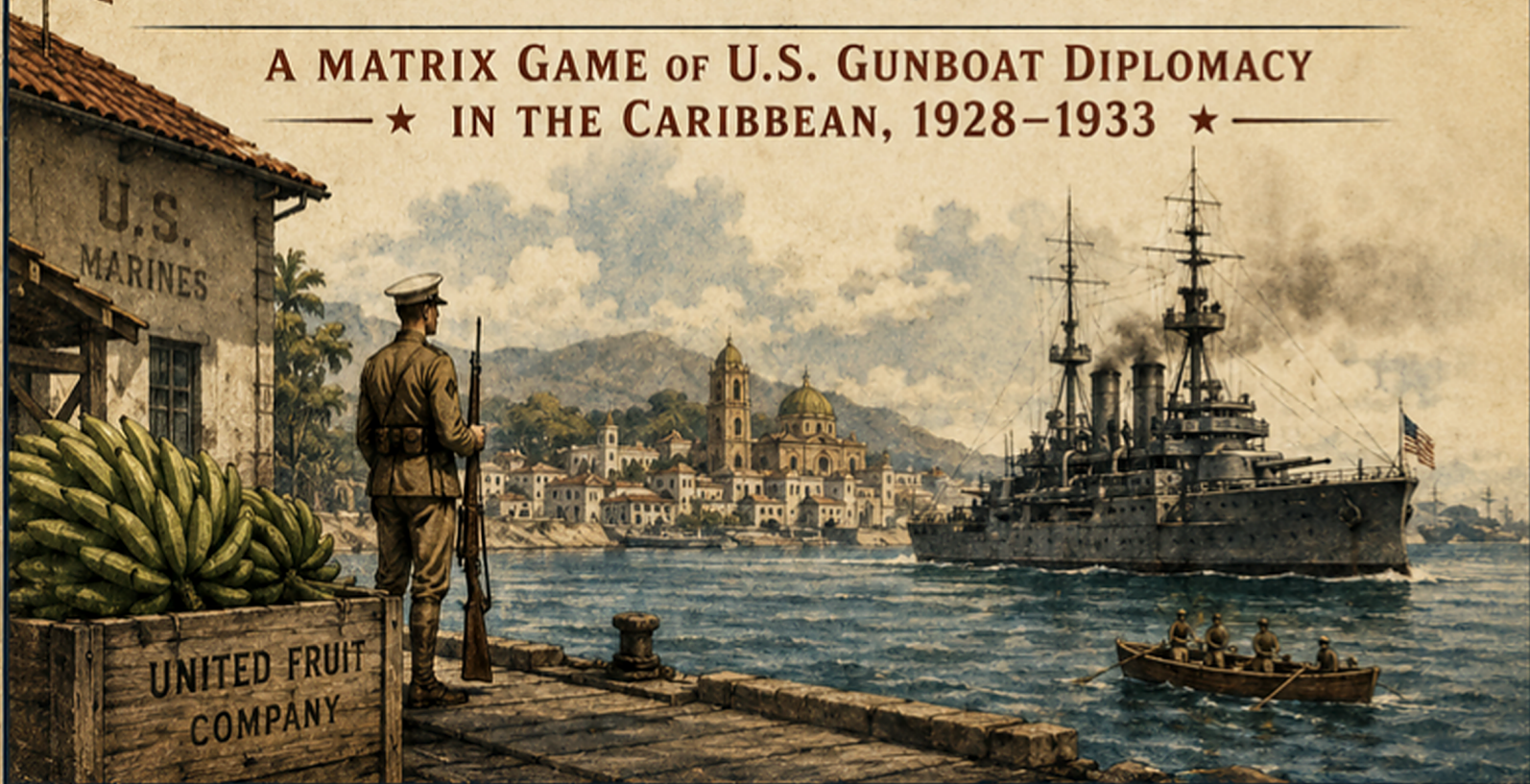


BANANAS, BAYONETS, AND BATTLESHIPS

A MATRIX GAME OF U.S. GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY
★ IN THE CARIBBEAN, 1928-1933 ★



NAVAL
POWER



ECONOMIC
INTERESTS



NATIONALIST
RESISTANCE



FRAGILE
GOVERNMENTS



FOREIGN
INFLUENCE

FIVE ACTORS. MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES. ONE CARIBBEAN.

