

## CIVIL AFFAIRS IN HAITI

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### Description

Besides being the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti is also the most politically tumultuous. In its two centuries of sovereignty, Haiti has experienced nearly 200 revolutions or coups.<sup>1</sup> Haiti's modern political turmoil began in 1986 following the downfall of Jean Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier. Several military coups later, Lieutenant General Prosper Avril yielded to internal and external pressure for democratization and surrendered power to an interim government led by Haitian Supreme Court Justice Ertha Pascal-Trouillot in 1990. On December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1990, a Catholic priest named Jean Bertrand Aristide became Haiti's first democratically elected president.<sup>2</sup>

Following historical precedent, Aristide was ousted by his Chief of the Army, Lieutenant General Raoul Cedras, on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 1991, after just 7 months in power. In response to this affront to democracy, the United Nations (UN) instituted an oil and arms embargo and froze all over Haiti's foreign assets. On July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1992, less than a month into the embargo, Aristide and Cedras agreed to a US negotiated settlement that would return Aristide to power by October 30<sup>th</sup> and allow General Cedras and the rest of his military junta to honorably retire. In preparation for Aristide's return, the USS Harlan County set sail for Haiti on October 6<sup>th</sup> with 200 U.S. and Canadian military and police trainers. The ship was met in Haiti two days later by a mob of armed protesters, who made it clear that the ruling junta was not prepared to cede power. Occurring only days after the infamous "Black Hawk Down" incident in Somalia in which 18 U.S. Army Rangers died, the U.S. government ordered the USS Harlan County to leave Haiti.<sup>3</sup>

On July 31<sup>st</sup>, 1994, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 940 authorizing the restoration of democracy in Haiti by "all means necessary."<sup>4</sup> As the strongest proponent of Aristide's return to power, President Clinton ordered the U.S. military to take the lead in "Operation Uphold Democracy." On September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1994, the Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered U.S. Atlantic Command (USACOM) to activate its contingency plan for the invasion of Haiti. A force of 20,000 U.S. soldiers would forcibly return Aristide to power if necessary and secure conditions in Haiti to allow for a smooth transition to UN control.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> D.C. Convey, "Building Bridges in Haiti," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 125 no. 1 (1999): 93.

<sup>2</sup> John Fishel, *Civil Military Operations in the New World* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1997), 210.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

<sup>5</sup> D.C. Convey, "Building Bridges in Haiti," 93.

## Planning for Operation Uphold Democracy

Planning for the invasion of Haiti began over a year before the operation actually took place. In the fall of 1993, USACOM formed a 21 member team to formulate a contingency plan for a forcible entry into Haiti. By the spring of 1994, President Clinton's frustration with General Cedras' unwillingness to comply with U.N. accords led him to change the official U.S. policy toward Haiti to allow for the use of force. While the U.S. military remained reluctant to become involved with another failed state so soon after its unsuccessful intervention in Somalia, in May, 1994, the military leadership ordered the XVIII Airborne Corps under the command of Lieutenant General Hugh Shelton to form Joint Task Force (JTF) 180 and begin planning for the forcible take over of Haiti. For contingency purposes, the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division, under the command of Major General David Meade, was similarly ordered to stand up JTF-190 to plan for a permissive entry into Haiti.<sup>6</sup> After the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division began planning for a non-hostile mission to Haiti in May, strategic planning began to take place between DoD, DoS, DoJ, Treasury, CIA, and USAID under the leadership of the NSC. However, while all these civilian agencies theoretically understood their operational role, the high level of security surrounding the formulation of both plans prevented the creation of an integrated civil-military operational plan. This lack of communication meant that interagency coordination could not occur at a tactical level until all parties were already on the ground in Haiti.<sup>7</sup>

