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Controlling the Big Stick: The United States Navy and the Cuban Intervention of September 1906

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ABSTRACT

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A case study method is used to examine the role played by the United States Navy in bringing about the Second Cuban Intervention of 1906-1909. The 1906 American navy had a distinct lack of centralized direction during the September crisis in Cuba. As a consequence, initiative in the crisis passed to the several naval officers representing the United States in Cuba at the time. These officers acted in consonance with the navy's own institutional agendas and contrary to the objectives of the Theodore Roosevelt administration. In so doing these officers were supported and even rewarded for their actions by the sympathetic uniformed hierarchy within their department. The result was a massive military intervention in Cuba and an American occupation of the island which the American president did not want and worked strenuously to avoid. Principal research sources include the official records of the State and Navy Departments as well as personal papers of the major participants.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1971 Harvard political scientist Graham Allison published Essence of Decision, his seminal analysis of national government behavior during the Cuban Missle Crisis. While the work certainly presented a comprehensive historical examination of the crisis itself, its principal scholarly contribution lay on a more theoretical plane. Indeed Allison may best be remembered as the man who brought alternative, well-defined explanatory "paradigms" of nation-state behavior into something not unlike academic vogue.

Allison named his three analytical constructs the "Rational Actor," "Organizational Process," and "Governmental Politics" paradigms. The first of these models (the Rational Actor) most closely resembles the conventional view of nation-state behavior in that it pictures the actions taken by a nation to be the intended products of rational value-maximizing choices made by a single, integrated decision-making entity. In short, the nation operates much as would a single goal-oriented individual given a choice of discrete behavior options with reasonably forseeable consequences. Allison's second framework (the Organizational Process paradigm) differs from the Rational Actor model in that it addresses the undeniable fact that national governments are in reality made up of smaller, subordinate units which both collect and process the information needed for governmental behavior selection and then carry out the various behaviors selected. Naturally enough, these secondary actors are

influenced by their own parochial goals and priorities. Moreover, due to the relative inertia of bureaucratic activity, these actors are largely constrained to carrying out preset organizational "repetoires" in the absence of any specific higher-level direction to do otherwise. The third and final Allison model (Governmental Politics) derives its distinction from its recognition of the political element present in virtually any intra-governmental interaction. Consequently, this last framework most adequately addresses the inter-departmental bargaining and political gamesmanship attendant to the day-to-day operation of any large organization. National behavior outputs can thus be viewed as being the outwardly visible resultants of this "inside" political bargaining process.

Allison illustrated the use of his three carefully developed paradigms by applying each to the events surrounding the 1962 missile crisis in Cuba. In doing so the author made a convincing case for the general validity of all three models and particularly for the benefits to be realized from employment of the latter two. In fact the Organizational Process and Governmental Politics paradigms may be vitally important in explaining national crisis-oriented behavior in those situations when a more traditional (Rational Actor) approach to the episode is clearly inadequate.

That was the case with the United States intervention in Cuba in 1906. The Theodore Roosevelt administration was steadfast in its determination not to intervene in Cuba's electoral crisis--that fact is apparent to even the most casual student of the period. Yet just such an intervention did eventually take place. Why?

Part of the answer undoubtedly rests with the United States Navy. As the principal contemporary agent of crisis-oriented diplomacy in the

region, the navy played a pivotal role in the United States' initial response to the Cuban events. Moreover, as the drama on the island unfolded, the navy assumed the additional task of complementing this nation's later, more conventional diplomatic representations through the actions of its warships and their crews. The ultimate success or failure of American foreign policy in the episode was, therefore, tied directly to the United States Navy and the degree to which it could effectively support American objectives in Cuba. Of course the Navy's institutional raison d'être is the practical advancement of United States interests. Yet, paradoxically, the 1906 Cuban affair presents historians with the spectacle of that same service carrying out a series of actions frequently at odds with the national objectives which the navy was intended to serve.

The American national interest did not demand military intervention in Cuba in 1906. Additionally, the governmental leadership of the United States opposed such an action and worked strenuously to prevent its occurence. The fact that an intervention nevertheless took place pointedly illustrates the limited explanatory utility which a Rational Actor approach possesses in situations of this type. Clearly, the key to understanding American behavior in the crisis must rest instead with the employment of analytical tools more along the lines of Allison's Organizational Process and Governmental Politics paradigms. Consequently, the serious student of the 1906 Cuban affair must necessarily acquaint himself with the organizational dynamics, bureaucratic machinations, and political considerations at work within and between the various departments of Theodore Roosevelt's government. Of these, the most important in terms of its impact upon the crisis in Cuba is quite obviously the Department of the Navy. To

be sure, the actions of the United States Navy were the most significant visible behaviors of the American government throughout the episode. Explaining why those actions ultimately frustrated the vigorous exertions of the president and his principal lieutenants poses a compelling historical challenge. The resolution of that challenge must therefore begin with a thorough examination of the navy in 1906 and its contemporary institutional environment.

That Mr. Roosevelt's turn-of-the-century navy was a potent fighting force is certainly without question. Unfortunately enough, that same organization was beset by a troublesome collection of internal political maneuvers, administrative headaches, and unresolved questions regarding institutional goals and priorities. A surprising number of these would find expression in the 1906 Cuban crisis, handicapping the service's ability to support its commander in chief in the field. Thus, in September of 1906 the navy's problems became the nation's problems and led almost directly to an American foreign policy failure and the military occupation of the Republic of Cuba.

CHAPTER I

"NO MAN CAN RUN IT:"

Organization and Power Issues in the United States Navy of 1906

There was an undeniable air of confidence surrounding the United States Navy in 1906. American naval officers radiated it, American politicians reveled in it, American newspaper editors reflected upon it, and concerned foreign officials granted it a healthy degree of respect. All were bound by a common high regard for the present and future war-making potential of the growing United States fleet. Indeed the contemporary edition of Jane's authoritative annual ranked the American navy just behind that of Great Britain in terms of its overall importance.[1] While many individuals might have questioned the validity of Mr. Jane's ordering scheme, rare was the man who even remotely doubted that the United States possessed a growing naval capability which was not to be challenged lightly.

The positive spirit which permeated the 1906 American navy was certainly well-founded, as the service's ships, men, and professional expertise were uniformly first-rate. In all, the organization had a total of some two hundred seventy-six commissioned vessels ready for service. Still another twenty-six were being built. Nearly fifty of the ships in the active fleet were battleships and cruisers and no

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[1]Fred T. Jane, Fighting Ships (London: Netherwood, Dalton, and Company, 1906; reprint ed., Newton Abbot Devon: Davis and Charles Reprints, 1970), p. 386.

fewer than twenty of those under construction fell into these most critical categories.[2] Additionally, since this fleet was the direct product of the "New Navy" building program begun in the latter part of the nineteenth century, its vessels were relatively young and modern in design. What was more, the service's recent modernization program with regard to its gunnery practices meant that most warships could call upon the latest in state-of-the-art gunnery direction technology.

Of course much of the credit for any American naval victory at sea would ultimately depend upon the quality of the officers and men who served aboard the warships of the United States fleet. In this regard, the Navy could call upon an Annapolis-trained leadership elite of nearly two thousand commissioned officers, more than five hundred seasoned warrant officer specialists, and a well-trained pool of approximately thirty-one thousand petty officers, seamen, and apprentices.[3] A significant percentage of all three groups had been tested in battle during the lop-sided war of 1898, and each could take justifiable pride in the overwhelming naval defeat which they had handed their Spanish foe. More recently, every sailor had benefited from a renewed Navy emphasis on professional training and the recent introduction of annual fleet maneuvers had given each man an opportunity to practice his skills in a wartime environment.

The only real weakness concerning the personnel of the navy in 1906 was that associated with the lethargic promotion system then at work within the officer corps. Thus, while Fred Jane could note that the 1906 U.S. Navy's enlisted force "had plenty of initiative" and

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[2]Pitman Pulsifer, Navy Yearbook (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1906), p. 555.

[3]Ibid., pp. 557, 565.

could be "relied upon in case of need," he also was forced to conclude that "U.S. naval officers are, as a rule, promoted too late to give their best work."[4] Indeed in 1906 the youngest captain in the United States Navy was a full twenty years older than his British or other European counterparts. What was more, a statutory requirement that naval officers be retired at age sixty-two meant that the most senior American officers spent no more than an average of two years as an admiral before being forced to retire from service.[5] The upper echelons of the naval command structure were, therefore, largely populated by geriatric groups of seagoing professionals faced with an imminent, mandated retirement. Moreover, since contemporary officer advancement was based almost entirely upon seniority in grade, there was precious little prospect of moving capable younger men into these top-level positions without revamping the promotion system itself. Fortunately for all, there was a move afoot within the service to provide just such a remedy, and the likelihood of its being able to resolve the troublesome promotion problem seemed promising.

In fact there wasn't much that did not seem promising about the immediate future of the turn-of-the-century United States Navy. That the institutional advances of the past several decades would continue apace seemed to be assured by the considerable popularity which the navy enjoyed at virtually every level of American society. To be sure, there was a genuine public fascination with the nation's increasingly powerful navy. Best of all, a devoted former assistant navy secretary occupied the White House and a newly-formed Navy League of the United

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[4]Jane, p. 96.

[5]Peter Karsten, The Naval Aristocracy (New York: The Free Press, 1972), p. 360.

States was providing assistance in wresting financial support from Congress. In reality, however, Congress seemed to need very little prodding on its legislative backing of the American fleet. In fact each of the past five years had seen the navy's annual appropriation increase, sometimes by as much as twenty percent over the previous year's figure.[6]

The official organization of the 1906 navy resembled something very much like a bureaucratic pyramid. At the top of this structure was the secretary of the navy, a cabinet officer appointed by the president, subject to the approval of the Senate. An assistant navy secretary, also subject to Senate confirmation, was similarly appointed. The secretary was assisted in his duties by an admiral of the navy (the ranking officer on active duty) and a collection of official boards dedicated to providing advice on a variety of specific topics. Of these the most significant was the General Board, which existed to consider a wide range of issues under the leadership of the admiral of the navy. As was the case with the other naval boards, the General Board possessed no executive authority of its own and was limited to making recommendations for action to the secretary.

The kind of mandated executive weakness which characterized the various naval boards was not seen in the next lower echelon of the department's official organization. Here executive authority was carried out on a daily basis by the chiefs of the various navy bureaus and by the commandant of the Marine Corps. In all the navy had eight bureaus, each headed by a rear admiral who answered directly to the secretary and who, like the secretary himself, had been confirmed in

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[6]Pulsifer, p. 543.

his post by the United States Senate. Each bureau was responsible for a specific portion of the general administration of the service and the day-to-day direction of its ships and men. Thus were the Bureaus of Ordnance, Steam Engineering, Construction and Repair, Supplies and Accounts, Equipment, Yards and Docks, and the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery all charged with overseeing the various activities implied by their names.

The Bureau of Navigation, on the other hand, had managed to accumulate a vast array of duties and responsibilities hardly belied by the title borne by that office. By 1906, for example, the Bureau of Navigation had become responsible for both the recruiting and assignment of the navy's men and the operational direction of the service's warships. Additionally, the chief of the Bureau of Navigation was also charged with the training of all naval personnel and thus controlled the navy's three enlisted training centers, the United States Naval Academy, and the United States Naval War College.

The base of the navy's organizational pyramid was filled out by the various functional units of the service, each of which reported to its respective departmental bureau. The service's five naval hospitals, for instance, answered to the chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery just as the commanders of the various fleets, squadrons, and stations similarly reported to the chief of the Navigation Bureau. Of the latter, the most significant was the North Atlantic Fleet. Commanded by a rear admiral, this premier battle fleet consisted of a dozen battleships, eight cruisers, and six gunboats organized into three subordinate squadrons of two divisions each.

Officially, then, the administrative structure of the navy in 1906 seemed to be straightforward enough. There was quite clearly an institutional place for everything and everything was securely set into its place. Put simply, the various boards gave their advice to the secretary who, in turn, would consider this counsel and then direct the activity of his department through the cognizant navy bureau chiefs and the commandant of the Marine Corps.

The United States Navy of 1906, therefore, officially represented a textbook example of the venerated military "chain of command" leading ultimately to presidentially-appointed civilian authority. In theory the energies of every level of this vast organization could thus efficiently be focused upon attaining the most important national goals. In truth, however, the system operated in quite another fashion. Like any large bureaucratic organization, the real administration of the United States Navy was (and is) the direct result of institutional power issues. In the Navy Department of 1906 those power issues hardly followed the official lines of authority at all. A direct consequence of this basic organizational reality was that the navy would not be able adequately to support American national policy objectives in Cuba in September of that year.

The fact that these organizational power issues tended to run counter to the intended organization of the navy was especially evident at the very highest levels of the department. Indeed a fundamental dichotomy between organizational theory and day-to-day practice existed in the office of the secretary itself. In 1905 Charles Joseph Bonaparte had been appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt and confirmed by the United States Senate as the nation's secretary of the navy. By the summer of 1906, however, the reality of the situation was

such that the country's de facto navy secretary was none other than the president himself.

Of course, given the fact that Theodore Roosevelt had always had an affinity for things naval, this might have been somewhat inevitable. As a young Harvard graduate in 1882, Roosevelt published what is still widely regarded as an authoritative history of the naval war of 1812 and, by 1897, had been appointed to serve as William McKinley's assistant secretary of the navy. In that post the future Rough Rider quickly earned a reputation as an involved and active naval administrator. In fact it was Roosevelt who in 1898 had cabled Commodore Dewey to proceed to the Philippines and engage the Spanish squadron there at the onset of hostilities with Spain. When war was declared in April, Dewey followed the assistant secretary's order and was rewarded with his spectacular naval victory in Manila Bay. As for Roosevelt himself, the excitement of the Spanish war took him briefly away from the navy, since responsible positions in the fleet were closed to even the most high-ranking civilian volunteers. Instead, the navy's assistant secretary joined the army and campaigned in Cuba as a volunteer cavalry officer under the command of the famed Colonel Leonard Wood. Enormously popular as a result of this summer's wartime service, Roosevelt was quickly elected to the governorship of New York and, by 1900, was back in national office as William McKinley's second vice president. The sudden tragedy of McKinley's 1901 assasination thrust the forty-two year old Roosevelt into the presidency itself and instantly made him commander in chief of the naval service with which he had worked for so long. What was more, this long-standing bond between the new chief executive and his navy was reinforced by the fact that Roosevelt's sister was married to his own naval aide.

Theodore Roosevelt complimented his lifelong attachment to the United States Navy with a genuine respect for the organization's potential. An avid student of naval theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan, Roosevelt viewed his navy as an essential factor in the nation's recent rise to world power. In fact, the president so adamantly supported Captain Mahan's views on sea power that one contemporary author noted that they might as well be called the "Roosevelt Doctrine."[7] Moreover, as a peacemaker who would win the 1906 Nobel Prize for his mediation of the Russo-Japanese conflict, Roosevelt was equally convinced of the utility of naval force when it came to preventing a Great Power war. Indeed the American president had underlined his nation's commitment to the peace process early in the year by parading eight American battleships by the Algeciras Conference and later confided to Harvard University president Charles Eliot that "the United States Navy is an infinitely more potent factor for peace than all the peace societies, of every kind and sort that are to be found in the United States put together."[8]

Roosevelt's heartfelt high regard for the navy of the United States was more than returned in kind by the officers and men of that service. This mutual respect probably had its most significant origin in Mr. Roosevelt's tenure as assistant navy secretary, since the administrator had quickly aligned himself with the most progressive and respected officers in the department. Roosevelt was later to recall

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[7]Eric F. Goldman, Charles J. Bonaparte, Patrician Reformer, His Earlier Career (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1943), p. 101.

[8]Elting E. Morison, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, vol. 5: The Big Stick 1905-1907 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), pp. 419-21.

that he had found "natural friends and allies in such men."[9] As vice president, Roosevelt had cemented his place in the hearts of virtually every American sailor when he followed his famed comment about speaking softly and carrying a big stick with the admonition that this would only be possible through the construction and equipping of a "thoroughly efficient Navy."[10] Most significant of all, Roosevelt the president had backed his forceful words with action. Under Theodore Roosevelt the navy had prospered materially and had also found almost constant employment in carrying the nation's "big stick" to the far reaches of the globe. Perhaps the navy's sincere affection for its commander in chief was best summed up by contemporary historian James Ford Rhodes, who pointed out that "he would be a rare man in the Navy . . . who did not regard Roosevelt with veneration and was not willing to follow whither he led."[11]

As president, Theodore Roosevelt was remarkably involved in the day-to-day administration of his navy. A "hands-on" kind of leader, the popular chief executive showed his eagerness to be a part of the contemporary naval experience by diving in the submarine Plunger in 1905 and by frequently cruising the waters along the East Coast aboard his commissioned naval yacht Mayflower. Moreover, by the summer of 1906, Roosevelt was privately planning a unique around-the-world cruise for the navy's new battleship fleet and making arrangements for his own

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[9]Theodore Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt, An Autobiography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), p. 210.

[10]Daniel P. Mannix, IV, ed., The Old Navy (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1983), p. 74.

[11]Goldman, p. 101.

battleship voyage to Panama later in the year.[12]

Always the ardent scholar, Roosevelt somehow found time to devour a number of articles on naval theory and practice. Those that seemed to be of particular interest led the president to solicit the comments of serving naval officers on the topic in question. If the issue was of sufficient importance, Roosevelt would even refer the matter directly to the chief of the Bureau of Navigation for the consideration of the General Board.[13] Yet less weighty subjects would similarly receive the president's close attention. Thus did 1906 find the chief executive inquiring into matters as diverse as improved methods of shipboard gunnery practice, the disposition of the Asiatic Squadron in the event of a war with Japan, the continued use of jiujitsu for physical training at Annapolis, and the height of the stacks carried aboard the ships of the active fleet.[14] Surely the fact that the department occupied offices just across the street from the White House did little to discourage such intense presidential involvement in the affairs of the United States Navy.

Of course such lavish attention did have its benefits for the service. Of these the most pleasant was certainly the chief executive's enthusiastic efforts to promote the navy and its interests both to the elected leaders of the nation and to the citizenry of the

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[12]Robert A. Hart, The Great White Fleet (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1965), pp. 21, 23.

[13]Converse to Theodore Roosevelt, September 13, 1906, George Converse Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[14]Goldman, pp. 101-3; Robert Seager II and Doris Maguire, eds., Letters and Papers of Alfred Thayer Mahan, vol. 7, 1902-1914 (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1975), p. 170; and Truman Newberry to Theodore Roosevelt, September 4, 1906, Charles Bonaparte Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

country at large. Thus, when the navy appeared to be facing a potential cutback in battleship funding in the fall of 1906, Roosevelt planned and carried out an unprecedented Labor Day naval review in Long Island Sound. Roosevelt believed the spectacle to be "an excellent thing for the Navy in every way."[15] Moreover, to ensure that the proper message was received by as many Americans as possible, the president saw to it that dozens of reporters were on hand to record the impressive goings on. Roosevelt wanted these media representatives

> to grow to have a personal feeling for the navy--to get them under the naval spell--because I want them . . . to be our allies in keeping the public awake to what it means to have such a navy and such officers and men as those who man it.[16]

The only real drawback to having such a devoted president acting as his own secretary was that he was inevitably limited in the time he could devote to the service. Alfred Mahan himself was finally forced to comment upon this state of affairs when he noted that "the Navy is now so big a thing as to demand the whole attention of a first class man for a full official term. No man can run it and the Presidency together."[17] Yet in the summer of 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt was making a fairly determined effort to effectively fill both jobs at once. This was a difficult challenge indeed and one which would be especially apparent during the Cuban crisis of September.

With the president acting as his own secretary of the navy, the role of the dedicated secretary naturally succumbed to a kind of

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[15]Morison, p. 368.

[16]Ibid., p. 394.

[17]William D. Puleston, Mahan: The Life and Work of Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, U.S.N. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939), p. 282.

bureaucratic and political atrophy. Instead of being the functioning head of the Navy Department, each of Roosevelt's navy secretaries found himself to be a kind of superfluous stranger within his own organization. This was hardly helped by the chief executive's tendency to change secretaries at a startlingly rapid pace. Charles Bonaparte, for example, was the fourth navy secretary to serve in the Roosevelt cabinet in as many years.

The hardly surprising result of the redundant and short-term secretarial phenomena was the development of a more-or-less generalized service view of the secretary as little more than an institutional burden which had to be borne in the interest of fulfilling a statutory requirement that one exist. Individual secretaries were rarely seen to be anything but an encumbrance forced upon the organization who, if the admirals and captains were patient, would be moved along soon enough and replaced with still another well-meaning naval know-nothing. This sorry state of affairs was commented upon by retired admiral and acknowledged service intellectual Stephen B. Luce in April of 1906. Said Luce:

> Unfortunately, appointments to the Navy Department are not made in the interests of the Navy. They are not now and never have been. The Navy Department has always been made a convenience of. Men have been put at the head of it solely for political reasons. It is idle to hope for any change in this respect.[18]

In fact when Bonaparte had been tapped for the post in June of 1905, a close friend had commented that, to the best of his knowledge, the new secretary of the navy had never in his life even been aboard a ship of any kind.[19]

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[18]Albert Gleaves, Life and Letters of Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), p. 245.

[19]Goldman, p. 118.

The consequence of this situation was easy enough to foresee. A succession of turn-of-the-century secretaries became nothing more than political figureheads perched atop a decidedly strong-willed and independent service bureaucracy. Thus, while Secretary Bonaparte may have steadfastly believed that it was desirable for "a Secretary of the Navy [to] belong to himself" and run the office with a firm hand, his successor in the post was far more candid in admitting that

> my duties consist of waiting for the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation to come in with a paper, put it down before me with his finger on a dotted line and say to me 'Sign your name here.' It is all any Secretary of the Navy does.[20]

Even the headstrong Bonaparte had to confess that his department seemed to maintain something like a carefully preserved distance from its titular head. Indeed, in September of 1906 he wrote Roosevelt to say that he strongly suspected that allegedly missing accounting information was actually being kept by the various chiefs of the naval bureaus but had been denied to exist because the officers in those positions did not "see the necessity for Congress, or even the Secretary to know how [the bureau chiefs are] disposed of the money."[21] Similarly, the secretary's solicitation of information on a sensitive topic from the department's Personnel Board that same year led to the latter group's

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[20]Robert G. Albion, "The Administration of the Navy, 1798-1945," in The Navy: A Study in Administration (Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1946), p. 7 and Charles J. Bonaparte, "Experiences of a Cabinet Officer Under Roosevelt," Century, 79 (March 1910): 754-55.

[21]Bonaparte to Theodore Roosevelt, September 8, 1906, Bonaparte Papers.

asking "to be excused from offering suggestions on this subject."[22]

Clearly the secretary operated in an institutional vacuum--assuming, of course, that he could operate at all. The plight of Roosevelt's assistant navy secretaries was just that much worse. For virtually all of Charles Bonaparte's tenure in office, his assistant was Detroit industrialist and former Michigan naval militiaman Truman Newberry. Characterized as "wealthy and somewhat pompous" by one biographer, Newberry came to Washington in 1905 amid persistent published rumors that he was taking the job in order to "get even" with the regular officers of the navy who had allegedly made sport of him during his voluntary naval service in the war with Spain.[23] Such fears seemed to have been put to rest by early 1906, but Newberry's relationship with the department and his boss appeared to have already reached the point of frustration. According to one contemporary account, Newberry cheered the news that Bonaparte might soon be replaced by eagerly asking, "When will he go?" This, the observer noted, was a result of the fact that "there has been friction between them."[24]

Most of the real power within the Navy Department itself resided with the chiefs of the eight service bureaus. Each reigned supreme within his respective branch of the navy. This considerable institutional authority derived in large measure from an 1842 statute which stipulated that a bureau chief's orders carried the same force

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[22]U.S. Department of the Navy, Annual Reports of the Navy Department for the Year 1906 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1907), pp. 4-7.

[23]Goldman, p. 92.

[24]Diary of Mildred Dewey, George Dewey Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., pp. 146-47.

and effect within his bureau as if they had been issued by the president or the secretary of the navy.[25] Moreover, by 1906 the procedural norm within the department had evolved to the point where virtually all such orders were routinely given on the bureau chiefs' own initiative. Rare was the occasion when one was contravened by the secretary. Unfortunately, this meant that the service typically operated as a loose federation of autonomous functional groups. In fact something as basic as the building of a new warship involved one bureau's designing the vessel's hull, another its engines, another yet its guns, still another would oversee the vessel's construction, and one more would establish the new unit's manning standards.[26] Since there was no requirement that these bureaus consider one another's needs, intra-service conflict was frequently the order of the day.

Resolution of the inevitable friction which developed between the bureaus was the responsibility of the secretary of the navy. Theodore Roosevelt's secretaries, however, were never truly effective in this role of bureaucratic referee owing to the temporary nature of their own tenures in office. What was more, any secretary's effectiveness in bringing wayward bureaus into line was severely hampered by the stark realities of the department's somewhat unique budgetary system. Instead of receiving a service appropriation which could be parcelled out to the various bureaus by the department head, the navy received its annual allocations from Congress in the form of appropriations designated for the bureaus themselves. In other words, the bureau

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[25]Gleaves, p. 232.

[26]Paul Y. Hammond, Organizing for Defense, The American Military Establishment in the Twentieth Century (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 50.

chiefs were granted an "independent" source of income for their operations and thus did not need to placate any secretary in order to receive funding for their activities. Moreover, as Admiral Luce wrote in 1906, "a Chief of Bureau is accountable to no one for the expenditure of funds."[27]

Clearly, the eight bureau chiefs more than rivaled the secretary of the navy in terms of their organizational power and individual political importance. That that power would occasionally be put to use in preserving and even extending the chiefs' own share of influence within the department was all but assured. In fact the one thing which could bring the bureaus together and truly lead to integrated problem solving on their part was a challenge to their comfortable positions of autonomy. An exasperated Luce commented upon this fact when he noted that any internal recommendation to alter the contemporary system of naval administration "would be pigeon-holed! The Bureaus would not have it, and they have influence enough to kill any such measure. They have done it before and they will do it again."[28]

As a group, the bureaus wielded an enormous amount of power in the Navy Department of the United States. By the turn of the century, the leadership of that group--and therefore of the navy itself--had come to rest with the multifaceted Bureau of Navigation. As noted earlier, this particular bureau oversaw all of the navy's recruiting, training, and personnel assignments in addition to directing the various units of the fleet. Not surprisingly, the chief of this bureau was generally regarded as the most important serving officer in the department.

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[27]Gleaves, p. 246.

[28]Ibid.

Moreover, by 1906 the Navigation Bureau head had also taken on the implied collateral duty of serving as the military advisor to the secretary. In the not infrequent absence of the secretary or his assistant, it was naturally enough the chief of the Bureau of Navigation who became the acting secretary of the navy. Thus, in light of this situation, even the strong-willed Bonaparte was forced to confide to President Roosevelt that in his first six months in office he had been "almost unreservedly in the hands of the Bureau of Navigation."[29]

Somewhere between the powerful chiefs of the departmental bureaus and the secretary and his assistant was the nation's first admiral of the navy, George Dewey. An 1858 graduate of the Naval Academy (where he stood thirty-third in a class of thirty-five), Dewey had served under Farragut during the Civil War battle of New Orleans and later took part in the bloody landing operation at Fort Fisher, North Carolina. By 1898 the sixty-year-old Commodore Dewey had become a favorite of Assistant Navy Secretary Theodore Roosevelt and was serving in command of the navy's Asiatic Squadron.[30] Sent to meet his Spanish opposite as a result of Roosevelt's famed cable, Dewey entered Manila Bay shortly after midnight on the first of May and completely destroyed the enemy squadron inside at dawn. This action essentially delivered the whole of the Philippines to the United States. Incredibly enough, Dewey's enormous victory had been won at the cost of only a single American life.

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[29]Goldman, p. 119.

[30]Robert Debs Heinl, Jr., Soldiers of the Sea (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute Press, 1962), p. 112.

The United States greeted the news of Dewey's Manila Bay triumph with wild celebration and instantly placed the officer in the forefront of the nation's greatest military heroes. A commemorative medal bearing the commodore's likeness was immediately struck and Congress sent a vote of gratitude, a promotion to rear admiral, and a substantial pay raise to the new "Hero of Manila Bay." Upon Dewey's triumphant return to the country in early 1899, the naval officer was subjected to an exhausting routine of parades, parties, and congratulatory dinners. At the peak of this outpouring of public affection, Dewey was presented with a special sword on the Capitol steps by the president of the United States. George Dewey was, quite simply, the preeminent naval officer of his time.

The only dark cloud on the admiral's post-war professional horizon was the fact that he was about to reach the mandatory retirement age of sixty-two in December of 1899. Faced with a situation in which America's greatest naval hero would become an unwilling civilian before the glow of his triumph could fade, the president and Congress managed to concoct a unique solution to the problem. Thus, on 2 March, the United States Congress authorized President McKinley

> to appoint by selection and promotion an admiral of the navy, who shall not be placed upon the retired list except by his own application; and whenever such office shall be vacated by death or otherwise the office shall cease to exist.[31]

The president immediately named George Dewey to this special, one-time position.

Understandably grateful, Dewey was later to recall that this latest concession to his fame instantly made him the ranking officer of

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[31]George Dewey, Autobiography of George Dewey (London: Constable and Company, Ltd., 1913), p. 286.

the service and--even more important--kept him "on the active list for life."[32] Moreover, sensing that this popular adoration could be tranferred to national political power, Dewey made an ill-advised run for the presidency in 1900. It was at this point, however, that the new admiral of the navy came face-to-face with the limits of his public esteem, as he was only able to garner the nomination of the Fourth Annual Convention of Hoboes.[33] Still, this was the Hero of Manila Bay, and Navy Secretary Long was himself bothered by the fact that there really wasn't much of a job for the highest-ranking officer in his department to do. Since the secretary was at that time being besieged by navy requests for the establishment of a general staff, Mr. Long saw an opportunity to solve two problems in one stroke. Thus, in 1900 John Long announced the formation of the service's General Board and immediately named George Dewey to be its president.

Finally given a responsibility in addition to his special rank, George Dewey quickly fell into a comfortable routine of chairing the meetings of the General Board and offering advice to virtually any political or naval figure polite enough to listen. Moreover, despite his significant lack of any real executive authority, Dewey was still treated very much like the nation's leading uniformed officer. Thus was the admiral's pay nearly double that of any other serving flag officer and he could routinely call upon the use of the service's warships in the event that he needed transport afloat.[34] When the United States Navy had held its first fleet-size exercises in 1902,

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[32]Ibid., p. vi.

[33]Karsten, p. 204.

[34]Pulsifer, p. 574 and Converse to George Dewey, August 15, 1906, George Converse Papers.

Dewey had gone to sea in command of the operation.[35] Consequently, by 1906 there was ample precedent for concluding that the aging Spanish-American War hero just might lead an American fleet into battle again. This naturally added to the already brilliant aura which surrounded the man and the considerable deference he was accorded.

Another asset in George Dewey's bureaucratic power ledger was the influence he still could command with his former assistant secretary, Theodore Roosevelt. In fact, on the occasion of Charles Bonaparte's appointment as the new Navy Department head in 1905, Roosevelt had asked the Deweys and the Bonapartes to join him for lunch at the White House in an apparent effort to start everyone off on the right foot and, at the same time, make it clear that Bonaparte would do well to heed the advice offered by his senior military subordinate. Mrs. Dewey noted in her diary that the event was characterized by the president's accepting the admiral's lunchtable advice, noting that "he covered him with kindness and I think did it purposely, so as to show the Bonapartes in what esteem he held George."[36] A more pointed indication of the naval officer's influence with the chief executive was offered some six months later when Roosevelt was considering potential replacements for the retiring chief of the Navigation Bureau. After listening to Dewey's comments on the matter, the president was alleged to have said that "you can name the man, Admiral, what you say goes."[37]

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[35]Damon E. Cummings, Admiral Richard Wainwright and the United States Fleet (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1962), p. 143.

[36]Diary of Mildred Dewey, p. 103.

[37]Ibid., p. 129.

Clearly George Dewey was not to be taken lightly within the Navy Department of 1906. Of course, this internal power potential derived entirely from the admiral's still considerable popularity with both government officials and the public at large. Mildred Dewey could therefore note in the summer of 1905 that her husband "is today more loved by the people than at any time, and he knows his business and has no superiors in it."[38] She was hardly exaggerating. This was a man so popular that the death of his dog made the papers and (on at least one occasion) he had caused a traffic accident when an awestruck motorist craned his neck to see the great American hero.[39] The current edition of Who's Who in America's biography of the admiral credited him with winning the greatest naval battle since Nelson's feat at Trafalgar.[40]

For his own part, Dewey was not unaware of the source of his institutional muscle, and did not hesitate to use it as a weapon when he wanted things to go his way. His principal method of control within the General Board, therefore, seems to have been his persistent threats to resign from the body, an action which would surely cast shame upon any organization which would drive such an august personage to take such a drastic step. Apparently this worked rather well. In June of 1905, Mrs. Dewey's diary recorded an incident in which

> George spoke his mind to the board today . . . if they do not defer to his experience and knowledge and only wished to use his influence, he would quit the board; 'that he was sick

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[38]Ibid., p. 113.

[39]Mildred Dewey to Charles Dewey, September 2, 1906, George Dewey Correspondence, Naval Historical Foundation, Washington, D.C.

[40]John W. Leonard, ed., Who's Who in America, 1906-1907 (Chicago: A. N. Marquis and Company, 1906), p. 471.

> of the d----d thing anyway.' In a minute, he says, they were on their knees, full of contrition.[41]

A similar episode in January of 1906 led to the same diary's recording that George Converse, the chief of the Navigation Bureau, "had implored him not to say he would leave the Board--that he was all there was to it, and Converse had tears in his eyes."[42] Moreover, as a self-appointed arbiter of power within the navy, Dewey was prone to see any attempt to upset the present arrangement without his approval to be nothing less than "a slap in the face."[43] Thus, when the navy found itself embroiled in the Cuban troubles of September, its crisis-related activities would almost certainly have to conform to the desires of its own admiral of the navy.

Yet all of Dewey's influence and bluster could not erase the fact that the General Board which he officially led was never more than an advisory body. Like its predecessor, the navy's 1898 "War Board," the General Board possessed neither original nor executive power. Although Dewey was pleased to note that the organization "was to prepare war plans, recommend the types and armament of ships for the annual building programme, and act as a clearing-house for all questions of naval policy," it was completely divorced from active command of naval forces or the enforcement of its policies, even with the approval of the navy secretary.[44] What was more, the long-standing chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, Eugene Hale, wrote Roosevelt in 1906 that "the record, when presented to Congress, would almost laugh

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[41]Mildred Dewey Diary, p. 107.

[42]Ibid., pp. 148-49.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Hammond, pp. 54-55 and Dewey, Autobiography, p. 291.

the Board out of Court."[45] Nevertheless the organization did possess some influence within the service. To a degree, this was a natural outgrowth of its composition. In the summer of 1906, for example, the Board's eight members included Dewey (in his designated role of president and Hero), the chief of the Bureau of Navigation, the head of the Office of Naval Intelligence, and the commanding officer of the Naval War College.[46]

The final major source of administrative power within the Navy Department of 1906 was that contained within the Naval War College itself. Founded in 1884 to temper the officer corps' knowledge of seamanship with an appreciation of politics and strategy, the War College quickly became the intellectual center of the service. It was here that Alfred Thayer Mahan first gave voice to his theories of national power and naval influence and here that systematic war planning first began to take shape. In general, then, the Navy listened to what the War College had to say. Indeed, by 1906, the routine summer practice of the General Board was to leave the oppressive heat of a summer on the Potomac and move to Newport where they could work side by side with the War College's officers.[47]

These officers were themselves very much involved in planning for the navy's next campaigns afloat. This particular preoccupation had started simply enough as an academic exercise some thirteen years earlier when a "main problem" requiring the development of monographs, charts, and defensive plans had officially been introduced into the

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[45]Goldman, p. 122.

[46]Proceedings of the General Board, USN, September 26, 1906, Naval Historical Foundation, Washington, D.C.

