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UPHOLDING DEMOCRACY

**The United States Military
Campaign in Haiti, 1994–1997**

John R. Ballard

 **Greenwood**
PUBLISHING GROUP

Upholding Democracy

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*The United States Military
Campaign in Haiti,
1994–1997*

John R. Ballard

with a Foreword by

General John J. Sheehan

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**For Sergeant First Class Gregory Cardott, U.S. Army,
Killed at a checkpoint in Gonaives, Haiti,
January 12, 1995**

Military service is the ultimate form of patriotism

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Contents

<i>List of Maps and Charts</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>List of Photographs</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>Foreword</i> by General John J. Sheehan, USMC (Ret.)	<i>xi</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>xvii</i>

PART I HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Chapter 1	Colonial Haiti and Revolution	3
Chapter 2	The Haitian Republic's Early Years	13
Chapter 3	The Garde d'Haiti and the Duvaliers	25
Chapter 4	The Rise and Fall of Aristide	39

PART II CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Chapter 5	Military Plan Development: The "Jade Green" Cell	61
Chapter 6	Posturing the Force	85

PART III MILITARY OPERATIONS IN HAITI

Chapter 7	Operations by JTF-180: "Dragon's Blood"	105
Chapter 8	Stabilization by JTF-190: The MNF in Haiti	131
Chapter 9	The U.N. Mission in Haiti: Toward a New Democracy	161

PART IV INNOVATION AND PROGRESS

Chapter 10	The Distinctions of Uphold Democracy	185
Chapter 11	Epilogue: Haiti Today	211

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Haiti's Rulers	223
Appendix B	Admiral Caperton's Operations Order, July 28, 1915	225
Appendix C	Agreement of Governors Island	227
Appendix D	The Carter/Jonassaint Agreement	229
Appendix E	U.S. Government Agencies Involved in Haiti	231
Appendix F	Nongovernmental and Private Voluntary Organizations in Haiti	233
Appendix G	Fact Sheet on Haiti: The Road from Dictatorship to Democracy	235
Appendix H	U. N. Security Council Resolution 940 (1994)	241
Appendix I	Command-and-Control Relationships	245
	<i>Glossary</i>	247
	<i>Bibliography</i>	253
	<i>Index</i>	259
	<i>About the Author</i>	265

List of Maps and Charts

1. Key Locations for Operations in Haiti, *page xix*
2. Deployment Actions for Operations in Haiti, *84*
3. D-Day Operations in Haiti, *104*
4. Figure 8.1: Security transition from the invasion to the end of the U.N. mandate, *140*
5. Figure 8.2: The results of early MNF weapons buy-back operations, *149*

List of Photographs

1. General Henry H. Shelton, USA, and U.S. Ambassador William Swing.
2. Admiral Paul David Miller, USN, and General Shelton.
3. U.S. Army forces aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Eisenhower*.
4. General Shelton with General Meade at FAd'H headquarters.
5. Secretary of Defense Perry, General Shalikashvili, and Ambassador Swing.
6. Surplus and confiscated illegal weapons.
7. A U.S. soldier deep inside a crowd of Haitian citizens.
8. A U.S. Marine helps Haitian migrants with food and medicine in Cuba.
9. The JTF-190 staff during initial operations in Haiti.
10. The support of the Haitian people.
11. President Aristide's return to Haiti.

Photographs follow page 130

Foreword

Since the end of the Cold War the nature of security for the United States and other nations of the industrialized world has changed. Security is no longer defined entirely in a military dimension: the political, economic, and cultural aspects of security have now gained prominence. Within that larger context, terrorism, drug smuggling, and illegal migration are viewed today as threats by many Americans. Conditions in many developing world countries spawn these problems, and they can ultimately affect the United States. The U.S. military is adapting to deal with these new threats through changes in missions, organization, and training.