★
Influence the region. Advance your interests. Shape the future.

Bananas, Bayonets, and Battleships

A Matrix Game of U.S. Gunboat Diplomacy in the Caribbean, 1928–1933

By John F. Schmitt

Overview

This matrix game places players in the era of the so-called "Banana Wars," when the United States repeatedly intervened throughout the Caribbean Basin to protect strategic interests, American investments, and regional stability. Marines patrol volatile republics, local strongmen seek power, commercial interests pursue profits, foreign powers probe for influence, and nationalist movements challenge outside control.

The game operates at the intersection of strategy, operations, and tactics. Players must decide not only grand policy but also where to deploy warships, Marines, insurgents, diplomats, and money.

The game is designed for **5 players**, in turn order:

- Nationalist Revolutionaries
- Caribbean Governments
- American Commercial Interests
- External Powers
- United States Government

What Is a Matrix Game?

A matrix game is a facilitated discussion game used to explore complex situations involving multiple actors with competing interests. Unlike traditional board wargames, matrix games do not attempt to model every detail through extensive rules. Instead, they rely on structured argument and adjudication to represent decisions, actions, and events.

The purpose of a matrix game is not merely to determine a winner. It is also to develop a deeper understanding of the problem, identify opportunities and risks, test assumptions, and explore how different actors might interact. Matrix games encourage creative thinking, critical analysis, and collaboration while preserving competition among the players.

At its heart, a matrix game is a conversation disciplined by logic and evidence. Players propose actions, explain their expected effects, and defend their reasoning. Other players challenge, refine, support, or complicate those arguments. The immediate purpose of this

process is to determine what happens in the game. Its broader purpose is to expose assumptions, reveal different perspectives, and generate insights. In this sense, argument is both the engine that drives the game and the principal learning mechanism of the game itself.

If an action is not explicitly prohibited by the scenario, it is generally open to argument. Players are therefore free to pursue military, political, diplomatic, economic, informational, or other approaches as appropriate to their objectives.

Purpose and Logic of Matrix Games

Unlike traditional board wargames, a matrix game does not rely on detailed combat tables or exhaustive rules to determine what players may do. Instead, players use informed argument to describe actions their actor could reasonably undertake and explain why those actions are likely to succeed. The game therefore emphasizes creative thinking, persuasion, and the exploration of complex decision-making rather than the optimization of predefined mechanics.

Every player represents an actor with distinct interests, objectives, and capabilities. Because those interests only partially overlap, players must constantly balance cooperation with competition. A government may welcome American investment but resent American political influence. A nationalist movement may oppose the government while temporarily cooperating with foreign supporters. These shifting relationships create the dynamic interactions that drive the game.

The objective is not simply to "win." The discussion itself is a form of analysis. By debating courses of action, challenging assumptions, and considering second- and third-order effects, players collectively develop a deeper understanding of the historical situation. In this sense, argument is both the mechanism by which the game advances and one of its principal educational outcomes.

How the Game Works

The game is played in turns. Each turn lasts **6 months**. During each turn, every actor has an opportunity to make one argument describing something that happens in the game world. An action may be military, political, diplomatic, economic, informational, or any reasonable combination of these. Players are encouraged to pursue creative approaches consistent with their actor's capabilities and historical context.

An argument consists of three elements:

1. An Action or Event

- Something your actor does, causes, or attempts.
- Something that occurs because of your actor's decisions.

2. A Measurable Result

- A specific outcome that would occur if the action succeeds.
- The result should be stated in concrete game terms.

3. Reasons Why It Is Likely to Succeed

- Evidence, logic, capabilities, circumstances, or precedents that support the argument.
- These reasons should explain why the proposed outcome is plausible.

