THE UNITED STATES AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TO 1965: BACKGROUND TO INTERVENTION

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The history of U.S. relations with the Dominican Republic, indeed with the Caribbean region generally, is a tale of mutual frustration. Perhaps in no other country has the influence of the United States been so long and so continuously exerted as in the Dominican Republic, yet in few places have the limits of America's power to transform foreign realities been more evident. Three times within sixty years — in 1905, in 1916, and in 1965 — the United States sent the Marines to Santo Domingo, but these military interventions are only the most dramatic episodes in a record of extraordinary American involvement in Dominican affairs, involvement which preceded the first intervention and survives the third.

Events in the Dominican Republic, for instance, occasioned the "Roosevelt corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine, the initial U.S. interest in customs receivership, and undisguised American efforts to dictate public policies of the Dominican government — all before the U.S. military occupation of 1916-24. More recently, in the five years before the 1965 intervention, the U.S. Government undertook a wide variety of activities in the Dominican Republic, among them: implementing OAS-approved sanctions against the brutal Trujillo dictatorship; using the threat of military force to stabilize a volatile situation after the dictatorship's sudden end; expending foreign aid for immediate political purposes; helping to organize and assure free elections under OAS supervision; assisting the elected government through the Alliance for Progress; strengthening some groups through political development programs and reinforcing others through military assistance and training; attempting to deter and then to reverse an unconstitutional change of government by threatening to withhold recognition and suspend aid and then by doing so; pressuring for a return to constitutional procedure through national elections; and eventually aiding the unconstitutional regime in many ways — funding its development programs, training its police, even providing it tactical political advice — although the promised elections were not held.

Review of this troubled history suggests that the United States has

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long been deeply, pervasively, but somewhat reluctantly involved in Dominican affairs. The extent of American involvement in the Dominican Republic has almost always been extraordinarily great. Its nature has been mainly preemptive and its principal motivation has been the protection of U.S. security.

Although the landing of American troops at Santo Domingo in 1965 shocked even knowledgeable observers of U.S. policy in Latin America, it should not really have been so surprising if seen in the context of previous American relations with the Dominican Republic and the rest of the Caribbean. Earlier American involvements in the area did not make inevitable the 1965 military intervention, but they did help shape the attitudes of American officials and thus made the Dominican episode more likely. An analysis of this history and its effects on American attitudes and assumptions will make the events of 1965 easier to comprehend.

II

Although nominally sovereign and independent since 1844, the Dominican Republic has never been able to exclude the predominant influence of the United States. As early as 1849 one Dominican president approached Washington to request that the Dominican Republic be annexed.[1] This particular overture was rejected, but the American government's special interest in conditions on the island of Hispaniola (which the Dominican Republic shares with Haiti) due to the "proximity of that island to the United States" was noted by President Millard Fillmore in his Annual Message to Congress a year later.[2]

Several times during the rest of the nineteenth century, American officials negotiated with Dominicans on proposed annexation agreements. Even more often, U.S. and Dominican representatives discussed proposals to grant the U.S. government special rights and concessions, particularly for use of Samaná Bay. None of these discussions ever produced lasting agreement, but one annexation proposal — strenuously backed by President U.S. Grant — did reach the floor of the Senate in 1870; half of the fifty-six senators present at the vote supported the plan.[3]

Four scholarly analyses of successive periods in Dominican-American relations reveal the deepening U.S. involvement in Dominican

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[1] Charles C. Tansill, *The United States and Santo Domingo, 1798-1873: A Chapter in Caribbean Diplomacy* (Baltimore, 1938), 130.

[2] Charles C. Tansill, *The United States and Santo Domingo...*, 154.

[3] Sumner Welles, *Naboth's Vineyard: The Dominican Republic, 1844-1924* (New York, 1928), Vol. I, 395. In 1871 Dominican President Buenaventura Báez tried to reinterest Grant in annexation by alleging Prussian designs on Samaná; this was probably the first use of what was to become a standard ploy in Dominican-American relations. See Welles, *Naboth's Vineyard...*, I, 403.

affairs from 1870 to 1915. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, "relations were necessarily of an intimate nature," and American engagement increased as U.S. private interests expanded and U.S. strategic horizons broadened.[4] At the turn of the century, the establishment of the San Domingo Improvement Company — organized to collect the Dominican government's debts to foreign bond-holders — climaxed "two decades of steady advance toward American commercial and economic dominance of the Dominican Republic."[5] The U.S. government's support for the San Domingo Company, another analyst concludes, "marked the beginning of a more active participation by the United States in the Dominican Republic — leading to closer control of the country's economy" as the twentieth century opened.[6] During the first two decades of this century, a fourth scholar notes, "in no Latin American country were the economic and political intervention by the United States more in evidence nor carried farther towards their logical conclusion than in the Dominican Republic."[7]

Step by step the U.S. government involved itself ever more deeply in Dominican affairs. Having supported the claims of the San Domingo Improvement Company on the Dominican government's resources, the U.S. government next — under President Theodore Roosevelt — asserted the right to collect customs charges at Santo Domingo and other Dominican ports in order to guarantee that the Dominican government would pay its debts. Once established, U.S. control of Dominican customs' collection paved the way for American demands to exercise final authority on the Dominican government's expenditure of revenue collected by the customs' receivership. Soon the United States government demanded, as well, the right to dictate specific policies to the Dominican government. American officials were particularly eager that the Dominicans disband their armies and establish a national constabulary under U.S. supervision, and also that Dominican factions agree to hold U.S.-supervised elections and pledge

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[4] William F. Tansill, "Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and the Dominican Republic, 1874-1899," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the Department of History, Georgetown University, 1952), 212 ff.

[5] David C. MacMichael, "The United States and the Dominican Republic 1871-1940: A Cycle in Caribbean Diplomacy," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the Department of History, University of Oregon, 1964), 72.

[6] Edgar C. Duin, "Dominican-American Diplomatic Relations, 1895-1907," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the Department of History, Georgetown University, 1955), 112.

[7] Earl R. Curry, "The United States and the Dominican Republic, 1924-1933: dilemma in the Caribbean," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the Department of History, University of Minnesota, 1965) introduction.

to respect the results. When the Dominican government balked at these and similar demands, the stage was set in 1916 for President Woodrow Wilson to send in the Marines.[8]

Once the Marines landed, U.S. officials thought it necessary to establish an outright military government in the Dominican Republic. For eight years American military and civilian personnel ruled the Dominican Republic directly, taking over every branch of public administration. American troops attempted to impose order, American officers trained and commanded a Dominican constabulary, American revenue agents collected taxes, American engineers built roads and bridges, American bureaucrats set up a civil service system and reformed the post office, and American educators revamped the Dominican Republic's schools.[9]

The occupation period marked the height of American intervention in Dominican affairs, but strong U.S. influence was assured even after the Marines withdrew and an elected Dominican regime took office in

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[8] Perhaps the best single account of the process by which the U.S. government was drawn more deeply into Dominican affairs and finally into military intervention may be found in relevant chapters of Dana G. Munro's, *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean, 1900-1921* (Princeton, 1964). Other works I have used in analyzing this period, besides those previously noted, include: Wilford H. Colcott, *The Caribbean Policy of the United States, 1890-1920* (Baltimore, 1942); Melvin M. Knight, *The Americans in Santo Domingo* (New York, 1928); Max Henríquez Ureña, *Los Yanquis en Santo Domingo* (Madrid, 1929); Charles E. Chapman, "The United States and the Dominican Republic," *Hispanic American Historical Review* (February, 1928): 84-91; J. Fred Rippy, "The Initiation of the Customs Receivership in the Dominican Republic," *Hispanic American Historical Review* (November, 1937): 419-457; and Carl Kelsey, "The American Intervention in Haiti and the Dominican Republic," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (March, 1922): 113-202.