[47]Cummings, p. 150.

school's curriculum.[48] The problem was then "gamed" to a resolution, testing the validity of the hypothetical war plan developed by the students in attendance at the time. This quickly became an annual high point of the War College experience. In the early days, Great Britain was frequently chosen as the imaginary enemy. By 1895, however, the focus had shifted to Spain and the War College had submitted a detailed plan for battling the Spanish navy to the department in January of the following year.[49] The department did not accept the Spanish War Plan. Only two years later, though, just such a war did take place and the Spanish followed a strategy remarkably similar to that divined in the War College exercise. As a consequence, post-war planning by the college took on new significance. Indeed the War College quickly grew to assume the lion's share of the responsibility for preparing and refining the navy's various war plans, although officially it was merely assisting the General Board in this endeavor.[50]

The United States Navy of 1906 was, therefore, a complex institution indeed. Power at the top of the organization was remarkably diffuse, with the attendant result that no single entity truly controlled the service and its activity. The president was quite clearly the de facto navy secretary, yet he simply lacked the time to devote adequate attention to the service in this capacity. Cowed by the president's domineering role in naval administration and hamstrung by his own impermanence in the post, the appointed service secretary

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[48]Ronald Spector, Professors of War: The Naval War College and the Development of the Naval Profession (Newport: Naval War College Press, 1977), p. 71.

[49]Ibid., p. 90.

[50]Ibid., p. 102.

often ran the organization more in name than in fact. The various navy bureau chiefs did possess real power, but were constrained in their ability to wield it by the discrete and often divergent interests which each represented. Even the powerful chief of the Navigation Bureau was limited in the exercise of the considerable power inherent in his office so long as George Dewey was there to look over his shoulder. Finally, each of the department's top actors operated with the knowledge that any action running counter to the desires of the General Board or Naval War College could only be undertaken at some risk. Thus, when the navy was faced with the Cuban crisis of September, there would be no single executive entity to ensure that its activity supported either the administration's domestic political goals or the nation's foreign policy objectives. In 1906 the United States Navy simply lacked that kind of leadership.

CHAPTER II

"MANY WHISPERED MALEDICTIONS:"

Uniformed Officers vs. the Secretary of the Navy in the Summer of 1906

Both the bureaucratic organization of the navy and the basic political realities of Theodore Roosevelt's cabinet conspired to fractionalize power at the top of the Navy Department in 1906. At the same time, the prospect of centralized leadership of the department was further weakened by a pair of internal political campaigns designed to place more direct control of the service in the hands of its uniformed officers. The first of these was the continuing officer corps battle to institute a navy General Staff. By so doing the naval officers hoped to establish a permanent means of ensuring that operational decisions affecting their organization were made principally by uniformed members of the service. Naturally this meant that a certain amount of power would have to be taken away from the civilian secretary. The second internal struggle sought a far more immediate and tangible reward: the removal of an increasingly troublesome Charles Bonaparte from the secretaryship itself. Both efforts were intended to allow the officers of the United States Navy to seize control of their own service's promising destiny. Both would find expression in the department's response to the September crisis in Cuba.

The institution of a General Staff for the navy had first become a major agenda within the service following the war with Spain. Both the

army's and the navy's officers felt that they could have handled the recent conflict much more efficiently had they been able to call upon the services of a specialized staff of planners granted executive power to direct their respective organizations. In the case of the army, this impetus for administrative reform was given added momentum by that service's disastrous record in preparing for the campaign in Cuba. For the navy, however, the Spanish-American War had been popularly perceived as little more than a prolonged victory parade for the United States fleet. Consequently, while the public plainly demanded the institution of a General Staff for the army of the United States, there was very little outside interest in calling for a similar change in the navy.

Yet within the service itself, the feeling was that just such a step was needed. In the opening months of 1900, Navigation Bureau chief Henry Taylor finally wrote Navy Secretary Long to argue that "the need for a General Staff in our Navy is not unnatural: All military organizations, afloat and ashore, experience the same necessity, as do all large business enterprises in Civil life."[1] Long, of course, had responded by creating the advisory General Board under George Dewey's leadership in March. Although this action was seen within the service as marking a step in the right direction, the board's lack of an executive mandate clearly fell far short of the expectations of the contemporary officer corps. In fact, since war planning was felt to be something which should properly fall to a departmental element with executive power, it was suggested that the Bureau of Navigation take over the function. This move, however, was

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[1]Paul Y. Hammond, Organizing for Defense, The American Military Establishment in the Twentieth Century (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 54.

stopped in its tracks by the very same Admiral Taylor, who complained that he was far too busy with personnel matters to be bothered with the formulation of such plans.[2]

Mindful of Taylor's professed plight, George Dewey entered the controversy in June of 1902 by sending a memorandum to the president. In his note, Dewey offered his own opinion that "the existence of a General Staff in any military or naval service is absolutely essential." The admiral then went on to observe that, in his proposed scheme, the chief of this staff (who would just happen to be "the ranking naval officer of the Department") "would be directly responsible to the Secretary of the Navy" and

> would possess the higher directive and administrative duties of the present Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, but who, being free from the countless routine duties of that position, would have the opportunity of devoting himself to the more important ones of general efficiency of the fleet and of thorough readiness for international complications.[3]

Yet Dewey's idea was not put into effect. What was more, the admiral's new boss, William H. Moody, was hardly likely to revive the notion during his term in office.

Indeed, even though Moody (who succeeded Long as secretary in 1902) was amenable to the notion of a General Staff, his view of the body rather emasculated it to the point of being little more than a reiteration of the current General Board. Moody wanted a staff which could give him the best military advice available, but was determined to retain a strong civilian control of the department, conceding to the proposed General Staff "no authority except such as may be conferred

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[2]Ibid., p. 55.

[3]Dewey to Theodore Roosevelt, June 3, 1902, George Dewey Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

upon it from time to time by the Secretary."[4]

A year later Long re-entered the debate with the publication of his memoirs. In the work Long decried the dangers attendant to the creation of a General Staff within the Navy Department. Noting first that the contemporary system of naval administration "has stood the test of . . . time, including two recent wars and the upbuilding of the New Navy," Long went on to warn that the institution of a General Staff would all but eliminate any power held in the hands of the secretary.[5] Certainly aware of Theodore Roosevelt's considerable involvement in naval affairs, Long claimed that a chief of staff would

> seek always direct communication with the President; and a President with aggressive force would easily come to deal directly with the official who . . . is made the real working head of all the bureaus and machinery of the Department.[6]

According to Long, this would make the secretary "a figurehead in the administration of the Navy," would lead to undue service expenditures (since the head of the navy was not directly tied to any accountable elected official), and--curiously--would foster professional jealousy within the officer corps since one of that body would possess an inordinate amount of power.[7] Before the year was out, however, Naval War College founder and frequent conscience of the service Stephen B. Luce took second prize in the prestigious Naval Institute's annual essay contest with a damning look at contemporary naval

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[4]Paolo E. Coletta, Admiral Bradley Fiske and the American Navy (Lawrence, Kansas: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1979), pp. 76-77.

[5]John D. Long, The New American Navy, 2 vols. (New York: The Outlook Press, 1903), 2:183.

[6]Ibid., p. 185.

[7]Ibid., pp. 184, 186.

administration. Roosevelt himself asked for the insitution of a navy General Staff in his December message to Congress.[8]

The next two years brought little respite from the debate. A new navy secretary (Paul Morton) entered the fray in 1904, while naval officers themselves intensified their efforts to force the measure through. From his position atop the Navigation Bureau, Admiral Taylor privately concluded that "if we build many more ships than we have authorized at present, without some sort of a General Staff, we shall be building them for an enemy to capture and use."[9] Yet Morton was not to be swayed, and a legislative initiative for the creation of the staff in the same year failed to gain passage.[10] In March of 1905, however, the cause of naval reform was advanced by the publication of Commander Bradley Fiske's Naval Institute Proceedings article entitled "American Naval Policy." The work, which took first prize in the institute's essay contest that year, charged that the lack of a General Staff had left American warships poorly designed, naval science and tactics largely undeveloped, and military considerations slighted by those in control of the service. Real preparedness, the officer argued, could only be had through the creation of a General Staff whose chief, if opposed by the secretary, had the option of making an appeal directly to Congress.[11] Unfortunately for the reform-minded officer corps of the day, the impassioned plea seemed to have little practical effect. Moreover the appointment of Charles Bonaparte as navy

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[8]Hammond, p. 55 and Coletta, p. 253.

[9]Albert Gleaves, Life and Letters of Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), p. 240.

[10]Hammond.

[11]Coletta, p. 76.

secretary in June of that year meant that the service was once again faced with the kind of staunch General Staff adversary which John Long had represented some two secretaries before.

The officer corps' 1906 campaign for a Navy General Staff consequently took the offensive on three distinct fronts. First, the opinion of active-duty line officers was once again given expression by Commander Bradley Fiske, who returned to print to fire a published broadside at the organizational general lack of progress on the matter. Bluntly noting that "we may not need a very big army and navy; but it is clear that they should be good," Fiske's March Proceedings article cited ample historical precedent for the "calamatous results of interference by civil officials with both military officials in council and commanders in the field."[12] Moreover, in an era laced with Great Power rivalries and large doses of imperialistic national chauvinism, Fiske went on to charge that military authorities in the United States possessed much less institutional power than that granted their opposites abroad. The officer then drove his point home by boldly asserting that "one can declare with certainty that, if two navies fight, of equal strength, one directed by a general staff, and the other not, the one that is directed by a general staff will whip the other one."[13] Additionally Fiske was sure to point out that the establishment of a General Staff would keep civilians from interfering in purely technical matters and foster a sense of professionalism in the navy officer corps without creating any corresponding decline in dignity for the civilian leadership of the service. In fact, from

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[12]Bradley Fiske, "The Civil and Military Authority," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, 32 (March 1906):128.

[13]Ibid., p. 130.

where Fiske stood, the only apparent obstacle to the creation of the body was simply the "non-acquaintance of civilians with naval conditions." The officer then went on to argue that these same civilians might want to consider the fact that "our own President has often declared that responsibility and authority must go together."[14]

Fiske's article was followed in June by a move calculated to enlist the navy's best-known strategic theorist on the officer corps' side of the controversy. On 20 June, Admiral of the Navy George Dewey ordered retired Captain Alfred T. Mahan to report to him for a special assignment. The task which Dewey had for Mahan was to prepare for the department a detailed study of the service of the 1898 War Board. The admiral specifically required that Mahan, a former member of the board, address that organization's function and scope, its work, and especially its relationship with the secretary of the navy.[15] With luck, it was expected that the product of Mahan's study would be ready for review in the early fall.

Another project which would make its appearance in the autumn season constituted the third leg of the General Staff advocates' 1906 campaign triad. The September issue of the Naval Institute's quarterly Proceedings would include the first in a series of articles on the history of naval administration. Written by civilian historian Charles Paullin, the works were to examine the subject in installments beginning with colonial times and progressing to the present. Thus did the first of these, "Early Naval Administration Under the

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[14]Ibid., p. 129.

[15]Robert Seager II and Doris Maguire, eds., Letters and Papers of Alfred Thayer Mahan, vol. 7, 1902-1914 (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1975), p. 164.

Constitution," cover the direction of the Department from 1789 to 1801. Its successor, due for publication in the December issue, would advance the period examined up through 1814, the next through 1842, and so on.[16] The cumulative effect of this series was, therefore, to act as something not unlike a political thumbscrew which could be tightened steadily as the series progressed. Consequently, living former navy secretaries and even an unfortunate incumbent might one day be forced to account for their resistance to institutional reform in the context of steadily-approaching episodes of American naval history.

What the naval officers could not have counted upon was an opportunity to prove the merit of their General Staff argument in something just short of the heat of battle. Yet the Cuban crisis of September would do just that and do it at a critical juncture in service history. Indeed the officer corps of the navy would find itself face-to-face with a chance to show just how much the admittedly limited General Board could accomplish when the chips were down. That done, the foundation would be laid for an even more persuasive case for the institution of a General Staff, since the more powerful General Staff would surely be able to provide just that much more in the way of a coordinated crisis response in the future.

While naval officers certainly wanted a permanent solution to their perceived lack of control within the department, they were also keen on the idea of receiving some short-term relief through the

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[16]Charles O. Paullin, "Naval Administration Under the Constitution," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, 32 (September 1906):1789-1801; idem, "Navy Administration Under Secretaries of the Navy Smith, Hamilton, and Jones, 1801-1814," Proceedings, 32 (December 1906):1289-1328; idem, "Naval Administration Under The Navy Commissioners, 1815-1842," Proceedings, 33 (June 1907):597-641; and idem, "Naval Administration, 1842-1861," Proceedings, 33 (December 1907):1435-1477.

replacement of Charles Joseph Bonaparte as service secretary. An acknowledged interim office-holder, Bonaparte had been appointed to his post with the full understanding that he would ultimately be transferred to the attorney general's position within the next eighteen months. In fact, Bonaparte's premature entry into Roosevelt's cabinet might never have taken place at all had it not been for the fact that the incumbent navy secretary was leaving the post somewhat unexpectedly under the cloud of a railroad rebate scandal.[17] Yet from the day he took the post, the new stop-gap secretary instantly represented a formidable and increasingly unpleasant challenge to the uniformed naval hierarchy. Indeed, Charles Bonaparte lacked personal charm, was too independent in his actions, posed a direct threat to serving officers and their values, and was far too much of a political liability to be truly acceptable to the navy's officer corps by the summer of 1906.[18] One of the more immediate priorities of the 1906 navy, therefore, was arranging an early end to its present secretary's tenure in office.

Bonaparte was not an easy individual to like. A smallish, stocky man who was a direct descendant of Napoleon's youngest brother, Charles Bonaparte had been a successful Baltimore attorney before entering politics. Wealthy, Harvard-educated, and self-assured, Bonaparte

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[17]Eric F. Goldman, Charles J. Bonaparte, Patrician Reformer, His Earlier Career (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1943), p. 87.

[18]Interestingly enough, Bonaparte's leading biographer, Joseph Bishop, claimed that his subject was "popular with the navy, and . . . was regarded by its officers as one of the most efficient secretaries who had filled the position during recent years." Yet the fact of the matter was that Bishop's work was little more than a lengthy eulogy for Bonaparte, written immediately after the latter's death, and containing entire chapters devoted to "Notable Appreciations," and "Tributes of Associates." Joseph B. Bishop, Charles Joseph Bonaparte (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1922), p. 126.

enjoyed the respect of many Americans and the love of but a few. Instead the "Peacock of Park Avenue" quickly earned a reputation for being direct, sarcastic and savage, a man who, "when he spotted a blemish . . . raised his scalpel without concern for how deep he might cut."[19] One biographer noted that "few men in American public life have been as flippant, and none has shown a greater unconcern about who might be galled."[20]

Nevertheless Bonaparte had earned national fame as a result of his unflinching personal integrity and his related commitment to civil service reform. Moreover the Baltimore native could always count upon the whole-hearted support of his long-time close friend and reform movement colleague, Theodore Roosevelt. In fact it was Roosevelt who appointed Bonaparte to his first national office in September of 1902 and who, in a 1905 letter, confessed to the lawyer that he represented "the principles for which I hope I stand."[21]

This comfortable liason with the president naturally added considerable weight to Charles Bonaparte's potential political power and it was not without some trepidation that the admirals of the Navy Department greeted their new boss in July of 1905. This discomforture was hardly lost upon the alert press of the day. The Baltimore Evening Herald, for example, noted that the new secretary of the navy was pictured by the various bureau chiefs to be

> a creature not unlike the 'Hound of the Baskervilles' with flaming eyes and hanging tongue and wolfish teeth, and never so happy as when turning things topsy-turvy. That doesn't quite suit the men behind the desks, who have always got

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[19]Goldman, pp. 15-16.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., p. 91.

> along in a quiet, gentlemenly way with the leisurely civilians who the bureaucrats have magnanimously allowed to think they were running the Department.[22]

This apprehension on the part of the senior navy officers was not at all relieved by Bonaparte's actions on his first day in office. Gathering his staff together, the new cabinet officer announced, "I hope we will all get along well together, but if we don't, since you can't discharge me, I suppose I will have to discharge you."[23]

Clearly the new navy secretary intended to chart his own course and act far more independently than had his predecessors in the post. This was certain to ruffle some feathers, but Bonaparte was characteristically unconcerned. According to the new office-holder,

> a Secretary of the Navy, if unwilling to be merely a more or less ornamental appendage, must work hard, think for himself, keep his own counsel, and, while receiving outwardly military deference, count on many whispered maledictions.[24]

Maledictions there were aplenty, because Mr. Bonaparte was one man who backed his words with healthy doses of action. Thus, when two bureaus disagreed over raising the tonnage of a pair of new warships in 1905, Bonaparte himself took the heretofore unusual step of having the secretary decide the issue himself instead of attempting to reconcile the officers' opposing viewpoints.[25] A year later Bonaparte again displayed his independent streak in the manner in which he similarly handled a dispute over armor plate contracts.[26] Not surprisingly,

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[22]Ibid., p. 88.

[23]Ibid., p. 92.

[24]Charles J. Bonaparte, "Experiences of a Cabinet Officer Under Roosevelt," Century, 79 (March 1910): 754.

[25]Goldman, p. 107.

[26]Ibid., pp. 124-25.

Bonaparte earned further distinction as the only secretary of his day actually to write his own annual reports and, unlike past secretaries, also refused to compromise his official position by succumbing to the charms of the gala Washington social life.[27] On the contrary, this particular navy chief was decidedly his own man, and a man who was business and nothing but.

Bonaparte's independent style of departmental leadership soon won him the disdain of the other significant actors atop the contemporary naval hierarchy. By December of 1905, for instance, Assistant Secretary Newberry was confiding to George Dewey that he "was worn out with Bonaparte's conceit," complaining that "he asks no advice from his aides in his office and undertakes to pass on professional matters upon which he has neither knowledge nor observation."[28] For his own part, Dewey was similarly finding himself cut out of the secretary's decision-making process. By the first week of January, 1906, therefore, Mrs. Dewey was noting in her diary that the admiral was "worried over Bonaparte's crazy-headed actions," and that "the officers say Bonaparte asks nobody's views and acts as a Navy expert. I wish he would go or be put out."[29] In fact Dewey's relationship with the Marylander had deteriorated to the point that merely meeting with the man left the naval hero "so distressed . . . that he was nearly sick."[30] To Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Dewey bluntly stated that "the Navy was going to hell," and to the president that "Bonaparte was

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[27]Ibid., pp. 120, 127.

[28]Diary of Mildred Dewey, George Dewey Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., p. 137.

[29]Ibid., p. 141.

[30]Ibid., p. 145.

cranky and . . . instead of administering the Department was 'mulling over papers' all the time."[31]

That this same sorry state of affairs existed well into the summer of 1906 is evidenced by an August note from Bonaparte to Roosevelt on the subject of the upcoming Labor Day naval review. Despite the fact that the occasion would be the largest naval spectacle of its kind to ever involve the United States fleet, Bonaparte hadn't the slightest notion of whether his service's highest ranking officer planned to attend. Indeed the secretary admitted that "I have not heard anything about the Admiral lately, and I do not know whether he will care to come or not."[32] The powerful chief of the Navigation Bureau was similarly divorced from Bonaparte's office, complaining in November of 1905 that, in Bonaparte's first four months as secretary, he had "never consulted him and only asked for him twice."[33] When Bonaparte did decide to look for advice, he did not hesitate to bypass his fuming bureau chiefs to do so. Such was the case when the secretary solicited the opinions of some nine line officers on a shipbuilding matter. Unwilling to be parties to any breach in the navy's chain of command, the officers promptly objected to the unconventional approach to doing the department's business.[34]

Bonaparte was even set against the one departmental division which existed solely to provide him with professional advice: the Dewey-led

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[31]Ibid., p. 146.

[32]Bonaparte to Theodore Roosevelt, August 8, 1906, Charles Bonaparte Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[33]Diary of Mildred Dewey, p. 132.

[34]Coletta, p. 79.

General Board. Dead set against a General Staff (saying that it would provide "a ladder by which the military might climb on the back of the Secretary"), Bonaparte discounted the value of the existing General Board's advice since its members were "too much like the old sea captains who were always right because they had tasted more brine than any of their crew."[35] Thus, when Bonaparte told the board's president that he was making plans to "settle" its powers amid persistent published rumors of the body's impending dissolution, Dewey first threatened to resign his post and then proceeded to make a call at the White House. There the admiral complained that "everything was going wrong," and received the president's assurance that he would never permit Bonaparte to dissolve the board.[36]

Still, the damage was done. Charles Joseph Bonaparte had become much more than just another administrative nuisance as secretary of the navy. Instead the reform-minded lawyer had emerged as a major threat to the power held by the uniformed membership of the organization. Small wonder, then, that Fiske's 1906 Proceedings article warned that "'a little knowledge' may be a dangerous thing when possessed by a mediocre man; but when it is possessed by an official of ability and force, it becomes a menace to the State."[37]

Bonaparte's general unacceptability to the navy's officer corps was punctuated by several specific episodes which made the challenge he represented seem all the more immediate and severe. The first of these concerned what could only be regarded as the navy's most cherished

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[35]Goldman, pp. 122, 123.

[36]Diary of Mildred Dewey, p. 146.

[37]Fiske, "The Civil and Military Authority," p. 129.

historical relic, the century-old U.S.S. Constitution. One of the famed Joshua Humphries frigates of the late eighteenth century, the Constitution had made the famed corsair-battling voyage "to the shores of Tripoli" in 1803 and had carried the flag of the young republic in storied victories over the English warships Guerriere and Java in the War of 1812. She had been commanded in battle by naval heroes Stephen Decatur and Isaac Hull (and in peacetime by George Dewey) and was immortalized in law student Oliver Wendell Holmes 1830 poem "Old Ironsides." Decommissioned after one hundred years of faithful service in 1897, the ship was placed on exhibition in Boston. There she stood as a floating tribute to the naval history of the United States.

In December of 1905, however, Secretary of the Navy Charles Bonaparte committed the institutional sacriliege of suggesting that the floating monument was "absolutely useless."[38] What was even worse, the secretary proposed to dispose of the navy's sentimental favorite by taking the frigate out to sea and using her "as a target for some of the ships of the North Atlantic Fleet."[39] The navy was shocked at the very idea. Fortunately for the service, an indignant expression of national outrage swept the country. Indeed Dewey himself was present (although rather by accident) when a party of Senators bearing a petition with some thirty thousand signatures calling for the preservation of the Constitution was delivered to the president. Impressed by the petition and Dewey's own (impromtu) support for the notion, Roosevelt finally came down in favor of the measure, telling

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[38]U.S. Department of the Navy, Annual Reports of the Navy Department for the Year 1905 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1906), p. 19.

[39]Ibid.

the assembled group that "the Admiral is my conscience about Navy matters."[40] Consequently, the 1906 navy budget included a one-time appropriation of one hundred thousand dollars to "repair, equip, and restore the frigate Constitution, as far as may be practicable, to her original condition."[41]

Yet Charles Bonaparte's challenge to the navy was far from limited to the realm of the sentimental. Quite the opposite was true. In fact the most significant threat which the secretary represented throughout the duration of his administration of the department was that associated with his burning personal desire to institute long-term organizational reform. This was hardly a passing fancy nor could it be dismissed as an idle threat.

Bonaparte had made a career of reforming the world around him. In 1881 the then thirty-year-old attorney had helped found the Civil Service Reform Association of Maryland and later assisted in the formation of the National Civil Service Reform League. It was here that the zealous Baltimore native first came into working contact with Theodore Roosevelt as the two collaborated on an investigation of corrupt practices in Baltimore in 1891.[42] Moreover, by the time Roosevelt appointed this colleague to the navy secretaryship, Bonaparte was a past president of Baltimore's Union for Doing Good and was currently a member of the Executive Committee of the National Civic Foundation and chairman of the Council of the National Civil Service Reform League. Bonaparte therefore brought to the navy a deep

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[40]Diary of Mildred Dewey, p. 147.

[41]Pitman Pulsifer, Navy Yearbook (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1906), p. 514.

[42]Goldman, pp. 22-24.

commitment to change and--on at least one occasion--wrote Roosevelt to tell him that "the next three years should be used to make the Navy so good," that whoever followed the Rough Rider in the White House "will be compelled by public opinion, at least, to let it alone."[43]

To the horror of the existing naval hierarchy, Bonaparte lost no time in taking his first steps to restructure the Navy Department of the United States. In October of 1905 the secretary wrote to George McAneny of the Civil Service Reform League unofficially to ask that the latter appoint a committee to look into politically-affected jobs in the various navy yards.[44] Then, in his report at the end of that year, Bonaparte himself went after much bigger game when he observed that the department's system of autonomous bureaus "seems to me open, in theory, to very serious objection, and it is in practise attended with some measure of friction, circumlocution, and delay."[45] Convinced that the organization worked in its present form only because it was staffed by good men, Bonaparte went on to recommend his own remedy, one which involved halving the number of Navy Department bureaus. In the proposed scheme, the current Bureaus of Yards and Docks, Construction and Repair, Equipment, and Steam Engineering were to be combined to form a new Bureau of Ships, while the existing Bureaus of Navigation, Medicine and Surgery, as well as the whole of the Marine Corps would similarly be blended into a new Bureau of Men. The Bureaus of Ordnance and Supplies and Accounts would be unaffected

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[43]Ibid., pp. 119-120.

[44]Ibid., p. 99.

[45]Ibid., p. 128.

by the change, which also called for a civilian accountant to be assigned directly under the secretary.[46]

The navy secretary's bold proposal rather inevitably caused most of the senior naval leaders to move with lightning speed to counter Bonaparte's attack upon their respective shares of departmental power. Fortunately for them, Congress was unwilling to institute the changes proposed and the issue was, for the time being, quietly put to rest. That the credit for this successful defensive action belonged principally to the various bureau chiefs is made clear in a letter from Admiral Luce to Navy League founder Wharton Hollingsworth. According to the retired officer, the reorganization effort's "most powerful enemies are in the Department itself. The Bureau officers do not want a change"[47]

Nevertheless Charles Bonaparte was a very determined man and, while he may have lost the opening battle in his campaign to reform the navy, he was far from willing to concede the war. In August of 1906, therefore, he appointed a somewhat unwilling Truman Newberry to head a board charged with devising a plan to reorganize the Navy Department of the United States.[48] In the meantime, Bonaparte himself worked on his own plans for altering the navy's system and continued to make efforts to assert the pre-eminence of the secretary's position over that of his unhappy uniformed subordinates. In September the embattled Secretary wrote Roosevelt on the subject, saying that "it undoubtedly requires a man who is interested in his work and has some force of

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[46]Reports of the Navy Department, 1905, p. 4.

[47]Gleaves, p. 245.

[48]Goldman, p. 129.

character to keep these autonomous bureaus in due subordination, and, in fact, to retain control of the Department's work."[49] Indeed the struggle for real control of the Navy Department was far from over in the summer of 1906.

As far as serving officers were concerned, however, the navy secretary's ongoing battle for control of his department took on a particularly sinister complexion on those several occasions when Bonaparte chose to dabble in the service's system of military justice. The first such incident was not long in coming. Less than three weeks after Charles Bonaparte became navy secretary, some fifty sailors were killed in a tremendous boiler explosion aboard the U.S.S. Bennington. A naval Court of Inquiry report on the incident exonerated the ship's commanding officer of any wrongdoing but recommended that an ensign on watch at the time of the explosion be ordered to stand trial by court-martial. Upon receiving this communication, Bonaparte caused a major stir within the officer corps by disapproving the report and ordering a court-martial for both the accused ensign and the warship's captain as well. Outraged, many of the department's officers condemned the secretary's high-handed interference in their affairs, and in January of 1906 both of the accused Bennington officers were acquitted. Once again, the secretary disapproved the verdict delivered him and remanded the case to the court for reconsideration. Nevertheless, the court refused to be swayed and returned the same innocent verdict it had originally tendered.[50] At this point the

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[49]Bonaparte to Theodore Roosevelt, September 8, 1906, Bonaparte Papers.

[50]Bishop, pp. 113-14.

affair reached its official end, but the entire episode had left a decidedly unpleasant taste in the mouths of the navy's officer corps.

The Bennington legal battle was to be followed by still another incident in which Bonaparte decided to enter the service's system of justice. In September of 1906 Charles Bonaparte determined to order courts-martial for several officers involved in the 31 July collision between the battleships Alabama and Illinois. That the secretary intended to use these trials as a mechanism by which he could record his own dissatisfaction with certain officers serving in the fleet is reflected in his comment to Roosevelt that the proceedings would give him an opportunity "to say something appropriate and especially timely as to the apparent absence of the higher officers from the bridge of several ships at so critical a moment."[51]

Bonaparte also managed to antagonize the officers serving in the navy's bureaus as a result of his intended revision of the service's financial accounting procedures. This change was certain to reduce the political influence and independence of the various bureaus. It was naturally far from welcome. The change's immediate cause had been the bureaus' response to a July 1906 circular in which the secretary directed each of the bureau chiefs to submit a detailed account of exactly how he had spent the previous year's Congressional allocation. As Bonaparte was later to note, "in a majority of the Bureaus, no records were kept which would enable them to furnish the Department such information."[52] Yet for the secretary, the lack of a

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[51]Bonaparte to Roosevelt, September 8, 1906.

[52]U.S. Department of the Navy, Annual Reports of the Navy Department for the Year 1906 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1907), p. 24.

meaningful response was hardly bad news at all, since

> the disclosure of this situation gave me an opportunity for which I have been looking, and I promptly announced in a memorandum which clearly set forth the inadmissable condition of affairs which had thus been ascertained, my intention now to so modify the methods used in the accounts and records of the Department[53]

Indeed Bonaparte at once appointed "a small and carefully chosen commission" to investigate the department's bookkeeping and accounting practices and to report recommended reforms to the secretary. This was hardly music to the ears of the officers serving in the bureaus at the time since Charles Bonaparte was once again challenging the power and autonomy of the uniformed actors of the organization.

The final significant naval officers' objection to Charles Bonaparte's continued tenure as secretary of the navy was that dealing with the Marylander's unsuitability in the roles of service advocate and official representative. As an advocate, Bonaparte generally fell far short of taking an active stand on behalf of the department within Theodore Roosevelt's cabinet. Indeed, despite his being as close as any government offical to the president, Bonaparte belonged to the least influential group within the cabinet. In the words of the postmaster general, Bonaparte was "a good working member," and not much more.[54] Additionally the 1906 navy secretary provided an indication of just how tenuous was the nature of his relationship with Congress when he noted that "the pettiness, selfishness, and timidity of the typical Congressman" were almost without limit since he "could look at

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[53]Ibid., p. 25 and Bonaparte to Roosevelt, September 8, 1906.

[54]Goldman, p. 93.

nothing beyond his own political interests, and trembled at the thought of displeasing anybody whose displeasure might cost him votes."[55]

Unfortunately for the navy, some significant service lobbying was sure to be necessary before the year was out. In February England had launched the monster battleship Dreadnought and instantly consigned every existing warship to second-rate status. Longer, wider, and deeper than any previous ship of war, H.M.S. Dreadnought was the first battleship to have as its primary armament all big guns. Naturally enough, the navy of the United States wanted to ensure that its own new ships kept up with this latest tehnological advance. However, the advocates of building American dreadnaughts quickly found themselves in a heated debate with a formidable opponent in Maine Senator Eugene Hale. Hale, who advocated smaller, mixed caliber battleships of the traditional type, was clearly a problem. A member of Congress for over thirty years, the legislator had served on the Senate's Naval Affairs Committee for twenty-three of those and had been its chairman since 1897. Moreover, Hale had the public support in his argument of the world's foremost naval figure, the renowned (and recently-promoted) Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan. A difficult Congressional battle was therefore looming on the horizon and, in the view of a majority of the navy's serving officers, the outcome of the fight would determine the very survivability of the United States fleet in time of war. The year 1906 would therefore be a particularly critical time in which to carry the navy's banner through the halls of the Capitol, and Charles Joseph Bonaparte was apparently ill-equipped to meet the demands of such a delicate and important lobbying challenge.

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[55]Bonaparte, "Experiences of a Cabinet Officer," p. 754.

As the navy's highest ranking representative, Bonaparte also possessed some serious drawbacks. To begin with, the overwhelmingly Protestant navy's secretary was highly visible as the token Catholic in Theodore Roosevelt's cabinet. And while Bonaparte completely disassociated his religion from his work, his Catholicism was still something of a liability at a time when only thirteen percent of the national population and just four percent of the country's political leaders shared his Catholic faith.[56] Moreover Bonaparte was an outspoken advocate in the Negro Rights movement of the day, another association which did not sit well with the universally white officer corps of the United States Navy. Lastly, Bonaparte's personality itself left him something of an unlikely popular figure. Sometimes pompous, frequently blunt, and always controversial (he had once defended the custom of lynching to a Yale Law School commencement), Charles Joseph Bonaparte was simply too much of a liability as the navy's designated leader and champion.[57] Thus was the navy more than a little concerned to discover that its unwanted leader advocated a seven-year term for his position.[58]

Like it or not, Charles Bonaparte simply presented far too many problems for the department to allow him to remain long in the secretary's chair. The officer corps of the service was consequently searching for a way to move the bothersome Mr. Bonaparte along. In fact, the sooner he could be eliminated, the better. Thus, if an early autumn crisis in Cuba could be used to demonstrate the department's

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[56]Karsten, p. 75.

[57]Goldman, p. 32.

[58]Ibid., pp. 118-19.

ability to operate capably without this particular secretary's direction, it would be more than a little welcome.

In any event, the standing confrontation between the navy's officer corps and its appointed civilian leadership would mean that neither side would be able to exercise truly firm control of the service's activity throughout the duration of the crisis. Instead the navy's various commanders in the field would be given an inordinate amount of decision-making responsibility rather by default. For both the United States and the Republic of Cuba, the consequence of this unique situation would be a three-week episode of frequent misunderstanding, growing diplomatic frustration, and high-stakes political failure.

CHAPTER III

"A DUTY WHICH NATURALLY DEVOLVES:"

The United States Navy, National Defense, and the World in 1906

The primary mission of the United States Navy has always been that of defending the United States and its interests. In order to accomplish that task in 1906 the navy was necessarily forced to focus the lion's share of its strategic attention upon the waters of the Caribbean Sea. This region was of critical importance to turn-of-the-century national defense and was, therefore, one about which the navy's officer corps was intensely concerned. At the same time, the service's international outlook and its officers' collective self-image all but guaranteed that the navy would act swiftly and decisively whenever Caribbean trouble threatened.

To accomplish the navy's basic national security objectives, the service first needed to overcome a major geographic dilemna. The problem, quite simply, was that the United States had come to possess long contiguous coastlines in two different oceans as well as a number of new territorial aquisitions in the Caribbean and the Pacific. The protection of this far-flung territory naturally required the navy to seek a way in which it could most effectively parcel out its inevitably limited vessel resources. Thus were contemporary naval officers more than a little enthused with the concept of a trans-oceanic canal which would allow for the transfer of warships from one ocean to the other. Such a canal would mercifully obviate the need for creating

prohibitively expensive distinct East Coast and West Coast naval establishments. In fact strategic guru Alfred T. Mahan had always championed the creation of such a waterway as a means of developing internal lines of communication within the Western Hemisphere and had written in 1898 that the Central American isthmus was therefore to the United States "what Egypt and Suez are to England."[1] Not surprisingly, Mahan's attitude was shared by most of the navy's turn-of-the-century officer corps and the construction of the Panama Canal had naturally become a primary service objective. American naval officers the world over were, therefore, greatly relieved to see construction of that canal begin in earnest in 1904.

With the isthmian canal finally under construction, the priority focus of the navy naturally shifted ahead to the next related concern: protecting this new cornerstone of American hemispheric defense. Once again Mahan spoke for virtually all of his fellow officers when he said that "the nation which ruled the sea approaches to the canal would control the canal itself."[2] Focusing upon European powers as the most likely challengers in the region, the navy therefore concluded that the sea approaches most seriously in question were those which lay in the Caribbean. Consequently the establishment of American naval dominance in the region was placed at the top of the service's strategic agenda. It was further concluded that control of the Caribbean Sea would hinge upon controlling the Windward Passage

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[1]Alfred T. Mahan, Lessons of the War With Spain and Other Articles (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1899), p. 297.