Recent operations in Haiti reflect the U.S. military's capacity to respond to operations across the spectrum of conflict, including operations other than war resulting from political and economic instability. Operation Uphold Democracy demonstrated military flexibility by transitioning from an assault operation in the initial execution phase to an unopposed intervention. Subsequent operations in Haiti established a stable and secure environment, which permitted the restoration of the legitimate government and follow-on democratic elections. United States joint task force commanders in Haiti successfully commanded a multinational force and completed a variety of tasks that enabled the transition to a United Nations military force. These wide-ranging actions in Haiti provided valuable experiences, from which we can learn, and important lessons, which we can build upon, for success in future operations. Uphold Democracy was not a template for coming operations, for they will all be unique, but this operation clearly demonstrated the appropriate use of the unique capabilities of today's U.S. armed forces in a complex and changeable environment.

As Americans, we should all reflect upon the challenges facing the men and women of our armed forces today so that we can act within the democratic process

to determine when and how military force should be used. The key events of operation Uphold Democracy may never reoccur in exactly the same way, but the actions of U.S. military personnel in Haiti serve well as a study of the complexity of modern military operations, to inform and engage our fellow citizens.

JOHN J. SHEEHAN
General, USMC (Ret.)

Preface

In the late evening hours of September 18, 1994, operation Uphold Democracy began with one of the most challenging requests ever made by a U.S. President of a military commander. After over a year of planning, Admiral Paul D. Miller was directed to stop an airborne and amphibious invasion of over 100 aircraft and nearly 20,000 troops assembling from all over the United States, and recraft his operations so that Lieutenant General Hugh Shelton could enter Haiti peacefully to “cooperate” with the man formerly designated as his enemy. Within a space of 2 hours preceding the planned assault time, Miller, Shelton and their staffs successfully coordinated with other military agencies to halt the largest airborne strike since operation Market Garden in World War II. Early the next morning, Shelton flew into Haiti to negotiate the end of years of oppression within the country, using only the threat of his military power. What followed was a unique and ever-challenging campaign that illustrates well the difficult role that the United States now plays as the world’s single superpower.

When General Shelton answered the phone in the combat operations center of the USS *Mount Whitney* on that night before the invasion, he did not expect the change in his campaign but was prepared with multiple options just in case the situation shifted. Turning back the assault force and crafting a humanitarian operation without combat appeared to be a herculean effort. But it was a task that the U.S. military was able to accomplish rapidly, without loss of momentum or resolve. Many other challenges also followed in Haiti as the United States worked for over 3 years to preserve regional stability in a nation with a complex and often violent past. Change has always been tough in Haiti, but the actions of the United States and its allies *have* made a difference there. This book is the story of that multifaceted campaign and an analysis of the factors that made actions in Haiti successful.

Military operations in Haiti demonstrated many of the significant changes that have occurred within the U.S. Department of Defense since the end of the Vietnam conflict. Lessons from the 1970s and early 1980s pointed out key

areas that needed reform, and military leaders at all levels responded with improvements in force composition and readiness. The U.S. Congress, as the institution that makes the rules and regulations for the military, also participated in these changes. The efforts of these two institutions and the leadership of many concerned members of the executive branch eventually resulted in a smaller but more effective uniformed force. Increased effectiveness was the result of incorporating better technology, improved decision-making, and a concerted effort to inculcate joint concepts and synchronized capabilities within the armed services. The Persian Gulf War of 1990–1991 first demonstrated these new, emerging efficiencies. Operations in Somalia, 1992–1993, demonstrated additional benefits of the reforms as well as areas where improvement was still needed. This book outlines the Haitian Campaign of 1994–1997, which illustrated the success of these reforms in a different, yet still crucial, mode of military operations.

This study arose from my personal observations of the significant improvements made in U.S. military operations since the 1970s. As I witnessed the admirable professionalism of the present military, serving under very different circumstances from those it had experienced during the Cold War, I decided to investigate just how well the Haitian campaign fit within the parameters of U.S. national security strategy and the training that our service-members were receiving. What I discovered convinced me that Americans needed to better understand both the noncombat operations that so mark our current security environment and the capabilities that our military possess to accomplish them.

