Revisiting the 1954 Coup in Guatemala

The Soviet Union, the United Nations, and "Hemispheric Solidarity"

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> "In death the Guatemalan party may prove to be a bigger asset to the Kremlin than in life."
>
> —Daniel James, editor of *The New Leader*[1]

On 20 June 1954 the United Nations (UN) Security Council (SC) adopted Resolution S/3237 calling for the "immediate termination of any action likely to cause further bloodshed" in Guatemala. The original resolution, introduced by Brazil and Colombia, would have referred Guatemala's complaint to the Organization of American States (OAS), but the Soviet Union vetoed it, preferring that the issue remain in the UN Security Council, where the USSR had a permanent seat and could thus stay involved.[2] Earlier, in January 1954, the International Department of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) had circulated a communiqué from Guatemala's president, Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán, detailing the plight of his government in the face of U.S. "scaremongering, slander, and intimidation."[3] Although Latin American Communists and Soviet sympathizers actively petitioned the USSR for military and political assistance to the Árbenz government to enable it to withstand U.S. "aggression," Soviet leaders were unwilling to offer material support beyond a single shipment of outdated Nazi weaponry that had been captured by Czech

1. Quoted in Nick Cullather, *Secret History: The CIA's Classified Account of Its Operations in Guatemala, 1952–1954* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 112.

2. Resolution S/3237, unanimously adopted at the 275th meeting of the UNSC, 20 June 1954, in United Nations Archives and Record Management Section (UN ARMS), Series S-1078, Box 58, File 11.

3. "Kommyunike Sekretariata prezidenta respubliki Gvatemala o namereniyakh SShA k sverzheniyu demokraticheskogo pravitel'stva respubliki, 29 yanvarya 1954 g.," 29 January 1954, in Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Noveishei Istorii (RGANI), Fond (F.) 5, Opis' (Op.) 28, Delo (D.) 253, List (L.) 5.

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fighters during the Second World War. This refusal to provide meaningful support to Árbenz did not, however, prevent Moscow from using the UN as a forum for challenging U.S. interventionism in the Western Hemisphere or from seeking to capitalize on the anti-American sentiment that flooded Latin America in the wake of the coup.

Although the UN had originally been envisioned as a mechanism for the peaceful resolution of international conflicts, the United States and the Soviet Union by the early 1950s had effectively transformed the organization into a weapon for waging the Cold War.[4] In the case of Guatemala, this involved a show of Soviet solidarity with the Árbenz regime, which provoked a dispute within the UNSC over the sovereignty of regional bodies like the OAS. During the drafting of the UN Charter, several Latin American states had expressed anxiety about the organization's usurpation of regional authority and had managed to insert a clause guaranteeing the sovereignty of organizations like the OAS. The joint Guatemalan-Soviet action at the UN represented a challenge to the U.S. conception of hemispheric solidarity, which sought to unite the countries of the Western Hemisphere under U.S. leadership and in conformity with the rules and procedures of the inter-American system.

Exactly a week after the passage of Resolution S/3237, Árbenz resigned his post and fled the country. Operation PBSUCCESS, a secret plot devised by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to overthrow Árbenz, had lived up to its name. Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas, who led the coup, immediately proceeded to dismantle his predecessor's progressive reforms and bring Guatemala squarely back into the U.S. orbit. The CIA operation was motivated by a powerful combination of national security concerns, economic interests, and domestic pressures. The Árbenz regime had implemented a transformative agrarian program that threatened the power and profits of the United Fruit Company, a multinational corporation with so many arms that it was known in Central America as "*El Pulpo*"—the octopus. During a period of U.S. domestic anti-Communist recriminations, Árbenz had legalized Guatemala's Communist party, the Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo (PGT), and adopted an independent foreign policy that challenged the U.S. government's predilections.

The Guatemalan coup has been explored from many angles, but no attempt has been made up to now to use the archives of the former Soviet

4. See Ilya V. Gaiduk, *Divided Together: The United States and the Soviet Union in the United Nations, 1945–1965* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2012); and Caroline Pruden, *Conditional Partners: Eisenhower, The United Nations, and the Search for a Permanent Peace* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998).

Union to examine Moscow's role. The majority of scholarship on Soviet foreign policy assumes that the Soviet Union was uninterested in Latin America before the Cuban revolution.[5] On the rare occasions when the Guatemalan coup is even mentioned, it is for the purpose of arguing that it "served to confirm the Soviet perception" of "geographic fatalism," which emphasized the obstacles to revolution in Latin America posed by the region's geographical proximity to, and economic dependence on, the United States.[6] However, an examination of archival documents from the CPSU's Agitation and Propaganda Department, International Department, and Department of Relations with Foreign Communist Parties demonstrates that the overthrow of Árbenz had the opposite effect on Soviet leaders. Rather than confirming the theory of "geographic fatalism," the coup raised hopes that Latin America could be pried away from its dependence on the United States. Thus, in the wake of the coup, the Soviet Union sought to strengthen its influence in the region not only by expanding its propaganda apparatus but also by launching an effort to develop trade relations with Latin American countries in order to mitigate their economic dependence on the United States and help them achieve full political and foreign policy independence. Latin American Communists and Soviet sympathizers played crucial roles both in drawing Moscow's attention to the possibilities to bolster Soviet influence in the region and in shaping Soviet perceptions of U.S.–Latin American relations.

The United States and Árbenz's Guatemala

The English-language scholarship on the coup has tended to focus on U.S. foreign policy, and the debates have thus revolved around the causes and consequences of the U.S. intervention in Guatemala. Most historians agree that the Eisenhower administration exaggerated the threat posed by the Árbenz government. Some scholars argue that Communist influence in Guatemala

5. See, for example, Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II: Imperial and Global* (Boston: Scott, Foresman, 1989), p. 216; and Leon Gouré and Morris Rothenberg, *Soviet Penetration of Latin America* (Miami, FL: University of Miami, Center for Advanced International Studies, 1975), p. 1. This tendency is apparent in the periodization of studies such as Nicola Miller's *Soviet Relations with Latin America, 1959–1987* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and in assertions such as those of Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin that Soviet leaders were not interested in Latin America until the late 1950s when Fidel Castro and other charismatic revolutionaries burst onto the scene. See Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), pp. 28–29.

6. Joseph L. Nogee and Robert H. Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), p. 216.

was minimal and that the Eisenhower administration mistook Árbenz's nationalism for Communism. These scholars point to the small size of the PGT and the strongly conservative nature of many sectors of Guatemalan society (e.g., the army and the Catholic Church) as evidence that contemporary U.S. policymakers gravely overestimated the Communist threat emanating from the small Central American country.[7]

The historian Piero Gleijeses, whose work draws extensively on Guatemalan archives and in-depth interviews with previously inaccessible figures who were close to Árbenz, reaches a different conclusion. He argues that Communist influence in Guatemala was more widespread than previously acknowledged but that Moscow did not exert control over the PGT. Gleijeses is among the group of scholars who contend that the Guatemalan Communists exerted an influence out of all proportion to their negligible numerical strength.[8] Although the PGT did not have many card-carrying members, Gleijeses asserts that Árbenz, "in the last two years of his administration, considered himself a communist."[9] Some of Guatemala's Communists, moreover, enjoyed close personal relations with Árbenz. His wife, though not a member of the PGT, acknowledged in an interview with Gleijeses that she and her husband were both convinced that socialism was the wave of the future and that "communism was inevitable."[10] In the late 1940s, Árbenz developed close friendships with Guatemalan Communists who later became leaders of the PGT. Indeed, a future General Secretary of the PGT, Manuel Fortuny, was Árbenz's "closest friend."[11] Árbenz had delegated to Fortuny the lead role in drafting Decree 900, the agrarian reform bill that had so antagonized the United Fruit Company.[12] Thus, even though Árbenz himself was not a member

7. Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 59; Richard H. Immerman, *The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), pp. 183–184; and Stephen Rabe, *Eisenhower and Latin America: The Foreign Policy of Anticommunism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), pp. 46–47.

8. Ronald Schneider, *Communism in Guatemala* (New York: Octagon Books, 1979), p. 318; and Robert Alexander, *Communism in Latin America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1957), pp. 350–364. Piero Gleijeses observes, in *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944–1954* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 362, that "in no country of Latin America had the communists ever been as influential as they were in Guatemala."

9. Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope*, 147.

10. María de Árbenz, quoted in Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope*, p. 148.

11. Ibid., pp. 4, 141.

12. Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 224 n. 37.

of the Communist party, Gleijeses argues that he was strongly influenced by the ideas and reformist agenda of the PGT.