Although, the overall purpose of Operation Uphold Democracy was clear, the mission's strategic objectives remained vague as the island nation was of no strategic importance to the U.S., nor did it represent any real threat beyond that of illegal immigration. While the Clinton administration saw the U.S. mission in Haiti as a chance to defend a fledgling democracy and regain some of America's prestige lost in Mogadishu, the military's combatant commanders saw democracy promotion in the pejorative terms of "national building" and believed that close ties with the Haitian government would inevitably lead to mission creep.<sup>8</sup> As a result, the State Department took it upon themselves to rally the international development community for help in securing long term stability in Haiti. State Department officials coordinated the efforts of the NGO community prior to the invasion by soliciting the help of InterAction, a coalition of over 150 relief organizations operating in 160 countries. While InterAction attempted to plan for issues such as advocacy, media, refugee and disaster relief, their efforts were ultimately futile as the military planners were unable to include NGOs in the planning process due to the classified nature of military planning.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> John Fishel, *Civil Military Operations in the New World*, 214.

<sup>7</sup> Margaret Daly Hays and Gary F. Weatley eds, *Interagency and Political-Military Dimensions of Peace Operations: Haiti-A Case Study* (Washington, DC: NDU Press Book, 1996), 3.

<sup>8</sup> John Fishel, *Civil Military Operations in the New World*, 213.

<sup>9</sup> Leslie Benton and Glenn Ware, "Haiti: A Case Study of the International Response and the Efficacy of Nongovernmental Organizations in the Crisis," *Emory International Law Center*, 16.

## **Key Actors**

- **Blue:**
  - U.S. Military
  - U.S. Department of State
  - U.S. Department of Justice
  - U.S. Treasury Department
  - CIA
  - USAID
  
- **Green:**
  - United Nations (34 Participants in UN Mission in Haiti (UNMIH))

Algeria	Antigua and Barbuda
Argentina	Austria
Bahamas	Bangladesh
Barbados	Belize
Benin	Canada
Djibouti	France
Guatemala	Guinea Bissau
Guyana	Honduras
India	Ireland
Jamaica	Jordan
Mali	Nepal
Netherlands	New Zealand
Pakistan	Philippines
Russian Federation	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Saint Lucia	Suriname
Togo	Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia	United States

- **Brown:**
  - InterAction (a consortium of 150 international aid organizations)
  - No records were kept by the U.S. military tracking how many NGOs were active on the ground in Haiti. Estimates put their number between 20 and 100.
  
- **Red:**
  - General Cedras' defeated military Junta

## **Objectives & End States**

Following a last minute diplomatic agreement brokered between General Cedras, former President Jimmy Carter, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Colin Powell, and Senator Sam Nunn, it became necessary to hastily merge the operational plans of both

Joint Task Forces. Planning for both missions had been kept completely compartmentalized up until a few weeks prior to the actual intervention, which greatly inhibited their integration.<sup>10</sup> The new plan called for the XVIII Airborne to assume control of Haiti with a force of 20,000 soldiers and then transfer authority to the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division 30-45 days into the mission.<sup>11</sup> Overnight the mission objective had changed from the forcible return of Aristide to power to a peacekeeping mission intended to promote conditions for a smooth transition back to democracy.

The new mission objectives for Operation Uphold Democracy were as follows:

- Return President Aristide to power
- Maintain law and order in Haiti
- Create conditions for a smooth transition to UN control of Haiti (UNMIH).

The logistical consequences of merging two separate operational plans proved utterly chaotic. For example, coordinating the flow of aircraft to Haiti required the combination of Time Phased Force and Deployment Data (TPFDD) from the two operational plans, which caused equipment to be misplaced and in some cases left behind. More importantly however, while the military expected its civilian counterparts to arrive with them in Haiti ready to begin operations, the civilian agencies quickly discovered that neither operational plan had made provisions for the transportation of civilians. Members of JTF-190 with whom all the non-military agencies and NGOs had been coordinating their plans, deployed to Haiti without providing any guidance or contacts for their civilian counterparts.<sup>12</sup>