One of the primary purposes of this study is to provide the American people, students of military history, researchers, and interested members of the government with some of the valuable insights into the operation in Haiti. This understanding of the lessons learned in Uphold Democracy should help make any future commitment of American troops as safe and effective as possible. I also hope that these operational insights will aid in the continued refinement of joint tactics, techniques, and procedures, because these are now the heart of the American way of war. The campaign in Haiti was not a war, but the lives of many Americans were placed at risk during its execution. We must always learn as much we can from any military action in order to minimize risk in future operations.

Another of this book's primary goals is the explanation of the joint operations process that has contributed so significantly to the U.S. military's increased effectiveness in an era of constrained resources. Many of the inner workings of this joint process are still under development. Few outside the higher levels of the military have had an opportunity to observe how the United States prepares for and executes military operations short of war. However, such operations are growing in number and importance following the demise of the Soviet bloc, and therefore the American people they are designed to support should better understand them. As citizens of a democracy it is *we* who decide when and how military force should be employed, so therefore we must be cognizant of the benefits and dangers of committing our military forces.

Finally, the story of operation Uphold Democracy tells us much about U.S.–Haitian relations, our current national security strategy, strategic decision-making in America, and the evolving roles and missions of U.S. military forces. I hope that readers of military history and international affairs can derive from this book a deeper understanding of the contributions of today's servicemen and women and the conditions under which they serve our nation.

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Acknowledgments

This book was written after my service as a member of the U.S. Atlantic Command's Joint Analysis and Assessment Team in Haiti and Norfolk, Virginia and while assigned to the faculty of the Armed Forces Staff College. For 6 years I have been privileged to work with some of the finest professionals in the Department of Defense. With the rise of every challenge these men and women have responded with dedication and unrelenting diligence to achieve consistently superb results. When their combined efforts have fallen short of the mark they have been even more inspiring, as they analyze, learn, improve, and progress to even greater challenges and better results. This special capacity of theirs to learn and be trained to ever-higher standards has inspired this book.

The information contained herein comes from various sources: personal observations, the compiled reports and interviews of individuals and organizations participating in operation Uphold Democracy, and the significant body of literature that has investigated the rich history and culture of the Haitian people. This study has also benefited from the dialogue and thoughtful questioning of a host of officer-students and the insights of my colleagues within the National Defense University. Finally, it has benefited from the example of a select group of leaders. Many of these leaders are general and flag officers, prominently among whom are Generals Jack Sheehan and Hugh Shelton and Admiral Hal Gehman; but many others are sergeants and petty officers working just as hard, often far from home, to keep our country safe.

The writing of this book would not have been possible without the support of many people. My special thanks must acknowledge the invaluable support provided by Gail Nicula and the staff of the Armed Forces Staff College Library: they have been ever helpful, ever patient, and always ready with an answer. Colonels Robert J. Fawcett, USMC, Donald W. Richardson, USA, and Robert J. Garner, USMC, provided the day-to-day guidance and the time that made writing this book possible; Drs. Nancy Wilds, Ralph Passarelli, and William McClin-

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Although it has benefited from a great deal of government information, this book does not reflect the opinions of the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Atlantic Command, or the National Defense University, nor does it reflect their policies. The views expressed in this book are mine alone, as are any errors or omissions.



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PART I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

“Haiti is imprisoned by its past.”¹

Robert D. Heint

The internal conflict that resulted in the intervention of other nations into Haitian affairs in 1994 had deep roots in the culture and national character of Haiti. To place the military intervention in proper context, operation Uphold Democracy must be viewed from a perspective that includes Haiti's troubled past and America's extensive involvement in Haitian affairs. Although French in cultural tradition, Haiti has always had a strong, yet variable political and economic affiliation with the United States; and this long-standing relationship between the two nations had a dominant influence on planning and executing the operation.

Haiti has a unique heritage. No clear understanding of Haitian affairs can be gained without an appreciation of the traumatic history of this, the world's first black republic. This history begins with the initial Spanish colonization of Hispaniola and the subsequent development of the French colony of St. Domingue in Haiti. Haitian history took a radical turn when, spurred by the French Revolution, Toussaint L'Ouverture and his followers fought a war of independence against France. Thus, the first black republic issued from a bloody and divisive revolution, which profoundly marked its national character ever after.