[2]Margaret T. Sprout, "Mahan: Evangelist of Sea Power," in Edward M. Earle, ed., Makers of Modern Strategy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943), p. 426.

separating the islands of Cuba and Hispaniola.[3] The key to United States defense of the Windward Passage was, in turn, the fledgling naval station situated at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, near the western edge of the pass itself. Thus, while the nation debated the pros and cons of Cuban independence, a 1902 General Board report concluded that--as far as the navy was concerned--Guantanamo Bay was the single most important location in the region and "should be obtained irrespective of the future status of Cuba."[4]

Since a compelling argument could be made for the case that the American naval base at Guantanamo was at least indirectly the key to the maritime defense of the United States itself, it followed naturally enough that the navy began to invest a considerable amount of time and money in the development of its Cuban facility. Thus by 1906 the overseas base contained a thirty thousand gallon fresh water reservoir, a fifteen thousand ton coaling station, roads, buildings, gun emplacements, a wireless radio station, and some of the finest small arms target ranges in the navy. Additionally, a deep well was being drilled on the premises, the harbor itself was being dredged, and plans were on the books for the construction of a dry dock and a new marine barracks.[5] Mapping the progress of this effort was a nearly constant feature of General Board meetings. That the body considered the money devoted to improvements to be well-spent is indicated by one board

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[3]Richard D. Challenger, Admirals, Generals, and American Foreign Policy 1898-1914 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 88.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Robley D. Evans, An Admiral's Log (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1910), p. 338 and Proceedings of the General Board, USN, January 24, February 27, June 19, 1906.

document, which placed Guantanamo Bay at the top of the list of "Government Coaling Stations in Order of Strategic Importance."[6]

In fact by 1906 the issue was not whether the navy should have a base at Guantanamo, but whether the existing facility was large enough. On this there were some serious doubts. The service's senior rear admiral and commander of the North Atlantic Fleet, Robley Evans, wrote that "one look at the reservation as laid out clearly indicated that we had not taken ground enough. The reservation was too small for the purpose intended."[7] Evans' main concern was the defense of the station and he wanted to include several commanding heights nearby within the base's boundaries. Concerned, he appointed his chief of staff, Captain John Pillsbury to survey the site and make suggestions. Pillsbury agreed with his boss and wrote to Admiral Dewey, hinting that American intervention in Cuba just might allow the United States to accomplish the task. Said the captain:

> I have always believed, as did many others, that when we had possession of the island before, we should have taken the land necessary for the defense of the naval station, no matter what the Cubans might say afterwards. If we can gain temporary possession [of Cuba] once more, wouldn't it be a good time for the General Board to do something about enlargement?[8]

Like virtually all of his naval officer contemporaries, Pillsbury knew that in time of war Guanatanamo would play an essential part of any hemispheric naval campaign and he was determined to see to it that the facility was as complete and secure as possible.

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[6]Undated report in "General Board File," George Dewey Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[7]Evans, p. 339.

[8]Challenger, p. 98.

Of course there was also a major peacetime navy need satisfied by the base in Cuba. The growing station was in an ideal location to serve as a year-round training facility for the units of the North Atlantic Fleet. As noted before, the small arms ranges at Guantanamo were of suberb quality and were frequently put to use by the sailors and marines of the fleet. Even more important, however, was the base's utility in support of the fleet's all-important gunnery drills. These exercises formed the centerpiece of the navy's operational training program in 1906.

The navy's vitally important gunnery exercises were a direct result of the efforts of Lieutenant Commander William Sims. From his post as target practice inspector for the Asiatic Squadron, then Lieutenant Sims had written Roosevelt directly in 1902 to warn him that the level of gunnery proficiency in the American fleet was virtually non-existent. Sims reminded the chief executive that only five percent of the navy's shells had found their mark in the 1898 battle off Santiago, Cuba, and that contemporary English naval marksmanship made United States gunners look foolish. Understandably concerned, Roosevelt immediately made improvement in American gunnery proficiency a first-class personal priority. Sims was appointed at once to the position of inspector of target practice for the navy at large and the somewhat insubordinate officer quickly set about the business of raising the scores of the American fleet. Praise, prizes, and even increases in pay were awarded to the ships and gun crews which could meet Sims' increasingly rigorous standards for accuracy.

Naturally enough, the entire routine of the American battle fleet eventually came to revolve around the scored exercises held in the spring and fall of each year. To Roosevelt's immense relief, the

warships' marks improved steadily. In fact Sims had been able to report to his president in July of 1906 that, in the spring drills just completed, every participating American vessel had at least equalled the H.M.S. Terrible's 1902 world-record score. Better yet, no less than a dozen of the navy's warships had actually doubled the Terrible's once untouchable mark.[9] Justifiably proud, the inspector tendered an invitation to Roosevelt to come see the fall practice in person. This the president eagerly accepted, giving the North Atlantic Fleet still another incentive for ensuring that its gunnery accuracy was at its peak.

Another central tenet of the nation's security policy in the hemisphere was denying potential enemies their own bases in the critical Caribbean region. In this regard 1906 also stood as a milestone. Finally convinced that the American naval facilities at Culebra (Puerto Rico) and Guantanamo would satisfy the United States' own regional defense needs, it was in 1906 that the General Board shifted its strategic emphasis from base acquisition to foreign power base denial.[10] Indeed it was universally assumed that the only way the United States could be defeated by a European power was if that power had a base of operations in the Western Hemisphere. It was further deduced that the only logical place where such a base might be established was in the Caribbean area.[11] The denial of the Caribbean Basin to foreign naval powers thus became an issue of utmost importance to the United States Navy.

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[9]Elting E. Morison, Admiral Sims and the Modern American Navy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), p. 235.

[10]Richard W. Turk, "Defending the New Empire, 1900-1914," in Kenneth J. Hagan, ed., In Peace and War (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978), p. 193.

[11]Challenger, p. 35.

While the suggestion of any great power intrusion in the Caribbean would surely require a countering effort by the United States, by 1906 Germany was the only European state about which the navy was truly concerned. This apprehension was not without considerable justification. Ironically a fair degree of the credit for Germany's emergence as a threat to the United States in the Caribbean belonged to a retired American naval officer: Alfred Thayer Mahan. Indeed it was Mahan's celebrated 1890 tome, The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, which probably had the greatest practical effect upon the German naval program. Kaiser Wilhelm II was very impressed by the American theorist's writings and, using Mahan's depiction of English history as a model, determined to build a high seas fleet and garner all that it could give him.

The dramatic new emphasis which Germany placed on things maritime could hardly go unnoticed. Mahan himself early on saw this significant shift in German policy and sounded a warning that the emperor's new preoccupation with things maritime was "the folly of the age on the European Continent--the hunger for ships, colonies, and commerce, after which the great Napoleon so hankered, and upon which the prosperity of Great Britain has been built."[12] Thus in 1897 the kaiser created the new post of Secretary of State of the Imperial Naval Office and promptly named forty-nine-year-old Alfred von Tirpitz for the job. Right in step with his leader's wishes, the new German naval chief lost no time in asserting his nation's aggressive new attitude at sea. The same year therefore saw German warships seize the Chinese port of Kiaochow and, in an incident followed very closely in the United

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[12]Mahan, p. 289.

States, witnessed another pair of gunboats deliver a blunt ultimatum to the Caribbean republic of Haiti. In the meantime German shipyards began an immense new naval building program. This also troubled American observers, since Germany's 1898 naval budget included funds for the construction of four new cruisers designed for service in the South Atlantic and the Caribbean.[13]

As if the German naval construction and increased activity at sea was not enough, Tirpitz openly proposed to complement his growing high seas fleet with a world-wide chain of German naval stations. Thus were turn-of-the-century German naval planners searching eagerly for potential sites for these promised facilities, hoping to find some unaccounted-for piece of territory which could easily be seized and put to use by the restive German Empire. Mahan warned of this too, pointing out in an 1898 work that a union of the Dutch and Germans in Europe would place the Caribbean island of Curaçao in German hands. This, the former naval officer insisted, the United States could not allow, saying, "if Curaçao and its political tenure do not fall within the purview of the Monroe Doctrine, the Monroe Doctrine has no existence."[14] Great alarm was expressed in the United States over the fact that German warships appeared to menace Dewey's squadron in the Philippines following the latter's Manila Bay victory and Wilhelm himself confided to his uncle, King Edward VII of England, that "German naval construction is directed not against England but America," a

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[13]Walter R. Herrick, Jr., The American Naval Revolution (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1966), p. 203.

[14]Mahan, p 297.

comment which was quickly reported to the United States by the British monarch.[15]

Across the Atlantic, the United States Navy certainly took the growing German threat quite seriously. The department's Office of Naval Intelligence in particular was fascinated by the potential European enemy; so much so, in fact, that one officer even sent a portrait of German military planner Helmuth von Moltke to hang in the office chief's study.[16] As it was, the intelligence branch of the service was already vexed by the sinister antics of the German embassy's naval attache, Lieutenant Rebeur-Paschwitz, who had a maddening tendency to slip away unnoticed for weeks at a time to gather intelligence and chart the American coastline.[17] As for its own information-gathering efforts, the office was similarly dismayed to have to report as early as 1902 that "the German shipbuilding program will be completed in 1908, probably 1907, instead of 1916 as first planned."[18]

The navy's General Board was also troubled by the mounting German challenge. In 1901, therefore, the body directed the Naval War College to build its main summer gaming problem around a scenario in which political instability in the Caribbean region had led to open hostilities with Germany.[19] The resultant analysis by the War

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[15]Holger H. Herwig, Politics of Frustration: The United States In German Naval Planning 1889-1941 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1976), p. 68.

[16]Jeffrey M. Dorwart, The Office of Naval Intelligence (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1979), p. 75.

[17]Ibid., p. 77.

[18]Undated Report (1902?), Office of Naval Intelligence, George Dewey Papers.

[19]Turk, p. 189.

College concluded that the European power could not carry its naval campaign to the United States without first gaining a base of operations in the Caribbean. The most probable locations for these advance enemy facilities appeared to be on the island of Hispaniola, in the Danish West Indies (Virgin Islands), or in the Margarita region off of the north coast of Venezuela.[20] According to the exercise, the best American counter to this eventuality hinged upon the use of Guantanamo Bay as the United States' principal forward base and the assembly of the fleet there as soon as possible after the start of the war.[21] Once this naval muscle was in the area it could then be used either to deter the German fleet from attempting to seize a Caribbean base or to give battle to the enemy squadrons should they attempt to do so anyway.

These navy fears regarding German intentions in the Caribbean were more than a little intensified as a result of the 1902-1903 crisis in Venezuela. That incident stemmed initially from the incumbent Venezuelan dictator's refusal to make good on debts owed several European powers. Consequently, in December of 1902, German warships joined those of Great Britain in a "peaceful" blockade of the Venezuelan coast. Yet the German version of the measure soon seemed to be much more belligerent than pacific. In fact German naval vessels quickly managed to sink several Venezuelan ships and greatly raised the ire of the American public when they shelled a Venezuelan town in January of 1903. Outraged, the popular press in the United States was

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[20]Ibid., p. 188.

[21]Ronald Spector, Professors of War: The Naval War College and the Development of the Naval Profession (Newport: Naval War College Press, 1977), p. 103.

calling for war and President Roosevelt was anxious to ensure that his administration did not become one associated with the surrender of the principles of the Monroe Doctrine.

Luckily, the United States Navy was holding its first-ever fleet maneuvers near the Puerto Rican island of Culebra and the nation was able to call upon the services of some fifty-four nearby warships under the command of the Hero of Manila Bay. Roosevelt ordered the American ships to exercise just a little farther south than had originally been planned and used the not-too-subtle threat to force the European powers to submit their local dispute to international arbitration. In this the president was successful, bringing an end to the immediate crisis.

Nevertheless many Americans and most of the nation's naval officers emerged from the episode convinced that Germany had tipped her hand as to her aggressive tendencies in the Caribbean region. German Ambassador Speck von Sternberg wrote his government in the wake of the affair "that it is undeniable that a relatively acute animosity . . . existed between the American and German Navies."[22] His elusive naval attache, Lieutenant Rebeur-Paschwitz, was even more attuned to the potential for trouble with the Americans, eventually becoming obsessed with the likelihood of a Latin American war between the United States and his own country.[23]

Rebeur-Paschwitz's increasingly pessimistic view of the situation was more than shared by many of the officers running the United States Navy. Thus, when the 1903 revolt in Panama took place, the department immediately ordered the American naval attache in Berlin to monitor

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[22]Herwig, p. 83.

[23]Ibid., pp. 70-71.

German naval movements carefully since it was feared that this would be just the kind of opportunity Germany sought in order to make her move in the West Indies.[24] Indeed German bogies seemed to be everywhere. The mere appearance of German warships in the waters of the Caribbean instantly led to wild speculation as to their no-doubt dastardly intentions. "Scientific expeditions, hydrographic surveys, commercial ventures, steamship sailings, and cordial diplomatic visits were all viewed with a skeptic eye."[25] This tense situation was further aggravated by a German popular press which harped on the issue of that nation's territorial aggrandizement in the Western Hemisphere.[26] At the same time, the United States Navy was having its own apprehensions continually renewed by a series of real estate promoters who would, in order to make the offered sale of potential American base sites more attractive, consistently make thinly veiled hints about having to offer them to some other power in the event that the American government was not interested.[27]

In 1904 the situation was worsened by the General Board's conclusion that German money was behind the disruptive rebel movement then fighting the government of the Dominican Republic.[28] Similarly, in June of 1905 Roosevelt was advised by Senator Lodge that

> under cover of the Danish Asiatic Company the Hamburg America Company is going to establish a big German coaling

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[24]Ibid., p. 102.

[25]Ibid., pp. 98-99.

[26]Ibid., p. 75.

[27]Robert Albion, Makers of Naval Policy, 1798-1947 (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1980), p. 329.

[28]Turk, p. 192.

> station at St. Thomas. This shows that the Kaiser is still hankering after those islands . . . and the Kaiser could use this commercial station for warships."[29]

Open hostilities seemed imminent just a week later. Mildred Dewey's 18 June diary entry thus included a somber note that "Germany is trying to grab Denmark and Holland and that means islands in the Caribbean and that means war for us."[30]

George Dewey in particular harbored no great love for the potential German enemy. Still bitter over Germany's posturing in the glow of his own Manila Bay victory, the admiral had asserted shortly thereafter that he would not be at all surprised to see Germany, in the space of the next fifteen years, dominate Europe, attack the United States, occupy Washington and New York, and force the beaten American nation to pay a huge indemnity. Yet the 1903 Venezuelan affair left the hero feeling a little more optimistic. Now, while he was no less trusting of German intentions in the Caribbean, Dewey was able to brag that his experience at the head of the fleet off of Culebra had taught "an object lesson to the Kaiser, more than to any other person."[31] To be sure, Dewey rather relished his popular image as the man who had stood up to the German navy and made it back down on two occassions. Consequently the admiral was called to testify about the German menace before a secret Congressional committee hearing in March of 1906 and, following dinner at the British embassy in the following month, was sent on his way by the governor general, who shook Dewey's hand and

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[29]Theodore Roosevelt, Selections From the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge (1884-1914), 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), 1:135-36.

[30]Diary of Mildred Dewey, p. 107.

[31]Herwig, p. 98.

wished "Good luck to the man who called the German's bluff."[32] Later, the navy's highest ranking officer summed up his view of the German problem in a memorandum for the secretary, saying

> Germany wants to expand her colonial possessions. Especially it is thought that she is desirous of obtaining a foothold in the Western Hemisphere, and many things indicate that she has her eyes on locations in the West Indies, on the shores of the Caribbean, and in parts of South America. It is believed in many quarters that she is planning to test the Monroe Doctrine by annexation or establishing a protectorate over a portion of South America, even going to the extent of war with the United States when her fleet is ready.[33]

As the ranking officer of the United States Navy, George Dewey was one man who was more than a little determined to frustrate Germany's hemispheric ambitions in any way he could.

Dewey was far from alone in this view within the Navy Department. Ever since the Spanish War incident in the Philippines, the navy's officer corps had harbored a collective distrust of its growing German rival. The events of the early twentieth century did little to relieve this concern and the officers, therefore, became more and more convinced that they would sooner or later have to meet the German fleet in battle. The legacy of the Venezuelan episode, in particular, was a widely-held conviction that the only thing which the impressed the German policy-makers was force and force alone. Lieutenant Daniel Mannix summed up the contemporary view of the incident when he penned that, "except for the arrival of our fleet, the Germans would have unquestionably established a naval base in Venezuela."[34] Not

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[32]Diary of Mildred Dewey, pp. 161, 163.

[33]Challenger, p. 28.

[34]Daniel P. Mannix, IV, ed., The Old Navy (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1983), p. 96.

surprisingly, then, the 1905 Naval War College curriculum once again called for mapping out a strategy for defeating the Germans as the result of hostilities triggered by local unrest in the Caribbean. This time, however, the agreed upon American strategy called for the pre-emptive occupation of potential German base sites in Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, and on the Central American isthmus.[35]

The year 1906 brought no relief from the pressures of impending trouble with Germany. American officers were distressed to see in that year's edition of T. A. Brassey's famed Naval Annual that Germany was listed ahead of the United States in the book's ranking of "Effective Fighting Ships" (leading the Americans by five battleships and nine cruisers).[36] Even the fact that the United States would be able to right the equation as a result of the number of ships it currently had building meant that Germany might be tempted to belligerence while it still exercised numerical superiority. Moreover heads in naval circles around the world were turned in May of that year when Admiral Tirpitz tendered his resignation as a ploy to force the Reichstag into underwriting a massive new naval building program. The tactic was successful and the 1906 budget authorized the construction of six new cruisers and three Dreadnought-class battleships.[37] Germany lost no time in setting her industry to work on the new vessels.

Naturally alarmed, the American naval officer corps redoubled its determination to counter the German menace. A September 1906 Proceedings article once again warned that the United States must stand

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[35]Turk, p. 189.

[36]T. A. Brassey and John Leyland, eds., The Naval Annual, 1906 (Portsmouth: J. Griffin and Company, 1906), p. 52.

[37]Holger H. Herwig, Luxury Fleet: The Imperial German Navy 1888-1918 (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1980), p. 59.

firm in applying Mr. Monroe's famous doctrine to the whole of the Western Hemisphere as the only practicable way of holding Germany in check.[38] Mahan himself even took up his pen to write President Roosevelt that "Germany is inevitably ambitious of transmarine development," bluntly asserting that "her ambitions threaten us."[39]

Ironically this intensified American fear of Germany's transatlantic ambitions came precisely at the time that Germany itself concluded that it could no longer successfully wage sustained naval operations in the Western Hemisphere. Schlieffen's famous work on German strategic planning in December of 1905 and January of 1906 had already convinced the nation's leadership that its only long-term military hope lay in waging a two-front war on the European continent. Consequently the exceptionally detailed 1903 plans which Germany had for seizing an advanced base of operations in the Caribbean (exactly as had been divined by the Naval War College some two years earlier) were of little practical use. The German navy, therefore, downgraded its plan for a German-American fight in the Western Hemisphere to a theoretical exercise in May of 1906 and began making serious preparations for supporting the new strategy for waging war in Europe.[40]

Of course the United States had no way of knowing that such a major strategic planning change had taken place in Germany. Instead the officers of the American navy busily prepared themselves for the

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[38]Albert B. Hart, "The Monroe Doctrine In Its Territorial Extent and Application," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, 32 (September, 1906):753-800.

[39]Robert Seager II and Doris Maguire, eds., Letters and Papers of Alfred Thayer Mahan, vol. 7, 1902-1914 (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1975), p. 165.

[40]Herwig, Politics of Frustration, pp. 85-91.

impending German war and looked warily at any development which might hint at its expected opening shots in the Caribbean. Thus would the navy insist on preserving and protecting its Guantanamo base site in Cuba while quickly moving to quell any regional disturbance which might be exploited by the German leadership. The September political crisis in Cuba would, therefore, strike at the very heart of two of the navy's central national security tenets. A firm and prompt American response would be essential. To do otherwise would be little more than courting strategic disaster on the nation's very doorstep.

That the United States should not feel constrained in responding forcefully to a political crisis abroad was a direct reflection of the various intellectual trends at work in contemporary American society in general and in the 1906 navy's officer corps in particular. Of these, the most pervasive were surely the popular concepts of imperialism, national chauvinism, and Social Darwinism. Indeed turn-of-the-century America was caught in a heady spirit of representing a chosen race which had as its duty the leadership (if not the outright domination) of the balance of the world community. This was especially true in regard to the more backward societies of the "colored" peoples of the world, whether they occupied lands in Asia, Africa, or Latin America. According to this logic, the United States, driven as it was by the imperative of fulfilling its global manifest destiny, must assume the responsibilities attendant to being a truly great power. Those responsibilities meant that the American people must Christianize, civilize, and educate the members of the many inferior races and peoples who were cast across the surface of the earth. If this "white man's burden" also meant that American arms should be used to settle a political dispute in Cuba, then so be it.

As president and principal navy benefactor, Theodore Roosevelt championed and popularized this noble cause, frequently translating its tenets into action. A scholar in his own right, Roosevelt was careful to read the works of most of the prominent imperialist and Darwinist authors of the day and subscribed to the beliefs espoused by many. One such published mentor was the aging naval theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan. Clearly a child of his age, Mahan had succeeded in combining the philosophies of many of the social movements of the era, tempered them with an appreciation of English naval history, and produced a composite dogma wrapped around the maritime prowess of the state. Mahan called the central pillar of his new doctrine "Sea Power" and instantly found a receptive audience for his teachings both at home and abroad.

Not surprisingly Mahan's work was most enthusiastically received within the ranks of the officer corps of the United States Navy. Here at last was an articulate member of their own select brotherhood who could argue the sailor's case for the development of a powerful merchant and battle fleet. What was more, Mahan skillfully showed the intimate relationship which existed between a nation's naval and foreign policies, elevating the naval officer from the traditional category of a somewhat mindless warrior to that of a thinking instrument of diplomacy. The navy's officers, therefore, embraced this favorite son and carefully read and reread his voluminous writings. The product of this devotion was the creation of an army of loyal adherents within the turn of the century officer corps. One navy secretary could therefore comment, only half-facetiously, that "to the average American naval officer, the United States Navy was the only

True Church, Neptune was God, and Mahan was his prophet."[41] Naturally enough, the work of the General Board belied this almost religious devotion to Mahan and all that his views represented, interpreting the world around it through a filter of nationalism, Darwinism, and imperialism based squarely upon a foundation of sea power.[42]

Mahan himself continued to fuel this phenomenon through a profusion of books, articles, and lectures and was in 1906 "at the very height of his fame."[43] From this lofty perch, the oracle of sea power delivered his eagerly-awaited teachings on imperialism, force, and national destiny. A man who could unabashedly claim that "power, force, is a faculty of national life; one of the talents committed to nations by God," Mahan firmly believed that "the responsibility of the state to its own conscience remains unimpeached and independent."[44] Consequently this officer could, in 1901, view the bloody and unpopular English experience in the Boer War as an undertaking which gave "renewed and increased force to the spirit of union, of concentration upon great ideals, without which material strength runs to waste."[45] This somewhat callous view of the costs associated with practicing imperialism on a practical level certainly found an audience in the United States Navy. Even the much-despised Charles Bonaparte would write in August of 1906 that "if we are to do our part in protecting,

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[41]Challenger, p. 13.

[42]Ibid., p. 15.

[43]Morison, Admiral Sims, p. 164.

[44]Mahan, pp. 228, 232.

[45]Idem., Retrospect and Prospect (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1902), p. 81.

pacifying, and regenerating the New World, all men must know and therefore believe that . . . we do not fear and have no reason to fear war."[46]

Indeed force seemed to be at the center of a great deal of popular political theory. Mahan certainly believed that force should be used to retain American pre-eminence within the Western Hemisphere, observing that "the United States had but two principal and permanent policies--the Monroe Doctrine and the Open Door--and all naval planning should originate with them."[47] Should the diligent pursuit of this national divine purpose require its uniformed agents to depart from the strict confines of their legal authority or the misguided direction of those few non-believers who might be appointed over them, the navy's officers could also rest secure in the knowledge that their intellectual guide could offer them moral absolution. In fact Mahan wrote in 1899 that "there is unquestionably a higher law than Law, concerning obedience to which no other than the man himself, or the state, can give account to Him that shall judge."[48]

To the turn-of-the-century American navy fell the privilege and the responsibility of being both the guardian and disciple of Western civilization in those distant lands which might otherwise continue to languish in anarchical backwardness. This was most assuredly a corps of armed men fired with the social passions of the hour and universally convinced that the world was much as Hobbes had pictured it: a teeming mass of conflict and potential violence in desperate need of a (naval)

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[46]Eric F. Goldman, Charles J. Bonaparte, Patrician Reformer, His Earlier Career (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1943), p. 104.

[47]Challenger, p. 17.

[48]Mahan, Lessons of the War With Spain, p. 227.

Leviathan capable of preventing overwhelming chaos and destruction. Might may not have always meant right but, placed in the proper hands, it certainly could not hurt. Thus, impatient with the slow progress of peaceful diplomacy, one naval officer wrote that the battleship "as an object lesson was better than the cathedral for compelling nations to behave."[49] Armed with a number of these floating international nightsticks, the growing navy of the United States quickly assumed the attitude of being the world's policeman both afloat and ashore. In the wake of one particularly successful bout with Latin American violence, therefore, Commander Fullam could write that his was nothing less than a service "trying to suppress piracy on land."[50]

Nowhere was this institutional role as the world-wide agent of civilization and order more steadfastly applied than in the waters of the Caribbean and Latin America. To an organization which respected discipline and revered order, the constant political turmoil and social unrest of the region was a bitter pill to swallow. Consequently the navy welcomed any opportunity to set things aright in the region, even if only for a brief period. This attitude of being the hemisphere's guardian of peace and prosperity was compounded by a healthy dose of disdain both for the capabilities of the governments in the area and for the Latin American people themselves. As early as 1888, therefore, naval reformer Henry C. Taylor was writing that a canal across the Central American isthmus would impose upon the United States "some duties with reference to the nations of Latin America whose

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[49]Peter Karsten, The Naval Aristocracy (New York: The Free Press, 1972), p. 220.

[50]Ibid., p. 194.

establishments are too limited to properly defend themselves."[51] Accordingly, when the navy's first permanently-established Caribbean Squadron was assigned to duty in 1902, the secretary of the navy directed that the force "should be utilized to exert our influence in those regions . . . [since] this is a duty which naturally devolves upon this government."[52]

That it would be up to the United State Navy to keep order in the area in any event was plainly evident to Captain Charles Sperry who, in 1904, accused the local governments of being "crews of bandits" only "masquerading as governments by the people and for the people" which were "not amenable to civilized opinion." Nor had Sperry's view of the situation changed after two years. The prominent officer noted in 1906 that the "Latin Americans were 'pitifully incompetent' to rule themselves 'which of course is no news to a naval officer.'"[53] A contemporary of Sperry's also noted that "except for a small elite class, the people are illiterate and cannot vote on national questions. Trying to explain democracy to them is like trying to explain what red looks like to a blind man."[54] Only the guns and men of a benevolent American fleet could hope to improve the lot of these miserable peoples, leading the latter officer to wonder "if the Latin American nations . . . ever stop to consider that the only reason they exist is because of the United States Navy."[55]

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[51]Spector, p. 84.

[52]Challenger, p. 22.

[53]Ibid., p. 20 and Karsten, pp. 214-15.

[54]Mannix, p. 141.

[55]Ibid., p. 95.

Cuba, in particular, seemed to fit the naval officers' model of the typical, ineffective, and hopeless Latin American republic. A 1906 Chicago Tribune article could, therefore, relate the fact that "Admiral Dewey has never had a high opinion of Cuban character." Moreover the paper went on to note that "the inability of the Cubans to maintain a stable government has vindicated the Admiral's judgement," adding that this pessimistic view of the island's future "is shared by every army and navy official who has served in Cuba."[56] Given the strategic importance of the Cuban location, those same officials generally assumed as a matter of course that Cuba must one day become a permanent American possession. Thus even the normally reserved Luce could write a colleague serving on the 1906 General Board that "Cuba is bound, soon or late, to be ours whether we wish it or not."[57]

As far as the 1906 navy was concerned, someone would have to look out for these backward people and it might as well be naval service of the United States. Moreover the contemporary attitude toward regional trouble tended to favor solutions which threatened "a whiff of the grape." The American navy plainly had a moral obligation both to discipline and protect the Cuban people. This, combined with the service's already considerable strategic interest in the island, meant that the September Cuban crisis could not go unanswered for very long. Given the opportunity, therefore, the United States Navy would make a point of settling the Cuban troubles once and for all. For serving naval officers such a response was more than just a good idea--it was a moral obligation of the first order.

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[56]Chicago Tribune, 24 September 1906, George Dewey Papers.

[57]Albert Gleaves, Life and Letters of Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), p. 292.

CHAPTER IV

"OFFICERS ARE ENTITLED TO THEIR OWN OPINIONS:"

Significant Attitudes and Agendas at Work in the Naval Officer Corps of 1906

The turn-of-the-century American navy undoubtedly saw itself as a principal agent of civilization and order in the world. This heady feeling of institutional importance also carried over into the naval officers' view of their service's role in American governmental functions. This was especially true where the exercise of American foreign policy was concerned. At the same time, the navy of the United States was increasingly coming to see itself as the designated protector of American business interests abroad. Not surprisingly, both of these features of the organization's contemporary psyche would find ample expression in the tense days of the September crisis in Cuba. Additionally many of the naval officers destined to play a key role in the United States' response to that challenge also possessed significant personal agendas which would likewise be translated into action in the field. Of these the most important was certainly the widely-held navy opinion that marine guards should be removed from service afloat. This feeling, together with the many other institutional attitudes at work in the naval officers' collective mind, formed a kind of psychological filter through which the many observations and impressions of the Cuban experience would have to pass. As a result these officers would be even more confirmed in their strongly-held belief that American military intervention stood as the

only credible response to the crisis which they and their nation faced in September of 1906.

That the United States Navy would see itself as an active participant in the exercise of American foreign policy in the early twentieth century was simply the result of considerable contemporary experience in that pursuit. Indeed the turn-of-the-century navy found almost constant employment as the executor of American will in the world. Nowhere was this more true than in the familiar waters of the Caribbean. In 1901, for example, the battleship Iowa was dispatched to the Central American isthmus to prevent insurgent marauders there from interfering with local railway traffic. A 1902 naval expedition to the same region had a similar mission and in 1903 Roosevelt once again ordered American warships to the area. In that particular episode, the U.S.S. Nashville, U.S.S. Boston, and U.S.S. Dixie were directed not only to "maintain free and uninterrupted transit on the railway," but also "to prevent the landing of any armed forces, either government or insurgent at any point within fifty miles of Panama." On the following day revolution broke out and Commander John Hubbard of the Nashville dutifully executed his orders by preventing a detachment of Colombian troops from going ashore to quell the disturbance. Consequently the revolution was a success, a new government of Panama was formed, and three days later it received the official recognition of Mr. Roosevelt's administration. Within two weeks the Hay-Buneau-Varilla treaty, permitting the United States to build its long-awaited canal across the isthmus, was signed.[1] Less than a year afterward American warships once again took the lead role in carrying out a

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[1]William D. Puleston, Mahan: The Life and Work of Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, USN (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939), p. 246.

Caribbean foreign policy coup. This time it was as the executors of Roosevelt's new "corollary" to James Monroe's time-honored doctrine, enforcing the customs receivership just imposed upon the troubled and defaulting Dominican Republic.

Incredibly all of these actions took place at a time when there was no formalized system of liaison between the Navy and State Departments. Whatever coordination and cooperation resulted between the admirals and the diplomats was entirely the result of ad hoc situational arrangements. What was more, the State Department was jealous of its role as formulator and practitioner of the nation's foreign policy and was, therefore, generally unwilling to admit outsiders into its decision-making processes.[2] Happily for the American people, however, the international outlooks of the diplomatic and naval officer corps were remarkably similar and conflict between the membership of the two was rare. This harmony was clearly enhanced by an internal navy requirement which stipulated that any warship visit to a foreign port would be followed by the submission to the department of a detailed report from the naval vessel's commanding officer. Those which contained information of a political or diplomatic nature were routinely forwarded to the State Department for review by its statesmen and bureaucrats.[3]

Actually the State Department itself did a great deal to reinforce the naval officers' view of their starring role in the nation's foreign policy drama. Indeed, while the State Department's own officials might not agree with Roosevelt's 1897 assertion that "the diplomat is the

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[2]Richard D. Challenger, Admirals, Generals, and American Foreign Policy 1898-1914 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 52.

[3]Ibid., p. 63.

servant, not the master of the soldier," they did voice a substantial degree of respect for the many ways in which the increasingly powerful American fleet could advance the nation's foreign policy objectives.[4] Ministerial and consular requests for warship visits to foreign ports were a typical feature of the period. One such application made by the 1904 acting American minister to Cuba noted that

> it cannot be denied that such an exhibition of force and power impresses all people, and the display of a powerful fleet would undoubtedly counteract the impression left by our rivals. . . . [That]the German government never loses an opportunity to impress itself upon every community, whether commercially or politically, and its policy in Cuba is no exception to this rule. . . . The Platt Amendment is to many [Cubans] a menace, but when it takes the form of a powerful fleet, it is a substantial guarantee of their independence against their enemies, foreign and domestic.[5]

Crises and demonstrations aside, there was still another, more pedestrian, need which the State Department had for the navy and its officers at the turn of the century: that of mobile inspectors of its envoys abroad. Through 1905 the State Department operated without its own inspection system and was frequently dependent upon the observations of others to inform the departmental leadership of the suitability of their employees in the field. This was especially true in the case of consular officials. In fact these official representatives of the United States were not even placed on the federal payroll until 1906. Instead many consular corps members made their living through investments in various foreign business schemes and through the fees which they were permitted to charge for their

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[4]Peter Karsten, The Naval Aristocracy (New York: The Free Press, 1972), p. 173.

[5]Challenger, p. 71.

official services. Understandably, this arrangement tended to retard the formation of a professional ethic within the group and miscreants would sometimes find a home in their midst. A naval visit to a consul's port was, therefore, an ideal way for the government to check on the performance of these distant employees and many a captain would make certain to report on the fitness of the consuls with whom he dealt abroad.[6] At the same time, this service as roving diplomatic inspectors tended to develop in the navy's officers an attitude of being somewhat superior to lower-level officials of the State Department abroad. This latter phenomenon would become especially critical at several crucial junctures in the Cuban crisis of September.

Yet, despite the nature of the relationship itself, the pattern of intimate interaction between the State Department and the nation's navy was hardly interrupted by the events of 1906. On the contrary, that year saw the two executive agencies work in even closer unison than had been seen in the past. Contemporary naval analyst T. A. Brassey had just called the United States Navy "one of the most important factors in the politics of the world," and the State Department of the United States was not about to voluntarily do without its services.[7] Appropriately enough, the year began with a full squadron of navy vessels patrolling the waters of the Dominican Republic, and by March the president and George Dewey were actively assisting Secretary of State Elihu Root in deciding which warships should accompany the latter on his visit to Latin America in the summer.[8]

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[6]Challenger, p. 64.

[7]T. A. Brassey and John Leyland, eds., The Naval Annual, 1906 (Portsmouth: J. Griffin and Company, 1906), p. 28.

[8]Diary of Mildred Dewey, George Dewey Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., p. 160.

The summer's Marblehead conference stood as a particularly impressive example of how the two departments cooperated to effect favorable foreign policy outcomes. In May a revolt against the government of Guatemala quickly led to the involvement of neighboring Honduras and San Salvador in the hostilities and the gunboat U.S.S. Marblehead was dispatched to the scene. In July delegates of all three warring powers as well as several from Mexico and the United States boarded the American gunboat for a trip out to the neutral territory of the high seas. There, having been made seasick by the vessel's rolling in the long Pacific Ocean swell, the compliant ministers signed an American-sponsored peace agreement ending the conflict.[9]

The close relationship between the two departments hardly abated as the summer progressed. Even the navy's all-important Labor Day naval review was affected tangentially by the wishes of the diplomats. Thus in August Navy Secretary Bonaparte wrote the president to tell him that the transport Yankee should return from her duty in Dominican waters in time for the festivities, "provided [that] the State Department does not object to her leaving." This, the navy chief reported, was not altogether assured since the ship's stay in the area had been extended "at Mr. Root's suggestion."[10]

Allied to the typical naval officer's not infrequent overseas activity in support of American foreign policy was the widely-held conviction that it was his special duty to defend, promote, and advance the business interests of his nation. Naval historian Peter Karsten

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[9]Robert Albion, Makers of Naval Policy, 1798-1947 (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1980), p. 330.

[10]Bonaparte to Theodore Roosevelt, August 7, 1906, Charles Bonaparte Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

even suggests that this turn of the century period saw the beginnings of what would later be labeled as a "military-industrial complex." According to Karsten, "it is clear that the business interactions of many naval officers with industry and commerce were wide, important, and varied."[11] Karsten is further convinced that the American naval officer was, at the very least, "a vigorous ally of the United States businessman abroad."[12]

The activity of the service's warships certainly tended to buttress this argument. Indeed in 1901 the U.S.S. Scorpion was sent up the Orinoco River of Venezuela "to investigate the region's investment potential and to confer with agents of the Orinoco Shipping and Trading Company, a firm in the area with American connections." In 1905 three different warships were hurridly dispatched to Chinkiang, China where they performed the mission of protecting the property of Standard Oil.[13] Just a year later American businesses in Cuba would be threatened by local political troubles and the United States Navy would once again come swiftly and forcefully to the rescue.

