

CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TO UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE
TO LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES FROM 1957 TO 1964

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

The purpose of this thesis is to determine the reaction of the Congress to United States military assistance programs for Latin America from 1957 to 1964 through a close examination of debates in Congress and the reports of its various committee hearings. These programs became a subject of continuous debate within the Congress, and it is this writer's contention that both the quantity and quality of this assistance was influenced by those debates. Until 1957, military assistance programs for Latin America had been accepted by the Congress with only minor criticism or objection. But from 1957 on, there was "a rising tide of criticism building up against this type of aid" in the Congress.¹ According to Norman A. Graebner, even though the executive branch of the government is primarily responsible for foreign policy formulation, "Congress can play a formative role in strengthening or destroying that policy." In addition, Congress "may alter

¹Michael J. Francis, "Military Aid to Latin America in the U.S. Congress," Journal of Inter-American Studies, VI (July, 1964), 396. (Hereinafter cited as Francis, "Military Aid.")

any program through its control of the purse, through investigation, and through debate."² Graebner's study reveals that since the end of World War II, Congress has taken its power of the purse more seriously, examples being reductions in aid for Western Europe and military assistance in general. Congressional hearings have, as Congressman James P. Richards has indicated, "'a noticeable effect on how our officials conduct relations with other countries.'" Graebner says, however, that the greatest influence Congress has over foreign policy is "exerted through the power of debate, for through this device it educates or miseducates the American people."³

The first phase of congressional reactions to be examined covers the period from 1957 to 1960, when military aid to Latin America was being justified by the executive branch as providing for hemispheric defense. During this time, not only did Congress question its justification, but also the giving of military assistance to dictators came under considerable criticism. The second

²Norman A. Graebner, The New Isolationism: A Study in Politics and Foreign Policy since 1950 (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1956), p. 9.

³Ibid., p. 10.

phase of congressional reaction began with the election of President John F. Kennedy and his Latin America policy under the Alliance for Progress. The executive then justified military aid to Latin America as providing for the internal security and stability of those countries. To the consternation of a concerned Congress a wave of militarism swept across Latin America during this period. According to Professor Edwin Lieuwen, between March, 1962, and June, 1964, seven duly elected, constitutional, civilian presidents were deposed by military coups.⁴ Once again a considerable number of congressmen and senators were questioning the misuses of United States military aid by the Latin America military in deposing democratic governments. In the third and last phase the writer will analyze congressional reaction on the same issues during the early months of the presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson. Johnson inherited the dilemma presented by militarism in Latin America, whether to grant or withhold recognition and assistance to such regimes.

⁴U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Survey of the Alliance for Progress, Studies and Hearings before a Subcommittee on American Republics Affairs, S. Doc. 91-17, 91st Congress, 1st sess., 1969, pp. 96-97. (Hereinafter cited as Senate, Survey.)

According to Edwin Lieuwen, the origins of United States military assistance to Latin America can be traced to the period just prior to World War II; such aid was intended to counter the threat of Fascist and Nazi subversion. To eliminate this threat the United States began a military-mission program in Latin America in 1938, the objective being to cause the removal of all European military missions from Latin America, including those of England and France. By underbidding its Axis rivals in the cost of mission training and instruction, the United States was able by the end of 1941 to acquire a complete monopoly on the military missions to Latin America.⁵

By the outbreak of World War II, the United States has become the sole provider not only of training and advising but also of arms as well. Latin America's armed forces had traditionally obtained their armaments from Europe, particularly from the Axis powers, but soon severed diplomatic and commercial relations with these countries. The United States during this period provided Latin America with four million dollars worth of arms.

⁵Edwin Lieuwen, Arms and Politics in Latin America (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1960), pp. 175-195. (Hereinafter cited as Lieuwen, Arms and Politics.)

Following the end of the war, President Harry S. Truman urged Congress to continue the assistance, but Congress failed to approve such legislation. Finally, in 1947, when the United States became enmeshed in the Cold War and vitally concerned with the rise and spread of Soviet influence in the underdeveloped areas of the world, a renewal of the wartime program of military aid was considered. The Rio Treaty, officially labelled the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, was signed by the United States and the Latin American nations in September, 1947, with the primary objective being to provide collective security against aggression, foreign or domestic. Containment of communism had become the by-word of the United States in its European foreign policy. The outbreak of hostilities in Korea in June, 1950, forced the United States to adopt a program of military, economic, and technical assistance to several noncommunist countries as a means of defense against communism. The instrument given by the Congress to the President for such a massive aid program was the Mutual Security Act of 1951.^e

^eLieuwen, Arms and Politics, pp. 195-198.

Congress in Title IV of the Mutual Security Act of 1951 specified that military assistance would be furnished to its hemispheric defense partners "only in accordance with defense plans which are found by the President to require the recipient nations to participate in missions important to the defense of the Western Hemisphere."⁷ President Truman requested 40 million dollars for the program, but Congress trimmed the figure to 38 million dollars. Shortly thereafter, the United States entered into bilateral mutual-defense assistance pacts with Ecuador, Cuba, Colombia, Peru, and Chile. Agreements were reached with Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and Uruguay in 1953; with Nicaragua and Honduras in 1954; with Haiti and Guatemala in 1955; and with Bolivia in 1958.⁸ It was not until 1962 that agreements were signed with El Salvador, Panama, Costa Rica, and two years later with Argentina.⁹ In addition to supplying arms, the

⁷Senate, Survey, p. 114.

⁸Harold A. Hovey, United States Military Assistance: A Study of Policies and Practices (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), pp. 51-53.

⁹Raymond Estep, United States Military Aid to Latin America (Maxwell AFB: Documentary Research Division, Aerospace Studies Institute, Air University, 1966), p. 44.

United States and the Latin American countries made provisions in 1953 for the training of Latin American officers and enlisted men in order to insure that the equipment being sent to Latin America would be utilized properly.

In a 1953 State Department fact sheet entitled, "Military Assistance to Latin America," the executive branch justified aid to the southern neighbors for the following reasons:

- (1) This hemisphere is threatened by communist aggression from within and without;
- (2) The security of strategic areas in the hemisphere and of inter-American lines of communication is vital to the security of every American republic; and
- (3) The protection of these strategic areas and communications is a common responsibility.¹⁰

An argument for aid that appeared from 1955 onward was that if the United States were not responsive to the military assistance requests from the Latin Americans, they would resume their dealings with European countries to

¹⁰U.S., Department of State, Military Assistance to Latin America: A Background Fact Sheet, January, 1953, p. 2.

secure their arms. It was further argued that this would have an adverse effect on collective defense and on standardization of military equipment.¹¹

Congress faces a yearly dilemma when considering military aid to Latin America, which is: risk damaging United States-Latin American relations by putting an end to the program or continuing the program that some members of Congress believe is contrary to the democratic principles of this nation. This became apparent from 1957 onward in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, whose key members William Fulbright, Wayne Morse, Frank Church, and Hubert Humphrey became the "most vocal critics" of military aid to Latin America.¹² Not only was the Senate Committee critical but also its counterpart in the House, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, started its close review and judgment of this program. This, essentially, is the story unfolded in the following pages.

¹¹Senate, Survey, p. 114.

¹²Michael J. Francis, "Prospects of Military Aid in Latin America," Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, XLVI (March, 1966), 445.

C H A P T E R I

CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TO MILITARY AID FOR HEMISPHERIC DEFENSE: MUTUAL SECURITY ACT OF 1957

During the Truman and Eisenhower administrations "military aid was provided to Latin American governments which proclaimed themselves to be anti-Communist regardless of their representative or dictatorial nature."¹ By the latter part of the Eisenhower administration, Congress and the public began to interpret this policy to mean United States support of dictatorships. In 1954, twelve of the twenty republics in Latin America were ruled by generals or colonels who had ascended to the presidency through coups d'etat. Some members of Congress were most disturbed with the policy of giving military aid to dictatorial regimes. Cited as foremost examples of this strange relationship were the military pacts with General Fulgencio Batista of Cuba, General Rafael Leonidas

¹Larry Dale Givens, "Official United States Attitudes Toward Latin American Military Regimes, 1933-1960" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1970), p. 169. (Hereinafter cited as Givens, "Military Regimes.")

Trujillo of the Dominican Republic, and General Anastasio Somoza of Nicaragua.²²

The first critical confrontation between the executive and legislative branches of the government over the military program for Latin American countries came in consideration of the Mutual Security Act of 1957. In the hearings on the bill conducted by both the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, the executive branch presented a strong case for continuing its military assistance for the purpose of hemispheric defense. Testifying before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, R. R. Rubottom, Jr., Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, supported mutual assistance for Latin America for three reasons. First, geographic proximity required that Latin America be taken into consideration in planning for the defense of the United States. Second, the United States and other American republics depended upon "a large volume of materials essential to our security and well being." Third, military aid provided for the defense of lines of communication and allowed the Latin American governments

²²Senate, Survey, pp. 95-96.

to maintain their internal security. He recalled the communist's attempt in Guatemala in 1954 to "undermine the defense of the hemisphere through subversive activities."³ Appearing before the Committee with Rubottom was Colonel Thomas B. Hanford, Director of the Western Hemisphere Regional Office, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, who defended the Administration's program on the grounds that "the countries of Latin America do not have the financial resources or the experience in modern warfare to train and equip forces for hemisphere defense missions without external help."⁴

Later, before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Rubottom was asked by Representative Dante B. Fascell of Florida for his reaction to an amendment to the Mutual Security Bill which would specify that "no military assistance funds shall be made available to any country which in law or in fact is a dictatorship." The Secretary in his reply took a dim view of such a restrictive measure.

³U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Mutual Security Act of 1957, Hearings, before the Committee on Foreign Relations, 85th Congress, 1st sess., 1957, pp. 314-315.

⁴Ibid., p. 329.

It would not serve the United States interests to place that type of restrictive amendment on the legislation. There are all shades of governments with which the United States maintains relations throughout the world, not just in Latin America.⁵

Rubottom went on to say that "the maintaining of relations including the military relationships with a country, do not imply approval of the type of government which it happens to have."⁶

When the Mutual Security Bill was reported out of the committees, both chambers of Congress began debate on it. On July 15, 1957, Senator Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin addressed the Senate on the subject, "The Importance of Correct Relations with the Western Hemisphere," and expressed some opinions held by many legislators during this time. Wiley told his colleagues that "too often in the past we have tended to lose sight of the tremendous diplomatic, military, economic, and technical challenges facing us right here in the New World, with our twenty sister republics." He asserted that "some people tend

⁵U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Mutual Security Act of 1957, Hearings, before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, 85th Cong., 1st sess., 1957, p. 936.

⁶Ibid.

to think of Latin America as relatively immune from the Communist peril," but, in actuality, "right in our own backyard we have seen communism rise."⁷ In addition, many Americans did not realize the military significance of Latin America, especially the importance "of its naval and air patrols in direct defense of the hemisphere."⁸ This in no wise was the sentiment of all Congressmen; on the same day Representative Charles O. Porter from Oregon delivered an entirely different type of speech. He remarked that "the military alliance we erect with dictators and the facade of inter-American solidarity we are so fond of praising on inter-American occasions, are so many houses of cards." Porter made eight recommendations for improving hemispheric relations. First, he urged that "our ambassadors in dictatorially-governed countries [be instructed] to avoid all unnecessary identification with the dictator." Second, the United States should "encourage democratic nations to send their chiefs of State and other high officials to the United" and "honor them

⁷U.S., Congress, Senate, 85th Cong., 1st sess., July 15, 1957, Congressional Record, CIII, 11650.

⁸Ibid., 11651

publicly." Third, the Congressman strongly recommended an end to the practice of giving medals to dictators. His seventh recommendation was perhaps the most challenging to Congress as a whole; Porter advocated giving "no economic or military aid to dictatorships." Then he raised the question which many of his colleagues had been asking all along: how important was military assistance in providing for hemispheric defense? Porter felt that the armaments provided under the military assistance programs "serve a single purpose--to encourage and strengthen the military caste." He maintained that, even though the Pentagon was pushing to strengthen hemispheric defense, he doubted the importance or effectiveness of tanks and conventional weapons in Latin America "in view of weapon developments in the last decade."⁹

Porter, in an effort to put his words into action, offered two amendments to the Mutual Security Act of 1957. His first amendment provided for preferential treatment to the democratic Latin American governments in furnishing them mutual security assistance.¹⁰ His

⁹Ibid., July 15, 1957, 11756-11757.

¹⁰Ibid., July 19, 1957, 12203.

second denied economic and military aid to countries "which the State Department determined to be governed by dictators."¹¹

Representatives Victor A. Anfuso from New York and Donald L. Jackson from California did not share Porter's views. Anfuso and Jackson rebutted Porter's remarks by pointing out to the House membership that Representative Porter

feels that it is all right to support the Communist dictators, Tito, and others, but not those dictators whose countries are definitely allied with the United States; namely Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Spain, and Portugal, all of which are anti-Communist.¹²

Joining the opposition to the first Porter amendment was Representative Clement J. Zablocki of Wisconsin, who strongly urged the defeat of the amendment, as its passage would, in his opinion, "hamper and prevent adequate defense against communism." To the Congressman from Wisconsin the enemy was communism, and it "was not to be tolerated in this hemisphere under any conditions."¹³

¹¹Ibid., July 19, 1957, 12224.

¹²Ibid., July 19, 1957, 12204.

¹³Ibid., July 19, 1957, 12204-12205.

Although both of Porter's amendments were defeated, this in no way deterred his efforts to change United States policy toward Latin America. On July 23, 1957, he addressed the House on a similar topic, which he called "Lest the Cock Crow." Referring to the Bible, the Congressman recounted how "Jesus told Peter, 'Truly, I say to you, this very night before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.'" Using the biblical passage, he proceeded to state his position to the members of the House: "Lest the cock crow, I recommend we change our present neutralistic policy toward Latin American nations and publicly discriminate between the democratic and despotic nations."¹⁴ Porter pointed out to his critics that there was no justification for granting military aid on the basis of hemispheric defense, since "a military attack on any portion of the Western Hemisphere will be met by United States forces, planes, submarines, and troops, not those of any Latin American nation." In addition, he tried to impress upon the House that the United States policy in Latin America was one in which the United States was identified with oppressors, and not with the

¹⁴Ibid., July 22, 1957, 12388.

oppressed, "who then have reason to turn to international communism for help against the tyrants."¹⁵ The Representative continued his criticism on August 1, 1957, when he stated:

In my opinion our present policy of placating the Latin American dictators because we feel we need them as allies against communism is gravely in error.¹⁶

To him the real "danger of Communist aggression in Latin America is from subversion," which should be combatted only through economic aid and the encouragement of democratic practices. Dictatorships, he claimed, only serve to "hold back social and economic progress," and the "result is they set the stage for communistic subversion and control."¹⁷

Once again representing the Department of Defense, Colonel Thomas B. Hanford, in his appearance before the House Subcommittee on Appropriations, was asked by Representative Winfield K. Denton of Indiana if the only reason that the United States was giving military aid to

¹⁵Ibid., July 22, 1957, 12389.