[9] There is as yet no good comprehensive analysis of the U.S. occupation in the Dominican Republic. Among the sources I have consulted, besides those already cited, are: "Inquiry into Occupation and Administration of Santo Domingo," *Hearings before a Select Committee of the United States Senate* (Washington, 1922; 2 volumes); Military Government of the Dominican Republic, *Santo Domingo — Its Past and Its Present Condition* (Santo Domingo, 1920); Marvin Goldwert, *The Constabulary in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua: Progeny and Legacy of United States Intervention* (Gainesville, 1962); Antonio Hoepelman and Juan A. Senior (eds.), *Documentos Históricos que se Refieren a la Implantación de un Gobierno Militar Americano en la República Dominicana* (Santo Domingo, 1922); Enrique A. Henríquez, *Episodios Imperialistas* (Ciudad Trujillo, 1958); Luis F. Mejía, *De Lilis a Trujillo* (Caracas, 1944); C. C. Baughman, "United States Occupation of the Dominican Republic," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings* (December, 1925): 2306-2327; Rufus H. Lane, "Civil Government in Santo Domingo in the Early Days of the Military Occupation," *The Marine Corps Gazette* (June, 1922): 127-146; Robert C. Kilmartin, "Indoctrination in Santo Domingo," *The Marine Corps Gazette* (December, 1922): 377-486; and T. J. Saxon, Jr., "Diplomatic Spurs: Dominican Republic, 1916-1924," *The Marine Corps Gazette* (November, 1965): 40-41.

1924.[10] The United States-Dominican Republic Convention of that year reserved several rights to the U.S. government, and it appears that American officials considered the threat of renewed military intervention a legitimate means of assuring that these rights would be respected.[11] Even after the Franklin Roosevelt administration formally renounced unilateral intervention as a policy instrument, the U.S. maintained its customs receivership officially until 1941 and retained other fiscal controls over the Dominican government until 1947.[12]

U.S. entanglement in Dominican affairs decreased somewhat during the long Trujillo period, from 1930 to 1961. The last years of the Trujillo era, however, brought renewed American involvement.[13] The U.S. government's decision in 1960 to go beyond diplomatic and economic sanctions the OAS had voted against Trujillo by imposing a special fee on the purchase of Dominican sugar served to strengthen the will of Dominicans opposed to Trujillo and thus brought the U.S. government back into Dominican politics as a key actor.[14]. American officials in Santo Domingo identified and encouraged a group of anti-Trujillo Dominicans, assuring them that the United States government would cooperate with them should they gain power. According to some reports, U.S. agents may even have materially aided the Dominican plot which culminated with Trujillo's assassination on May 30, 1961.[15]

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[10] See Curry, "The United States and the Dominican Republic...," and Joseph R. Juárez, "United States Withdrawal from Santo Domingo," *Hispanic American Historical Review* (May, 1962): 152-190.

[11] Curry, "The United States and the Dominican Republic...," 258.

[12] George P. Atkins and Larman C. Wilson, "The United States and Trujillo: A Policy Study of U.S. Relations with Latin American Dictatorships," unpublished manuscript cited with the authors' permission, 40.

[13] See Atkins and Wilson, "The United States and Trujillo...," for a systematic review of Dominican-American relations during the Trujillo period. For further information, see Raymond H. Pulley, "The United States and the Trujillo Dictatorship, 1933-1940: The High Price of Caribbean Stability," *Caribbean Studies* (October, 1965): 22-31; Theodore P. Wright, "The United States and Latin American Dictatorship: The Case of the Dominican Republic," *Journal of International Affairs* (1960): 152-157; and Robert D. Crassweller, *Trujillo: Life and Times of a Caribbean Dictator* (New York, 1966), esp. pp. 421-431.

[14] See Jerome N. Slater, "The OAS as an Antidictatorial Alliance (I): The Dominican Republic, 1960-1963." Chapter 5 of *The OAS and United States Foreign Policy* (Columbus, Ohio, 1967), pp. 183-216.

[15] Varying accounts of Trujillo's assassination which discuss alleged American involvement include Crassweller, *Trujillo: Life and Times...*, pp. 433-439; Arturo Espaillat, *Trujillo: The Last Caesar* (Chicago, 1963), pp. 7-22; Selden Rodman, *Quisqueya: A History of the Dominican Republic* (Seattle, 1964), 152-158; Norman Gall, "How Trujillo Died," *The New Republic* (April 13, 1963): 19-20; Sam Halper, "The Dominican Upheaval," *The New Leader* (May 10, 1965): 3-4; and Rafael C. Hoepelman, "Las Armas para Ajusticiar a Trujillo Fueron Proporcionadas por Wimpy", *La Nación* (Santo Domingo, December 7, 1961), 4.

Whatever the accuracy of the rumors about American complicity in Trujillo's death, it is clear that by the time Trujillo died the U.S. government was prepared once again to participate actively and directly in Dominican affairs. The extent of American involvement soon became extraordinary; from mid-1960 through 1962, writes Jerome Slater, the "United States in the Dominican Republic engaged in the most massive intervention in the affairs of a Latin American state since the inauguration of the Good Neighbor Policy." [16] Employing a wide variety of instruments, American officials sought to help the Dominican Republic move through the difficult transition from tyranny through disorder to constitutional democracy.

In the very first days after Trujillo's death, a U.S. Navy Task Force composed of nearly forty ships patrolled the Dominican coast, ready, if necessary, to implement a Presidentially-approved contingency plan providing for armed intervention in Santo Domingo. [17] The order to land never came, but U.S. forces remained near the Dominican Republic for several months more. In November, 1961 — during a crisis caused by the sudden return to Santo Domingo of two of Trujillo's brothers, apparently bent on regaining control of the Dominican Republic — the proximity of the U.S. fleet enabled the U.S. government to play a dramatic, probably decisive, role in Dominican politics. Secretary Rusk's warning on November 18 that the U.S. would not "remain idle" if the Trujillos tried to "reassert dictatorial domination" and his statement that the U.S. was "considering the further measures that unpredictable events might warrant" gained credibility when U.S. warships appeared within hours in clear view of Santo Domingo. By the next day, U.S. military attaches were encouraging key Dominican Air Force officers to oppose the Trujillos and U.S. Navy jets were seen flying over Santo Domingo. On the day after, both the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* reported that the U.S. government was prepared to land the Marines, if necessary. [18] That night the Trujillo brothers and a planeload of relatives and close associates left the Dominican Republic, and Dominican crowds chanted pro-American slogans. [19]

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[16] Slater, *The OAS and United States Foreign Policy...*, p. 185.

[17] *New York Times* (June 2-3, 1961); *New York News* (June 2, 1961). For further information, see Harold R. Lamp, "The United States Role in the Dominican Republic's Transition Toward Democracy: 1960-1961" Unpublished M. A. Thesis submitted to the Graduate School of Georgetown University, 1964), pp. 82-89.

[18] *New York Times* (November 19, 20, 21, 1961); *Wall Street Journal* (November 20, 1961).

