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INTERVENTION AGAINST COMMUNISM

BY HERBERT S. DINERSTEIN

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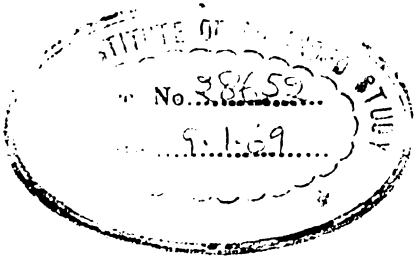

FOREWORD

American foreign policy has been dominated by the general objective of containing communism since the announcement in the Truman Doctrine of our intention to support "free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." The Greek-Turkish aid program was the first result of this policy. Since then the United States' view of its interests in containing Communist expansion in particular parts of the world under particular circumstances and its view of the proper means of containment have changed greatly in response to the largely unanticipated nature of various Communist threats to the status quo. These threats, in turn, have been partly a response to unanticipated American measures of containment.

The question of interests and means has been thrown into sharpest controversy when the United States has undertaken the direct or indirect use of force as an instrument of containment. Each forceful American intervention against a Communist incursion has been a response to different circumstances by different means from the last intervention. Each has raised the controversial issue of whether national interests warranted the means and whether the means were commensurate with interests. And each has led the nation to draw certain lessons for the future which have altered the strategy of intervention.

Professor Dinerstein's analytical-historical interpretation of the American experience in intervening against communism in the cold war illuminates the nature of the problem with which intervention tries to deal, examines the methods and consequences of specific interventions, and recommends guidelines for American policy in the future. His essay contributes to the Center's continuing interest in assessing America's evolving approach to foreign policy.

This publication is the first in a series of booklets on international political and economic affairs. We are inaugurating this series because we have found that the dissemination of the results of many of our research projects requires a flexible, medium-length format. The studies in the series will analyze and comment on issues in international affairs of current interest to government officials, the academic community, and informed persons generally. Special attention will be given to the assessment and reassessment of U.S. foreign policy. We expect to publish between four and six studies every year.

January, 1967

ROBERT E. OSGOOD
Director
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INTERVENTION AGAINST COMMUNISM

I. INTRODUCTION

Intervention against communism as a problem for American policy is as old as communism itself. At present, the war in Vietnam and the consequences of the intervention in the Dominican Republic make it one of the most acute and controversial problems in American foreign policy. This paper will explore the origin of American attitudes toward such intervention as well as the nature of the problem itself. Intervention is here defined as the use of force by the United States, directly or indirectly, in order to prevent what is believed to be the likelihood of Communist assumption of power in a state, or in order to overthrow an established Communist regime.

Intervention against communism differs from traditional nineteenth century intervention. Before World War II intervention had taken place largely in a nonideological setting. Ideology was of course a factor in the Napoleonic Wars and the Catholic-Protestant conflicts of the sixteenth century. The purpose of nonideological intervention was to force a change in the conduct of a smaller state. In a sense, much of the history of imperialism is the history of intervention, although imperialism often meant outright colonization. If one takes a broad view, much of the history of Europe's relations with the Ottoman Empire and with China in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the United States presence in the Caribbean in the first third of the

twentieth century, can be seen as a series of interventions.

Present day intervention, however, is not a continuation of the earlier practice but rather its opposite. The political setting in which intervention now takes place and its ideological purposes make it an essentially different issue, although, confusingly, the same term "intervention" is employed. The great powers never tried to replace the Ottoman Empire; in China they did not supplant the traditional political system, being satisfied to limit its sovereignty. (Changes in the system were made by the Chinese themselves.) In the Caribbean the United States did not try to introduce political systems of a different kind; it was satisfied to limit sovereignty by stationing troops, by controlling customs, etc.

At present, however, the purpose of intervention is either to prevent a Communist regime from coming to power or to unseat an existing regime. What it is worth to defeat communism in a given country is a very different question from what it is worth to defend American lives and property in a given country. But the new ideological context of intervention has not led to the politically absurd aim of defeating communism, however great the cost. The issue now is how far to go in preventing the spread of communism. In the pages that follow, the formation of American policy on that subject will be examined.

II. INTERVENTION AGAINST THE FIRST COMMUNIST STATE 1917–21

Intervention against communism began with the birth of the first Communist state in Russia in 1917. The motives for the intervention were most varied. For some of the more than a dozen powers that intervened, the object was to unseat the regime that had abandoned the war against Germany and to replace it with one that would prosecute it. The naïve assumption was made, especially in the United States, that a democratic regime in Russia would want to continue the war alongside the democratic Entente powers. But the Russian people clearly wanted to withdraw from the war and only a government which flouted the deepest desires of the population could have continued it. Russia neither became democratic nor did it continue the war against Germany. Very probably Allied intervention in Russia made possible the conversion of the coup d'état of October, 1917, into a Communist regime. As the civil war and the war of intervention coalesced, the Communist leaders played the role of national leaders against foreigners and their Russian allies. During the struggle the Communists forged an army and a secret police which enabled them to retain and expand their power when, later, they undertook radical measures of social transformation.

The Allies broke off the intervention for a variety of reasons. In Great Britain, France, and the United States perhaps the most important of these reasons

was the domestic political cost of supporting the intervention, modest as its dimensions were. When the field forces of each of these countries mutinied, their political leaders felt that the issue could not be forced any further. The intervention failed not because the victorious Allied powers lacked the strength to prosecute a successful war against the new Communist state, but because the forces which they were willing to commit were woefully inadequate to the task. None of the interventionists decided in advance how much they were willing to invest to depose the Communist regime. It was hoped that each increment of strength would turn the trick, but in the last analysis the necessary force was unavailable for political reasons. This half-hearted intervention was worse than none at all. It failed to bring Russia back into the war against Germany and it was an incalculable but surely important element in the Communist consolidation of power.

III. INTERVENTION AGAINST THE EXTENSION OF SOVIET POWER TO CONTIGUOUS AREAS IN EUROPE

A quarter of a century later the expansion of the Soviet Union into Europe raised once more the issue of intervention against communism. While the Soviet Union was an ally against a common enemy and for a few years following the war, the underlying conflict between communism and the West was held in abeyance, but it was always an issue beneath the surface. President Roosevelt has been charged, with some justice, with wishful thinking in his negotiations with the Soviet Union on the future of Europe, but in fairness it must be said that his choices were rather narrow. To challenge Soviet influence and control in Eastern Europe required a readiness to dislodge Soviet troops from areas they already occupied. Since this course was never seriously considered at the time, President Roosevelt had no alternative but to accept the reality of expanded Soviet influence in Eastern Europe and to hope that Soviet aims were limited to that area and that non-Communist parties might not be completely eliminated. It is now largely forgotten that the Soviet Union discouraged some of the more activist French and Italian Communist leaders who wanted to seize power in their countries immediately after the war. The Soviet Union never concealed its intention to exercise major influence in Eastern Europe but was understandably vague about the modalities. This permitted Western leaders to believe that the Soviet understanding of "democracy" in Eastern Europe

roughly accorded with their own. Hence no formal division into spheres of influence and control was effected. For example, even the famous scrap of paper exchanged between Churchill and Stalin spoke of a 50–50 division in Yugoslavia. The limits of Soviet expansion were to be established in a contest rather than by formal agreement.

The first post-World War II American intervention against communism took place in Greece. Like the first intervention in Russia, it was an intervention in a civil war, but there the resemblance ceases.