The degree of perceived Communist influence on Árbenz is important because it has shaped assessments of the Eisenhower administration's motives for supporting the coup that toppled him from power.[13] Scholars have traditionally emphasized either U.S. economic "imperialism" or Cold War strategic imperatives, depending to some degree on their appraisal of the role and influence of the United Fruit Company in U.S. foreign policy.[14] Stephen Kinzer and Stephen Schlesinger have been the most popular purveyors of the economic imperialism theme. They argue that in the case of Guatemala, "American national security considerations were never compelling."[15] Most scholars, however, have argued that the strategic and security imperatives of the Cold War were more significant than the role of the United Fruit Company in shaping U.S. policy.[16] More recently, scholars have advanced the debate by considering such previously underexamined factors as the domestic political interests of U.S. presidents, the lobbying efforts of prominent Latin American politicians, and anxieties about U.S. international credibility. One historian has persuasively argued that these factors spurred the decisions of U.S. policymakers to intervene repeatedly in Latin America during the Cold War.[17] Another scholar has assigned equal responsibility for the coup to Latin American political actors, who for years had been lobbying the United States to support regime change in Guatemala. Faced with U.S. resistance, they had embarked on their own invasion plans.[18]

Scholars of U.S. policy toward Guatemala have drawn a straight line from the coup to the vicious civil war and repression that devastated the country

13. For a good discussion of the historiography of the coup, see Stephen Streeter, "Interpreting the 1954 U.S. Intervention in Guatemala: Realist, Revisionist, and Post-revisionist Perspectives," *The History Teacher*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (November 2000), pp. 61–74.

14. For an example of the former, see James Siekmeier, *Aid, Nationalism, and Inter-American Relations: Guatemala, Bolivia, and the United States, 1945–1961* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999). For an example of the latter, see Cole Blasier, *The Hovering Giant: U.S. Responses to Revolutionary Change in Latin America, 1910–1985* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976).

15. Schlesinger and Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit*, p. 107.

16. See, for instance, Cullather, *Secret History*; Immerman, *The CIA in Guatemala*; and Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope*.

17. Michael Grow, *U.S. Presidents and Latin American Interventions: Pursuing Regime Change in the Cold War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), p. xi.

18. Zachary Karabell, *Architects of Intervention: The United States, the Third World, and the Cold War, 1946–1962* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), pp. 98, 104, 123.

in later decades.[19] Stephen Streeter has thoroughly chronicled U.S. efforts to manage the politics of post-Árbenz Guatemala, and State Department historian Mark Hove has recently shown that Salvador Allende reaped tremendous political benefits from his strident opposition to U.S. meddling in the internal affairs of Latin American countries.[20] The Eisenhower administration failed to take account of Latin American opposition to its actions in Guatemala and only belatedly discovered the wellspring of anti-American animosity the coup had exposed. In seeking to eliminate the threat of Communism in the Western Hemisphere, the Eisenhower administration unintentionally contributed to a public opinion climate more receptive to it.[21] The historian Robert McMahon has argued that the Eisenhower administration's failure to perceive "the force of Third World nationalism" constituted "a major setback for American diplomacy." "Rather than promoting long-term stability in the Third World," McMahon concludes, "the foreign policy of the Eisenhower administration contributed to its instability, thus undermining a basic American policy goal."[22]

One of the ways the U.S. intervention proved counterproductive to long-term U.S. interests was by confirming the analyses of regional Communists who had tried to obtain Soviet support and thus by drawing Moscow's attention to the possibilities inherent in Latin America. Even though the Western Hemisphere ranked lowest on Moscow's list of strategically vital areas, the aftermath of Árbenz's overthrow revealed the force of anti-U.S. nationalism in Latin America just as the Third World was starting to emerge as a political bloc and the Cold War was becoming globalized. Moreover, the coup reinforced the views of Latin American Communists, who had been arguing all along that the United States was a predatory imperialist power intent on plundering the natural resources of underdeveloped countries.

During the invasion of Guatemala, however, Soviet leaders were unprepared to take any decisive action to stabilize the Árbenz regime. Iosif Stalin had

19. See, for instance, Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre*, p. 188; and Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993), p. 113. For a recent challenge to this view, see Hal Brands, *Latin America's Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

20. Stephen Streeter, *Managing the Counter-Revolution: The United States and Guatemala, 1954–1961* (Athens, OH: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 2000).

21. Hove uses Chile as a case study to explore the effect of the CIA coup on Latin American public opinion and U.S.–Latin American relations. Mark T. Hove, "The Arbenz Factor: Salvador Allende, U.S.-Chilean Relations, and the 1954 U.S. Intervention in Guatemala," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (September 2007), pp. 623–663.

22. Robert McMahon, "Eisenhower and Third World Nationalism: A Critique of the Revisionists," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 101, No. 3 (Fall 1986), p. 457.

died in 1953, and his successors were still in the throes of a post-succession power struggle.[23] Soviet Premier Georgii Malenkov delivered a speech in March 1954 in which he tentatively enunciated the concept of "peaceful coexistence" and called for a "durable strengthening of peace" and a "further diminution of international tension."[24] In the quest for détente with the United States, the Soviet Union was unwilling to provoke U.S. wrath by providing decisive support to Árbenz. Some of the highest-ranking Soviet officials, moreover, were hamstrung by a dogmatic approach that viewed the Communist parties as the only true revolutionaries and failed to recognize "bourgeois nationalists" as potential allies. Under the leadership of Stalin, as one observer notes, "the original Leninist policy of supporting national liberation from imperialism by backing bourgeois nationalism in the colonial world had been unceremoniously dumped."[25] Latin American Communists, lower-level Soviet diplomatic and party personnel, and trade union activists played a major role in facilitating greater attention to the opportunities that Latin America presented. The Soviet Union eventually developed a series of doctrinal innovations advocating support for "bourgeois nationalism" in what was increasingly becoming known as the "Third World."

Regional Communist parties, Communist front groups, and trade unions sympathetic to Moscow provided the Soviet Union with ideologically tendentious analyses of events in the Western Hemisphere. These reports served to reinforce Soviet leaders' view of the imperialist nature of the United States and to authenticate that view by locating it in the context of Latin America, where discontent with U.S. policy ran deep and was rooted in a decades-long history of economic exploitation and big-stick diplomacy. Although the reports frequently included recommendations that the Soviet Union take meaningful steps to support the Árbenz government, such recommendations were apparently not convincing enough. A shipment to Guatemala of Czechoslovak weapons was eventually arranged, but otherwise the Soviet approach to the Árbenz government remained cautious. The delivery of weapons to the

23. See Mark Kramer, "The Early Post-Stalin Succession Struggle and Upheavals in East-Central Europe: Internal-External Linkages in Soviet Policy-Making (Part 1)," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Winter 1999), pp. 3–56; Mark Kramer, "The Early Post-Stalin Succession Struggle and Upheavals in East-Central Europe: Internal-External Linkages in Soviet Policy-Making (Part 2)," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Spring 1999), pp. 3–39; and Mark Kramer, "The Early Post-Stalin Succession Struggle and Upheavals in East-Central Europe: Internal-External Linkages in Soviet Policy-Making (Part 3)," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Fall 1999), pp. 3–67.

24. Quoted in Geoffrey K. Roberts, *The Soviet Union in World Politics: Coexistence, Revolution, and Cold War, 1945–1991* (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 40.

25. Jonathan Haslam, *Russia's Cold War: From the October Revolution to the Fall of the Wall* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 146.

Árbenz regime, the first Soviet-bloc arms shipment to a Third World country, was merely a pretext for the U.S.-backed invasion.[26] During Operation PB-SUCCESS, the Guatemalans requested Moscow's help, including the use of the UNSC to demand an end to the invasion. Guatemalan Foreign Minister Guillermo Toriello dispatched an urgent request for support to the USSR, and it was distributed to the CPSU Presidium (as the Politburo was then known). The message was published, and the Soviet delegation to the UN fiercely condemned the invasion, but no material support for the Árbenz regime was proffered.[27]

The Inter-American System and "Hemispheric Solidarity"

Although the inter-American system had been in operation since the nineteenth century and was the brainchild of Simón Bolívar, it underwent a transformation in the postwar period.[28] The Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty) of 1947 and the Charter of the OAS, concluded the following year, provided the framework for coordinating collective action to repel external aggression and a consultative mechanism for resolving intra-American disputes. The drafting of the UN Charter, which occurred alongside the reconfiguration of the inter-American system, raised thorny questions about the appropriate balance between national sovereignty and collective defense. The language of the charter ultimately reflected the concerns of Latin American states to keep the inter-American system intact and elevate the principle of regionalism over the universalism of the UN.[29] At the San Francisco conference in 1945, the Latin American delegations had sought to prevent the intervention of extra-hemispheric powers in the maintenance of peace and security

26. See Carol R. Saivetz and Sylvia Woodby, *Soviet-Third World Relations* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985), p. 156.

27. Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War: The Inside Story of an American Adversary* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2006), p. 62.

28. On the history of the inter-American system, see J. Lloyd Mecham, *The United States and Inter-American Security, 1889–1960* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961); M. Margaret Ball, *The OAS in Transition* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1969); Jerome Slater, *The OAS and United States Foreign Policy* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1967); and John C. Dreier, *The Organization of American States and the Hemisphere Crisis* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1962).

29. On the tensions between universalism and regionalism, see Aida Luisa Levin, *The Organization of American States and the United Nations: Relations in the Peace and Security Field* (New York: United Nations Institute for Training and Research, 1974).

in the region.[30] Article 20 of the OAS Charter, moreover, provides that any dispute between American states must first be submitted to the regional body "before being referred to the Security Council of the United Nations."[31] The inter-American system was thus strengthened largely at the behest of Latin American leaders who wanted to preserve the Monroe Doctrine and protect the Western Hemisphere from Soviet-bloc meddling.[32]

The Tenth Inter-American Conference was a turning point, both for U.S. efforts to cultivate hemispheric support for anti-Communism and for the way it revealed the fault line separating U.S. interests from those of the Latin American countries. Although the paramount U.S. goal at the conference was to achieve a strongly worded anti-Communist resolution, the countries of Latin America were far more interested in economic issues, especially the negotiation of better trade terms. This disconnect between the security imperatives of the United States and the economic concerns of Latin America has long been a salient theme in hemispheric relations and a deep wellspring of anti-U.S. sentiment.

Key U.S. objectives at the conference were to raise awareness of the Communist menace in the Western Hemisphere, to obtain Latin American support for U.S. anti-Communist policies, and to convince the Latin American countries that Guatemala must be isolated, both politically and economically.[33] The primary obstacle to the achievement of U.S. objectives was a dispute over the definition of intervention.[34] The U.S. delegation wanted to "call attention to the international character of the Communist movement and the control from Moscow of its activities everywhere" and "declare the activities of international Communism to constitute intervention in American affairs."[35] Such a declaration would invoke the consultation procedure under Article 6 of the Rio Treaty, which was intended to protect the hemisphere from "extra-continental"

30. Dreier, *Hemisphere Crisis*, p. 26.

31. Article 20 of OAS Charter, quoted in Dreier, *Hemisphere Crisis*, p. 56.

32. Stephen Schlesinger, *Act of Creation: The Founding of the United Nations* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003), pp. 66, 175–192.

33. Progress Report Prepared in the Department of State for the Operations Coordinating Board, 25 May 1954, "Third Progress Report on NSC 144/1, United States Objectives and Courses of Action With Respect to Latin America," in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1952–1954, Vol. IV, p. 47 (hereinafter referred to as *FRUS*, with appropriate year and volume numbers).

34. Max Paul Friedman, *Rethinking Anti-Americanism: The History of an Exceptional Concept in American Foreign Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 137–138.

35. Memorandum by Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Cabot to Acting Secretary of State, Subject: Position on Communism for the Tenth Inter-American Conference, 10 February 1954, in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IV, p. 280.

aggression.[36] Had U.S. officials acknowledged that Communism in Guatemala was a homegrown affair, they would have had no legitimate basis for intervention. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles acknowledged that the purpose of the anti-Communist resolution was to "recognize Communism as an international conspiracy instead of regarding it merely as an indigenous movement."[37] Months earlier, the CIA and State Department had been instructed to gather and if necessary, fabricate evidence for use in the OAS demonstrating that "Guatemala constitutes a menace to Hemispheric solidarity and the internal security of friendly nations through aggressive Communist subversion."[38] The nature of the Communist threat emanating from Guatemala had to be established as international in scope and directed by Moscow; otherwise, charges of foreign intervention would seem irrelevant. If, however, Communist subversion "was tantamount to external aggression," then "efforts . . . to counter such Communist subversion could not rightfully be described as American intervention."[39]

After two weeks of preparations by the U.S. delegation, a resolution affirming that the international Communist movement constituted "intervention" in the affairs of Latin America was adopted. Mexico and Argentina abstained from voting on the resolution, and the Guatemalan delegation was the sole dissenter. Not only did the Guatemalan delegation vote against the resolution, it also renounced the country's adherence to the anti-Communist resolutions adopted at prior conferences (Bogota in 1948 and Washington, DC, in 1951). Although the United States succeeded in passing the resolution, many anti-Communist Latin American regimes did not truly perceive Guatemala as a threat to hemispheric security.[40]

During a meeting of the U.S. National Security Council (NSC) shortly after the conference, Secretary Dulles described the difficulties he had faced in securing passage of the resolution. The thorniest issue, as always, concerned U.S. "commercial and financial policies." Dulles also had to contend with "those who insisted that the anti-Communist resolution was nothing but a pretext to permit American intervention in the internal affairs of the other

36. Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty), Article 6. The text of the treaty can be accessed at http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/b-29.html.

37. Minutes of a Cabinet Meeting Held at the White House, 26 February 1954, in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IV, p. 301.

38. Memorandum for the Record, 11 September 1953, in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Guatemala, p. 106.

39. Memorandum of Discussion of the National Security Council, 18 March 1954, in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IV, p. 304.

40. "Third Progress Report on NSC 144/1," p. 27.

republics of the hemisphere." Despite "two weeks of very intensive work . . . to change this atmosphere," the resolution "was certainly not adopted with genuine enthusiasm."[41] The Caracas conference not only demonstrated the U.S. effort to convert the OAS into an anti-Communist alliance but also revealed the failure of the United States to address Latin American economic grievances.

The Soviet Union and Communism in Latin America

Although Latin American Communist parties reached the summit of their popularity in the immediate aftermath of World War II and enjoyed the prestige attendant to the Soviet defeat of Nazi Germany, Stalin did not view Latin America as an area ripe for Communist influence. In 1943, Stalin dissolved the Communist International (Comintern) in the hopes of extending the cooperative relationship that had developed as a result of the wartime alliance with the West. As that alliance began to deteriorate, the burgeoning Cold War convinced U.S. policymakers that the existence of Communist parties in Latin America could not be tolerated, and the United States pressured its Latin American allies to sever diplomatic ties with the USSR and to ban domestic Communist parties. Most of the region's Communist parties were subsequently outlawed and forced either to disband or to operate underground.

By 1954 the Soviet Union maintained diplomatic relations with only three Latin American countries: Mexico, Argentina, and Uruguay. Soviet embassy officials in Mexico carefully tracked developments in neighboring countries and reported back to Moscow about the growing potential for revolutionary change in Latin America. Soviet diplomats evaluated the proceedings of the Second PGT Congress and concluded that the Guatemalan Communists were at the forefront of the country's struggle for national liberation. The PGT, moreover, was lauded for its leading role in opposing "foreign monopolies," particularly United Fruit.[42]

The PGT General Secretary, Fortuny, was a fierce critic of U.S. policy and an outspoken advocate of a pro-Soviet foreign policy. His scathing speeches at the PGT's Second Congress in December 1952 lambasted the United States for exploiting the Guatemalan people and pursuing an aggressive policy designed to expand the U.S. military presence in the country. Fortuny accused

41. Memorandum of Discussion at the 189th Meeting of the National Security Council, p. 305.

42. "TsK KPSS tov.Smirnovu A.A. iz zav.otdelom Latino-amerikanskih stran D. Zhukov: Posol'stvo SSSR v Meksike, 18 marta 1953 g., Vtoroi s"ezd kompartii Gvatemaly (Spravka)," 18 March 1953, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 48, L. 29.

the United States of waging a propaganda campaign "under the same flag of 'anti-Communism' that was used by Hitler in his day." Characterizing the United States as a fascist police state and accusing the "American imperialists" of carrying out "terrorist acts" against the workers and "democratic movements" of several different countries, Fortuny anticipated no end to U.S. meddling in the internal affairs of Latin American nations. The fundamental goal of aggressive U.S. policies, according to Fortuny, was to halt economic development in these countries and to thwart the struggle for national liberation. "Pan-Americanism," "anti-Communism," and "continental security," he argued, were merely empty slogans used as a pretext for overthrowing progressive leaders and replacing them with obedient and repressive dictators. Fortuny exhorted PGT members to spread the truth about the superiority of the socialist economy and the "new society" being built in the Soviet Union.[43]

Perhaps most damaging to the U.S. vision of hemispheric solidarity was the PGT's call for Guatemala to conduct a more independent foreign policy. Fortuny sought to "unmask" the "provocative" nature of the Organization of Central American States (ODECA) and to show that the Salvadoran delegation's introduction of a resolution to combat the "subversive actions of International Communism in Central America" was designed to serve the interests of the "Yankee imperialists."[44] In Fortuny's view, Guatemala not only should sever its dependence on the United States but should also establish ties with national liberation movements and identify itself with the aspirations of newly decolonizing states.[45] Árbenz's attempts to dissociate his country from the regional pacts and policies of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations suggest that he was strongly influenced by the PGT's stance. In February 1953, U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala Rudolf Schoenfeld warned that the ultimate objective of the PGT was the "neutralizing of Guatemala as a Western nation" and that Communist infiltration of key government positions was not an accurate indicator of Communist influence in the country.[46] Two months later, Guatemala withdrew from ODECA.[47]

The Soviet embassies in Latin America were not the only source of intelligence at Moscow's disposal. The Communist trade unions were an active presence in Latin America and provided Moscow with continuous updates

43. Ibid., Ll. 15–19.

44. Ibid., L. 20.

45. Ibid.

46. Letter from the Ambassador of Guatemala (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State's Special Assistant for Intelligence (Armstrong), 13 February 1953, in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Guatemala, pp. 68–69.