[19] See Slater, *The OAS and United States Foreign Policy*, pp. 198-200; John Bartlow Martin, *Overtaken by Events: The Dominican Crisis from the Fall of Trujillo to the Civil War* (New York, 1966), pp. 82-83; Abraham F. Lowenthal, "Foreign Aid as a Political Instrument: The Case of the Dominican

Once the almost universally-despised Trujillo family was gone, the U.S. government turned to means short of the threat of military intervention to influence Dominican politics. First, American officials (particularly Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Arturo Morales Carrión) encouraged and even actively participated in detailed negotiations among Dominican political factions seeking to establish an interim Council of State. American pressures — including private bargaining, public statements, the conditional offer of aid, and even the movement to new positions of U.S. naval units — affected the negotiations at several key stages. Successful conclusion of the talks late in December elicited a personal statement from President Kennedy announcing that the U.S. government would soon renew diplomatic relations with the Dominican Republic and increase sugar purchases from Dominican producers, and would dispatch a high-level economic assistance mission upon the formal installation of the Council. [20]

Next, when an attempted coup led by Air Force General Pedro R. Rodríguez Echavarría threatened to unseat the new Council in mid-January, a strong American response helped reverse the coup. Official spokesmen in Washington quickly let it be known that the U.S. government might suspend diplomatic relations anew, rescind the sugar quota increase, and withhold economic assistance unless the Council of State were re-installed. In Santo Domingo, American representatives made it clear to Dominican civilian and military leaders — including General Rodríguez Echavarría himself — that the United States would welcome a counter-coup to restore the Council to power. Within two days General Rodríguez Echavarría was arrested by fellow military officers and exiled to the United States, and the Council of State resumed office. [21]

From the definitive installation of the Council of State until the inauguration of an elected government fourteen months later, the U.S. government forcefully sustained the Council against opposition and helped it perform its primary task: to hold national elections. An emergency A.I.D. loan of $25 million rescued the Council from a severe reserves' shortage at the start, and increased American sugar purchases

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Republic," *Public Policy* (1965): 144-145; Thomas Wellington, "US Diplomacy and the Dominican Crisis," *SAIS Review* (Summer, 1963), pp. 25-30, and Howard J. Wiarda, "The Context of United States Policy Toward the Dominican Republic: Background to the Revolution of 1965," unpublished paper presented to the Center for International Affairs, Harvard University (December 8, 1966), pp. 18-20.

[20] Lowenthal, "Foreign Aid as a Political Instrument...;" Slater, *The OAS and United States Foreign Policy;* Wiarda, "The Context of United States Policy...;" and Juan Bosch, *The Unfinished Experiment: Democracy in the Dominican Republic* (New York, 1965), pp. 38-54. President Kennedy's Statement of December 20 may be found in the *Department of State Bulletin* (January 22, 1962): 128.

[21] Lowenthal, "Foreign Aid as a Political Instrument...": 146.

and additional economic assistance kept the Dominican government solvent thereafter. The pesos generated by the $25 million loan and other U.S. aid were used to implement projects designed to cut unemployment and otherwise gain quick public support for the Council's efforts. American officials repeatedly showed their backing of the Council or even of specific policies by public statements and speeches, journalistic leaks and inspired articles, photographs of the U.S. Ambassador with some or all members of the Council, and even by ostentatious port-calls and receptions for Council leaders aboard U.S. warships. U.S. police officers trained Dominican forces in "public safety" methods, thus enabling them to quell a series of riots and demonstrations which had threatened to topple the Council. An American military assistance advisory group (MAAG) taught counter-insurgency techniques to Dominican Army units. American advisers helped determine the Dominican government's policies on a wide variety of matters including the disposition and management of the former Trujillo enterprises, programs for agrarian and tax reforms and housing development, and ambitious plans for improvements in education.[22]

Finally, the U.S. Government undertook, both directly and through the OAS, to arrange and facilitate the 1962 election. An OAS mission helped draw up new election laws and procedures while American advisers prepared an intensive press, radio, and television campaign to teach Dominicans the new procedures and to encourage them to vote. Then an OAS team observed the elections throughout the country, thus inhibiting any possible fraud or other disruptive procedures.[23] Behind the scenes, meanwhile, U.S. Embassy officials drafted and secured formal agreement in advance by the two leading candidates to a declaration that each would respect the outcome of the election and that the loser would recognize and congratulate the winner.[24] Ambassador John Bartlow Martin's efforts to facilitate the election sometimes even exceeded what the State Department could endorse. When Martin called in newspapermen on the eve of the election to state for direct attribution that "the United States Government would support whoever won," the Department rebuked the Ambassador, cautioning him "to say 'assist' rather than 'support' next time."[25] Indeed the Embassy's activities to assure that the elections would be held without incident or delay, to prevent either major candidate from withdrawing, and to

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22 See Martin, *Overtaken by Events: The Dominican Crisis,* pp. 84-302; and Lowenthal, "Foreign Aid as a Political Instrument...," 146-150.

23 See Henry Wells, "The OAS and the Dominican Elections," *Orbis* (Spring, 1963): 150-163.

24 Martin, *Overtaken by Events: The Dominican Crisis,* 225-230; and Bosch, *The Unfinished Experiment...,* 102-107.

25 Martin, *Overtaken by Events: The Dominican Crisis,* 292.

guarantee that the results would be accepted went so far that at one point the President of the Council of State complained to Ambassador Martin: "You make me feel that I am no longer President." [26]

The election of Juan Bosch in December, 1962 and his accession on February 27, 1963 brought into office a Dominican regime with its own power-base, eager to assert its sovereignty. [27] American participation in Dominican politics during the seven months that Bosch presided, accordingly, was more circumspect than it had been during the Council of State's tenure. [28] It is not true, however, that the "active role of the United States temporarily ended." [29] From Bosch's triumphant pre-inaugural visit to the White House until his exile to Puerto Rico less than ten months later, the U.S. Government continued its direct entanglement in Dominican affairs. Ambassador Martin functioned during these months, as one fellow U.S. diplomat put it, "much as would the authoritative coach of a rather backward football team." [30] Martin extended to President Bosch insistent advice on matters as sensitive as the designation of Cabinet officers and military commanders, the advisability and even the constitutionality of specific legislative proposals, and general political strategy; once he actually offered Bosch his considerable talents as an experienced speechwriter. [31]

U.S. economic and military assistance to the Dominican Republic continued at high levels during the Bosch period, and the high-priority Peace Corps program was reinforced. [32] Special efforts were intensified to help the Dominican Government establish an effective counter-subversion agency. [33] New programs were instituted, designed in part to camouflage the extent of American participation in Dominican affairs. U.S. government-sponsored experts — operating through an ostensibly

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[26] *Ibid.*, 230.

[27] Bosch moved immediately after his election to establish his independence, especially by denouncing a contract the Council of State had made with Standard Oil Company of New Jersey and by negotiating a $150 million line of credit with a European consortium. See Bosch, *The Unfinished Exneriment...*, pp. 162-165; Martin, *Overtaken by Events: The Dominican Crisis,* pp. 309, 324, and Lowenthal, "Foreign Aid as a Political Instrument...": 154.

[28] Bosch acknowledges that Ambassador Martin and AID Mission Director Newell Williams "displaved exemplary tact" and "always respected my national pride." See Bosch, *The Unfinished Experiment...*, p. 164.

[29] Slater, *The OAS and United States Foreign Policy,* p. 202.

[30] Philip W. Bonsal, "Open Letter to an Author," *Foreign Service Journal* (February, 1967): 40.

[31] See Martin, *Overtaken by Events: The Dominican Crisis,* passim, esp. pp. 323, 349, 418-420, 486-488, 499, 508-518, 562-565.

[32] Abraham F. Lowenthal, "Limits of American Power: The Lesson of the Dominican Republic," *Harper's* (June, 1964): 87-89, 94-95.