As in many other countries in Europe the Communists, who were more experienced in illegal activity as well as more willing to pay the cost of provoking the wrath of the occupier, played a prominent part in the resistance. The Soviet Union could not prevent the Greek Communist Party from trying to seize power. It is now known, but was not then realized in American government circles, that Stalin feared, correctly, that the West would respond sharply to the threat of a Communist seizure of power in Greece, and that the Yugoslavs supported the guerrillas in defiance of his wishes.[1] At the time the issue had a different aspect. Great Britain, exhausted by the war and stretched to the limit of endurance by the bitter winter of 1946, announced that she was withdrawing her troops from Greece, and that if the civil war was not to be lost to the Communists the United States would have to assume the burden. It was a failure of British power that precipitated the crisis rather than a new phase of

[1] Professor R. V. Burks has pointed out that Zhdanov supported Tito and that Stalin permitted this while encouraging an alternative policy. Paper delivered at the 1966 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association.

"Communist" aggression. However, the Truman Doctrine, in formulating the justification for intervention, put the case in the broadest terms: that of defense against Communist expansion. Although the objective of the Truman Doctrine was to stop the expansion of communism, the circumstances in which the United States would intervene and the character of the intervention were left quite vague, perhaps deliberately. The United States was responding to a whole series of Soviet advances, of which the crisis in Greece was only the latest. From Washington it seemed that after much patience (or wishful thinking) Soviet goals were finally laid bare. From the Soviet point of view, everything that had happened up to that time was only "natural," and it seemed to the Soviet Union that the United States was seizing on a pretext to start the cold war. Each side felt quite self-righteously that the other side had started the cold war. But in essence the cold war was inevitable. Only the negotiation during the war of the limits of the political spheres of each side in Europe could have settled the issue. Neither side was willing, for various reasons, to sign such an instrument. The Soviet Union hoped it could get better terms as its military fortunes improved. For the British, who had entered the war in fulfillment of their treaty obligations to Poland, the effective transfer of that country to Soviet control was a bitter draught that they postponed swallowing. For the United States it seemed easier to brush all the unpleasant problems under the rug while the war was being waged and to hope for the best afterward. Both sides avoided a negotiation of the spheres of Communist and Western control. The issue was then settled in the struggle of the cold war.

The American response to the Greek crisis, which was worked out gradually during the spring of 1947, had two distinct features. The first was the revival of the power of Western Europe. This successful venture constitutes perhaps the greatest achievement of American postwar foreign policy. Western Europe was like a complex machine of which some critical parts had been damaged. Once these were repaired, Western Europe was not only restored to economic health but brought to heights of prosperity which it had never before enjoyed.

The situation in Greece which had precipitated the American initiatives was very different from that of Western Europe. In the more than a hundred years since its liberation from the Ottoman Empire, Greece had not been able to grow economically and politically to the point where it could recover quickly after the cruel blows of defeat and occupation—as France, for example, could. Given the weakness of the Greek body politic, the Communists might have won the civil war. The American intervention tipped the scales in two ways.

First, and obviously, the commitment to the defense of Greece heartened the Greeks, even though the contribution of advisers and materiel was modest and fairly slow in arriving.

The second effect, although unanticipated, may have been even more important. It contributed to the break between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union and removed the main base of support for the Greek Communist guerrillas. Our knowledge of Yugoslav-Soviet relations in that period is still imperfect, but enough is known to make some generalizations of contemporary validity on the problems of intervention against a Communist revolutionary movement

when Communist states disagree on how to treat the movement. Yugoslavia was the most aggressive of the new Communist states of Eastern Europe, partly because of the tradition of the partisan war and partly because it was the only Communist state with important territorial claims on non-Communist states. (The question of territorial claims against Communist states was not to be raised for almost another generation.) Quite naturally, Yugoslav interest in Trieste and in Greek Macedonia was more intense than that of the Soviets, and consequently Yugoslavia was more willing than Russia to risk provoking the United States. This was one of the major causes for the poor relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. The American commitment to Greece changed the situation in that it made the risks of involvement with the United States higher. Stalin's earlier retreat from Iranian Azerbaijan showed that he wanted to avoid an open break with the United States while consolidating gains already made. The aim was to consolidate and perhaps extend Soviet control but not at the cost of stopping the American withdrawal from Europe. Yugoslavia threatened that policy because the United States believed that the foreign policy of all Communist states was directed by the Soviet Union. Yugoslavia was like a bellicose little dog who barked fiercely at big dogs, frightening his master almost as much, if not more, than his enemies. In such combinations the weaker partner can pursue an aggressive policy ostensibly supported by a senior partner only at the expense of irritating the latter. Soviet concern finally resulted in the expulsion of the Yugoslavs from the Cominform and an attempt

to impose Soviet control on the Communist Party of Yugoslavia by replacing its leadership.

In the long run, ejection from the bloc has proved an unmitigated boon for Yugoslavia, but immediately it meant the abandonment of the Greek guerrillas and of plans for absorbing Greek Macedonia. Without Yugoslav support, the Greek Communists started to lose the civil war, and eventually the crisis was surmounted.

Some lessons can be drawn from this major turning point in postwar diplomatic history. The first lesson seems to apply to later Soviet-Chinese relations as well as to Soviet-Yugoslav relations. A second rank Communist state can better pursue an expansionist policy when on reasonably good terms with the first rank Communist power. A breach means facing non-Communist opponents alone. When the breach occurs, both lose. The hegemonic power, the Soviet Union, must suffer the costs of open dissension in the Communist camp; the secondary power must trim its aggressive plans to its new isolation. In the period before the breach, each party tries to compel submission by threats of damage to the other party's interests. In some cases neither yields. But if the attempt at expansion is not resisted, the conflict between the Communist states recedes. Here is the rationale for intervention against communism. It may save the threatened territory, and firm resistance precipitates a crisis in the opponents' state relations.

The second lesson was that determined American opposition to Communist expansion, even on a modest scale, would succeed. The modest United States intervention in Greece fell far short of what most would have considered a reasonable effort to save

Greece. The Greek case did not test how far the United States would have gone, because success came so soon. Obviously the use of American troops to dislodge Soviet troops already in occupation was beyond the limit. But just how far the United States would have gone in Greece without quick success cannot now be determined. For a democracy to break off at a point where costs and gains are believed to have become disproportionate is very difficult because the party in power loses prestige and its continuation in power may be threatened.

It was not until much later that the United States had to cope with the problem of raising the level of intervention when the initial effort was inadequate. This problem was faced within a few years in both Southeast Asia and the Caribbean. We shall turn first to Asia.

IV. INTERVENTION AGAINST THE EXTENSION OF COMMUNIST POWER IN ASIA—TO THE KOREAN WAR

After World War II the Soviet Union and the United States agreed (tacitly, to be sure) that the Chinese Communists could not control most, or all, of the mainland of Asia in the near future. On that basis the United States tried, but failed, to negotiate a peace between the Chinese Communists and the Kuomintang. After the failure of that effort, the United States never clearly formulated its policy; in practice, however it was clear that she was prepared to aid Chiang Kai-shek only with materiel. The United States was not prepared to dispatch troops to fight in a civil war on the side of the Kuomintang whose efficiency the recent war had taught it to despise. The Kuomintang collapsed much more quickly than had been expected. By the time the American public realized that the greatest shift in the balance of power since World War II had occurred, the issue was no longer intervention in a Chinese civil war but waging war against an established Chinese Communist regime. This we were unwilling to contemplate even during the Korean War, which broke out the year following the collapse of the Kuomintang on the continent.

The origins of the Korean War are still clouded in obscurity, it being one of the pieces of dirty linen the Chinese and the Russians have not yet elected to wash in public. Reconstruction of its origin then must be speculative. My own preferred version is that the Korean War was essentially Soviet-initiated.