¹⁶Ibid., August 1, 1957, 13408.

¹⁷Ibid.

South America was to "get their goodwill." Colonel Hanford replied in the negative and indicated to the committee that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had determined that it was a "military necessity."¹⁸

Congress passed the Mutual Security Act of 1957, but it was evident from the reaction of several Senate and House members that in the future Congress would be more critical on the subject. Some in Congress questioned the value of any military assistance, but especially that given to dictators. Thus Congress, in 1958, would seek more control over the program.

¹⁸U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, Mutual Security Appropriations for 1958, Hearings, before a Subcommittee on Appropriations, 85th Cong., 1st sess., 1957, p. 684.

C H A P T E R I I

CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TO MILITARY AID TO DICTATORS: MUTUAL SECURITY ACT OF 1958

The Eisenhower's administration's policy of granting military aid to dictators greatly concerned Congress; such a policy appeared as a direct contradiction to encouraging democracy in Latin America.

Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon, one of the chief legislative opponents to military assistance to Latin America, on February 10, 1958, reminded his colleagues that the Senate had created in July, 1956, a Special Committee to Study the Foreign Aid Program, but that the "Senate had paid little heed to their studies last year in approving the Mutual Security Act of 1957."¹ Morse voiced his concern with the findings of the special committee, a part of which indicated that in many places in the world American military aid was "being used to suppress freedom." The Senator reiterated what the Secretary

¹U.S., Congress, Senate, 85th Cong., 2d sess., February 10, 1958, Congressional Record, CIV, 1937.

of State had told the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations when asked to explain the "rationale for the foreign aid program to countries which use it to keep down freedom," that was "to help a government keep down dissident groups." This logic greatly distressed the Senator because he felt "that the fight for freedom in many nations of the world is a fight put on by dissident groups who are as opposed to communism as we are."² Morse then quoted part of the special study made by Edgar S. Furniss, which stated:

The geography of the area and the strength of the twenty American Republics make fantastic the supposition that an annual commitment by the United States, of thirty to forty million dollars, even for an indefinite period of time, could bring the individual Latin American military establishments to a point where they could resist any (equally fantastic) Communist aggression by themselves.³

Morse felt very strongly that South America was in no danger of "external Soviet aggression." The Senator emphasized to his colleagues that "internal subversion has not been eliminated by military aid, as we saw in

²Ibid., February 10, 1958, 1940.

³Ibid.

Guatemala; in some South American countries our military aid has been used in struggles between rival 'juntas' having nothing to do with communism."⁴ In view of the misuse of military aid, plus the fact that between 1949 and 1957 the United States had spent 175 million dollars to arm Latin America countries with very poor results, Morse called upon the Senate to restudy the question. He advocated shifting to more economic assistance through the Organization of American States.⁵

Morse, on March 11, 1958, addressed the Senate on "Arms in the Hemisphere," at which time he labeled the administration's foreign aid policy as "obsolescence" due to its emphasis on military aid. He questioned the administration's logic in requesting 75 percent for economic aid. Morse argued that scientific developments had rendered obsolete nearly all conventional weapons and armaments being given under the military assistance programs. He told the Senate that "it would be better to send bread rather than bullets to South America."⁶ Earlier

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., March 11, 1958, 3884.

in the session he had voiced his opposition to providing military assistance to Cuba in view of Batista's being a dictator. He related to the Senate that during the hearings, Secretary Rubottom had indicated that undoubtedly the shipments of arms by the United States to Batista had strengthened his dictatorship.⁷ He called on his colleagues to make it clear that the United States would help economically but would "not continue to pour millions of dollars' worth of armaments into South America only to find that in too many instances such armaments [were] being used to suppress freedom and to strengthen military juntas and dictatorship regimes."⁸

Not all senators shared Morse's opinions. Senator Charles Potter of Michigan believed that the United States should encourage and recognize Latin America's potential in national and hemisphere security. He recommended that the United States rely on the Latin American nations for additional "missile bases, submarine detection bases, air bases, atomic stockpiles, and other buttresses to our far-flung strength."⁹

⁷Ibid., March 6, 1958, 3594.

⁸Ibid., March 6, 1958, 3595.

⁹Ibid., April 2, 1958, 6095.

On the other hand, some congressional members, among them Senator Mike Mansfield from Montana, were fearful of encouraging too much armament for Latin America for fear of creating a small-arms race there. The question of disarmament in Latin America came up during the Senate hearings on the 1958 bill. Mansfield wanted to know the Defense Department's attitude "toward insertion of a policy statement in the Mutual Security Act that military aid to Latin America shall be administered in such a way as to promote steps toward disarmament in Latin America." The Secretary of Defense did not respond immediately, but subsequently he submitted a written statement of the department's position on the matter, which read in part:

This is a broad question which should be considered in the light of requirements for national and hemisphere security and must be related to present world conditions. . . . I doubt that there is any need to amend the Mutual Security Act in this respect.¹⁰

Disarmament was not the only concern of Congress during the 1958 hearings. The question of giving support

¹⁰U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Mutual Security Act of 1958, Hearings, before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, on S. 3318, 85th Cong., 2d sess., 1958, p. 33.

to dictators again surfaced. Senator Russell B. Long of Louisiana questioned the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Mansfield Sprague, on the wisdom of giving aid to dictators:

With regard to our Latin American situation, in the case of a government that is not willing to permit free elections do you think that we particularly help our situation by giving weapons to promote internal security, which I assume would be to prevent a revolution of people?

Secretary Sprague replied in the following manner:

Well, sir, in general I think that there has been a historical trend in South America toward greater democracy and freer elections. . . . It is certainly not the policy of the United States to give military assistance for the purpose of preventing free elections or of maintaining anyone in power. I'm afraid that from time to time that does have that effect; yes, sir.¹¹

Long then proceeded to question the Secretary on the logic of supplying arms to a country whose government was not satisfactory to the United States. The Secretary replied: "We are supplying arms to their military forces in limited amounts, largely small arms." Long informed the Secretary that this only served to reinforce his earlier conclusion

¹¹Ibid., p. 62.

regarding the use of such weapons: "small arms are just the things they need against their own revolutionary forces. Supplying cannons might be more useful for defending their own country than supplying them machineguns with which to kill their own people." In reply to these remarks, Sprague sought to justify the military programs as "designed for internal security, and hemispheric defense mission."¹² But Long still maintained that the giving of military aid to a dictator was hurting the American cause before the world and that said policy amounted to saying, "'Here is a man [the dictator] who is a sorry rascal, but he is ours.'"¹³

As the Foreign Relations Committee continued its hearing, the issue of aiding Cuba was brought up again by Senator Morse. In questioning Secretary Rubottom, the Senator wanted to know if the Secretary could "say categorically that United States military aid is not being used by Batista against the Cuban rebels." Rubottom replied that he could not give such assurance, for he felt that there was evidence that some of it might have been

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., p. 63.

used by Batista's army against one of the recent rebel uprisings.¹⁴ To support his case, Morse introduced a memorandum sent to the United States by some of the Cuban congressmen in exile in which the Cubans charged the United States with "supporting Batista's ruthless dictatorship."¹⁵

In April and May, 1958, Vice-President Richard Nixon was to represent the United States at the inauguration of Arturo Frondizi as President of Argentina. Before the tour could begin, the scope of Nixon's tour was broadened to encompass seven nations. This was prompted by the recent removal of dictators in Venezuela and Columbia, as Washington wanted Nixon to visit these countries, according to Givens, to show "approval of recent political events."¹⁶ The tour became, as Givens points out in his doctoral dissertation, "the symbol for Latin America to vent its resentment toward postwar policies of the United States." Further, the Latin Americans who had been recently freed from dictatorial rule expressed their anti-United States feelings in "explosive outbursts." He points out

¹⁴Ibid., p. 443.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 444.

¹⁶Givens, "Military Regimes," p. 204.

that "one significant reason for the hostility directed against the Vice-President was the widespread Latin American belief that Washington had supported the dictatorships."¹⁷

Congress reacted with anger and concern to the reception of the Vice-President in Latin America. Morse, speaking on the Senate floor on May 13, 1958, told his colleagues that the United States needed to keep a close watch on freedom in South America because in many countries in this area, "freedom is not doing well." He cited the demonstrations against Vice-President Nixon as an "indication that there is a great need for improved relations between the United States and South America." He urged that the United States "make it perfectly clear that the support we have given to dictators in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and elsewhere in Latin America are out of line with our policies of supporting true democracy." In the area of foreign aid, Morse recommended once again that the Congress "emphasize more aid which will build up the economic productive power of those nations, rather than aid in the so-called military assistance."¹⁸ Speaking

¹⁷Ibid., p. 205.

¹⁸Congressional Record, May 13, 1958, CIV, 8555.

on the same subject, Representative Porter on May 27, 1958, told the House that Mr. Nixon had "discovered the real South America," where he found "a continent in ferment and a people yearning for freedom." Furthermore, the Vice-President had found the "Communists on hand ready to identify themselves with the burning aspirations of the populace." Porter opined that Nixon, ironically, "found the United States, supposed leader of the Free World and defender of human rights, identified in the popular mind with brutal dictatorships and old-style dollar diplomacy." According to this Congressman, Vice-President Nixon, upon his return from his tour of South America, had made one simple recommendation in order "to recuperate our lost prestige throughout Latin America," which was: "For dictators, a formal handshake; for officials of free countries, an embrace."¹⁸

Representative Porter blamed Secretary of State Dulles for the poor relations that existed with Latin America, for, he asserted, "Latin America never [had] occupied a preeminent place" in Dulles' thinking. Porter felt that Vice-President Nixon had a duty to correct

¹⁸Ibid., May 27, 1958, 9628.

"Dulles' blind spot" on Latin America.²⁰ The Congressman repeated his forementioned recommendation that the United States "cut off mutual assistance funds and military missions to hemisphere dictators." According to him, throughout Nixon's tour, the Vice-President "heard criticism that our military and economic aid was being used by dictators to perpetuate their power."²¹

Disturbed by the mistreatment of Nixon, Senator George A. Smathers from Florida brought up another distressing matter. He was troubled by the fact that the Mutual Security Act of 1958 provided for seventeen ships of the destroyer escort and submarine class to be made available to seven Latin American countries. He questioned not only the justification for this authorization but also felt that the maintenance of these modern ships would place a strain on the countries' economics. He disputed the validity of this program for "hemisphere defense" on the basis that military strategy and world conditions had changed since World War II. Smathers believed that "our military is making the same mistake in

²⁰Ibid., May 27, 1958, 9629.

²¹Ibid., May 27, 1958, 9630.

trying to fight the next wars in terms of the last war."²²

To the Senator, military assistance to Latin America raised such serious questions as:

Does it strengthen military cliques and hinder the development of [the] democratic process, thus creating divisive ill will toward the United States? Does it arouse inter-American jealousies and envies and lead to miniature arms races?²³

It was his belief that each of these questions "would have to be answered in the affirmative." He warned the Senate that the real danger in Latin America was still communism, but not "military communism." "The danger," said the Senator, "is Communist exploitation of unhappy, unhealthy people. This offer of relief in the form of military aid, in no way meets the threat of Communist infiltration in Latin America."²⁴

On May 28, 1958, the Senate began its floor debate on the Mutual Security Act of 1958 as reported from the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. The committee had recommended an important amendment to the bill in an

²²Ibid., June 3, 1958, 9994.

²³Ibid., June 3, 1958, 9995.

²⁴Ibid., June 3, 1958, 9996.

effort to insure that the President exercised greater control on the military aid program. The amendment required the President to make an annual review of each request for military assistance, but more importantly, the amendment stated that: "Internal security requirements shall not normally be the basis for military assistance programs to American republics."²⁵ Congress' logic for this was to prevent perpetuating dictatorships with United States aid. As consideration of the bill continued, other senators expressed dissatisfaction with the foreign aid program.

Senator William E. Jenner from Indiana referred to congressional consideration of the foreign aid bill as the "Foreign Aid Follies." To him, the House and Senate merely went through the motions of holding hearings and debating the bill, as the executive branch always seemed to get its way.²⁶

Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin felt that he could at least attempt to change the bill. On June 5, he introduced two amendments; one would reduce the overall

²⁵Ibid., May 28, 1958, 9727.

²⁶Ibid., June 3, 1958, 9986.

military assistance request by 339 million dollars; the other would prohibit military assistance to Yugoslavia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Saudi Arabia. Proxmire believed that the reduction was justified, especially in the case of aid to Latin America. Citing the speech made by Smathers on June 3, 1958, in which he objected to the kind of military aid being given the Latin American countries, Proxmire argued that continuation of military aid to Latin America would only "build up a military clique" which does not have popular support.²⁷

A large number of Proxmire's colleagues immediately disagreed with his amendments. Senator Frank M. Clark from Pennsylvania could not accept the amendments, as their adoption would endanger the security of the United States. By stopping military aid to Cuba and the Dominican Republic, the United States would have to give up its missile bases and other military facilities in these countries which were vital to the security of the United States. Senator Everett M. Dirksen entitled Proxmire's amendments "How to lose friends and be unable to influence people," and labelled it "ill-advised" and

²⁷Ibid., June 5, 1958, 10260-10266.

"short-sighted" to recommend that the United States stop foreign aid to countries like Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Saudi Arabia. He believed that writing such a provision "into the solemn law of our country would affront the people and the leaders" of these countries.²⁸ Senator Theodore F. Green from Rhode Island objected to the Proxmire amendments for being based on two misconceptions:

[F]irst, that the furnishing of aid to a foreign country by the United States means that the United States approves of the government in power in that country. The second misconception appears to be that if we now suddenly cut off aid to certain countries, such action will bring about desirable changes in the governments of such countries.²⁹

With so much opposition, the Proxmire amendments were defeated; yet, there remained senators who had reservations about the military assistance program.

Senator Fulbright, on June 20, 1958, made a speech entitled "The Dangerous Apathy," in which he stated that the United States had become obsessed with "foreign military-assistance programs and overseas military bases." The Senator maintained that "we pour military assistance

²⁸Ibid., June 5, 1958, 10267-10269.

²⁹Ibid., June 5, 1958, 10270.

into any foreign country that would accept it," and, in the long run, United States assistance involved "dilemmas of the most painful kind." He believed that "the shipment of arms to any nation not practiced in the art of democratic self-government promotes maintenance of the status quo" or "nonrepresentative government."³⁰

The 85th Congress did pass the Mutual Security Act of 1958, but Congress was slowly reacting more strongly to military assistance programs, and in enacting the Mutual Act of 1958 it made definite stipulations to curb the practice of giving military aid to perpetuate dictatorships.³¹

³⁰Ibid., June 20, 1958, 11847.

³¹Mutual Security Act of 1958, Statutes at Large, LXXII, Sec. 103, 262 (1958).