Of course all of the foregoing features of the naval officer's corporate psyche were embellished with an overwhelming sentiment of patriotism, a silent vow of political denial, and the pursuit of personal glory. Devotion to country which could only be described as canine was a hallmark of the officer corps of the day. Moreover, unlike their army brethren, the officers of the Navy tended to abstain from almost all personal political ambition or activity. Rare indeed was

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[11]Karsten, pp. 174-178.

[12]Ibid., pp. 144-45.

[13]Ibid., pp. 162, 168.

the naval officer who entered the political arena either as a participant or merely to voice his opinion on domestic political matters. Politics was for the politicians. The naval officer had a more demanding calling to fulfill, and he consequently poured his energy into an almost holy concept of being part of a brotherhood sworn to nothing more than service to his nation and bettering the reputation of the naval uniform he proudly wore. Even the chaplain assigned to the battleship Missouri was moved to boast that "Our motto is: The Navy and the flag; Our Mistress: Glory."[14]

As the chaplain's comment tends to indicate, the pursuit of personal glory was a matter of no small importance to the men who filled the wardrooms of the fleet. Most had joined the naval service braced by visions of danger, excitement, and adventure and many continued to seek these grails throughout the duration of their time on active duty. The successful pursuit of this glory afforded the officer the opportinity to not only prove himself as a man, but also the chance to make his own name within the orgnaization. George Dewey stood as a living example of how personal bravery and initiative could be rewarded in the navy as it existed. A 1906 Proceedings article even went as far as to propose the text for new legislation which would institute a new system of advancement based in part upon the selection of standout performers when it came time to single out officers for promotion.[15] As with the several other attitudes held by naval officers of the day, this latest phenomenon would also play a part in the September Cuban

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[14]Ibid., p. 263.

[15]Ibid., pp. 257-63 and Roy C. Smith, "Personnel and Promotion Reduced to its Simplest Terms," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, 32 (September 1906): 801-59.

crisis. Indeed the troubles of that nearby republic presented the officers on scene with a prime opportunity to make a name for themselves in the service of their nation and its interests. It would be one which they simply could not refuse.

One especially important navy attitude in the summer of 1906 was that which addressed the shipboard role played by the eight thousand men of the United States Marine Corps. Yet, unlike all of the preceding features of the naval officer's psyche, this particular sentiment was a subject of bitter controversy within the department. For the most part the argument divided the department neatly along organizational lines, with most of the naval officer corps advocating an end to marine duty at sea and the Marine Corps itself fighting for a continuation of its service aboard the ships of the United States fleet. At the eye of the storm was a fifty-year-old navy commander by the name of William Freeland Fullam.

Fullam, who had graduated at the top of his 1877 Naval Academy class, quickly made a name for himself in the service. After six years of duty at sea, the bright lieutenant returned to Annapolis, where he was placed in charge of the infantry drill of the Brigade of Midshipmen. Since his duties involved teaching the future naval officers combat tactics and infantry procedures, Fullam eventually came to the conclusion that the the nation's sailors were quite capable of conducting their own expeditions ashore. Moreover his service afloat had convinced the Academy instructor that the "New Navy," consisting as it did of steamships whose guns and machinery were increasingly the responsibility of technicians, left the average bluejacket and line officer little more than housekeepers who ferried the technical specialists about the world's oceans. At the same time, contemporary

naval warfare all but eliminated the possibility of ships closing sufficently to allow for at-sea boarding assaults or for effective employment of marine sharpshooters in the dwindling "fighting tops" of the fleet. Thus, over time, Fullam began to see a solution to these problems in the elimination of the marine detachments assigned to duty on the fleet's ships. Properly trained naval officers and men could assume the landing duties formerly held by the sea-going soldiers and at the same time rid themselves of the unpleasantness of having a separate "police force" assigned to keeping order aboard the vessels themselves.

Fullam combined his views regarding marines with those he possessed on several other topics and published the collection in an 1890 article in the Naval Institute's Proceedings. An articulate writer, Fullam boldly stated his case, claiming that "nothing could be more harmful to the sailor than the presence of marine guards afloat," adding that "the presence of the marine on board ship degrades the whole service."[16] Needless to say, the work was received with something less than enthusiam by the officers and men of the United States Marine Corps. After all these respected warriors rather liked the excitement of their unique, globe-girdling brand of landing service. Moreover, while Fullam did not advocate doing away with the outfit altogether, his proposal to trim the corps's duties to the point of being virtually indistinguishable from those of the United States Army naturally raised the spectre of a merger of the two organizations and a consequent lack of a distinct identity for the marine corps of

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[16]William F. Fullam, "The System of Naval Training and Discipline Required to Promote Efficiency and Attract Americans," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, 16 (September 1890): 476.

the United States. The marines were, therefore, extremely troubled to find that the naval officer's damning suggestion was favorably received by his fellow officers within the department. For the time being, however, the issue passed and the marines were spared a bitter intra-service fight on the matter.

In 1894 Fullam returned to the offensive. In a year which saw the naval officer publish a Proceedings article illustrating a variety of methods by which sailors could control hostile crowds ashore (a rather typical assignment of marine detachments serving on ships in foreign ports), Fullam officially recommended that the department sharply reduce the number of marines assigned to the cruiser Raleigh, aboard which he served. When the idea was disapproved, Fullam endorsed the notion of petitions which would circulate among the crews of the navy's ships. These petitions asked for the removal of marines from sea duty and were forwarded to Congress until a special order by the secretary put a halt to the process. Nevertheless several were read into the Senate Record by Vice President Adlai Stevenson in August, and a bill was introduced that same month which proposed to merge five regiments of the army with the marine corps to form the Corps of Marine Artillery under the War Department.[17] Furious, marine officers complained about the upstart naval officer and lobbied successfully for the defeat of the threatening legislative initiative.

Far from defeated himself, Fullam withdrew for the time being, marshalled his political forces, and returned to the fray with an 1896 Proceedings article which once again challenged the presence of the corps at sea. Saying, "it has been demonstrated repeatedly that naval

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[17]Robert Debs Heinl, Jr., Soldiers of the Sea (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute Press, 1962), p. 102.

officers are fully competent to command companies and battalions on shore," Fullam cited as evidence the favorable impression made by navy officers and bluejackets in the North Atlantic Squadron's most recent landing drills. Fullam made it clear that "two kinds of military officers are not needed afloat. The marine officer has no raison d'être. Officers of general usefulness are needed on board ship."[18] The article was extremely well-received by the naval officer corps. The Naval Institute's Board of Control only failed to award the work its annual prize after taking a second vote, in which the Fullam article lost by a mere four to three count.[19] Prior to its publication, the Institute sent a draft of Fullam's work to more than thirty officers to invite their comment on its contents. Fully twenty-eight of the thirty-four officers who responded endorsed Fullam's argument and two of the six which did not were marines unlikely to favor the notion in any event. Indeed the current chief of the Office of Naval Intelligence wrote Fullam to tell him that "there can be but few line officers who do not support your views."[20]

As for the marine corps' own officers, their patience had now been fully exhausted. In April of 1896, therefore, Colonel Charles Heywood, the Corps Commandant, wrote to the navy secretary to complain about the piece and to hint broadly that it was high time that the errant naval author was disciplined by the department. Saying that "this is not the first time Lieutenant Fullam has given utterance in print to his views

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[18]William F. Fullam, "The Organization, Training and Discipline of the Navy Personnel as Viewed From the Ship," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, 22 (March 1896): 91.

[19]"Notice," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, 22 (March 1896).

[20]Richard Wainwright to Fullam, April 11, 1896, William Fullam Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

on this subject," and conceding that "officers of the Navy as men are entitled to their own opinions [here Fullam had written "Good!" on his own copy of the letter]," the ranking marine went on to charge that "Lieutenant Fullam does not seem to regard his obligations [to maintain "a proper spirit of subordination"] . . . and openly criticizes the Secretary of the Navy and his policy, violating the spirit, if not the letter, of Article 235, Navy Regulations."[21] Heywood closed his communication by noting that he regarded it as his duty to "refer this pamphlet for such action as may be deemed proper."[22] Clearly the good colonel felt that a court-martial would be proper enough.

Yet Fullam's views were too widely respected to permit such an occurence to take place. Indeed an acquaintance in the secretary's office (who was himself "convinced that marines should gradually be eliminated") wrote the lieutenant to say that "I see that Heywood has reported you to the Department for presuming to express your opinion about his Corps--Don't bother your head about it."[23] There was no court-martial, nor even a letter of reprimand. On the other hand, neither was there a change in the status of the marine corps. This was in large measure the result of a particularly effective marine corps lobby at work in the nation's capital. The navy's Intelligence Chief was therefore compelled to warn Fullam that "the Marines are very strong in Washington and we will find it hard work getting rid of them."[24] Too hard, it seemed, for the 1898 war with Spain gave the

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[21]Charles Heywood to Fullam, April 14, 1896, Fullam Papers.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Buckingham to Fullam, April 20, 1896, Fullam Papers.

[24]Richard Wainwright to Fullam, April 11, 1896, Fullam Papers.

corps an opportunity to prove its worth in battle and its storied defense of Guantanamo Bay in that conflict excited the passions of the nation. As a consequence, the 1899 Navy Personnel Act not only continued the marine corps as a separate service within the Navy Department, but actually provided for more than doubling the manpower of the organization.[25]

Still the issue refused to die. Thus in 1905 a persistent Lieutenant Commander Fullam asked for and received the chairmanship of a board of officers assigned the task of writing the navy's new "Landing Party Manual" to provide guidance to the fleet in employing its sailors on land. That there was a need for such a work was generally unquestioned. In fact, a June 1906 Proceedings article complained about the lack of small arms training received by bluejackets in the fleet since those same sailors were finding frequent employment in expeditions ashore.[26] Moreover the senior officers of the fleet were still actively campaigning to remove marines from their vessels, arguing that the sea soldiers were not necessary for duty on board the ships either. Rear Admiral Robley D. ("Fighting Bob") Evans, in command of the North Atlantic Fleet, thus reported to the General Board in April of 1906 that his recent training visit to Guantanamo had given him the opportunity to place his fleet's marines on shore for more than a week, "their duties on board being performed by men of the seaman branch during their absence." To buttress his case, Evans even forwarded letters from the captains of eight of his battleships and

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[25]Heinl, p. 117.

[26]Ridley McLean, "Small Arms Training in the Navy," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, 32 (June 1906): 563-70.

four of his cruisers attesting to how well the sailors had done the marines' work in the absence of the latter group. In fact, Evans pointed out, it actually took fewer bluejackets and no officers to do the work of the marine detachments (in addition to their own regularly assigned tasks) during the marine detachments' service ashore.[27]

Interestingly enough, virtually all of the key navy players in the 1906 Cuban crisis felt quite strongly about the marine controversy. Navigation Bureau chief George Converse was so convinced that it was time to rid the navy's ships of the marine detachments that he even appeared before Congress toward the end of the year to once again recommend legislation to accomplish the task.[28] Of course Converse's principal subordinate, North Atlantic Fleet commander Robley Evans, similarly sought the removal of marines from duty at sea. In Evans' case in particular, this was a longstanding desire passionately held and persistently voiced.[29] Even the men assigned to command the two warships initially dispatched to Cuba were remarkable for their depth of feeling on the issue. Thus was the gunboat U.S.S. Marietta (assigned to Dominican Republic duty with the West Indies Squadron of

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[27]Proceedings of the General Board, USN, April 26, 1906 Naval Historical Foundation, Washington, D.C.

[28]Heinl, p. 154.

[29]While assigned as the prospective commanding officer of the new battleship Iowa in 1895, Evans had asked to have the marine detachment stricken from the ship's personnel allowance list altogether. The marine corps naturally put up a fight and the secretary of the navy eventually refused the request and, for good measure, ordered that a larger-than-normal marine compliment be assigned to Evan's new command. Embittered but duty-bound to accept his fate (earning him the derisive nickname "Frightened Bob" within the ranks of the marine corps), Evans was nevertheless determined to carry on his struggle and did so throughout the remainder of his time on active duty. See Heinl, p. 103.

Evans' North Atlantic Fleet) commanded by none other than the same William Fullam about which so much has already been said. In command of a ship without a marine guard attached, Fullam was still steadfastly trying to prove the mettle of navy sailors in operations ashore. Prior to the Cuban troubles, however, the commander had been frustrated by a maddening lack of opportunity to prove his point in practice. At the same time, the other North Atlantic Fleet warship initially assigned to Cuban duty was commanded by a man who had once written (in response to a Fullam article in Proceedings) that "the day of the marines passes with that of the old-style seaman, and we no longer need them. As a part of the fighting force of a ship they are gradually becoming an embarassment."[30] This was Commander James C. Colwell of the cruiser U.S.S. Denver. Thus was the entire service chain-of-command from the top of the navy's leading bureau to the commanders of the ships and men on scene filled with the desire to prove the utility of using sailors instead of marines for landings overseas. The point would certainly be made in Cuba.

Two other personal agendas would affect the navy's response to the Cuban crisis of 1906. The first of these was held by Admiral Converse in his position atop the Navigation Bureau. Indeed by the summer of 1906 Converse was aware of the fact that his own power within the organization had slipped considerably. To begin with, the admiral reached retirement age in May of that year and consequently was continued in his office in a retired status only "until further orders" were issued.[31] Although it was generally accepted that those orders

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[30]Discussion of Fullam, "The System of Naval Training and Discipline," p. 513.

[31]Truman Newberry to George Converse, May 10, 1906, Bonaparte Papers.

would not be issued until March of the following year, Converse and his contemporaries were well aware of the fact that they could make their appearance at any time. As a result, the aging bureau chief was naturally eager to show that he could still run his own office and much of the rest of the department in a capable fashion. When the crisis in Cuba began to heat up, therefore, George Converse would want to do everything possible to demonstrate his capability effectively to run the navy under pressure. After all, swift action and forceful response by the men and ships under his command just might be the measure it took for George Converse to hold on to his job.

The other significant agenda held by an individual in the crisis was one possessed by Rear Admiral Evans. In the late summer of 1906 Evans was determined to prove the tactical proficiency of his fleet (and therefore of his command) to the president, the navy, and the American public. A natural impulse in any event, this need was made all the more immediate as a result of several mishaps which called the professional competence of the fleet's leadership into question. The first of these accidents took place as Evans led the fleet out of New York harbor in January of 1906. A tight formation, rigid instructions from the flagship, and a stiff breeze all combined to have the battleships Keararge and Kentucky quickly run aground. Within minutes a third battleship--the Alabama--had collided with and holed the latter of the grounded units. In July a Norwegian ship off of Newport News, Virginia had dragged anchor and collided with the battleship Rhode Island, causing more than five thousand dollars worth of damage. Then, on 31 July, Evans was once again leading his fleet (this time into Newport, Rhode Island) when disaster struck. The battleships Alabama (again) and Illinois had a massive collision which damaged both vessels

severely and caused one sailor to lose both an arm and a leg.

Evans' navigational troubles had not gone unnoticed. A note from Bonaparte to Roosevelt on 1 August ended its discussion of a variety of naval matters with the comment that "I suppose Evans has enough to do in investigating the last collision between his battleships."[32] When Roosevelt responded an accusing finger was pointed at the fleet commander himself. Indeed, after noting that "there seem to be too many collisions in Evans' fleet," the chief executive returned to the January mishap by saying that the "collision in New York Harbor was . . . owing to what I regard as Evans' mistake." Similarly disatisfied with the Newport situation, Roosevelt again wrote Bonaparte to say that "I feel that Evans should explain about sending out those ships in close order in the fog. Has any explanation been asked?"[33] This time the secretary lost no time in formulating a firm response to the episodes, and by early September he had directed Converse to convene a court-martial to look into the guilt or innocence of the commanding officers involved.

As a result of the doubt which had so recently been cast upon his professional reputation, Robley Evans was more than a little determined to make the presidential visit to his fleet's September gunnery exercises a chance to prove himself once again. Thus, as the crisis in Cuba developed throughout September, Robley Evans was far too preoccupied with preparations for his end-of-the-month show for Roosevelt to give the matter much concern. Instead the admiral turned

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[32]Bonaparte to Theodore Roosevelt, August 1, 1906, Bonaparte Papers.

[33]Elting E. Morison, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, vol. 5: The Big Stick 1905-1907 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), pp. 341, 361, 362.

his attention to making sure that the chief executive would have the chance to see a flawless fleet performance off of the Massachussetts coast. Meanwhile, in Cuba, a pair of ship's captains only nominally under the control of local American diplomats and anxious to prove their sailors' capabilities ashore would be busy writing a unique chapter in the history of their service and their country.

CHAPTER V

"WHAT I HAVE DREADED HAS COME TO PASS:"

Theodore Roosevelt, the Navy, and Intervention in Cuba

The September crisis in Cuba presented President Theodore Roosevelt with a difficult decision. Strong arguments for American military intervention in the Cuban political troubles certainly existed. For the most part these arguments tended to represent the position of the nation's naval officer corps on the matter. Yet there were other, even more compelling reasons why Theodore Roosevelt would not want to send American servicemen ashore in Cuba in the late summer of 1906. The president's eventual decision to seek a diplomatic solution to the problem consequently puzzled the officers of his navy and led them to interpret his desires in a way more in line with their own interventionist sentiments. All the while Roosevelt's own capability to gather information and make timely decisions on crisis-related matters would be severely hampered by the limited competence of the various civilian actors upon whom he had to rely throughout most of the episode. The stage was clearly set for a foreign policy failure of the first order.

The immediate cause of the Cuban crisis of 1906 was the national presidential election held there in December of the previous year. In that hotly-contested political battle, the island's liberal party was matched against the moderates of incumbent Tomas Estrada Palma. The seventy-year-old political and economic conservative had served as

Cuba's first elected president since the end of American occupation in 1902. Yet Palma's 1905 bid for re-election found strong opposition and the campaign quickly degenerated into a political free-for-all characterized by insult, invective, and inuendo. Moreover, by the December election day, the liberals had decided to boycott the process in protest of the president's alleged illegal campaign practices. With his principal opposition thus out of the way, Palma easily won the contest at the polls. This December victory was nevertheless marred by charges of election fraud and immediately became the object of a determined attack by Palma's political opponents. Even so, the elderly statesman's second inauguration went off as planned in May of 1906. As the summer progressed, however, the liberal challenge to the legitimacy of Palma's government continued to intensify. By mid-August passions had reached the boiling point. On 16 August Liberal Congressman Fuastino Guerra called several hundred of his followers to his cause in the island's western-most province of Pinar del Rio. The disaffected group immediately took up arms and then called for the resignation of the Palma Government and for the holding of new elections, launching the Cuban revolt of 1906.[1]

President Palma's ability to quell the civil disturbance in August of 1906 was severely limited. Cuban Treasury monies had for some time been used primarily for various social and sanitation programs and very little had been devoted to military or internal police needs. Consequently when the revolt broke out the government could call on the services of no more than four thousand soldiers, most of whom were

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[1]Allan R. Millett, The Politics of Intervention: The Military Occupation of Cuba, 1906-1909 (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1968), pp. 46-59.

scattered accross the countryside in small Rural Guard detachments.[2] What was worse, on the day following Guerra's call some of these troops in Havana mutinied (more likely as a result of bad food than out of any deep-seated political conviction), weakening Palma's available force all the more.[3] The rebels, on the other hand, were quickly able to muster more than ten thousand men in a cause which only seemed to gather momentum as time wore on. Moreover, rebel bands won several early skirmishes with the goverment's soldiers with the consequence that the prospect for a battlefield reversal of Palma's political misfortune seemed rather unlikely. Frightened by the ominous nature of these August events, Palma ordered the arrest of the rebel leadership. Since these popular individuals naturally happened to be the president's chief political rivals, this action was immediately exploited by the rebels, enabling them to rally even more of the population to their cause. Nevertheless Palma seemed convinced that he could overcome the insurgents, advising the concerned American chargé d'affaires in Havana that his government felt fully capable of coping with the situation.[4]

Despite Palma's rosy view of the situation, the American chargé did not share the optimism of his host government. Indeed, on the day following his receipt of the Palma government's assurance that all was well, Jacob Sleeper wired Washington to warn the State Department that "I believe the outbreak to be more serious than the Government cares to

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[2]David A. Lockmiller, Magoon in Cuba: A History of the Second Intervention, 1906-1909 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1938), p. 35.

[3]Ibid.

[4]U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1906 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1909), Part One, pp. 454-55.

admit." Still, the American envoy felt that Palma did have public opinion on his side and, while the process might not be as easy as the Cuban seemed to feel, Sleeper saw "no reason why the Government should not crush the revolt with the resources at its disposal."[5] This anticipated outcome had not been obtained by the end of August, however. Instead the rebels had by that time succeeded in occupying several western towns and threatened to destroy the English-owned Western Railway if it continued to be used for the transportation of government troops. In fact, by September the revolt had spread to the province of Santa Clara and was threatening the property of several American sugar plantations there. Moreover a government offer of amnesty to the rebels had not led to any large-scale defections from their ranks.[6] On the contrary, the insurgents continued to press their campaign, gaining both territory and the grudging respect of the government's troops in the process.

Clearly the rebels' primary goal was that of having a more active hand in the government of their nation. Given Estada Palma's intransigence, however, only an outright military defeat of his government would be likely to bring this about. It was widely believed that the pursuit of this course would mean that Cuba would be subjected to a long, bitter, and bloody civil war which would involve unacceptable sacrifice by both rebels and government forces alike. By the end of August, then, the insurgent leadership had settled upon a new tactic: that of gaining political power through the medium of American military intervention in Cuba. Thus one rebel leader was

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[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid., p. 464.

quoted in a Havana paper on 29 August as saying that "We prefer a new American intervention that will guarantee future legal elections." Still another spokesman added that "We would much rather trust Roosevelt than Palma."[7]

Bringing the United States into the island's troubles would not be easy. A carefully planned campaign designed to force the American hand was therefore developed. This strategy hinged upon the obvious concern which the United States had for defending the lives and property of its own citizens. Thus did the new strategy feature an ultimatum that foreign property in Cuba would be burned beginning on 15 September (unless, of course, the Palma government had a complete change of heart and granted the rebel demands). This official warning was underlined on 6 September by a passage in Cienfuegos' La Correspondencia in which a local insurgent chief was quoted as saying:

> I can only assure you that the forces of Santa Clara, which are all under my orders, will commence their offensive work against . . . the property of foreigners, with the sole end that the Americans shall come as quickly as possible as we prefer to live under the shelter of the justice of a foreign power than submit ourselves to tyranny under the flag which has cost us so much to acquire. The properties which we will commence to destroy by fire and other means (which we neither desire nor hope for) in case that we do not arrive at an understanding with the Government, will be that of American citizens.[8]

Just in case there were other foreigners afraid of the rebels' wrath, this same leader went out of his way two days later to make it clear that only Americans need be concerned. Using the island's Spanish community as an example, the insurgent was reported to say that their

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[7]Millett, p. 61.

[8]Translated copy of an extract from Cienfuegos (Cuba) La Correspondencia, 6 September 1906, William Fullam Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

businesses were safe, since "he had no hope that Spain could induce the United States to assume any attitude."[9] It was American intervention and American intervention alone which the Cuban rebels wanted and they were determined to do all within their power to bring it about. By publicly threatening to destroy American property in a Latin American nation, the insurgents had skilfully chosen a tactic tailor-made for prodding turn-of-the-century American naval officers into a Cuban intervention.

For his own part Palma also tended to favor American military intervention as a means to settle the issue. A Cuban patriot who had spent the seven years prior to his 1902 election in the United States, Palma was openly sympathetic to American concerns. Indeed one historian of the period has noted that the aging Palma "never completely dismissed the possibility of Union with the United States."[10] Thus the rebel strategy of courting American interference in the Cuban revolt seemed attractive to Palma also, but only because the Cuban president felt that the Americans would intervene on his own behalf. On 8 September Jacob Sleeper was, therefore, forced to report with some dismay that "no effort has been made by the Government to afford the protection [to threatened American properties] which I have from time to time requested through the foreign office."[11] Instead Palma was biding his time, waiting for the Americans to become sufficiently angry to come and punish his opponents for him. Like his

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[9]"Guzman Puts Up A Game," Washington Evening Star, 8 September 1906, p. 1.

[10]Millett, p. 46.

[11]U.S. Department of State, Papers, p. 471.

rebel opposites, the Cuban president had chosen a tactic almost certain to move the outraged officers of the United States Navy to intervention.

Certainly interested in the events to the south, Roosevelt's initial response to the building crisis was to take a cautious "wait and see" attitude, hoping that the situation would somehow resolve itself. Unwilling to rush into intervention in any event, the president first sought to put an end to the lawlessness on the island by assisting the beseiged Palma government in solving its own problems. To that end Roosevelt encouraged Cuban orders for ammunition needed to fight the rebels. Indeed, when delays began to appear in this process, President Roosevelt complained about "the pedantry, red tape, and hidebound lack of initiative and common sense" shown by the War Department in fulfilling the critical orders. Roosevelt then took matters into his own hands and personally saw to it that the requests for the badly-needed ammunition were processed as quickly as possible.[12] In the meantime, Chargé Sleeper was advised by the State Department to ensure that Americans whose property was lost or damaged filed claims in the appropriate Cuban courts and forwarded lists of the property to the legation in Havana for its use in demanding protection from the Palma forces.[13] In short, Roosevelt was simply unwilling to respond to the initial phase of the Cuban crisis with a precipitate dispatch of American troops. Instead, the United States Army was directed merely to send two officers with extensive Cuban service to the island to act as more or less surreptitious observers of the crisis.[14]

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[12]Elting E. Morison, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, vol. 5: The Big Stick 1905-1907 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), pp. 385-86.

[13]U.S. Department of State, Papers, p. 457.

[14]Morison, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, p. 391.

The situation changed radically on 8 September. While Chargé Sleeper continued to report to Washington that the Palma government seemed to be making slow headway against the insurgents, the American Consul-General, Maximillian Steinhart, had arrived at quite an opposite conclusion. A personal friend of the Cuban president, Steinhart had been engaging in his own brand of diplomacy entirely distinct from that of his countryman in the charge's post. This separate activity resulted in a telegram of jolting immediacy which Steinhart sent to the State Department under the heading "Absolutely Confidential." It read:

> The secretary of state of Cuba has requested me, in the name of President Palma, to ask President Roosevelt to send immediately two vessels--one to Habana, other to Cienfuegos. They must come at once. The government forces are unable to quell the rebellion. The Government is unable to protect life and property. President Palma will convene Congress next Friday, and Congress will ask for our forcible intervention. It must be kept secret and confidential that Palma asked for vessels. No one here except [the] President, secretary of state, and myself knows about it. Very anxiously awaiting reply. Send answer to "Steinhart, Consul General."[15]

Quite obviously, Theodore Roosevelt was suddenly faced with a situation of dramatically heightened urgency in Cuba. The rebels openly threatened American property, the elected government of the island professed its inability to maintain internal order, and a direct request from that nation's chief of state for the dispatch of American naval forces had been made. Here was a genuine turning-point in the episode. American intervention was being demanded by Palma and the insurgents alike, and time to delay a decision on the matter was quickly slipping away. Since strong cases could be made both for and against United States military intervention in Cuba, it would be up to the American president to weigh his options and choose a course of

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[15]U.S. Department of State, Papers, p. 473.

action certain to please some and anger others. In any case, as the Steinhart cable indicated, a decision of some kind would have to be made soon.

One of the principal arguments in favor of United States intervention was the 1901 Platt Amendment to the Cuban Constitution. The brainchild of American Senator Orville Platt, this eight-article amendment had been drafted at a time of growing American disillusionment with the burdens of post-war colonial administration in Cuba. Yet this American attitude was tempered by genuine concern about guaranteeing the protection of American business interests on the island once the occupation of Cuba came to an end. Consequently Cuban acceptance of the controversial passage had been made a precondition for the granting of independence and the withdrawl of the island's American military garrison. Because of this precaution, the Cuban Constitution read, in part,

> that the government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence [and] the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty.[16]

This same provision for American intervention was also codified in a treaty with the United States.

Not surprisingly, both contemporary scholars and politicians of the day harbored some serious reservations about this amendment and its companion treaty which together pledged American intervention in future Cuban troubles. Many feared that by guaranteeing internal peace in Cuba the United States had actually encouraged disaffected political groups within the island's community to rebel since the logical result

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[16]Millett, p. 41.

of such an action would be the return of American soldiers who would again wipe clean the nation's political slate. Annexation-minded parties both within and without the island were similarly offered with a blueprint for generating a return to American occupation of Cuba. Moreover the United States soon made it clear that it would not shrink from its obligation under the treaty. In the wake of the measure's passage, (then) Secretary of War Elihu Root told a delegation of Cubans that while "there would be no intermeddling or intervention in any manner" in the island's internal political squabbles, the United States might very well intervene "when there may exist a true state of anarchy within the Republic."[17] Just such a state appeared to be rapidly approaching in the opening days of September, 1906. Thus could the intervention-minded officer corps of the navy base its overwhelming institutional desire to act in Cuba squarely upon a firm legal foundation.

Still another pillar of the case for intervention was the undeniable need of the United States to ensure that American lives and property were protected from harm. Obviously this too was a position strongly supported by the activist and intensely patriotic naval officer corps. Moreover, Cuba presented an especially pronounced problem since hundreds of American businesses dotted the countryside and thousands of United States nationals lived in every part of the island. Indeed, a 31 August report to the Navy Department from the commandant of the Guantanamo naval station ended with the reminder that "American interests in this locality are large. Nearly all important ownership is American." In fact virtually all of the twenty-one large

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[17]Ibid., p. 42.

sugar plantations in the area surrounding the base as well as the Cuban Eastern Railroad were owned outright by United States citizens.[18] Consequently the local American naval commander was already becoming worried the import of any local political violence.

The American officers' concerns were hardly relieved by the contemporary march of events. Indeed the extensive American holdings were finding themselves increasingly in peril as the insurgents made a point of despoiling them while the government forces were equally determined in denying them protection. On 28 August, for example, the American-owned Mercedita Sugar company in the vicintity of Cabanas was raided by a band of rebels which helped itself to the company's horses, saddles, and other equipment. Two days later Sleeper was advising the State Department that three American sugar plantations and a cattle ranch near the southern city of Cienfuegos had similarly been subjected to loss.[19]

Naturally enough, this sorry state of affairs was the subject of many bitter complaints by the American community on the island. Many of these took the form of desperate pleas for assistance which were communicated to American consulates around the Cuban countryside. A note to the Cienfuegos consulate from one nearby store owner was typical, saying that "we have no protection as all our arms have been taken and we are subjected to gross indignities. Can't our Government do something to relieve the anxiety of the American colony out here?"[20]

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[18]Commandant, Guantanamo Naval Station to Assistant Secretary of the Navy, August 31, 1906, U.S. Department of the Navy, Record Group 45, Area Eight File, August-October 1906, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[19]U.S. Department of State, Papers, p. 460.

[20]John R. Stanley to American Consul, Cienfuegos, September 2, 1906, Fullam Papers.

A second message from the same proprietor noted that since he had sent the first note his store had been raided another four times (as had other American businesses in his neighborhood), plaintively reminding the local consul that "we are absolutely without protection."[21] Hard-hearted indeed would be the government which would not step in to end such treatment of its citizens.

Another considerable imperative where intervention was concerned was the overwhelming desire of the United States to prevent European intervention in the Western Hemisphere. Of course, this was all the more important in the strategically critical waters of the Caribbean. Just two years earlier this fear had led Theodore Roosevelt to proclaim what would soon become known as the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. In essence this new addition to the time-honored American dictum said that the United States would henceforth assume the duty of policing the nations of the region whenever their internal troubles might be sufficiently pronounced to invite regional meddling by an extra-hemispheric power. Clearly the chief executive was recalling the recent unpleasantness involving Germany and England (and later Italy) in Venezuela and feared that other, similar episodes were not unlikely in the future.

In any event Roosevelt's new policy provided for something not unlike pre-emptive intervention by the United States instead and was almost immediately applied to the bankrupt Dominican Republic. The president himself explained his rationale for this new approach, reasoning that

> if we are willing to let Germany or England act as the policemen of the Caribbean, then we can afford not to

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[21]Idem, undated, Fullam Papers.

> interfere when gross wrongdoing occurs. But if we intendto say 'Hands off' to the powers of Europe, then sooner or later we must keep order ourselves.[22]

Nothing could be more threatening than the prospect of a European power (especially Germany) intervening to protect its own interests in Cuba. No, if the troubles on the island were to be resolved by some external force, then that force would have to belong to the United States. Strategic necessity demanded nothing less. It was the nation's navy which had quickly accepted the challenge of being the president's "big stick" when trouble threatened in the Dominican Republic. That same navy was more than a little eager to do the same in Cuba in the summer of 1906.

The United States Navy was also keenly aware that Roosevelt's handling of a Cuban crisis would be carefully watched by those same European powers whose intervention the service sought to preempt. The solution chosen by the president would therefore have to accord with the United States' own continuing aspiration to genuine great power status. Indeed, unless the United States could bring the errant Cuban people to heel, the nation would risk the embarassment of losing control of its de facto Caribbean colony. Keen to this, one London newspaper editorialized that "the Americans must [either] tolerate anarchy in Cuba or exercise an effective protectorate," while another urged outright annexation of the island, noting that "the destiny of the United States stands behind her and urges her imperially on to the next step in her overseas expansion."[23]

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[22]Dana G. Munro, Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean, 1900-1921 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 77.

[23]"Blames United States," Washington Post, 14 September 1906, p. 4.

As a matter of fact the still booming imperialist movement did advocate taking permanent possession of Cuba. The movement's opponents were obviously well aware of this fact and raised a related question as to whether the Cuban revolt was entirely indigenous. On 13 August, The Nation made the following editorial statement:

> let the American investors in Cuban tobacco and sugar get up a fair semblance of chaos on the island, and the ruler who feels himself ordained to be the policeman of this hemisphere would be sorely tempted to draw his night-club.

Two weeks later that same publication wondered aloud as to who was supplying arms to the rebels, discounting the possibility that it might be political supporters in the United States. Indeed, when dealing with the issue of what was behind the continuing trouble, the editors noted that

> it is an unfortunate fact that there are certain large business interests in this country which have everything to gain from a long and disastrous revolution, resulting, perhaps, in American intervention or annexation.[24]

Such interests there were aplenty and most had a staunch political ally in the imperialistic officer corps of the 1906 American navy.

In any case there was a widespread feeling of betrayal by the Cuban people. Here was a neighboring republic liberated with the blood of American soldiers and sailors and carefully prepared for independence by a doting United States government. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge thus wrote Roosevelt in frustration to inform the president that "the general feeling is that [the Cubans] ought to be taken by the neck and shaken until they behave themselves," later complaining that

> the conduct of the Cubans is disheartening. After all we did for them and the way in which we started them without debt and the Island in perfect order, to find them

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[24]"The Week," The Nation, 83: 173, 214.

> fighting and brawling at the end of four years furnishes a miserable spectacle of folly and incompetency.[25]

A truly great power would be expected to curb such unacceptable behavior on its doorstep. Already disdainful of Cubans in general, the navy especially found this most recent island episode to be a slap in the face to the fleet which had purchased Cuban freedom with American shot and shell. Clearly the "big stick" was meant to be used in situations such as this. Perhaps it was time to let it swing.

Of course there were other, more mercenary reasons for the United States to intervene in Cuba. One of these concerned the not inconsiderable need to protect American business profits. Physical damage and loss aside, the revolt in Cuba was simply bad for business. Thus do Jacob Sleeper's reports to the State Department in the early going of the crisis belie the diplomat's substantial concern about the pocketbook losses which the troubles were bringing about. On 25 August, for example, the American chargé noted that

> business of the wholesale houses with the interior has fallen off, stocks have gone down, and commerce everywhere has been affected. Many merchants and planters are fearful that present conditions will continue . . . and such continuation would, of course, be exceedingly serious.

A similar report for 28 August closed with the comment that "Cuban bankers are refusing loans to planters and cattle raisers." Four days later Sleeper warned his government that

> the commercial element generally takes a pessimistic view of the situation, which is undeniably bad, all new operations having been suspended, only absolutely necessary business being transacted and all the loans to tobacco and sugar planters being refused by the banks.

