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Gunboat Diplomacy in the Wilson Era—The U.S. Navy in Haiti, 1915-1916

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change have any influence on the use of power and force in the conduct of world affairs?

What political leaders and their legislative supporters implicitly assume or take for granted on these matters will largely determine the ultimate decision to use military force.

HENRY E. ECCLES
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)

Harriman, W. Averell and Elie Abel.
Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin 1941-1946. New York: Random House, 1975. 595pp.

With World War II now 31 years old and already into its third writing—the first flash histories, the serious studies including the beginnings of revisionism, and the current spate of works revealing dramatically the cryptological successes of the British in being able to read Hitlerian and Nazi General Staff traffic, there now appears a significant memoir from the thinning ranks of senior participants. Averell Harriman, a distinguished American by any measure, sets forth his experiences and views concerning the crucial wartime years during which he served as President Roosevelt's personal emissary first to Winston Churchill and later as U.S. Ambassador in Moscow where he spent as much time with Joseph Stalin as any American living or dead.

It is a story of *noblesse oblige*, of service, of dedication to the commonweal. It is also the story of a patriot who quietly cared and who was not afraid of dissent or controversy. There is one immediately apparent lesson in Harriman's memoir. He was no bureaucrat. He walked the world stage.

The outline of the memoirs covers familiar terrain—the era of the late 1930's and the war. What is significant in this well-written account by Columbia Journalism School Dean Elie Abel is the Harriman insight. He covers with precision his "Mission to Moscow" with

the suspicions, the delays, the grudging respect shared by Stalin and Harriman for each other. There are excellent chapters on the Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam Conferences. There is a direct challenge throughout to the revisionist theories on the cold war. Harriman's perceptions are, of course, those of America's wartime leadership, and through his eyes one sees the emerging and tragic confrontation of East and West.

The book must stand as a basic reference on the period. Not only do we have Harriman's memoranda and notes, but the book is supported by quite adequate research and documentation. This last of the great World War II memoirs should be of use and interest to all students of strategy and diplomacy.

ROBERT F. DELANEY
Naval War College

Healy, Davis. *Gunboat Diplomacy in the Wilson Era—The U.S. Navy in Haiti, 1915-1916*. Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1976. 268pp.

On 28 July 1915, American marines and bluejackets from the armored cruiser *Washington* were landed in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, for the purpose of "preventing further rioting and for the protection of foreigners' lives and property and to preserve order." Thus began a military occupation of nearly 20 years duration.

It is impossible to justify or to understand this action by the administration of Woodrow Wilson without adequate knowledge of those years of Haitian history immediately preceding the intervention, years known by the Haitians themselves as the "*Epoque des Gouvernements Ephemeres*"—the Era of the Ephemeral Governments. On 17 December 1908, Antoine Simon was elected to the Presidency for the constitutional term of 7 years. In the 7 years following that election, no fewer than

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seven presidents were elected and deposed in Haiti. The last, Vilbrun Guillaume Sam, was actually dragged from asylum in the French Legation and torn to pieces by an enraged mob in the street outside.

Haiti, the second oldest "republic" in the Western Hemisphere, was in a state of almost total anarchy when Rear Adm. William B. Caperton, Commander Cruiser Squadron, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, ordered American forces ashore, Admiral Caperton apparently acted under his own authority in response to urgent demands by the diplomatic corps in Port-au-Prince. Within a matter of hours, however, his orders were confirmed by superiors in the Navy Department.

Intervention in Haiti had long been under consideration in Washington. On 13 January 1915, President Wilson discussed the situation in a memorandum to Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan:

... The more I think about that situation the more I am convinced that it is our duty to take immediate action there such as we took in Santo Domingo. I mean to send a commissioner there who will seek and obtain an interview with the leaders of the various contending factions of the Republic and say to them as firmly and definitely as is consistent with courtesy and kindness that the United States cannot consent to stand by and permit revolutionary conditions constantly to exist there . . . Is not this your judgment?

The Wilson administration's diplomatic initiative was an utter failure, and in the end order in Haiti was restored only by American arms.

The weeks and months following the intervention were marked by a rapid expansion of American control throughout the country and the establishment of an administration staffed primarily

by naval personnel. Little guidance came from Washington, despite Admiral Caperton's pleas for a statement of U.S. policy and intentions. Eventually, however, consent was granted to the election of a new president in Haiti, who was all but nominated by Admiral Caperton and his chief of staff, Capt. Edward L. Beach.

Seeking to legitimize the American presence, the U.S. State Department at last forwarded a treaty proposal to Port-au-Prince that had the practical effect of granting the United States complete financial and military control of the Black Republic. The treaty was fiercely resisted by the Haitians, and when they were forced to accept its terms, all but the trappings of sovereignty were surrendered.

It is probable that the years of intervention gave Haiti the only honest and reasonably efficient government it has ever known. A study of history, however, seems to support the thesis that political freedom, progress, and evolution are seldom, if ever, successfully imposed from without. After an extensive period of "Haitianization," American forces were withdrawn in 1934. Haiti quickly returned to the old ways and ultimately drifted into the nightmare of Papa Doc and the ton ton macoute.

David Healy's short account of the first year of the American intervention in Haiti is well researched, though it suffers somewhat from a rather dry style. Those who read his book may well wish to sample further the rich mine of primary source material that exists concerning a fascinating period in the history of an intriguing land.

R.L. SCHREADLEY
Commander, U.S. Navy (Ret.)

Kearns, Doris. *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*. New York: Harper & Row, 1976. 432pp.

Initially it would be useful to describe the provenance of this book. In