Much like in Somalia, the U.S. military saw security as its main mission priority and believed that its civilian partners would take the lead in humanitarian and development projects. However, military planners vastly overestimated the capabilities of their civilian counterparts. Civilian agencies do not have the ability to surge their personnel and thus many civil support operations were not fully staffed until 30 days into the operation. In the initial planning stages many agencies were not told how much money would be appropriated for their missions in Haiti and thus they lacked concrete operational plans prior to their arrival in country. As the lead agency for development assistance, USAID was expected to start work immediately returning essential services to the Haitian people. However, because USAID contracts out all of its projects, it was naïve for the military to assume that development and humanitarian projects would begin as soon as the boots hit the beaches.<sup>13</sup>

The military also falsely assumed that the same type of NGOs would appear in Haiti as had in Somalia. However, unlike in Somalia where relief workers quickly appeared on the scene to distribute food, the NGOs operating in Haiti were more

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<sup>10</sup> Margaret Daly Hays and Gary F. Weatley eds, *Interagency and Political-Military Dimensions*, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Martin Ganzglass, "The Restoration of the Somali Justice System," in *Learning from Somalia*, eds. Sheldon Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997), 82.

<sup>12</sup> Margaret Daly Hays and Gary F. Weatley eds, *Interagency and Political-Military Dimensions*, 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

interested in long term development projects and took longer to arrive in country. As a result, when boats of food first arrived in Port-au-Prince there were not enough personnel to handle distribution.<sup>14</sup> Additional civil affairs (CA) personnel could have helped filled the void created by a lack of civilian personnel early in the mission. These misconceptions are representative of the fundamental lack of “cultural” understanding between civilian and military organizations.

### **Operational Strategies/Key Missions and Tasks**

The dilapidated state of Haiti’s infrastructure was arguably one the main causes of the country’s constant state of political unrest. However, instead of simply restoring essential services to Haiti themselves, the civil affairs personnel planned on encouraging the Haitians to do the majority of the work with support from American military engineers and financial backing from the international community. According to Lieutenant Colonel Edward Anderson, the J-3 civil affairs officer for JTF-180, U.S. forces lacked Title 10 authority from Congress to assume responsibility for rebuilding Haiti’s critical infrastructure. The U.S. military command used this as an excuse not to engage in extensive reconstruction projects out of a fear that they would lead to mission creep if the Haitian people became too reliant on U.S. support.<sup>15</sup>

At the time of the arrival of U.S. forces, Haiti had only 4 functioning highways. All other roads were only passable with 4-wheel drive vehicles in dry weather. Narrow roads and a lack of traffic lights and traffic police resulted in a constant state of gridlock in Haiti’s largest cities. A plethora of broken down cars and trucks left in the street further contributed to the country’s terrible traffic problems. To alleviate these stresses and facilitate the movement of goods throughout Haiti, the World Bank donated \$4.4 million for a bridge to reduce traffic in Port-au-Prince’s commercial port district.<sup>16</sup> CA teams further diminished the problem by hiring local contractors to remove all the abandoned vehicles from city streets and perform maintenance on the country’s main thoroughfares.<sup>17</sup>

The electrical supply in Haiti was notoriously sporadic and completely unregulated. Households were charged a flat fee because no meters existed with which to measure rates of consumption. The inability to predict levels of consumption resulted in frequent blackouts and served as a reminder of the government’s inability to provide for the well being of its people.<sup>18</sup> Once U.S. forces arrived in Haiti, CA electrical engineers and 16 members of the 20<sup>th</sup> Engineering Brigade joined forces to form “prime power teams” and went to working repairing the country’s electrical grid. Haiti’s electrical woes were determined to be mostly the result of a lack of spare parts. By bringing four power

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<sup>14</sup> Leslie Benton and Glenn Ware, “Haiti: A Case Study of the International Response,” 27.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Baumann and John Fishel, *Operation Uphold Democracy: The Execution Phase* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: US Army Command and Staff College Press, 1996), 1.

<sup>16</sup> D.C. Convey, “Building Bridges in Haiti,” 93.