It had two purposes. One was to hasten what was believed to be the inevitable withdrawal of the United States military forces from the Eurasian continent. A second was to establish Soviet hegemony over Northeast Asia and to estop the Chinese from establishing their control. With control of the Chinese Eastern Railway, the Treaty Ports, and all Korea a Soviet protectorate, the Soviet Union would have recovered and extended the patrimony of the Tsars in Northeast Asia. The Soviet Union had badly misjudged the United States reaction to its Korean adventure. United States planners did not conceive of a limited war and believed that a war with the Soviet Union, like the war with Germany, would be a "global" war on many fronts. In such a war they proposed to concentrate forces in Europe, and planned to liberate Korea in a later phase of the war. Unwisely, they aired this view in public and convinced the Soviet Union, which had probably been surprised by the tame acceptance of the communization of China, that the United States would not defend South Korea if the attack came there first. But quite unexpectedly, the United States reacted immediately and barely in time. The reasons were several. First, the significance of the loss of China to the Communists was beginning to sink in. Second, and more immediate, the North Koreans had committed a definite and hostile act and had crossed a line clearly marked on the map. Americans could not nourish the hope, as they had with regard to China some years earlier, that a civil war would end favorably, or, at least, last a long time. Action had to be taken immediately, if at all.

The American defense of South Korea cannot be classed as intervention against communism; it was

defense against an attempt to expand Soviet control. But it is instructive, nevertheless, because it reveals, more clearly than did events in Europe, the upper limit of American military involvement. The unpopularity of the war and its political cost to the Democratic Party showed that the Truman administration was probably correct in deciding that the political costs of a large-scale military involvement in China were unsupportable. Mr. Acheson's phrase about letting the dust settle probably represented the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the population. But even those intermittently interested in power politics realized that the Chinese Communist revolution represented the greatest shift in power resulting from World War II. It was a bitter pill to swallow and its aftertaste is still with us. The Democratic Party was unlucky enough to have had to administer this dose. Quite naturally the Republican Party capitalized on the mood of public frustration, but never seriously proposed going to war with China. The Republican Party contented itself with charging that the problem never need have arisen if only—if only—we had found the traitors in our midst. This argument had a predictable appeal because it avoided the core political issue: If the United States in the late forties was unwilling to send an expeditionary force of several millions to China, it had to accept the possibility that the Communists would win the civil war. (It was generally believed from the outset that only an intervention on a large scale could defeat the Communists. In Vietnam the opposite assessment was made at the outset.)

I am not suggesting that we should have intervened in the Chinese civil war, but it is a melancholy

reflection that our failure to recognize that we were unwilling to fight a large war, and the displacement of our frustration onto a mythical internal enemy, cost us very dearly in our domestic life.

The United States and the Soviet Union both suffered from the Korean War and both were determined not to repeat the experience. The Soviet Union abandoned what might be called the "pounce and snatch" tactic of expansion in which a position is to be quickly seized and the defendant faced with the alternatives of either acquiescence or a war of unpredictable dimensions.[2] In order to avoid in the future the ambiguity which surrounded the commitment to Korea, the United States made a series of treaties with countries bordering the Soviet Union and China guaranteeing them assistance in the event of aggression of the Korean type, i.e., the crossing of a frontier. These arrangements were adequate to deter whatever Soviet impulse may have existed to repeat a Korean style aggression. But now, in retrospect, one is inclined to believe that this impulse was very moderate. The Korean War had cost the Soviet Union dearly; the threat of its expansion had frightened it thoroughly; the economic situation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe had deteriorated as a consequence of strains of the Korean War; and the United States' ability to strike massively and quickly had grown alarmingly. All these considerations, combined with the death of Stalin, produced a mood and a policy of retrenchment which was to persist until several years later when the Soviet Union acquired a missile capability.

[2] It will be recalled that just such a tactic was expected during the Berlin crisis, but never employed.

In Asia, too, the Chinese had reached similar conclusions, but for somewhat different reasons. The Chinese intervention in Korea had eliminated the possibility of the unification of Korea under non-Communist auspices. But after their initial successes the Chinese armies suffered severe losses and faced a difficult situation if the Soviet Union had not been able to arrange a truce. The final arrangements were concluded after another interval of fighting and reflected both the improvement of the Chinese military position (which took place during the truce) and the growing war weariness in the United States. For the Chinese regime which had so recently come to power holding off the United States and restoring the status quo ante was a great victory. But it had been purchased at great cost and risk. The Chinese had won but they had navigated many a dangerous passage and were not eager to repeat the experience very soon.

The United States had drawn very different conclusions from the Korean War. First, consistent with its belief that limited wars could not occur, it viewed the Korean War as a feint preliminary to a Soviet invasion of Western Europe. It was that perception of the threat, shared by the peoples of West Europe, which made NATO develop so rapidly.

Furthermore, the buildup during the Korean War greatly improved both the United States strategic forces and its all-purpose forces. Before the Korean War both atomic weapons and delivery capabilities were very limited, but by its end the United States was capable of massive and instantaneous retaliation, as Dulles announced on January 12, 1954. Perhaps it was not so much a doctrinaire conviction that limited war was impossible (after all, one had just

occurred) but a determination never again to engage American troops in an Asian war, with all its domestic political costs, which impelled the enunciation of the doctrine of massive retaliation. The United States feared a series of Koreas and possessed, if only for a brief interval, overwhelming nuclear preponderance. The enunciation of the doctrine of massive retaliation seemed to suit American needs at the time.

It is tragic, or ironic, depending on one's outlook, that at the very moment when China and the Soviet Union, sobered by the perils of the Korean War, decided to pull in their horns, the United States perceived the threat to have increased and behaved accordingly. Inside the United States, Senator McCarthy continued to hunt in vain for the traitors who had lost China. The possible significance of the doctrine of massive retaliation was interpreted abroad against the background of presidential toleration of McCarthyism.

It took several years of Soviet and Chinese effort to reassure the United States that world communism had called a temporary halt. By 1955, with the Soviet withdrawal from Austria and the Chinese promulgation of the Bandung policy, the United States' perception of Communist political intentions became more accurate. During this period the United States came to believe that the most probable threat was not a series of Koreas, but the collapse of regimes from within. The collapse of French colonial rule in Indochina gave impetus to the policy of maintaining the status quo as the chief defense against the expansion of communism. It is in the same area, a dozen years later, that that policy is receiving its severest test.

V. THE SUPPORT OF THE STATUS QUO AS THE BASIS OF AN ANTI-COMMUNIST STRATEGY: VIETNAM

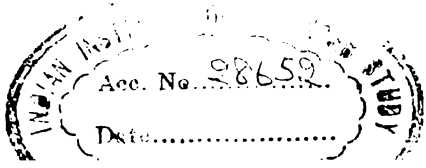
History is untidy. It is like a play for which there are variant scripts and in which the actors are given to improvisation. In 1954, although the Chinese and the Soviet Union wanted a reduction of international tension, the Indochinese War became the center of an international crisis. But the Indochina War had started long before the Korean War, and although the latter had caused a radical alteration of the Communist script for the international drama, the Indochina War continued to unfold following an earlier script played by different actors.

Unlike other great imperialist powers, the French were willing to engage in long wars to save their colonies. By 1954 the struggle in Indochina was already almost ten years old, and in its course the Communists had gained the leadership of the nationalist forces. It was the only place in the world where the Communists were able to assert leadership over the patriotic anticolonial forces. Elsewhere the imperial powers quit early in the game or acquiesced in decolonization, depriving the Communists of the opportunity to become the hegemon of the struggle for independence. By 1954 important elements in French political life had wearied of the war even though the United States had assumed most of the financial burden. As in Greece seven years earlier, changes in the determination of the West rather than a change in the direction of Communist policy produced a crisis. At the very moment

that the French were wavering in their resolve, and perhaps because of it, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles made Dien Bien Phu the symbol of resistance. Once its importance had been inflated, new opportunities tempted the Chinese, and, certainly, the Vietminh. Thus, while improving relations with the Indians, the Burmese, and the Ceylonese, the Chinese were helping the Vietnamese Communists to win a battle against the French. That the loss of the battle meant the loss of the war was more a consequence of the determination of the French in the field to stake so much on that battle than it was of the unfolding of a Chinese plan of conquest. At the negotiations in Geneva it was clear that the Soviet Union and China preferred the consolidation of victory and a pause rather than the continuation of the war. How fully the Vietnamese Communists concurred in this policy is unknown, but they did agree.