[33] Martin, *Overtaken by Events: The Dominican Crisis,* pp. 310-311, 348, 467, 471.

private entity called the Centro Interamericano de Estudios Sociales (CIDES) — undertook to perform key functions of the Dominican government, including preparing budget estimates, compiling statistics, conducting surveys, formulating plans, and drafting legislation.[34] Other specialists, also apparently linked to the U.S. government, worked to organize Dominican labor and peasants and to train cadres of political activists.[35]

The most extraordinary American involvement in Dominican politics during these months arose from Ambassador Martin's continuous attempt, right up until the last night of Bosch's tenure, to shore him up against domestic opposition. Although Martin's vivid memoir, *Overtaken by Events,* clearly reveals that the U.S. Government's willingness to commit itself to Bosch's regime was limited, Martin also documents the intense efforts he and his staff made to help Bosch. Martin issued statements in Santo Domingo and encouraged articles and speeches in Washington by influential U.S. leaders backing Bosch. He sponsored dinner parties and other social functions to build ties between Bosch and Dominican business leaders, announced actual and proposed economic assistance to bolster Bosch's prestige, pressed for mediation efforts to conciliate Bosch and opposition leaders, and repeatedly engaged in feverish efforts to head off a coup.[36] When the coup finally came, only Bosch's refusal, in fact, prevented Martin from accompanying Bosch to confront the military leaders who overthrew the Dominican president.[37] The U.S.-sponsored "showcase of democracy" in the Dominican Republic was quickly smashed, but not for lack of American involvement.[38]

The U.S. government's response to Bosch's overthrow further reveals

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[34] Lowenthal, "Foreign Aid as a Political Instrument...": 155-157; Martin, *Overtaken by Events: The Dominican Crisis,* pp. 309-310, 329, 457; and Bosch, *The Unfinished Experiment...,* pp. 167-178.

[35] Lowenthal, "Foreign Aid as a Political Instrument...": 156-158; Wiarda, "The Context of United States Policy...": 24; Ruth Shereff, "How the CIA Makes Friends and Influences Countries," *Viet Report* (January-February, 1967): 15-19, 26; Dan Kurzman, "Dominican Unions are Still Feuding," *Washington Post* (June 13, 1966); and Sacha Volman, "Latin American Experiments in Political and Economic Training," unpublished report presented to the Foreign Policy Studies Division, Brookings Institution (April, 1964).

[36] Martin, *Overtaken by Events: The Dominican Crisis,* pp. 343-578.

[37] *Ibid.,* p. 568. According to his own account, Martin considered going to the Palace, where Bosch was meeting with the military leaders, even after the final meeting started, but he was dissuaded by members of his Embassy staff. See pp. 571-572.

[38] See Lowenthal, "Limits of American Power;" Donald A. Allen, "Santo Domingo: The Empty Showcase," *The Reporter* (December 5, 1963): 28-36; Sam Halper, "US-Backed Reform Flops as Bosch Gets the Bounce," *Life* (October 18, 1963): 49-50; and Norman Gall, "Anatomy of a Coup: The Fall of Juan Bosch," *The Nation* (October 26, 1963): 253-256.

the extent of American entanglement in Dominican affairs well before the 1965 crisis. Beginning on the very morning of the coup — when Ambassador Martin invited José Rafael Molina Ureña (the Speaker of the Dominican House and constitutional successor) to breakfast in the Embassy and suggested to the Minister of the Armed Forces that Molina be recognized as President — American officials encouraged initial efforts to bring to power a constitutional successor to Bosch.[39] To implement this policy, the U.S. government quickly recalled to Washington Ambassador Martin and the heads of the AID and MAAG missions and soon broke diplomatic relations with the Dominican Republic, refusing to recognize the newly-installed Triumvirate.[40] A week later Secretary Rusk announced not only the immediate suspension of all economic and military assistance to the Dominican Republic but also the U.S. government's plans to re-assign all the personnel involved. The United States seemed publicly committed to the principle of "constitutionality."[41] U.S. Embassy officials in Santo Domingo consulted with a number of Dominican figures in an attempt to find an acceptable political solution, and at least some of those Dominicans working actively to restore "constitutionality" felt that the Embassy was supporting their cause. The climax of American involvement in the post-coup imbroglio came on October 14 when the U.S. Chargé d'Affaires and the chief U.S. political officer went so far, under instructions, in pressuring the Triumvirate to consider a "return to constitutionality" that the Dominican regime officially complained to the OAS about American intervention and also asked that the political officer leave the country.[42]

Perceiving its leverage and influence severely limited, the U.S. Government felt itself reduced over the next few weeks to suggesting a variety of different political and constitutional schemes, none of them acceptable to the Triumvirate. U.S. support for an immediate return to "constitutionality" was attenuated and then abandoned. When the U.S. government finally extended diplomatic recognition to the Triumvirate on December 14, 1963, the only concession secured by the United States was the Dominican regime's agreement to hold national elections in 1965.[43]

Following the re-establishment of normal diplomatic relations with the Dominican Republic, the U.S. government appointed a new Ambassador, W. Tapley Bennett, Jr., an experienced foreign service officer who

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39 Martin, *Overtaken by Events: The Dominican Crisis*, pp. 574, 580-581.
40 *Ibid.*, p. 589.
41 *Ibid.*, pp. 601-602.
42 *Ibid.*, pp. 605-606.
43 *Ibid.*, pp. 606-632.

had served in the Dominican Republic early in his career.[44] Bennett was neither inclined by temperament nor instructed by Washington to play the active role which Ambassador Martin had fulfilled in Santo Domingo, but the U.S. Embassy nevertheless continued to be a major focal point of Dominican politics. Despite Bennett's wish not to be drawn into internal Dominican struggles, the new Ambassador and his staff soon found themselves helping to resolve almost weekly crises on very diverse matters: economic and fiscal policies, sugar marketing, labor difficulties, trouble with Haiti, political jockeying among individuals and groups, and frequent rivalries among Dominican military cliques.

Nor were the U.S. government's activities confined to the Embassy's political and diplomatic efforts. Economic and military assistance programs were resumed early in 1964 and a new AID mission began to assemble by March. By early 1965, a U.S. Army Special Forces team was again training Dominican counter-insurgency units, sizable new aid commitments were being announced, U.S.-financed political development specialists were establishing a school to train *campesino* leaders, the CIA was sponsoring secret polls of Dominicans' political preferences, and U.S. agents were even preparing to give covert political advice and organizational assistance in case the U.S. government were to choose to back a candidate in the scheduled national elections.[45] Once more, the United States government was very deeply involved in the affairs of the Dominican Republic.

III

Although deep and pervasive, the U.S. government's involvement in the Dominican Republic, and in the Caribbean area generally, has rarely, if ever, been positive and whole-hearted. The tension in Dominican history between the desire for protection, even for annexation, and the demand for full sovereignty has been mirrored in the United States by the conflicting pull between the urge to control foreign events and the ideal of national self-determination. Strong currents of opinion favoring respect for Dominican sovereignty have influenced U.S. policy time and again.

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[44] "Envoy on Firing Line: William Tapley Bennett, Jr." *New York Times,* May 1, 1965.

[45] For further information on U.S. government-financed political development activities through the International Development Foundation, see Shereff, "How the CIA Makes Friends...," pp. 19, 26. For published information on the secret poll taken for the U.S. government before the April crisis, see Walter Pincus, "Dominican Poll's Use in Setting Policy in Hit," *Washington Star* (November 21, 1965) and Martin, *Overtaken by Events: The Dominican Crisis,* p. 639.

In the nineteenth century, the U.S. government several times resisted proposals put forth by Dominican politicians that the United States should annex the Dominican Republic. When President Grant finally sought to win the Senate's approval of annexation, vigorous opposition led by Senator Charles Sumner defeated the plan. More recently, the U.S. military interventions of 1916 and 1965 offended many American opinion leaders almost as much as they inflamed Dominican passions; both interventions were affected by domestic American opposition.[46] All through the history of American relations with the Caribbean, indeed, runs a thread of unwanted engagement. The U.S. government has been much more concerned about how to withdraw and decrease its involvement in the Caribbean than with how to intervene there. Periods of especially intense American participation in the Caribbean (and in the Dominican Republic specifically) have characteristically been followed by years in which American officials attempted to abstain from overt involvement.