For example:

1. **Action:** *“The United States deploys 2 cruisers to Corinto while Marines conduct joint patrols with the Nicaraguan National Guard.”*
2. **Measurable Result:** *“Stability and U.S. Credibility each increase by +1. Sandino guerrilla actions receive a -1 on dice roll for all succeeding turns until S\Nationalist Revolutionaries take a successful counteraction.”*
3. **Reasons Why It Is Likely to Succeed:** *“This action is likely to succeed because: (1) the U.S. Navy enjoys overwhelming local naval superiority, (2) joint patrols strengthen the government's security forces, and (3) a visible naval presence will deter rebel attacks without requiring a major offensive.”*

For each action:

1. The active player presents an argument.
2. The other players may briefly support or challenge that argument.
3. The facilitator adjudicates the argument and determines the outcome.
4. Metrics are adjusted as appropriate.
5. Any consequences are recorded before the next player acts.

At the end of each turn, a Random Event may occur, introducing new opportunities or complications that affect all players for the next turn. Play then proceeds to the next turn.

The Spirit of the Game

A matrix game operates on two levels simultaneously.

At one level, players are competing to achieve their objectives and influence events in their favor. They seek advantages, exploit opportunities, overcome obstacles, and shape the course of events.

At another level, the group is collectively exploring a complex problem or issue. Every argument forces participants to explain their reasoning, confront competing interpretations, and consider factors they may not previously have recognized. The result is that even unsuccessful arguments often contribute valuable understanding. A good matrix

game therefore measures success not only by the quality of decisions made within the game, but also by the quality of the discussion and insights generated around the table.

The argument process is how events are created, how uncertainty is explored, and how participants learn. And through those arguments, the players collectively build both the narrative of the game and a richer understanding of the situation being explored. By the end of a successful matrix game, players should not only understand what happened in the game world; they should also understand the real-world problem more deeply than they did when they began.

Adjudication

The purpose of adjudication is not merely to determine winners and losers. Rather, it disciplines the discussion by requiring players to make plausible, evidence-based arguments. A weak argument supported by little evidence should be less likely to succeed than a strong argument grounded in facts, capabilities, and logic.

Once adjudicated, the result becomes part of the game reality. Future arguments must be based on what has already happened. Players may not argue against established facts unless they are specifically attempting to reverse or change them through new actions.

There are several ways of adjudicating the outcome of arguments, ranging from having a subject-matter expert judge the arguments to having the entire group vote. Some methods use a dice roll to add a probabilistic element.

One of the most common methods is called *weighted probability*. Two dice are rolled. A roll of 7 or higher means the action is successful, with the dice roll weighted plus or minus 1 or 2 based on the strength of the competing arguments as judged by the facilitator.

Roll	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Catastrophic Failure		Argument Fails			Argument Succeeds				Great Success	

For example, the facilitator assigns an especially strong argument a +2. The dice roll is a 6, which normally denotes failure, but $6 + 2 = 8$ means the argument succeeds.

When judging the arguments, the facilitator evaluates each based on its plausibility rather than on rigid rules. Players are encouraged to challenge unsupported assumptions, but debate should remain brief and focused on the merits of the argument. The facilitator should consider questions such as:

- Is the action consistent with the actor's capabilities?
- Are the proposed effects proportional to the effort?
- Are the stated reasons historically and logically persuasive?

- Have previous events in the game made the action easier or more difficult?
- Would success create unintended consequences elsewhere?

Most successful actions modify one game metric and occasionally two. Particularly ambitious actions may produce both positive and negative effects. For example, a Marine intervention may increase **Stability** while simultaneously increasing **Nationalist Momentum**, or foreign investment may improve **Economic Prosperity** while reducing a government's domestic legitimacy.

The facilitator should also account for cumulative effects. Repeated success in one area may make future actions easier, while earlier failures may impose lasting constraints. Likewise, players should be rewarded for building upon previous actions rather than treating each turn as an isolated event.