Still alarmed on 4 September, Sleeper once again offered his opinion

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[25]Theodore Roosevelt, Selections From the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge (1884-1914), 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), 2: 233, 237.

that continued rebellion would "have a most disastrous effect on the tobacco and sugar crops," since "the trouble is occurring at one of the most difficult seasons of the year, on the eve of the harvest."[26] A prolonged Cuban struggle would cost more than Cuban lives and American prestige. The real ledger sheet for this epsiode would be kept in terms of cold, hard cash. As an experienced protector of American businessmen abroad, the navy, therefore, would have yet another reason to favor intervention in Cuba.

There was a final, much more covert American agenda which advocated United States intervention in Cuba. Indeed, this latter concern was centered squarely on the rather unattractive perceived need to punish what was frequently portrayed as a band of black ruffians terrorizing the white citizens of respectable Cuban society. In "reconstructed" turn-of-the-century America, this shocking state of affairs could not go unresolved. In the universally white officer corps of the United States Navy, it would become a matter of utmost importance.

Recent events had brought racial matters into stark relief in the 1906 national consciousness. In January racial rioting broke out in Savannah, Georgia, and a similar episode of racial violence ravaged Springfield, Ohio in February and March. Yet the most spectacular racial incident of the year took place in the sweltering heat of August. On 14 August several white residents of Brownsville, Texas were killed in what was alleged to have been a pre-planned nighttime raid carried out by black soldiers stationed at nearby Fort Brown. In the wake of the incident the townspeople first barred the black troops

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[26]U.S. Department of State, Papers, pp. 456-67.

from setting foot in their community, and then demanded that Roosevelt replace the black garrison with white soldiers in order to prevent a massacre of the town's white population. In the meantime the accused companies' own white officers reluctantly concluded that the riotous behavior on the night of the killings had indeed been a premeditated act on the part of their men. In Delaware more racial rioting erupted. Shocked and troubled, President Roosevelt immediately ordered the withdrawal of all black soldiers from the Brownsville area and directed that a full investigation of the incident be conducted. While the results of that particular report would not be made public until November, the nation, nevertheless, had been shocked and outraged by the widely-publicized August lawlessness.

It is, therefore, somewhat understandable to find Jacob Sleeper frequently referring to the racial component of the Cuban situation in his daily dispatches to Washington. Moreover, given the attitudes of the day and the disturbing events of the long American summer, there can be little doubt that Sleeper's warnings about the problem found a ready audience among the officials of the all white Government of the United States. Thus on 29 August, for example, the chargé noted that one "insurrectionist" leader alleged to have stolen American property was "a colored member of Congress." A 6 September dispatch stated: "From letters and eyewitnesses I gather that there are a great number of blacks under arms . . . and if discipline is once relaxed it may prove difficult to restrain them." Two days later, as Consul General Steinhart was drafting his secret cable calling for American warships, Sleeper again wrote Washington to say that

> the war appears in one respect to be assuming its most dangerous phase. Parties of the worst class of negroes are rising up under the pretext of being revolutionists,

> are robbing and sacking shops, and if this lasts much longer, will soon be guilty of worse offenses.[27]

Those "worse offenses" were also alleged in short order. Correspondents from the Washington Evening Star reported that "colored soldiers among the rebels are outraging women in the country."[28] The cause of international chivalry, if nothing else, would therefore demand swift retribution. Interestingly enough, the Cuban press was more than a little aware of the potential racial overtones which might attach to an American military intervention on the island. Havana's La Discusion ran an editorial discussing this very problem on 1 September, saying that

> well may the colored race tremble before the prospect of permanent American intervention. The Americans hate and despise the American negro. Two hundred years of living side by side in liberty have not sufficed to draw the races together, nor even to prevent the colored man from being treated like a dog, whom they lynch and look upon not even as a human being . . . . What would intervention mean? For the negroes, persecution and extermination.[29]

While the Cuban paper may have overstated its case to a degree, its thesis was rooted in truth. The United States' leadership and electorate were ill-disposed to accept high-handed treatement of white Americans (or Cubans, for that matter) by colored men of any nation in September of 1906. This was one "white man's burden" which the American navy would shoulder at once if the opportunity would but present itself.

There were certainly a number of reasons for the United States to intervene in Cuba in 1906. In fact, if the situation had been left to

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[27]Ibid., p. 471.

[28]Washington Evening Star, 11 September 1906, p. 1.

[29]"La Discusion Sees Danger," Havana Evening Telegraph, 1 September 1906, in Bonaparte Papers.

the contemporary United States Navy, American sailors and marines would have been in Havana at once. Yet the decision regarding intervention was not the navy's to make. Instead it belonged to the service's commander in chief, President Theodore Roosevelt. And despite the many arguments advocating the immediate dispatch of American arms to settle the crisis, President Roosevelt quickly found himself confronted with an even more impressive array of reasons why an American intervention should not be ordered.

To begin with the American president was currently engaged in a campaign to demonstrate his country's reluctance to intervene in the affairs of other nations in Latin America and the Caribbean. This particular effort had been made necessary by the tumultuous events of the recent past. Indeed in the preceding five years the diplomats of the hemisphere had seen an American military occupation of Cuba, the threat of American naval action in Venezuela, a United States-sponsored revolution in Panama (assisted by still another show of naval force), the proclamation of the Roosevelt Corollary, and the taking of the Dominican Republic into a United States customs receivership guaranteed by the presence of American gunboats. As a result the various political leaders of the region were outwardly distressed about the potential for heavy-handed American involvement in the internal affairs of their respective nations.

Sensing this concern that the United States might be more worthy of fear than respect, Roosevelt accordingly decided to send a strong message to the nation's southern neighbors that his government was not at all eager to intervene in other lands and would do so only when no other course of action remained open. This decision was made in the early spring of 1906, and by 30 April Roosevelt was writing his

political confidant, Henry Cabot Lodge, that "there should be a minumum of such interference" in order to accomplish American objectives in the hemisphere.[30]

Still there remained the task of making this intention plain to the community of nations. Fortunately the third Pan-American Conference was scheduled for late July in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Since this gathering would include statesmen and diplomats from throughout the hemisphere, the event seemed to offer a perfect opportunity to deliver assurances that the United States had no desire to turn all of the region into an American protectorate. Plans were quickly made to have Secretary of State Elihu Root address the opening session of the conference. On 31 July the elder statesman made a very firm statement of United States friendship with and respect for the political integrity of the nations of the region. To the assembled delegates, Root said "we wish for no victories but those of peace; for no territory except our own; for no sovereignty except the sovereignty of ourselves," adding that "we deem the independence and equal rights of the smallest and weakest member of the family of nations entitled to as much respect as those of the greatest empire."[31]

Naturally enough, the American secretary's words were enthusiastically received, and Root was at once invited to continue this renewed spirit of cooperation through a series of goodwill visits to the capitals of Latin America. Consequently, when the conference closed, the American secretary of state began an enormously successful tour which would take him to Uraguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Panama,

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[30]Millett, p. 65.

[31]U.S. Department of State, Papers, p. XLVII.

and Colombia before returning to the United States. Similar invitations to call upon the leaders of Paraguay, Bolivia, and Ecuador had to be declined only as a result of those countries' distance from the sea. Thus by late August of 1906 the United States was enjoying a renewed bond of friendship and cooperation with the various nations of the hemisphere.

Naturally, Theodore Roosevelt exulted in this triumph. From his summer residence in Oyster Bay, Long Island, the chief executive wrote a personal note to Root offering his

> hearty congratulation upon the success of your trip. You have made a great impression here; and, as far as from this distance one can judge, you have made a great impression in South America. . . . In short, the trip seems to me to have realized all and more than I had dared hope, and I feel that it marks a permanent epoch in the relations of this country with the other American republics.[32]

Small wonder that, confronted with the possibility of having to land United States forces in the region at just this historical moment, Roosevelt lamented the poor timing of the episode.

Indeed Steinhart's request for American intervention in Cuba's political trouble could hardly have come at more inopportune time. "I . . . hope that we can avoid landing a very great number of sailors and marines," he wrote during the crisis, adding "I am fighting hard to bring about some arrangement which will obviate this necessity."[33] To be sure, the absence of that arrangement would almost certainly undo what had heretofore been a spectacular long-term American foreign policy success.

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[32]Morison, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, p. 367.

[33]Ibid., p. 431.

Roosevelt was also aware that, even if the political mood would permit it, an American intervention in Cuba would be no easy thing for the military and naval forces of the United States. While there were certainly warships enough to police the Cuban coastline, the real problem was ashore and the task of pacifying the interior would be another matter entirely. In fact, at Roosevelt's request, the army's General Staff prepared a report on just what an American military occupation of Cuba would require. It was hardly optimistic. Using their memory of the army's post-war occupation of the same island and their recent combat experience in the Philippines as a gauge, the generals concluded that a successful pacification campaign in Cuba would demand the deployment of more men than the service currently had available for duty. Even then, it was felt, a long and bloody guerilla war would be necessary to keep Palma's elected civilian government in power.[34] This would be made all the more trying for the United States as a result of the fact that a Cuban campaign would have to be conducted in addition to an already difficult counterinsurgency program still being carried out against hold-out bands of Filipino rebels. The United States armed forces would thus find a second war in Cuba to be a tremendously costly experience which would very likely overtax the nation's military resources.

Domestic political considerations similarly urged presidential restraint in September of 1906. Theodore Roosevelt was keenly aware that the American electorate had grown quite impatient and disillusioned with the bitter guerilla war which had been waged for years in the Philippine Islands. Clearly the prospect of a repeat

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[34]Millett, pp. 65-66.

performance of that particular American tragedy would not at all help the president's Republican party at the polls in November. On the contrary, an increasingly vocal anti-imperialism movement had begun to take hold in the United States, presenting a direct political challenge to the imperialism-minded Roosevelt administration. These detractors could only be aided an American military intervention in Cuba, especially since that nation had long been used as an example of what might be accomplished in the Philippines once the continuing American police action there could be brought to a complete end. Indeed a dissappointed Roosevelt penned a letter to one acquaintance saying that

> In Cuba, what I have dreaded has come to pass in the shape of a revolt or revolution. . . . I loath the thought of assuming any control over the island such as we have over Porto Rico and the Philippines . . . As a matter of fact, what I have been ardently hoping for has been, not that we should have to reduce Cuba to the position of the Philippines, but that the Philippines would make such progress that we could put them in the position of Cuba.[35]

Forcible American intervention in Cuba would, therefore, be tantamount to an admission of defeat in this heated political pursuit. More powerful ammunition could hardly be provided to the anti-imperialist cause. Roosevelt certainly felt vulnerable on this count, complaining that his harshest Congressional critics were "always ready to jump him on the imperialism issue."[36] Faced with the Cuban crisis, the president therefore wrote War Secretary William Howard Taft that "we have to do not only what is best for the island, but what we can get public sentiment in this country to support, and there will be very grave dissatisfaction here with intervention." Earlier the chief

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[35]Morison, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, p. 401.

[36]Millett, p. 97.

executive had also worried that "we are certain to be violently attacked in Congress not only by most of our open political opponents but by republicans who have special cause to be jealous of either you or me."[37]

To be sure neither political party stood to gain much from intervention in Cuba. Such an event would embarass the Democrats, who had been arguing for true Philippine independence and an end to American military action on the grounds that they would allow the fledgling nation quickly to become a settled republic on the Cuban model. Republicans would similarly have their reputation tarnished by such an obvious departure from the new Roosevelt-Root policy of moderation and restraint among the nations of Latin America.[38] Thus, with neither party anxious to be associated with military action on the island, the Washington Post could report that "no attempt is being made to deny the truth of the suggestion that the pending Congressional campaign at home is acting as a deterrent in the matter of intervention."[39] At a bare minimum Roosevelt would want to delay any forcible interference in Cuban affairs until after the election was over and the votes were cast. Any move before then would merely court political hardship for his own administration.

That Theodore Roosevelt had a critical and difficult decision to make with regard to intervention in Cuba is certainly without question. Moreover the president would have to make that decision in a crisis-response environment which was far from ideal in September of

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[37]Morison, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, pp. 424, 432.

[38]Millett, p. 98.

[39]"'Big Stick' May Swing," Washington Post, 14 September 1906, p. 4.

1906. At the root of this problem was a clearly inadequate American system for gathering information about the situation in Cuba itself. The American minister to Cuba, a former history professor with seven years of diplomatic experience, had never before been assigned to a post in Latin America and had held his present position for less than a year. Prior to this assignment, Harvard-educated Edwin V. Morgan had performed duties in Russia, Washington, Manchuria, and--most recently--Korea. Of course, Morgan's status as a Latin American political novice might have been of greater import than was the case, since the minister came to the United States on leave in July and then traveled to Europe, where he was enjoying a summer's vacation when the crisis in Cuba broke. Roosevelt was already complaining in early September that "Morgan . . . has mist [sic] the great chance of his diplomatic life by not being on the spot. At the first symptom of disturbance in Cuba he should have been hurrying to his post." Yet, even when the errant minister had resumed his duties on the island, Morgan's signal lack of ability hardly redeemed his early failure. Roosevelt later summed up the diplomat's performance by saying that he had been "absolutely useless during the crisis," adding that he was "greatly displeased" with his envoy's incompetent behavior.[40]

In Morgan's absence from the island, Chargé d' Affaires Jacob Sleeper took over the reigns of the American legation as acting minister. Yet Sleeper was far from the most perceptive individual and his lack of aggressiveness in obtaining an accurate appraisal of the situation in Cuba put blinders on the United States Government. The Washington Post, noting that "the prime objective of the administration at present is to get the facts," further pointed out that this effort

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[40]Morison, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, pp. 402, 440-41.

was being frustrated by the fact that "Mr. Sleeper is bound to accept the official renditions of the daily collisions between President Palma's troops and the insurgents in the field."[41] For his own money Roosevelt could afford to be more blunt, calling the Havana chargé "a wretched and worthless creature."[42]

The remaining major diplomatic actor collecting and evaluating information for the United States in Cuba was American Consul-General Frank Maximillian Steinhart. Born in Germany in 1864, Steinhart enlisted in the United States Army as a young immigrant and quickly rose to the rank of sergeant. The promising soldier eventually became chief clerk of an army corps in the war with Spain. This assignment was followed in short order by similar postings in the Department of Puerto Rico and in Leonard Wood's military government of Cuba. With the coming of Cuban independence, Steinhart was made the War Department's agent on the island and, in March of 1903, was named consul-general. In the opinion of Secretary of War Taft, Steinhart was "by reason of his eight years' service in the islands, . . . better acquainted with conditions and public men than any other American whom we could have consulted."[43] As was noted earlier, one of those public men with whom Frank Steinhart was so well acquainted was Cuban President Tomas Estrada Palma.

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[41]"Administration After Facts," Washington Post, 12 September 1906, p. 3.

[42]Morison, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, p. 402.

[43]Robert Bacon and William Taft, "Report of William H. Taft, Secretary of War, and Robert Bacon, Assistant Secretary of State, of What Was Done Under the Instructions of the President in Restoring Peace in Cuba," in Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1906, House Document 2, 59th Congress, Second Session, Vol. 1, Appendix E, Government Printing Office, 1907, p. 450.

Steinhart thus represented an excellent avenue for American communication with the very highest levels of the Palma Government. Yet the close friendship which the two men shared seemed to cloud the consul-general's perception of events and political priorities, sometimes leading Steinhart to confuse Palma's own political needs with those of the American government. As a result, the principal American information-gatherer in Havana was little more than an advocate for his host government. Steinhart's diplomatic dispatches would therefore have to be read with a somewhat skeptic eye. Indeed the critical 8 September message led Roosevelt to conclude that "Steinhart is wrong about immediate intervention."[44] Still Frank Steinhart was probably the best thing the Americans had looking out for their interests in Cuba.

At the other end of the information pipeline was an official Washington bureaucracy remarkably ill-equipped to deal with any serious foreign policy crisis. Secretary of State Elihu Root was on his grand tour of Latin American capitals, having been out of the country since early July. In the elder statesman's place was one of the president's Harvard classmates, Massachussetts banker Robert Bacon. A capable administrator in his own right, Bacon was inhibited in exercising much initiative in the post by the absolute awe in which he held the secretary of state. Indeed the assistant secretary had written his father during the previous year to say that "I am in love with my new chief, Elihu Root. . . . It is a privilege to work with him in the public service." Consequently convinced that his own role was limited to that of a political understudy, Bacon constrained his actions to

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[44]Morison, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, p. 402.

accord with what the secretary would himself do under the same circumstances. Small wonder, then, that Elihu Root often allowed the younger Bacon to carry out his policy directions. One biographer thus concluded that "If Mr. Root had the mind to contrive, Mr. Bacon's was often the hand that executed."[45] Obviously Root was able to depart on his South American trip secure in the knowledge that his policies and agendas would have a diligent caretaker in his absence. In fact the secretary wrote the president to tell him that "whatever question comes up, you will find Bacon thoroughly cognizant of it and possessed of sound judgement upon it."[46]

Notwithstanding Bacon's successful handling of the Central American war mediation in July, the acting secretary of state was not likely to be of a mind to offer much useful advice in a crisis not foreseen at the time of Root's departure. Accordingly, when the situation in Cuba suddenly began to turn sour in August of 1906, Bacon felt that it would be best simply to preserve the status quo until his boss and foreign policy mentor could return to handle the problem.[3] Given this state of affairs, Roosevelt was sure to miss Mr. Root's presence, commenting in early September that "I greatly wish I could have an hour's talk with him."[47] This particular predicament was even more exacerbated by the fact that virtually all of official Washington was away from the city in order to avoid the oppressive late summer heat on the banks of the Potomac. Indeed congressmen were home campaigning for re-election, the president was staying at his estate on

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[45]James B. Scott, Robert Bacon, Life and Letters (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1923), pp. 106-7.

[46]Ibid., p. 110.

[47]Ibid., p. 118.

Oyster Bay, Long Island, the secretary of war was off fishing in Quebec, and the the secretary of the navy was staying in the cooler air of Lenox Massachussetts. Even stand-in Secretary of State Bacon was vacationing in Maine, leaving the day-to-day operation of his organization in the hands of lifelong department bureaucrat Alvey Adee.

With such a poor crisis-response mechanism standing by in summer time Washington and even poorer diplomatic representation in Cuba itself, Roosevelt's government was remarkably ill-equipped to handle any serious trouble on the island in early September of 1906. Owing to this unique blend of circumstances, therefore, Theodore Roosevelt and his lieutenants would have to rely upon ad hoc information sources and improvised decision-making schemes when it came to formulating a response to the episode. Thus would the observations of American naval officers in Cuba become the basic foundation for the American government's official view of the situation throughout the duration of the crisis. Additionally that same government's lack of an effective crisis decision-making capability meant that those naval officers at the scene would frequently be forced to act in advance of being given any meaningful guidance from above. The administration consequently found itself being swept along by a rush of events which were only marginally under its control. Indeed real initiative in the crisis would fall to the handful of officers serving aboard the nation's warships in Cuban waters and to their uniformed bosses in the navy's headquarters in Washington.

In addition to the mischief being worked by the phenomena just described, there was a final political consideration which served to compound the contemporary situation. Roosevelt knew that he must never be accused of being as militarily unprepared as McKinley had been at

the outset of the mercifully brief war with Spain. Should the United States once again be unable to mount an effective and timely military response to a crisis just ninety miles from its own shore, public opinion both at home and abroad would damn the leadership of the nation to a political hell from which it could never return. Thus would it be simple political suicide for Roosevelt to find himself faced with a situation in which immediate intervention was necessary but beyond the military capability of his nation. To avoid such a self-inflicted wound, the president would have to make doubly certain that every possible hedge against being caught unprepared be employed. As a result, Roosevelt would be keen to muster as much naval muscle near Cuba as soon as possible. From the president's perspective, such a move would merely be a kind of floating insurance policy in the unhappy event that his efforts to avoid and intervention failed. Yet in the eyes of the officers of the United States Navy, the massing of the fleet's ships and men off of the Cuban coast was far more likely to be interpreted as evidence of their commander in chief's apparent intention to intervene in the island's political troubles. It would certainly edge the service one step closer to taking charge of American foreign policy in Cuba and to a point where the president's own big stick would swing wildly out of control.

CHAPTER VI

"EVIDENCE OF INTERVENTION:"

The Navy and the Cuban Crisis
8 September-14 September

Theodore Roosevelt was unwilling to choose intervention as an intitial response to the growing crisis in Cuba. Even so, the president was certainly intent upon taking steps to facilitate the efficient execution of a military solution to the Caribbean problem should future events render it necessary. Ironically, these precautionary measures themselves would hasten the necessity for intervention. Indeed, the American naval officers affected by Roosevelt's early reaction to the crisis quickly misinterpreted their commander in chief's intent. Both at the service's headquarters in Washington and aboard its ships at sea, navy officers in critical positions of responsibility erroneously saw American intervention in Cuba as a duty with which they were charged and both groups acted accordingly. Moreover, by the time that steps were taken to ensure that such a misunderstanding did not take place, the United States virtually had been committed to an unwanted Cuban intervention.

Roosevelt's most immediate concern was that of responding to Consul-General Steinhart's secret telegram of 8 September. The central feature of that particular message had been the Cuban president's request for two warships to protect American life and property on the island. Moreover, Steinhart had indicated that the two vessels should "come at once," and Roosevelt was determined to provide the

urgently-needed muscle as fast as he possibly could. Still, the president was also aware of his envoy's admonition to keep the fact that it was Palma who had requested the vessels strictly confidential. The president, therefore, wired his navy secretary that same day to inform him only that "it seems advisable to send two war vessels to Cuba, one to Havana and one to Cienfuegos, to protect American interests." Without providing any more guidance on the vessels' mission once they reached the island, Roosevelt went on to inquire as to which vessels should be sent and how soon they could be on their way. The telegram was closed with the note, "immediate action necessary."[1]

The president's urgent message was received at the Navy Department early that same Saturday evening and was quickly brought to the attention of Rear Admiral George Converse. As acting navy secretary in the absence of the vacationing Charles Bonaparte and Truman Newberry, Converse would be responsible for seeing to it that the president's orders were carried out. For the navy, "protecting American interests" often meant placing armed landing parties ashore. Thus the admiral quickly set himself to the task of surveying the status of the various units assigned to the Navy's North Atlantic Fleet.

At first glance some eleven battleships, eight cruisers, five gunboats, and a troop transport with an embarked battalion of marines were available for active service. Yet a closer reading of the situation revealed that virtually all of these vessels had operational commitments which precluded their being diverted to unexpected duties

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[1]Elting E. Morison, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, vol. 5: The Big Stick 1905-1907 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 399.

in Cuba. All of the battleships, for example, were engaged in conducting promised port calls in New England, and each was busily preparing for the president's attendance at their all-important gunnery exercises later in the month--and that certainly could not be interrupted! The fleet's newest division of four cruisers was similarly unavailable, having just that morning departed on the first leg of a journey to the other side of the world and a tour of duty on the Asiatic Station. The gunboats, transport, and marines were also out of the question, as they were all engaged with customs collection duties in the waters of the Dominican Republic.

What remained, then, was Evans' Fifth Division, consisting of the cruisers Cleveland, Des Moines, Tacoma, and Denver. Sisters all, the former two were in Norfolk, Virginia while the latter pair had just departed Portland, Maine and New London, Connecticut (respectively) and were en route to the southern port to join them there. Convinced that these relatively new ships with their three hundred-man crews were ideally suited for the apparent task at hand, Converse promptly informed the president that the navy could send the Des Moines and the Tacoma "or vessels of that class . . . as soon as they can coal."[2] Armed with this information, Roosevelt then ordered Converse to dispatch the Des Moines and Tacoma to Cuba, adding that more vessels could always be sent later, if necessary.[3]

By Sunday, however, the aging Converse realized that the actual disposition of Evans' Fifth Division was not exactly the way he had

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[2]Roosevelt to Bonaparte, September 8, 1906, U.S. Department of the Navy, Record Group 45, Area Eight File, August-October 1906, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[3]William Loeb to Converse, September 8, 1906, Navy, Area Eight File.

pictured it the night before. Half of the quartet was currently at sea and both the Tacoma and the Cleveland would require several days to prepare for a trip south. Moreover, with Washington newspapers reporting that the Cuban "situation grows hourly more serious," the admiral knew that this extra time needed to coal and provision the ships in Norfolk might be more than the crisis permitted.[4] The Des Moines could sail Monday, but another ship would still be required in order to comply with the presidential orders. Obviously eager to please (and show his bosses that he could still run the navy in a pinch) Converse had a wireless message ordering the Denver to proceed directly to Havana transmitted to that ship early on Sunday afternoon.

Yet Converse's initial response was somewhat less than decisive. Indeed the Denver's commanding officer, Commander James C. Colwell, was to receive still another message from the Navigation Bureau chief before the day was out. This evening transmission changed his destination again, sending the ship to Key West where it was to await further orders.[5] Clearly, there was some indecision at work in the Navy Department as George Converse sought to provide an effective response to Saturday's presidential directive. Meanwhile, in Massachussetts a largely uninvolved Charles Bonaparte followed the events at a distance and busied himself with plans for ordering courts-martial in the Alabama-Illinois collision case.[6]

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[4]"Forces in Cuba Futile to Stop Acts of Rebels," Washington Evening Star, 9 September 1906, p. 1.

[5]James Colwell, "Report to the Secretary of the Navy," 4 October 1906, in Navy, Area Eight File, p. 1.

[6]Bonaparte to Roosevelt, September 10, 1906, Charles Bonaparte Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

By Monday, 10 September, Theodore Roosevelt decided that it might be a good idea to let his State Department know that he had no intention of intervening in Cuba. The president accordingly informed his acting secretary of state that "it would be out of the question for us to intervene at this time, adding that he felt the situation might best be resolved through "an emphatic warning to the people of Cuba." Bacon was therefore instructed to pass this decision to Consul-General Steinhart for his "private information." Moreover, the envoy was ordered to tell his Cuban friend that he must quell the disturbances on the island using his own government's resources.[7]

Steinhart, however, was growing impatient. By Monday he was still waiting for an answer to his Saturday telegram and he therefore fired off a curt reminder to his department saying, "President worried because no reply received my message and asks war vessels be sent immediately."[8] Prompted to action, Bacon quickly dashed off a reply which claimed that "two ships have been sent, due to arrive Wednesday."[9] Yet the fact of the matter was that no American warship was actually on its way to Cuba on 10 September. Both the Des Moines and Denver were en route to Key West and no other navy ship had received instructions to make for Cuban waters by day's end. The lack of an established State-Navy Department system of liason had already become a problem.

Of course Frank Steinhart had no way of knowing that his department's assurances were somewhat hollow. On the other hand, what he

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[7]Morison, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, p. 402.

[8]U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1906 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1909), Part One, p. 473.

[9]Ibid., p. 474.

did know did not please him. The envoy's telegram from Bacon included the unwelcome message that the president personally wanted to impress upon Steinhart "the reluctance with which this country would intervene." Instead, he was told, Palma must be made to understand that American public opinion would not support such an action until the Cuban government had exhausted every possible solution to the problem on its own. "Until such efforts have been made," the message concluded, "we are not prepared to consider the question of intervention at all."[10] Disappointed, Steinhart responded by complaining to Washington that "few understand Cuban situation and still less appreciate the same." With regard to the phantom ships en route to the island, the consul-general indicated that Palma wanted them to "remain for a considerable amount of time to give security to foreigners in the island," adding his own observation that the Cuban government's efforts to defeat the rebel movement by itself were all "useless from the start."[11] In Frank Steinhart's mind, only American military intervention would keep his friend in power. If that intervention began with just two American warships, then that would have to do.

Things certainly did not improve on the island. On Tuesday American newspapers were reporting that martial law had been declared, that Havana was in a panic, and that chaos reigned throughout the rest of Cuba. Nevertheless, spokesmen for a cautious Roosevelt administration were careful to point out that "there would be no intervention by the United States unless the rebellion assumed the

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[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

proportions of a general uprising."[12] Clearly, in its present form, it had not. Within the government Robert Bacon once again wired Consul-General Steinhart to remind him that the president believed "actual, immediate intervention to be out of the question."[13]

Belated steps were also being taken to ensure that the Navy Department understood the diplomat's intructions and concerns with regard to Cuba. Thus did Rear Admiral Converse meet with Acting Secretary Bacon to coordinate the activity of their respective departments. Following that meeting, the aging naval officer once again diverted the Denver (then just short of reaching Key West) to Havana. Additionally, the gunboat Marietta also received instructions to from the department to proceed from her post in the Dominican Republic to the Cuban port of Cienfuegos. In the meantime, the Navy Department announced that its warships would not support any side in the island's conflict but would rather be used as a safe haven for threatened foreign nationals--assuming, of course, that they were used at all.[14]

Thus, by late Tuesday two American warships were at last on their way to Cuba. Yet neither James Colwell on the Denver, nor William Fullam on the Marietta had a clear idea of just what it was that their respective commands were to do once they arrived. Colwell's orders simply indicated that he should "proceed to Havana without stopping at

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[12]"No Intervention Now," Washington Post, 12 September 1906,p. 3.

[13]U.S. Department of State, Papers, p. 475.

[14]"U.S. War Ship is Ordered to Cuba," Washington Post, 12 September 1906, p. 1.

Key West."[15] Fullam, at least, was given a repetition of the president's Saturday evening instruction that the ship should be used to "protect American interests."[16] Yet the department failed to provide any hint as to just what those interests were nor what actions would be justified in protecting them. To make matters worse, both of these warship captains were operating in a vacuum with regard to recent news of the situation on the island and of their own government's stated policy. Indeed the Denver had been at sea since Saturday and the Marietta had been operating in the vicintity of the Dominican Republic for quite some time. As a consequence, Commanders Colwell and Fullam would have to make critical decisions in Cuba based upon little more than their instincts, training, and experience as naval officers of the United States.

Wednesday, 12 September once again found the navy busy with activity related to the crisis in Cuba. In fact there was so much activity hurridly being undertaken that the service's officers could only conclude that a major naval action was about to take place. Thus, while sisterships Tacoma and Cleveland continued to make last minute preparations for a hasty departure from Norfolk, the aging cruiser Newark (which had been scheduled to go out of commission) was rushed there from Baltimore to begin her own preparations for southern service. In Washington the Navy Department officially announced that the Denver had been sent to Havana and the Marietta to Cienfuegos,

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[15]U.S. Department of the Navy, Cipher Messages Sent, 1 June 1898-16 September 1906, Record Group 45, National Archives, Washington, D.C., p. 483.

[16]George Converse to William Southerland, 11 September 1906, William Fullam Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

adding that current plans called for the Des Moines to be used off of the Florida coast to prevent Americans from shipping supplies to the rebels.[17] At Guantanamo, the transport Dixie arrived for an overnight visit which would allow her to make a routine transfer of several marines before returning to her station in the Dominican Republic on the following day.

Meanwhile, in Havana Frank Steinhart busied himself with various diplomatic concerns as he awaited the arrival of the American warships he had been promised. By the late afternoon, however, these routine matters were set aside while Steinhart relayed an official Cuban admission that the Palma government could no longer control the revolt nor prevent the rebels from destroying property. The message went on to state that

> President Estada Palma asks for American intervention, and begs that President Roosevelt send to Habana with rapidity two or three thousand men to avoid any catastrophe in the capital. The intervention asked for should not be made public until the American troops are in Habana. The situation is grave and any delay may produce a massacre of citizens in Habana.[18]

A bad Cuban situation suddenly had taken a decided turn for the worse. At 4:30 P. M., the U.S.S. Denver steamed into port.

The arrival of the American cruiser was clearly the event of the day in Havana. The Denver's white hull gleamed in the tropical sunshine as the cruiser stood into the harbor with the Cuban flag flying from her masthead. Approaching the Cabanas fort, Commander Colwell ordered the firing of a national salute of twenty-one guns, which was appropriately answered--gun for gun--by the Cuban garrison.

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[17]"More Cruisers to Go South?" New York Times, 13 September 1906, p. 2.

[18]U.S. Department of State, Papers, p. 476.

Her arrival thus heralded, the cruiser quickly drew a large and interested crowd to the city's waterfront. A local correspondent would later report that "the countenances of Americans" in the throng "showed pleaure, while those of the Cubans expressed wonder and perplexity."[19] There was certainly no doubt that the United States Navy had arrived.

After concluding her salute, the Denver steamed past the rusting masts of the U.S.S. Maine and moored to a bouy just offshore. Colwell immediately sent one of his junior officers into the city to call upon the American acting minister. Working his way through the enthralled crowd at the landing, the officer finally reached Chargé Sleeper and carried out his captain's order to "report the force at [his] disposal, the readiness of the ship for any duty, and, that [he] had no instructions beyond those to proceed to Havana." This done, arrangements were made for the American commander to call upon both Frank Steinhart and President Palma on the following day.[20]

Of course the Denver's arrival presented a special challenge to Jacob Sleeper. Charged with carrying out his nation's foreign policy wishes in Cuba, the hapless diplomat suddenly had an American warship bristling with guns and carrying a crew of three hundred fighting men sitting in his harbor. Yet Sleeper had no idea as to just what this latest American presence was to accomplish. What the chargé needed, therefore, was official advice from his government and he needed it at once. Thus, Sleeper immediately dashed off a telegram to the State Department asking for instructions on just how the warship was to be employed.[21]

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[19]"Rebels Work Havoc; U.S. Ship at Havana" New York Times, 13 September 1906, p. 1.

[20]Colwell, "Report," p. 2.

[21]U.S. Department of State, Papers, pp. 476-77.

In the meantime, Commander Colwell was getting some direction of his own. Indeed Frank Steinhart lost no time in hurrying down to the harbor and going aboard the cruiser to brief her commanding officer on the situation. In this initial conversation, the consul-general allowed as to how he was on "informally intimate terms" with the republic's president and suggested that the naval officer accompany him on an unofficial visit to the palace that evening. Intrigued, Colwell consented.[22]

After bidding Steinhart a temporary goodbye, the cruiser's captain was next faced with a collection of reporters from various Cuban and foreign newspapers. Colwell listened patiently as the correspondents used the meeting to provide him with what were often conflicting briefs on the Cuban crisis.[23] When one of the reporters asked about the Denver's available landing force, the naval officer responded that "while she carried no marines at present, she had 150 well-drilled and armed sailors and several field guns, which could be put on shore on fifteen minute's notice."[24] At the end of the impromtu press conference, the group left Colwell a number of newspapers for him to review at his leisure.

That evening, the navy commander changed into civilian clothes and at seven o'clock he was ushered into Palma's private chambers to meet secretly with Steinhart and the Cuban president. Of this meeting Colwell would later recall that the Cuban "impressed me as very nervous, but much pleased at the presence of the Denver in port."[25]

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[22]Colwell, "Report," p. 2.

[23]Ibid., p. 3.

[24]"Rebels Work Havoc."

[25]Colwell, "Report," p. 2.

Moreover, while the Cuban government's official spokesmen were to a man claiming that the cruiser's visit had "no special significance," Colwell's meeting with Palma gave the American officer the distinct impression that the president "regarded her presence as strengthening his administration."[26] Before parting, it was agreed that Commander Colwell would still make his official call upon Palma at 1:00 P. M.

Back aboard his ship the officer was again faced with callers of his own. This time his visitors were prominent American and British businessmen who, like the reporters earlier in the day, used the opportunity to brief the cruiser captain on the situation as they saw it. That the officer was certainly receptive to such counsel is indicated by his later recollection of the period in which he lamented, "having received no instructions, I [did] not know the policy of my Government with respect to Cuba."[27] In the absence of that policy, James Colwell would simply have to consider the various alternatives available and choose the one which seemed best to him.

Ironically the guidance which James Colwell so desperately needed was being worked out in Washington at exactly the same time that he was trying to divine it from meetings with reporters, businessmen, diplomats, and the president in Havana. The prime motivator for this tardy advice was the jolting news that Palma not only wanted American intervention, but warned of a bloodbath in Havana if it was not forthcoming. With American headlines screaming about an imminent rebel attack on the city and with racial rioting erupting in New York, this was a serious alarm which Roosevelt could not ignore.

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[26]Ibid., and "Rebels Work Havoc."

[27]Colwell, "Report," pp. 3, 9.

Yet, in reacting to this latest news, the president did little to dispel any naval doubt as to his intentions respecting a Cuban intervention. Indeed, from his Oyster Bay retreat the president immediately wired Robert Bacon to "cable Steinhart . . . that we will send ships and marines as soon as possible for the protection of American life and property."[28] At the same time Charles Bonaparte was directed to "get ready ships to be sent to Havana at the earliest possible moment and especially get as many marines as possible down to Havana as soon as can be." Roosevelt further ordered the navy secretary to notify him as soon as possible as to how many marines the United States could send to Havana and how soon they could arrive in the city.[29] Fortunately for the navy, some two hundred marines were already in Cuban waters. The transport Dixie, just preparing to leave Guantanamo for her return trip to the Dominican Republic, had been carrying the ready landing force for the Caribbean since June. Now, with the president apparently preparing to use force in Havana, the ship and battalion were fortuitously just a day's steaming away.