47. Schneider, *Communism in Guatemala*, p. 295; and Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope*, p. 225.

about regional developments. These labor groups were on the front lines of the struggle to win the hearts and minds of Latin America's workers and peasants and played a major role in directing the attention of the Soviet leadership to the Third World in general and Latin America in particular. The major Communist-dominated labor confederation active in Guatemala was the Confederación Central General de Trabajadores de Guatemala (CGTG), which had aligned itself with the Confederación de Trabajadores de América Latina (CTAL) and the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU).[48] The Confederación Nacional Campesina de Guatemala (CNCG), a peasant organization formed in May 1950 under the leadership of non-Communists, allegedly "spouted pro-Soviet rhetoric" in a bid to secure financial support from Árbenz's government.[49] The CNCG also became affiliated with the World Federation of Trade Unions, which functioned essentially as an instrument of Soviet policy, albeit not always a perfectly reliable one.[50] Under the leadership of Vicente Lombardo Toledano, one of Mexico's most influential Marxists, CTAL was folded into the WFTU in 1945.[51]

The WFTU's second congress, convened in Milan in the summer of 1949, witnessed a pronounced emphasis on Latin America.[52] CTAL was declared "the organism of liaison and coordination of the World Federation of Trade Unions with the National Centers of Latin America."[53] CTAL was a vital source of intelligence. According to the WFTU's report, "the studies and research" undertaken by the CTAL "have shown that . . . the regime of foreign monopolies hinders their economic development and makes their complete independence impossible."[54] CTAL also reported that the trade union movement was "meeting serious difficulties" as a result of "the economic dependence of the majority of the Latin American nations on the United States."[55] In the postwar period, "a new and intense pressure has been applied by the great

48. Jon V. Kofas, *The Struggle for Legitimacy: Latin American Labor and the United States, 1930–1960* (Tempe: Arizona State University Center for Latin American Studies, 1992), pp. 179, 189.

49. Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope*, p. 189.

50. Ronald Radosh, *American Labor and United States Foreign Policy* (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 384; and Roy Godson, *The Kremlin and Labor: A Study in National Security Policy* (New York: National Strategy Information Center, 1977).

51. John P. Windmuller, *American Labor and the International Labor Movement, 1940 to 1953* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Institute of International Industrial and Labor Relations, 1954), p. 185.

52. Kofas, *The Struggle for Legitimacy*, pp. 337–399.

53. Report of Activity of the World Federation of Trade Unions, 15 October 1945–30 April 1949, Presented to the World Trade Union Congress II, Milan, 29 June–10 July 1949, p. 80.

54. Ibid., p. 79.

55. Ibid., appendix p. 73.

American monopolies on Latin America, with the aim of controlling the latter from the economic, military, and political point of view."[56] The fact that CTAL and WFTU analyses were routed to senior CPSU officials suggests that the trade unions shaped the Soviet Union's approach to the region.

In May 1954 the WFTU sent its representatives on a tour of Latin America, and the assistant director of the department for national centers produced a report that was sent to the CPSU International Department. The WFTU tour included a stop in Guatemala for the second national congress of the CGTG. A few months earlier, the CGTG had organized a meeting to express the "solidarity" of Guatemala's workers with the Vietnamese people and to "struggle for the termination of the colonial war in Vietnam," which the French colonialists, "with the support of the American monopolists," had for eight years been ruthlessly waging against the Vietnamese people.[57] At their congress the following spring, a platform indistinguishable from that of the PGT was expounded. The main points of discussion were the struggle against United Fruit, the necessity of supporting Árbenz, and the defense of Guatemala's national independence, which was under direct threat from the United States and its "reactionary satellites in Central America—El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua."[58] The WFTU report predicted an intensification of U.S. "imperial pressure" on Guatemala and recommended "intervening" to provide support to Árbenz because even though he was not a member of the Communist party, he recognized the significance of the PGT's activities in service of the country's national interests.[59]

As early as 1953, Soviet officials were receiving indications that the aggressive U.S. posture toward Guatemala could have serious implications for the future of U.S.–Latin American relations. Nikolai Leonov, a KGB officer whose later career would include multiple stints in various Latin American countries and who served as an information officer at the Soviet embassy in Mexico City in the early 1950s, provided the Soviet Foreign Ministry with an assessment of the Pan-American Journalists Congress in December 1953. Leonov characterized the organization as a tool of the U.S. State Department and judged the primary goal of the congress to be the condemnation of leftist

56. Ibid.

57. "Obzor o provedenii mezhdunarodnogo dnya aktivnoi solidarnosti s V'etnamskim narodom i bor'by za prekrashenie kolonial'noi voiny vo V'etname—19 dekabrya 1953 g.," 19 December 1953, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 192, L. 21.

58. "Doklad zamestitelya zaveduyushhego otd.natsional'nyh tsentrov VFP tov.Kazadeya o ego poezdke v strany Latinskoi Ameriki, 21 maya 1954 g.," 21 May 1954, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 195, Ll. 150–151.

59. Ibid., Ll. 202–203.

regimes in Guatemala, Bolivia, and Argentina. In his view, the State Department, under the auspices of the congress, sought to accuse these regimes of liquidating freedom of the press and attempting to break hemispheric solidarity and also hoped to achieve a declaration asserting that the Guatemalan regime was under the decisive influence of Communists.[60] The results of the congress showed, however, that within Latin America, opposition to dictators was growing, and this opposition could potentially spill over into a general protest against the "imperialistic policy" of the United States.[61]

In May 1954, the head of the Soviet Committee for the Defense of Peace, Nikolai Tikhonov, sent a report to the CPSU Central Committee describing the activities of the Latin American affiliates of the World Peace Council (WPC), the head of which had toured Latin America in preparation for the WPC's upcoming international conference and had met with President Juan Perón of Argentina. Perón had claimed that the Argentine people were exerting pressure on their leaders to take a "clearly anti-imperial" stance on the situation in Guatemala.[62] In February and March, the Argentine branch of the WPC had sent messages expressing solidarity with Guatemala to the Guatemalan and Argentine governments and to all of the delegates at the Tenth Inter-American Conference in Caracas. These groups had petitioned to hold a demonstration in Buenos Aires in support of Guatemala but had not yet received permission from the authorities. Attempts were being made to create a Society for Friends of Guatemala, as had already been done in Chile. The Chilean society had sent telegrams signed by 67 deputies of varied political loyalties to the delegates at Caracas.[63] The Costa Rican branch of the peace council claimed to have sent ten thousand letters to the UN to request the "defense of peace in Central America."[64] The United States Information Agency (USIA) cited these efforts as evidence of the "coordinated Communist thrust at the Americas."[65] The simultaneous creation in several Latin American countries

60. "Posol'stvo SSSR v Meksike 24 dekabrya 1953 g. Zaveduyushchemu otdelom stran Ameriki MID SSSR spravku stazhera N. Leonova 'Panamerikanskii kongress pechati,'" 24 December 1953, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 48, Ll. 117–119.

61. Ibid., L. 135.

62. "Otchet o poezdke sekretarya Vsemirnogo Soveta Mira Varela v strany Latinskoi Ameriki v svyazi s podgotovkoi k mezhdunarodnoi vstreche 15 maya 1954 g.," 15 May 1954, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 195, L. 98.

63. Ibid., L. 108.

64. "Otchet natsional'nogo komiteta storonnikov mira Kosta-Rika, 30 noyabrya 1954 g.," 30 November 1954, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 358, L. 16.

