



An ADST-DACOR Diplomats and Diplomacy Book

PLUNGING INTO HAITI
CLINTON, ARISTIDE, AND
THE DEFEAT OF DIPLOMACY

Ralph Pezzullo

For much of the early 1990s, Haiti held the world's attention. A fiery populist priest, Jean Bertrand Aristide, was elected president and deposed a year later in a military coup. Soon thousands of desperately poor Haitians started to arrive in makeshift boats on the shores of Florida. In early 1993, the newly elected Clinton administration pledged to make the restoration of Aristide a cornerstone of its foreign policy. But that fall supporters of Haiti's ruling military junta intimidated the United States into ordering the USS *Harlan County* and its cargo of UN peacekeeping troops to abort plans and return to port. Less than a year later, for the first time in U.S. history, a deposed foreign president prevailed on the United States to use its military might to return him to office.

These extraordinary events provide the backdrop for *Plunging into Haiti*, Ralph Pezzullo's detailed inside account of the international diplomatic effort to resolve the political crisis. Based on thorough research and interviews, the author emphasizes the candid perspectives of his father, Lawrence Pezzullo, a key player in the story as Special Advisor to the Secretary of State on Haiti in 1993–94, and of three others deeply involved in the events: Michael Kozak of the State Department and Dante Caputo and Leandro Despouy, both of the United Nations. Robert Malval, an interim Haitian prime minister, also provides a key insider's account. The book tells the story of talented, committed men and women from the United States, France, Argentina, and Haiti who dedicated themselves to creating an outcome that would benefit Haiti and the rest of the world.

With the energy of a political thriller, *Plunging into Haiti* fleshes out the central political struggle with threads of Haitian history and will engage readers with a general interest in Haiti as well as students of foreign policy. Using his unique perspective and access, Pezzullo covers the aftermath of the Clinton administration's diplomatic maneuvers to show an island still in turmoil.

“Plunging into Haiti is a must-read for all who would know how foreign policy is actually made, day by day, by fallible and vulnerable people rather than as the abstract process usually depicted.”

—JAMES MORRELL, Executive Director, Haiti Democracy Project

Early Praise for *Plunging into Haiti* by Ralph Pezzullo:

“Highly ambitious and especially valuable, not only as a diplomatic case study drawing on a number of important primary sources, but also as a major contribution to the resources on Haiti itself, *Plunging into Haiti* also underscores our need to know cultures, national history, and individual personalities before pretending to set effective policies and fix courses of U.S. diplomatic and military action.”

—TIMOTHY M. CARNEY, former U.S. Ambassador to Haiti

“[With his] playwright's sense of language, character, and drama, Pezzullo presents a Potemkin Village of posturing self-righteousness and counterproductive—sometimes inexplicable—decisions and actions by all sides. . . .”

—HENRY (CHIP) CAREY, Professor of Political Science, Georgia State University

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