Unfortunately, the natural resources that made the French colony so prosperous were rapidly depleted once Haiti gained its independence and the Haitian people began to suffer from a plague of internal strife. This dissension was so severe that it destroyed the richness of the land and the promise that independence had brought in 1804. A succession of regimes, poorly directed and ending in coups from the countryside, soon marked Haitian politics. During the nation's first century twenty-four rulers held sway in Port-au-Prince, yet only eight served a full term of office and only two retired peacefully.²

Very early in the twentieth century, the U.S. government began to view such instability as a threat to regional security and henceforward embarked on a more active role in Haitian affairs. These actions included the nineteen years of U.S. Marine nation-building from 1915 through 1934, on-again, off-again support of Haitian leaders following World War II, and intimate participation in the change of regimes after the fall of “Papa Doc” Duvalier in 1971. This American involvement colored perceptions of the United States in Haiti, drew key U.S. officials to Port-au-Prince on an increasingly frequent basis as the century wore on, and, when instability in Haiti grew chronic, eventually led to the operation entitled Uphold Democracy.

Relationships between nations are complex. Many factors have contributed to the multifaceted bond between Haiti and the United States: economics, shared democratic institutions, and certainly the close proximity of the two republics. Such close neighbors cannot coexist without frequently affecting each other’s actions, but the United States and Haiti have developed special bonds resulting from a unique love/hate relationship. The past had much to say about the reasons for American intervention in Haiti in 1994; the future will also bring new perceptions of the invasion. The events of 1994–1997 should be placed in proper perspective and must be well understood so that future Haitian–American relations will include no more conflict.

NOTES

1. Robert Debs Heintz and Nancy Gordon Heintz, *Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People, 1492–1971*, p. 6.

2. H. P. Davis, *Black Democracy: The Story of Haiti*, p. 324. See Appendix A for a listing of the rulers of Haiti.

CHAPTER 1

Colonial Haiti and Revolution

Haiti was one of the first locations discovered by Columbus on his voyage to the New World in 1492. When the *Santa Maria* ran hard aground east of the area where Cap-Haitien now stands, he was forced to leave part of the crew ashore, thereby establishing on Hispaniola the first Spanish settlement in the New World.¹ During the first century and a half of Hispaniola's colonization the Spanish did little with the western half of the island, concentrating instead on the eastern half, which appeared to be more lucrative. But the smaller island of Tortuga off the north coast of Hispaniola did become a haven for pirates, who preyed on the rich shipping trade of the region.² One of the significant results of this growth of piracy in the area was the beginning of a mixed island race, the product of pirate men and local black women purchased from traders or abducted from Spanish or English settlements. "These unions were responsible for the inception of the mulatto caste as a community, and for many years the majority of children born were of mixed white and Negro blood."³ This early period was a time of European jockeying for possession of the rich lands of the Caribbean, and France soon superseded the influence of Spain in western Hispaniola.

The French, asserting their own rights within the region, soon saw the advantage of the island's location. France's foreign minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, chose Bertrand d'Ogeron de la Bouère, a former French officer and trader, to establish a settlement on the island in 1659. In d'Ogeron, Colbert found a capable and resourceful manager who was familiar with the area. As one of his first priorities, d'Ogeron brought cocoa, indigo, and perhaps most important, women to the region to further the development of a local economy. By 1681 d'Ogeron had established nearly 7000 planters in Haiti, but plenty of pirates still remained as well. The Treaty of Ryswick, which ended the War of

the League of Augsburg in September 1697, established an initial boundary between the French and Spanish portions of Hispaniola: they were separated formally as the colonies of St. Domingue (French) and Santo Domingo (Spanish). Thus French became the official language of what is now Haiti.