Combat Outcomes

Some arguments may result in direct combat between military and paramilitary forces. There are multiple ways to resolve combat. One of the most common is to have both actors roll two dice simultaneously until one makes a successful roll and the other an unsuccessful roll. Rolls are weighted based on the relative combat power of the combatants. The more rolls it takes to achieve a decisive result, the more intense the combat.

Unit	Combat Rating	Fails	Succeeds
U.S. Marines	+2	≤4	≥5
Haitian Gendarmerie	+1	≤5	≥6
Nicaraguan National Guard	+1	≤5	≥6
Dominican Army	0	≤6	≥7
Sandino Guerrillas	+1	≤5	≥6
Haitian Cacos	0	≤6	≥7
European regular forces	+2	≤4	≥5
Other guerrilla forces	-1	≤7	≥8

Adjustments to combat ratings in any given situation based on terrain or other tactical considerations are open to argument.

Units that suffer defeat lose 1 point in Combat Rating.

Measuring Success and Change

One challenge in matrix gaming is translating narrative arguments into meaningful results. Players may argue about abstract concepts such as legitimacy, influence, stability, morale, or economic health. While discussion remains central to the game, facilitators often use **metrics** to track how the situation evolves over time.

Metrics provide a simple way to quantify the cumulative effects of arguments. They help players understand whether conditions are improving or deteriorating and provide a common reference point for judging success.

Some metrics apply to the situation overall. Shared metrics in this game are Regional Stability, Economic Prosperity, Notionalist Momentum, or Foreign Influence. Actions by any player may increase or decrease these metrics.

Other metrics are **actor-specific** and reflect the unique concerns of a particular actor. For example, the United States might track Prestige while Caribbean Governments track Legitimacy.

Metrics should support the narrative rather than dominate it. Their purpose is not to reduce a complex situation to numbers, but to help players think more rigorously about cause and effect while keeping the focus on argument, discussion, and learning. In some games, metrics may determine victory conditions; in others, they simply provide another lens through which to understand the evolving situation.

Most arguments will affect 1 or 2 metrics; ambitious arguments may target 3, but the bar for success should be higher. Gray cells marked with an * indicate the level of that metric at the start of the game.

Shared—common to all actors						
Regional Stability—Degree of political order across the region						
-3	-2	-1	0	1*	2	3
Economic Prosperity—Regional trade, investment, employment, and government revenue						
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2*	3
Nationalist Momentum—Anti-foreign and anti-establishment political energy						
-3	-2	-1	0*	1	2	3
Foreign Influence—Non-U.S. influence in the Caribbean						
-3	-2	-1*	0	1	2	3

United States						
Prestige—Measures perceived American credibility and leadership						
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2*	3

Caribbean Governments						
Legitimacy—Measures domestic acceptance of governing institutions						
-3	-2	-1	0*	1	2	3

Nationalist Revolutionaries						
Popular Support—Anti-foreign and anti-establishment political energy.						
-3	-2	-1	0*	1	2	3

American Commercial Interests						
Profitability—Measures returns on investment						
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2*	3

External Powers						
Access—Measures practical ability to influence events						
-3	-2	-1	0*	1	2	3

Crisis Thresholds

When key metrics reach certain levels, they trigger crises, which have implications for the game:

Stability at -3: Facilitator assigns one:

- Government collapse
- Coup d'état
- Major insurgency
- Civil war

The player most responsible for driving Stability downward receives a +1 on next argument, but all players must now deal with the consequences.

Economic Prosperity at -3: Effects:

- +1 Nationalist Momentum
- -1 Stability

- Caribbean Governments receive -1 on subsequent arguments as long as metric remains -3.
- Nationalist Revolutionaries receive +1 on subsequent arguments as long as metric remains -3.
- American Commercial Interests receive -1 on subsequent arguments as long as metric remains -3.

Foreign Influence at +3: Challenge to the Monroe Doctrine: An external power gains a permanent foothold (economic, diplomatic, military advisory mission, or intelligence network) somewhere in the Caribbean Basin.

U.S. Prestige at -3: American Credibility Crisis: The next anti-American action gains a +1 on next argument.