C H A P T E R I I I

CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TOWARD THE USE OF MILITARY AID IN LATIN AMERICA: MUTUAL SECURITY ACT OF 1959

The violent anti-American demonstration against Vice-President Nixon during his tour and the political events in Cuba raised serious questions about United States policy in Latin America. Congress was determined in 1959 to appraise thoroughly the military assistance program and adopt legislation to control its administration.

The 86th Congress opened in January, 1959, with a renewed interest in Latin America due to Castro's defeat of Batista. Addressing the House on January 15, 1959, Representative Adam C. Powell from New York charged that the United States had been a partner in the "blood bath of Batista for the past years," as it had armed dictator Batista's armed forces.¹ He claimed that Batista had violated both the Mutual Security Act and the Mutual

¹U.S., Congress, House, 86th Cong., 1st sess., January 15, 1959, Congressional Record, CV, 700.

Assistance Agreement. Those acts clearly specified that arms "may be used only in the implementation of defense plans agreed upon by the United States and Cuba under which Cuba participates in missions important to the defense of the Western Hemisphere." Yet, despite this open misuse of American aid, the Congressman argued, the United States "continued this policy of aiding, abetting, arming, sympathizing with and helping to direct Batista's reign of terror." Powell contended that the United States had failed to learn its lesson, for now the administration was sending a special mission of fifty-five marines to help train the Haitian army. By doing this the United States had embarked on support of another bloodbath, this time in Haiti, and was continuing its policy of supporting dictators. The Congressman called on his colleagues to join in the campaign of "No more aid for tyrants."²

The Security Act of 1959 did not escape the discussions and disagreements which marked earlier bills. The leading opponents of the bill were Senators Wayne Morse and Frank Church who, as members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, introduced several amendments.

²Ibid., January 15, 1959, 701.

Morse indicated on March 25, 1959, that he could not comprehend the President's logic in recommending "a continuation of his blanket proposals for military and economic foreign aid," after the President had received the findings of a special congressional committee which recommended less military aid. The Senator urged congressional action since, "under the Constitution, it is the obligation of Congress, exercising its power of check, to challenge inefficiency and waste and maladministration of the military and economic foreign aid program."³

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Latin American Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, Senator Morse then addressed himself to specifics in the military aid program. He felt that "there has been great waste of both military and economic aid in many parts of Latin America." Challenging once again the "rationale" of the Pentagon that military aid actually contributed to hemispheric defense, he stated that if the United States became involved in a nuclear war, "the military appropriations to Latin America will be of no defense value." In referring to talks that had taken place between the

³Ibid., March 25, 1959, 5241.

members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and two members of the Chilean Parliament, the Senator from Oregon stressed the fact that some Latin American leaders themselves questioned the value of military aid to their countries. One of the Chileans, according to Senator Morse, asked the committee, "Why do you send us military aid? Do you not recognize that for the most part it is used to stir up trouble in the individual countries to which it goes, and to stir up trouble among the Latin American countries themselves?" In addition, Morse found it "inexcusable for us to send any of it [military aid] to any dictator in Latin America." He vowed that he would not "vote for a dollar of military aid to a single totalitarian regime in Latin America."⁴

Hearings on the Mutual Security Bill for 1959 before the House and Senate committees began in March, 1959, and it soon became apparent that the administration's recommendations on foreign aid faced serious opposition. Appearing before the House Committee on Foreign Relations Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs William P. Snow testified that for the fiscal

⁴Ibid., March 25, 1959, 5242.

year 1960 the administration was requesting 96.5 million dollars for military assistance to Latin America. Snow indicated to the committee that since the Korean War, the Latin American countries had requested "training of their military personnel in United States military schools," and have procured standard United States equipment in order to provide for collective "hemispheric defense."⁵ The Secretary told the congressmen that another benefit derived from the military assistance program is the close professional association of United States and Latin American personnel which resulted in "a deeper understanding and appreciation of the democratic ideals which we and Latin American nations share in common."⁶

Such justification, however, did not generally impress the committee members. The chairman of the committee, Representative Thomas E. Morgan from Pennsylvania, opened the interrogation by asking Brigadier General Frederick O. Hartel, Director of the Western Hemisphere Regional Office, if he thought the requested 96 million dollars was essential and if he felt that the United States

⁵U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Mutual Security Act of 1959, Hearings, before Committee on Foreign Affairs, 86th Cong., 1st sess., 1959, p. 729.

⁶Ibid., p. 730.

was spending too much money on military aid in South America. General Hartel immediately indicated that such military aid was essential, and though "the economic area is a very important one in Latin America, we must not overlook the importance of the military."⁷

An issue that bothered Congressman Armistead I. Seldon, Jr. from Alabama was the fact that one program, the "so-called special Brazilian program," had to a great extent necessitated the increase in the military assistance program for fiscal 1960. Upon questioning, Secretary Snow told the committee that in 1956 the United States had negotiated the missile tracking station agreement with Brazil, to which the Brazilians had agreed only on the condition that assistance to them would be increased.⁸ The missile tracking station would draw considerable attention later on the floor of the Senate.

Speaking on April 15, Democratic Senator Hubert Humphrey strongly recommended to the Senate that it "thoroughly reappraise the military assistance program in Latin America." Humphrey warned that the aid being given the

⁷Ibid., p. 746.

⁸Ibid., p. 753.

Latin American countries for hemispheric⁹ defense purposes was encouraging "an arms race." He called for the United States to "lend its support to the idea of regional arms control," which Costa Rica had suggested to the Organization of American States. Humphrey also expressed concern for the way certain dictatorial governments were using United States military aid to suppress freedom and to intimidate their people.⁹

Humphrey's comments reflected a general mood in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as it held hearings on the Mutual Security Bill of 1959. Several Senate members questioned the value of giving military aid to several countries around the world. Chairman J. W. Fulbright believed there was a danger in overemphasizing military assistance programs, observing that Cuba and Iraq, which had been recipients of substantial United States military aid, had recently experienced revolutions. The senator theorized "that an overemphasis [on military aid] not only does not strengthen governments, but it undermines them politically and economically and weakens them as assets to the West."¹⁰

⁹Congressional Record, April 15, 1959, CV, 5935.

¹⁰U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Mutual Security Act of 1959, Hearings, before Committee on Foreign Relations, on S. 1451, 86th Cong., 1st sess., 1959, p. 189.

Furthermore, the committee felt that the "burden of proof" was on the executive branch to justify military aid to dictatorial governments. Senator Wayne Morse also questioned granting aid to dictatorial regimes for the sole purpose of maintaining a stable government. He felt that the United States was not justified in helping a government that "does not provide the people with democratic processes." Furthermore, he rejected the argument set forth by Secretary of Defense Neil H. McElroy that if the United States did not provide arms, the Latin Americans would turn elsewhere to obtain them. The Senator labeled this threat by the Latin Americans as "a form of international blackmail."¹¹ In addition, Morse took to task the United States military establishment when he charged that the Pentagon tended to overplay the "fear argument" to scare the American people "into taking the position of 'Don't question the military. After all they are a group of experts and they are dedicated men and you mustn't raise any questions.'" He declared that "we are going to have a lot of trouble if we don't change our course of action military-wise in regard to Latin America."¹²

¹¹Ibid., p. 205.

¹²Ibid., p. 208.

Strongly disagreeing with the administration's request for 96 million dollars, Senator Humphrey questioned the justification for tripling military assistance to the Latin American countries in only two years (in 1958 the amount was 39 million and in 1959 it was 54 million), since the program was not intended to "enhance the internal security of any particular regime, unless that relates directly to the security of the United States," Humphrey asked the Secretary of Defense to explain the degree to which the Latin American nations contributed to the security of the United States. Secretary McElroy responded by saying that they performed a vital antisubmarine mission.¹³ Humphrey expressed a strong opinion to the contrary, responding to the committee and Secretary McElroy that in too many instances American aid to Latin America had the "result of bolstering the internal security of local governments."¹⁴

Joining Senators Morse and Humphrey in their attack on the mutual security program was Senator Frank Church, who strongly disagreed with the Department of

¹³Ibid., p. 209.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 217-218.

Defense with respect to the nature of the threat to Latin America. To him the communist threat in Latin America was entirely different from the one that faced Europe, therefore, the mutual security program should be tailored to the kind of communism threatening areas supported by the United States. The secrecy on the details of American aid imposed by the Pentagon disturbed Church. To him this practice by the Pentagon made it impossible for the American people to assess the merits of the program. Even the Congress, Church maintained, had to debate the bill on the Senate floor without the benefit of detailed information.¹⁵ When pressed to explain the necessity of classifying the amount given to each individual Latin American country, the Defense Department witness commented that if one country found out what its neighbor was getting, "swirls of discontent" would occur. The Senator then registered a strong protest against the administration for its use of the classification process to cover up "the detail of American foreign policy all over the world," indicating to his colleagues the impossibility of legislating and debating intelligently when the details were kept secret.¹⁶

¹⁵Ibid., p. 219.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 232-233.

One may conclude from the aforementioned comments of the House and Senate members that the military assistance program was not a popular item with the Congress. The Senate committee, like its counterpart in the House, believed it was its duty, as Senator Morse stated, "to get the water out of this program" (meaning the mutual security program) and to inform the American people on "those facts that we can without in any way endangering the security of our country." Morse rejected completely the trend that he felt was "becoming more and more implanted in this country . . . that foreign policy belongs to the President and the Secretary of State." As far as the Senator was concerned the President and the Secretary of State were solely "a couple of administrators of the people's foreign policy."¹⁷

One item that the Senators wanted more information on was the agreement with Brazil for the missile tracking station. Senator Church was most critical of this arrangement; he indicated that "this is the most expensive piece of real estate in history in terms of what has gone into the mutual assistance program in Brazil."

¹⁷Ibid., p. 246.

Fulbright contended that the United States had paid millions of dollars just to rent a 10-square-mile island.¹⁸

Senator Fulbright, realizing "the great sentiment against the way military assistance has been carried on in Latin America," felt a new approach to administering the entire mutual security program was highly desirable. He then addressed his recommendation to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Roy R. Rubottom, Jr., by asking his reaction and that of the Department toward regionalizing the Latin American defense program under the Organization of American States instead of the current practice of appropriating money for each country. Rubottom replied that under the Rio Treaty there existed a regional defense structure, and it would be a most difficult accomplishment to merge "the military forces on the hemisphere into a single unit without respect to their nationality and the military traditions in their respective countries."¹⁹ Because the executive witnesses could not visualize the advantages of furnishing military aid through a regional defense system, Fulbright sought to enlighten

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 238-239.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 541.

them on the benefits of such an arrangement. He explained that by channeling the aid through a regional defense organization, attacks on United States policy could be prevented; it could also eliminate the anti-Americanism evidenced by the Nixon tour in 1958, which had been prompted by United States support of "undesirable regimes in country after country." The Senator warned that the United States could not afford to continue giving aid under the present system, rather the problem should be resolved through a regional approach, with the United States neither taking sides nor supporting any dictator.²⁰ This proposal to form a regional defense organization would later be debated at length on the Senate floor.

Senator Church was most critical of military aid programs that provided for the internal security of some of the countries. He strongly believed that it should not be "the burden or the responsibility of the United States to use American money to furnish them [Latin American governments] with those arms" in order to maintain internal security.²¹ Rubottom, on the other hand, believed that

²⁰Ibid., p. 546.

²¹Ibid., p. 551.

military assistance was essential to Latin America as it contributed to hemispheric defense, but equally important were the training missions through which "we are able to exercise . . . constructive influence of the kind that our own military believe in and have been raised in." But Church countered by pointing out to Rubottom that the Congress had legislated that "internal security requirements shall not normally be the requirement for military assistance programs" in Latin America.²²

When the Senate Foreign Relations Committee completed its hearings on the Mutual Security Bill of 1959, it issued a report that clearly indicated the mood of the committee toward military assistance for Latin America. The committee concluded that its members were "disturbed over the size, and especially over the recent growth, of military assistance to Latin America." The report stated that military assistance to Latin America frequently stimulated arms races and encouraged "the diversion to military purposes of resources which are badly needed for economic development." The committee concluded with several proposed revisions to the Mutual Security Act, which

²²Ibid., p. 552.

would later create lively debate on the Senate floor.²³ Among the amendments the committee was recommending were: (1) a reduction of money; (2) the creation of an international military force under the control of the Organization of American States; and (3) a revision of the criteria used to determine military assistance to the Latin American countries.²⁴

When the bill reached the Senate floor for consideration, Senator Church continued his efforts to change the bill. On May 28, 1959, he offered three amendments which the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had recommended after its extensive hearings. The first amendment would direct "the President to 'make public all information concerning the mutual security program not deemed by him to be incompatible with the security of the United States.'" Church was primarily seeking an end to the excessive secrecy that cloaked the military assistance to Latin America, explaining that it was naive on the part of the administration to think that the Latin American countries "are so

²³U.S. Congress, Senate, Mutual Security Act of 1959, S. Rept. 412 to Accompany S. 1451, 86th Cong., 1st sess., 1959, p. 10.

²⁴Ibid., p. 11.

blind to the facts of life, and so inept in the ordinary processes of intelligence, that they do not have a pretty good idea of how much aid we are giving their neighbors." Joining Church in supporting this amendment was the senator who was to become a leading critic of military aid to Latin America, Ernest Gruening of Alaska. Gruening agreed with Church and Morse that the only reason the program was "shrouded in secrecy" was "to prevent the Senate and the House from obtaining adequate testimony on what is to be expended, and thereby prevent the Congress from exercising adequate control over the expenditure annually of millions of taxpayers' dollars."²⁵

Church's second amendment was "intended to prevent a further expansion of our military assistance program in Latin America." He proposed to refuse the administration's request of 96.5 million dollars and to retain instead the current sum of 67 million dollars, which would "be fully adequate for such military missions in the area as may be directly related to the legitimate needs of hemispheric defense."²⁶

²⁵Congressional Record, May 28, 1959, CV, 9319.

²⁶Ibid.

The Senator's third amendment "would put an end to the use of military assistance for purposes unrelated to our national interest in promoting the common defense of the Western Hemisphere." The new law would require the President to review annually the military assistance program and determine whether such assistance was necessary. Then, in order to insure that the military aid funds were not used to maintain a regime in power, Church's amendment contained the following provision: "Internal security requirements shall not be the basis for military assistance to American republics."²⁷

Joining Senators Church and Gruening in support of the three amendments was Senator Morse, who blasted the Pentagon for imposing so much secrecy on the mutual security program. He renewed the attack on the Brazilian missile tracking station, for though it was common knowledge that such a facility existed, Morse questioned why the amount being paid to Brazil was classified. He contended that this arrangement was a waste of millions of dollars, and, if the Pentagon were to disclose to the public the terms of the agreement, the American people would demand an

²⁷Ibid., May 28, 1959, 9320.

explanation. Yet, he indicated, because of the secrecy surrounding the program he could not intelligently present a case against this "inexcusable expenditure." Church related to the Senate that he had written Under Secretary of State Douglas Dillon, "requesting the prompt declassification of the dollar value of the military assistance furnished each Latin American country up to and including the current fiscal year, 1959." Furthermore, Church wanted the executive branch to

Declassify and make public the details concerning the agreement entered into between the United States and Brazil . . . for the purpose of maintaining a guided missile tracking station in return for which the United States has agreed to furnish large amounts of military assistance to Brazil.²⁸

From this point on, the Congress engaged in heated debate on the Mutual Security Act of 1959.