The new colony of St. Domingue was to be ruled by a governor-general and an intendant, both working for the French Minister of Marine, who administered all of France's colonial possessions. The governor-general was the representative of the crown and head of the military; the intendant handled all administrative affairs, including justice, taxes, and revenues.⁴ Unfortunately for France, the working relationship between the two men chosen for these key positions, and their contact with the mother country, was often not very close nor cordial. In addition, the only other organ of government for the colony was the colonial assembly, which was composed of the governor-general, the intendant, the attorney general, the navy commander, the chiefs of the militia, and the presidents of the provincial councils, none of whom effectively represented the colonists' interests.⁵ This early colonial government began a process of poor administration that would grow more and more inadequate and disruptive in succeeding centuries in Haiti. Frequently insufficient to the task assigned and marked by inexperience and lack of understanding, the men "awarded" these positions inadvertently ensured that Haiti and France would eventually part, and that Haiti would be left with little or no working governmental structure.

Notably, these initial French settlers were planters and pirates but not slave owners. Slavery was first legally introduced into the new French colony in 1633, ostensibly to "gain souls for Christ."⁶ The slave trade remained small until 1664, when the French *Compagnie des Indes Occidentales* began to transport Africans in ever-larger numbers to the New World. By 1700 there were nearly 10,000 slaves, and by the end of the century over 700,000 are estimated to have been working the land in Haiti.⁷

With such huge increases in the African population, the French in Haiti became more and more embroiled in the problems of slavery. To their credit, in March 1685 King Louis XIV issued one of the most liberal and fairest of all seventeenth-century laws concerning slavery. Known as the "Edit touchant la police des Isles de l'Amerique française," or Code Noir,⁸ it actually provided for due process, restrictions on the break-up of families, limits on the authority of masters, and even the possibility of freedom for slaves. If exercised over the long term, the Code Noir could possibly have maintained a cooperative and viable society in St. Domingue by establishing a method of racial integration for the growing white and black populations. Unfortunately, the Code was soon largely ignored, and its liberal tenets served only to create racial conflict as black and white expectations were disappointed. The Code Noir did produce an additional faction within Haitian society: the "mulâtre" or "marron," the freed black.⁹ As time progressed the presence of this third group would exacerbate all conflicts between whites and blacks, especially as many mulâtres became more prosperous than some whites.¹⁰

Large increases in the population resulted in the further settlement of Haiti during the colonial period. The population expanded generally south and then

west from the area of Cap-Haitien, settling first near the better harbors. Port-au-Prince, first known as Port Royal, was founded in 1706 and became the capital 32 years later. St. Marc was founded in 1716, after Jacmel was founded in the south; Jérémie followed in the southwest in 1765. As a result of this growth, the interior was improved through the development of roads and stagelines connecting the major cities. The colony grew and prospered.

By the second half of the seventeenth century Haiti was understood by many Europeans to be a rich and quite delightful place. Unfortunately, its prosperity was but a thin veneer¹¹—a layer as shallow as the 36,000 white elites overlaying the mass of nearly 700,000 blacks.¹² Although the colony supported much of Europe with sugar, coffee, and cocoa, life in Haiti was dehumanizing because of slavery.¹³ A combination of poor administration, geographic expansion and population growth, rising prosperity for only a few, and internal conflict among the racial strata of the population soon began to traumatize the colony. Small revolts had begun as early as the mid-sixteenth century and, as the proportion of slaves in the colony increased, the frequency and seriousness of these revolts grew as well. This combination of threats and challenges soon resulted in measures designed to increase French controls within the colony. Such controls were focused primarily on the free black population—the *mulâtres*.