If the United States has not sought to annex the Dominican Republic, has rejected several obvious opportunities to do so, and even has sought periodically to reduce its involvement in Dominican and Caribbean affairs, why then has it continuously become so engaged in Dominican politics? What explains the U.S. government's persistent entanglement in the Dominican Republic over the years?[47]

Many discussions of American involvement in the Caribbean stress the supposed importance of positive U.S. interests in the area, primarily economic.[48] The whole record of American involvement in the area, however, suggests that the main interest of the U.S. government has not been economic. Security concerns and traditional axioms, not simple conquest or profit, have motivated American involvement in the Dominican Republic and the rest of the Caribbean for many decades.

Private economic interests — mainly of dubious adventurers at first, later of banks and investment houses, and in this century mainly of

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[46] For an analysis of the role of domestic American pressures in ending the 1916-1924 U.S. occupation of the Dominican Republic, see Juárez, "United States Withdrawal...", p. 170 ff.

[47] So brief an analysis is necessarily oversimplified, discounting the roles of personality and accident, the effects of organizational procedures and bureaucratic politics, and the influences of events elsewhere and of wider policies and trends.

[48] To cite one recent study of U.S. policy in the Dominican Republic, for instance, "while Kennedy and Johnson used different mechanisms to dominate Dominican society... their objective remained the same... maintaining a safe place for investment with a high profit rate, developing a market for goods and services, (and)... securing a source of cheap raw materials and labor." See Fred Goff and Michael Locker, "The Violence of Domination: U.S. Power and the Dominican Republic," in Irving Horowitz, Josué de Castro, and John Gerassi (eds.), *Latin American Radicalism: A Documentary Report on Left and Nationalist Movements* (New York, 1969), pp. 249-291.

sugar and fruit producers — have been important in drawing the U.S. government's attention to the Dominican Republic. Undoubtedly they have influenced American policy on occasion, especially through personal relations with U.S. diplomatic representatives in Santo Domingo.[49] But by and large, the pressure of existing business interests on American policy towards the Dominican Republic does not appear to have been substantial or effective, particularly in recent years; the U.S. government has increasingly tended to resist overt business pressures when they have been exerted.[50]

Nor does it seem that prospective trade and investment opportunities have importantly affected American involvement in the Dominican Republic, for the country's size and resources simply have not been sufficient to attract significant U.S. commercial interests. Far from being embroiled in Dominican affairs to protect existing or proposed U.S. private interests there, the U.S. government has actually sought to spur American investment in the Dominican Republic in support of government policy. The initiative for much recent U.S. investment, like that of the "dollar diplomacy" of another era, has come from Washington, not from the business community.[51]

Elsewhere in the Caribbean, where the United States has established and maintained important military facilities, these have undoubtedly been a cause of continuing American interest. The military advantages the Dominican Republic could offer to the United States have never been of major significance, however. The U.S. has never established a permanent military base in the Dominican Republic. The missile tracking station set up there in 1951 was never of vital importance

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[49] For a particularly colorful example, see *Report of James D. Phelan, Special Commissioner named by the Secretary of State... To investigate Charges Against the United States Minister to the Dominican Republic* (dated May 9, 1915).

[50] See, for example, Martin, *Overtaken by Events: The Dominican Crisis*, p. 312, where Martin recounts an unsuccessful attempt by United Fruit Company to secure U.S. Embassy assistance and notes that "This was the only time that any U.S. Company attempted to put on such pressure." See also, MacMichael, "The United States and the Dominican Republic 1871-1940," p. 256.

Some writers, including Goff and Locker, assert that business pressures have been successfully brought to bear on those in Washington who make U.S. policy toward the Dominican Republic. That possibility cannot be excluded, but I know of no substantial evidence that business pressures have significantly affected major U.S. policies toward the Dominican Republic in recent years.

[51] See Munro, *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy...*, pp. 535-538 and MacMichael, "The United States and the Dominican Republic 1871-1940," 302. Herbert Feis argues persuasively that the motivation for "dollar diplomacy" after World War I generally was political, and that the main initiative for involvement of U.S. firms abroad often came from the U.S. government. See Herbert Feis, *Diplomacy of the Dollar: First Era, 1919-1932* (Hamden, Connecticut, 1965).

and was abandoned by 1962. It is true that American authorities were interested a century ago in the possibilities of using Samaná and Manzanillo Bays for coaling stations or naval bases, and that some interest in Samaná continued into this century, but the main reason for continuing American concern about Samaná seems to have been to assure that the bay would not be used by Germany nor any other European power. Moreover, MacMichael argues, "after 1877 it was not so much American desire to secure a naval base at Samaná as it was a Dominican conviction that the U.S. still desired the bay and would pay well to obtain it that kept the naval base project alive." [52]

Positive economic and military interests, then, do not account for the history of intense American involvement in Dominican affairs. The chief goal of U.S. policy, rather, has been pre-emptive. The means used by the U.S. government have varied, but the fundamental U.S. aim in the Dominican Republic and the entire Caribbean has always been the same: to assure that no situation actually or even potentially damaging to U.S. security has a chance to develop. The main concern has been to prevent the introduction into the Caribbean of any new foreign influence which might oppose the United States. Proclaimed as policy by President James Monroe in 1823, the U.S. aim to keep new foreign influence out of the Caribbean has ever since been considered "doctrine" with the force of axiom, if not of international law. [53]

Ever since the Dominican Republic achieved formal independence in 1844, the U.S. government has aimed to prevent any external power from gaining influence there. President Polk in 1846, for example, expressed his fear that a European power might exert control over Santo Domingo, and from that time on for several decades one of the chief concerns of "successive Secretaries of State was that some foreign nation might secure Samaná Bay as a naval base." [54] Later in the century, increased U.S. participation in Dominican affairs was "motivated at least in part by the fear of foreign intervention, especially German, in the Caribbean area." [55] Measures taken to assure the payment of bondholders were intended less to satisfy private American claims than to preclude European intervention to obtain repayment; the U.S. sought to stem the Dominican Republic's economic deterioration and "to prevent this weakness from becoming a threat to American security" by opening

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52 MacMichael, "The United States and the Dominican Republic 1871-1940," p. 51.

53 See Dexter Perkins, *Hands Off: A History of the Monroe Doctrine* (Boston, 1941). For general insights on the influence of axioms on U.S. foreign policy decisions, see Ernest R. May, "The Nature of Foreign Policy: The Calculated versus the Axiomatic," *Daedalus* (Fall, 1962): 653-657.

54 Charles Tansill, "The United States and Santo Domingo," p. 129; William Tansill, "Diplomatic Relations," pp. 212-213.

55 Duin, "Dominican-American Diplomatic Relations," p. 112.

the way for the introduction of European influence.[56] "Far from being an attempt to enslave the Dominican economy," another scholar argues, the 1907 Customs Convention was "designed to set it free from foreign shackles," that is, to minimize European influence.[57]

At the turn of the century, after the local superiority of the U.S. force over any European power had been established by the Spanish-American War, U.S. concern in the Caribbean came to focus on the possibility that political turbulence among or within the countries of the region might somehow permit the quick introduction there of extra-continental power. To prevent this eventuality, the U.S. government undertook both to promote mechanisms for settling intra-regional disputes and to foster political stability within the countries of the region.[58] The means chosen by the United States to promote internal stability, as well as the intensity of American interest in this aim, have varied as the actual possibilities of extra-continental exploitation of local turbulence have ebbed and flowed, and as the presumed causes of instability have been analyzed and re-examined. But the basic aim — to assure local political stability in order to exclude possible opportunities for the introduction of extra-continental power — has been the keystone of U.S. policy in the Dominican Republic and the rest of the Caribbean throughout this century.[59]

It was partly the search for stability, together with the claims of U.S. bond-holders and the fear of European efforts to secure payment of their loans, which led the U.S. government to take over the Dominican customs-house early in this century. Because customs revenue appeared to them to be the main booty of Dominican politics, American officials hoped — by controlling the customs apparatus — not only to forestall European actions but also to remove what they regarded as the prime cause of continued Dominican strife.[60]

When it became clear (after the Dominican President Ramón Cáceres was assassinated in 1911) that an American customs receivership alone

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56. *Ibid.*, p. 245.