At the State Department Assistant Secretary Bacon announced that the United States was pursuing a policy of military preparedness in Cuba, but curiously cautioned reporters to note that the movements of the Denver, Marietta, and Des Moines (the presence of the Dixie in the region was not disclosed) should not be construed as an indication that the United States wanted to make "a demonstration in Cuban waters." Instead, it was once again claimed that the ships had been sent "for

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[28]Allan R. Millett, The Politics of Intervention: The Military Occupation of Cuba, 1906-1909 (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1968), p. 78.

[29]Roosevelt to Bonaparte, September 12, 1906, Navy, Area Eight File.

the purpose only of protecting American interests and furnishing asylum for Americans who may be in danger."[30]

Back at the Navy Department George Converse was finally making a valiant but belated effort to inform the captains of the naval vessels in Cuban waters of the State Department's conservative policy. By day's end, therefore, a message was transmitted to the Denver, Marietta, and Dixie which said that their respective commanding officers should

> take no part in troubles at Cuba further than to protect American interests. You will not land force for the protection of American interests except in case of necessity or in accordance with the wishes of the American Minister. Your vessel will be used only for asylum in the case of necessity demanding it.[31]

Yet the sad fact of the matter was that the primitive communications system of the day would not be able to deliver this more detailed guidance to the units concerned for quite some time. In the interim, officers like James Colwell in Havana would have to continue to rely upon their own judgement as to what the national interest required.

On Thursday morning Commander James C. Colwell reflected upon the momentous events of the day just past and drew some important conclusions. First, the naval officer decided that the insurrection in Cuba was far more extensive than even the most alarmist papers were reporting. Additionally, Colwell decided that the revolt before him was hardly the work of some fringe group with an axe to grind, but rather was a well-organized popular uprising of the Cuban masses. Moreover this uprising was being directed against a Cuban government

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[30]"More Cruisers to Go South?," New York Times, 13 September 1906, p. 2.

[31]Converse to Denver/Marietta/Dixie, September 12, 1906, Cipher Messages Sent, pp. 484-86.

which was most certainly corrupt and intensely unpopular with its own people. From his previous night's experience, Colwell also concluded that this weak and unpopular government could only call upon the services of a rapidly dwindling force of approximately five hundred troops in Havana, while a much larger rebel contingent was at that moment bearing down of the capital city. Naturally enough, business had ground to a standstill and, in Colwell's estimation, panic gripped the town's population. Worst of all, the officer was absolutely convinced that a successful rebel attack on Havana would undoubtedly lead to "an uprising of the low negro and lawless elements" in the city. This was quite obviously a threat feared beyond all others by polite Havana society.[32]

Given this sorry state of affairs, Colwell quickly decided that the only decent thing he could do was to use the substantial armed force under his command to prevent the rebels from taking the town and triggering the racial violence which everyone so feared. In fact, his honor as a naval officer of the United States elevated this calculation to something not unlike a moral imperative. Here, once again, was an opportunity for the American navy to fight piracy on land--and in a nation of immense strategic importance to both the service and the nation. Surely Roosevelt would not have sent the warship to Havana in the first place if he did not intend for her to play a part in the crisis.

While James Colwell was deciding that his sailors should intervene in panic-stricken Havana, Consul-General Steinhart was far from idle. Eager to see American sailors ashore in the city, the American envoy

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[32]Colwell, "Report," pp. 3-4.

attended an emergency meeting with the Cuban president, secretary of state, and secretary of war which resulted in yet another offical request from Palma for American military intervention on the island. This, Steinhart dutifully reported, was being done "because [Palma] cannot prevent rebels from entering cities and burning property." For his own part Steinhart informed his bosses in Washington that "President Palma has irrevocably resolved to resign," and then went on to note that it was "imperative intervention come immediately," since there were "probably 8,000 insurgents outside Habana." The message also warned the State Department that, in Steinhart's view, "it may be necessary to land force of Denver to protect American property."[33]

At two o'clock, Commander Colwell made his official call upon the American acting minister to the Republic of Cuba. Still waiting for orders from Washington, Jacob Sleeper was perhaps understandably evasive as to just what the American policy in Cuba was. In fact Colwell later complained that he "got no definite idea of his views beyond that he would like me to land a force to protect American lives and property." Naturally James Colwell was more than a little receptive to the chargé's request. Consequently the two men agreed that a landing should take place, further deciding that it would be best to wait until after their afternoon meeting with President Palma to carry out the measure.[34]

Having come taken the momentous step of deciding upon intervention (in contravention of their own nation's most fervent wishes), Sleeper and Colwell proceeded to the Presidential Palace, where a despondent

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[33]U.S. Department of State, Papers, pp. 477-78.

[34]Colwell, "Report," p. 4.

Tomas Estrada Palma awaited them. Officially receiving the visiting naval officer at three o'clock, Palma quickly turned the conversation to the chaos which threatened his capital. Since all three men present were enthusiastic about an American intervention in the city, the ensuing conversation played itself out as if from a carefully pre-arranged script. Jacob Sleeper, in his role as leading American representative on the island, began the drama by asking President Palma whether he could guarantee the protection of American citizens and property in the city. Palma said that he could not. On cue, Commander Colwell then told the president that "if you cannot guarantee protection to American lives and property in Havana it becomes my duty to afford them such protection as I can." Palma once again repeated that he was regrettably unable to provide such a guarantee. The American chargé d'affaires then turned to the naval officer and asked whether Colwell could place a landing party ashore, to which Colwell replied not only that he could, but that they could be in the city within a half hour's time. Next, the officer asked President Palma if he would object to the Denver contingent occupying a place which Colwell himself had selected for them. Palma said no, that the American sailor could put his men anywhere in Havana that he thought best. Universally satisfied with these arrangements, the three men then parted company and the two Americans proceeded directly to the Denver to set the landing operation in motion.[35]

At 4:30 P. M. Thursday a party of one hundred twenty-four well-armed American sailors, four officers, and three field pieces was placed ashore in Cuba under the command of Lieutenant Commander M. L.

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[35]Ibid., pp. 4-5.

Miller, the U.S.S. Denver's executive officer. Commander Colwell himself went ashore with the force and watched them briefly as a police guide (arranged by Sleeper) ushered the men to the site which Colwell had selected for their camp. Interestingly enough, this bivouac location was the city's Plaza de Armas, a lovely little park with a low stone wall directly in front of Palma's Presidential Palace. Moreover, while the naval battalion was getting situated (and raising the American flag over the position), Colwell had the Denver herself moved to a new location at the end of a nearby street. When done, the American cruiser was now situated just two hundred yard from the shore and had her after guns trained down the street approaching the American encampment.[36] Few observers could doubt that an American military intervention apparently had begun.

The landing had an immediate effect in the city. Stunned by the swift operation, Havana residents quickly flocked to see the American force eating its dinner in the shadow of Palma's Palace. One reporter would note that the sight of these men in this location "aroused great curiosity in among the people of Havana, most of whom accepted it as evidence of intervention."[37] At the Palace a delighted Tomas Estrada Palma was adding to this impression by informing the awed correspondents that the American sailors were there not merely to protect their own countrymen, but "for the maintenance of order in general."[38] As for the landing force itself, the groups' excited

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[36]Ibid., pp. 5-6.

[37]"Gave Feeling of Security," Washington Post, 14 September 1906, p. 4.

[38]"Denver Sailors Guard Palace," Washington Post, 14 September 1906, p. 1.

officers managed to further fuel this belief by their answer to the question of whether they were there to protect Americans only or to guard the palace and Palma as well. According to several American papers, the officers "unanimously replied" that if the town were attacked or an uprising took place, their men "would undoubtedly have something to do regardless of fine questions as to who attacked."[39] Yet at the American legation Jacob Sleeper was sending quite a different version of the landing force's mission to the State Department. Informing Washington that American troops had indeed been put ashore in Havana, the chargé was careful to stress that the men would "only be used in case of disorders within the city menacing American life and property."[40]

Sleeper's important message announcing the landing would take some time to find its way to its destination. In the meantime, the American government had been engaged in a day of near frantic activity with regard to the worsening crisis in Cuba. One of the most critical of these events was another meeting between Robert Bacon and Rear Admiral Converse. Bacon had received the president's message about getting lots of ships and marines to Cuba and met with the acting navy secretary to look into the matter. Yet Converse quickly informed the civilian that it would be no easy feat to gather a large marine force together and get it to Cuba, especially if the present atmosphere of secrecy on the issue was to be maintained. Instead, the admiral saw an opportunity once and for all to make his case for the utility of using American sailors instead of marines for landing operations ashore. In

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[39]"American Force Lands at Havana," New York Times, 14 September 1906, p. 1.

[40]U.S. Department of State, Papers, p. 478.

fact, should the navy aquit itself well in this regard in Cuba, the festering question of maintaining the marine guard on warships might finally be laid to rest.

Accordingly, the Navigation Bureau head told Mr. Bacon that better than waiting for a force of marines, the navy could send some of the new battleships assigned to Evans' Third Division to do the job. After all, the ships--which had all been commissioned just that year--were presently engaged in a "shake-down" period designed to see how well they operated. While these vessels were something of an unknown commodity as far as showing them off at the fall presidential gunnery show was concerned, all carried field pieces and camp equipment for use ashore, and together represented a ready pool of over twenty-three hundred American servicemen. The only real drawback, however, was that all three were a considerable distance from Cuban waters. Indeed, the New Jersey was at Provincetown, Massachussetts, the Virginia was at Newport, Rhode Island, and the Lousiana was coaling at Bradford, Rhode Island.

Nevertheless, Admiral Converse managed to overcome this particular obstacle and succeeded in presenting a convincing argument to his opposite at the State Department. In fact, that very same day Bacon wired the president to give him advice (which sounded suspiciously like Converse's own attitude) on the matter, saying that

> blue jackets are as good as marines. To ensure prompt action with better chance of secrecy, three battleships now on detached shake down service, "Virginia," "Louisiana," and "New Jersey," can, without their departure attracting attention, arrive in Havana with over two thousand blue jackets within five days. It will take several days longer to assemble so many marines, although

> three hundred will arrive on "Dixie" probably within forty-eight hours. The orders to the ships can at any time be countermanded by wireless and the independent movement of marines can go right ahead.[41]

Obviously, George Converse had done his job well. To be sure, the admiral was sufficiently convinced of the viability of his scheme that he even hedged his bet by secretly ordering the Virginia and Louisiana to Newport and the New Jersey to Boston with instructions for each to coal, provision, and stand by for further orders.[42]

In the meantime, all along the American East Coast naval units reinforced the impression of preparing for an intervention in Cuba. In Philadelphia, the cruiser Minneapolis, which was to have gone out of commission, immediately began loading stores and preparing to receive a contingent of marines needing transport to Cuba. In Norfolk the U.S.S. Newark, similarly diverted from carrying out a decommissioning process, began loading provisions for a six-month deployment to the island. In that same port, the cruisers Tacoma and Cleveland finally finished loading ammunition and began the final stages of their own provisioning for duty in the tropics. Farther south their sistership Des Moines arrived at Key West and at once began the long and dirty task of coaling ship. All of this was breathlessly reported in the national press and naval officers from Maine to Havana could, therefore, readily conclude that a Cuban intervention was imminent.

Back in Washington Rear Admiral Converse responded to the president's specific direction to get American marines to Havana by ordering the Dixie immediately to deliver her marine battalion to that

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[41]Bacon to Roosevelt, 13 September 1906, Navy, Area Eight File.

[42]Converse to Commandant, Second Naval District/New Jersey, September 13, 1906, Cipher Messages Sent, pp. 488, 490.

port. Of course, this had to be especially welcome news to the leathernecks embarked, since the two hundred-man force had been packed into the aging transport since June. On the other hand, the commanding officer of the transport Yankee, then at New York, would have to deliver some rather unpleasant news to that ship's contingent of marines. The problem here centered around the fact that this battalion, which had been relieved after many months in the Caribbean by the Dixie force, had just that week returned to the United States and all of her men had been given a well-deserved ten days of leave. Thus when Converse ordered her captain to "hold all marines" and to "make no transfers" pending future developments in Cuba, this particular unit might have been just a little less than thrilled at the prospect of a hasty return to sea.[43] In Washington the Evening Star noted all of this naval activity and came to the rather natural conclusion that "some important things have been done by the President and his advisors, which have not been made public."[44] Such was most certainly the case.

At the Navy Department itself the most significant event of the day was undoubtedly the sudden return of Charles Bonaparte. The heretofore absent secretary was in town to be briefed on the Cuban situation and the navy's role in it, and was to leave immediately for an emergency conference with the president on Long Island. In the meantime, however, the colorful political figure met briefly with reporters interested in his personal views on the crisis. When asked

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[43]Converse to Commandant, New York Navy Yard, September 13, 1906, Cipher Messages Sent, p. 492.

[44]"May Confer With President on Cuba," Washington Evening Star, 13 September 1906, p. 1.

about his department's instructions to the commanding officers of the Denver and Marietta, Bonaparte responded that their orders were "of a special character in which a great deal was left to the discretion of the officers in case emergencies arose."[45] Of course the truth of the matter was that both Colwell and Fullam were operating in nearly total ignorance of the desires of their government and were consequently being forced to act almost entirely upon their own initiative.

Yet Bonaparte probably felt that there was still sufficient time to correct any omissions in the guidance provided the navy's representatives in Cuba. Thus, before the interview ended the secretary allowed as to how the situation on the island "was becoming very interesting and that important developments might be expected in three or four days--a figure which just happened to represent the time it would take a battleship to travel to Cuba from New England."[46] Still, other department spokesmen were leaving reporters with the distinct impression that real trouble in Cuba might be much more imminent than their learned boss believed. According to the Washington Post, for example, Navy Department officials thought that the Cuban situation was "rapidly growing more alarming from the standpoint of this nation's immediate interest." Still another navy source was credited as saying that the department was terribly concerned that a Cuban plan was afoot which would result in the Denver being blown up in Havana harbor just like the hapless Maine had been some eight years before. Moreover an anonymous "assistant chief of a bureau" indicated

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[45]"Intervention Now Expected," New York Times, 14 September 1906, p. 2.

[46]"Cuba Conference Topic," Washington Post, 14 September 1906, p. 4.

that the cruiser's real mission in Cuba was to spirit President Palma away from the city in the not unlikely event that the Cuban leader feared for his safety.[47]

As for Robert Bacon, like Bonaparte, he was busy gathering last-minute information on the crisis which he could take to Friday's Oyster Bay meeting with the president. Among the messages which he therefore reviewed was a note from Converse which transmitted copies of the navy's previous-day instructions which had been sent to the Denver, Dixie, and Marietta and another from Roosevelt's private secretary which indicated that the president approved of Bacon's suggestion of using the three new battleships for immediate Cuban service.[48] Thus, confident that all was going well with the nation's reaction to this latest foreign policy crisis, Bacon drafted one last message to Chargé Sleeper before boarding the midnight train to Oyster Bay.

The message, which was in response to Sleeper's day-old request for instructions regarding the newly-arrived Denver, contained the kind of information which might have prevented disaster had it only been sent earlier. As it was, the communication provided detailed guidance on how to employ naval vessels and crews in complete ignorance of the fact that the Denver's sailors were already ashore in Havana. Indeed the cable opened with a note advising the acting minister that the "vessels sent to Cuban waters are under orders of the president, who will determine when and how they shall be used for the protection of

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[47]"Fears a Bomb for the Denver," Washington Post, 14 September 1906, p. 4.

[48]Converse to Secretary of State, September 13, 1906, U.S. Department of the Navy, Record of Confidential Correspondence, 16 June 1904-16 October 1908, Record Group 45, National Archives, Washington, D.C., p. 250 and William Loeb to White House, September 13, 1906, Navy, Area Eight File.

American life and property." Then, just to make sure that the not altogether insightful Sleeper got the picture, Bacon sternly warned that, while these ships might be used as a place of asylum for Americans in immediate peril, the charge could not "under any circumstances request landing of marines or any armed force except under orders from the Department of State."[49] This done, Bacon prepared to depart the capital, while in Havana the Stars and Stripes were flying on Tomas Estrada Palma's Havana lawn.

Into this picture of relative calm burst the devastating news that the U.S.S. Denver had placed more than a hundred armed sailors ashore. In Washington the unwelcome information stunned the American government. The Post noted that "the landing was a complete surprise to the government here," adding "that the landing was not made under instructions from Washington, also was made plain." Indeed government spokesmen "distinctly stated that . . . there would be no landing parties except in the case of rioting."[50] In Oyster Bay, a furious Theodore Roosevelt first ensured that the press understood that no orders had been sent from him relative to the landing, and then wired Robert Bacon to say

> you had no business to direct the landing of those troops without specific authority from here. They are not to be employed in keeping general order without our authority. Notify me immediately if they cannot be taken to the American legation with the field pieces and kept there. Scrupulous care is to be taken to avoid bloodshed. Remember that unless you are directed otherwise from here the forces are only to be used to protect American life and property.[51]

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[49]U.S. Department of State, Papers, p. 478.

[50]"Landing a Surprise," Washington Post, 14 September 1906, p. 4.

[51]Morison, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, p. 409 and "American Force Lands at Havana."

As for Charles Bonaparte, the navy secretary was approached by reporters as soon as he arrived in New York City. Shown an Associated Press dispatch describing the landings, the one-time Baltimore lawyer announced that "he knew nothing" about the incident and "was unable to account for it." Following this, Bonaparte hurried to a telephone and called the State Department to investigate the rumor.[52]

Meanwhile, in Havana, Commander Colwell had come to the conclusion that the presence of his men had been the deciding factor in preventing a bloodbath in the Cuban city. Indeed reporters in Havana noted that the landing "had the effect of creating a feeling of comparative security against attack from without or internal uprising," and Colwell himself believed that "the effect on the populace was noticable."[53] Moreover according to the naval officer, "for the very first time I then learned, positively, that the attack on Havana was to have taken place that evening and the very much feared uprising in the city was to have occurred." Instead Colwell's quick action had caused the rebel commander to withdraw his forces, "remarking that he was not going to put himself in a position antagonistic to the United States."[54] Thus, as far as James Colwell was concerned, his landing had saved the day and stood between order and chaos in the island republic.

Back in Washington serious efforts were under way to minimize the political damage created by the landings. An official announcement was made stating that "the senior naval officer in Cuban waters had been

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[52]"Bonaparte Acted Quickly," Washington Post, 14 September 1906, p. 4.

[53]Colwell, "Report," p. 6 and "American Force Lands at Havana," New York Times, 14 September 1906, p. 1.

[54]Ibid.

instructed that he was not to land men or use force unless for the protection of American citizens and their interests." It also was revealed that the landing had been made "simply for the protection of the lives and property of American citizens," and had been conducted in "the belief that it was a wise precaution" by the American charge and the Denver's commanding officer. Moreover the official statement went on to say that the landing was in no way made to defend Palma, his government, nor the rebels and stressed that "this fact could not be emphasized too strongly." Finally, it was clearly pointed out that the force had already been directed to return to their ship.[55]

Yet an astute President Palma had decided to use the American landing as apparent evidence of United States support for his own failing regime, announcing that the troops were there to protect him and his government from the rebels. Having thus been taken advantage of, James Colwell was later to complain that "I was kept busy all night flatly denying this statement and asserting that I had nothing to do with the internal troubles of Cuba."[56] In actuality, however, Colwell was about to play a major role in Cuban insurrectionary diplomacy. At approximately ten o'clock Thursday evening, an emissary from two of the leading rebel leaders approached the naval officer with an offer from the rebels "to surrender their arms and ammunition to me personally and disband their forces on my orders if I would guarantee a justice and a fair hearing of their grievences."[57] Delighted, Colwell informed the emissary that he would carry this offer to

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[55]"Ordered Back to Cruiser," Washington Post, 14 September 1906, p. 4.

[56]Colwell, "Report," p. 19.

[57]Ibid., pp. 6-7.

President Palma. The commander then proceeded directly to the palace, where he laid the proposition before the Cuban president and his secretary of foreign affairs. Yet these gentlemen felt that they could not decide the issue without more information, and Colwell dutifully returned to the rebel envoy to obtain it. That done, Colwell once again journied to the palace, where he reported that three rebel bands closest to Havana and Cienfuegos could surrender within twenty-four hours, and the rest of the movement nation-wide would do the same as soon as they could be reached. Yet, in a surprising fit of moderation, Colwell informed the Cuban government that he would be unable to accept this surrender nor could he offer the requested guarantees on his own authority. Nevertheless, the cruiser captain made it quite clear that he would be more than pleased to perform these services if Palma could secure the necessary permission from Washington. To this Palma agreed, and the Cuban foreign minister was instructed to draft the necessary message to the United States. Successful, Commander Colwell returned to the waiting emissary and, after informing him of the arrangements then being made, suggested that a truce be declared until the peace agreement could be consumated. The rebel agent quickly agreed.[58]

While Colwell was trying his hand at diplomacy, Jacob Sleeper was finding himself to be in serious trouble with his own department. Finally in receipt of Converse's 12 September message to Colwell directing him not to land the Denver contingent except in an absolute emergency, the chargé was now faced with the difficult task of convincing the cruiser's captain that the whole affair had been a ghastly mistake. Accordingly, the acting minister went in search of

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[58]Ibid., pp. 7-8.

the naval officer. Finding him hotly engaged in arranging a truce on the island, Sleeper showed the tardy message to Colwell and then requested that his men break camp and return to the ship at once.

Yet a "victorious" James Colwell was not to be so easily dislodged from the city of Havana. Instead, the commander dismissed the message, telling Sleeper that it was a day old, in ignorance of the situation, that the action forbidden had already been taken, and, finally, that "the results justified it."[59] Swayed by this logic, Sleeper agreed and departed. In the meantime, a newspaper correspondent met with the American officer and showed him a press report indicating that Washington had indeed ordered his men out of the city. According to the resulting story:

> he expressed great astonishment and said he had received no such orders, adding that he believed the Navy Department had not deciphered his code message explaining the situation. Commander Colwell said he believed he had done right and was satisfied that this evening's events had so proved. However, if after reaching an understanding of the situation the Navy Department ordered the return of the sailors on board ship, the order would be carried out within half an hour.[60]

In short, James Colwell was so convinced of the propriety of his action that he simply could not conceive of it meeting with anything but the enthusiastic approval of his government. Any evidence to the contrary, therefore, would have to involve an error or misunderstanding.

By midnight, however, Sleeper was back again. Armed this time with the unmistakable evening directive from Robert Bacon, the American diplomat now insisted that the sailors return to the Denver. Genuinely annoyed by having to put up with this kind of pestering from a local

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[59]Ibid., p. 8.

[60]"Colwell Gets Orders," New York Times, 14 September 1906, p. 1.

American diplomat, Commander Colwell asked that the bothersome chargé talk the matter over with the more reasonable Frank Steinhart. Sleeper declined to do so. Consequently, the naval officer announced that since Sleeper would not seek Steinhart's counsel, he would talk to the consul-general himself. Moreover, the commander made it quite clear that he would not risk a panic in the city by withdrawing his highly-visible force in the dead of night. Instead, James Colwell told the acting minister that the naval officer "took all responsibility for [his] actions and that he could cable the State Department to that effect." Indignant, Jacob Sleeper said that he would do so, and the two antagonists immediately proceeded to the city's telegraph office. There, Colwell left the angry diplomat and at once set out to find his principal official intervention ally, Frank Maximillian Steinhart.[61]

By 1:30 A. M. Friday, Colwell found the Cuban president's confidant and related his evening's experience with Jacob Sleeper. Having heard the naval officer's version of events, Steinhart indicated that he agreed with Colwell's decision. Bouyed by the consul-general's blessing, Colwell determined to leave his men right where they were.[62] Satisfied, Colwell then returned to his ship and retired for the evening. At 9:00 A. M., however, the Denver's captain was confronted by one of Sleeper's subordinates. Unable to persuade the naval officer in person, the agitated chargé had sent the legation's second secretary with a written order informing him that Sleeper had received definite word from Washington that the Denver force was immediately to return to its ship.

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[61]Colwell, "Report," p. 8.

[62]Ibid.

Yet Colwell was certainly not about to be bullied by a piece of paper, especially one coming from the bothersome Jacob Sleeper. Instead the commander went ashore once again and surveyed the situation. What he found pleased him. The city seemed calm, the once-imminent rebel attack had been abandoned, and a truce was still in effect as the rebels waited for their peace overtures to bear fruit. Convinced that the previous afternoon's desperate situation was no longer in evidence (and perhaps mindful of the fact that the ranking diplomat in town was more than a little adamant about ending the landing), James Colwell made his way to the Plaza de Armas and ordered his men to break camp.[63] By 11:00 A. M., the force and all of its equipment were aboard the ship "by order of the Commanding Officer."[64] This done, Commander Colwell gave the following statement to reporters from the Associated Press:

> Since landing I have received no instructions whatever from the Navy Department. This morning Mr. Sleeper notified me that the State Department had instructed him to request me to return on board. I was ready to comply, of course, but I first visited President Palma and told him that, in my opinion, it was enough, since the city continued quiet, to take the men aboard the Denver, which is close at hand at the foot of O'Reilly street. I said that we could land again in a few minutes in case any disturbance which made our presence necessary for the protection of Americans, or quieting the situation. President Palma stated again that he would much prefer the men to stay where they were, but in view of the circumstances I felt unable to comply. Consequently, here we are aboard ship again. We will remain right here handy in case necessity arises of landing a second time.[65]

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[63]Ibid., pp. 8-9.

[64]14 September 1906 Entry, Log of the USS Denver, April 3-November 30, 1906, Record Group 24, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[65]"Commander Colwell Statement," Washington Evening Star, 14 September 1906, p. 2.

Thus, when all was said and done, James Colwell was the one who had decided when to land his force, James Colwell had decided when to bring them back, and James Colwell would be the one to decide when to land them again.

Though Commander Colwell could not have known it at the time, his 13 September landing in Havana would eventually stand as the single most important turning-point in the Cuban crisis of 1906. Because of this naval officer's conviction that the landing had been a duty which he was bound to perform, the tremendously significant precedent of showing American willingness to intervene in the crisis was established. This critical action not only surprised the national leadership of the United States, but actually ran counter to the policy which they were trying to pursue. The die had suddenly been cast in Havana. As a result, only a carefully coordinated American reaction to the event could hope to avoid military intervention in Cuba. Should such a response not be possible, James Colwell would have committed his nation to an unwanted and exceedingly difficult course of action. Clearly the big stick have to be harnessed at once if irreparable damage was to be avoided.

CHAPTER VII

"I FEEL THAT WE DID RIGHT:"

The Navy and the Cuban Crisis 14 September-18 September

The landing of an armed force from the U.S.S. Denver stunned the Roosevelt administration. Clearly this act of military intervention was at odds with the president's desires. Yet the damage done by Colwell's precipitate action did not necessarily mean that United States would have to intervene in Cuba. There was a real possibility that such an intervention could still be prevented. In order to do so, however, the government of the United States would have to send strong and unambiguous signals to the Cubans indicating that, in spite of the Denver operation on 13 and 14 September, the United States clearly did not intend to intervene in the island's political troubles. Ordinarily such a task would be extremely difficult to perform. Moreover, given the unique mix of factors affecting American actions in the 1906 Cuban crisis, it would take a herculean effort by all concerned. Unfortunately for Roosevelt the United States Navy was simply uncommitted to the mission at hand, and the president's attempt to resolve the crisis were frustrated all the more.

That the Denver contingent's landing and withdrawal quite clearly marked a major turning point in the resolution of the crisis in Cuba was certainly without question. In London the news of the event sparked editorial comment that "American intervention in Cuba cannot

long be delayed."[1] Washington opinion echoed this fear. The Evening Star observed that "the landing of an armed force seems to many to be the first step in this country's participation in the crisis which affairs in the Cuban republic have now reached."[2] In Havana Tomas Estrada Palma concluded that the hasty removal of his American palace guard indicated that the United States government would not support his bid to remain in power. Less than three hours after the Denver contingent had returned to their ship, therefore, the Cuban president decided to resign his office. Dismayed, a less than impartial Frank Steinhart relayed this information to the State Department, noting that the vice president would not assume the presidency, nor would the members of Palma's cabinet do so. In fact, the message went on to say that the Cuban congress would not meet because there would be no one left to convene the body. "The consequences will be absence of legal power, and therefore the prevailing state of anarchy will continue."[3]

In the meantime the initial reaction of the Roosevelt administration belied a collective attempt to right Commander Colwell's significant foreign policy wrong. The first order of business, therefore, was to disassociate the naval officer's own decision regarding intervention from that of his government. Thus Friday, 14 September found a number of American government officials making sure that it was clearly understood that they had not authorized the action

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[1]"Say We Must Interfere," Washington Evening Star, 14 September 1906, p. 2.

[2]"Serious Business," Washington Evening Star, 14 September 1906, p. 2.

[3]U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1906 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1909), Part One, p. 479.

nor permitted such an occurence to take place. At Oyster Bay Acting State Secretary Bacon answered a reporter's inquiry about whether the landing had been ordered by his department with an evasive "I am not at liberty to tell you."[4] Navy Secretary Bonaparte was also careful to sidestep any blame. After reminding correspondents that he had first learned about the landing only when shown a newpaper account of the action, the secretary admitted that "when Commander Colwell was sent on his present mission, he received such instructions as an officer of the navy is ordinarily given when an important matter is involved." Bonaparte did admit, however, that "he received no specific instructions as to intervening in Cuban affairs" but "he of course would not take any serious step without first communicating with the department." Pressed by the reporters, who pointed out that Colwell's action must surely be viewed "as the first move toward armed intervention by the United States in Cuban affairs," Bonaparte confessed that such a landing did indeed pass muster as being a very serious matter. Would this serious matter lead to intervention? Bonaparte thought for a moment, and then dodged the question by responding that "I think those persons who have financial interests in Cuba would like to see the United States intervene."[5] In Washington Admiral Converse simply referred all inquiries to either the president or the State Department.[6] As temporary caretaker of the latter bureau, Alvey Adee was similarly reluctant to provide any official

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[4]"Serious Business," Washington Evening Star, 14 September 1906, p. 2.

[5]"Bonaparte on Landing the Denver's Marines," Washington Evening Star, 14 September 1906, p. 2.

[6]"Cause of Cuba in the Hands of Uncle Sam," Washington Evening Star, 14 September 1906, p. 1.

comment, except to say that the landing had most certainly not been made as a result of any order sent from Washington.[7]

Interestingly enough, the tenor of the day's official denials of responsibility consistently upheld a presumption of propriety on the part of James Colwell and of wrongdoing where Jacob Sleeper was concerned. Surely a naval officer of the United States could not have made such a grievous error on his own. The Evening Star, for example, noted that while the landings "have caused considerable comment" in official Washington "it is asserted that no reflection on the officer is involved in the action."[8] Instead, the navy was quick to point out that the Denver had been placed at the disposal of the acting minister and that the landing of her men had been made in response to his orders. Indeed, according to the press, "if there is any disposition to question the propriety of [the landing] the responsibility must rest upon Mr. Sleeper."[9] In New York the president was even more direct. According to the New York Times' reporter at Oyster Bay, "it is the belief here that the Chargé d'Affaires was either not aware of the President's wishes or lost his head."[10]

At Oyster Bay President Roosevelt's morning meeting with his Secretaries of War, State, and the Navy took on a new sense of immediacy as a result of Steinhart's latest telegraphic bombshell.

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[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Dispatch from Commander Colwell," Washington Evening Star, 14 September 1906, p. 1.

[10]American Force Lands at Havana," Washington Evening Star, 14 September 1906, p. 1.

Bonaparte, who had just received a copy of Colwell's official landing message, reported that he could have the Des Moines in Havana within twenty-four hours, the Dixie there Monday, the three battleships by Wednesday, and the cruisers Cleveland, Tacoma, Minneapolis, and Newark with some eight hundred fifty marines to the island by the following Sunday. The Yankee, with her force of recalled marines, could perhaps be ready to sail Saturday as well.[11] Still eager to avoid being caught unprepared in the case intervention was necessary, Roosevelt gave the go-ahead to all of these preparations.

By meeting's end, the president also had decided to send Robert Bacon as a personal ambassador to Cuba in a special effort to resolve the crisis diplomatically at the scene. At Bonaparte's suggestion, William Taft was also directed to make the trip, and the newly-appointed Taft-Bacon Peace Commission departed Oyster Bay at once.[12] This done, Roosevelt drafted a personal appeal to Gonzolo de Quesada, the Cuban minister in Washington. In the letter the American president warned that

> our intervention in Cuban affairs will only come if Cuba herself shows that she has fallen into the insurrectionary habit, that she lacks the self-restraint necessary to secure peaceful self government, and that her contending factions have plunged the country into anarchy.[13]

Roosevelt stressed that he did not wish to intervene unless such a measure was absolutely unavoidable under the terms of the Cuban treaty

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[11]Undated note in Charles Bonaparte's hand, Charles Bonaparte Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

[12]Eric F. Goldman, Charles J. Bonaparte, Partician Reformer, His Earlier Career (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1943), p. 94.

[13]Elting E. Morison, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, vol. 5: The Big Stick 1905-1907 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), pp. 411-12.

and that he had dispatched the Taft-Bacon party to seek a peaceful resolution of the island's troubles. Copies of this letter were then sent to Chargé Sleeper for delivery to Palma and to a number of newspapers both in Cuba and the United States.

Clearly Theodore Roosevelt was determined to undertake extraordinary peaceful measures to undo the mischief which James C. Colwell had done in Cuba. With luck, the president's efforts might have succeeded--assuming, of course, that the Cubans were shown ample evidence of American unwillingness to intervene in Cuba itself. Yet even as the president was meeting with his cabinet officers at Oyster Bay on that eventful Friday morning, still another American naval officer was preparing to place his own armed contingent ashore on the island. Obviously, such an action would be an extremely damaging follow-up to the Colwell affair in Havana. This time, however, the scene of the crisis was the southern port city of Cienfuegos. There the gunboat U.S.S. Marietta had just dropped anchor. From that moment on, the most important figure in that area's local politics would be none other than the American warship's colorful commanding officer and lifetime advocate of sending navy sailors ashore: Commander William Freeland Fullam, United States Navy.

Unfortunately for the American president, Commander Fullam was forced to make a truly significant decision within hours of his arrival at the port. The region's American consul (Vincent Lombard) had come aboard Fullam's ship immediately upon her arrival. The envoy had painted a dismal picture of the local situation, claiming that it was characterized by tremendous confusion, uncertainty, and peril. In the city itself a wholly ineffective garrison maintained a state of martial law while, in the countryside, chaos reigned. The American consulate,

Lombard went on to note, had received numerous frantic requests for protection sent by the many American businessmen and plantation managers in the region. Thus far, however, rebel depredations had been limited to stealing American equipment and livestock. Widely circulated rumors of American property being burned and American citizens harmed were--as yet--unfounded. Nevertheless, recent news did not portend well for the local American community. Just the day before Lombard had been advised by an American store owner that he had "920 bales of tobacco . . . worth at least $70,000 . . . in great danger," and the American manager of the large Hormiguero sugar estate complained that the rebels' threats were causing the plantation's laborers to walk off the job.[14] In short, while no Americans seemed to be in imminent danger of sustaining personal harm, American profits in the Cienfuegos area were being threatened directly. Consequently both the store owner and the plantation manager had added their names to the constantly growing list of United States citizens insisting on protection for their property.

Lombard had also brought the manager of the American-owned Soledad Sugar Company aboard the Marietta with him and the two civilians both prevailed upon the naval officer to assist them at once. According to the pair, there were three large local estates (Soledad, Constancia, and Hormiguero) that were in immediate peril. Unfortunately, they said, the local government forces were helpless when it came to extending protection to anyone outside the city limits. Would it be possible, the two men therefore asked, for an armed party from the

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[14]U.S. Department of State, Papers, p. 479.; Koop and Post to American Consul, Cienfuegos, 13 September 1906, William Fullam Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

Marietta to guard at least the Soledad property at once?

Ordinarily, William Fullam would have sent his men ashore without a second thought, but this was far from an ordinary set of circumstances. The problem, it seemed, was that the Marietta was just that very day in receipt of Admiral Converse's 12 September order to "take no part in troubles at Cuba" and to refrain from landing men "except in case of necessity or in accordance with the wishes of the American Minister." Obviously ths United States would not take an armed American landing in Cienfuegos lightly. Still, Fullam had also been advised by the ship's wireless operator that he had intercepted a number of telegraphic messages "telling of the landing of men from the Denver, and of trouble in other Districts."[15] This was extremely important. Fullam was well aware of the fact that the commanding officer of the Denver was more than fifty numbers senior to him on the current navy list and that he surely would not have landed his men in any event without the consent of the American minister, whom Fullam presumed to be in Havana as well. Thus had the precedent of sending armed American sailors ashore already been set by a more senior and experienced officer with the apparent approval of the United States legation in the Cuban capital.