Formal reactions against the former slaves began as early as 1758, when the assembly of the colony passed a law prohibiting all colored people from carrying swords. Four years later all weapons were denied them. In 1767 the sale of any munitions to nonwhites was prohibited unless ordered by a white. In 1771 Louis XV's official "Instructions to Administrators" codified the maintenance of a line between the races.¹⁴ By 1779 the local colonial laws had reached the point of resembling the Jim Crow laws of the nineteenth-century United States by restricting seating, dress, and occupations and even imposing a curfew on nonwhites.¹⁵ Such a situation, in an age when liberal reforms were fanning revolutionary sentiment in many countries, was clearly a powder keg waiting to explode.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The spark that burst the powder keg in Haiti was the same one that sealed the fate of Louis XVI in France: the French Revolution. The revolt that began in Paris in May 1789 eventually led to the reform of all French government institutions and the end of the Bourbon monarchy, and commenced nearly 20 years of war in Europe. But the implications of the French Revolution for Haiti were much greater than merely the change of government in the far-away mother country. The Revolution was accompanied by an overwhelming host of liberal ideas that modified forever the fundamental character of French culture—the same culture that nurtured life in Haiti. The greatest of these was the effort to institute social equality.

When the French revolutionary assembly proclaimed freedom for all Frenchmen in August 1789, that freedom included the slave populations in France's colonies. This granting of such freedom was easy for the men voting in

the assembly hall in Paris; very few of them had even met a slave. The liberal sentiment for freedom was so strong in Paris that Mirabeau, one of the Revolution's greatest leaders, even chastised the representatives sent from Haiti to the National Assembly because they were all white!¹⁶ Mirabeau's reaction confounded the colonials, who not only were out of touch with the radical changes that had taken place in the French capital since May, but had little concept of representing the nonwhite population. Even so, a second delegation arriving in Paris later in the year *did* include mulâtres. Then 6 months later, on March 28, 1790, the French National Assembly gave the vote to all persons in the colony aged 25 and older who either owned property or who had paid taxes for 10 years. When the news arrived in the colony months later, the population was energized by the implications of the reform.

Unfortunately, freedom only set all the new citizens of Haiti on a collision course. The majority of whites foresaw the inevitable end of their way of life as they suddenly became a tiny minority of citizens immersed within the larger black colony.¹⁷ Reforms from the Assembly in Paris particularly outraged many of the propertied elite in Haiti because they appeared to strike mortally at the economic basis of life in the colony, the plantation system. Liberty was a cherished ideal for slaves who had seen a glimpse of what life away from the fields could bring. But freedom for slaves also offended the freed blacks and mulattos, who felt that they had earned their freedom through guts and merit, and who would certainly risk the loss of their standard of living when the less prosperous and less educated slaves became their equals in rights. Although the law granting voting privileges passed in Paris, its implementation stalled in the Caribbean colony. The plantation owners strongly opposed giving the local population an opportunity at equality.

But on October 12, 1790 Vincent Ogé and his associate Jean-Baptiste Chavannes, both freed blacks who had been armed and financed by England and America, landed on the north coast of Haiti and formed the nucleus of a group intending to push for full execution of the Paris Assembly's decree. Ogé had been educated in France and encouraged by the association of the "Amis des Noirs" in Paris to work for full freedoms in the colony.¹⁸ He and Chavannes tried to achieve their goal by asking the colonial assembly for full implementation of the National Assembly's declaration of expanded rights. When they were refused, they took to arms to demand those rights. Although they intended to bring about change in a peaceful manner, a white planter was killed in a resulting melee. As a result, their group was destroyed by the elites and both Ogé and Chavannes were tortured and killed, broken on the wheel in full public view.¹⁹ Their deaths only convinced others that there could be no racial coexistence in Haiti.

These events established the pattern for a purely Haitian revolution. Internal conflict boiling under pressure, exacerbated by an infusion of liberal ideas during a period of rising prosperity, broke out into a condition of civil war. All these characteristics were similar to those that had created revolts in America in the 1770s and France in the 1780s, and would spark revolutions in Russia in the 1910s and China in the 1940s. But what made the revolution in Haiti different was the extreme disunity of the population. The other revolutions were bloody

and disruptive, but due to a higher degree of homogeneity among the controlling populations that created the revolts in America, Europe, and Asia, they were not nearly as destructive as Haiti's.