57 MacMichael, "The United States and the Dominican Republic 1871-1940," p. 206.

58 Cf. William Kamman, *A Search for Stability: United States Diplomacy Toward Nicaragua, 1925-1933* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1968).

59 I am indebted to Howard Wiarda's previously-cited unpublished paper, "The Context of United States Policy Toward the Dominican Republic...," and to the discussion it provoked at the meeting of the Seminar on United States Policy in the Dominican Republic at Harvard's Center for International Affairs on December 8, 1966, for help in formulating some of the points raised in the rest of this article. I have also benefited from consulting an unpublished manuscript by William Everett Kane, "American Involvement in Latin American Civic Strife," draft paper for American Society for International Law (February, 1967).

60 Munro, *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy,* pp. 99-111.

would not provide political stability, other means were sought. President Woodrow Wilson, imbued with a moralistic concern for teaching Latin Americans how to govern themselves, favored U.S. supervision of Dominican national elections, full U.S. support for the elected president, and an announced U.S. policy not to tolerate further insurrections in the Dominican Republic.[61] When this approach also proved inadequate, the United States demanded control of major Dominican government expenditures to assure that they would be spent on public works, sanitation improvements, schools, and other programs American officials thought were likely to promote stability. American officials sought, moreover, to establish the right to organize the Dominican armed forces, hoping thereby to remove another presumed source of instability by replacing competing local armies with a central national constabulary.[62] And when Dominican authorities rejected these American demands, the U.S. government threatened to withhold diplomatic recognition, and therefore customs payments, to compel acceptance. Dominican officials continued to resist, however, and political strife went on unabated. U.S. preoccupation with the war in Europe began to rise meanwhile, and concern intensified over the possibility that the Caribbean might become part of the conflict. When the persistent struggle within the Dominican Republic seemed likely to produce the accession of Desiderio Arias, a *caudillo* reported by concerned American officials to have pro-German sympathies, U.S. military intervention was ordered in 1916.[63]

The ensuing eight-year U.S. military occupation of the Dominican Republic saw repeated demonstrations of American concern for political stability. Often the approach adopted was touchingly naïve, as when the Dominican War and Marine Departments were merged with that of Interior and Police so that "in the absence of a Department for the conduct of hostilities, the thoughts of Dominicans might be diverted from warlike measures to peaceful pursuits."[64] Sometimes the American approach was tragically simplistic: the attempt to disarm the Dominican population and to establish a non-partisan constabulary responsible to the national civil government actually facilitated the rise to power of the brutal Rafael Trujillo.[65] But the chief aim of U.S.

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61 *Ibid.*, pp. 272-273, 275-307.

62 *Ibid.*, p. 309.

63 *Ibid.*, p. 307 ff.

64 Lane, "Civil Government in Santo Domingo...," p. 129. Similar naiveté was exemplified by the U.S. effort to establish a civil service system. Having concluded that "one of the fundamental causes of political unrest... had been the possession of public office by virtue of political association," U.S. bureaucrats set up a civil service and believed that consequently "the future would hold less reason for repetition of disorders." See Baughman, "United States Occupation...," p. 2320.

65 See Goldwert, *The Constabulary in the Dominican Republic...*, and Crassweller, *Trujillo: Life and Times...*

policy — evidenced also by measures to improve the Dominican Republic's roads, communications, schools, and agricultural techniques and to adjust the country's administrative and legal systems — was always to promote political stability (conceived of as following from economic development) and thereby to avoid the need for renewed U.S. intervention. [66]

Largely because of the difficulties experienced in attempting to disengage from the occupations of the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Nicaragua, American officials in the late 1920's made conscious efforts to reduce the degree of American participation in Caribbean affairs. As Henry Stimson and others drew non-interventionist conclusions from the experience of an interventionist decade, a new period began of reduced American involvement in the Caribbean. [67]

The U.S. government's attitude toward the possibility of Rafael Trujillo's rise to power in Santo Domingo typified the new American approach and its results. When the U.S. Minister in Santo Domingo, fearing Trujillo's likely accession, asked Washington to authorize a formal declaration that the United States would not recognize a Trujillo regime because Trujillo had previously agreed not to be a candidate, the State Department refused, arguing that "through scrupulously avoiding even the appearance of interfering in the internal affairs of the Dominican Republic our relations with Santo Domingo have been put on a very sound basis in the 6 years since the withdrawal of the military occupation." [68] Washington did not wish to involve itself in Dominican affairs to the extent necessary to prevent the accession of the admittedly distasteful General Trujillo, who soon took the Presidency and began his prolonged rule.

American concern with the Dominican Republic's stability, and with the over-riding aim of precluding the introduction into the Caribbean of extracontinental power, continued during the thirty-one years of

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[66] Some writers, Dominican and American have suggested that the U.S. emphasis on administrative and legal reforms, including the complete revision of the country's real property system, was designed primarily to advance the interests of U.S. sugar companies. U.S. companies were undoubtedly interested in some of these reforms and benefited from them. It seems to me, however, that the chief aim of these measures was to eliminate obstacles perceived by U.S. officials to be reducing the Dominican Republic's chances for economic prosperity and, consequently, political stability. For the contrary view, see Melvin Knight, *The Americans in Santo Domingo,* 40 ff.

[67] See Bryce Wood, *The Making of the Good Neighbor Policy* (New York, 1961).

[68] "The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in the Dominican Republic," (March 19, 1930), *Foreign Relations of the United States* (1930, Volume II): 718.

Trujillo's regime.[69] During the late 1920's and the 1930's, when no European power was capable of threatening the United States, the U.S. instituted toward Latin America what came to be known as the Good Neighbor Policy, under which the United States renounced the practice of military intervention and announced its intent to refrain from participation in the internal politics of nations in the Hemisphere.[70] Consistent with this general policy, and later with the policy of supporting Latin American allies in World War II and then the Cold War, the United States maintained normal diplomatic relations with the Dominican Republic under Trujillo for three decades and even extended some economic and military assistance throughout the period.[71] Given the continuing American aims, the U.S. stance was understandable, despite Trujillo's flagrant departures from the principles of the Atlantic Charter, the Act of Chapultepec, and the Charter of the United Nations. However illiberal, Trujillo did bring a temporary end to Dominican turmoil and to the immediate possibility that foreign powers could be introduced into the Dominican Republic, and his continuing opposition to the Axis powers (and then to the Communist bloc) seemed to be assured. As President Roosevelt is said to have remarked, Trujillo may have been an S.O.B., but "at least he's our S.O.B."[72]

Only when events elsewhere made Trujillo seem more a threat than a source of stability in the Caribbean did American support for Trujillo end. The U.S. government's belated realization that Castro's easy displacement of Batista in Cuba might augur ill for Trujillo and other Caribbean strongmen, together with mounting evidence that Trujillo's inter-Caribbean enmities might exacerbate the region's problems and even some indications that Trujillo was trying to court the Soviet Union, induced the U.S. government in 1959 to re-examine its policy toward the Dominican Republic. Spurred also by pressures from Venezuela and Costa Rica to oppose right-wing dictatorships as a prelude to possible actions against Castro, the United States began

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69 See Atkins and Wilson, "The United States and Trujillo," and Raymond H. Pulley, "The United States and the Trujillo Dictatorship," pp. 22-31.

