

# Excerpts From Fulbright's Attack on U.S. Policy in Dominican Crisis

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 WASHINGTON, Sept. 15—  
 Following are excerpts from a statement today by Senator J. W. Fulbright, Democrat of Arkansas and chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on the Dominican issue:

United States policy in the Dominican crisis was characterized initially by overtimidity and overreaction. Throughout the whole affair, it has also been characterized by a lack of candor.

These are general conclusions I have reached from a painstaking review of the salient features of the extremely complex situation. These judgments are made, of course, with the benefit of hindsight and, in fairness, it must be conceded there were no easy choices available to the United States in the Dominican Republic. Nonetheless, it is the task of diplomacy to make wise decisions when they need to be made and United States diplomacy failed to do so in the Dominican crisis.

It cannot be said with assurance that the United States could have changed the course of events by acting differently. What can be said with assurance is that the United States did not take advantage of several opportunities in which it might have changed the course of events.

The reason appears to be that, very close to the beginning of the revolution, United States policymakers decided that it should not be allowed to succeed. This decision seems to me to have been based on exaggerated estimates of Communist influence in the rebel movement and on distaste for the return to power of Juan Bosch or of a government controlled by Bosch's party, the P.R.D. (Dominican Revolutionary party).

#### 'Fragmentary Evidence'

The essential point is that the United States, on the basis of fragmentary evidence of Communist participation, assumed almost from the beginning that the revolution was Communist-dominated, or would certainly become so. It apparently never occurred to anyone that the United States could also attempt to influence the course which the revolution took. We misread prevailing tendencies in Latin America by overlooking or ignoring the fact that any reform movement is likely to attract Communist support.

We thus failed to perceive that if we are automatically to oppose any reform move-

ment that Communists adhere to, we are likely to end up opposing every reform movement, making ourselves the prisoners of reactionaries who wish to preserve the status quo.

The principal reason for the failure of American policy in Santo Domingo was faulty advice given to the President by his representatives in the Dominican Republic at the time of acute crisis. Much of this advice was based on misjudgment of the facts of the situation; some of it appears to have been based on inadequate evidence or, in some cases, simply false information.

On the basis of the information and counsel he received, the President could hardly have acted other than he did; it is very difficult to understand, however, why so much unsound advice was given him.

#### Policy Review Is Urged

I am hopeful, and reasonably confident, that the mistakes made by the United States in the Dominican Republic can be retrieved and that it will be possible to avoid repeating them in the future. These purposes can be served, however, only if the shortcomings of United States policy are thoroughly reviewed and analyzed. I make my remarks today in the hope of contributing to that process.

The question remains as to how and why the attitude of the United States Government changed so strikingly between September, 1963, and April, 1965. And the question inevitably arises whether this shift in the Administration's attitude toward the Dominican Republic is part of a broader shift in its attitude toward other Latin American countries, whether, to be specific, the United States Government now views the vigorous reform movements of Latin America—such as Chris- and Venezuela, APRA [American Popular Revolutionary Alliance] in Peru and Accion Democratica [Democratic Action] in Venezuela—as threatening to the interests of the United States.

And if this is the case, what kind of Latin American political movements would now be regarded as friendly to the United States and beneficial to its interests?

#### U. S. Aims Must Be Clarified

It is of great importance that the uncertainty as to United States aims in Latin America be resolved. We cannot successfully advance the cause of popular democracy and at the same time align



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Senator J. W. Fulbright

ourselves with corrupt and reactionary oligarchies. Yet that is what we seem to be trying to do.

The direction of the Alliance for Progress is toward social revolution in Latin America; the direction of our Dominican intervention is toward the suppression of revolutionary movements which are supported by Communists or suspects of being influenced by Communists.

The prospect of an election in nine months, which may conceivably produce a strong democratic government, is certainly reassuring on this score, but the remains that the reaction of the United States at the time of acute crisis was to intervene forcibly and illegally against a revolution, which, had we sought to influence it instead of suppressing it, might have produced a strong popular government without foreign military intervention.

Since just about every revolutionary movement is likely to attract Communist support, at least in the beginning, the approach followed in the Dominican Republic, if consistency pursued, must inevitably make us the enemy of all revolutions and therefore the ally of all the unpopular and corrupt oligarchies of the hemisphere.