Fullam unquestionably had some of his reluctance to act relieved by the fact that the ranking American diplomat in Cienfuegos was merely asking him to repeat the Denver's Havana maneuver in this southern town. Moreover the Marietta's skipper was convinced "that the revolutionists will not attack our men."[16] Finally, the Cienfuegos

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[15]Fullam to Bureau of Navigation, 14 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[16]Fullam to Secretary of the Navy, 14 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

situation at last offered William Fullam the opportunity to prove the mettle of his sailors in operations ashore. Thus sixteen years of published claims regarding the utility of using bluejackets instead of marines assigned afloat could suddenly be redeemed. Best of all, this was an opportunity for Fullam to prove his point himself in an environment in which the attention of the world was focussed upon him.

Thus the man who had written the navy's Landing Party Manual just a year earlier landed his own force of sailors in Cuba before the day was out. The contingent of thirty-one sailors, armed with a Colt rapid-firing gun and under the command of an ensign from the Marietta's wardroom, quickly made their way to the Soledad plantation outside of the city. Before their departure Fullam had taken the time to ensure that the group's leader understood that he was not to initiate combat with the rebels and that his mission was "the protection of American interests." Commander Fullam also instructed the ensign to "let it be known that you have landed for this purpose."[17]

Not surprisingly Fullam had scarcely informed Consul Lombard of this action to protect the Soledad estate when a representative from yet another American sugar plantation called aboard the ship to ask whether the navy's protection could be extended to his property as well. This time it was the Constancia estate which claimed to be in imminent danger. In fact, according to the representative, rebel forces had threatened to raze the establishment within twelve hours if an extortion amount of fifteen thousand rounds of ammunition was not delivered to them. To make matters even worse, the American manager added that there were a number of unprotected women and children in

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[17]Fullam to Ensign Rorschach, 14 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

residence at the estate. Consequently, on Saturday morning Fullam sent his executive officer, thirty-six sailors, and another Colt gun to Constancia's rescue. In the meantime, the harried gunboat captain wired the Navy Department to inform it that "the situation is getting worse," and that "an additional force is needed at this port to ensure proper protection of the sugar estates."[18] Indeed, with some sixty-nine men ashore, the Marietta was left critically short-handed and Fullam advised the Navigation Bureau that he was only able to provide such large landing parties as a result of his having no need to man the warship's guns.[19]

With more than a third of his ship's crew engaged in guard duty ashore and the risk of their being involved in open hostilities very real, Fullam paused to evaluate his situation. To begin with the American officer was fully cognizant of the fact that the rebels had "declared it is their only purpose to force the American Government to protect American property by landing men," and that his own recent actions had played directly into the insurgents' hand.[20] Yet Fullam also noted that the insurgents had "complete control of the country in this vicinity" anyway. Moreover, there was absolutely no likelihood of Cuban government forces resolving the situation. Indeed the local military governor and the commander of the Cienfuegos garrison had both confessed to Fullam that it would be at least a year before they could

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[18]Fullam to Bureau of Navigation, 14 September 1906 and 15 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[19]Ibid., 15 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[20]Fullam to Secretary of the Navy, 14 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

hope to take the offensive. "In the meantime," a disgusted William Fullam penned, "the country will be devastated by rebels."[21]

In fact Commander Fullam was having his worst suspicions about Latin American political and military incompetence confirmed. According to the officer, the thing which most impressed him about the local Cuban officials was their "utterly hopeless and helpless attitude." Fullam further noted with disdain that these men were doing "nothing whatever to check the movement of the revolutionists."[22] Undoubtedly it would fall entirely to Fullam and his command to come to the defense of American interests in this region.

Other factors also argued for American action ashore. As had already been pointed out upon his arrival in the port, American companies were finding it exceedingly hard to make a profit in the area. Further investigation into the matter led Fullam to note with alarm that "business is paralyzed." Nevertheless, an even more immediate problem than that of dollars was the recurring crisis bogey of impending racial violence. Fullam therefore warned his bosses that at least nine out of every ten rebels were black men. This, he pointed out to Washington, had a particularly sinister complexion in light of persistent reports of rebel depredations among the white planters of the region. The incumbent Cuban government did little to discourage this perception of the conflict as being a race war in the making. In fact American papers were already reporting that the government generally condemned the insurgent forces as being "a mob of negroes led by white men of lower character than the negroes themselves."[23]

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[21]Ibid., 15 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[22]Ibid.

[23]"Activity Over Situation," Washington Post, 14 September 1906, p. 4.

Impressed by the image of potential racial violence, Fullam would later write that the insurgent leadership's efforts to rally "the negroes and worst elements of Cuba to their support" stood as ample "proof of their lack of patriotism."[24] Worst of all, Fullam had been provided with a translated copy of a Cienfuegos Correspondencia article which quoted one insurgent leader as saying that "up till now mulattoes have been borne by colored women. From now on it is necessary that white women should also bear them."[25] Shocked, William Fullam underlined the offending passage in his own copy of the story and immediately forwarded it to Washington. No United States naval officer could possibly allow such an outrage to occur where he had even the slightest semblance of control. Thus was the gauntlet dropped. No white women of Cuban polite society need worry about being ravaged by black ruffians on William Fullam's watch. Of that the commander was sure.

Ashore the Marietta contingents were quickly having an effect on the local political setting. On Friday evening the Soledad party reported that its presence had had a noticable calming effect on upon the plantation's manager and that no more of the estate's property had been burned nor even threatened by the rebels.[26] A day later Fullam's executive officer sent word from Constancia that he had already held negotiations with the local rebel commander under a flag of truce.[27] In his reply Fullam instructed the lieutenant to use a

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[24]Peter Karsten, The Naval Aristocracy (New York: The Free Press, 1972), p. 206.

[25]Fullam to Secretary of the Navy, 14 September 1906 and 15 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[26]Ensign Rorschach to Fullam, 14 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[27]Fullam to Lieutenant Klemann, 15 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

veiled threat of American intervention and retaliation as a mechanism to hold the rebels at bay. Said Fullam, "if you see Colonel Collado again give him to understand that he may have the United States Government to deal with if he assumes the offensive."[28] Back at the Soledad estate, the presence of the first landing party caused that plantation's manager similarly to hint at American military intervention in the crisis. In a message intended for and delivered to the rebels, the American manager announced that the Marietta sailors guarding his property were there "in obedience to orders received from the President of the United States."[29] This seemed to have the desired effect, as a reply from the rebels two days later indicated that the property would be respected. In fact the answer said that if it had been other than Americans protecting the site, the rebels would have destroyed it long ago.[30]

On Sunday, 16 September Fullam was once again forced to reexamine the propriety of his actions in and around Cienfuegos. On that day word was received from Lombard to the effect that the (now) gun-shy legation in Havana had informed him that Fullam's men should not have been landed in the absence of specific direction from Washington. Like Colwell before him, Fullam was stunned. Incredulous, the Marietta's captain wrote to his executive officer at the Constancia plantation to tell him that in spite of the American consul's message, he was "glad that we did not wait, because I feel that we did right. We were sent

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[28]Ibid.

[29]Hughes notice to rebels in the vicinity of Soledad Sugar Estate, 15 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[30]Guzman to Hughes, 17 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

here to protect American Interests."[31] At the same time Fullam wired the Navy Department to tell his bosses that while he would "be very careful about take no part in trouble in Cuba," he could also report that his "landing force [had] saved property of American citizens" and that "gross outrages have been committed."[32]

Nevertheless, as a conscientous and often controversial naval officer, William Fullam was clearly troubled by the notion that his decisions in Cienfuegos might meet with official disapproval within his own department. As a consequence, Commander Fullam immediately turned to some rather unorthodox measures intended to protect his professional reputation. Thus did the officer send letters to the managers of both the Constancia and Soledad estates outlining his predicament. These letters were openly critical of the Havana legation's instructions. In fact, Fullam said that he was "amazed at [the American acting minister's] action and glad that I did not wait for his advice." Moreover, since, as Fullam explained it, he did not want the Navy Department to think ill of him, he wished to enlist the assistance of both men in his cause. Indeed both managers were asked to send strongly-worded cables defending Fullam's actions to their respective companies in the United States. The officer provided them with advice on the cost of sending the necessary wires and suggested that each specifically include mention of how the Marietta's landings may have saved their property. In the case of the Soledad letter, Fullam actually went as far as to tell the manager that "the only regret is that I did not send the men sooner," adding that "I will be disgusted

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[31]Fullam to Lieutenant Klemann, 16 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[32]Fullam to Bureau of Navigation, 16 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

if my action is disapproved by the Department, but I shall feel that I did right."[33] Later, when the drafts of the managers' messages to their home offices were shown to him, Fullam took the time to make several notes and editing notations on them. As a result, by Sunday evening the Boston owner of the Soledad estate received word that his property had "probably [been] saved by Marietta's men" and that "General conditions [were] desperate [in] this district."[34] In New York the Constancia plantation's owners were advised that "prompt action Commander Fullam and presence his men . . . last night saved Constancia" and that "reinforcements [were] needed quickly."[35] In both cases the State Department was immediately informed of the owners' gratitude and of their concern.

Even with this support for his position, Fullam still felt that he needed to continue to defend his actions in Cienfuegos. On Monday the naval officer once again wired the Navy Department to inform it that his "landing parties have overawed revolutionary leaders" and that, thanks to his quick action, it was "believed that estates will escape for the present."[36] Additionally, in a letter written to the secretary of the navy on the following day, Fullam once again complained of the inappropriate nature of Sunday's State Department instructions to refrain from landing his men. In fact his sailors' "steadfastness and firmness awed the rebel leaders and prevented

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[33]Fullam to Hughes and Fullam to Childs, 16 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[34]Hughes to Atkins, 16 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[35]Childs to Company in New York, 16 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[36]Fullam to Bureau of Navigation, 17 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

trouble." Copies of the plantation managers' telegraphic testimonials were also enclosed with the letter for good measure.

Hardly repentent, Fullam frankly stated that he actually intended to place still more men ashore just as soon as another naval ship could reach the port of Cienfuegos. Finally, the American officer used the opportunity to register his profound disgust with the Cuban government and its officials in his region. Noting that "the best people of all nationalities" accused the Palma regime of election fraud and gross ineptitude, Fullam positively fumed about the fact that a government gunboat lay within sight of his own ship while all about them turned to chaos. Frustrated, Fullam evaluated this inaction as being evidence that it was frankly "the design, notably of the government authorities and troops, [and] of the insurgents also to force American intervention."[37] Ironically William Fullam was not only correct in this assessment, but was at the same time moving his nation perilously close to the point of that very intervention which the rebels and government forces alike seemed to be seeking.

Incredibly enough, Fullam also took pains to make sure that he could extend his operations ashore as soon as the capability to do so existed. Thus, bouyed with the Sunday afternoon word that the transport U.S.S. Dixie would be there to reinforce him in a matter of days, Fullam dashed off a note to Consul Lombard to inquire as to whether the diplomat's cousin (who was employed as the manager of the Hormiguero estate) had arrived in town. This it seemed was important to Fullam because he wanted to meet with the other Lombard as soon as possible in order that he could ascertain whether the latter wanted

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[37]Fullam to Secretary of the Navy, 18 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

American protection.[38] Since Consul Lombard replied that his cousin had not arrived, Fullam communicated his offer directly to the cousin on Tuesday, saying that it was "desirable that you make application at once as a U.S. transport with Marines on board is due to arrive today, probably."[39] Prompted sufficiently, the second Lombard answered by saying that he had already petitioned his cousin for such assistance and that he certainly would be please to accept any aid that Fullam might be able to extend.[40]

In the meantime Fullam had been able to raise the Dixie by wireless and, after determining that her commanding officer was junior to him, ordered the ship to be prepared to land three separate parties of marines totaling more than two hundred men and to equip them with supplies enough for a week in the field. Anxious to see to it that no time was wasted, Fullam directed the transport's captain to have the men "ready to leave within an hour of arrival."[41] Moreover, in a fascinating show of his determination to prevent the marine corps from getting the upper hand in the drama unfolding ashore, Fullam stipulated that the marine officers placed in charge of each of the detachments should be junior to the Marietta officers assigned to duty ashore.[42]

All the while William Fullam was continuing to take a less than disinterested role in the political troubles ashore. At Soledad the Marietta detachment had continued negotiations and established

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[38]Fullam to Vincent Lombard, 17 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[39]Fullam to J. R. Lombard, 18 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[40]J. R. Lombard to Fullam, 18 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[41]Fullam to Holmes (U.S.S. Dixie), 18 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[42]Ibid.

"friendly" relations with the local rebel contingent. At Constancia, however, Fullam was taking a more personal hand in the direction of his men. This was especially true when it came to interactions with Colonel Collado, the insurgent commander in that area. On Sunday, for example, Fullam ordered the manager of the estate to point out the presence of Collado in the event that the rebels attacked "so that our men can punch him full of holes."[43] That same day Fullam further instructed his executive officer to "try to kill him first by all means if he shows himself" in an attack.[44] A day later Fullam once again repeated this advice, saying that, while Collado would probably refrain from attacking, "if he does be sure to kill him."[45] As a matter of fact, Fullam's rules of engagement made a violent clash with the rebels more than a little likely. Carefully underlining portions of his orders which he thought required special emphasis, the naval commander instructed his men to avoid provoking hostilities, but gave them full authority to fire upon any Cubans in the event that they "menace you or do any damage to American property."[46] Even so, throughout this entire period the rebels managed to bait the American officer with threats and gestures alone. No shots were ever fired in anger.

At the same time that William Fullam was playing such a large role in Cuban politics, his department was smoothly setting its own intervention plans in motion. Thus, in the wake of the Friday meeting with the president at Oyster Bay, Charles Bonaparte wired Admiral

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[43]Fullam to Childs, 16 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[44]Fullam to Lieutenant Klemann, 16 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[45]Ibid., 17 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[46]Ibid., 16 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

Converse to have him "issue all orders as intended; Des Moines to Havana at once; three battleships start as soon as possible; other vessels go when they and marines are ready."[47] Accordingly, the commandant of the marine corps was directed to assemble a four hundred-man battalion at both the Norfolk and at the Philadelphia Navy Yards and the cruisers Tacoma, Minneapolis, and Newark were ordered to take the eight hundred men to Havana as soon as they could be embarked. In the meantime the Cleveland was sent from Norfolk to Key West while the Des Moines was immediately dispatched to Havana. Farther north, the commanding officers of the battleships Virginia, Louisiana, and New Jersey all received secret instructions to head for Havana at once and, on the pretext of sailing for more sea trials, the trio of new ships hurridly put to sea.[48]

In fact, by Tuesday, 18 September the Navy had a cruiser, a gunboat, and a transport full of marines already in Cuban waters, four cruisers with an embarked force of well over one thousand fully-equipped marines en route to the island, three new battleships similarly rushing to the crisis spot, and still another cruiser with the Taft-Bacon Peace Commission aboard racing at 15 knots for Havana from Tampa. Small wonder, then, that a day later Bonaparte boasted about the preparedness of his service. In a letter to Roosevelt the navy secretary boasted that "so far as the Navy is concerned, everything has worked as smoothly as possible. All our ships have got

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[47]Bonaparte to Acting Secretary of the Navy, 14 September 1906, U.S. Department of the Navy, Record Group 45, Area Eight File, August-October 1906, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

[48]Seaton Shroeder, A Half Century of Naval Service (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1922), p. 284.

started on time and two of them ahead of time."[49] Yet the same day also saw influential General Board member Charles Sperry hint at just who would be taking the credit for the navy's job well done when he claimed that "the marines are ready to move because the General Board, after several years of pressure, procured the purchase and storage of a complete field and needed outfit for that number."[50] Yet, credit aside, the fact of the matter was the navy of the United States was gaining significant momentum in its preparations for a Cuban intervention. To all outward appearances and to its own officers and men, this was a service preparing to put thousands of men and guns ashore in Cuba as soon as it possibly could.

In truth, the alacrity with which the marines themselves were dispatched had an awful lot to do with the beleaguered corps' own determination to prove its fighting worth. In this particular "image" campaign, the opening salvo was actually a gift which flowed from faulty newspaper reporting. To be sure, even as William Fullam was busily proving the efficiency of his sailors ashore, American newspapers were reporting that the initial Cienfuegos landing had been made by "marines from the United States gunboat Marietta."[51] On Saturday this erroneous word was supplemented by official releases to the effect that the Dixie had brought some three hundred marines to Havana and that the rest of the corps "was in perfect readiness and expects to place 2,000 marines aboard the various ships [then in

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[49]Bonaparte to Roosevelt, 18 September 1906, Bonaparte Papers.

[50]Sperry to child, 18 September 1906, Charles Sperry Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

[51]"Marines in Cienfuegos," New York Times, 14 September 1906, p. 1.

Norfolk and Philadelphia] in a few hours' notice."[52] In fact, marine detachments from shore stations all along the Atlantic coast were being rushed to the two ports with the result that the service could later boast that the two ad hoc battalions had been placed aboard the waiting cruisers within a mere seventy-two hours of Converse's initial order to do so. In the meantime, excited press reports revealed that the hastily-formed marine units expected to see service in Cuba soon, since "it is their part to do the advance fighting always."[53] Moreover, still more published reports from Cuba were claiming that the second force that the Marietta had sent ashore was also made up of United States Marines.[54] In Washington, the commandant of the marine corps, a thirty-six year veteran of the service who had himself fought at Guantanamo during the war with Spain, reported that he could place two thousand men on the island and still have several hundred left over for immediate service wherever else they may be needed. What was more, the general indicated that he wanted to personally take the field in Cuba in charge of his men. This request was, for the time being, denied by Bonaparte and the marine leader was directed to remain at his desk in Washington.[55]

In Cuba, meanwhile, James Colwell was still playing an active role in local politics. Indeed, even as his men were striking their landing party equipment below the cruiser's decks on Friday morning, their

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[52]"Eight Vessels Available," Washington Evening Star, 15 September 1906, p. 1.

[53]"Marines for Cuba," Washington Evening Star, 16 September 1906, p. 1.

[54]"Second Force of Marines," Washington Evening Star, 16 September 1906, p. 2.

[55]Bonaparte to Roosevelt, 18 September 1906, Bonaparte Papers.

captain was busy receiving emissaries from the Cuban government seeking his assistance in arranging passes through the rebel lines.[56] By day's end Colwell had therefore entered into negotiations with officials at the Presidential Palace to effect the measure and had also done similar duty for the many rebel envoys who wished safe passage into the town. In fact, as one reporter noted at the time, "all of the people are expecting him to pacify the island, acting in the capacity of referee."[57] Referee or otherwise, Colwell had most certainly become the nation's most important source of crisis-related information in Havana. Thus did the Navy Department immediately forward Colwell's reports to both the president and to the State Department. Similarly relying upon his officer's assessment of the local situation, Secretary Bonaparte was moved to comment that Colwell's evaluation of the prospect for a negotiated peace on the island was "very important and surprising, if he is not mistaken in the inferences which he draws from his information."[58] In the meantime, Colwell was advised of the seven American warships headed his way and told that he should refrain from taking any definite action pending the arrival of the Taft-Bacon mission on Wednesday, 19 September.

William Fullam, on the other hand, was permitted to continue his activity in and around Cienfuegos. To a degree this was undoubtedly a result of the pressure that the several American sugar interests were able to put on the Roosevelt administration in Washington. Thus on

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[56]James Colwell, "Report to the Secretary of the Navy," 4 October 1906, in Navy, Area Eight File, p. 9.

[57]"Loynaz Wishes to Confer," Washington Evening Star, 14 September 1906, p. 1.

[58]Bonaparte to Converse, 15 September 1906, Bonaparte Papers.

Saturday 15 September the director of the Boston-based United Fruit Company wrote the State Department to complain about the dangers faced by American property in Cuba while E. F. Atkins of the Trinidad Sugar Company (also a Boston concern) that same day had the distinction of providing the State Department with the first word of the Marietta landing to protect its own Soledad estate.[59] Moreover, by Monday 17 September the plantation managers' messages prompted by Fullam a day before were also working some mischief in Washington. Atkins, for example, wrote to the State Department to point out that Fullam had saved Soledad but that "the interior towns are running out of provisions and conditions bordering on anarchy prevail."[60] At the same time, the Boston businessman released a statement to the press in which he claimed that conditions in southern Cuba were "desperate" but that his own estate had "been saved from the insurgents by the presence of marines from the gunboat Marietta."[61] Also on Monday, the New York owner of the Hormiguero plantation wired the assistant secretary of state to complain that his

> manager cables threats of destruction of factory and machinery. . . . Refusal of marines for protection from Marietta. Situation desperate. Marines have been furnished Soledad and Constancia estates. Cannot we have equal protection? More urgent because of situation. If proper please wire us what we can expect.[62]

On Tuesday the Colonial Sugars Company of New York added its own voice

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[59]"Landing of Marietta's Men," Washington Evening Star, 15 September 1906, p. 1.

[60]Acting Secretary of State to Secretary of the Navy, 18 September 1906, Area Eight File.

[61]"Saved From Insurgents," Washington Evening Star, 17 September 1906, p. 1.

[62]Acting Secretary of State to Acting Secretary of the Navy, 17 September 1906, Area Eight File.

to the din by pointing out that "prompt action [by] Commander Fullam and [the] presence [of] his men undoubtedly saved Constancia last night." Even so, the wire continued, "present force can protect sugarhouse only. Reenforcements needed quickly."[63]

In Washington, an increasingly overwhelmed Acting Secretary of State Alvey Adee made certain to send each of these anxious messages to the Navy Department for action. There Bonaparte and others collected them with growing alarm. While forwarding copies of most of Fullam's reports directly to the president and reassuring the sugar barons that the United States Navy was "doing everything . . . possible to provide for the safety of American property in Cuba," it was increasingly accepted as fact that the Marietta's commanding officer certainly "had his hands full" in Cienfuegos.[64] Consequently, when Robert Bacon suggested that the Dixie be moved from Havana to that port on Sunday, 16 September, the Navy Department was only too happy to concur since, as Bonaparte put it, "the condition of affairs there seems to be pretty bad."[65] In fact the navy was convinced that things were sufficiently bad to warrant depriving the West Indies Squadron commander not only of the ship's use in the troubled waters of the Dominican Republic, but also of his personal baggage and squadron records that were still aboard the hastily-dispatched transport. Moreover, that same squadron commander was "asking rather urgently for [the Dixie's] return, especially as the San Domingo patriots appeared to be fired by

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[63]Bureau of Navigation to Naval Station, Key West, 18 September, 1906, Navy, Area Eight File.

[64]Bonaparte to Kelly and Bonaparte to Truman Newberry, 17 September 1906, Bonaparte Papers.

[65]Bonaparte to Roosevelt, 18 September 1906, Bonaparte Papers.

emulation to equal those of Cuba."[66] Nevertheless Converse was directed to send the transport and her load of marines to Cienfuegos and on Tuesday, 18 September Bonaparte himself succumbed to Fullam's continued arguments for increased activity ashore and authorized the Marietta's commanding officer to "land force for protection of American citizens as necessary from Dixie."[67]

Incredibly, at this particularly critical juncture Bonaparte took some calculated steps to relieve himself of direct control of the navy's units at work in the crisis. In response to an inquiry from Roosevelt as to his coordination of navy actions with the State Department, Bonaparte first wired the president that he had been "in close touch with the State Department since Cuban complications arose" and would continue to "be guided by its views so far as practicable in all orders given."[68] Later that day, however, the secretary wrote Roosevelt to admit that "practically all orders given to the forces in Cuban waters have been at the suggestions of that [State] Department." What was more, Bonaparte strongly urged the chief executive to place the naval forces in Cuba "under the immediate control of Secretary Taft in case an emergency arises." This, Bonaparte felt, was abolutely critical since the navy secretary was not at all sure that the senior naval officer present (at the time, James Colwell) would accept the secretary of war's suggestions since the latter individual was clearly outside of the naval chain of command.[69] Indeed, just to be on the

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[66]Ibid.

[67]Bonaparte to Marietta, 18 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[68]Bonaparte to Roosevelt, 18 September 1906, Bonaparte Papers.

[69]Ibid.

safe side while awaiting Roosevelt's answer, Bonaparte himself ordered Colwell to confer with Taft as soon as he arrived in Havana and to "offer [the] services [of his] naval vessels and comply with his wishes as far as is practicable."[70] Still worried, Bonaparte actually sent a repetition of this same message on the very next day (18 September) as well.

Charles Bonaparte obviously saw the Taft-Bacon commission as the key to a successful resolution of the September crisis in Cuba. He was certainly not alone in this regard. In fact, the eyes of the world were focussed squarely upon the peace mission then on its way to the troubled Caribbean island. In all, the commission's party numbered eleven men, including the hastily returned American minister to Cuba, Edwin Morgan. From Havana Jacob Sleeper had reported that the mission's dispatch had calmed passions in Havana and left the population feeling more hopeful as it anxiously awaited the party's arrival. Indeed, on Sunday, 16 September the Cuban government even went as far as to order a halt to all offensive operations against insurgent forces pending the arrival of the American mission. By Tuesday, therefore, Colwell was reporting that all was quiet in the Havana region since "there is a cessation of hostilities for the present." Better still, the naval officer also added that "peace negotiations are progressing favorably between the Government and the Revolutionary leaders."[71] While the commission's members themselves were under no illusion as to the ease of the task which awaited them on the island, its leader added to the general sense of optimism by

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[70]Bonaparte to Denver, 18 September 1906, Cipher Messages Sent.

[71]Bonaparte to Roosevelt, 18 September, Area Eight File.

confidently predicting that he and his cohorts would finish their business and return to their Washington in a mere ten days of less.[72]

Yet the challenge which the Taft-Bacon party faced was growing more insurmountable by the hour. To be sure the olive branch which they carried was increasingly being obscured by the guns and bayonets of an active United States Navy. Obviously James Colwell's landing and withdrawal had created a serious problem and sent powerful (and unintented) signals to rebels and government forces alike. In their wake, William Fullam had sent his own armed band of American servicemen ashore in yet another area of the island. Like Colwell before him, Fullam was firmly convinced that he was acting in the nation's best interest and that any official efforts to restrain him were being undertaken in error. Moreover, Fullam's own activity clearly left the impression in local minds that his actions were in keeping with the American national policy in the crisis, while at the same time leaving little doubt as to whose side his men were supporting. All the while the American press was dutifully reporting the navy's hurried preparations to dispatch even more ships and hundreds of marines to Cuba. It would, therefore, require both incredible diplomatic finesse and a massive shifting of gears by the United States Navy if the Taft-Bacon Peace Commission was to have any prospect of success. Otherwise, the momentum of Roosevelt's own big stick would carry him unwillingly into military intervention in Cuba.

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[72]Washington Evening Star, 16 September 1906, p. 1.

CHAPTER VIII

"CONSERVATION OF AMERICAN INTERESTS:"

The Navy and the Cuban Crisis
19 September-28 September

By Wednesday, 19 September the crisis in Cuba clearly had become the leading United States foreign policy challenge. Up to that point, American efforts to resolve the crisis peacefully had been thwarted by a lack of effective representation and coordination of national activity in Cuba itself. During that time a pair of American naval officers had all but dragged their nation into military intervention as they operated without any real supervision or meaningful guidance from Washington. If that intervention was to be forestalled, some significant changes would have to take place at once. Thus did the 19 September arrival of the Taft-Bacon Peace Commission represent the last real opportunity for the United States to get a firm grip on the events of the day and consequently to prevent a second American occupation of the island. Taft and company would have to win over both the insurgent and government leadership, reign in the naval activity on and around the island, and put the navy to effective use in complimenting their diplomatic representations with coordinated visible activity. Should this be possible, intervention in Cuba just might be avoided. It would be an exceptionally difficult thing to bring about. Without the assistance of the American navy it could not be done.

The arrival of the Taft-Bacon party was the event of the day in Havana and the commissioners lost no time in setting to work on their

important assignment. It had been exactly one week since James Colwell had brought the Denver into the same port and the cruiser's captain immediately called upon the secretary of war, placing his own command at Taft's disposal. At the same time, both commissioners received a detailed briefing on the complex local situation from Commander Colwell. According to the naval officer, he had conferred with rebel leaders just a day before and the insurgent commanders had expressed their eagerness to meet with the American peace mission.[1] Later that same morning, the commissioners met both with the Cuban secretary of state and with President Palma, then struck out for Morgan's official residence some ten miles outside the city (and beyond the rebel lines). There, Taft and Bacon took up residence and, in the afternoon, met with insurgent leaders who had earlier been summoned through the good offices of Commander Colwell.[2] A quick threat of an American occupation of the city was used to force both sides to hold their present positions while the commission engaged in meetings with representatives from many Cuban societal groups over the next several days.[3]

Yet, from the very beginning Roosevelt's personal emissaries were having their message of diplomatic conciliation countered by the physical activity of the American navy in Cuba. Indeed, William Fullam was still continuing to write Cuban history unchecked in Cienfuegos.

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[1]Bonaparte to Roosevelt, 19 September 1906, Charles Bonaparte Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

[2]James Colwell, "Report to the Secretary of the Navy," 4 October 1906, in U.S. Department of the Navy, Record Group 45, Area Eight File, August-October 1906, National Archives, pp. 12-13.

[3]Allan R. Millett, The Politics of Intervention: The Military Occupation of Cuba, 1906-1909 (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1968), p. 94.

Thus, while Taft and Bacon were busily assuring all of the interested parties that the United States had absolutely no desire to intervene on the island on that first Wednesday morning, Fullam was landing two hundred marines from the U.S.S. Dixie. One detachment each was sent to Soledad, Constancia, and Hormiguero. Yet even Fullam was slowly beginning to realize that his own little intervention was becoming something of a military and political tar baby. In fact the more that the aggressive naval officer did, the more that seemed to be needed. That same day, for example, also saw the British firm of Fowler and Company add their Parque Alto and Dos Hermanas plantations to the list of properties asking for Fullam's protection. Consequently an increasingly harried William Fullam wired his West Indies Squadron commander to say that he had no idea how long he would need to keep his recently-arrived force of marines ashore.[4] Unfortunately for Fullam's plans, the next day brought word that the Dixie would have to return to the Dominican Republic at once. Another naval vessel, he was told, would be sent shortly to take the transport's place. As a result, Fullam took yet another twenty-five marines and some artillery aboard the Marietta before sending the Dixie on her way.

Undaunted by his loss of the Dixie, Fullam used Thursday, 20 September to further cloak his intervention with the trappings of American national policy. Thus did William Fullam busy himself with distributing and posting hundreds of specially printed leaflets in the Cienfuegos area. The single-page, Spanish-language document provided a brief comment on the reason for his landing and the mission of his

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[4]Fowler and Company to Fullam and Fullam to Southerland, 19 September 1906, William Fullam Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

parties ashore. The notice then went on to state that any trespassing on United States property or even threats made against United States forces could "only be considered and treated as acts of war against the flag of the United States."[5] Later Fullam provided his own men with what by now was his second admonition to consult the Landing Party Manual for guidance in their duties ashore.[6] Pleased with his interventionist handiwork, the officer reported to Washington at day's end that a "good effect" had been produced by all of this and that the local situation seemed to be improving.[7]

On Friday, 21 September Fullam was ready to take the next step in his ever-expanding intervention in Cuba. While the New York Times dutifully reported that the officer had been responsible for saving the Constancia and Soledad estates from loss, Fullam advised the Navy Department that "British subjects ask for protection from the U.S. Government." This, Fullam felt, should be honored since the Englishmen did appear to be imperiled by "a lawless band of irresponsible negroes."[8] Interestingly enough, Fullam's repeated alarm at the racial component of the crisis came just a week after racial violence had erupted in New York City and less than a week before three days of race riots would rip through Atlanta, creating a problem so severe that some three thousand national guardsmen and the imposition of martial

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[5]Fullam Notice distributed in Cienfuegos, Cuba, 20 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[6]Fullam to Commanding Officer, U.S.S. Dixie, 20 September 1906, Navy, Area Eight File.

[7]Fullam to Bureau of Navigation, 20 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[8]"Cuba's Independence in the Balance--Taft," New York Times, 21 September 1906, p. 2; Fullam to Bureau of Navigation, 21 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

law would be required to put an end to the trouble. It was not likely that the racial issue would fall upon deaf ears at home.

Somewhat predictably, William Fullam also took time to write the navy secretary to call his attention to the way in which his landing party sailors had done "their duty to perfection," noting that bluejackets such as his "seldom get full credit for work of this kind." As a matter of fact, Fullam chafed, "the press always speaks of them as Marines," but "in this case . . . full credit is due them." Understandably, the controversial author closed this particular communication with an expression of hope that his department would "not misconstrue my motive in making this statement in their behalf."[9]

On Saturday, 22 September Fullam addressed a new challenge ashore. Still waiting for a reply regarding his protection of British interests, the American naval officer was once again finding himself face to face with yet another demand for an increased presence in the region. Indeed by now it had become apparent that the Marietta could only effectively maintain communication with and resupply its Hormiguero contingent through the Cuban Central Railway, itself a British concern. Thus Fullam, armed with yet another appeal from Fowler and Company, approached the railway's management and asked for its consent to use its trains to meet his growing logistics requirements. In fact, Fullam went on, he felt it would be necessary to place an armed guard on the train, fly the American flag from its engine, and issue a proclamation warning Cubans to grant it safe passage under penalty of incurring the military wrath of the United States of America. Happily for Fullam, the railroad men agreed to this

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[9]Ibid., Navy, Area Eight File.

arrangement and Fullam that afternoon wired Washington to seek approval for his plan. In making his case, Fullam made sure to stress that the action would assist in supporting his marines in the field and, not coincidentally, "divide revolutionary forces in the vicintity."[10]

On the very next day William Fullam received the interventionist carte blanche he had been seeking from the very beginning. Indeed, with Truman Newberry's full administrative blessing, George Converse had wired Fullam to "use the force under your command at your discretion to protect American and British interests where possible."[11] The Department of the Navy had just washed its hands of the whole bothersome problem. Elated, the commander immediately informed the railroad's manager that he was placing his line under American protection. Fullam then published yet another leaflet to inform the local population of the action and to warn that any hostile acts or trespass on the line would be "considered hostile to the flag of the United States."[12] Yet the tar baby was to strike again. In order to facilitate his protection of the railroad, Fullam now found that he had to place an armed contingent in the town of Palmira along the way and a small detachment and another Colt gun were soon stationed in that spot as well.

Back in Havana, the navy was also working at cross purposes with the Taft-Bacon commission's efforts to signal American reluctance to intervene. While the commissioners argued their point day in and day

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[10]Fullam to Bureau of Navigation and Sagua la Grande Office to Cienfuegos Office, Cuban Central Railway, 22 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[11]Converse to Fullam, 23 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

[12]Notice distributed along Cuban Central Railway route, 23 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

out, three American battleships and two cruisers steamed into Havana, the guns of each booming out a formal salute to announce their presence. By Saturday, 22 September a landing force of well over two thousand men was being actively organized aboard the ships and a party of uniformed officers was sent ashore to survey the harbor and determine the best defensive positions in the city. All of this was hardly consistent with the professed attitude of reluctance being trumpeted out at the Morgan residence. Worse still, arrangements were soon made with local businessmen to provide railway transportation for the large landing force sitting just offshore in Havana.[13] Even more attention was called to the fleet on Saturday when Taft called upon the battleship U.S.S. Louisiana and received the seventeen gun salute to which he was entitled. In the meantime, Minister Morgan was also calling upon ships in the harbor, collecting a total of fifty-eight gun reports by the time his rounds were complete.[14] Incredibly, all of this official saluting came on the heels of the cruiser U.S.S. Minneapolis' arrival that same morning and the by-now obligatory twenty-one gun salute she fired upon entering the harbor.

If Saturday was notable for its noise, fire, and smoke as the ever-increasing American fleet in the harbor reminded Havana of its presence, Sunday would be remembered as the day when overt preparations for an American intervention in Cuba resumed with a vengeance. Thus the Minneapolis and Newark were both busy discharging landing party supplies to lighters which in turn carried the equipment ashore.

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[13]Seaton Shroeder, A Half Century of Naval Service (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1922), pp. 285-87.