70 Wood, *The Making of the Good Neighbor Policy.*

71 Although U.S. military assistance to the Dominican Republic during this period was avowedly intended to help the Dominican Republic contribute effectively to hemisphere defense (first against Nazi Germany and then against the Soviet Union), one unpublished study concludes that the military aid was granted "primarily to promote internal political stability." See Atkins and Wilson, "The United States and Trujillo," p. 139.

72 Roosevelt's supposed remark about Trujillo, perhaps apocryphal, has been quoted in a number of places, such as Robert F. Smith's, *The United States and Cuba* (New York, 1960), p. 184. Other writers have reported Roosevelt's statement being made with reference to Chiang Kai Shek or Anastasio Somoza.

then to disassociate itself from Trujillo and even to press for changes within the Dominican Republic.

Dropping its previously unreserved support for the non-intervention doctrine, the U.S. government began in 1960 actively to support proposals in the OAS aimed at inducing liberalization in the Dominican political structure.[73] Both in concert with OAS members and on its own, the U.S. government undertook measures designed to bring an end to the Trujillo regime and to facilitate a transition to a new government with a better prospect of providing lasting stability. To head off a Castro-type movement in the Dominican Republic — with its potential for introducing extracontinental power into the Caribbean — the U.S. sought out and began to aid moderate anti-Communist opponents of Trujillo. Among those in the group which assassinated Trujillo in May, 1961 were men whom the U.S. government had encouraged to organize.

The objectives of American policy during the period of transition after Trujillo's death were mixed. The newly-installed Kennedy Administration was committing itself in 1961 to encouraging economic development, social reform, and political democracy throughout the hemisphere. President Kennedy, in presenting the Alliance for Progress proposal in March, specifically mentioned his hope that the Dominican Republic — then still under Trujillo — could soon be included.[74] Some in the Administration — particularly the Puerto Rican group to whom Kennedy had turned for help in formulating and implementing his Alliance program — hoped to transform the Dominican Republic into a special "showcase of democracy," a demonstration of the efficacy of development under democratic auspices.[75]

But the primary emphasis of U.S. policy towards the Dominican Republic, even in the early Kennedy Administration, was the traditional aim to prevent any security threat from arising there, now cast with new urgency in terms of the need to prevent a "second Cuba." Part of the reason for regarding the Dominican Republic as a potential "second Cuba," no doubt, was Castro's announced interest in extending his revolution to Hispaniola, evidenced concretely by his support for the June, 1959, invasion of the Dominican Republic by anti-Trujillo Dominicans. More important, probably, was the simple fact of perceived analogy, however faulty. The Dominican Republic, like Cuba, was a

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73 Slater, "The OAS as an Antidictatorial Alliance..."

74 See *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy* (1961), p. 174. President Kennedy again singled out the Dominican Republic for special attention in his 1962 State of the Union address. See *Public Papers* (1962): 12.

75 See Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston, 1965), pp. 769-773; Martin, *Overtaken by Events: The Dominican Crisis,* pp. 151, 164.

sugar-producing island nation in the Caribbean ruled for many years by a corrupt praetorian dictator. Differences between the two islands, at very different levels of economic and political development and with very different histories, were obscured as American officials focused their attention on the supposed similarities.[76] Unprepared to analyze Santo Domingo in terms of its own past, American observers attempted to interpret the complicated swirl of Dominican events by referring to the experience of neighboring Cuba, with which they were more familiar and which was salient in their minds.

IV

Whatever the reasons, it is clear that by 1961 American officials regarded the Dominican Republic as a potential "second Cuba." Just days after the Bay of Pigs, President Kennedy personally approved a contingency plan for landing troops in the Dominican Republic which stressed as the principal policy guideline that the United States could not afford and would not permit the imposition in the Dominican Republic of a pro-Castro or pro-Communist government. This theme was repeated time and again in presidential instructions to U.S. officials concerned with the Dominican Republic. President Kennedy reportedly felt that his first year in office would be successful if neither the Dominican Republic nor the Congo were lost to international Communism.[77] He is said to have believed that there were three possibilities in the Dominican Republic "in descending order of preference: a decent democratic regime, a continuation of the Trujillo regime, or a Castro regime." "We ought to aim at the first," Kennedy reportedly concluded, "but we can't really renounce the second until we are sure we can avoid the third."[78]

The aim of preventing a "second Cuba" shaped American policy toward the Dominican Republic at every stage after Trujillo's death in May, 1961. The dispatch of a Navy Task Force to the vicinity of Santo Domingo in June, immediately after Trujillo's assassination, was meant specifically to preclude any possible pro-Communist movement and to prevent possible Cuban involvement. President Kennedy's instructions to Consul General John Calvin Hill in July emphasized his keen interest in the progress of anti-Communist laws and other measures designed to exclude Communists and Castroist exiles from the Dominican Republic

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[76] See, for instance, "Communist Threat to the United States Through the Caribbean," *Hearings Before the Internal Security Subcommitte of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, passim.*

[77] See De Lesseps Morrison (ed. Gerold Frank), *Latin American Mission* (New York, 1965), pp. 113-114 ff.

[78] See Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days...*, p. 769.

and to oust Dominican Communists already there. The ambiguous stance the U.S. government adopted later that year with respect to the Balaguer regime reflected conflict between the desire to prevent immediate Communist subversion by strengthening Balaguer's hold and the belief that Communist prospects over a longer period might better be countered by providing the Dominican people an early opportunity to choose a new government through national elections.[79] The eventual decisions to press for the removal, first of the Trujillo family and then of General Rodríguez Echavarría and of Balaguer himself, stemmed from the U.S. view that these steps would best foster stability and thus make it easier to exclude Communist influence. And throughout this period, and those that followed, conscious American efforts were made to strengthen the Dominican Armed Forces as a bulwark against possible Communist encroachments.

U.S. activities during the Council of State's tenure in 1962-63 — including massive economic aid used for tactical expenditures, assistance to strengthen the National Police, to establish a "public safety corps" for riot control and to train a counter-insurgency unit in the National Army, programs to strengthen the democratic labor movement, and the whole general emphasis on holding free elections — were primarily aimed at curbing the presumed Communist threat.[80] Each time the Council of State suffered a reverse, Ambassador Martin reflected on the danger that "Castro-Communists" would gain strength.[81]

This focus on precluding a possible "Communist take-over" continued after Juan Bosch took office on February 27, 1963. During the very week Bosch was inaugurated, Ambassador Martin found himself preoccupied by the reported presence in the Dominican Republic of eight Communist agents.[82] The Ambassador's first duty after Bosch became President was to ask him to accept U.S. assistance to strengthen the Dominican government's security apparatus. From then on, Martin continuously stressed to Bosch the need to protect the Dominican Republic from "Castro-Communist" subversion. Among the specific measures Martin recommended to Bosch were to close a supposedly Communist school, to ban travel to Cuba, to propose a law permitting deportations, and even to "enact something like our Smith Act."[83]

In internal communications with his staff in Santo Domingo and with his superiors in Washington, Martin placed similar stress on the need to guard against Communist subversion.[84] Recording his own

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79 See Slater, *The OAS and United States Foreign Policy*, pp. 202-203.
80 See Martin, *Overtaken by Events: The Dominican Crisis*, passim.
81 *Ibid.*, p. 331.
82 *Ibid.*, pp. 347-350.
83 *Ibid.*, pp. 509-510, 562.
84 *Ibid.*, passim. (e.g., 196, 459, 539.)

retrospective regret that his embassy had spent so much time and effort reporting Communist activities, Martin explained: "But we had to, a Castro-Communist takeover was the one thing the United States government, and the American people, would not tolerate." [85]

Some prominent U.S. officials, including Alliance for Progress Coordinator Teodoro Moscoso, had begun dealing with the newly-elected Bosch early in 1963 full of hope that they could help this recognized member of Latin America's social democratic circle. Their expectations were disappointed, however, for the Dominican Republic's problems were much more intractable than they had realized at first. Bosch himself, who alienated one Dominican group after another by his statements and actions, turned out to be a much less dedicated and skillful politician than they had presumed, although it is fair to observe that any leader would have had great difficulty coping with Trujillo's political, economic, and social legacy. By the summer of 1963, some officials in Washington were ready to write Bosch off as a failure, although Ambassador Martin, Alliance Coordinator Moscoso and a few others sought frantically to sustain him. Moscoso went so far as to leak word that the United States was considering massive assistance for a comprehensive river valley development scheme in the Dominican Republic and even to plan a personal trip to Santo Domingo in this connection, but Bosch fell before the announced visit could be held.