#### U. S. Must Make Choice

We simply cannot have it both ways; we must choose between the Alliance for Progress and a foredoomed effort to sustain the status quo in Latin America. The choice which we are to make is the principal unanswered

question arising out of the unhappy events in the Dominican Republic and, indeed, the principal unanswered question for the future of our relations with Latin America.

It is not surprising that we Americans are not drawn toward the uncouth revolutionaries of the non-Communist left. We are not, as we like to claim in Fourth of July speeches, the most truly revolutionary nation on earth; we are, on the contrary, much closer to being the most unrevolutionary nation on earth.

The movement of the future in Latin America is social revolution and the choice which the Latin Americans make will depend in part on how the United States uses its great influence.

It should be very clear that the choice is not between social revolution and conservative oligarchy but whether, by supporting reform, we bolster the popular non-Communist left or whether, by supporting unpopular oligarchies, we drive the rising generation of educated and patriotic young Latin Americans to an embittered and hostile form of Communism like that of Fidel Castro in Cuba.

The Foreign Relations Committee's study of the Dominican crisis leads me to draw certain specific conclusions regarding American policy in the Dominican Republic and also suggests some broader considerations regarding relations between the United States and Latin America. My specific conclusions regarding the crisis in Santo Domingo are as follows:

1. The United States intervened forcibly in the Dominican Republic in the last week of April, 1965, not to save American lives, as was then contended, but to prevent the victory of a revolutionary movement which was judged to be Communist dominated. The decision to land marines on April 28 was based primarily on the fear of "another Cuba" in Santo Domingo.

2. This fear was based on fragmentary and inadequate evidence. There is no doubt that Communists participated in the Dominican revolution on the rebel side, probably to a greater extent after than before the landing of United States marines on April 28, but just as it cannot be proven that the Communists would not have taken over the revolution neither can it be proven that they would have.

The evidence offered the committee for the assertion that the rebels were Com-

munist-dominated or certain to become so is not persuasive, on the contrary, the evidence suggests a chaotic situation in which no single faction was dominant at the outset and in which everybody, including the United States, had opportunities to influence the shape of the rebellion.

3. The United States let pass its best opportunities to influence the course of events. The best opportunities were on April 25, when Juan Bosch's party requested a "United States presence," and on April 27 when the rebels, believing themselves defeated, requested United States mediation for a negotiated settlement.

Both requests were rejected, in the first instance for reasons that are not entirely clear but probably because of United States hostility to the P.R.D., [Dominican Revolutionary Party] in the second instance because Ambassador Bennett and the United States Government anticipated and desired a victory of the anti-rebel forces.

4. United States policy toward the Dominican Republic shifted markedly to the right between September, 1963 and April, 1965. In 1963, the United States strongly supported Bosch and the P.R.D. as enlightened reformers; in 1965, the United States opposed their return to power on the unsubstantiated ground that a Bosch or P.R.D. government would certainly, or almost certainly, become Communist dominated. Thus the United States turned its back on social revolution in Santo Domingo and associated itself with a corrupt and reactionary oligarchy.

#### Massacres Exaggerated

5. United States policy was marred by a lack of candor and by misinformation. The former is illustrated by official assertions that United States military intervention was primarily for the purpose of saving American lives; the latter is illustrated by wildly exaggerated reports of massacres and atrocities by the rebels—reports which no one has been able to verify.

It was officially asserted, for example, (by the President in a news conference on June 17) that "some 1,500 innocent people were murdered and shot, and their heads cut off." There is no evidence to support this statement.

A sober examination of such evidence as is available indicates that the Imbert junta was guilty of at least as many atrocities as the rebels, and perhaps more.

#### Advisers Held Responsible

6. Responsibility for the failure of American policy in Santo Domingo lies primarily with those who advised the President. In the critical days between April 25 and April 28 these officials sent the President exaggerated reports of the danger of a Communist take-over in Santo Domingo and, on the basis of these, recommended United States military intervention. It is not at all difficult to understand why, on the basis of such faulty advice, the President made the decisions that he made.

7. Underlying the bad advice and unwise actions of the United States was the fear of "another Cuba." The specter of a second Communist state in the Western Hemisphere and its probable political repercussions within the United States and possible effects on the careers of those who might be held responsible—seems to have been the most important single factor in distorting the judgment of otherwise sensible and competent men.

"Officials say F.B.I. has bugged Dominican Embassy since 50's" - NYTimes, E.W. Kenworthy, filed FBI, II, 3 Dec. 1966.