The Church amendments plus the views held by Senators Morse and Gruening caused mixed reactions in the House. Congressman Donald L. Jackson from California considered it a "dangerous course" for the legislature to be deemphasizing military aid in favor of economic aid.²⁹

²⁸Ibid., May 28, 1959, 9320-9321.

²⁹Ibid., June 17, 1959, 11130.

Representative Wayne L. Hays from Ohio believed that there had been too much waste and unnecessary military assistance given to some nations, including Latin American countries. Sharing Hays' views was Charles O. Porter who believed that there was only one way of correcting the negative aspects of the program; he proposed to eliminate all military assistance to the American republics. He introduced an amendment to the bill which stipulated: "No military assistance except assistance in the training of military personnel, shall be furnished under this Act to any American republics after the date of enactment of the Mutual Security Act of 1959 subject to fulfillment of commitments in existence on June 30, 1959." Porter was remonstrating against arms being provided Latin Americans as they "do not help the free world fight communism," but rather serve only to "identify the United States with forces and regimes that are as antidemocratic as the Soviet Union." He strongly maintained that Latin America did not need jets, tanks, and other military hardware, but, instead, it needed United States help in "its social and economic revolution." However, it immediately became apparent that such a radical proposal would not be acceptable to the Congress as a whole. Representative Selden, though agreeing that the

program "had had some harmful side effects," argued that the Porter amendment was too inflexible, and if adopted, would restrict the executive branch in dealing with the Latin American nations. Jackson agreed with Selden by calling the "immediate termination" of military aid "catastrophic" because there "would be a general consensus in Latin America that we had ceased to have any interest in the collective security of the Western Hemisphere."³⁰ Since collective security was so vital, Congress was seeking a new approach to administering the military aid program.

One recommendation that had been made by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was the creation of an international military force under the control of the Organization of American States to be funded by 31.5 million dollars. The objective of such a force would be to provide for international security within the Western Hemisphere and, in this manner, attempt to regionalize military aid to Latin America. The idea met with mixed reactions in both houses of Congress, as there were those who favored such an arrangement as well as opponents who saw only problems with such a creation.

³⁰Ibid., June 17, 1959, 11131-11132.

Senator Morse, a long-time critic of military aid to Latin America, made a long speech on the Senate floor favoring the establishment of a military police force, as this would save millions of dollars, which could then be used for economic loans to Latin America. On this occasion Morse, as usual, condemned the entire military assistance program to Latin America as being wasteful and not advancing the betterment of the people. The Senator told of a meeting between his Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs and a monsignor from Colombia, in which the monsignor related that the illiteracy problem in his country desperately needed United States assistance. Yet, most of the aid being given his country was for military purposes, which to the monsignor seemed wasteful and without forethought. For example, he said that the United States had given Colombia two jet bombers, but Colombia did not possess a single airfield that could handle jet planes. The result was that Colombia had to lease landing rights and privileges in Panama for the jets until the Colombian government could build an airport for them. Morse went on to warn his colleagues that the giving of military aid to Latin America was a vicious cycle because if "one Latin American country gets a jet bomber, human

nature being what it is, particularly government officials being what they are," others want some jet bombers also. Senator Proxmire agreed that giving the Colombian government the two jet bombers was "the worst kind of waste in our mutual security program." In renouncing the giving of military aid without first considering economic aid, Morse was expressing the belief that if the United States followed the "economic approach rather than the military approach," communism would never prevail in Latin America.³¹

Joining Morse in supporting the establishment of a hemisphere military force was Senator Albert Gore from Tennessee. He maintained that the whole problem in military assistance to Latin America was "the result of granting military assistance to individual countries through bilateral agreements." According to Gore, bilateral military aid tends to promote an arms race, as it "sometimes involves the United States in internal rivalries between military services in the recipient countries." Since the military plays such an influential role in politics in most Latin American countries, it can bring much pressure on its government to keep each service on an equal

³¹Ibid., July 6, 1959, 12690-12692.

par. For example, if the United States assists in building up the navy for hemispheric defense purposes, then the army will demand similar assistance. Bilateral military assistance, according to the Senator, involves the United States in the domestic affairs of a nation, especially where political instability exists. Such was the case in Cuba. He indicated that the answer was not elimination of the entire military assistance program because hemispheric defense and security must be maintained, but American aid "would be much more effective if used for the establishment of an international hemisphere defense force in which all Latin American nations would participate." This would eliminate the bad "side effects of bilateral military aid."³²

Taking opposing views on the proposed force were Congressmen Daniel J. Flood from Pennsylvania and Senator Allen Ellender from Louisiana. Flood objected to the creation of such an inter-American police force as not only unrealistic but also capable of serious diplomatic repercussions. He could not envision countries like Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina, which possess their own highly trained armed forces, allowing "intervention by any

³²Ibid., July 7, 1959, 12846-12847.

inter-American police force."³³ Ellender said of the proposed force, "We may be on the way to creating a military Frankenstein monster." He questioned the wisdom of the committee in providing 31.5 million dollars to establish this "supra national police force" under the "auspices of an agency [OAS] whose voting power we do not control and for the use in an area where political instability has been the rule."³⁴

The first session of the 86th Congress ended with the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and various individual congressmen and senators evidently intent upon Congress' giving more direction and control to the mutual security program. During this session, Congress made three important changes in the military assistance program to Latin America: (1) military equipment and materials would be furnished to the Latin American republics only for the purposes of furthering the missions directly related to hemispheric defense; (2) internal security requirements would not be justification for military assistance, unless the President determined otherwise; and (3) the amount

³³Congressional Record, June 3, 1959, CV, 12347-12348.

³⁴Ibid., July 7, 1959, 12801.

furnished for fiscal year 1960 would not exceed the amount obligated during the fiscal year of 1959.³⁵

The creation of an international military force under the Organization of American States was dropped from the bill after considerable opposition from Representative Flood, the Congress was moving in the direction of exerting considerable influence on the quality and quantity of the military assistance to South America.

³⁵Mutual Security Act of 1959, Statutes at Large, LXXIII; Sec. 101, pp. 247-248 (1959).

C H A P T E R I V

CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TO CONTINUATION OF MILITARY AID UNDER THE MUTUAL SECURITY ACT OF 1960

During the second session of the 86th Congress, the issue of continued military assistance to Latin America would continue to occupy the legislators' time. By this time Congress had concluded that there were three harmful side-effects in giving military aid to Latin America:

1. the military aid program to Latin America had "stimulated" those countries to "make heavy expenditures on armament";
2. the program had "the effect of maintaining dictators in power";
3. the program was "a costly, wasteful, and otherwise undesirable approach to the real necessities of hemispheric defense."¹

¹U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Mutual Security Act of 1960, Hearings, before Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives, 86th Cong., 2nd sess., 1960, p. 838.

The tenor in Congress was to be more critical of the mutual security program, and there would be attempts to eliminate that aid where it was decided that it served no purpose or interest of the United States.

Though the first session of the 86th Congress had written into law certain restrictions on the administration of military aid, it soon became apparent to some senators that the Department of Defense was not obeying the newly-passed law. On February 25, 1960, Senator Morse called the Senate's attention to a story that appeared in the Washington Daily News revealing that the Defense Department had "increased its military aid to Latin America by one-third this fiscal year." The issue involved spending nearly 70 million dollars in military assistance for Latin America during 1960, whereas the Congress had legislated during the last session that the amount could not exceed that spent during 1959, or approximately 53 million dollars. To Senator Morse this action by the military, if the press release were true, represented "a very flagrant and inexcusable violation" of the Mutual Security Act of 1959.² Once again, the Congress faced the familiar problem

²U.S., Congress, Senate, 86th Cong., 2nd sess., February 25, 1960, Congressional Record, CVI, 3415.

of seeking to reduce military assistance in favor of more economic aid.

As the Congress received the administration's request for the 1960 Mutual Security Program, it became apparent that the Congress would put up a good fight against increasing military assistance. When the bill came before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in March, 1960, Senator Frank Church immediately challenged the sincerity of the United States' position of encouraging the Latin American governments to reduce their military establishments in view of the fact that the United States continued "to siphon American money down into South America, which can only result in further augmenting the size and the burden" of the military establishments.³ Church could not reconcile the two positions taken by the United States. The Senator complimented Under Secretary of State Douglas Dillon for declassifying some of the military assistance information as a result of congressional pressure during the last session. He was, however, concerned that "not one authority coming down here either from the State

³U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Mutual Security Act of 1960, Hearings, before Committee on Foreign Relations, Senate, S. 3058, 86th Cong., 2nd sess., 1960, pp. 35-36.

Department or the Pentagon could make any case for this military assistance program that related to hemispheric defense." He indicated that while he was in Peru he had heard many compliments regarding the technical assistance program but not one single commendation of the military assistance program. Church felt that, in view of the past congressional recommendations to eliminate military assistance to Latin America, he could not comprehend "why we just don't write an end to it, why we just can't say as a matter of law--'the evidence is all in--we don't think this military assistance program is advisable or desirable. We don't think that it strengthens American foreign policy.'" The Senator believed that, if the Congress took a stronger stand on the military aid program, situations like the ones that existed in Chile and Brazil would not occur. For example, Chile's budget put was out of balance "every time they send a cruiser to sea," and Brazil had a new aircraft carrier but lacked "trained personnel and planes to put on it."⁴

During the Senate hearings, administration witnesses tried to disclaim the criticisms leveled at the

⁴Ibid., pp. 84-86.

military program to Latin America. The Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Roy R. Rubottom, Jr., in his testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee impressed upon the senators that the program was not "designed to encourage participating countries to undertake heavy military expenditures." Chairman J. W. Fulbright, though agreeing that the program was not intentionally designed to encourage heavy military expenditures, felt that it still had such an effect. In answering the second criticism, namely, "that it has helped to maintain dictatorial regimes in power," Rubottom recounted that since 1952 "more extensive U.S. military relations with Latin American countries," had occurred, but at the same time there had been "a notable increase in the number of constitutional regimes in the area."⁵ He stressed the fact, also, that since March of 1958, the State Department had followed a policy of "not shipping arms into tension-ridden areas," namely Caribbean republics. He attributed the adoption of this policy to "the attitude expressed by the Congress from time to time on this general subject."⁶

⁵Ibid., pp. 349-351.

⁶Ibid., pp. 360-370.

However, to the pair of staunch critics of the military aid program, Senators Morse and Church, the negative aspects of the program still outweighed the positive points. Morse vowed that he was "going to make a stronger fight than I have ever made for reduction in military aid to Latin America."⁷ Church agreed that the program to Latin America was "out of balance," considering that one-half of the entire mutual security aid for Latin America was for military aid.⁸ That same day, Church addressed the Senate on the subject of "U.S. Military Assistance Programs" and took to task the administration for allowing the mutual security program to be "plagued by an overemphasis on military assistance." He cited Africa and Latin America as areas where it was a tragic mistake to increase military aid. Both areas, he maintained, could ill afford the burden of maintaining military forces which directly divested them of energy and resources that could be used for economic development. Church strongly believed that "military aid to Latin America has become a habit," and one that should be broken.⁹

⁷Ibid., p. 371.

⁸Ibid., p. 376.

⁹Congressional Record, March 28, 1960, CVI, 6672-6674.

The Congress, still in a mood to write in more control and direction on how military aid was used, now proceeded in another direction. Senator Styles Bridges of New Hampshire introduced an amendment to the appropriations bill for mutual security which read:

No funds provided hereunder shall be available for any country which in the judgement of the President of the United States directly or indirectly is selling arms, munitions, or implements of war to the Castro regime in Cuba, or directly or indirectly is giving or loaning military or economic aid to that regime.¹⁰

Bridges explained that the whole "intent of the amendment is to prevent the supplying of military assistance to the Castro regime." The Castro government not only had "confiscated hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of American property," but according to the Senator, Castro was "playing fast and loose with Communist regimes." Backing Bridges in his amendments were Senators Kenneth B. Keating from New York and Morse. Keating was in complete accord that American money should not be "used to bolster a Cuban regime which has shown itself to be militantly anti-American." Seconding Keating, the senior Senator from Oregon welcomed the adoption of the amendment as serving notice "not only

¹⁰Ibid., August 24, 1960, 17418.

to our friends in Latin America, but also to some of our friends in Europe, that they are not helping the cause of peace and the freedom of the world when they sell arms to Latin American countries . . . to strengthen dictatorships" there. Morse, however, wanted to expand the amendment to include the Dominican Republic, which he viewed as a dictatorial regime as deplorable as the Castro government.¹¹ But the views held by Morse toward the Rafael L. Trujillo regime in the Dominican Republic were not shared by all members of the House.

Representative W. J. Bryan Dorn of South Carolina delivered a short speech condemning State Department policy toward the government of Generalissimo Trujillo. Dorn believed such a policy was "aiding the Communists in their desperate desire to overthrow" the Trujillo regime, and that, if the overthrow of Trujillo occurred, the identical sequence of events that had transpired in Cuba would ensue. Dorn had only praise for the Trujillo regime because of its contribution to the defense of the Western Hemisphere. Furthermore, under Trujillo, the Dominican Republic had "made fantastic progress in education, health,

¹¹Ibid., August 24, 1960, 17419-17420.

roads, standards of living, cleanliness, and love for freedom." Dorn saw the Dominican Republic as "one of the most truly democratic nations in South America, Central America, Asia, or Africa."¹²

The Mutual Security Act of 1960 was approved by the Congress, but it was apparent that the senators and congressmen were getting weary of giving military aid to the underdeveloped countries, especially Latin America.

The period from 1957 to 1960 proved to be, as attested to by the remarks made by the members of Congress, an era in legislative history in which the Congress of the United States sought to play a greater role in the field of foreign policy with respect to the mutual security assistance programs. During this period, Congress attempted to give more direction and control to military assistance. It questioned not only the justification for granting military aid to Latin America under the "hemispheric defense" concept, but it equally challenged the practice of giving military aid to dictators. Some like Morse, Church, and Porter saw military assistance to Latin America as a hindrance to the development of democratic principles in

¹²Ibid., September 1, 1960, 19122.

those countries, but others in the Congress saw a need to continue military assistance to the southern neighbors. Congress, though in a mood to cut off funds for the foreign aid programs, viewed the spread of communism as a very viable threat that necessitated the expansion and continuation of military assistance to the underdeveloped areas. In the 1960's a new attitude would be formed in the Congress with respect to President John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress, and his justification for granting military assistance to Latin America would run counter to that established by Congress. To complicate the situation a wave of militarism swept across Latin America during the early 1960's.