Caribbean Governments Legitimacy at -3 or Nationalist Revolutionaries Popular Support at +3: Facilitator assigns open civil war in one country.

Nationalist Revolutionaries Popular Support at -3: Nationalist Revolutionary movement decisively defeated in one country.

American Commercial Interests Profitability at -3: American Commercial Interests closed out of one country.

External Powers Access at -3: External Powers closed out of one country.

Random Events

Before each turn, the facilitator rolls two dice to determine if any random events occur. These events serve a forcing function, creating either opportunities or crises that actors may want or need to respond to. They can also be used as reasons for or against an argument.

Roll	Event
2	Major hurricane devastates one Caribbean island
3	Commodity prices collapse.
4	Marine patrol massacred.
5	Government corruption scandal exposed.
6	Foreign investors arrive
7	One U.S. warship must put into Miami for repairs (unavailable for 1 turn)
8	Major labor strike.
9	Major European newspaper publishes exposé alleging Marine atrocities.
10	Rebel leader killed.
11	New rebel movement emerges.
12	Infestation destroys the banana crop in one Caribbean nation.

The facilitator chooses in which operational area the event occurs, as appropriate.

Operational Areas

The theater is organized into the following operational areas:

1. Cuba

- Sugar economy
- Labor unrest
- Strategic location near Florida
- Possible instability:
 - Strikes
 - Political violence
 - Foreign influence

2. Haiti

- U.S. occupation (1st Marine Brigade)
- Gendarmerie
- Rural resistance (*Cacos*)

3. Dominican Republic

- Political instability
- Emerging strongmen
- Strategic ports

4. Nicaragua

- Sandino Insurgency
- U.S.-backed government
- U.S. occupation (2nd Marine Brigade)
- Special rule: Nationist Revolutionaries begin with active forces here

5. Honduras/Guatemala

- Banana plantations
- United Fruit Influence
- Weak institutions
- Special rule: American Commercial Interests gain +1 on all arguments here.

6. Panama Canal Zone

- Vital strategic interest for U.S.
- U.S. Special Service Squadron based here

- Special rule: Any successful hostile argument here creates -2 to Stability and U.S. Prestige.

Scenario Introduction (Common to All Players)

The Caribbean Basin in 1928 is often described as an American lake. The United States Navy dominates regional waters, Marines are stationed ashore in several countries, and American corporations control vast investments in agriculture, mining, banking, railroads, and shipping. The Panama Canal, completed only a decade earlier, has become a cornerstone of American military and commercial power. Washington believes stability in the region is essential to national security.

Yet beneath the appearance of order, tensions are mounting.

Throughout Central America and the Caribbean, nationalist leaders denounce foreign influence and the growing power of local elites who depend upon American support. In Nicaragua, the guerrilla leader Augusto Sandino continues to resist U.S.-backed authorities, demonstrating that even the world's most powerful nation cannot easily suppress determined local resistance. Similar sentiments simmer elsewhere, fueled by economic inequality, political corruption, and resentment toward foreign intervention.

Governments across the region face difficult choices. American support offers security, loans, and investment, but it often comes at the cost of political independence. Local leaders must balance the demands of Washington against the expectations of their own populations. Some seek closer cooperation with the United States; others quietly explore alternatives.

American businesses see enormous opportunities. Banana plantations, sugar estates, mines, railways, and banks generate substantial profits, but these investments depend upon stable governments and secure transportation routes. Business leaders increasingly pressure Washington to protect their interests when instability threatens.

Meanwhile, foreign powers watch carefully. While no nation can challenge American naval supremacy directly, rivals seek opportunities to expand commercial influence, encourage resistance to U.S. dominance, and undermine the Monroe Doctrine through diplomacy, finance, and propaganda.

The onset of global economic uncertainty further complicates matters. Falling commodity prices, labor unrest, corruption scandals, hurricanes, and insurgencies threaten to destabilize governments across the region. Every crisis raises a fundamental question: should the United States intervene to restore order, or should local nations determine their own destinies?

