

THE WAY TO WITHDRAW IS TO WITHDRAW

- THE UNITED STATES AND THE CARIBBEAN REPUBLICS, 1921–1933.* By DANA G. MUNRO. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974. Pp. 562. \$12.50.)
- THE UNITED STATES OCCUPATION OF HAITI, 1915–1934.* By HANS SCHMIDT. (Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 1971. Pp. 303. \$10.00.)
- THE UNITED STATES AND THE TRUJILLO REGIME.* By G. POPE ATKINS AND LARMAN C. WILSON. (Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 1972. Pp. 245. \$10.00.)
- EFFICIENCY AND EXPANSION: FOREIGN TRADE ORGANIZATION IN THE WILSON ADMINISTRATION, 1913–1921.* By BURTON I. KAUFMAN. (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1974. Pp. 300. \$12.50.)

Dana G. Munro concluded his earlier book, *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean, 1900–1921*, with the judgment that the United States had tightened its grasp over the Caribbean out of concern for its own security, and especially for the safety of the canal (pp. 531–36). Many scholars agree, and indeed protection of the canal and its approaches forms the core of a rational explanation of American policy. Why, then, did the military clamp continue well beyond the First World War, which exhausted the capability of would-be aggressors in Europe?

The man who might have achieved a quick loosening of the martial grip was Harding's secretary of state, Charles Evans Hughes, who has sometimes been viewed as eager to do just that. But Munro, in this his latest book, sees Hughes as cautious. While he announced that the Monroe Doctrine continued in force, he further stated that "the declaration of our purpose to oppose what is inimical to our safety does not imply an attempt to establish a protectorate" (p. 5). Clearly he wanted no new protectorates. But did he also understand the difficulty of disestablishing those already existing? Apparently not. Rather, he seems to have been in something of the situation of Harry Truman's caricature of President-elect Eisenhower, who, according to Truman, would issue presidential orders and see no results because he did not know that a political leader must constantly persuade not simply command. Commanding action in the State Department is, as statesmen from Wilson to John F. Kennedy have discovered, a frustrating undertaking. In describing the complexity of the Caribbean problems, Munro, a former State Department official himself, also unwittingly suggests the potential for frustration. "Deciding what to do about a political problem in a Central American country, for example, often required a knowledge of the background and of the personalities involved, and a consideration of the implications of any step that might be taken, for which only a person who dealt with the problems of one relatively small region could possibly have time. In dealing with matters of this sort, the secretary had to rely on the advice of his staff" (p. 6). The staff persuaded Hughes that immediate withdrawal was impossible.

Though an extreme case, the example of Haiti vividly illustrates the problem faced by Hughes and his successors. The illustration is compellingly executed by Hans Schmidt. Like numerous other scholars, Schmidt concludes that strategic considerations, not a missionary impulse, triggered the military takeover of Haiti in 1915. But the United States government would have found it awkward to state that it rushed in troops to foreclose the possibility of, say, a French landing—which was a distinct possibility. So, rather than gratuitously complicate relations with a European state, the government chose to emphasize its humanitarian objective. Secretary of State Lansing thought there was only one reason that could be acknowledged publicly for the intervention, “and that is the humane duty of furnishing means to relieve the famine situation. If our naval authorities should take over the collection of customs . . . these might be expended on the ground of dire necessity for the relief of starving people” (p. 67).

Now a case can be made for deception by governments. But no government can be excused for deceiving itself, as the American government, or at least the State Department, did during much of the twenty years of occupation of Haiti. President Wilson, after ordering the occupation, gave only sporadic attention to it. The Navy Department sent in the marines to carry out the occupation, and Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt bragged that he wrote the 1918 Haitian constitution. Ironically, at just the time when California and other states were outlawing alien landownership, Roosevelt and his associates saw to it that alien landownership was specifically safeguarded by the Haitian constitution. And though Roosevelt’s claim that he himself wrote the constitution may be doubted, there is no doubt—as Schmidt shows—that the scion of Hyde Park hoped to engage in property speculation in Haiti. FDR’s dalliance with Lucy Mercer probably was the least of his sins during the Wilson administration.

Haiti was next forced upon Wilson’s attention in 1919, not by FDR or any other American official who might have felt misgivings over the occupation. Rather, the Haitian representative at the Paris Peace Conference shamed Wilson and Lansing into acknowledging that American practice in Haiti did not square with Wilson’s declamations about self-determination and the rights of small nations. As a result, a cablegram went from Paris to the State Department stating the desire of the president to withdraw the marine occupiers and leave only a legion guard at Port-au-Prince. In response, FDR and the occupying force reported that, because of armed opposition to the Americans, a reduction in troop strength would not be feasible any time soon. Instead, within days another marine brigade was rushed to Haiti to reinforce the one already there.

The pattern was set. Secretary Hughes ran into the same unwillingness of the occupiers to leave until they could do so gracefully, and a decade later President Hoover encountered similar footdragging. Perhaps Hughes, who had startled the Washington Conference by his insistence that the way to disarm was to disarm, should have insisted that in Haiti the way to withdraw was to withdraw. Hoover did, in 1931. Dana Munro, then serving as minister to Haiti,

had to abandon plans for gradual withdrawal because of Hoover's desire to get out "bag and baggage immediately if possible" (Schmidt, p. 222.)