<sup>17</sup> Eric Doerrer, “Operation Vignette: Civil Affairs in Haiti,” 75.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

plants back online, these teams successfully quadrupled the amount of electricity in Port-au-Prince and restored power to areas of the Haitian countryside that had been without electricity for over 5 years.<sup>19</sup>

In an effort to improve the general level of hygiene in the Haitian capital, members of the 52<sup>nd</sup> and 820<sup>th</sup> Battalions removed more than 200 tons of garbage from the streets of Port-au-Prince. During this operation, CA personnel discovered that the country's main landfill at City Soleil had exceeded its maximum capacity. To alleviate Haiti's refuse problems, soldiers from the 20<sup>th</sup> Brigade built a new landfill just north of the capital at La Saline along with a two-way access road.<sup>20</sup> These basic improvements went a long way towards improving the quality of life in Port-au-Prince.

In an effort to speed Haiti's smooth return to democracy, 34 Army Reserve CA officers were assigned to advise the country's 12 government ministries.<sup>21</sup> These advisers reported directly to U.S. Ambassador William Swing and passed their long term development findings onto USAID. The reform of Haiti's customs system serves as a shining example of the capabilities of civil affairs specialists. Before the arrival of U.S. forces, Haiti's customs bureau was an administrative nightmare. It could take someone a day and a half and visits to 6 different departments to clear the simplest of items through customs. A single CA government support team member was assigned to work with the Haitian customs officials and within a matter of months completely streamlined the entire system.<sup>22</sup>

The one area in which the U.S. military failed to provide adequate civil support was in medical services. Both JTF-180 and JTF-190 had failed to include health service support as a component of their plans for an intervention in Haiti. According to the operational plan generated by the XVIII Airborne Corps, "except for detainees, JTF-180 medical forces will limit care for Haitians to emergency care for persons injured as a result of US/UN action and emergency care necessary to prevent loss of life and limb."<sup>23</sup> JTF-190 was only slightly more accommodating, allowing U.S. military personnel to administer medical treatment on a "case by case basis with approval from the commanding surgeon or request from the J-3 CA."<sup>24</sup> Once U.S. forces were on the ground, the decision was made that primary responsibility for indigenous medical care belonged to the local authorities and non-military U.S. government agencies. The 44<sup>th</sup> Medical Brigade was deployed to evaluate the status of Haiti's healthcare system;<sup>25</sup> however, its findings were passed along to the civilian authorities and were never addressed by CA personnel.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Darren Klemens and Kelly Slaven, "Task Force Caste: Joint Engineer Operations in Haiti," *Engineer* 25, no. ½ (1995): 41.

<sup>20</sup> Darren Klemens and Kelly Slaven, "Task Force Caste: Joint Engineer Operations in Haiti," *Engineer* 25, no. ½ (1995): 41.

<sup>21</sup> Martin Ganzglass, "The Restoration of the Somali Justice System," 116.

<sup>22</sup> Eric Doerrer, "Operation Vignette: Civil Affairs in Haiti," 76-77.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Most of Haiti's hospital equipment was 40-50 years out of date and lacked any hygienic standards

<sup>26</sup> Robert Baumann and John Fishel, *Operation Uphold Democracy: The Execution Phase*, 11.

By October 1, 1995, U.S. CA personnel had completed 332 infrastructure restoration projects and had begun work on an additional 375. A large emphasis on decentralization of the CA mission led to the majority of these projects being proposed and carried out by the Haitian people themselves with the support of the U.S. military.<sup>27</sup>

### **Order of Battle**

Operation Uphold Democracy consisted of over 20,000 U.S. troops the majority of whom were Army personnel. A contingent of UN forces also supplied an additional 2,000 troops.<sup>28</sup> Thanks to last minute diplomatic efforts, U.S. forces were able to enter Haiti virtually unopposed and immediately begin stabilization operations.