Over the next five years, the future of the Caribbean Basin will be shaped by decisions made in presidential offices, plantation boardrooms, rebel camps, naval headquarters, and crowded city streets. Stability, prosperity, nationalism, and great-power competition all hang in the balance.

Nationalist Revolutionaries

You represent the growing nationalist and anti-imperialist movements emerging throughout the Caribbean Basin. Your ranks include guerrilla leaders, labor organizers, student activists, journalists, reform politicians, and intellectuals. While your movements differ in ideology, they share a common conviction: Caribbean nations should govern themselves rather than serve the interests of foreign powers.

The most prominent example is **Augusto César Sandino's guerrilla movement in Nicaragua**, which continues to challenge the U.S.-backed government and Marine occupation. Similar sentiments can be found among labor activists in Cuba, student movements in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and nationalist politicians throughout the region. Some seek constitutional reform and greater sovereignty; others advocate social revolution or radical redistribution of wealth.

You understand that the United States cannot occupy every village, mountain range, or city neighborhood. Your objective is not necessarily military victory but political victory. Every Marine patrol, every intervention, every corrupt government official, and every plantation strike can become evidence that the existing order is illegitimate.

You thrive when governments overreact. Repression, election fraud, economic hardship, and foreign interference all create opportunities to recruit supporters and expand your influence. Your challenge is to maintain unity among diverse movements while convincing ordinary citizens that nationalism offers a better future than the status quo.

Major Objectives

- End foreign domination
- Force withdrawal of U.S. forces
- Expand nationalist support

Secondary Objectives

- Discredit existing governments
- Build independent political institutions
- Gain international recognition

Resources

- Labor unions
- Cacos rebellion in Haiti
- Sandino guerrillas in Nicaragua
- Political agitators

- Emerging strongmen in the Dominican Republic
- Weak institutions in Honduras and Guatemala
- Propagandists

Typical Actions

- Conduct guerrilla warfare
- Organize strikes and demonstrations
- Establish nationalist newspapers
- Build underground political networks
- Expose corruption
- Seek support from foreign sympathizers
- Turn U.S. interventions into propaganda victories

Victory Conditions

Major Victory

- Nationalist Momentum +3
- End Marine occupations

Minor Victory

- Force U.S. political concessions

Caribbean Governments

You represent the governments, ruling parties, military leaders, and political elites of the Caribbean and Central American republics. While each nation has its own circumstances, all face similar challenges: weak institutions, economic dependence on export commodities, political factionalism, and the looming presence of the United States.

American support can be both a blessing and a curse. U.S. loans, military assistance, and diplomatic backing can help preserve your government during times of crisis. Yet every visible sign of dependence provides ammunition to nationalist opponents who portray you as servants of foreign interests. You must constantly navigate between pleasing Washington and preserving domestic legitimacy.

Many of your governments inherited fragile political systems. Corruption, patronage, regional rivalries, and military ambitions threaten stability from within. A poorly managed election, an unpopular reform, or a severe economic downturn can quickly trigger unrest. At the same time, reforms that strengthen long-term legitimacy may alienate powerful supporters whose loyalty is essential to your survival.

Your challenge is to remain in power while gradually strengthening your state. Success requires managing foreign relationships, maintaining elite support, and responding effectively to popular discontent before it becomes revolution.

Major Objectives

- Remain in power
- Preserve internal stability
- Maintain control of national territory

Secondary Objectives

- Maximize political independence
- Secure foreign investment
- Build durable institutions

Resources

- Dominican Army
- Nicaraguan National Guard
- Gendarmerie of Haiti
- Police forces
- Regional militias
- Patronage networks

- Provincial governors
- Business allies

Typical Actions

- Expand security forces
- Distribute patronage
- Negotiate political settlements
- Request American support
- Conduct reforms
- Suppress insurgencies
- Build infrastructure
- Manipulate elections
- Exploit rivalries among opposition groups

Victory Conditions

Major Victory

- Survive in power
- Stability +1 or higher

Minor Victory

- Preserve autonomy while retaining U.S. support

American Commercial Interests

You represent the banks, shipping firms, mining companies, railroad operators, sugar producers, and fruit companies whose investments span the Caribbean Basin. The region is both an economic opportunity and a source of constant uncertainty. Political instability threatens profits, while excessive intervention can create public backlash that endangers long-term business interests.