65. Circular Telegram from USIA to Certain Posts, 25 June 1954, in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Guatemala, p. 383.

of "friendship societies" to express solidarity with the Guatemalan people, and the societies' well-coordinated votes on identically worded resolutions, revealed the "mark of the experienced agent."[66]

In January, USIA and the CIA had escalated their propaganda campaign to discredit Árbenz's government as a dupe of Moscow and thereby lay the groundwork for the passage of an anti-Communist resolution at the Caracas Conference scheduled for March.[67] Amid the scare campaign, Árbenz issued an official communiqué warning of the Eisenhower administration's intentions to overthrow his government. The communiqué, which was circulated in the CPSU International Department, charged that high-ranking U.S. government personnel were lending both "moral and material" support to the invasion plans of "such powerful monopolies as United Fruit," the interests of which were threatened by Árbenz's economic policies.[68] In preparation for the invasion, the United States was waging a campaign of slander and lies, tarnishing Guatemala as a "threat to the security of the American continent" and a "bridgehead of international communism." Not that this U.S. propaganda blitz was fooling anyone—"everyone knows" the slander was merely a pretext for "open intervention" in Guatemala's internal affairs, with the ulterior motive of depriving the country of its sovereignty and independence.[69]

During the invasion period, the CPSU Agitation and Propaganda Department prepared a lengthy report about the situation in Guatemala. The invasion, the report said, was preceded by a "provocative campaign of threats and slander" waged by high U.S. government officials, including members of Congress, the secretary of state, and the president himself. From the first failed attempt, the "American imperialists" were now crossing over to the "preparation of open armed intervention." Forces from Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador—all ruled by "fascist dictators" who were mere "marionettes" manipulated by their U.S. puppet masters—were invading Guatemala at the behest of the United States. All this was occurring in the midst of a raging class war that pitted the feudal land owners and foreign monopolies against the masses, who were being led by the PGT and the labor unions. The Guatemalan people were heroically struggling to implement the Árbenz regime's agrarian reforms and more broadly, a genuine anti-feudal and anti-imperial revolution.

Soviet propagandists, based on information supplied by the Communist parties and trade unions, assumed that the U.S. intervention was designed to

66. Ibid.

67. Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope*, pp. 256–257.

68. "Kommyunike Sekretariata prezidenta respubliki Gvatemala," L. 5.

69. Ibid.

protect the monopoly status of United Fruit, and they discerned no difference between the interests of the Eisenhower administration and those of the company. They claimed that many high-ranking officials and former officials had large investments in the company, including John Cabot (former assistant secretary of state for Latin America), Thomas Cabot (head of the State Department section dealing with issues of international security), Robert Cutler (senior aide on the National Security Council staff), Sinclair Weeks (secretary of commerce), Charles Erwin Wilson (secretary of defense), and Henry Cabot Lodge (U.S. ambassador to the UN), not to mention Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, who had been an attorney for United Fruitand was still one of its largest shareholders.[70] Such ties were considered decisive evidence of the "predatory plunder of dependent countries by American imperialism."[71] "Reactionary" forces inside the country and abroad used the pretext of "anti-Communism" to mask their true intentions—they called the Árbenz regime "Communist," and yet no Communist had ever served in his administration![72]

The report on Guatemala prepared by the CPSU Agitation and Propaganda Department characterized inter-American organizations, specifically the OAS and ODECA, as mere tools of U.S. imperialism. Owing to the servility of Central American dictators, ODECA had become an "obedient instrument of the U.S. Department of State." Guatemala, to its credit, had withdrawn from the organization, having lodged a formal protest against the creation of a military bloc designed to legitimize intervention in the internal affairs of Central American nations. At the Tenth Inter-American Conference, moreover, Guatemala had voted against the anti-Communist resolution, delivering an "ideological blow" to the United States.[73]

The Árbenz regime could have been a valuable ally for the Soviet Union—it was dedicated to democratic reform and progressive ideals, it pursued an independent foreign policy and openly criticized the United States in international forums, and it provided a safe haven for Communist exiles throughout the region, having welcomed political refugees such as the General Secretary of the Paraguayan Communist Party, Obdulio Barte. Guatemala also provided a valuable service by publishing the news bulletins of the Dominican Republic's Communist Party.[74] The report on the situation in Guatemala tracked the

70. "O polozhenii v Gvatemale i deyatel'nosti Gvatemal'skoi partii truda / po materialam pechati / 25 iyunya 1954 g.," 25 June 1954, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 194, L. 104.

71. Ibid., L. 114.

72. Ibid., L. 127.

73. Ibid., Ll. 138–140.

74. Ibid., L. 140.

proceedings of the PGT in detail, extensively quoting Fortuny and carefully describing the praiseworthy goals and actions of Guatemala's Communists, particularly their attempts to throw off the "imperialist yoke" of the United States and its "predatory" companies, which were "strangling" Guatemala's economy.[75] Yet the efforts of Árbenz and the PGT to establish more tangible ties to the Soviet Union were destined to be in vain. Although they did manage, with the help of the Cuban Communist Party, to negotiate the sale of a shipment of captured Nazi weapons from Czechoslovakia, substantive Soviet aid was not forthcoming.[76] Fortuny, who traveled to Prague at Árbenz's behest, was struck by the impression that "the Russians knew little of Guatemala . . . and had more pressing concerns than the plight of Jacobo Arbenz."[77] Although Latin American Communists admired the Guatemalan revolution and petitioned the Soviet Union to aid the Árbenz government, Soviet leaders were disinclined to render large-scale support to a Central American regime tottering under the weight of a U.S.-backed invasion.

The Post-Coup Propaganda Battle

During the invasion of Guatemala just a few months after the Caracas conference, the Cuban Communist Party sent Osvaldo Sánchez Cabrera to Guatemala on an investigative mission to confer with the leaders of the PGT. Based on these meetings, Sanchez prepared and sent a report to the Soviet embassy in Mexico. The report clearly delineated what had become the Communist Party line on the invasion of Guatemala: the forces of imperialism, led by United Fruit and International Railways of Central America, along with their "lackeys" in the U.S. government, were directing the intervention against Árbenz. After the failed uprising at Salamá, the U.S. government hired an army of "foreign mercenaries" from the countries surrounding Guatemala. The Árbenz government had unmasked the dastardly plot, presenting the matter to the UN and thus revealing the machinations of U.S. imperialism to the entire world. Two months later, the Guatemalan delegation's performance at the Tenth Inter-American Conference was a "brilliant victory for the Guatemalan people and a defeat for American imperialism." Sanchez had emphasized that an important consequence of the invasion was the heightened

75. Ibid., Ll. 143–156.

76. "Doklad o Gvatemale, polucheno 2 iyulya 1954 g.," 2 July 1954, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 194, L. 164. See also Cullather, *Secret History*, p. 54.

77. Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope*, pp. 280–281.

solidarity of the peoples of the world, particularly the peoples of other Latin American countries, with Guatemala. Moreover, the Soviet delegation's "brilliant defense" of Guatemala at the UN on 20 June was warmly received, and the "acts of international solidarity directed against the American imperialists" were designed to deliver the following message: "what is happening today in Guatemala can tomorrow happen in any other country."[78]

On 20 June the Soviet delegate to the UN, Semen Tsarapkin, had vetoed the Brazilian and Colombian resolution to transfer Guatemala's complaint to the OAS. Instead, the French drafted a watered-down resolution appealing for the immediate cessation of hostilities and imploring the members of the UN to abstain from aiding such actions. When presenting the draft resolution, the French delegate stated that it should in no way "be construed as casting doubt on, or weakening, the competence of the Inter-American Peace Committee or the legitimacy of its action in this matter." In fact, the reverse was true—"the correctness of resort to . . . [the OAS] . . . only gains confirmation from the failure of the Security Council brought about by the Soviet veto." The Árbenz government had also lodged a complaint with the Inter-American Peace Committee (IAPC), which met on 24 June and proposed the immediate departure of a fact-finding committee for Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Árbenz subsequently withdrew the complaint, preferring instead to pursue the issue under the auspices of the UN, where the Soviet Union could use its power as a counterweight to U.S. aggression.[79]

At the request of Guatemala and the Soviet Union, the Security Council convened again on 25 June. During the session, the Brazilian delegate praised the OAS machinery and its "long record of achievement" as an "efficient instrument for the solution of conflicts." He also noted that at the Chapultepec conference of the OAS in 1945, Toriello had made an eloquent argument in favor of strengthening the inter-American system and maintaining "principles of collaboration and continental solidarity." Toriello's viewpoint was incorporated into Article 2 of the Rio Treaty, which entreated all parties to "settle any such controversy among themselves by means of the procedures in force in the Inter-American System *before referring it to the General Assembly or the Security Council of the United Nations.*"[80] The Brazilian delegate thus argued against the adoption of the agenda by the UN Security Council.