C H A P T E R V

CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TO MILITARY AID FOR INTERNAL SECURITY OF LATIN AMERICA: INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY ACT 1961

The administration of President John F. Kennedy significantly altered the traditional policy toward the Latin American military. Whereas the Eisenhower administration accepted and extended recognition to "all de facto regimes, regardless of how they achieved power, so long as they were anti-Communist and friendly toward the United States," the Kennedy administration pursued "a hard line toward governments coming to power through the use of force."¹ President Kennedy on March 13, 1961, set forth the Alianza para el Progreso (Alliance for Progress), a program designed to raise the standards of living for Latin Americans. Additionally, Kennedy's grand plan called for the elimination of tyranny and advocacy of peaceful social changes. By mid-1961, it appeared as though military rule

¹Edwin Lieuwen, Generals vs. Presidents: Neomilitarism in Latin America (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1964), p. 6.

in Latin America was at an end, as Paraguay remained the only nation under a military government. By early 1962, however, a new wave of militarism had begun to sweep across Latin America, causing much concern in the Congress of the United States. Between March, 1962, and October, 1963, six military coups occurred, deposing constitutionally elected presidents in Argentina, Peru, Guatemala, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras.

The Kennedy administration rejected also "the prevailing United States military policies designed to promote hemisphere defense against external aggression."² Due to the Cuban Revolution and the threat of guerrilla warfare in other areas, the basis for military assistance to Latin America changed to that of aiding Latin America governments in their internal security. This policy ran counter to the congressional restrictions adopted by the last Congress. Counterinsurgency training became the order of the day for United States military personnel charged with aiding and advising the Latin American military forces.³ Part of the motive behind the administration's

²Lieuwen, Generals vs. Presidents, p. 124.

³Ibid., Chapters 1, 7, 9 (passim).

emphasis on counterinsurgency training was the hope that the Latin American military would "find the new game [finding and fighting the guerrilla] more engrossing than the old one of 'throw out the president.'" However, inherent in such training techniques was the ever present danger that the pupil might use the newly acquired knowledge to "aid the cause of insurrection." Even more detrimental would be the possibility that the pupil would not be able to "distinguish the revolutionary guerrilla from the protestor against injustice and oppression."⁴

President Kennedy's plan was to utilize the military assistance program to Latin America to further the principles of the Alliance for Progress as he viewed such assistance as contributing to the economic progress of Latin America. His hope was to help the Latin American military assume a role similar to the United States Army Corps of Engineers. This concept came to be called "civic-action."⁵ As Congress began to consider the foreign

⁴Willard F. Barber and C. Neale Ronning, Internal Security and Military Power: Counterinsurgency and Civic Action in Latin America (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1966), p. viii.

⁵U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, International Development and Security, Hearings, before Committee on Foreign Relations, Senate, on S. 1983, 87th Cong., 1st sess., 1961, p. 594.

assistance and security act for fiscal year 1962, it immediately became apparent that the administration was requesting several key changes in the military assistance program to Latin America and that congressional reaction would be varied.

Appearing before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, which was considering the International Development and Security Act, Secretary of State Dean Rusk informed the committee that the communist threat required a new approach. External invasion was no longer feared. According to Rusk, the communist tactic, especially in Latin America, was to undermine governments internally, a condition which required "an increased emphasis upon assistance for internal security."⁶ Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara echoed this concern also when he appeared before the committee. He presented changes before the committee which Congress needed to approve in order to meet successfully the new communist threat in the Western Hemisphere. The Congress needed to repeal the amendment to the Mutual Security Act that specified that internal security

⁶U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, The International Development and Security Act, Hearings, before Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, on H.R. 7372, 87th Cong., 1st sess., 1961, p. 36.

requirements would not be the basis for military assistance to Latin America, unless the President determined otherwise. Secretary McNamara cited as justification for this change the events that had occurred in Cuba and other places in the hemisphere, which, according to him, "have so sharpened the need for protection against threats to internal stability." In addition, the present law requiring Presidential determination before aid could be given or used to meet internal security problems the Secretary considered as "too large an impediment to swift action" necessary to meet urgent situations. Citing "the immediacy of the threat in Latin America," Secretary McNamara recommended that Congress remove its ceiling of 55 million dollars on military assistance to that area.⁷ The Secretary informed the committee that the administration had designed a military assistance program to meet the security needs in three categories of countries:

1. those countries which mainly "face the threat of internal aggression," called "single-threat" areas, characterized by the ability of the enemy to infiltrate and conduct guerrilla warfare;

⁷Ibid., p. 73.

2. those countries that faced both the threat of direct and internal military aggression, called "double-threat countries"; and
3. those countries in the NATO area that faced a different type of threat.

He included Latin America in the first category and maintained that the main weapon against communism was economic and social progress. This progress could not be possible without internal stability. McNamara emphasized to the committee the need to provide the Latin American military establishment with small arms, transport, communications, and training in order "to guard against external covert intrusion and internal subversion designed to create dissidence and insurrection."⁸

Administration witnesses appearing before the House and Senate committees on Foreign Relations began to introduce a new theme in regard to Latin American military establishments, namely, that there was "a growing tendency of the military to support constitutional rather than dictatorial governments and to play a constructive rather than a repressive role within their countries." Such was the

⁸Ibid., p. 69.

testimony of Wymberley Der Coerr, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, who cited the constructive role the military had played "in assisting the transition in Venezuela and Argentina from dictatorship to democracy." Mr. Coerr called on the Congress to support the Latin American military as they now appeared to be "a force for freedom and for democracy."⁹ In this respect, Senator Fulbright foresaw the dilemma that existed in the military assistance program to Latin America. Even though the United States looked favorably on peaceful social change and revolution, the United States was identified with the governments in power. Thus, if a revolution occurred, the United States would find itself "allied with those powers that are being eliminated, and we just necessarily end up as the enemy of the revolution which takes over." Regardless of how one regarded the United States foreign aid program, it seemed as if the country would always be identified with maintaining the status quo.¹⁰

Leading critics of the program in the House and Senate led the debate against the proposed changes. First

⁹House, International Development and Security, p. 425.

¹⁰Senate, International Development and Security, p. 784.

to take a stand against the administration's recommendations was Representative Wayne L. Hays of Ohio who believed that all that would result from the proposed aid would be the creation of "armies to fight each other."¹¹ The bulk of the criticism came from Senator Wayne Morse, who had been one of the cosponsors of the amendment that eliminated internal security requirements. Calling it "a great mistake" to repeal the amendment, and referring to the Cuban Revolution, the Senator stated that the United States had "had some pretty sad experiences" in giving arms for internal security. Morse argued that with the amendment in force, the United States, at least, had a means of checking the validity of sending arms to Latin America for internal security reasons, and not for "external war-making purposes." The restriction imposed by the amendment made it "clear to the Latin Americans that we were not going to build them up to make war against each other."¹² Joining the opposition was Congressman William F. Ryan from New York who questioned the administration's request to increase arms shipments; he failed to see that what was

¹¹Ibid., p. 88.

¹²Senate, International Development and Security, p. 619.

happening in June, 1961, would "warrant increased military assistance to Latin America." Ryan questioned whether the shipments of arms would "contribute to turning the region into a bloody battlefield," or whether they would "assist in meeting the social and economic challenges" faced by the Latin American nations.¹³ The position of the critics of the proposed requests was best summarized by Senator J. W. Fulbright. He challenged the whole concept and the purported advantages of the aid program when he demanded that McNamara explain why it was that the countries that received the most military aid "are the very ones who have lost their civilian governments and are having great financial and internal difficulties." The Secretary of Defense replied that the problem was "economic." Fulbright countered with the belief that the granting of military assistance was the cause, and he added that almost "every country in history that has overdone its military establishment has suffered the same fate."¹⁴

Resuming his opposition to the military assistance requests, Senator Morse, on June 20, delivered a

¹³U.S., Congress, Senate, 87th Cong., 1st sess., June 16, 1961, Congressional Record, CVII, 10413.

¹⁴Senate, International Development and Security Hearings, p. 681.

lengthy speech in which he served notice on the administration that he would not vote in favor of lifting the ceiling on the amount of military aid to Latin America. He accused the Pentagon of developing "crises in print" shortly before appropriations were to be made. Morse called on his colleagues not to "fall for the bureaucratic argument which the Pentagon frequently uses: 'The President is too busy' to review any request for American aid for internal security in any Latin American country." The Senator called on the President not to relinquish his authority to the Secretary of Defense or to the general staff in the Pentagon. As he often did, Morse once again stressed that he did not believe that the security of Latin America was "going to be maintained by American arms," but rather by extending "economic benefits" to the region. He issued a strong plea for the United States to "do something about the stomachs of Latin America, or else we will lose the minds of Latin America." The "sending of more bullets" would not solve the problem.¹⁵

On June 28, Senator Morse delivered another speech critical of American military and economic policies. Citing

¹⁵Congressional Record, June 20, 1961, CVII, 10829-10831.

the plight that faced Brazil in its fuel shortage he stressed that the United States should do everything possible to aid the countries economically instead of militarily. Lacking liquid petroleum in spite of large deposits of shale oil, Morse felt that the Brazilians required United States aid in developing the shale oil industry. Brazil had requested a seven million dollar loan to develop its oil industry, but the United States had not given her any indication that such a loan would be forthcoming. The Senator indicated that "there is no better way to open the door to Communist penetration of South America than to refuse to help Brazil develop its shale." He warned the Congress that it would be sheer folly on the part of the United States to furnish weapons that would be used against anticommunists forces who had attained a high spirit of nationalism and desired reform. These nationalistic groups would turn against the United States' policy, and look upon it as "an indirect form of American intervention." Morse pointed out that all too frequently United States arms "are used to put down a justifiable national movement on the part of the people who want more freedom and want reform." The Senator concluded with the affirmation that the "best service" he could render to the

President was to disagree with him on his proposed military assistance program to Latin America.¹⁶

Senator Humphrey deemed the threat that Castro's Cuba posed for the Western Hemisphere to be "ideological" and not military. He pointed out that neither armed intervention nor shouting "Monroe Doctrine" would aid Latin America in its struggle against "Communist ideological and subversive tactic." The Senator believed that "[a]iming the Monroe Doctrine at Communist infiltration and subversion is like shooting a cannon at an invisible enemy." The answer was a crash program to help the hemisphere in its development and to help the millions of "exasperated" Latin Americans achieve a better life.¹⁷

As the Senate continued its consideration of the Mutual Security Bill of 1961, other senators expressed their support for it. Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri called the program "vital" in helping the "free world to resist Communist aggression." He cited the testimony of the military and of the State Department as offering concrete proof that "dollar for dollar, the military assistance

¹⁶Ibid., June 28, 1961, 11631-11634.

¹⁷Ibid., May 9, 1961, 7636-7637.

program buys as much true defense against Communist aggression as dollars invested in our own military budget." Symington wholeheartedly supported increasing the internal security program in view of "Castro-inspired activities in Latin America." However, he strongly favored the amendment retaining the requirement for presidential determination before any Latin American country could obtain aid for internal security purposes. This precaution would insure, to some extent, that United States military aid would not be used to support dictatorial regimes.¹⁸

When the Mutual Security Bill of 1961 came up for House consideration, Congressman John V. Lindsay of New York wanted the members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee to explain why it was necessary to increase the military aid by 5 million dollars. Representative Hays of Ohio, though a frequent opponent of military aid to Latin America, related to Lindsay that the Department of Defense had presented a strong and convincing case for the increased amount. Congressman Walter H. Judd from Minnesota told his colleagues that the one thing that convinced him to change the ceiling on the aid program was the

¹⁸Ibid., August 8, 1961, 15055.

testimony indicating that the armed forces in Latin America had changed for the better. He felt that the military officer corps as a result of their training in the United States had become depoliticized and had "absorbed democratic ideals." With this new type of Latin American officer, Judd believed American arms would not be used to keep dictators in power.¹⁹

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 was passed by the Congress, authorizing that:

Military assistance to any country shall be furnished solely for internal security, for legitimate self-defense, to permit the recipient country to participate in regional or collective arrangements or measures consistent with the Charter of the United Nations.²⁰

However, Congress set definite restrictions on military aid to Latin America when it included in Public Law 87-195 the following stipulation:

Internal security requirements shall not, unless the President determines otherwise and promptly reports such determination to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and to the Speaker of the House of

¹⁹Ibid., August 17, 1961, 16215.

²⁰Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, Statutes at Large, LXXV, Sec. 505, 436 (1961).

Representatives, be the basis for military assistance programs for American Republic.²¹

Note that Congress required of the President an immediate report whenever he determined that it was essential to provide Latin America with military aid to ensure its internal security. It was a foregone conclusion that the President had already determined that the Latin American countries did in fact need military assistance for this purpose. In addition, the Congress voted to increase the ceiling to 57.5 million dollars, which was reduced later to 55 million dollars.²²

With the passage of the new security and development act and the President's determination that Latin America needed aid for its internal security, the administration proceeded with its new military assistance program to Latin America emphasizing a "civic action" role for the military. As the Congress reconvened in January, 1962, several political changes in Latin America would cause many Congressmen and Senators to question once more the value of military aid to Latin America.

²¹Ibid., p. 438.

²²Ibid.

C H A P T E R V I

CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TO COUPS D' ETAT AND MILITARY AID: FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1962

Beginning in early 1962, President Kennedy's Latin American policy "came under increasing criticism from the United States Congress" as a result of "military assaults upon consitutional governments." Some senators saw these coups as by-products of United States military assistance.¹

Appearing before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs to offer testimony regarding the Foreign Assistance Act of 1962, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara sought to justify and to clarify the administration's new attitude toward military assistance to Latin America. He defined "civic action" to mean "the use of military forces on projects useful to the populace at all levels in such fields as training, public works, agriculture, transportation, communications, health and sanitation." "Civic action" was "an indispensable means of establishing a link

¹Lieuwen, Generals vs Presidents, p. 128.

between [the] army and the people," in countries faced with internal subversion or covert aggression. In order to carry out this program, the administration was requesting 77 million dollars for all types of military assistance including training. The amount would not exceed the congressional ceiling of 57 million dollars on material assistance.²

The Pentagon representatives cited the need for effective security forces if the Alliance for Progress were to have a chance; furthermore, they foresaw "an intensification of the revolutionary danger to the hemisphere." The witnesses once again emphasized that the Latin American military establishments had undergone major changes: "the caudillo or military political tyrant" apparently was becoming an anachronism, and the Latin American armed forces were "becoming increasingly dedicated to the preservation of constitutional government."³

As the Congress was considering the Foreign Assistance Act of 1962, Argentina held congressional and

²U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Foreign Assistance Act of 1962, Hearings, before Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 87th Cong., 2nd sess., 1962, pp. 68-69.