Your influence derives not from military force but from money, employment, infrastructure, and access to decision-makers in Washington and local capitals. In many countries, your investments represent a substantial portion of the economy. Governments need your capital. Workers depend on your enterprises. American policymakers frequently listen to your concerns.

Yet your interests do not always align perfectly with those of the U.S. government. You desire stability, but not necessarily military occupation. You seek predictability and access to markets. In some circumstances, moderate reform may be preferable to repression if it preserves the business climate. In others, stronger measures may seem necessary.

Your challenge is to protect profits while avoiding becoming the symbol of foreign exploitation that nationalist movements use to rally support.

Major Objectives

- Protect investments
- Maintain profitable operations
- Ensure secure trade routes

Secondary Objectives

- Expand economic opportunities
- Encourage favorable governments
- Prevent nationalization

Resources

- Sugar and fruit plantations
- Roads and Railways
- Shipping
- Mines
- Capital
- Political influence/lobbyists
- Arms dealers

- Propagandists
- Intelligence operatives

Typical Actions

- Expand investment
- Fund infrastructure projects
- Support political allies
- Lobby Washington
- Finance security measures
- Influence media coverage
- Provide economic relief
- Negotiate labor agreements
- Threaten capital withdrawal

Victory Conditions

Major Victory

- Economic Prosperity +3
- No nationalizations

Minor Victory

- Maintain profitable access to markets

External Powers

You represent the collection of outside powers seeking opportunities in a region long dominated by the United States. Depending on circumstances, this may include European commercial interests, Mexican diplomacy, Soviet agents, international financial institutions, foreign shipping firms, and others who see advantage in a less exclusive American sphere.

You cannot challenge American naval supremacy directly. Any attempt to do so would be futile. Instead, your strategy is indirect. Economic investment, diplomatic engagement, propaganda, intelligence activities, and support to local actors can gradually erode American influence without provoking open confrontation.

Your greatest ally is American overconfidence. Heavy-handed interventions, prolonged occupations, and support for unpopular governments create opportunities for you to present alternatives. You can offer loans, trade agreements, diplomatic support, weapons, expertise, or simply a sympathetic audience for those frustrated by American dominance.

Success does not necessarily require driving the United States from the region. It is enough to demonstrate that Washington cannot dictate events alone. Every gain in influence, every new partnership, and every challenge to the Monroe Doctrine represents progress toward that goal.

Major Objectives

- Expand foreign influence
- Weaken American dominance
- Establish lasting economic or diplomatic footholds

Secondary Objectives

- Secure commercial opportunities
- Support sympathetic governments
- Encourage regional independence from Washington

Resources

- Investment capital
- Soviet agents in Cuba
- Mexican influence in Nicaragua
- Intelligence operatives
- Arms dealers
- Propaganda networks

- Diplomatic pressure

Typical Actions

- Offer loans and investment
- Conduct diplomatic initiatives
- Support nationalist groups
- Supply arms and advisers
- Expand trade networks
- Run propaganda campaigns
- Exploit crises
- Build intelligence networks
- Challenge U.S. policies in international forums

Victory Conditions

Major Victory

- Foreign Influence +3

Minor Victory

- U.S. Prestige below 0

United States Government

You represent the combined leadership of the United States government, including the White House, State Department, Navy Department, Marine Corps, and diplomatic missions throughout the Caribbean Basin. Since the Spanish-American War, successive administrations have embraced the idea that instability in the Caribbean threatens American security and prosperity. The Panama Canal has only reinforced that belief. Washington considers the Caribbean an essential sphere of influence and expects neighboring governments to remain stable, friendly, and free from foreign interference.