After the Geneva settlement and the French withdrawal from Asia, the task of keeping South Vietnam independent of Communist control became an American task by default. It is noteworthy that the SEATO Treaty, unlike the NATO Treaty, provides for American assistance in the event of internal subversion.[3] Defense against communism had

[3] The South East Asia Collective Defense Treaty, September 8, 1954, Article IV, reads in part: "If . . . the inviolability or the integrity of the territory or the sovereignty or political independence of any Party in the treaty area . . . is threatened in any way other than by armed attack or is affected or threatened by any fact or situation which might endanger the peace of the area, the Parties shall consult immediately. . . ." In G. V. Amberhar and V. C. Divekar, eds., *Documents on China's Relations with South and South East Asia* (1949–1962) (Bombay, 1964). In plain English, the United States might intervene in the internal affairs of any of the parties to the treaty if invited.



become defense against the activities of a Communist Party within a country rather than against the invasion of Communist armies.

Dulles's problem was difficult. American opinion was much exercised about the dangers of the further expansion of communism in Asia but firmly opposed to ground wars in Asia. In fact it was generally believed that the size of Eisenhower's electoral victory derived from the belief that he would terminate the Korean War, in which the Democrats had involved the country. Given the task of defending large parts of the world from Communist external and internal aggression and being necessarily uncertain about how many men the Congress would authorize, Mr. Dulles fixed upon the policy of threatening the opponent with terrible retaliation while remaining vague about the circumstances in which the United States would act and the scope of its action. The opponent had to worry about American reaction, but was not permitted to know just how far he could proceed without risk. Obviously a new Korea would be hazardous, but how close to that threshold could the Soviets or the Chinese Communists come without concern? Fortunately for Mr. Dulles his threats were made at the time when the margin of American nuclear superiority was wider than it had ever been before and when both the Soviet Union and Communist China had decided to pause. Moreover, the United States, having enunciated the policy of supporting existing regimes against internal aggression, was not called upon to demonstrate how far it was willing to go for several years. Since the policy was not really tested in the Eisenhower administration, its very enunciation seemed sufficient. But we shall

see how different were the problems of Eisenhower's successor.

The United States did not accept the inevitability of the Communist absorption of Vietnam and supported the South Vietnamese government from its inception. But the limits of that support were established early and were maintained until recently. The United States had, after a debate within the Eisenhower administration, decided against sending American troops to prevent a Vietminh victory. After the French defeat, the United States continued to be unwilling to use American troops. Eisenhower's statement that Asians should fight Asians was misinterpreted as a bit of racial chauvinism; actually it reflected the estimate of American political life which underlay Republican campaign strategy in 1952: an American expeditionary force in Asia was poison at the polls.

For a time the successor regime in South Vietnam seemed on the road to stabilization, but at the end of the fifties the activities of the South Vietnamese Communists increased. It is a tangled question whether the Vietcong, as the Communists came to be known, stepped up their activity because the increased weakness of the government offered better opportunities, or whether the government became weaker because the Vietcong were more active. In any case, by the time Kennedy took office the situation had worsened. Yet the policy of not committing American fighting men continued.

The Kennedy administration believed that its predecessors had been complacent about national security and had relied too much on the deterrent effect of threats of massive nuclear retaliation. Furthermore, it seemed likely that the new administration

would face greater problems of indirect aggression. There was not only the aggravation of the situation in Vietnam but also the prospect that Castro would export his revolution and that the Soviet Union would move from threats to action in Berlin. President Kennedy feared that his military resources were inadequate to the tasks they might be called upon to discharge. The capacity to move troops to distant places was expanded quickly, and a great deal of attention was devoted to raising and training forces for the special task of dealing with threats to friendly regimes from guerrilla action. It was not expected that these new special forces would fight civil wars for threatened regimes. Rather it was expected that they would serve as advisers and trainers for indigenous forces.

But this self-imposed restriction was soon to be abandoned. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations made a sharp break with the practice of the Eisenhower administration. Even if the necessity had arisen and Eisenhower had been willing to do so, American military forces were incapable of conducting operations like the landings in the Dominican Republic and the campaign in Vietnam. The very existence of the new capability made its use more likely, since situations arose where its employment seemed to be the only safe course.

For example, in 1961, President Kennedy, according to his biographer, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., greatly increased the number of American military advisers in Vietnam because he felt that the failure at the Bay of Pigs and the unsatisfactory confrontation with Khrushchev at Vienna had made it necessary to show the Soviet Union that we would not readily accept further Communist expansion. The

dispatch of 16,000 advisers to Vietnam was calculated to demonstrate resolve to the Soviet Union and to influence it to discourage the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam from conducting guerrilla warfare against the South Vietnamese government. It seems now that the warning was sent to the wrong address, because if anyone controlled the guerrilla movement in South Vietnam it was not the Soviet Union.

The situation continued to deteriorate in South Vietnam; the Vietcong became more effective and the South Vietnamese government experienced a series of crises. By 1964 it seemed as if the South Vietnamese government might collapse. As in other such cases, it was not clear whether the Vietcong alone, the Vietcong in cooperation with the North Vietnamese, or both in agreement with the Chinese had decided to seek a victory, or whether the South Vietnamese government's deterioration was thrusting victory upon the Communists.[1] But only American intervention seemed to be able to save the situation. Two separate decisions were taken: first, to coerce the North Vietnamese government to stop the war in South Vietnam by a campaign of bombing. For the first time a socialist state, allied to other socialist states, was subjected to attack. Such an action has no precedents. It was based in part on the assumption that aggression had to have an initiator who would cease offending when properly punished. The traditional American attitude toward aggres-

[1] Douglas Pike, *The Viet Cong* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), the best book on the subject, argues that the North Vietnamese urged the policy on the somewhat reluctant South Vietnamese Communists.

sion requires a government as its instigator. We are loath to attach the label of aggression to a mere revolutionary movement, probably because there is no way of bringing it to the bar of justice. Although the North Vietnamese have certainly been giving increasing support to the National Liberation Front (Vietcong) in South Vietnam, there is no evidence to support the assumption implicit in the bombing of North Vietnam, namely, that internal disorder in the South is largely a consequence of aggression from the North.

Second, large American forces were sent to South Vietnam for the dual purposes of bolstering the South Vietnamese regime and conducting the war against the Vietcong. These decisions represented a new level of commitment after a decade of limited assistance. What was the rationale for so momentous a change?

The extension of communism was, and perhaps still is, viewed as an irreversible process. No Communist state, with the exception of Hungary in 1919, has ever ceased to be a Communist state. Perhaps the Communist states of Eastern Europe will eventually evolve into neo-Communist or non-Communist states, but such hopes hardly make the loss of South Vietnam more palatable now. Further, it is believed that success in establishing new Communist regimes encourages further attempts, while failure deters them. The containment of the Soviet Union in the late forties (I believe, with many others) put a term to the expansion of communism in Europe. It encouraged non-Communist countries to hope for outside support when faced with a crisis, and it forced the Soviet Union to revise its calculations about the costs and possible risks of promoting new

Communist states. Surely if Greece had become a Communist state, the Soviet Union would have been encouraged to try to repeat the success elsewhere. It has been argued that the loss of South Vietnam would have been the first in a series of defeats for the West. The very remoteness of Southeast Asia from the United States aggravates the problem. A comparison with Cuba is instructive in this connection. Troubling as Communist Cuba is, the United States can always overthrow the regime if it chooses to do so. Should new Communist states arise in the Caribbean, they too could be dispatched with limited amounts of force. Such assertions cannot be convincingly made for Southeast Asia. One might argue that the spread of communism has so diluted its content that communization is no longer an irreversible process. But we are here concerned with the rationale for intervention, and one can understand the slowness with which a government would accept such a radical revision of the character of its international opposition and its reluctance to act upon such a revised assessment.