[14]Log of the U.S.S. Denver, 22 September 1906, U.S. Department of the Navy, Record Group 24, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Meanwhile, at the Havana waterfront, trains intended for employment in moving the landing force inland were backed onto convenient sidings. Moreover, everything from tents and water barrels no fewer than one hundred fifty thousand rounds of ammunition were moved from the warships to locations in the city itself.[15] A day later the cruiser Newark once again had a working party of sailors and marines making preparations for a landing ashore.[16]

Not surprisingly these fairly blatant activities, coupled with Fullam's own private intervention to the south, had a decided effect upon William Taft's and Robert Bacon's ability to negotiate a settlement to the island's problems. Indeed, as early as 21 September Roosevelt was giving reluctant permission for Taft to order an American landing. Even so, the chief executive warned his war secretary that he should "avoid the use of the word intervention" in any proclamation relating to the use of American troops, adding that "it is important from the standpoint of public sentiment here that we shall make it plain that we are exhausting every effort to come to an agreement before we intervene."[17] To this end Taft and Bacon devised a compromise proposal in which the commissioners suggested that Palma be allowed to remain in office but that his cabinet would become a coalition group and new congressional elections would be held as soon

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[15]Log of the U.S.S. Minneapolis, 22 and 23 September 1906, U.S. Department of the Navy, Record Group 24, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; "Taft Has Full Powers in Cuban Negotiations," New York Times, 24 September 1906, p. 5.

[16]Log of the U.S.S. Newark, 24 September 1906, U.S. Department of the Navy, Record Group 24, National Archives, Washington D.C.

[17]Elting E. Morison, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, vol. 5: The Big Stick 1905-1907 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), pp. 418-19.

as possible. While the rebels immediately endorsed the idea, Palma's faction rejected the notion outright on Monday, 24 September. Frustrated, Taft cabled the American president to report the failure and to ask for many more ships and men at once.[18]

In the meantime Taft was having trouble directing the naval forces officially at his disposal. This was so in spite of the fact that the new ranking American naval officer in Cuban waters (Captain Albert Couden in the battleship Louisiana) had in fact been directed to take his orders from Taft. Still, Taft felt constrained to couch his desires in the form of requests to the flotilla's commander. Thus when the navy ordered the cruiser Cleveland to leave Havana and replace the Dixie at Cienfuegos, Taft asked Couden to please have her remain in the Cuban capital. Bacon then wired his own department to say that both he and Taft desired the navy secretary to please order the Dixie to remain in the southern port and to permit the Cleveland to stay in Havana for a few days "unless strongest reason to the contrary." Yet an unhappy George Converse noted on his copy of the wire that "Dixie's presence deemed necessary in San Domingo. (Has sailed from Cienfuegos) after landing 225 marines--Cleveland necessary at Cienfuegos to supply provisions to marines already landed. Newark and Minneapolis are due in Havana tomorrow."[19] That done, the war secretary's request was denied. The Cleveland was sent on her way and the Dixie continued en route to the Dominican Republic.

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[18]Robert Bacon and William Taft, "Report of William H. Taft, Secretary of War, and Robert Bacon, Assistant Secretary of State, of What Was Done Under the Instructions of the President in Restoring Peace in Cuba," in Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1906, House Document 2, 59th Congress, Second Session, Vol. 1, Appendix E, Government Printing Office, 1907, p. 490.

[19]Bacon to Secretary of State, 21 September 1906, Navy, Area Eight File.

It is unlikely that the navy had any intention of letting the War Department's leader direct its ships without the practical consent of the uniformed officers of the service. This reluctance to accept external direction was perhaps not so much directed at Taft as it was at any outsider who presumed to usurp control of the navy from its uniformed leadership. Thus did the Admiral of the Navy complain about the problem, so much so in fact that Mildred Dewey was forced to comment that "George [was] very outspoken over the use of the Navy by the Secretaries," since "Root has three ships [and] Taft has a whole lot threatening Cuba."[20] Threatening perhaps, but hardly at his beck and call!

The marine corps was also flexing its institutional muscle at about this time, though hardly in an adversarial fashion. As at the earlier stages of the crisis, the marines viewed the continuing Cuban drama as a priceless opportunity to guarentee the future survival of their service. Thus, when Roosevelt wired the Navy Department on 24 September to have "as many additional vessels with as many Marines aboard as is possible" sent to Havana, the corps once again lept into action.[21] Off Provinctown, Massachussetts, the North Atlantic Fleet mustered more than eight hundred marines (the entire contingent assigned to all of its ships) aboard the battleships Indiana and Kentucky within just four hours of receiving the order. In fact, the operation took place so quickly that it wasn't until a full twenty-four

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[20]Diary of Mildred Dewey, George Dewey Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., p. 194.

[21]Roosevelt to Newberry, 24 September 1906, Record of Confidential Correspondence, 16 June 1904-16 October 1908, U.S. Department of the Navy, Record Group 45, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

hours after the leathernecks were berthed aboard the ships that the vessels themselves were ready to depart.

The marines' eagerness to get into action in Cuba manifested itself at every level of the organization. Indeed, Bonaparte had even been able to report to the president that a large number of the weary Yankee marines had voluntarily returned to their ship and promptly offered themselves for assignment to Cuban duty.[22] Moreover, Brigadier General Elliott, the marine corps commandant, reported on Tuesday, 25 September that still another two battalions had been formed and were at that moment ready to sail south. The marine leader then used the opportunity to point out that, despite the fact that these men had been "collected from the various posts of the Corps [and] were assembled within thirty-six hours after the order reached these headquarters," their actual departure was "unfortunately . . . delayed owing to a lack of water transportation."[23] In any event, the United States Marine Corps now had some ninety-seven officers and approximately twenty-eight hundred enlisted men either in Cuba or on their way to the island. Unable to take the field himself, General Elliott ordered "his best colonel" to command the new expeditionary brigade.[24]

That General Elliott intended to brook no second-rate treatment for his troops was clearly evident in the man he chose to represent him in Cuba: Colonel Littleton W. T. Waller. Tony Waller was every inch a

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[22]Bonaparte to Roosevelt, 19 September 1906, Bonaparte Papers.

[23]U.S. Department of the Navy, Annual Reports of the Navy Department for the Year 1906 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1907), p. 1097.

[24]Robert Debs Heinl, Jr., Soldiers of the Sea (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1962), p. 152.

marine's marine. A twenty-four year veteran of the service, Waller had earned a reputation as a fierce warrior and steadfast opponent to the Fullam clique's efforts to remove the corps men from the navy's warships. Most recently Waller had performed heroically in the 1900 Boxer Rebellion in China. Indeed, he would forever be remembered as the man who, on an envelope addressed to the senior naval officer in the area and containing a report of his unit's heavy fighting ashore, had scrawled "please open and read and add Russian casualties two killed, nine wounded. I need whiskey."[25] A year later, Waller's command in the Philippine Islands was involved in the terribly brutal Samar campaign and Waller was himself court-martialed for murder as a result of the bloody reprisals he had ordered against his enemy. His subsequent acquittal merely added more luster to an already shining reputation. Thus, when General Elliott ordered Tony Waller to take command of the marines assigned to Cuba, he could be sure that this particular officer would not be likely to be intimidated by the naval officers appointed over him. After all, the marines were plainly out to show just how much they could do as an organization and Tony Waller would definitely ensure that they got the opportunity to do just that.

In Cuba itself the Taft-Bacon Commission was finding it increasingly difficult to reconcile the Cubans' political problems. Bacon would later recall that William Taft seemed to become more and more resigned to intervention as the days dragged on. Thus on one occassion did the diplomat remember hearing the war secretary observe that "I fear in twenty-five years we may be obliged to govern not only the Philippines and Cuba, but Mexico as well." At another point the

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[25]Ibid. p. 134.

former governor of the Philippines told Bacon outright that "I am ready to try intervention if you agree."[26] Yet Bacon was not ready to concede defeat, and while the ships in the harbor continued to make ready for the landing which seemed to be more and more inevitable (the U.S.S. Louisiana had even gone to the bother of hooking up a telephone line into the city), the two commissioners pressed on with their task. When a reporter asked Taft about the obvious preparations for a landing on Sunday, 23 September he responded by asserting that "the United States forces are under my orders. I have given no order for them to land, and not a man shall land until I give such an order."[27]

Still, Taft's forceful comment could not erase the fact that in Cienfuegos there were a great many armed men ashore and none of them seemed to be even remotely under his control. Indeed by Tuesday, 25 September Fullam (who had been reassured by Truman Newberry the day before that "the Department relies upon your discretion in protecting American interests") was able to report that he had one hundred and eight men at Hormiguero, fifty-two at Constancia, fifty-three at Soledad, fifty-seven at Palmira, six Colt guns and three field pieces at various locations, and yet another company of bluejackets being readied to go ashore that very day.[28] Just a day later Fullam increased the American presence in the region even more by dispatching another thirty-two-man party to guard the rail center at Sagua la Grande.

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[26]Scott, pp. 115, 117.

[27]"Taft Has Full Powers," New York Times, 24 September 1906, p 5.

[28]Newberry to Fullam, 24 September 1906 and Fullam to Newton, 25 September 1906, Fullam Papers.

Hardly unaware of this expanding American commitment to the south and convinced that the Taft-Bacon mission was not willing to support him any longer, President Palma advised the commissioners of his intention to resign and take his government down with him on 25 September. Disappointed, Roosevelt that same day issued a personal appeal to stay in office to his Cuban opposite and also wired Taft to inform that "it seems to me that the thing to do is to land the troops and temporarily assume the functions of the government."[29] Unhappy at the frustrating turn of events, Roosevelt was himself beginning to concede foreign policy defeat. Even so, in an attempt to keep up the appearance of success in any event, Roosevelt sent a series of telegrams warning Taft to avoid discussion of "intervention" and to "place the landing of our sailors and marines on the grounds of the conservation of American interests."[30] Since it now seemed that American intervention might be unavoidable, Roosevelt would need all the help he could get in countering the appearance of having failed in his stated Cuban policy.

In Washington, the same navy which essentially had forced the president into an unwanted intervention in Cuba was already congratulating itself on a job well done. Indeed, the prevailing attitude was merely to let events in Cuba run their course. Thus did Charles Bonaparte brag to Roosevelt on 19 September that "everything seems to be moving smoothly in regard to Cuba so far, at least, as the Navy is concerned."[31] Mildred Dewey confided to her diary that "no

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[29]Morison, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, p. 423.

[30]Ralph E. Minger, William Howard Taft and United States Foreign Policy: The Apprenticeship Years 1900-1908 (Urbana, Illinois: the University of Illinois Press, 1975), p. 130.

[31]Bonaparte to Roosevelt, 19 September 1906, Bonaparte Papers.

doubt we will hold Cuba. The Navy is thoroughly prepared and ready," while her husband told a reporter that the nation "must take Cuba" in order that the United States "not shrink from its plain duty" as a world power and to redeem the "pledge of '98." Moreover in doing so George Dewey made it abundantly clear that it was the work of his General Board that had made the service's quick response to the crisis possible.[32] At the General Board's September session, the Cuban situation was only discussed tangentially in that some attention was given to reviewing the marine corps' requirement to be provided with two advance base outfits.[33] Indeed it was as if the General Board, satisfied with the way things had turned out in Cuba, was now ready to turn its attention to more weighty matters. For the navy of the United States the 1906 Cuban crisis was already something of a closed book.

Back at his vacation retreat in Lenox, Massachussetts, Charles Bonaparte noted that events no longer required his presence, feeling that "the Department was fully able to cope with the exigencies of the situation," and adding that "I do not know that there is anything else to be done, at least by us until the crisis has been reached."[34] As for Acting Secretary Newberry, he was already coming to the aid of Robley Evans and his North Atlantic Fleet by announcing that no more of the admiral's battleships would be committed to the Cuban situation since "it would be an injustice to send them there now if it could be avoided in any way." After all, service in Cuba was sure to deprive the ships' gun crews of the opportunity to earn the marksmanship prize

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[32]Diary of Mildred Dewey, p. 193; "Must Take Cuba So Dewey Thinks," Chicago Tribune, 24 September 1906, George Dewey Papers.

[33]Proceedings of the General Board, USN, September 26 and 27, 1906, Naval Historical Foundation, Washington, D. C.

[34]Bonaparte to Roosevelt, 25 September 1906, Bonaparte Papers.

money which otherwise could be theirs through participation in the upcoming target practice scheduled for the end of the month off of Cape Cod. In fact, Newberry even hinted that the battleships already involved in the Cuban crisis might be brought home promptly for just that reason, saying that "they would be of little use there except as floating boarding houses."[35]

The navy's upcoming New England gunnery practice did in fact begin to overshadow the service's concerns about operations in Cuba. Yet the Cuban problem would not go away. Thus when Theodore Roosevelt boarded Evan's flagship to witness the gunnery drills on Friday, 28 September the president was confronted with several waiting messages from Havana. While Robley Evans waited impatiently to begin his personal show for the commander in chief, Roosevelt read learned that Palma had officially informed Taft that he would resign at midnight that evening. Taking this news in stride, the president then sat down and dashed off two responses. In one he advised Taft that it would not be a bad thing if the foreign consuls in Cuba could ask for their own governments to intervene "because it would make our course even clearer and give us an even more complete justification." Even without that coming to pass, though, Roosevelt permitted Taft to "land forces and issue proclamation . . . but if possible emphasize fact that you are landing only at Palma's request because there is no Government left."[36]

With the Cuban problem resolved at last, the president and his navy could turn their attention to more immediate concerns. Thus did

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[35]"Roosevelt May Call a Special Session," New York Times, 27 September 1906, p. 9.

[36]Morison, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, pp. 433-34.

Roosevelt soon join Admiral Evans on the flagship's bridge and the lifelong naval enthusiast "showed great enthusiasm" as the North Atlantic Fleet sent "shell after shell . . . tearing through the target."[37] While he did, a navy torpedo boat carried the president's intervention order to the Provincetown Western Union office for transmission to Havana. That evening Taft ordered a small detachment of marines ashore to guard the Cuban national treasury when Palma asked to be relieved of custody of the thirteen million dollars stored in its vaults. At midnight the Cuban Republic's only elected president formally submitted his resignation to the American peace commission and quietly took his leave. The United States' Second Cuban Intervention was about to begin in earnest. The big stick had carried the day.

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[37]Robley D. Evans, An Admiral's Log (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1910), p. 377.

CHAPTER IX

"OUR JUSTIFICATION WAS COMPLETE:"

The Navy and the Second Cuban Intervention September 1906-January 1909

The United States embarked upon its Second Cuban Intervention swiftly and effectively. Indeed no sooner had William Taft accepted President Palma's midnight resignation than he ordered the first of what would soon be many marine contingents ashore in Havana. Thus, while the population slept in the pre-dawn hours of Sunday, 29 September, hundreds of American fighting men were quietly placed at strategic locations within the city limits. By the time the Cuban capital awoke, therefore, the American intervention was an accomplished fact. With Roosevelt's full blessing, Taft then proclaimed himself provisional governor of the republic, ordered both of the warring factions to disarm, and stated that the Cuban flag would remain flying and that Cuban law would remain in effect. As he spoke, still more marines were landed and detachments were soon stationed in Cienfuegos, Sagua la Grande, and other troublespots throughout the Cuban countryside.

In all, no fewer than twenty-four hundred American marines were landed to garrison the various Cuban towns. Offshore another six thousand American sailors stood ready to assist if needed. In fact a formidable naval force comprised of six battleships, seven cruisers, a gunboat, and two naval auxiliaries were used to back the marine corps's

landing operation. In the meantime, the United States Army was hurridly gathering a six thousand-man "Army of Cuban Pacification" to relieve the marines on the island. The first unit of this more permanent intervention force arrived in Havana exactly one week after the marines had come ashore and by the end of October army troops had replaced all but a thousand-man marine regiment which would remain assigned to the Pacification Army for the duration of its twenty-eight months of existence.

Fortunately for all concerned, the intervention itself was virtually bloodless. Taft had made it extremely clear that the American forces were completely impartial in the Cuban political dispute and that they would be used only as "backup" support for Cuba's own policemen and Rural Guard. As such, contact between the Cuban population and the American troops was kept to an absolute minimum as the soldiers and marines spent virtually the entire intervention period assigned to barracks duty much as they might have performed back in the United States. The occupation force was also able to benefit from the fact that both sides in the Cuban struggle had sought this intervention and therefore there were very few Cubans who saw the American presence as anything but the most attractive alternative to continued political strife. Consequently, Provisional Governor Taft was able to declare an official end to the island's factional violence on 10 October and, as the interim leader of the republic, he issued a general amnesty that very same day. On 13 October Taft himself was relieved of the governor's duties by Minnesota lawyer Charles Magoon. Taft and Bacon immediately returned to the United States. As for Magoon, the former member of the Isthmian Canal Commission and one-time minister to Panama governed the island peacefully for more than two years and eventually

handed over the reigns of government to an elected Cuban president on 28 January 1909.

Taft's intervention of 29 September was viewed favorably by virtually every sector of informed public opinion around the world. In England, the American landings were "expected and approved." In France the landings were accepted as "inevitable." Italians "expressed their satisfaction" and even Germany regarded the undertaking as "reasonable in consequence of [the United States'] relations with the island."[1] In the United States reaction was extremely favorable overall. This particular outcome was no doubt produced in part by the Roosevelt administration's prompt publication of the diplomatic correspondence concerning the crisis. This act, which The Nation labelled as "unexampled" in diplomatic history, was a political boon to Roosevelt and his advisors. The Outlook, for example, concluded that these documents made "doubly clear the entire good faith of President Roosevelt . . . and Secretary Taft." The New York Times editorialized that, while "our justification was complete to any fair-minded man, . . . the publication of this correspondence makes a complete case against even the unfair-minded man. Thus, the Times opined that the published cables took the Cuban issue "entirely out of American politics."[2]

In Cuba itself Taft and Bacon were seen off on their homeward journey by thousands of grateful islanders. Even Elihu Root--whom

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[1]"Foreign Press Laughs at the Cuban Mixup," New York Times, 30 September 1906, p. 2.

[2]"The Week," The Nation, 83 (July-December 1906): 523.; "Cuba: The Provisional Government," The Outlook, 84 (September-December 1906): 341; "The Cuban Correspondence," New York Times, 6 October 1906, p. 8.

Robert Bacon had feared would object to the intervention as being "contrary to his policy and what he has been preaching"--came out in favor of the landings. Said the State Department head, "I do not see how anything else could have been done."[3] As for the president of the United States, Roosevelt's 1920 memoirs would ultimately include a passage in which the former Rough-Rider contended that he knew "of no action by any other government in relation to a weaker power which showed such disinterested efficiency in rendering service as was true in connection with our intervention in Cuba."[4]

The 1906 Cuban Intervention was hardly a blot on the navy's record either. On the contrary, the episode was immediately seen to enhance the service's reputation both in the eyes of its own leaders and in those of the nation at large. Sufficiently pleased with the way things had turned out that he did not want the army to "grab the credit for the Navy's work in Cuba," George Dewey made a point of telling at least one reporter that he should "call attention to how [the] Navy had taken possession and disarmed Cuba without a blow." The beaming admiral of the navy also stressed that, while the paper should "make no invidious comparison with [the] Army, all stress should be placed on the Navy's role in the Cuban affair."[5] For the most part, it was. Taft and Bacon's own official report of their trip similarly made a point of

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[3]Whitney T. Perkins, Constraint of Empire: The United States and Caribbean Interventions (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981), p. 17; Philip C. Jessup, Elihu Root, 2 vols. (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1938), 1: 531.

[4]Theodore Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt, An Autobiography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), p. 505.

[5]Diary of Mildred Dewey, George Dewey Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., pp. 195, 197.

citing "the great benefit which the presence of a formidable naval force gave us in effecting a peaceful conclusion."[6]

Indeed the navy had dispatched to Cuba fully one half of the battleships and all of the available cruisers assigned to the North Atlantic Fleet on very short notice. This rapid response was favorably commented upon by many both in the government and in the population in general. In his annual message to Congress in December of 1906, Theodore Roosevelt added his own name to this list when he boasted of the service's ability to respond to the crisis just past. According to Roosevelt, "thanks to the preparedness of our Navy, I was able to immediately send enough ships to Cuba to prevent the situation from becoming hopeless." This, in turn, had been made possible by the navy's pseudo general staff. Thus Roosevelt could also use the December address to lobby for a proper general staff in his navy, saying that "it was owing in large part to the General Board that the Navy was able at the outset to meet the Cuban crisis with such efficiency; ship after ship appearing on the shortest notice at any threatened point."[7] In fact, the navy's reaction to the Cuban crisis had been so smooth and trouble-free that it received absolutely no mention in the Naval Institute's Proceedings, a forum typically reserved for any topic of critical comment or controversy within the service.

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[6]Robert Bacon and William Taft, "Report of William H. Taft, Secretary of War, and Robert Bacon, Assistant Secretary of State, of What Was Done Under the Instructions of the President in Restoring Peace in Cuba," in Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1906, House Document 2, 59th Congress, Second Session, Vol. 1, Appendix E, Government Printing Office, 1907, p. 468.

[7]U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1906 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1909), Part One, pp. XLIV, LIX.

The marine corps also garnered considerable praise from the Cuban crisis experience. Like the navy, the corps had made an enormous investment in resources in the intervention and the days which preceded it. Indeed one out of every three men in the service went ashore in Cuba when Taft landed the intervention force at the end of September. Even more than the navy, the marines had made a truly impressive showing of their ability to mass that many men and deploy them for extended operations in the field on a notice measured only in hours. Moreover, the Taft-Bacon report reserved special mention for the service, noting that although the marines "were exposed to many trying situations, . . . at no point did they fail." Instead, the commissioners praised the "courage and self-restraint, rarer than courage" which the marines in Cuba had shown.[8] Roosevelt would later tell Congress that "the Marine Corps in particular performed indispensible service."[9] From his secretary's post, Charles Bonaparte went as far as to note that "our recent experience in Cuba has shown that the Marine Corps is clearly insufficient in numbers to satisfactorily discharge all the multifarious duties now imposed upon it." Bonaparte was especially concerned that the Cuban contingent had been made possible only by stripping the ships of the North Atlantic Fleet of their marine guard detachments, "a source of embarassment [which] might have had undesirable results."[10]

Bonaparte was trying to do the marine corps a favor based upon its showing in the Cuban episode. What the secretary had in mind was an

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[8]Taft Bacon Report, p. 459.

[9]U.S. Department of State, Papers, p. LIX.

[10]U.S. Department of the Navy, Annual Reports of the Navy Department for the Year 1906 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1907), p. 16.

increase in the size of the force authorized by Congress. Yet others in the department were to use the Cuban experience as ammunition to reopen the old marines afloat wound. An understanding George Converse, for example, bouyed by reports from Robley Evans that his fleet operated just fine while the marines were off in Cuba, approached Congress to inform the legislators that the corps should be removed from the vessels permanently and kept ready for "landing parties and quick service like that in Cuba recently."[11] The resulting controversy would rage for several years and actually lead to the marines' being withdrawn from duty afloat for a brief period of time.[12]

For James Colwell the Cuban crisis produced no lasting harm and a wealth of favorable comment. The naval officer remained steadfast in his conviction that his 13 September landing had been proper to the end. In his own (October) report of the affair, Colwell noted that his action "was approved and appreciated by all classes" of Cuban society and led directly to "an almost immediate armistice and the present situation looking to permanent peace in the Republic."[13] While Taft

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[11]"The Week," The Nation, 83 (July-December 1906): 473.

[12]The marines' organizational crisis finally came to a head in October of 1908. The contemporary chief of the Navigation Bureau was none other than the same J. E. Pillsbury who had been Evans' chief of staff in 1906 and the admiral officially asked the navy secretary to withdraw the marines from the navy's ships. Secretary Metcalf supported the idea. The withdrawal, therefore, began that same month and was accelerated by Roosevelt's signing an executive order endorsing the removal. Convinced that the withdrawal was the first step toward abolition of the corps itself, the marine corps mounted a brutal political counter-offensive which ultimately led to a congressionally-mandated return of the service to duty afloat in March of 1909.

[13]James Colwell, "Report to the Secretary of the Navy,", 4 October 1906, in U.S. Department of the Navy, Record Group 45, Area Eight File, August-October 1906, National Archives, Washington, D. C., pp. 18-19.

and Bacon reserved judgment on this point (saying that they were "not definitely informed" of "what the fact is in this regard") the Cuban rebels were more than a little vocal in their own approval of the landing.[14] In fact upon his departure James Colwell was presented with a gold watch at a banquet given in his honor by "the grateful revolutionary junta."[15] Within the navy itself, the Denver officer was also the object of praise and admiration. The commanding officer of the U.S.S. Dixie therefore defended Colwell's actions in his own report to Washington, arguing that the presence of the Denver landing party in Havana clearly "prevented an attack from the insurgents."[16] As for the attitude of the naval officer corps at large, it might best be summed up by the USS Brooklyn's Lieutenant Mannix, who noted with some disappointment that "unfortunately, by the time we arrived, the uprising was virtually over. It had been put down almost entirely by the efforts of one man: Captain Colwell of the cruiser Denver."[17] Perhaps most telling of all, James Colwell was subsequently promoted to the rank of captain, a reward seldom reserved for those who have met with official displeasure.

William Fullam was also rewarded for his efforts. In his own case, of course, Fullam had actually expressed some concern as to the propriety of his actions as early as 16 September. This concern

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[14]Taft-Bacon Report, p. 459.

[15]Allan R. Millett, The Politics of Intervention: The Military Occupation of Cuba, 1906-1909 (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1968), p. 107.

[16]Holmes to Bureau of Navigation, 16 September 1906, U.S. Department of the Navy, Record Group 45, Area Eight File, August-October 1906, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

[17]Daniel P. Mannix IV, ed., The Old Navy (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1983), p. 138.

remained with Fullam and on 22 September he wrote to the navy secretary to ask whether his service in and around Cienfuegos had "met with approval." In his October reply, Truman Newberry wrote that "I have to inform you that the prompt and effective measures taken by you, as reported in your letter mentioned, to protect the lives and property of American citizens meets with the approval of this Department."[18] At the end of that month Fullam received his official report of fitness from the commander of the West Indies Squadron. On the subject of Fullam's recent activity in Cuba, the senior officer had entered the comment that Fullam's duties had been "exceedingly well done."[19] Thus confirmed in his action, Fullam even went as far as to repeat the experience just four months later, landing the Marietta's sailors once again to protect American and British interests in the Caribbean. This time it was to shield those interests from any harm which might befall them as a result of fighting then in progress between Nicaragua and Honduras.[20] Ultimately, William Fullam would be promoted to the rank of rear admiral and would serve as both the commandant of the Great Lakes Naval Training Station and as superintendent of the United States Naval Academy before retiring in 1919.

In the end, therefore, the Cuban crisis of September 1906 was swiftly transformed from a foreign policy failure into a classic American success story for all involved. Even Edwin Morgan was allowed to retain his post as minister to Cuba in the rosy glow which remained

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[18]Newberry to Fullam, 3 October 1906, William Fullam Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

[19]Memoranda From Fitness Reports, 31 October 1906, Fullam Papers.

[20]Peter Karsten, The Naval Aristocracy (New York: The Free Press, 1972), p. 168.

in the wake of the landings. Roosevelt was not about to acknowledge defeat in the epsiode and he consequently chose to portray the undeniable foreign policy failure as a victory for diplomacy and restraint. Thus would the official line remain an impressive restatement of the facts surrounding the incident. After all, for three harrowing weeks the United States had tried mightily to settle peacefully a bitter dispute in a neighboring land. When these many efforts proved futile--and only after every other alternative had been exhausted--the nation reluctantly used its naval and military forces to restore order swiftly and thus to provide for domestic political stability until a properly-elected local government could once again take charge of its own affairs.

Yet the United States was hardly divorced from the political problems in Cuba that eventually resulted in a long-term military occupation of that nation against the will of the American president and people. One need only consider the armed band of Denver sailors camped on Tomas Estrada Palma's lawn on the evening of 13 September or of William Fullam's ever more extensive garissoning of the Cienfuegos region to realize that the United States had become an active participant in the Cuban troubles long before William Taft proclaimed himself governor on 19 September. The simple fact of the matter is that throughout the duration of the September crisis the United States Navy was all-too-frequently engaged in activity that had a direct impact upon the Cuban political environment. Moreover, such activity frustrated the diplomatic efforts of the United States. In the end the consequence of this activity would be the commitment of the Roosevelt administration to a massive military intervention that it not only did not want, but had worked actively to prevent.

As Graham Allison suggested in his examination of yet another Cuban crisis half a century later, the diligent student of such episodes must necessarily consider the fundamental mechanics of government action in order to account fully for such contradictory national behavior. Allison, of course, focussed academic attention upon a country's secondary actors as a means of accomplishing his investigative task. In this regard, insitutional actors which are both possessed of deep-seated parochial interests and prone to a considerable amount of intra-organizational bargaining appear to be the most likely to stray from their intended course in times of crisis. When those same actors become the principal executors of national policy, the recipe for unintended and uncontrolled behavior is complete. The ultimate result of this mix of internal and external behavioral factors is a situation in which national leaders lose practical control of their nation's actions. As a consequence, coordinated policy execution is frustrated, foreign leaders are presented with conflicting and confusing messages, and the risk of foreign policy failure escalates. Such was most certainly the case in the American response to the Cuban crisis in 1906.

Undoubtedly, the leading American actor throughout most of the September crisis was the navy of the United States. That the 1906 American navy was beset by significant parochial concerns is similarly without question. Indeed, the officer corps of the navy was more than a little intent upon guaranteeing the continued protection of its own Cuban base facility, of denying the Caribbean region to any extra-hemispheric power, and for upholding the image of the United States as a legitimate great power which would brook no misbehavior on its southern doorstep. Moreover, the navy was intensely interested in

proving its ability to manage its own operational activity as a means of siphoning institutional power from its increasingly bothersome civilian secretaries. At the same time a strong movement for the abolition of marine guards from duty at sea had the majority of the navy's officers looking for an opportunity to prove the utility of using sailors in their stead. Significantly enough, these strongly-held service agendas were embraced by an organization with an unusual degree of power fragmentation at the very top of its structure. Thus, in the late summer of 1906 there simply was no strong hand directing the navy of the United States. Internal power squabbles and a president who had effectively preempted his own navy secretary from the exercise of his statutory authority combined to produce a naval command structure which was severely limited in its ability to control its own far-flung operational units. When this same navy became the nation's principal representative in Cuba, therefore, the United States was courting potential foreign policy mischief from the outset.

The final ingredient for a significant diplomatic disaster in Cuba was fulfilled by Theodore Roosevelt's choosing a national course of action which his navy could neither understand nor endorse. Thus, when the American president elected to chart an uncharacteristically non-interventionist course in the Caribbean the prescription for real trouble was complete. The officers of the United States navy were simply unwilling to stand by and watch chaos reign in Cuba. Instead these officers were determined to use the force assigned to their control to settle the matter in their own way. Fortified by an insitutional self-image which assigned them the role of agents of international order, the officers of the United States Navy simply

could not conceive of a more proper course of action than to stamp out swiftly and forcefully the Cuban internal troubles. When these same troubles threatened American businesses and menaced American life and property, the imperative to act was even stronger. When it became evident that the rebels were largely composed of black ruffians of Cuba's lower class, the impulse to intervene could no longer be resisted.

These forces which would ultimately force the United States Navy to intervene in Cuba were felt most intensely by those several officers in command of naval units in Cuba itself. Forced to operate largely in a vacuum as far as meaningful direction from their government was concerned, these same officers first decided upon their respective courses of action by consulting their previous experience in similar episodes and by recalling the objectives which they possessed as naval officers of the United States. In fact, these sentiments so favored intervention that both James Colwell and William Fullam would express disbelief when presented with evidence of American determination restrain their activity ashore. That their fellow officers similarly regarded their actions as proper was reflected in each man receiving both official and unofficial navy approval of their performance in the crisis.

The net result of these various concerns and organizational dynamics was that the United States Navy did in fact work at cross purposes to the country's national objectives throughout the duration of the crisis. Thus, while the American president and his principal lieutenants were steadfastly maintaining that the United States had no desire to interfere in Cuba's internal troubles, Colwell's Denver contingent was landed in the Cuban capital. The ambiguous mission of

this initial American landing force, its commander's willingness to negotiate with the rebel leadership, and the way in which it was subsequently withdrawn created serious diplomatic problems for the United States. No sooner was that crisis somewhat resolved, however, than yet another naval officer was sending his own armed band of American servicemen ashore in Cuba. Moreover, these men would never be withdrawn. In the interim, both in Havana and Cienfuegos the ranking American naval officers had become the leading figure in each region's internal political bargaining and attendant military maneuvering. Even the dispatch of personal envoys from the American president himself could not wrest control of events from these uniformed representatives of his administration. Indeed the Taft-Bacon Commission was never fully effective as a result of the navy's counter-productive activity throughout the length of their stay on the island. Thus, after some three weeks of increasingly futile attempts to stay an American military occupation of Cuba, the Roosevelt adminstration was forced to concede defeat and embark upon a massive military operation on the island.

Of course the naval officers involved in the Cuban crisis were acting in pursuit of what they perceived as organizational and national imperatives which just happened to run counter to the desires of their commander in chief. Thus was the United States faced with the troubling spectacle of relatively low-ranking officials of its government working directly against the most strenuous efforts of the president and his diplomatic envoys. Even more important, these particular officials were both supported in and rewarded for this action by the professional community to which they belonged. By virtue of the time, place, and circumstances in which the officers of the 1906

American navy performed, their own parochially-focussed efforts managed to prevail. Incredibly, this was so even though it could occur only at the expense of larger national goals and priorities associated with the crisis.

The net result of these various institutional phenomena, of course, was that the United States Navy played the principal role in making the Second Cuban Intervention a political and military reality. In considering the navy's effect on the crisis, however, one should not discount the responsibility borne by the State Department of the United States as well. Indeed the nation's diplomatic representation in Cuba had been wholly unable to forestall the development of the crisis in the first place and had done very little at all in the way of minimizing the damage done once it was under way. As for apportioning blame, the lion's share of the outcome may properly be placed at the feet of the president of the United States. Though ultimately responsible for American actions in any event, this particular president helped to engineer the insitutional shortcomings which allowed the navy to foil his own efforts in Cuba in 1906. By taking less of a detailed role in the administration of the service and by seeing to it that a strong navy secretary was assigned, Roosevelt may have been able to forestall the administrative and foreign policy dilemna which would eventually face him in September. Moreover, as the crisis progressed, the American president's attempts to prepare for a massive intervention without signalling his willingness to do so proved to be beyond his diplomatic capabilities. Indeed, the presidentially-ordered naval preparations for a Cuban intervention confused the Cubans people and the American navy.

The Second Cuban Intervention lasted less than three years and is characterized by most traditional Cuban histories as being a time of peace and relative prosperity for the people of the Cuban republic. Yet the legacy of those several years is nevertheless felt to this day. By rescuing the Cuban people from the need to resolve their own internal problems in 1906, the United States established a troublesome precedent both in internal Cuban politics and in its own relationship with the rest of the peoples of the Caribbean and of Latin America. In the wake of the intervention Cuba would for half a century exist as little more than an American colony, a puppet state located on the doorstep of the colossus of the north. During that same time the United States would resort to forceful interventions time and time again in the various republics of the Caribbean region. This subsequent checkered history has itself led to serious foreign policy challenges for the United States in the contemporary world. Indeed a hostile Cuba now duels with the United States in a Latin American socio-political arena forever scarred by bitter memories of an interventionist empire to the north.

Of course James Colwell should not be held responsible for creating an openly antagonistic state in Cuba any more than William Fullam can be regarded as the father of American intervention in Central America. Even so, it is an undeniable truth that these two officers and a host of their naval contemporaries managed to play a major role in forcing their nation into an unwanted military occupation of the Cuban republic. Policy is seldom carried out by politicians and diplomacy is rarely the work of diplomats alone. Instead events are quite often shaped and history written by ordinary men placed in extraordinary circumstances. In 1906 James Colwell, William Fullam,

and a handful of their fellow naval officers were thrust into a crisis of tremendous long-term importance to the United States and its neighbors. Each man reacted precisely in the way which he had been prepared to respond. As a group, they almost coincidentally exerted a major influence on the course of Cuban history and dictated policy to the president of the United States.

In September of 1906 the United States did not want to intervene in Cuba. The United States Navy was charged with lending a hand and seeing to it that the American goal of avoiding intervention was achieved. Within three weeks of that time, a massive American intervention was already under way. In an ironic twist of fate, the United States Navy had failed in its assigned mission and still managed to achieve all of its own insitutional objectives. Extraordinary events were both the cause and the effect of the navy's behavior in the crisis. Ordinary men had moved the colossus to action. The big stick had swung out of control.

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