A long planning period combined with lessons learned from a recent intervention in Somalia allowed U.S. civil affairs planners to formulate a comprehensive plan to restore essential services and rebuild Haiti's government institutions. Approximately 80 CA and 70 PSYOP personnel were assigned to carry out civil support operations in Haiti.<sup>29</sup> The majority of these individuals were Army Reservists, who were called to active duty under the Presidential Selected Reserve Call-up. This was only the second time this authority had ever been exercised and was done as a result of lessons learned from not activating the Reserves in Somalia.<sup>30</sup> 42 members of the active duty 96<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion were also deployed to Haiti, where they were divided into 21 direct support two-man teams and assigned to support Special Forces teams operating in the countryside. For many months after their initial deployment, these teams essentially functioned as the civil administrators of rural Haiti. Reservists from the 351<sup>st</sup>, 448<sup>th</sup>, and 407<sup>th</sup> CA companies coordinated reconstruction projects mainly in Haiti's larger urban areas and helped reform the country's dysfunctional government ministries.<sup>31</sup>

In order to aid the restoration of democracy in Haiti, the military set up Civil-Military Operations Centers (CMOC) in Port-au-Prince and Cape Haitian to coordinate civil-military operations. However, unlike in Somalia, where the CMOC had been the primary liaison between the military and the NGOs, in Haiti they performed more traditional peacekeeping functions such as dealing with displaced civilians. The main CMOC in Port-au-Prince was also located within the secure military compound of the Joint Operations Center and was thus inaccessible to civilians lacking the appropriate clearances. This made it extremely difficult for personnel from civilian agencies to coordinate their efforts with their military counterparts. The military setup a Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Center (HACC) outside of the Joint Operations Center to serve as the interface between the military and the NGOs.<sup>32</sup> However, the fact

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<sup>27</sup> Martin Ganzglass, "The Restoration of the Somali Justice System," 116.

<sup>28</sup> Globalsecurity.org, [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/uphold\\_democracy.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/uphold_democracy.htm)

<sup>29</sup> Martin Ganzglass, "The Restoration of the Somali Justice System," 82.

<sup>30</sup> The only other time that reservists have been activated as a result of the Presidential Selected Reserve Cal-Up authority was in Operation Desert Storm. John Fishel, *Civil Military Operations in the New World*, 226.

<sup>31</sup> Eric Doerrer, "Operation Vignette: Civil Affairs in Haiti," *Military Review* 76 no. 2, (1996): 73.

<sup>32</sup> Leslie Benton and Glenn Ware, "Haiti: A Case Study of the International Response," 18.

that the HACC in Haiti functioned as the CMOC in Somalia had just months earlier was an endless source of confusion for the NGO personnel.

Unlike the CMOC in Somalia, which kept exact records of all the NGOs and their personnel operating in country, neither the HACC nor the CMOC were ever aware of how many NGOs were operating in Haiti. Estimates put the number of NGOs in Haiti, after the arrival of the U.S. forces somewhere between 20-100 organizations.<sup>33</sup> These groups remained suspicious as always of working with the military out of the fear of losing the appearance of neutrality in the eyes of the local population. Besides providing translators and the occasional security detail, there were not many joint ventures between the military and the NGO community. Furthermore, many NGOs, such as Christian Relief Services, also expressed a reluctance to cooperate with other NGOs operating in Haiti.<sup>34</sup>

### **Ends-Means Relationships/Final Thoughts**

Operation Restore Hope was technically a success as it met the finite goals of restoring Aristide to power and transferring authority to the United Nations within 6 months. The long lead time given to the military to plan the operation, as well as, the adaptability of commanders on the ground contributed to the success of the military operation. The lack of armed resistance from Cedras' forces also allowed the military to focus more on civil support missions that were intended to lay the groundwork for Haiti's successful return to democracy. However, the U.S. civilian and military planners greatly underestimated the difficulties inherent in rebuilding a government that was barely functional even before it experienced a revolution. By narrowly defining democracy in Haiti as the return of Aristide to power, military planners created the conditions for which the United States could declare victory and return home without having to make a long term commitment to building institutions capable of supporting a stable democracy in Haiti.