³Ibid., pp. 268-269.

gubernatorial elections in March. The peronistas who were participating in elections for the first time since the ouster of Juan Perón in September, 1955, scored victories in ten provincial governorships and captured one-fourth of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies. The election results were not acceptable to the armed forces, and on March 29, 1962, civilian President Arturo Frondizi, was removed by the armed forces. According to Edwin Lieuwen this event in Argentina signified the "resurgence of militarism in Latin America." The Kennedy administration interpreted it as a setback for the Alliance for Progress.⁴

When Secretary McNamara appeared before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations to testify regarding the foreign assistance bill, Senator Frank Carlson from Kansas wanted to know how the Secretary could "justify military assistance to the military dictatorship in Argentina." McNamara responded by saying that the assistance being extended to Argentina was limited to the training of personnel. Carlson countered with the argument that the United States could not justify any assistance, no matter how small, that would help a military dictatorship to continue

⁴Lieuwen, Generals vs Presidents, 10-11.

in power; and the training of personnel appeared to be for the sole purpose of perpetuating military dictatorships. McNamara took exception to the Senator's comment and contended that the training and other assistance being provided Argentina had "little or no relationship to the participation by the military in recent events," that the actions by the military would have occurred whether or not the United States had provided the training. McNamara proceeded to defend military assistance, and in particular, the training of Latin American military personnel in the United States as an opportunity to acquaint the officers "with democratic philosophies, democratic ways of thinking, which they, in turn take back to their nations."⁵

There were those in the Senate who agreed with the position taken by Mr. McNamara. Senator Margaret Chase Smith from Maine, speaking on March 24, 1962, defended the administration's program and was critical of those in the Senate who "frown upon our having any military ties with South American countries." Smith opined that the best "friends that the United States has in South America

⁵U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Foreign Assistance Act of 1962, Hearings, before Committee on Foreign Relations, Senate, on S. 2996, 87th Cong., 2nd sess., 1962, pp. 75-76.

are the members of the military forces" and, furthermore, she asserted, they were "the greatest enemies of communism." The Senator from Maine made a case for military assistance rather than economic aid by citing the fact that four countries--Mexico, Chile, Argentina, and Brazil--refused to stand on the side of the United States against Castro at Punta Del Este. At the same time two countries, Peru and Venezuela, stood fast with the United States. The four countries that refused their support were the very ones that from 1946 to 1961 received the most economic aid from the United States, while receiving little in the form of military aid. At the same time Peru and Venezuela were receiving mostly military assistance. Senator Smith concluded that "the nations to whom we gave the higher percentage of military assistance in our overall assistance, were the very nations that stood by us when the chips were down at Punta Del Este and . . . the nations to whom we gave so very little percentagewise in military assistance were the very nations that deserted us"; therefore, in the future, the United States should give more military assistance and less economic aid.⁶ Meanwhile, events were

⁶U.S., Congress, Senate, 87th Cong., 2nd sess., March 24, 1962, Congressional Record, CVIII, 4957.

taking shape in Peru that were to have repercussions in Congress.

On July 18, 1962, Peruvian President Manuel Prado was arrested and imprisoned by the armed forces after a commando-type raid on the presidential palace supported by an armored division of Sherman tanks which crashed through the palace gates. The Peruvian military defended their intervention in order to "preserve democracy," as there was evidence that the June 10 elections were conducted with many irregularities. The military contended that both the President and the National Electoral Board had played politics, had chosen to ignore the fraudulent election, and that such irresponsible actions by the civilians "were intolerable"; therefore, they had intervened to "save their country."⁷

The reaction in Congress and in the press was very strong, generally faulting the United States for providing the hardware used in the military take-over of the Peruvian government. On August 2, 1962, Senator Ernest Gruening delivered a speech entitled "Military Aid to Latin America is Defeating the Alianza Para El Progreso,"

⁷Lieuwen, Generals vs Presidents, pp. 25-26.

a speech to which frequent references were subsequently made by his colleagues. Gruening advised his fellow senators that the press releases on the Peruvian coup d' etat reported that the "United States military assistance program in Peru provided the Sherman tank that rammed through the iron gates of the Pizarro Palace," and, in addition, several of the Peruvian military officers commanding the "coup were trained here under our military assistance program."⁸ The Senator then gave a history of the military assistance program to Latin America with special emphasis on the justifications for such a program. One such argument was that association with United States military personnel would teach the Latin American officer "the role and mission of the military in a democratic, constitutional government."⁹ Considering ten years of military assistance and the recent events in Peru and Argentina, Gruening concluded that:

Most of the Latin American military leaders will continue to react to power struggles in their own countries in accordance with their own estimates of the situation, their own ambitions, their vested privileges,

⁸Congressional Record, August 2, 1962, CVIII, 15416.

⁹Ibid., August 2, 1962, 15417.

and their own heritage. Where military professionalism has really taken root in Latin America, the military's new concept of its role has developed from circumstances within the framework of their own institutions, not from the minute and transitory influence encountered in rubbing shoulders with U.S. military people.¹⁰

Gruening then proceeded to discount the argument that American aid contributed to the standardization of military equipment in Latin America, and to the limitation of the type of equipment bought by the South American countries. He cited Peru as an example where "efforts to standardize equipment and persuade Peru to limit its purchases to items essential to hemisphere defense have been futile." Gruening pointed out to his colleagues that despite the fact that the United States had made available to the Peruvian Air Force twelve F-86 Sabre jets, the Peruvians had turned to Britain and purchased sixteen British Hawker Hunter jets, plus eight British Canberra jet bombers. Peru's purchase of British jets led to Ecuador's rushing to Britain to purchase six Canberra jets at a cost of 1.4 million dollars per plane, which could only strain their already-shaky economy. He strongly objected

¹⁰Ibid., August 2, 1962, 15418.

to the United States' being a contributor to an arms race in Latin America.¹¹

Turning to the Alliance for Progress, Gruening pointed out that the United States had agreed to provide one billion dollars a year to help the Latin American economies, and yet, ironically, the Latin American countries spent approximately one billion dollars yearly on military procurements and the maintenance of such equipment. This meant that the United States was losing in two ways: the Alliance was not being fulfilled, and American taxpayers were indirectly paying for foreign-made armaments for Latin American countries.¹² Summing up his evaluation, Senator Gruening stated that none of the goals of the military aid program to Latin America, had been achieved; the only outcome had been tragic results. He strongly recommended that the Senate Committee on Appropriations consider including a "prohibition against the expenditure of any funds appropriated for military assistance to Latin America either directly or indirectly

¹¹Ibid., August 2, 1962, 15419.

¹²Ibid., August 2, 1962, 15420.

through bailout payments to take the place of funds spent unnecessarily on armaments."¹³

The Senator from Alaska praised President Kennedy's "hard line toward governments coming to power through the use of force," and for taking action that would suspend and withhold all forms of assistance from Peru until the Peruvian government stabilized.¹⁴ On August 9, 1962, Senator Gruening recommended that the President also stop foreign aid to Brazil and Argentina, citing a passage from an article that appeared in the Washington Post as his reason for such a stand.

When a [Peruvian] military junta seized power, policymakers were faced with a condition and not a theory. Simply to acquiesce and continue the sizable aid program was to announce to Latin America that all the fine words about reform and democracy were meaningless.

Gruening did not want the Alliance for Progress to be just a program of "high sounding words."¹⁵ The Senator was not alone in his quest to reduce or stop all forms of aid, especially military, to those countries that were either misusing such aid or whose governments were unstable.

¹³Ibid., August 2, 1962, 15422.

¹⁴Ibid., August 9, 1962, 16065.

¹⁵Ibid., August 9, 1962, 16065.

During the Senate debate on the amount requested by the administration, Senator Proxmire challenged the need for such a sum of money. He argued against appropriating 77 million dollars for military aid.¹⁶ Senator Humphrey, though agreeing that the containment of Castro did require military preparedness on the part of the Latin American countries, advised his colleagues not to overlook "one of the chief factors which propelled Castro to power in Cuba": economic and social backwardness. Humphrey favored United States support and aid to help the people overcome the enemies of poverty, injustice, and disease.¹⁷

The 87th Congress passed the Foreign Assistance Act of 1962, but it was clear that there was no congressional unanimity in regard to the administration's position. As a result of the military takeovers in Argentina and Peru, many in Congress questioned the value of such aid and would welcome action by the executive branch to stop all forms of assistance to any country that had its civilian government removed by force. For a time congressmen rejoiced in President Kennedy's ending the aid to

¹⁶Ibid., October 1, 1962, 21438.

¹⁷Ibid., October 1, 1962, 21441.

Peru; however, this was short-lived. Finding itself almost alone in its "international ostracism" of the military junta in Peru, the United States government relented on its policy and extended recognition to the new Peruvian regime upon its promise from the junta to hold elections within a reasonable amount of time. Likewise, the Kennedy administration restored both economic and military aid to Peru.¹⁸ This action was possibly instrumental in inviting other Latin American military men to interrupt "civilian misrule," without the fear that Washington would not extend formal recognition to the consequent junta. The coming year would see four constitutional governments toppled by military take-overs. This aroused concern in the Congress as some members of both houses viewed these coups as by-products of United States military assistance.

¹⁸Lieuwen, Generals vs Presidents, pp. 116-117.

C H A P T E R V I I

CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TO CONTINUED MILITARISM IN LATIN AMERICA: FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1963

To the consternation of Congress military coups deposed four constitutional governments in Latin America in 1963. Congress considered this destruction of democratic governments as a threat to the Alliance for Progress.

The need to continue military aid to Latin America was underscored by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Herbert K. May when he appeared before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs that was considering the Foreign Assistance Bill of 1963. Citing Castro's intention to intensify subversion and guerrilla warfare, May announced that the program in 1963 "places unprecedented emphasis" on training Latin American military personnel in "riot control, counter guerrilla operations, and tactics, intelligence, public information, psychological warfare and counterinsurgency. All this training, according to May would "contribute to the maintenance of public order and the support of constitutional

governments."¹ The total amount requested by the administration for military assistance to Latin America for fiscal year 1964 was 77 million dollars, of which 56 million came under the ceiling imposed by Congress.²

Appearing before the same committee, General Andrew P. O'Meara, Commander-in-Chief of the Caribbean Command, sought to answer "the perennial question of whether military assistance is desirable or undesirable in Latin America." General O'Meara conveyed to the committee that whether one considered the influence of the military in Latin America as good or bad, the United States could not ignore it because it was a powerful force and would continue to be so in the future. Therefore, the general recommended that just as the United States had sought to assist and to influence economic development in Latin America, so must the United States seek to "assist and influence the course of military developments" in this area.³

¹U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Foreign Assistance Act of 1963, Hearings, before Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, on H.R. 5490, 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963, p. 861.

²Ibid., pp. 863-864.

³Ibid., p. 914.

The influence of the Latin American military that General O'Meara had reference to was felt in Guatemala on March 31, 1963, when a column of Sherman tanks surrounded President Manuel Ydígoras Fuentes' official residence and took the President prisoner. The military leaders of the coup charged him with "complicity with the communists," even though the President had a record of being anti-Communist.⁴ The most probable reason was the military's fear of an election which might bring to power those whom they disliked for one reason or another.

The military take-over in Guatemala was the third coup in a year; the United States Congress was most concerned with these violations of constitutional authority. Reactions would be expressed during congressional hearings on the Foreign Assistance Bill.

In questioning Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara in his appearance before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Senator Morse wanted to know how many of the Latin American military leaders who had overthrown constitutional governments in the last two years had been trained by the United States military. At first McNamara

⁴Lieuwen, Generals vs Presidents, p. 37.

replied that there were none, but when Morse pressed the Peruvian coup, the Secretary of Defense answered that there "may have been one or two." Referring to the coup in Peru, Morse told the committee and McNamara that the military leaders "were clearly United States trained and United States tanks were used in the coup by them, which is part of the military assistance that we have provided them. This is just fodder for the Communist grist mill in Latin America."⁵ Morse informed the Secretary and the committee members that he was concerned with the use of United States military assistance for internal security purposes, such equipment would inevitably be used during a coup. The Senator recommended that before granting military aid, the United States evaluate "the stability of a country" and the possibility of a coup," so that the United States did not end up "having provided a military dictator group with the weapons that it needs to overthrow a constitutional government."⁶

Senators Gruening and Morse advanced the argument that continued military assistance could only hurt

⁵U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Foreign Assistance Act of 1963, Hearings, before Committee on Foreign Relations, Senate, 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963, pp. 206-207.

⁶Ibid., p. 208.

the Alliance for Progress. Gruening observed that because of the frequency of coups d' etat in Latin America, plus the fact that military aid did not enhance hemispheric defense, he could see no reason it should be continued.⁷ The coups were not over; soon others would occur in Ecuador and the Dominican Republic.

The overthrow that had taken place in March in Guatemala was reenacted on July 11, 1963, in Quito, Ecuador, when a military junta ousted President Julio Carlos Arosemena. The reason given by the military for their actions was the President's constant state of inebriation while performing his state duties, but, more importantly, because the military believed Arosemena to be "soft on Communism."⁸

The third coup to occur in 1963 took place on September 25, when the military arrested President Juan Bosch of the Dominican Republic. Their explanation for his removal was to "save their country from the threat of Communism." In addition, the military charged Bosch

⁷U.S., Congress, Senate, 88th Cong., 1st sess., July 15, 1963, Congressional Record, CIX, 12575.

⁸Lieuwen, Generals vs Presidents, pp. 45-46.

with "corruption, inefficiency, and economic mismanagement."⁹ This coup would cause considerable reaction in the halls of Congress.

Senator Gruening was the first solon to criticize the action taken by the military in the Dominican Republic. In an address on September 30, Gruening pointed out that it had been the hope of the United States "to help the Dominican Republic become the showplace of the Alliance for Progress." But, with the help of the United States funds, the Trujillo holdovers had ousted President Bosch and the future of the Alliance was questionable. His election to the presidency represented the first constitutional government in thirty-one years, and Gruening came to his defense. First, as to the charge that Bosch was a poor administrator, Gruening pointed out that this was "not a fatal defect in any head of state," even in the United States. To the charge that Bosch was "soft on communism," Gruening indicated that this "is invariably the pretense of every would be dictator, crook, or scoundrel, who seeks United States support, recognition, and United States financial aid." Gruening urged the President to hold firm on his decision

⁹Ibid., pp. 53-54.

to withdraw diplomatic recognition and halt economic assistance.¹⁰

In the same address to the Senate, the Alaskan Senator urged the reinstatement of Bosch and the return of constitutional government. To accept any less, in his opinion, would endanger "other civilian governments not only in Latin America, but in the rest of the world as well." He recommended that the United States "insist upon adherence to the principle that the military is subject to civilian control."¹¹

Agreeing with Gruening's stand was Senator Proxmire, who asserted that if the United States permitted "the military coup in the Dominican Republic to succeed, the chances for the success of the Alliance for Progress will be very dim indeed."¹²

On October 1, Senator Morse took to task the State Department for the way it had historically dealt with coups. Morse pointed out that the Department would follow the "old pattern of slap on-the-wrist performance"

¹⁰Congressional Record, September 30, 1963, CIX, 18320-18321.