The Ogé revolt was soon succeeded by another, led by a slave named Boukman. Boukman's supporters included men named Papillon, Biassou, Jeannot, and Toussaint L'Ouverture, the eventual "father of free Haiti." These men renounced peaceful approaches and soon had inflamed the whole of the north section of the colony by freeing slaves and destroying the property of recalcitrant whites. The savagery of this insurrection and the response it elicited from whites were unparalleled. A British historian visiting at the time noted that

to detail the various conflicts, skirmishes, massacres and slaughter which this exterminating war produced were to offer a disgusting and frightful picture. . . . Within two months after the revolt began, upwards of two thousand whites had been massacred, one hundred eighty sugar plantations and about nine hundred coffee, cotton and indigo settlements had been destroyed, and twelve hundred families reduced from opulence to abject destitution. Of the insurgents . . . upwards of ten thousand had perished by sword or famine and some hundreds by the hand of the executioner, many of these on the wheel.²⁰

Boukman was soon captured and executed. But he was quickly succeeded by Jeannot, who was so savage in his approach that he was soon executed by Biassou. Haiti was rapidly consumed in fighting between black and white, poor and wealthy.

While the inhabitants of the colony were fighting one another, Britain and Spain took advantage of the opportunity to attack and expand their influence in the region at France's expense. With the entire colony under attack from within and without, the French commissioner in Port-au-Prince, Léger-Félicité Sonthonax, proclaimed the emancipation of the slaves in order to make an alliance with the current black commander in the north on August 29, 1793. That commander was L'Ouverture, who had initially proclaimed his goals as vengeance, then liberty and equality in St. Domingue.²¹ Thus began the stormy relationship between Toussaint L'Ouverture and France. In September 1793 the British made landings in the port towns of Jérémie and Môle St. Nicholas, while forces from Santo Domingo advanced into the northeast region around Dondon. The Spanish also supported the slave revolts with arms and supplies.²² The time was ripe for the emergence of a new leader.

Toussaint L'Ouverture was a 47-year-old former coachman and veterinarian at the plantation of Bréda in the northern region near Haut du Cap. He was gap-toothed (some say hence the name "l'ouverture," meaning "opening") and ugly, but literate, an excellent rider, and an active, effective leader. Two months later, after having first taken the pay and the cause of the Spanish to heart in order to gain his objectives in the north, he changed allegiances, saved Sonthonax from imprisonment, and became a "French" general.²³ Even with the help of L'Ouverture, however, over the following 10 months French fortunes fell steadily in Haiti, and the English finally conquered the capital of the colony in June 1794. Over the same period the fortunes of Toussaint L'Ouverture were rising

dramatically, and with the fall of Port-au-Prince and French leader Robespierre's recall of Sonthonax, he and a man named André Rigaud²⁴ were the only "French" powers left on the island.

Sudden peace in mainland Europe caused the Spanish to stop fighting in Haiti, leaving Rigaud and L'Ouverture with only the English enemy in common and a clear disdain for each other. Haitians freed from conflict with the Spanish flocked to L'Ouverture's banner. Through 1796 the English troops suffered terribly from heat and disease, while the Haitians fought amongst themselves. Toussaint L'Ouverture steadily grew in power and prestige; he had been appointed lieutenant governor of Haiti for saving the life of Sonthonax in 1796 and a général de division in 1797 by the French Directory. Successive French administrators supported all efforts against the English and actually fanned the flames between Rigaud and L'Ouverture when it served their purposes. The English finally gave up on their Haitian campaign in October 1798, leaving the all-important question of Haitian leadership unresolved.

Open civil war began in Haiti later that same month when the last French administrator departed from Port-au-Prince, leaving L'Ouverture and Rigaud as coequal, independent commanders. In November 1798 L'Ouverture established relations with the United States. The platform for these relations comprised mutually beneficial trade supported by the American Navy, open ports for U.S. merchants in Haiti, and American arms for L'Ouverture's forces.²⁵ Haiti and the United States were natural allies at this point, both working to establish ties with former colonial masters and to develop important trade alliances in the western hemisphere. This relationship of mutual benefit would slowly evolve to the advantage of the United States, but at first the arrangement between the two powers was of much greater benefit to Haiti, and most significantly to Toussaint L'Ouverture.