78. "Doklad o Gvatemale, polucheno 2 iyulya 1954 g.," Ll. 160–163, 166, 192–193.

79. Minutes of the 676th Meeting of the UN Security Council, 25 June 1954, p. 2, in UN ARMS, Series S-1078, Box 58, File 11.

80. Ibid., pp. 4–5; emphasis added.

The Soviet delegate, Tsarapkin, interrupted the proceedings with a point of order concerning Article 32, which stipulated that parties to a dispute be invited to participate in UN Security Council discussions. Tsarapkin requested that, "since the substantive discussion of the question . . . has already begun, the Guatemalan representative should be invited to come to the Council table." The council's president noted that "it is not customary to invite non-members of the Security Council to come to the table until after the agenda has been adopted." Tsarapkin then assumed a belligerent tone, chastising the president for referring to him as a "gentleman" and insisting that he be addressed as the "representative of the Soviet Union." He openly challenged the president's ruling and demanded that the council not "be prevented from dealing with the Guatemalan question by a procedural ruse." He then cautioned that if the president of the SC "refuses to invite the victim of aggression to participate in the discussion of this question, he will be violating [Article 32]." The matter was put to a vote, with all SC members except Tsarapkin voting in favor of the president's ruling. Denouncing the U.S. "machinations . . . aimed at removing the question from the agenda," Tsarapkin warned that "failure to include this question in the agenda will serve the aggressor's purpose."[81] He was thus serving notice that the refusal to adopt the agenda would constitute clear evidence that the SC was a mere tool in the hands of the American imperialists.

Lebanon, Denmark, and New Zealand ultimately joined the USSR in voting to adopt the agenda, with the United States, Turkey, Brazil, Colombia, and China voting against, and Britain and France abstaining. By the time the IAPC fact-finding committee arrived in Guatemala to investigate, Árbenz had resigned his post and fled the country. The episode provoked UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold's comment that "a policy giving full scope to the proper role of regional agencies can and should at the same time fully preserve the right of a Member nation to a hearing under the Charter."[82] The episode also prompted Hammarskjold to draft a memorandum concerning the proper relationship between the UN and regional organizations. He argued that "regional action within the framework of the Charter is a *complement* of universal action."[83]

The UN was just one venue for the post-coup propaganda battle in which each combatant sought to portray the other as evil and imperialistic. The CIA

81. Ibid., pp. 6–10, 27.

82. Introduction to the "Ninth Annual Report," in UN ARMS, Series S-1078, Box 58, File 11.

83. Memorandum by the Secretary-General, 30 June 1954,in UN ARMS, Series S-1078, Box 58, File 11; emphasis added. See also Peter B. Heller, *The United Nations Under Dag Hammarskjold, 1953–1961* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2001), pp. 70–72.

was well aware of the need to deflect Communist claims that U.S. policies were merely a smokescreen for economic imperialism. Defining imperialism as "the use of government power for the exploitation of foreign territories and people," CIA psychological warfare specialist Tracy Barnes recommended a series of statements emphasizing that Soviet imperialism was "the only imperialism operating today." Barnes also suggested stark depictions of Soviet "economic exploitation" of occupied territories and "atrocities committed by Soviet troops" in annexed areas.[84]

With Latin American leftists popularizing the view that the U.S.-sponsored invasion of Guatemala was specifically designed to halt and reverse agrarian reforms, the CIA recommended that the U.S. delegate to the UN Security Council make absolutely clear that the United States favored agrarian reforms in underdeveloped countries and was "exclusively concerned with safeguarding Western Hemisphere against Communist conspiracy."[85] To prove the existence of such a conspiracy, USIA circulated an unattributed piece citing evidence that "top-flight agents of the Kremlin are guiding all acts both in the field and on the diplomatic front" in Guatemala. Among the evidence presented was Tsarapkin's veto of the transfer to the OAS of Guatemala's complaint.[86]

USIA emphasized the UN's usurpation of the proper jurisdiction of the OAS: Article 52 of the UN Charter specifically recognizes the authority of regional organizations.[87] USIA recommended heavy circulation of an OAS resolution signed by ten members indicating that "member OAS states are in exactly same frame of mind as US Senate" and should be interpreted as a Soviet failure to "pin rebellion of Guatemalans on US as act of aggression." The Soviet veto on the transfer of the matter to the OAS, however, "revealed mailed fist under glove manipulating Guatemalan affairs" and "rallied peoples of Western Hemisphere to repulse most sinister imperialism and most overt intervention in Western Hemisphere in recorded history."[88]

Meanwhile, the WFTU and CTAL stepped up their activities in Latin America, keeping the CPSU apprised of the growing potential for revolutionary change in the region. The WFTU and CTAL sharply criticized the

84. Dispatch from Operation PBSUCCESS headquarters in Florida to PBSUCCESS headquarters, CIA, 4 June 1954, in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Guatemala, pp. 310–311.

85. Telegram from Operation PBSUCCESS headquarters in Florida to CIA, 24 June 1954, in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Guatemala, p. 378.

86. Circular Telegram from USIA to Certain Posts, 25 June 1954, in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Guatemala, Vol. IV, p. 383.

87. Schlesinger, *Act of Creation,* pp. 66, 180, 183.

88. Telegram from USIA to Certain Posts, 26 June 1954, in *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Guatemala, p. 385.

United States and the "Yankee monopolies" that dominated the economies of the Western Hemisphere, branding the "North American imperialists" as their main enemy, exhorting workers to struggle for economic justice, and touting the "international solidarity" that had strengthened as a result of the "bloody terror" in Guatemala.[89] The strikes that rocked Honduras were "a clear indicator" of the "militant spirit" of Central America's plantation workers.[90] Characterizing Honduras as a colony of the United States, one CTAL affiliate boasted that the general strike of United Fruit workers had "shaken the foundations of domestic and international reactionary forces."[91] The U.S. invasion of Guatemala had "clarified" the situation of laborers throughout the region and definitively revealed United Fruit as the common enemy.[92] Amid vows to "remain faithful to the slogan of proletarian internationalism," the delegate promised to lead the workers of Honduras along the path "dictated to us by CTAL and WFTU—the sole organizations expressing the . . . genuine interests of the world's workers."[93]

In July, CTAL issued a manifesto condemning Castillo Armas and the "North American imperialists." Calling on the workers of the world to save the "Guatemalan patriots" from oppression, the manifesto named "imperialism" as the main enemy of the Guatemalan people. Washington had acted against Árbenz not only because his agrarian program had threatened United Fruit's monopoly status but because the success of the Guatemalan revolution had inspired "the Latin American masses" to demand similar reforms. The Yankee imperialists, "thirsty for maximum profits," would use any means necessary, including "blood and fire," to exploit Latin America's land and people. The manifesto expressed certainty that the workers of the world would support the demands of the Guatemalan people and facilitate a victory in the struggle against U.S. monopolists, whose actions in Guatemala had revealed the "criminal essence" of the U.S. policy of "world domination."[94]

89. "Doklad, predstavlennyj rasshirennomu zasedaniyu central'nogo komiteta Konfederacii trudyashchikhsya Latinskoi Ameriki s 19 do 23 iyulya 1954 g.," 23 July 1954, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 253, Ll. 223, 226.

90. Ibid., L. 218.

91. "Doklad oficial'nogo delegata dvizheniya 'Lyuchcha Obrera' o polozhenii v Gondurase na sessii tsentral'nogo Komiteta Konfederacii Trudyashchikhsya Latinskoi Ameriki, iyul' 1954 g.," July 1954, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 194, Ll. 228–229.

92. Ibid., L. 250.

93. Ibid., L. 255.

94. "Konfederatsiya trudyashchikhsya Latinskoi Ameriki, postupilo 7.1Kh-1954 g.: Manifest," 1954, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 253, Ll. 253–254, 256–257, 263.