¹¹Ibid., September 30, 1963, 18321.

¹²Ibid., September 30, 1963, 18326.

and, then, protest the overthrow of the government for two weeks. Next, the State Department would throw up its hands in despair and announce that some sort of deal must be worked out with the new government. Finally, an announcement was traditionally made in order to justify extending recognition to the junta; it was usually based on the idea that the junta was "anti-Communist and pro-Western, and in another two years they will have elections and restore a democratic regime." Joining Morse in the attack was Senator Gruening, who charged that the overthrow of Bosch was carried out with arms provided by the United States. Furthermore, Gruening believed that all military aid being given to Latin America was "merely serving as an instrument for the overthrow of established democratic regimes by the military, as is the case in the Dominican Republic." Echoing Morse's sentiment toward the State Department, Gruening indicated how the Department would in three weeks time devise a "face-saving formula" and announce recognition of the coups.¹³

On the same day, Senator Humphrey delivered a lengthy speech entitled "The Crisis in the Dominican

¹³Ibid., October 1, 1963, 18484-18485.

Republic," in which he called upon his colleagues to speak out on this most recent coup because one of the responsibilities of United States Senators was to aid in the development of foreign policy. Humphrey urged the senators to take a stand so that the Latin American countries would know how disturbed the Senate was. He could not comprehend how the United States could let a "handful of trigger-happy, gun-toting, machine-gunning military officers drive out of that country the duly elected President, destroy the Cabinet, and close up the Congress." Despite all the military assistance by the United States, Humphrey regretted that the United States had failed to indoctrinate the Latin American military "in democratic value and virtues." He called not only for the suspension of diplomatic relations with junta and termination of economic aid but also the total recall of the military mission to the Dominican Republic.¹⁴ This call to action by Senator Humphrey had its effect on the Senate members the following day.

On October 2, twenty-two senators sent a telegram to President Kennedy "urging him to issue orders

¹⁴Ibid., October 1, 1963, 18521-18525.

withdrawing U.S. personnel from the diplomatic, military, and AID missions to the Dominican Republic." The logic of the request was that even though assistance had been suspended, "continued presence in the Dominican Republic of missions' personnel is tantamount to giving illegal military junta Government assurances of ultimate recognition and resumption of military and economic aid."¹⁵ On the following day the United States government faced the fourth Latin American coup of the year.

Eight days after the coup in Santo Domingo, on October 3, the armed forces in Honduras overthrew the government of President Ramón Villeda Morales whose term of office was due to expire in eighty days. In addition to President Villeda, the military arrested Modesto Rodás Alvarado, who was favored to win the election scheduled for October 13. The military coup dissolved the Congress, called off the elections, and abolished the constitution. Once again, the military justified its take-over of the civilian government to stop "flagrant violations of the constitution and obvious Communist infiltration."¹⁶ Many

¹⁵Ibid., October 3, 1963, 18647-18648.

¹⁶Lieuwen, Generals vs Presidents, pp. 63-64.

in the Congress of the United States would consider this latest coup a threat to the Alliance for Progress and would also raise the issue of military assistance to Latin American countries.

Following the coup in Honduras, Senator Gruening pointed out "some inconsistencies" in the United States policy toward Latin America. Under the Alliance for Progress, the United States gave the Latin American countries all forms of aid, including military aid, which he labelled "a gross failure because the military aid has gone to support the very juntas which have overthrown the democratically constituted governments." Gruening questioned the inconsistency of giving military aid so that a country could meet external threat, and, yet, not giving military assistance when a coup was imminent and a democratic government might be saved. He cited the cases of Lebanon and Vietnam as two occasions when the United States government had sent troops or advisors to help save a government from being overthrown. To emphasize the inconsistencies, Gruening referred to a statement made by Edward M. Martin, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, which pointed out that the Secretary "now finds that there is much that is desirable, attractive, and praiseworthy in

the performance of these military juntas." Gruening demanded that the administration clarify the action of the State Department, as it was inconsistent with the President's position on governments coming into power through the use of force. He commended the President for the response he gave the telegram sent by twenty-two senators, for the President had "announced the withdrawal of the aid and military personnel from the Dominican Republic."¹⁷

Senator Morse also criticized the Martin statement as being inconsistent with President Kennedy's policy toward military coups. He labelled Martin's remarks as "an apology for military coups and 'strong man' rule in Latin America," and a "diplomatic smokescreen" which precluded "recognition and aid to the new dictatorships of the Dominican Republic and Honduras." Morse, furthermore, questioned Martin's case that there are "good and bad" coups and his acceptance of the condition under which civilian constitutional governments serve only with the permission of the military as though it was "the way of life in Latin America." Morse's opinion, therefore, was that there was no justification for aid programs to Latin

¹⁷Ibid., October 7, 1963, 18813-18815.

America as apparently military establishments in Latin America existed not for national defense, but to "control internal politics." For the United States to give them military aid to maintain internal security was a "contradiction" in this country's policy; furthermore, by building up the Latin American military the United States was "reaping the harvest of coup after coup which is destroying constitutional government in Latin America." Morse again assailed Martin's statement as meaning that the United States was "willing to accept whatever government comes to power as the one with which we shall do business," which was in contradiction to the Alliance for Progress. If the Assistant Secretary of State's comments went unchallenged, then, Morse predicted, more coups would occur in Latin America, as the military leaders would think that "the United States only intends to pay lipservice to the principles and objectives of the Alliance for Progress."¹⁸ And he was not alone in thinking that the coups threatened the Alliance for Progress.

Senator Gruening delivered a speech entitled "The Alliance at the Crossroads," in which he called on the President to use all the means at his disposal "to

¹⁸Ibid., October 7, 1963, 18785-18787.

secure the restoration of the democratic processes in the Dominican Republic and in Honduras." Gruening again made reference to the Martin statement as being "sheer nonsense."¹⁹ Morse told his fellow Senators that military governments do not provide security against communism; instead they foster and create "instability that gives the Communists their greatest opportunity." Referring to the Honduras coup, and the other coups that had taken place recently, Morse indicated that regretably they had been "the product of the American military system by way of training," and "were armed with American weapons under the military aid program." The Senator believed that "all of American foreign policy, at least in Latin America," was "at the crossroads," and the American people had a right to ask the State Department and even the President, "Which fork in the road are you taking?"²⁰

Backing Morse in the charges that the coups were by-products of United States training and assistance, Senator Humphrey introduced information indicating that the organizer of the Dominican coup, a Lt. Colonel Wessin Y.

¹⁹Ibid., October 9, 1963, 19081-19082.

²⁰Ibid., October 9, 1963, 19116-19121.

Wessin, was a graduate of the United States Army schools, while Colonel López Arrello, who had led the coup in Honduras, was trained in United States Air Force schools. To Humphrey this raised serious questions regarding the whole United States military assistance programs, as nearly all the coup leaders in recent military overthrows had been United States-trained. Humphrey feared that the military aid was not being used properly when he advanced the following statement:

There has been far too much evidence recently that our military assistance program in Latin America has in too many cases merely generated more military power to be used for domestic political purposes; to be used not for preserving internal security or defending the nation against external attacks, but for consolidating and strengthening the position of the military in the society as a whole.²¹

Several members of the Senate were deeply disappointed that President Kennedy had not taken a stand against the Martin statement. It led Senators Morse and Javits to introduce a "concurrent resolution," that called "for the denial of diplomatic recognition and the canceling of United States assistance programs to regimes established by military juntas." The resolution would

²¹Ibid., October 9, 1963, 19123-19124.

authorize the President to "co-operate with and assist any nation or group of nations in Latin America" to protect "its territorial integrity and political independence from aggression or subversion by any nation or from any source controlled by international communism."²² A similar action was taken by a group of senators led by Gruening who introduced an amendment to the foreign aid bill that would halt further military assistance to Latin America, unless the President determined that such assistance was "necessary to safeguard the security of the United States and so informs the Congress."²³

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee Report on the Foreign Assistance Bill of 1963 proposed a similar amendment as the Morse and Javits "concurrent resolution." It would prohibit any assistance to any country participating in the Alliance for Progress whose government comes to power through forcible overthrow. In addition the committee recommended that the ceiling on the military assistance program be changed from 57.5 million to 55 million dollars. These actions registered the committee's

²²Ibid., October 15, 1963, 19460.

²³Ibid., November 1, 1963, 20897-20898.

concern that American aid could have contributed to the success of the coup.²⁴ Some of the amendments recommended by the opponents of military aid to Latin America, however, would be defeated in the House-Senate Conference Committee.²⁵

In the final passage of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1963, which became Public Law 88-205, the Congress authorized the President to stop military assistance to the Latin American countries, unless he determined such aid was essential to the security of the United States or "to safeguard the security of a country associated with the United States in the Alliance for Progress against overthrow of a duly constituted government, and so informs the Congress." In addition, the President was given authority to continue aid to "fulfill prior commitments." The ceiling of 55 million dollars on grant military assistance was approved.²⁶

President Kennedy did not live to see either the enactment of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1963 or to see

²⁴Ibid., November 15, 1963, 21978.

²⁵Ibid., December 12, 1963, 24392.

²⁶Foreign Assistance Act of 1963, Statutes at Large, LXXVII, sec. 202, p. 384, (1963).

whether his policy toward the Latin American military was a success or a failure. He attempted to invoke the democratic principles embodied in the Alliance for Progress in his administration's dealings with six military coups. He abandoned the hemispheric concept, as the basis for assistance in favor of a policy supporting internal security and "civic action." The Congress at first supported the President's new policy; but, as a wave of militarism swept across Latin America, resulting in the forceful overthrow of constitutional governments, Congress began to question seriously the value of his policy. Some members of Congress believed that the military coups were by-products of the military aid program. Adding to Congress's consternation was the appearance of inconsistencies between the President and the State Department in policies toward the military coups. Congress sought to provide the President with the advice and the legislation to deal with the coups that were destroying democratic governments and threatening the Alliance for Progress. And Congress called on the President to deny diplomatic recognition to the juntas and to suspend all forms of aid, especially military. Furthermore, they demanded that the President recall all missions' personnel.

Congress during the Kennedy administration sought to develop a sound program for military and economic aid to the nations of Latin American, but it still was not satisfied with the way the Latin American countries used such aid. With the assassination of President Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson would inherit the problem of militarism in Latin America, and with it the dilemma of the recognition of these military regimes plus the granting of all forms of assistance to them. A definite shift from the Kennedy policy would occur under President Johnson, but, as customary, Congress' reaction would be mixed.

C H A P T E R V I I I

CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TO MILITARY AID FOR INTERNAL SECURITY AND SUPPORT OF MILITARY GOVERNMENTS

NOVEMBER, 1963—DECEMBER, 1964:

FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1964

On the day that Lyndon B. Johnson became President of the United States he inherited from the Kennedy administration the problem of militarism in Latin America. Kennedy's policy had been to follow a "hard line" in dealing with the military juntas that had overthrown constitutional governments. During the last weeks of his administration, Kennedy, following his own policy and, at the urging of the Congress, denied diplomatic recognition to military governments in the Dominican Republic and Honduras. Congress exhorted the President not only to deny recognition but also to suspend all forms of aid. President Johnson faced the choice of either continuing the Kennedy policy or granting recognition and/or aid to the military regimes. Congress divided, as usual, over the issue of recognition. Under President Johnson, the Congress would also continue to question military assistance to the Latin American

countries. A dominant element in congressional deliberation would be the threat, real or imagined, that Castro's revolution posed to the Western Hemisphere.

Congressman Armistead I. Selden, Jr., of Alabama expressed on December 14, 1963, the attitude of those congressmen and senators who favored recognizing and aiding the military juntas in the Dominican Republic and Honduras. Selden called the action by President Johnson a welcome diplomatic move that would meet the "primary hemispheric need of the moment: unified inter-American action to meet the rising and increasing violent Communist threat to the countries of Central and South America." He urged the President to restore to the two countries the means that would enable them to meet their hemispheric defense responsibilities against the enemy.¹ Not all legislators gave such hearty approval.

The military rulers in the Dominican Republic and Honduras, realizing that nonrecognition and no aid from the United States was detrimental to their existence, repeatedly warned Washington that the "ostracism of their regimes had given strength to subversive elements and that

¹Congressional Record, December 14, 1963, CIX, 24632.

a Cuban-type upheaval was in store." Faced with the possibility that the threat was genuine, the Johnson administration finally "succumbed" and extended recognition to the two regimes in December, 1963. The military juntas, in exchange for formal recognition, promised to hold elections during 1965. During January and February, 1964, Washington restored economic and military aid to both.² This was the first indication that the Johnson administration would not follow Kennedy's policy toward military governments and would have to deal with the mixed reactions in the Congress.

Senator Wayne Morse labeled the recognition of the Dominican Republic "a sad mistake." The action by the President would, according to Morse, create "serious problems for the Alliance for Progress," and, in addition, would jeopardize the democratic governments in Latin America. Favoring the policy of the previous President, Morse contended that by recognizing military juntas the United States was playing "directly into the hands of the Communist propaganda."³ Continuing his attack on the

²Lieuwen, Generals vs Presidents, p. 142.

³Congressional Record, December 16, 1963, CIX, 24708-24709.

administration's policy toward military governments, Senator Morse addressed the Senate on January 14, 1964, stating that there existed in Latin America a struggle between three ideologies: communism, fascism, and democracy. To Morse the military juntas represented the ideology of fascism, which he regretted that the United States had "aided and abetted" by recognizing the Dominican Republic and Honduras. Morse declared that he would "continue to oppose any aid to either of them, military and economic" until constitutional government was restored.⁴ But the Johnson government had only begun; more was to come.

The next indication that a shift in policy had occurred under the Johnson administration was first reported by the New York Times. The report revealed that the new Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs, Thomas Mann, had expounded a new doctrine toward military regimes; this was done at a joint consultation conference attended by United States ambassadors and AID missions chiefs in Latin America. According to the Times' story, Secretary Mann advocated that the United States "no longer seek to punish military juntas for overthrowing

⁴U.S. Congress, Senate, 88th Cong., 2d sess., January 14, 1964. Congressional Record, CX, 352.

democratic regimes." He indicated, however, that this shift in policy was not designed to display United States sympathies for dictatorships, but rather to avoid involvements in domestic political crises in Latin American republics. According to the newspaper account, the Mann Doctrine consisted of the following four points, which were to be the new policy for Latin America: (1) the fostering of economic growth in the area; (2) the protection of nine billion dollars in United States investments; (3) nonintervention in the internal political affairs of the Latin American Republics; and (4) opposition to communism. This new policy, if the Times' article were correct (the meeting held by Mann was a closed session and no transcript was made available), represented a radical change from the Kennedy policy toward governments by coups d'etat.⁵ The first application of this new policy coincided with the overthrow of the democratically elected civilian Brazilian government on March 31, 1964.