Moreover the Democratic Party cannot have forgotten how damaging the charge of "losing China" was. This buttresses the determination to oppose communism even at the cost of intervention.

But the situation in Vietnam is peculiarly difficult. The Communists came to power in North Vietnam as the leader of the struggle against the French colonial regime. Although French and American purposes are different, many Vietnamese view the struggle as a continuation of the struggle for independence against colonial rule by foreigners of a different race. That many of the present leaders in South Vietnam were in the French service does not

help matters. Not only does the United States suffer from being successor to the French, but it must wage the struggle in cooperation with a regime that, to say the least, commands scant authority or respect in South Vietnam. The powerful impulse to save the situation and the weakness of the South Vietnamese authorities have combined to create an intervention against communism of a special and unprecedented character.

Two features distinguish this intervention from earlier ones. First, the Communist state of North Vietnam is being subjected to coercive attacks in the expectation that it can and will alter the situation in South Vietnam. Second, there seems to be no upper limit to American direct participation in the war against the Vietcong. Let us examine these new aspects of intervention.

1. Not since the intervention in Soviet Russia in 1917–21 has a non-Communist state attacked a Communist state without a declaration of war. (In the Bay of Pigs episode there was the thin fiction of Cuban refugee responsibility plus the fact that the engagement was quickly broken off.) The strategy of coercion is based on two assumptions. First, it is believed that the North Vietnamese regime exercises sufficient control over the guerrillas in the South to make them break off the struggle. What we know of the pattern of the control of Communist movements by Communist states makes this a tentative assumption rather than a foregone conclusion. It has always been easier to urge guerrillas on than to prevail upon them to desist. Even if the North Vietnamese wanted and were able to shape Vietcong behavior, it was still unlikely that they could deliver a negotiated settlement as the price

for the cessation of the bombing. There is no precedent for such an outcome. Guerrilla movements have not negotiated their defeat; they have faded away as their cadres have been killed, quit fighting, or accepted amnesty offers. Contrary to American hopes, the North Vietnamese have responded by sending in regular troops, thereby adding a conventional war to a guerrilla war.

The President of the United States has stated that he does not want to overthrow the North Vietnamese regime but to negotiate with it. Hence the American purpose is not to conduct a war against North Vietnam until it collapses, but to coerce it to change its policy. Given that limited objective, the destruction to be visited on North Vietnam must perforce be limited. What are the upper limits of the destructiveness of such a campaign? Does the campaign harden North Vietnamese resolve rather than compel compliance? These are difficult questions.

2. The magnitude of our intervention in South Vietnam has produced dilemmas no less perplexing. Until 1965 the American policy was to help indigenous authorities conduct their own struggle against the Communist guerrillas. No promise was made to introduce American forces if the Vietnamese proved unequal to the task. The opposite was implied, which was actually a form of pressure on the Vietnamese authorities to exert themselves to their utmost in their own interest. Undoubtedly, this policy would have been continued if it had succeeded, or even approached success. The change to the direct intervention of American forces on a large scale has improved the military situation, but the continued weakness of the Vietnamese regime, as well as the

determination of the North Vietnamese authorities and the guerrillas in South Vietnam to continue, makes an end of the fighting seem quite distant. Whatever influence the United States had on the South Vietnamese authorities derived from the fear that unless the latter improved their effectiveness, they would suffer defeat. Now that the United States has largely assumed the military and political responsibility for the struggle, its bargaining power has been sharply reduced. The United States therefore faces a long and difficult struggle in South Vietnam, with the native authorities under little compulsion to accept advice (assuming we had good advice to give). Wars waged by foreign armies against guerrilla forces are notoriously difficult. The guerrilla forces shelter themselves from attack by blending with the population, which makes it impossible to attack them without injuring civilians. The guerrillas hope that this will inflame hatred for the foreigner. The counterguerrillas hope that the populace will understand that the guerrillas are responsible. Ever since the guerrillas caused Napoleon's armies to quit Spain, the verdict has generally gone against foreign forces.

As the present struggle intensifies, the question arises of how much a people is willing to sacrifice to avoid Communist control. Obviously there is some limit. At the extreme, no one would argue that it is better for all the Vietnamese to perish rather than to live under communism. Once that is accepted it is no longer an argument about principle but about price. Since the situation by its nature does not admit of a referendum, the decision about price is in the hands of foreigners and the local Vietnamese authorities. Both those who want a Communist victory

and those who want peace rather than victory at any price view the Vietnamese authorities as instruments of the United States. The moral problem of waging a war for the sake of a people who may prefer not to be saved at that price is genuine and troublesome.

In the past, intervention against communism was modest in size and in destructiveness[5] (against the Soviet Union, for example) or successful without direct American participation (Greece) or abandoned when it failed of prompt success (the Bay of Pigs). The intervention against communism in Vietnam is, then, unprecedented in magnitude and in the grave moral issues it poses. Naturally, the United States cannot publicly state that after the effort has attained a certain magnitude or after it has lasted a certain time without success it will cut losses and make the best possible terms. Even if an upper limit has been privately determined (and one wonders if this is the case), the decision will probably not be made on the basis of sober calculation but more likely, as in the past, on the basis of what public opinion will support and demand.

The situation is too complex, the uncertainties are too extensive, and the consequences too grave to make simple recommendations for a resolution. But one can readily understand the reluctance to repeat the experience. This perhaps explains why last year when it was generally (but incorrectly) assumed that the likelihood of a Communist take-over in Indonesia was high, no serious proposals for intervention against that contingency, nor plans for inter-

[5] The war in Korea was large and destructive, but has not been classed in this paper as intervention against communism.

vention after the fact, seem to have been made. It is only in areas where we already have a commitment, or where the effort can obviously be quite limited, that the question arises. The dilemmas of the Vietnamese war have fostered a disposition to avoid new commitments even among those who feel that we must pursue the struggle in Vietnam because our prestige and interests are so heavily committed. The problems of communism in Latin America and intervention against it have contributed to this new mood. Before we examine the specific problems of Latin America, we shall briefly examine the general problems of the defense of the status quo.

VI. THE SUPPORT OF THE STATUS QUO AS THE BASIS OF AN ANTI-COMMUNIST STRATEGY: THE PROBLEM IN GENERAL

The Italian and French Communist threats immediately after the war, the defeat of the French in Vietnam in 1954, and the renewed crisis in that area a decade later—among other threats—have created the belief in the West that instability and deterioration of governmental authority provide Communist parties with opportunities to seize power. The task has seemed to be the prevention of the decay of political authority in a country to the point where civil war threatened. This is indeed a formidable undertaking: to ensure the political progress of so many countries without interludes of violence in which Communists would presumably have a chance to come to power. The success of the Marshall Plan in producing stable political life was a misleading precedent. It would have been more appropriate to compare the problems of the many new nations in the underdeveloped world with the status of Europe in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries when nations were being formed. Even in the nineteenth century uneventful progress to democratic stability was the exception rather than the rule. Except for Switzerland and Great Britain, no country in Europe has continued as a single political entity since 1815. And Great Britain had a near brush with civil war in the eighteen-thirties and had to accept Ireland's independence in the nineteen-twenties. The United States

suffered the convulsion of the Civil War, which left wounds in the body politic that have still not healed.