Memories of the recent disastrous mission in Somalia negatively effected planning for the U.S. military's intervention in Haiti. While Somalia was in many ways representative of how not to conduct a civil affairs mission in a failed state, ultimately, the wrong lessons were learned. Following the U.S. withdrawal from Somalia, President Clinton bowed to pressure from Congress to put greater restrictions on when the U.S. military would intervene in foreign countries. As a result he issued Presidential Decision Directive 25 stipulating that U.S. involvement in future U.N. missions would be limited to operations that advanced American national interests.<sup>35</sup> While establishing democracy in Haiti was viewed to be in the U.S. national interest, a long term stabilization mission was not and thus strict time lines for the withdrawal of American troops were enforced.

False comparisons drawn between Somalia and Haiti also caused military planners to wrongly assume that the people of Haiti were starving. Dumping large

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<sup>33</sup> Leslie Benton and Glenn Ware, "Haiti: A Case Study of the International Response," 17.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>35</sup> The White House, "Presidential Decision Directive 25," 6 May 1994.

amounts of free and low-cost food into Haiti forced local farmers out of the market, which in turn made Haiti entirely dependent on external sources of food even though the country is agriculturally rich. This destabilizing influence has since caused massive urban migration and vastly contributed to the country's growing foreign debt. Had the civil affairs community had a better understanding of Haiti's culture and economy this ongoing crisis could have been avoided.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, the conscious decision not to engage in nation building resulted in the U.S. military cutting support for development projects started by its own civil affairs personnel.<sup>37</sup> Haitians had become so over reliant on U.S. aid from everything from providing fuel for their garbage trucks to maintaining their electrical grids that they could not support even the most basic of their own municipal functions. While military planners had envisioned NGOs and civilian agencies bearing the brunt of development projects in Haiti, they made very little effort to encourage interagency cooperation or the formulation of a long term strategy for Haiti. The military has proven its ability to learn from tactical mistakes made in past civil affairs missions, however, the U.S. military will continue to fail in changing the direction of failed states until its own culture gains the will to commit to long term nation building strategies.

### **Recommendations**

1. The U.S. government needs to create civil-military planning procedures for operations in failing or failed states.
2. Military planners must enhance their comprehension of the structural and organizational differences between civilian and military organizations.
3. Measures of effectiveness (MOE) should determine when it is appropriate to withdraw forces and not arbitrary timelines set in Washington.
4. Military planners need to include civilian agencies and NGOs much more in the planning process for future interventions.
5. The U.S. military desperately needs to hold civil-military operations gaming exercises.

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<sup>36</sup> Eric Doerrer, "Operation Vignette: Civil Affairs in Haiti," 77.

<sup>37</sup> Robert Baumann and John Fishel, *Operation Uphold Democracy: The Execution Phase*, 1.

## Order of Battle

<b>Divisions</b>	<b>Capabilities</b>	<b>Forces Serving</b>
U.S. Army	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• XVIII Airborne</li> <li>• 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division</li> <li>• 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division</li> <li>• 448<sup>th</sup>, 407<sup>th</sup> CA Companies</li> <li>• 358<sup>th</sup> CA Brigade</li> <li>• 96<sup>th</sup> CA Battalion</li> <li>• 20<sup>th</sup> Engineering Brigade</li> <li>• 52<sup>nd</sup> Battalion</li> <li>• 820<sup>th</sup> Battalion</li> <li>• 44<sup>th</sup> Medical Brigade</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Forces Group</li> </ul>	20,000
U.S. Air Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C-5</li> <li>• C-140</li> <li>• KC-135</li> <li>• KC-10</li> <li>• C-141</li> </ul>	Flew over 300 Sorties delivering equipment and supplies to Haiti
U.S. Navy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided Transport Vessels</li> </ul>	
U.S. Coast Guard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided Maritime Security around Haiti</li> </ul>	
United Nations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peacekeepers from 34 countries</li> </ul>	6,065 troops at its peak level of deployment