The Brazilian coup was far more complex than the coups that had taken place during the Kennedy administration. Apparently, in the months of January through

⁵Tad Szulc, "U.S. May Abandon Effort to Deter Latin Dictators" New York Times, March 19, 1964, sec. 1, pp. 1-2.

March, 1964, President João Goulart had sought to alter the basis of his political power by seeking such changes as the following: the enfranchisement of illiterates and military personnel; an agrarian reform program, long blocked by Congress; and the legalization of remaining independent oil distributors; and the legalization of the Communist Party. For some time Goulart, as Minister of Labor under Getulio Vargas and, later, twice the elected Vice President, had sought--and won--the support of the laboring class and Communist support to his cause. The situation was not as serious as North Americans would interpret it because of the rather apolitical nature of Brazilians and the nonexistence of true political parties. He was obviously making a play for support in any possible confrontation with the traditional sources of power in Brazil. He had openly courted Fidel Castro and the "Communist-bloc" nations. Goulart had also begun nationalizing a number of foreign-owned interests, especially utilities, and had threatened that this was only the beginning. These actions and attitudes were upsetting to both domestic and foreign affairs as long as Goulart was in office. The military had traditionally played the role of stabilizer in Brazilian politics and at the end of March

moved to restore public order. Goulart was removed, and it appeared that the Congress was allowed to elect the new president, who turned out to be one of the leaders of the coup; however, the courts continued to function under the increasing scrutiny of military men. This time, contrary to tradition, the military had come to power to stay until such time as they felt the threats to public order were under control.⁶

Washington's reactions to this coup were generally favorable, even among the traditional critics of military coups. Commenting on President Johnson's message to the new president of Brazil, Senator Morse complimented the President for his actions toward the new Brazilian government. But Morse pointed out that the developments in Brazil did not result from action by a military junta. Instead, the overthrow resulted from the Brazilian Congress acting under the constitution as a guiding force and being "reinforced by a military group which backed up the preservation of the Brazilian constitutional system."⁷ It was a premature analysis, and Morse's endorsement of the political change in Brazil would be short-lived.

⁶Lieuwen, Generals vs. Presidents, pp. 69-85.

⁷Congressional Record, CX, April 3, 1964, 6851.

Senator Morse once again reiterated that the recognition and support of the military juntas in the Dominican Republic and Honduras had "created a great deal of confusion among our democratic friends in Latin America." Furthermore, within days of his endorsement of the change in the Brazilian government Morse reversed his stand, as it appeared to him that the Brazilian military was not encouraging constitutionalism as he had hoped.⁸

Congress' annual consideration of the military assistance programs to Latin America came up during the House and Senate hearings on the Foreign Aid Bill of 1964. Again Congress would question the program's value in promoting the internal security and the economics of recipient countries. Of great concern once again would be the question of how to deal with governments that resulted from military overthrows.

Secretary of Defense McNamara appeared before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs to present the administration's request for 66 million dollars for Latin American military assistance. McNamara defended the program as being "an integral part of the entire Alliance for

⁸Ibid., April 21, 1964, 8611.

Progress effort," for it contributed to the internal security of a nation, which in turn helped promote democracy in Latin America.⁹ When General Andrew P. O'Meara, Commander-in-Chief, United States Southern Command, testified before the committee, he reaffirmed the value of military aid to Latin America, citing the successes of the military in Colombia, Bolivia, and Venezuela against guerrilla groups. General O'Meara credited United States military assistance as contributing to those successes and singled-out civic action as having been effective against the guerrilla. This program had enabled the military in Colombia to gain the confidence of the campesinos (persons living in the country-side) to win "them away from the subversive revolutionaries."¹⁰ Asked by the committee if the military in Latin America represented "a major stabilizing force," O'Meara replied that, even though the military intervened in politics, it was still a stabilizing force.¹¹ When asked what effect the elimination

⁹U.S., Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Foreign Assistance Act of 1964, Hearings, before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, on H.R. 10502, 88th Cong., 2d sess., 1964, p. 93.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 402.

¹¹Ibid., p. 413.

of Castro would have on bringing more stability to Latin America, General O'Meara answered that there was "plenty of homegrown capability for trouble in all of these countries." The General added that the charges that military assistance contributed to coups d'etat were without foundation, as there were "plenty of arms in Latin America to overthrow any number of governments if we had never given them one rifle."¹²

In the Senate hearings on the bill, Morse wanted David E. Bell, Administrator of the Agency for International Development, to establish the relationship between economic and military assistance. Bell replied that in the least-developed countries a large military aid grant usually meant a large economic assistance program. Morse countered that this proved his theory that the American taxpayer was having to "assume a very large burden" in helping the underdeveloped countries. Furthermore, Morse believed that the military aid "sometimes had the effect of producing a drain on the economy" of a country, an example being the large number of men that were taken out of the labor supply.¹³

¹²Ibid., pp. 424-425.

¹³U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Foreign Assistance Act of 1964, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, Senate, on S. 2659, 88th Cong., 2d sess., 1964, pp. 263-265.

In an evident attempt to control the administration of military assistance Congress, in its deliberations on the foreign aid bill, proposed certain conditions on the granting of aid. Misuse of foreign aid had become a major concern of Congress.

On August 8, Morse introduced an amendment to the Foreign Assistance Bill of 1964 that would require that the President, in furnishing assistance to foreign countries,

give special consideration to a country's allocation of its own resources as between military and development purposes. Priority in furnishing assistance shall be given to those countries whose military budgets do not exceed their legitimate and reasonable needs for internal security and self defense.¹⁴

Morse hoped to end once and for all the burden placed on the recipient country as well as the American taxpayer who was supporting "an unnecessarily large military establishment." Morse emphasized that the United States annually poured money into countries "which seduce us with the argument that they have to be placed in a posture to repel threatened Communist expansion," but the truth of the matter was that in the event of a communist attack they could

¹⁴Congressional Record, CX, August 8, 1964, 18747.

not retard such an attack even for one day without American military support. Applying his amendment directly to the Latin American countries, the Senator remarked that its adoption "would lessen the changes of military coups" because all too frequently United States military aid had been "used by military groups in various countries to entrench themselves in power."¹⁵ To the dismay of Morse and fellow opponents of foreign aid, their colleagues rejected the amendment.

The question of giving assistance to countries whose governments had come to power through forcible means was a subject of considerable concern to some senators. The recent coups in Latin America made the subject even more urgent for these senators who viewed military assistance as a contributor to the coups. Moreover, the "Mann doctrine" came under close scrutiny by congressmen. This State Department policy, which supported the recognition of military regimes, was restated when its author delivered an important policy address at Notre Dame University on June 7. In his speech Mann proposed a policy to deal with governments that come to power through coups d'etat, which emphasized that:

¹⁵Ibid., August 8, 1964, 18747-18748.

in each case where a government is overthrown by force there should be a careful, dispassionate assessment of each situation in the light of all the surrounding facts and circumstances so that decisions concerning recognition, trade aid and other related matters can be made which are consistent with our ideals, with international law, and with overall national interests.¹⁶

Whereas the Kennedy policy had adhered to the democratic ideals of the Alliance for Progress, the Johnson policy, as enunciated by Mann, was more pragmatic; it would evaluate each coup on its own merits.

Morse, hoping to restrain the new policy, submitted an amendment to the foreign aid bill which read in part:

None of the funds made available under authority of this act may be used to furnish assistance to any country covered by this title in which the government has come to power through the forcible overthrow of a prior government which has been chosen in free and democratic election.¹⁷

The Senator was careful to include a provision to allow the President, with the concurrence of Congress, to grant assistance if the President determined such aid was

¹⁶Thomas C. Mann, "The Democratic Ideal in Our Policy Toward Latin America," The Department of State Bulletin, L (June 29, 1964), 999.

¹⁷Congressional Record, CX, August 10, 1962, 18832.

essential to the nation's security. Morse maintained that had such a law as the one proposed in his amendment been in effect during the Dominican Republic's coup all aid would have stopped until constitutionalism had been restored. His amendment would "stop encouraging outlaws and military juntas around the world from destroying constitutional government." The Oregon Senator then repeated a critical statement made originally when recognition was extended to the Dominican Republic: "When the chips are down the United States cannot be counted upon to support freedom in Latin America." Morse reiterated that the record of the United States on this point "was deplorable," and he called on the government to take the position "that if a military junta overthrows a freely elected constitutional government, we will not support that military junta."¹⁸ The Senate rejected the amendment.

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1964 passed Congress, but it was apparent that many members of Congress felt foreign aid was becoming a liability for the United States. In both houses many viewed military assistance as only building up powerful military oligarchies that were a threat to freedom and democratic principles.

¹⁸Ibid., August 10, 1964, 18833.

The Johnson Administration had inherited the problem of dealing with the military juntas in Latin America. But, contrary to Kennedy's policy, the new administration ceased trying to impose standards of democracy unfamiliar to most Latin American governments as prerequisites for United States recognition and aid, even in the case of governments resulting from coups. Needless to say, this new policy did not receive the wholehearted endorsement of all congressmen. Some members recommended legislation that put certain restraints on the President's Latin American policy.

Serious crises in Latin America would plague the remainder of the Johnson administration. Among the most serious was the situation in the Dominican Republic in 1965 which prompted American intervention. Again there was strong congressional reaction to the administration's policy.¹⁹ New critics of Johnson's military assistance program appeared, principally Senators Fulbright and Church. The idea of creating a hemispheric police force was once again introduced and adopted as a way of policing the internal security of the Latin American

¹⁹U.S. Congress, Senate, 89th Cong., 1st sess., September 15, 1965. Congressional Record, CXI, 23855-23861.

nations; however, the plan was never implemented as the Latin American nations did not seem to favor the plan.²⁰ Senator Jacob Javits from New York would propose an amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1966 that was almost identical to that of Senator Morse's in 1964, which prevented aid to military juntas, except that the Javits amendment was more restrictive on the President.²¹ The amendment did not pass; but, again, it indicated that during the Johnson years there would continue to exist in the United States Congress a divergence of views on Latin America and, more specifically, a difference of opinion in regard to military assistance to that area.

²⁰Ibid., June 4, 1965, 12590-12591.

²¹U.S., Congress, Senate, 89th Cong., 2d sess., July 12, 1966. Congressional Record, CXIII, 15206.

S U M M A R Y

Beginning with the passage of the Mutual Security Act of 1951 and every year thereafter until 1957, Congress as a whole supported military assistance to the Latin American countries as a way of curbing the threat of communism. In 1957, however, it was evident that there would not be a general congressional endorsement of the program in that year, and as this paper has attempted to show, congressmen might not ever again give their unanimous support. Congressional members in the period from 1957 to 1960 began to question the military assistance program from two standpoints: (1) Does this assistance, in fact, provide the Latin American nations with the capability that allows them to contribute to hemispheric defense? (2) Does military aid to dictatorial regimes contribute to the perpetuation of nondemocratic governments? Several congressmen seriously doubted that the type of hardware being given would be significant in the event of nuclear war. The Eisenhower administration pursued a pragmatic policy of recognizing and aiding any Latin American government so long as it was anticommunist and friendly toward the United States. This policy drew criticism from some

congressmen who interpreted the situation as inconsistent: the supposed leader of the free world extending aid to dictatorial regimes and, thereby, hindering the development of democratic principles in this area. Other congressional members saw a need for such aid to insure a defense against communism, which they thought was threatening underdeveloped countries. During the last Eisenhower term, 1957-1960, the Congress attempted to play a greater role in formulating foreign policy with respect to the mutual security assistance program by legislating more direction and control through a ceiling on the amount of total material aid that could be granted to the Latin American countries. Additionally, in hopes of preventing aid which would perpetuate dictators, it wrote into law that internal security requirements would not be the only basis for granting assistance to the countries in this region. The Cold War mentality of the ever-present communist threat, however, could not be ignored even when men like Wayne Morse, Ernest Gruening, and Frank Church argued for the elimination of this aid program.

The Kennedy administration with its new policy toward Latin America, grandiosely expressed in the Alliance for Progress, presented the Congress with a different

set of questions. Kennedy altered the traditional policy toward the Latin American military by taking a hard line toward governments that achieved power through forcible means. In seeking to invoke the democratic principles embodied in the Alliance for Progress, he, consequently, pursued an idealistic policy in regards to recognition and to aid. He abandoned the hemispheric defense concept as a proper cause for aiding the Latin American nations and adopted internal security and civic action programs as the new basis for granting military assistance. At first Congress appeared to endorse the new policy, but, as a wave of militarism swept across Latin America, resulting in the destruction of six constitutional governments, Congress began to express serious reservations about the Kennedy military policy. Some congressional members believed that the military coups were by-products of the United States military assistance program. Kennedy attempted to deal with the resurgence of militarism by denying the new military regimes diplomatic recognition and all forms of aid, which had considerable support in the Congress. Such an attitude did not endure, however, because the President bowed to the pressure of big business at home and abroad and the pressure of other Latin American countries and

extended recognition to some of the military juntas. There is some feeling that the military in some other Latin countries probably interpreted this as meaning that Washington was only paying lip service to the Alliance for Progress. Additional coups plagued his short time in office and caused certain congressmen to doubt the efficacy of the Alliance for Progress. Congress sought to provide the President with the advice and legislation to deal with coups that threatened the Alliance for Progress by supporting his actions against coups; they also charged him authority to determine the merits of granting aid to Latin America for internal security purposes and to report such findings to the Congress. It soon became apparent that some congressional members seriously questioned the policy of continuing aid to Latin America, especially to military regimes. Some approved the action that Kennedy took during the last few weeks of his administration toward the juntas in the Dominican Republic and Honduras. But President Kennedy did not live to see if his idealistic policy was successful or not.

With the assassination of Kennedy, President Johnson inherited the problem of dealing with the military juntas in Latin America. Contrary to the Kennedy policy,

Johnson sought to pursue a more pragmatic policy toward the military regimes by ceasing to impose democratic principles on countries that were not familiar with American-styled democracy. The Johnson policy extended recognition and aid to the military regimes on the condition that they would be friendly to the United States, protect United States investment, and be anticommunist. This policy was similar to that pursued by the Eisenhower administration. Congress once again seriously questioned the use of military aid for internal security purposes, but the threat of Castro-communism was, in the minds of many congressmen, a real enough menace to the security of the United States and the Latin American countries to cause many to forsake democratic principles in favor of security.

One may conclude that there was considerable congressional reaction to military assistance to Latin American countries in the latter 1950's and 1960's. But the issue was never as simple as deciding whether to continue or discontinue such a program, however undesirable it might be, because the entire foreign policy of the United States for the period covered by this paper was overshadowed by the threat, whether real or imagined, of communism.

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