These brief allusions to the history of the successfully consolidated national states suggests that we were overoptimistic, to say the least, in our expectation that a host of countries, many of them newly formed, could gradually proceed to stable non-Communist statehood without fierce internal and internecine struggle. We have had much more success, or luck, than we had a right to expect. But our commitment to this expectation has led us into a static and unrealistic policy that might be summarized as "No chaos, please!" It has committed us to the support of, and intervention on behalf of, threatened regimes on the assumption that internal struggles could readily lead to communism and that existing regimes, whatever their failings, were to be preferred to their enemies. In some cases, this may have been a correct appraisal (Iran, Thailand, and the Philippines come to mind), but as a whole the policy has been a failure because we have more frequently come into conflict with nationalist rather than with Communist aspirations.

Despite all the successes of communism since World War II, nationalism rather than communism seems to be the dominant political force of the century. The alliance with nationalism has been a necessary ingredient in the establishment of Communist states and/or in the consolidation of Communist power in those states. The Russian, Chinese, Vietminh, and Cuban cases obviously support this generalization. But even the regimes in Eastern Europe, most of which were imposed by the Red Armies, have come to be responsive to nationalist

sentiments and thereby to acquire a popular base.[6] The achievement of these nationalist aspirations has been largely at the expense of the Soviet Union, but the latter has perforce accepted these claims. In the one case of Albania where the Soviet Union could not acquiesce, the regime defected to the Chinese. (Soviet acceptance of Albanian demands would have meant Soviet estrangement from Yugoslavia, a price they were unwilling to pay.) In China, Stalin pursued Russian goals at the expense of the Chinese; after his death the policy was reversed and Chinese nationalist aspirations were accepted and supported, but meagerly from the point of view of the Chinese. It would lead us away from our main subject to examine the subject of nationalism within the Communist world. It is sufficient here to make the point that even within their own sphere the Soviets have recognized the force of nationalism and have met many of its demands.

Outside the Communist world, it has been much easier for the Soviet Union to support nationalism. Although not without costs, the policy has been profitable for the Soviet Union. Beginning in 1955 the Soviet Union has supported nationalism in former colonies on the ground that the main thrust of this nationalism was anti-Western and therefore could only redound to the benefit of the Communist world. In some cases this has meant the sacrifice of the interests of local Communist parties (for example, in Algeria and Egypt); in Indonesia it has meant effective acquiescence in the physical destruction of the members of the Communist Party. But

[6] East Germany, of course, is still an exception, but perhaps not forever.

the Soviet Union has accepted these costs with remarkably little anguish.

In contrast, the United States has found itself frequently at odds with the expression of national aspirations. This has occurred, as one might have expected, when Communist regimes were identified with nationalism (the Vietminh and Castro). But in many other cases, and these are significant for an examination of the problems of intervention against communism, the United States has encountered difficulties with nationalism because of a too narrow definition of the concept. For most of the newly independent nations and for many of the older nations (especially those in Latin America), nationalism goes far beyond bare political independence. It has come to mean a society making progress toward the stability and wealth of the advanced countries. Most nations have discovered that the end of colonialism means only the beginning of another and more difficult struggle for genuine autonomy and self-respect. Naturally, blame for failure in this endeavor is assigned to the United States, whose plaintive plea (it hardly deserves the name "policy") for "no chaos" is interpreted as a reactionary stand against national progress.

The problem for a great many backward peoples is that they enjoy only partial nationhood, if one accepts—as they do—the mature national states as models. Most lack the minimum consensus on social goals necessary for a viable state. Particularistic loyalties to class, region, race, or religion outweigh attachment to the national entity. To the extent that nationhood requires the subordination of particular interests to general interests, many, if not most, of the new or aspiring states represent an imperfect

form of nationhood. The expression of this dissatisfaction is sometimes condemnatory rather than diagnostic. "It is *all* the fault of the former colonial master." "The real villain is neocolonialism, whose main weapon is unequal terms of trade which keep the underdeveloped world in a permanent state of subjection."

While these arguments have some substance, they deflect attention from where it should be concentrated, i.e., on national solutions to national problems. Such solutions seem impossible without major social and political adjustments in almost every country, and, if the past is any guide, these changes will not take place without civil strife and sometimes civil war. The fear that such turmoil will inevitably lead to communism makes the historical process the opponent of the United States rather than its ally. American anti-Communist policy in Latin America illustrates this generalization all too well and we now turn to this melancholy but instructive tale.

VII. THE SUPPORT OF THE STATUS QUO AS THE BASIS OF AN ANTI-COMMUNIST STRATEGY: LATIN AMERICA

Since 1954 the United States has intervened three times against communism in Latin America: twice prophylactically, against the threat of communism in Guatemala in 1954 and in the Dominican Republic in 1965; once with remedial intent, briefly and ineffectively in Cuba in 1961. On the whole, the situation in Latin America has become worse rather than better and in the following pages it will be argued that, as is all too frequently the case, many of our difficulties are of our own making and, what is pertinent to this paper, derive from a defective theory of how to oppose communism.

The intervention in Guatemala in 1954

One of the problems of prophylactic intervention against communism is that the very action makes it difficult to determine how serious the perceived threat really was. It has been argued both that the American support of intervention in Guatemala in 1954 was totally unnecessary and that it saved Guatemala from communism. This issue cannot be definitely resolved, but consideration of the question is none the less instructive.

In Guatemala Communists had been permitted, if not encouraged, by President Arbenz to play leading roles in his own immediate entourage, in the land

reform program, in education.[7] Applying European analogies, one would have said that the country was on the brink of a Communist take-over. When a shipload of arms from Eastern Europe arrived, it seemed as if the last act was about to be played out. But the rapidity with which the Arbenz regime fell after a very small scale incursion by its opponents, who had the public approval of the American Ambassador, makes it clear that the analogy with other Communist revolutions was misleading. None of the institutions which the Communists had infiltrated offered any organized resistance to the anti-Arbenz revolution. It became clear that Communist penetration (which was undoubted) into various Guatemalan institutions was without much significance. Communist infiltration was so easy because of the political passivity of Guatemalan officials. But they were equally indifferent to the expulsion of the Communists who did not try to defend themselves. The army had the last voice, and Arbenz bowed to it without a struggle. If the Communist arms had been distributed to create a militia to oppose the army, Arbenz might have stayed in power and moved further to the left.

This episode deeply influenced subsequent revolutionary and antirevolutionary policy. For the United States it seemed that very small-scale intervention by proxy without official American sponsorship had easily turned the tide. Very likely this influenced estimates of the success of the Bay of Pigs intervention seven years later. For Latin Americans the lessons drawn were very different. What was a

[7] See Ronald M. Schneider, *Communism in Guatemala 1944–1954* (New York, 1959) for a detailed and authoritative account based on internal Communist Party documents.

minor event for the United States was a major event in Latin America. Guatemalan and other exiles in Mexico City studied the history of the intervention intensively and broodingly. They concluded that the United States would intervene against any genuine social reform under the guise of intervening against communism. In Latin America the Communists in coalitions had been used and then discarded when they had served their purpose. Applying this standard to Guatemala, American sponsored intervention was interpreted as intervention against reform rather than as intervention against a threat of Communist take-over. A second conclusion was that revolutionaries had to have their own armed forces and that Arbenz should have armed the peasants.[8]

Although one cannot prove it, it seems very probable that Castro's strategy of revolution was deeply influenced by the lessons he drew from the Guatemalan events. Whether or not historians will agree with Castro's interpretation is irrelevant. Here as elsewhere, the important political datum is what revolutionaries believe happened rather than the reconstruction of events by dispassionate historians.