During most of the decade preceding Hoover's decision, *de facto* rule of Haiti was exercised by the United States Marines. It is in the description and analysis of this phase of American involvement in Haiti that Schmidt's book is so superior. It would be difficult to praise his work too highly. He has exploited manuscript and printed sources and has interviewed surviving participants, among them Dana Munro. The result is a book sympathetic to both the Haitians and to their marine occupiers, a book that is both forthright and fair. By comparison, Munro's book for all its admirable calm and detail seems a case of special pleading for the State Department.

No one, including Munro, had much faith in the nominal American objective of converting Haiti into a democratic and, therefore, stable nation. Munro allowed himself to report to his superiors that "force after all is the only thing these people have any respect for" (Schmidt, p. 221). The attitude of the Marines was even more disdainful. General John H. Russell, who was high commissioner from 1922 to 1930, considered most Haitians to be childlike and not far removed from savagery. His support of Jim Crow segregation and his racial attitudes generally would not have occasioned surprise in his native Georgia, or in most of the United States, but they hardly fitted him for his duties in Port-au-Prince.

Russell and his men can be faulted for their racism and their occasionally brutal suppression of opposition. They cannot be faulted, however, for governing by their own lights, especially since Washington, D. C. was usually neglectful. Martial men may be expected to rule by martial law, and proconsuls will behave like proconsuls: Russell consulted Lord Cromer's account of his rule over Egypt for guidance. The great anomaly is that the United States should have entrusted social and political reform to such an obviously ill-equipped organization as the Marine Corps. The few civilian members of the occupation, the men who attempted agricultural, sanitary, and fiscal reforms, hardly diluted the military character of the American presence. When widespread riots broke out in 1929, it became clear that even more force would be required if the Americans were to stay. President Hoover decided to get out: "I have no desire for representation of the American Government abroad through our military forces" (Schmidt, p. 206).

Hoover's sentiment applied beyond Haiti, of course. His secretary of state, Henry Stimson, wrestled continually with the problem of Nicaragua and the in-again-out-again American legion guard there. Again Munro handled much of the State Department routine, as he had in Haiti, and his book devotes over a quarter of its space to the knotty Nicaraguan question. When the final Marine contingent departed, in January 1933, it handed over command to Anastasio Somoza. As even casual students of Caribbean politics know, Somoza soon used his guard, established and trained by the marines, to make himself dictator. Similarly, the marine-nurtured constabulary in the Dominican Republic became the power base for that country's long-time dictator, Rafael Trujillo. In

both cases, the lasting American reform was the substitution of a central army for a handful of competing armed bands.

The relationship between Trujillo's regime (1930–61) and successive American administrations is the subject of the book by G. Pope Atkins and Larman C. Wilson. The authors conceive their subject to be a case study under the general category of United States policy toward Latin American dictators. Their book, which is brief, attempts to draw rational connections between policy ends and means. It is written in the graceless style of a position paper or a conference report and contains a fair number of counsels of perfection. Fortunately, the numbing effect of the prose is relieved by an engaging selection of photographs of the self-proclaimed "First and Greatest of the Dominican Chiefs of State" and "Genius of Peace."

The authors take pains to show that, for the United States, the promotion of democracy and the practice of nonintervention are not always compatible courses. They conclude that in 1930 the Hoover administration was wise to accept Trujillo's seizure of power rather than intervening to prop up democratic forms. And they note that, when the Eisenhower administration withdrew diplomatic recognition from Trujillo in 1960, it did so primarily because of Trujillo's meddling in Venezuela, not because of his undemocratic regime at home. The only form of intervention that Secretary of State Christian Herter proposed was multilateral intervention, by the Organization of American States, for the purpose of conducting free elections whereby Trujillo's successor could be chosen.

It is in regard to the matter of free elections that Atkins and Wilson make their most suggestive observation. Free elections became the sovereign American remedy in the Caribbean (and later in eastern Europe). But as the authors note, the Caribbean free elections in effect were not so much a manifestation of democracy as a device for arranging an orderly succession to a dictatorship. It seems entirely possible that the United States inadvertently cheapened a component of the democracy it vaunted. Dominicans and others may be pardoned for any cynicism they developed.

Burton Kaufman's fine study ought to bury forever any notion that the Wilson administration was antibusiness. By focusing on the numerous ways in which such administration figures as Secretary of Commerce Redfield and Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo went out of their way to facilitate the operations outside the country of organized manufacturers, merchants, and shippers, the book conclusively and systematically demonstrates the official enthusiasm for commerce. Legislation enabled banks and corporations to operate abroad more easily, exempted certain corporate combinations abroad from the provisions of the antitrust law, nurtured the expansion of the merchant marine, and enlarged the informational and other services of the Commerce Department. Certainly, an impressive array of both private and governmental machinery for the promotion of foreign trade came into being between 1913 and 1921.

Latin America was a field that many of the organizers studied by Kaufman saw as rich in potential, and while we do not find in his book proof that any of

the expensive, forcible forays of the United States into the Caribbean were directly prompted by economic considerations, we do find proof of something as interesting. The business and financial community shared the fear of military and naval thinkers that Germany would somehow steal the march on the United States in its own backyard. Constantly, agitators for government support of foreign economic ventures cited the model of German efficiency and drive. A case could probably be made that the popular image of Germany in America during the Progressive Era was as potent a factor in the promotion of external expansion as any of the standard factors usually cited. This curious, widespread fear in a nation which was simultaneously achieving surpassing strength calls for analysis of the national psyche. When such an analysis is undertaken, it will benefit greatly from the spadework done by Kaufman.

WILTON B. FOWLER
University of Washington