIDING RELIEF IN HAITI<sup>[256]</sup>**

NGOs working in Haiti include:

- a. American Friends Service Committee
- b. American Red Cross
- c. CARE
- d. Childreach
- e. Catholic Relief Services
- f. Christian Relief Committee
- g. Church World Service
- h. Direct Relief International
- i. Doctors of the World
- j. Doctors without Borders
- k. Foundation for International Community Assistance
- l. Interchurch Medical Assistance
- m. International AID
- n. International Medical Service for Health
- o. Lutheran World Relief
- p. Oxfam America
- q. PACT

- r. Pan American Development Foundation
- s. Partners in Health
- t. Save the Children
- u. Trickle up Program
- v. World Concern
- w. World Neighbors
- x. World Vision

### **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS**

ADRA– Adventist Development and Relief Agency

AFSC– American Friends Service Committee

AID –Agency for International Development

CARE – Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere

CMOC–Civil Military Operations Center

CRS –Catholic Relief Services

DART–Disaster Assistance Response Team (OFDA)

HACC–Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Center

HOC–Humanitarian Operations Center

ICRC–International Committee of the Red Cross

JTF–Joint Task Force

NGO–Nongovernmental Organization

OAS –Organization of American States

OFDA–Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance

OIT–Office of Transition Initiatives (AID)

SO/LIC–Special Operation/Low Intensity Conflict

UN–United Nations

UNICEF–United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund

UNITAF–United Nations Task Force (Somalia)

UNMIH–United Nations Mission in Haiti

UNOSOM–United Nations Mission Somalia

USACOM–United States Atlantic Command

USAID–United States Agency for International Development

USOCOM–United States Army Special Operations Command