Latin American Communist parties joined WFTU and CTAL in condemning the imperialist intervention, expressing solidarity with the Guatemalan people, and calling for greater unity of purpose and action among the parties of the region. At the Twelfth Congress of the Mexican Communist party in September 1954, General Secretary Dionysio Encina called for "working class unity" in the "struggle for Mexico's national sovereignty" against "American imperialism." He also lauded the party for its "leading role" in "expressing solidarity with the people of Guatemala."[95] In December 1954, the first secretary of the Soviet embassy in Mexico met with one of Venezuela's leading Communists, Eduardo Machado, who emphasized that "the general direction of U.S. policy consists of the further subordination of the Latin American countries to the interests of the U.S. monopolies."[96]

Senior PGT officials, in conversations with Soviet diplomats at the Mexican embassy and messages sent to the CPSU Central Committee, adopted a self-critical tone and acknowledged the grave errors they had made during the invasion. Alfredo Guerra Borges admitted that the biggest mistake was in not arming the peasantry. But he was glad that Toriello, Árbenz's foreign minister, had become more stridently anti-American since the fall of the regime. Apparently Toriello was convinced that the Democratic Party in the United States "does not adhere to an imperialist policy" and that the intervention "would not have occurred" had the Democrats occupied the White House.[97] The PGT leaders sent a note to Khrushchev in which, "in the spirit of self-criticism," they acknowledged the primary lesson they had learned from the Guatemalan experience: "only the consistent, continual, and universal application of Marxist-Leninist teachings guarantees the correct leadership of the revolutionary struggle to achieve success."[98]

In the period following Árbenz's resignation, the Soviet diplomatic and press corps in Latin America, partly in response to the initiatives of Latin American Communists, began pushing for the improvement of Soviet propaganda capabilities in the region. The paucity of good translators, media outlets, and contacts on the ground in these countries were cited as the major

95. "XII s"ezd kommunisticheskoi partii Meksiki / 20–25 sentyabrya 1954 g.," 19 October 1954, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 194, Ll. 266–267.

96. "Beseda s chlenom CK kompartii Venesuely Jeduardo Mochado, 7 dekabrya 1954," 7 December 1954, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 321, L. 13.

97. "Beseda s predstavitelem TsK Gvatemal'skoi partii truda v Meksike Gerra Borgesom, 29 iyunya 1955 g.," 29 June 1955, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 321, L. 82.

98. "Pis'mo ot Hose Luis Ramos, Mario Sil'va Honama, Alfredo Gerra Borhes, sekretar' CK, 22 oktyabrya 1955 g.," 22 October 1955, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 321, Ll. 131–132.

obstacles to improving the quality and quantity of Soviet propaganda. As early as January 1954, the Soviet officials noted "almost a complete absence of correspondents in the countries of South America."[99] Then, in the fall, the CPSU Agitation and Propaganda Department formally reevaluated its propaganda capabilities in the Western Hemisphere. The Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS), which collected and distributed all official news, embarked on a concerted effort to bolster its information-gathering and dissemination facilities in Latin America. Orlando Millas, editor of *El siglo*, the official newspaper of the Chilean Communist party, helped spur this initiative with his direct request for TASS to expedite and expand translations into Spanish of newsworthy developments in the Soviet bloc. Millas complained that because U.S. information distribution outlets were so much more effective, the majority of Latin Americans learned about the Soviet Union and its allies from news media that reflected the anti-Communist and anti-Soviet biases of the United States. Although Millas's letter was directed to CPSU bodies, it was quickly passed onto the head of TASS, who adopted Millas's recommendations and developed a series of measures to improve the agency's work in Latin America.[100]

Sovinformbyuro (the Soviet Information Bureau), which was responsible for developing and disseminating propaganda in foreign countries, also emphasized the necessity of enhancing its capabilities in Latin America. Sovinformbyuro representatives in Argentina, who began work there in the beginning of September 1954, relayed to the CPSU Agitation and Propaganda Department the wide scope of the "North American propaganda apparatus" and proposed a convention of Sovinformbyuro leaders in Latin America to develop methods for increasing the quantity and veracity of information about the USSR in the "bourgeois press" in Mexico, Uruguay, and Argentina.[101] The establishment of a more robust presence in Latin America meant that TASS and Sovinformbyuro could also track the rise of anti-American sentiment in the region. Sovinformbyuro noted the hostility of Uruguay's neo-Batllists toward U.S. economic policies and the intervention in Guatemala. This opposition was especially significant considering the previously strong pro-U.S. tendencies of President Luis Batlle Berres of Uruguay, who earlier had refused to establish

99. "Tovarishchu Shatalinu, N.N., 9 yanvarya 1954 g.," 9 January 1954, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 16, D. 600.

100. "Pis'mo ot Orlando Milasa, 11 noyabrya 1954 g." 11 November 1954, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 193, Ll. 202–203.

101. "Otchet predstavitel'stva Sovinformbyuro v Argentine za sentyabr'—dekabr' 1954 g.," December 1954, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 193, Ll. 212–213 and 219–221.

diplomatic relations with the USSR. In the 1955 electoral campaign, however, the neo-Batllists condemned U.S. foreign policy and pushed for trade relations with the USSR and other Soviet-bloc countries.[102]

In January 1956, Soviet Foreign Ministry analysts prepared a report for the CPSU International Department about "the U.S. economic and political enslavement of the countries of Latin America." According to the report, the United States was intent on bolstering its "hegemonic position" in the Western Hemisphere and would therefore continue to "take all measures" to keep the countries of Latin America in a state of "financial and economic dependence." This was to be achieved through "onerous" terms of credits and loans and "so-called 'technical assistance'" provided through the U.S. Export-Import Bank. The state of Latin American economic dependence on the United States allowed the U.S. "ruling elite" to "exert aggressive pressure" if any of these countries showed signs of wanting to "embark upon the path of independent development."[103]

The United States, the Foreign Ministry report asserted, also used the subservient economic position of the Latin American countries to foist its militaristic pacts and designs on the region. U.S. "politico-military expansion" proceeded under the auspices of the OAS and the Inter-American Defense Board, which had been created at the 1942 Rio de Janeiro conference as the "basic military authority" of the OAS, and through which the United States sought to "implement its military designs" in Latin America. Slogans such as "the defense of the Western Hemisphere" and "pan-Americanism" functioned as a pretext for the "subjugation of the economic and military resources of Latin America to U.S. politico-military designs." The hemispheric defense treaty signed at the 1947 Rio Conference was based on an expansive view of "armed aggression," under which U.S. "ruling circles" implicated national liberation movements that threatened the "hegemonic imperialism" of the United States. The adoption of the anti-Communist resolution at the Caracas conference in March 1954 had provided the Yankee imperialists with a "legal justification" for "any form of intervention" in "the internal affairs of Latin American countries." Using the "struggle against Communism" as a smokescreen, the United States had overthrown Árbenz, who had been a firm "advocate of

102. "Otchet za 1954 god ob izdanii zhurnala 'SSSR'—kratkaya politicheskaya obstanovka v Urugvae, 8 marta 1955 g.," 8 March 1955, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 193, Ll. 223–225.

103. "O faktah ekonomicheskogo i politicheskogo zakabaleniya stran Latinskoi Ameriki Soedinennymi Shtatami, podgotovlennyi Komitetom informatsii pri MID SSSR, 7 yanvarya 1956 g.," in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 439, Ll. 1–2, 4–6.

national independence." The goal of the U.S. intervention was not just to overthrow Árbenz but to replace him with a "fascist military dictatorship" and to "liquidate all democratic reforms" in the country.[104]

A mere week after the Foreign Ministry's report on the U.S. economic and political "enslavement" of Latin America was circulated in the CPSU International Department, Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Bulganin announced the launch of a Soviet economic offensive.[105] Declaring that the Soviet Union wanted to establish trade relations with the countries of Latin America "on the basis of mutual advantage," Bulganin adumbrated a foreign policy shift that would be institutionalized at the CPSU's Twentieth Congress in February 1956.[106] This shift involved the expansion of trade relations with both capitalist and decolonizing countries and, in the Latin American context, envisioned economic independence from the United States as a prerequisite for political independence. Two prominent scholars of Soviet foreign policy later observed "Khrushchev's confident assertion that aid from the socialist bloc could allow the Third World countries to break away from the imperialist economic grip and launch their plans for . . . truly independent national economies."[107]

Bulganin in his report to the Twentieth Party Congress triumphantly declared that although "the United States . . . practiced discriminatory measures designed to restrict, and even stop trade with the Soviet Union," trade with capitalist countries, "far from diminishing, substantially increased." Bulganin reported that the total value of foreign trade in 1955 "was nearly double that of 1950." "Of special significance," he emphasized, was "the fact that we are witnessing the disintegration of the colonial system of imperialism."[108] Although Moscow's power-projection capabilities were not sufficient for its Third World ambitions until the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Twentieth Party Congress "signified the advent of the globalization of the Kremlin's outlook."[109]

104. Ibid., L. 7–9, 15.

105. See Bevan Sewall, "A Perfect (Free-Market) World? Economics, the Eisenhower Administration, and the Soviet Economic Offensive in Latin America," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 32, No. 5 (September 2008), pp. 841–868.