You possess overwhelming military power. Cruisers, destroyers, Marine expeditionary forces, diplomats, and financial advisers give you tools that no other actor can match. However, power creates its own challenges. Every intervention risks generating nationalist opposition. Every deployment of Marines may restore order today while creating enemies for tomorrow. Domestic political support for foreign occupations is not unlimited, particularly as economic concerns begin to emerge at home.

You must balance competing priorities. Business interests demand protection. Caribbean governments seek assistance while resenting interference. Nationalists exploit every American mistake. Foreign powers search constantly for opportunities to undermine your position. The central question of your game is whether stability can be maintained without creating the very resistance that threatens it.

Major Objectives

- Maintain regional stability
- Protect the Panama Canal and Caribbean Sea lanes
- Preserve U.S. prestige and credibility
- Prevent foreign powers from gaining influence

Secondary Objectives

- Protect American citizens and investments
- Build capable local security forces
- Reduce the need for permanent occupations

Resources

- 1st Marine Brigade in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.
 - 1st Marine Regiment
 - 2nd Marine Regiment
- 2nd Marine Brigade in Managua, Nicaragua
 - 5th Marine Regiment

- 11th Marine Regiment
- Special Service Squadron based at Balboa, Panama Canal Zone, consisting of 1 armored cruiser, 3 light cruisers, 2 destroyers and 2 patrol gunboats:
 - USS Rochester (CA-2)
 - USS Galveston (CL-19)
 - USS Denver (CL-16)
 - USS Memphis (CL-13)
 - USS Wickes (DD-75)
 - USS Philip (DD-76)
 - USS Asheville (PG-21)
 - USS Tulsa (PG-22)
- Diplomats
- Election supervisors
- Financial advisors
- Deploy naval squadrons
- Land Marines
- Supervise elections
- Train national guard forces
- Negotiate settlements
- Apply financial leverage
- Recognize or isolate governments
- Conduct counterinsurgency campaigns

Victory Conditions

Major Victory

- Stability +2 or higher
- U.S. Prestige +2 or higher
- Foreign Influence 0 or less

Minor Victory

- Canal remains secure and no state collapses

BANANA WARS THEATER

• CIRCA 1928 •

A region of strategic straits, valuable ports, and fertile lands—where commerce, politics, and power often collide.

LEGEND

- Major Port / Naval Base (Existing)
- Major City
- U.S. Naval Presence
- British Presence
- German Presence
- National Capital
- Railroad
- Major Road
- Banana / Fruit Company Operations
- Key Shipping Route

CUBA

- Sugar economy
- Labor unrest
- Strategic location
- Soviet agents

HAITI

- U.S. occupation
- Gendarmerie
- Cacos rural insurgents
- Student organizations
- 1st Marine Brigade at Port-au-Prince

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

- Political instability
- Emerging strongmen
- Dominican Army
- Political agitators
- European investors

NICARAGUA

- Sandino guerrillas
- U.S.-backed government
- National Guard
- 2nd Marine Brigade at Managua
- V0-1M squadron (12 aircraft)
- Mexican influence

HONDURAS/GUATEMALA

- Banana plantations
- United Fruit influence
- Weak institutions

KEY STRATEGIC NOTES

- Control of ports = influence
- Banana & fruit companies own land, railroads & ports
- U.S. Marines have landed repeatedly to "restore order"
- European powers maintain commercial & naval interests

The Panama Canal (1914) shortened the route—and the reach—of power.

PANAMA CANAL ZONE

- Vital strategic interest
- Hostile activity here has severe consequences
- U.S. Special Service Squadron at Balboa
 - USS Rochester (CA-2)
 - USS Galveston (CL-19)
 - USS Denver (CL-16)
 - USS Memphis (CL-13)
 - USS Wickes (DD-75)
 - USS Philip (DD-76)
 - USS Asheville (PG-21)
 - USS Tulsa (PG-22)

MAJOR FRUIT COMPANY PRESENCE (circa 1928)

- United Fruit Company ("El Pulpo")
 - Standard Fruit Company
 - Cuyamel Fruit Company
 - Boston Fruit Company
- (Operations overlap and compete)