The first U.S. consul general, Edward Stephens, arrived in the colony in March 1799, accredited not to Haiti, but to L'Ouverture personally. One result of this arrangement was a strict embargo, at L'Ouverture's request, of Rigaud's southern sector by the U.S. Navy.²⁶ War of the most brutal kind continued to ravage the country: thousands were shot, hung, starved to death, or burned alive as the forces of both sides ravaged the countryside. L'Ouverture did not hesitate to use any power at his disposal to attack Rigaud. Finally, in July 1800, after the decimation of his force, Rigaud elected to depart Haiti by ship, leaving L'Ouverture in control of the entire country. In response, Toussaint permitted the continued massacre of nearly 10,000 persons, for the most part mulattos, to subjugate the south completely. To everyone else, Toussaint L'Ouverture was a hero, his mission complete, "compared to Hercules, Alexander the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte and Bacchus."²⁷ But for L'Ouverture the victory was not complete; he needed to ensure that slavery and oppression would not return to Haiti, and to do that, he needed security in Hispaniola and freedom from France.

THE INCOMPLETE HAITIAN REVOLUTION

L'Ouverture then embarked on a concerted campaign to end any threat to Haitian freedoms. First, in May 1800 he ordered his forces into Santo Domingo

and, within 6 months, had seized control of the entire island; then he turned his attention to reconstruction at home and efforts to keep the French at bay. Luckily for L'Ouverture, relations among the French, the Americans, and the English were again in crisis. For 2 years he had a relatively free hand in Haiti while the major powers were embroiled with other issues of commerce, freedom of the seas, and war in Europe between England and France. L'Ouverture focused his attentions on the development of a Haitian administrative system and resurrection of the local economy, which had been nearly destroyed by years of civil war.

The method he used to establish the new Haitian state is instructive. Because most of the skilled administrators, local or foreign, had been forced out during the revolt, Toussaint L'Ouverture had only his army to administer the state. Among his senior staff, most were noirs (blacks), many not even being Haitian-born, and several were undeniably vicious and vengeful.²⁸ Still, with only his military at hand, L'Ouverture divided the state into three districts and assigned one of his generals to each. The primary mission assigned to these generals was to restore the agricultural base of Haiti.

As an administrator, L'Ouverture demonstrated some promise, particularly given his limited experience. He chose moderation and reconciliation rather than continued vengeance and embarked upon a platform of black-ruled government supported by a strong Haitian agricultural base using the old plantation system. Forced labor was imposed on the people of Haiti, profits were divided among all, and a strict system of controls was developed for all workers.²⁹ He also retained a strong, military-like central government, with the army as the center of power. The chieftains of his army controlled the local districts, receiving their orders directly from L'Ouverture. To legalize the entire system he had the so-called "Constitution of 1801" concentrate all power in his hands and award to him alone the right to name his successor.³⁰ Thus he stamped Haiti with his personal image, molding it into a Caribbean Sparta—an image that would be resurrected time and time again by his successors, down to the rather unlikely General Cedras in the 1990s.

Unfortunately, L'Ouverture's vision was not very successful in practice. Although the initial results were promising and his creation of a black-ruled state demonstrated significant progress in the first year of peace, by 1801 the intricate web of deception and dominance he used to rule began to fall apart, both within and outside Haiti.³¹ His favorite cohort and expected successor revolted against him and was executed. The international crisis that granted him some security in the Caribbean cooled: France began to take a stronger interest in its possessions after Napoleon consolidated his power as First Consul of France, and Britain lifted its blockade of the Caribbean. The lifting of the blockade permitted other nations to make contact with Haiti for the first time. Napoleon understood that Haiti was the French gateway to the Caribbean and hoped to use the colony as a staging base for French reconquest of parts of Louisiana.³² The French ruler took advantage of an interim peace with his European enemies to send an expedition of 20,000 French soldiers to Haiti in an attempt to regain the colony and its strategic position in the Caribbean.

Napoleon chose his own brother-in-law, Victor-Emmanuel Leclerc, as the leader of this expedition. Leclerc's task was to smash resistance to France, pacify