Just as the U.S. intervention in Guatemala was critical in shaping Latin American attitudes, the Cuban revolution and its subsequent communization were critical in shaping United States attitudes.

The communization of Cuba

Castro's accession to power and his subsequent conversion to communism have exerted a profound

[8] I am indebted to Luigi Einaudi for his description of this emigre discussion conducted in the pages of *Humanismo* published in Mexico City.

influence on American attitudes toward the expansion of communism and the modalities of intervention against it. When Castro seized power, or rather, to paraphrase a revolutionary of an earlier generation, picked up the power that the Batista regime had left lying in the street, he was not a Communist. As a matter of fact, his relations with the Communist Party were strained, since he thought it conservative and inclined to cooperate with the regime in power. The Communist Party, for its part, considered Castro to be an adventurist who was apt to provoke the government into repressive activities from which Communists would suffer more than the guerrillas in the Sierra Maestra. Yet a limited alliance between Castro and the Communists was concluded very shortly before the collapse of the Batista regime. After Castro took power, the Communists approached him very gingerly because they feared that he, like other successful revolutionaries before him, might turn rightward rather than leftward.

Communist fears were groundless because they underestimated the depth of Castro's conviction that the United States would not permit him to make social reforms in Cuba and because the extent of Castro's ambitions in the Caribbean were to bring him into conflict with the United States.

The thesis has been advanced that if only Castro's suspicions had been allayed in 1959 by skillful American diplomacy, he would have become a social reformer in the mold of Betancourt. The proponents of this thesis have no difficulty in compiling a list of American errors of omission and commission, for great powers rarely act with perfect wisdom and foresight, especially in their dealings with small

powers. Most probably the United States would have been prepared to accept even a quite radical Cuban regime if it had not become Communist, and it is equally likely that Castro could not have believed this to be the case given the lessons he had drawn from the intervention in Guatemala. In this atmosphere of mutual distrust each side acted to confirm the fears of the other and contrived to make the most feared contingencies come to pass. It was a tragedy in the sense that it probably could not have been avoided even though each party wished to do so. Given Castro's conviction that United States intervention was inevitable sooner or later, he had to find a powerful ally, and the only candidate was in the camp of the opponents of the United States. Although the Soviet Union was clearly reluctant to guarantee a regime it could not protect, it could not reject a Castro who had proclaimed himself a Communist and Cuba a Communist state without forfeiting its claim to be the leader of the Communist world. Cuba's conversion to communism impelled the United States to formulate plans for the very intervention which Castro had believed to be inevitable.

A contingency plan for intervention was made during the last part of the Eisenhower administration. The decision to activate the plan was left to the new administration. In a revealing passage in his biography of Kennedy, Schlesinger shows how greatly the President was limited in his freedom of action by the very existence of a contingency plan. The plan had gone beyond the paper stage: Cuban exiles were already being secretly trained for the operation. If the operation were canceled, the

intended participants could hardly be expected to keep the secret and might even have to be forcibly disarmed. Kennedy felt that the abandonment of the Republican plan for the liberation of Cuba would entail an important domestic political cost. It is not suggested that this was a major factor in Kennedy's decision to sponsor an intervention, but it illuminates the pressures on American presidents to carry forward even contingency plans for intervention against communism.

The prompt abandonment of the project is also instructive. President Kennedy had overcome his reluctance to sponsor an intervention in Cuba in the belief that a small landing, backed by the United States, would catalyze the anti-Castro forces within Cuba and effect Castro's overthrow. Kennedy did not contemplate an American expeditionary force in Cuba. When the expectations from the Bay of Pigs were disappointed, Kennedy preferred to accept the costs of failure to the costs of a war with Cuba. Of course, the United States could have won a war against Cuba, but that was not the issue. The issue was how great a cost the United States was prepared to incur to destroy the Communist regime in Cuba. Kennedy decided that communism in Cuba presented only a limited threat and that only limited efforts to suppress it were politically justified. Subsequent events seem to have borne out the wisdom of that judgment.

But Kennedy, too, left a legacy to his successor, which has been described above, by sharply increasing the number of advisers in Vietnam in order to impress Khrushchev with his determination to act more effectively in Vietnam than he had in Cuba.

Prophylactic intervention against communism: the Dominican Republic

When President Johnson decided to send an expeditionary force to the Dominican Republic four years later in 1965, the American attitude toward intervention against the threat of communism had undergone considerable development as the implications of the split in the Communist world were digested and as the Cuban experience was assimilated.

Paradoxically, the threat of Communist revolutions loomed larger as the Communist world divided. It was argued above that when a bellicose Communist state like Yugoslavia breaks with the hegemonic power, it becomes less aggressive because it now stands alone. While this has probably applied to China *mutatus mutandis,* the opposite seems to be true for Communist movements. For Castro or the Chinese to miscalculate the United States' response to an aggressive policy could mean total defeat; for the leader of a revolutionary movement such a miscalculation might also bring total defeat, but more probably only a reverse. Heads of states have everything to lose by rash action; for heads of movements, "nothing ventured, nothing gained" is often the guiding principle. With the far-reaching disruption of international communism, Communist movements are no longer subject to whatever authority the single center of world communism once exerted. For the United States this change has two aspects. On the one hand, since international communism is no longer a reality, a new communist state does not necessarily contribute to the power of our adversaries. On the other hand, the restraints so often

imposed by the Soviet Union on overly ambitious revolutionary leaders are less effective.

Improved understanding of the Cuban Revolution has also heightened apprehension. Castro was the first to convert a successful non-Communist revolution into a Communist state. Therefore it seems only prudent for the United States to worry about non-Communist revolutionary movements, too, which reinforces the conviction that support of the status quo is the safest policy. This is particularly significant in Latin America, where the most radical revolutionary movements have been non-Communist, deriving like Castro from the non-Communist parties.

The two considerations undoubtedly greatly influenced the decision to intervene in the Dominican Republic in April, 1965.

The Dominican Republic has had an unusually tragic history even for Latin America. In the Caribbean and on its shores the naval power of England, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, and of individual pirates contested Spanish control for over two centuries. Hispaniola, of which the Dominican Republic now occupies the eastern two-thirds, was discovered by Columbus, and Santo Domingo on its southern shores is the oldest city in the Western Hemisphere. The island was one of the more neglected Spanish colonies, and French pirates were able to establish a foothold which was converted by the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 into a French possession. The struggle against control by the French part of the island has dominated the history of the island and even led in 1861 to a voluntary return to Spanish rule. This illustrates how poorly nationalism had developed. Matters were not improved by the

United States occupation from 1916–24 and the control of the customs until 1930. During the occupation the United States Marines had trained Trujillo, who became the dictator of the Dominican Republic, which he ruled according to its worst traditions. When Trujillo was assassinated in 1961 the Dominican Republic was probably as poorly prepared for stable political life as a country can be. Bosch, who was elected president shortly afterward, was the first elected chief magistrate in the history of the country. Bosch, who had spent most of his life in exile, had developed into a moderate socialist believing in a democratic non-Communist social revolution. Not surprisingly he was able to rule for only seven months, from February to September, 1963, before he fell victim to a coup d'état and again went into exile. In April, 1965, the leading figure of the ruling junta, Reid Cabral, fell from power, and the Dominican Republic once again faced a political crisis.[8]

Two groups contended for power: a younger group of officers who wanted to restore Bosch, headed by Colonel Juan Caamano, and older officers headed by General Wessin y Wessin, who were determined to prevent Bosch's return. The United States government accepted the theory that Communists played an important role in the Caamano group and that the restoration of Bosch would open the way for a Communist take-over. The best that one can say for the administration is that its judgment was faulty; it panicked and then intervened with a

[9] My account relies on Theodore Draper, "The Dominican Crisis—A Case Study in American Policy," *Commentary*, December, 1965, pp. 33–68. This is the best account of the events and is highly critical of administration policy.

large number of troops against a nonexistent threat. I am convinced that historians will not accept the judgment that a Communist seizure of power was a serious possibility.