Since the fundamental American objective in the Dominican Republic was never really to help Bosch or even his country but rather to prevent a "second Cuba," the U.S. government's reaction when Bosch was overthrown was not surprising. When Ambassador Martin asked the State Department late in September whether Washington would send an aircraft carrier to the Dominican Republic to show U.S. support for the badly-faltering Bosch regime, the Department refused unless a Communist takeover was threatened. Bosch's fall was thus assured. [86]

The over-riding American concern for anti-Communist stability in the Dominican Republic continued after the 1963 coup. Despite President Kennedy's strong statement condemning the coup, the break in diplomatic relations, and the suspension of all American aid, it soon turned out that the U.S. government's support for the principle of "constitutionality" was somewhat ambiguous. [87] American officials were

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85 *Ibid.*, p. 453.

86 *Ibid.*, p. 570.

87 The effects of President Kennedy's condemnation of the Dominican and Honduran coups and the actions taken by the U.S. government to dramatize its displeasure were tempered somewhat when an article by Assistant Secretary of State Edwin M. Martin, published in the *New York Herald Tribune,* seemed to accept such military overthrows as inevitable and sometimes even justified. In retrospect, it appears that the U.S.

much more interested in keeping Communists out of office than with helping Bosch or a constitutional successor get in. Immediately after the coup, rumors and reports circulated that, despite Ambassador Martin's efforts, the U.S. Government had not been united in supporting Bosch against opposition; it was even said that the Embassy's military attachés had helped encourage the coup, or at least had not discouraged it actively.[88] Within a few days, moreover, Martin himself confirmed to President Kennedy that the United States did not want Bosch back "because he isn't a President."[89] Martin's own exasperation after months of dealing with the mercurial Dominican leader seems to have been very influential in establishing a consensus view within the U.S. government that Bosch's own return should not be encouraged, a view which was to be an important element affecting the 1965 crisis.

Washington's subsequent interest in a "constitutionalist" solution — i.e., the continuation of Bosch's regime under someone other than Bosch himself — was fanned briefly by intelligence reports of pro-Communist guerrilla activities against the Triumvirate but soon waned when the reports proved to be exaggerated.[90] Pressure for a return to "constitutionality" was eased, and then dropped altogether, when it seemed likely to produce turbulence, and President Kennedy reportedly decided early in November to extend recognition to the Triumvirate when suitable agreements on eventual elections could be reached. At last, in December, rumors of flickering attempts to promote a counter-coup — together with the Triumvirate's own indication that continued non-recognition might undermine its position and strengthen the hand of leftist opponents — speeded President Johnson's decision to recognize the Dominican regime without further delay.[91] A week after U.S. recognition had been granted, Dominican Army patrols executed sixteen guerrilla leaders, their usefulness having been out-lasted.[92]

The basic thrust of U.S. policy toward the Dominican Republic from the recognition of the Triumvirate up to the outbreak of the 1965 crisis remained the same: to prevent any threat to U.S. security by promoting immediate stability and guarding against "Castro-Communist" gains.

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government's strong desire to strengthen the prospects for free elections in Venezuela, more than anything related to the Dominican Republic itself, may have motivated the President's strong public stand against the overthrow of Bosch. For further background, see Martin, *Overtaken by Events: The Dominican Crisis*, p. 602.

88 Martin's own comments on this point raise more questions than they answer. See Martin, *Overtaken by Events: The Dominican Crisis*, pp. 570-574 and especially 722 fn.

89 *Ibid.*, p. 601.

90 *Ibid.*, pp. 604-607.

91 *Ibid.*, p. 631.

92 *Ibid.*, p. 634.

The U.S. government's approach to Dominican politics continued to focus on the presumed danger from the left. Embassy officers reporting on the activities of Bosch's PRD concentrated on the alleged relations between members of Bosch's group and those farther to the left; close tabs were kept on who was joining the party, and on who was meeting with whom. Apparently fearing that the PRD, excluded from power, might become so thoroughly committed to cooperation with the extreme left (in opposition to the Triumvirate) as to lose its own freedom of action, American officials came to treat Bosch's party as if it had a permanent burden of proof that it was not seeking or even accepting "Castro-Communist" support. From the time the U.S. recognized the Triumvirate until after the U.S. intervention in 1965, "the only official U.S. personnel who talked with Juan Bosch were FBI agents who wanted him to inform them about Communists in the Dominican Republic." [93] Talks with PRD officials in Santo Domingo, as well, focused more often on the party's knowledge of Communist activities and plans than on its own program.

The U.S. government's involvement in the Dominican Republic in 1964-1965 was in many ways less active than it had been during the period of very intense American participation from 1961 to 1963. Just as the occupation period in the Dominican Republic and elsewhere in the Caribbean in the early 1920's brought about a period of American restraint in the area, so the extraordinary activity of Martin's tenure in the Dominican Republic (and of the dynamic activism of the early Kennedy Administration) was followed by an attempt to reduce the scope and depth of American involvement in Dominican affairs. Ambassador Bennett's personal attempt to limit his participation in Dominican politics, the reduced level of AID expenditures in the Dominican Republic, and Washington's support for an IMF-recommended economic austerity program were all aspects of a conscious attempt by American officials to deal with the Dominican Republic less intensely. The U.S. government was now trying to treat the Dominican Republic as one of very many nations with economic and political problems, which would not become a matter for priority attention in Washington unless American security appeared directly to be threatened.

American policy towards the Dominican Republic in 1965, as almost always before, was keyed not to opportunity but to threat. The Dominican Republic was approached, no longer as a possible "show-case for democracy," but still as a target of "Castro-Communist" subversion. American concern was focused on preventing a Communist takeover, on precluding a "second Cuba," and events were seen through this lens.

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93 Theodore Draper, *The Dominican Revolt: A Case Study in American Policy* (New York, 1968), p. 16.

Juan Bosch and PRD were viewed, not as possible partners in the Alliance for Progress but as ineffectual reformers and politicians and, even worse, as likely dupes of Communist organizers. Dominican Communists, in turn, were seen not as weak and fragmented groups of dissidents, but as potential agents of extracontinental power. The Dominican Armed Forces were conceived, not primarily as rival bands of plunder, but as an institution opposed to instability and to Communist advance.

As for the overall role of the United States, positive commitments to assist desired Dominican changes were publicized, but the emphasis of American officials was on avoiding renewed entanglement in Dominican politics and on keeping the Dominican Republic "off the front burner." Largely because of all these attitudes and assumptions, events in Santo Domingo in 1965 which might otherwise have passed almost unnoticed — by the U.S. government, at least — had they occurred in some other area or era, were to become instead the background to intervention.