106. Bulganin, quoted in ibid., p. 841.

107. Nogee and Donaldson, Soviet Foreign Policy since World War II, p. 166.

108. *Report by N.A. Bulganin to the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on the Directives of the Sixth Five-Year Plan*, Soviet News Booklet No. 5 (Moscow: Novosti, March 1956), pp. 8, 12.

109. Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Moscow's Third World Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 24.

U.S. Policy in the Post-Coup Period

The most pressing concern for the United States in the immediate post-coup period was to ensure the continued viability of the OAS. Having successfully parried Soviet efforts to force the Guatemala issue onto the agenda of the UN Security Council, Dulles sought to keep the peace in the hemisphere, anxious that any further disorder would lead "usually cooperative states" to side with Soviet arguments that the OAS was incapable of "maintaining order in the hemisphere."[110] A "return to normalcy" was essential to maintaining the viability of the inter-American system, which had been thrown into doubt when the closest allies of the United States, including the United Kingdom, had come perilously close to joining the Soviet Union in pressing for UN jurisdiction over the investigation of Guatemala's complaint. The crisis had been narrowly averted by U.S. diplomatic intervention, as a result of which British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden told the UK delegate to the UN to abstain from voting on the matter. If, however, tensions in Central America did not subside, U.S. allies might revert to their previous position, thereby "damaging the prestige of the United States and weakening the OAS."[111]

A National Intelligence Estimate prepared in August 1954 acknowledged that social and political reform was much more important to the Caribbean republics than the Communist issue but that the United States had to tread carefully for fear of alienating the Caribbean "strong men." Communist propaganda, the estimate continued, sought to identify U.S. support for regional dictators as the primary obstacle to "social and political progress" in Central America.[112] U.S. officials realized the only way to neutralize such propaganda was to associate the United States "with the aspirations of the peoples of Latin America."[113]

However, not until the final years of the Eisenhower administration did U.S. policy toward Latin America begin to change. By that point, evidence had already emerged that Latin American public opinion was hardening against the

110. Secretary of State Dulles to the U.S. Embassy in Venezuela, 10 July 1954, in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IV, p. 373.

111. Memorandum of Conversation between Secretary of State, Ambassador Thomas Whelan, and Assistant Secretary Henry F. Holland, Subject: United States Policy Toward Central American Countries, 18 August 1954, in National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group (RG) 59, Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Office of the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Country Files, 1953–1956, Colombia to Guatemala, Box 4, Entry A1 1132.

112. National Intelligence Estimate 80/54, "The Caribbean Republics," 24 August 1954, in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IV, p. 381.

113. Progress Report by the Operations Coordinating Board to the National Security Council, 19 January 1955, in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IV, p. 90.

United States.[114] Nixon's trip to South America, during which he was nearly lynched, was a dramatic sign that some sectors in the region had become radicalized.[115] That Nixon faced the most virulent anti-U.S. demonstrations in Caracas, the site of the conference at which Dulles had laid the foundations for the invasion of Guatemala, was no small coincidence. The ouster of Árbenz had unleashed a torrent of hostility toward the United States and brightened the prospects of regional pro-Communist politicians. Salvador Allende was one such beneficiary of the anti-U.S. backlash.[116] When visiting Moscow in July 1954, Allende declared that as president of the Popular Action Front he considered the restoration of diplomatic relations between Chile and the Soviet Union to be one of his "main tasks."[117] A report prepared for the CPSU International Department indicated that the Communist members of the Chilean delegation believed the visit to the USSR would "play a major positive role in the evolution of Allende's personal political views as well as in the activities of the Popular Front."[118]

Despite clear indications of Latin American dissatisfaction with the United States, U.S. officials positively assessed regional developments in the wake of the coup. The Operations Coordinating Board (OCB) noted that Latin American governments seemed more convinced of the threat posed by international Communism and that several regimes had "stepped up their efforts to control communist activity." Even Mexico, a stolid supporter of the Árbenz government, had shown a "new awareness of the dangers of communism." The Soviet economic offensive in Latin America, moreover, was not an overly worrisome development. OCB argued that the Soviet Union used trade missions as a Trojan horse for subversive activity and a prelude to establishing diplomatic relations, but the board acknowledged that not a single Latin American country had reestablished diplomatic relations with the USSR and that Latin American leaders were more interested in using "the threat of possible increased trade with the Soviet bloc as a bargaining point" in negotiating trade relations with the West.[119]

114. On changes in U.S. policy, see Siekmeier, *Aid, Nationalism, and Inter-American Relations*, pp. 293–324.

115. See Alan McPherson, *Yankee No! Anti-Americanism in U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 9–37.

116. Hove, "The Arbenz Factor," pp. 623–663.

117. "Zapis' besedy s vitse-predsedatelem chiliiskogo senata Sal'vadorom Al'ende, 17 iyulya 1954 g.," 17 July 1954, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 193, L. 146.

118. "Informatsiya o rabote s delegatsiej obshchestvennykh i kul'turnyh deyatelei Chili, nakhodivshikhsya v SSSR s 11.7.1954 po 8.8.54 po priglasheniyu VOKS," August 1954, in RGANI, F. 5, Op. 28, D. 251, L. 181.

Two years after the fall of Árbenz, the U.S. ambassador to Guatemala, Edward J. Sparks, considered the coup a propaganda victory. Assuming that the "publicity" that had surrounded the rout of the Communists in Guatemala "must be a constant source of irritation to the Soviets," Sparks thought it "reasonable to believe that International Communism will be continually considering alternatives for cancelling out this loss to their general prestige."[120] Whether this assertion represented willful self-deception or a sincerity born of naïveté, Sparks's positive evaluation reveals an unwillingness in certain quarters of the Eisenhower administration to come to terms with the stunning propaganda defeat that had accompanied the short-lived triumph of Castillo Armas.

This propaganda setback was the result of a U.S. response to Árbenz that was disproportionate to the threat posed by his government. No danger of a Soviet military presence in Guatemala ever existed, yet the United States implemented a covert operation to dislodge Árbenz through force. The U.S. intervention ultimately lent credence to what the Communists had been saying all along. The regional backlash against the intervention in Guatemala and the overthrow of Árbenz revealed the force of anti-U.S. nationalism in Latin America during a period in which Soviet leaders were reevaluating the parameters of the Cold War. This reevaluation entailed a closer look at Latin America and a dawning realization of the UN's utility as a forum in which to challenge the position of the United States within its own sphere of influence. Communist trade confederations and Soviet diplomatic personnel were ahead of the curve in anticipating the significance of the Third World. They sensed that the rise of the Third World would affect the international balance of power, or in the Soviet version of the concept, "correlation of forces" (*sootnoshenie sil*), and they urged a corresponding shift of focus in Soviet foreign policy. As early as 1949, six years prior to the CPSU's Twentieth Congress, WFTU and CTAL had already highlighted the Third World as the upcoming venue of an epic battle for the hearts and minds of the world's workers.

U.S. insensitivity to the economic concerns of Latin American countries proved to be a boon to Soviet officials, whose propaganda sought to aggravate and exploit anti-U.S. sentiment in the hemisphere. Although USIA attempted to counter Communist propaganda by pointing to the harsh realities of Soviet

119. Progress Report by the Operations Coordinating Board to the National Security Council, 19 January 1955, in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IV, pp. 97–99.

120. Edward J. Sparks, U.S. ambassador to Guatemala, to Henry F. Holland, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, 18 April 1956, in NARA, RG 59, Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Office of the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Country Files, 1953–1956, Colombia to Guatemala, Box 4, Entry A1 1132.

imperial domination, Latin America was unaffected by those realities. Even Daniel James, whose alarmist account of Communism in Guatemala reinforced the Eisenhower administration's threat perceptions, acknowledged that the efficacy of Communist propaganda stemmed largely from the underlying socioeconomic and political conditions prevailing in Central America. He noted the fundamental difference between U.S. and Guatemalan perceptions of Communism:

To a North American, a Communist is someone who has been convicted of atomic espionage, who has killed GIs in Korea, who preaches the overthrow of U.S. democracy. To a Guatemalan nationalist, a Communist was a person who supported the October Revolution, who fought the big landowners and reactionaries, who wanted the worker to earn more wages and the peasant to get some land.[121]

By the time the Eisenhower administration took steps to address the main economic concerns of Latin American countries, a new generation of radicals in the region was coming of age and preparing to inaugurate what became a turbulent new cycle of revolution and counterrevolution.

121. Daniel James, *Red Design for the Americas: Guatemalan Prelude* (New York: John Day Company, 1954), p. 94.