The prophylactic intervention in the Dominican Republic raises the whole question of the rationale for preventive intervention against communism. From a theoretical point of view one could make significant distinctions between a crisis with a 1 percent chance of transition to communism and a 99 percent chance, arguing that whereas in the latter case intervention would be justified, in the former case only a threat to national survival would warrant such an action. But in fact it is difficult for experts to agree on the imminence of Communist take-overs. Although transition to communism has not followed a pattern, most judgments on the likelihood of passage to communism are made on the basis of a model in the mind of the analyst. Hence most observers familiar with the communization of Czechoslovakia would have viewed the situation in Guatemala in 1954 as ominous; while many Latin Americans with unimpeachable democratic credentials thought the chances of communization were slight. Even President Arbenz, who faced political extinction, decided after only a day that the Communists and their allies could not successfully oppose the coup.

The United States government, like any other, cannot expect to be credited with perfect prescience. It must anticipate, therefore, that prophylactic intervention against communism will inevitably produce in some quarters the belief that the intervention was unnecessary, and it must be prepared to accept the political costs of such beliefs.

One argument for prophylactic intervention is that intervention against an established regime presents so many legal and political difficulties that the blow must be struck early if at all. This argument is persuasive to the extent that one believes that any new Communist state will be permanently Communist and to the extent that one believes the vital interests of the United States are affected. But now there is much more reason to believe that new Communist states (if, indeed, there are to be any) may founder. Second, if and when such new Communist states endanger the vital interests of the United States, the legal and political obstacles to intervention against established regimes seem to dwindle in magnitude. For example, the American threat to intervene very substantially against Cuba in 1962 when Soviet ballistic missiles were being installed met with very little domestic or foreign opposition. What seems paramount, to me at any rate, are the political costs of prophylactic intervention against communism when the threat to American vital interests is not evident.

The long-term political costs of the intervention in the Dominican Republic are probably very great, although the short-term costs have been less than might have been anticipated.

One might have well expected that many thousands of foreign troops would have rapidly become embroiled with a population naturally resentful of their presence. It needs only a few determined terrorists to assassinate the soldiers of the occupying forces, to provoke reprisals against guilty and innocent alike, and to start the familiar cycle of guerrilla resistance. If there had been a conflict between the Dominicans and the occupying forces on a national

basis, the Communists once more would have had an opportunity to lead the forces of national resistance. The imperfectly developed national consciousness of the Dominicans has probably prevented such a development. It would be dangerous to assume that a similar intervention in another Latin American country would go as smoothly.[10]

But in the long term, intervention in the Dominican Republic has hurt United States interests in Latin America. The United States in the next decades will have to come to terms with Latin American nationalism, which is clearly the most powerful political force in Latin America. With very few exceptions the political systems of Latin America are anachronistic and ill-suited to the modern world. For a variety of reasons the attainment of independence from Spain and Portugal has not produced the kind of socially unified national state with a growing economy which has become the world model. Dissatisfaction with the present state of affairs is widespread and increasing. It takes the form of nationalism. Its most common expression is anti-Americanism. Much of the energy and attention which could be more profitably devoted to seeking national solutions for national problems is expended in sterile anti-Americanism. Anti-Americanism becomes a substitute for the hard task of facing problems on their own terms. While American conduct in Latin America has hardly been without blemish, the importance of the United States for good, or evil, has been much exaggerated.

[10] Latin Americans from different nations have assured me that in their countries a broadly based opposition to intervention would take place.

Nothing agitates Latin American life more than the fear of North American intervention, especially physical intervention in domestic affairs. It opens up more widely the deep fissures within Latin American countries, and it is these very fissures which are the greatest obstacle to the creation of a healthy nation state. Broadly speaking, the disease of Latin America is the exclusion of large elements of the population from political life. American intervention against communism in Latin America, whatever the motives of its instigators, is viewed in Latin America as an act in favor of the status quo. Thus, men like Frei of Chile and Betancourt of Venezuela, who are deeply anti-Communist, have opposed the intervention in the Dominican Republic, while the odious Dr. Duvalier of Haiti has supported it. In Argentina the Dominican intervention precipitated an internal crisis; the military groups wanting to participate in the intervention and other political groups opposing it. This crisis has probably contributed to the recent military coup d'état in Argentina.

Latin Americans have to get on with the hard task of entering the modern world and American intervention is unhelpful because it deflects attention from the most urgent business. It is not that Latin Americans indiscriminately oppose North American initiative in Latin American affairs. They approved the American policy in the Cuban missile crisis because it restricted Soviet influence. Many Latin Americans have little respect for, and consequently little fear of, Latin American Communists because they have been able to accomplish so little. Therefore they are unwilling to accept the necessity of prophylactic intervention against communism. Even those Latin Americans who fear communism

as the embodiment of the Antichrist are violently opposed to intervention, especially in South America proper. Therefore, as many believe, the United States can serve Latin America best by encouraging Latin Americans to find their own way. Intervention against communism in that area, except when the threat to the United States security is unmistakable and imminent, should be intervention after the fact rather than in anticipation of it.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

Do these reflections on intervention against communism have any value for American policy in the future?

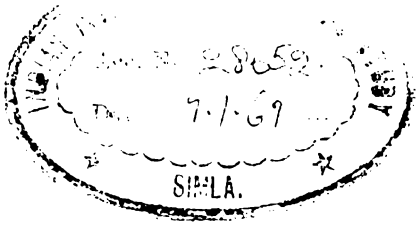
Some capsule conclusions on intervention against communism in the future might be appropriate, but they must be made with considerable diffidence. First, the historical reconstruction of the circumstances of such interventions in the past that is here offered is not universally accepted and, second, the political character of the international scene may alter sufficiently to deprive them of validity. For example, although it seems unlikely at present, the Soviet Union and/or China may adopt an aggressive and successful strategy of communization for new states.

A striking generalization that emerges is that in the one case of unequivocally successful intervention (Greece), the Communists occupied the antinational position. After all, it was they who wanted to turn over Greek Macedonia to Yugoslavia. The conclusion seems fairly obvious that intervention against communism has the poorest chance of success if the Communists can associate with the national cause. Second, the domestic political costs of disengaging from intervention, once launched, are very high or are believed to be so (which amounts to the same thing), so that the first steps should be made only when the situation is amenable to reversal by very small actions.

Third, the Bay of Pigs case should serve as a model of the wisdom and utility of cutting losses when the intervention requires a larger commitment than what was originally anticipated.

Fourth, prophylactic intervention seems to be justified only when the United States' vital interests are unmistakably and imminently threatened.

Fifth, the policy of rigid support of the status quo in the belief that it will inhibit the appearance of problems is probably best calculated to produce them.



This is a concise historical-analytical examination of United States intervention against communism. The cases considered are the Soviet Union, Greece, Vietnam, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic. In each case the global and domestic issues contributing to the development of American policy are considered and the success of that policy is assessed. Dr. Dinerstein's major conclusion is indeed sobering. It is that, with the exception of Greece, intervention against communism has tended not to inhibit the spread of communism but to increase it, largely because these interventions have been perceived as directed primarily against national aspirations rather than communism. Our interventions, he finds, have tended to be both insufficiently considered and unrealistic as well as unsuccessful. And this is all the more distressing because intervention tends to have a dynamic of its own: once undertaken it is difficult to withdraw, even when the national interest is clearly no longer being served. Accordingly, in the final chapter, a set of guidelines is suggested for U.S. intervention against communism that the author feels would help us avoid similar mistakes in the future.

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