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The non-recognition of El Salvador: the failure of a policy

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THE NON-RECOGNITION OF EL SALVADOR: THE FAILURE OF A POLICY.

by

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PREFACE

In an address before the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City on February 6, 1931, Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson announced: "The present administration has declined to follow the policy of Mr. Wilson and has followed consistently the former practice of this government since the days of Jefferson." The thrust of Stimson's speech was that the United States was no longer bound to the policy that a successful revolutionary regime could not be recognized until a constitutional reorganization of the country had taken place. The Wilsonian policy had demanded too much in the way of American suasion and/or force to maintain its legitimist position.

There was, however, one important qualification in Stimson's speech. In the five Central American nations treaties had been ratified which precluded the

member nations from recognizing any government spawned by revolution. In 1907 and again in 1923 the Central American republics agreed to deny recognition to revolutionary governments, and the United States although not a signatory to these treaties pledged to govern its recognition policy in the area in accord with their treaties. The United States was put in the position of having two recognition policies simultaneously operative in Latin America, one based on the Jeffersonian principle of prompt, de jure recognition of governments in undisputed control of their countries and disposed to carrying out their international obligations and the second predicated on a proviso of a Central American treaty.

Less than ten months later a revolution in El Salvador brought about the fall of its constitutionally elected President. The new Government headed by Maximiliano Hernández Martínez was able to withstand United States non-recognition; it tested and ultimately broke down the Department of State's policy in Central America. It is the de facto Salvadorean Government's struggle for de jure status from 1931 until recognition

was extended in 1934 that forms the focus of this study.

I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to several people who have greatly assisted me in the preparation of this thesis. My good friend and advisor, Dr. Richard Millett, has guided this work from the beginning. Without his advice, encouragement, and assistance this paper would never have been written. My deep appreciation is also extended to Professors Samuel Paarson and Stuart Weiss for their aid as readers and critics. Lastly, I would like to thank my wife for going the "second mile" in typing numerous drafts and proof-reading.

Martin Schmitz

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> La libertad, Sancho, es uno
> de los más preciosos dones que
> a los hombres dieron los cielos;
> con ella no pueden igualarse
> los tesoros que encierra la
> tierra, ni el mar encumbre.
> Por la libertad, así como por
> la honra, se puede y debe
> aventurar la vida.[1]
>
> --Cervantes

I. BACKGROUND

Smallest of the nations of the Americas, El Salvador lies facing the Pacific--the only Central American nation without an Atlantic coast. She has a seacoast of 160 miles and shares boundaries with Guatemala on the west and northwest and Honduras on the north and east. El Salvador's 8,260 square miles lie entirely within the tropics. Mountain ranges running east to west divide the country into three distinct areas. Most of the land is of volcanic origin and all arable land (approximately twenty-seven per cent) is under meticulous cultivation.[2]

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[1]Quoted by Germán Arciniegas, in Entre La Libertad y el Miedo (6th ed.; Santiago de Chile: Editorial del Pacifico, 1955), p. 21.

[2]Hubert Herring, A History of Latin America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), p. 830.

Despite its location only fourteen degrees north of the Equator, the tropical heat is mitigated by the high elevation, and only the coastal plains suffer from the expected high temperature and humidity. With its many mountains and fertile soil plus the favorable climate, the country is perfect for coffee growing; consequently coffee is the number one crop and export commodity.[3] Other agricultural products are corn (the basic domestic crop), rice, beans, millet, wheat, indigo, henequen, and sugar. Throughout the country the finca and hacienda economy dominates.[4]

El Salvador's population was second only to Guatemala in Central America. In 1930 its 1,434,361 people were crammed in at the rate of 125 per square mile and were increasing at the rate of three per cent

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[3]Coffee represented approximately ninety per cent of El Salvador's exports in the late 1920's (see Chief of Latin American Division, Edwin Wilson to Secretary Francis B. White, June 11, 1932. Records of the Department of State, National Archives, Record Group 59, decimal file 816.00/877. Henceforth all references to United States Department of State papers from the National Archives will be cited as "D.S")

[4]Richard N. Adams, Cultural Surveys of Panama, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras (Washington: Pan American Sanitary Bureau, 1957), p. 428.

annually.[5] Ninety percent of the people were mestizos, with relatively very few whites or Indians.[6]

The vast majority of the country's area and wealth was controlled by fourteen families. These white aristocrats perpetuated an institutionalized paternalism in their relations with the mestizos and Indians. Other than this paternalism there was a distinct lack of social interaction between the rich and the poor. United States Ambassador Jefferson Caffery noticed no progress toward social justice during his short stay there at the end of 1931; in his words, "There was no such thing as social consciousness or reform feeling among the rich."[7] The lives of the wealthy revolved around their country clubs and possessions, and they knew little about and cared less for the existence of the lower class.[8] Both Ambassador Caffery and his

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[5]Edwin Lieuwen, Generals vs Presidents (New York: Frederich A. Praeger, 1964), p. 92.

[6]Adams, El Salvador, p. 428.

[7]Telephone interview with Ambassador Jefferson Caffery, Lafayette, Louisiana, June 12, 1968.

[8]Telephone interview with Dr. H. Freeman Matthews, Washington, D.C., June 12, 1968.

assistant, Dr. H. Freeman Matthews of the Department of State, noted the large number of expensive cars around the Capital, San Salvador, giving a false sense of national prosperity.[9]

The extremes of poverty and wealth, the gap between the haves and have-nots was a prime factor in the creation of a highly volatile social atmosphere in the early 1930's. Peasant life for some 250,000 families centered on their attempts to eke out a livelihood as tenants on the large estates or on their own meager holdings.[10] Most peasants had no land of their own. Their livelihood was derived from their work as wage laborers on the coffee, sugar, or henequen plantations owned by the small group who dominated the nation's economic life. In the 1930's, the middle class or industrial working class was so small as to be almost non-existent. This incipient group worked mainly in small factories, offices, and as minor bureaucrats.

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Lieuwen, Generals vs Presidents, p. 92.

The aristocracy, army, and the Roman Catholic Church constituted the only real power blocs. The higher offices of both the Church and army have historically been the domain of the sons of wealthy land owners. The Church not only sided with the aristocracy, but provided it with protection by defending the social status quo as the divinely ordained way of life.[11] In the early 1930's the Church declared itself the enemy of all those who would change the social order. Archbishop Dr. José Alfonso Belloso y Sánchez unequivocally declared his opposition to all those who favored Socialism, Communism, or for that matter, any sort of liberal reform.[12]

From 1880 to 1931 the political scene in El Salvador had been relatively calm. During this period no revolutionary scheme had succeeded, and the

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[11]For an insight into the social thinking of Salvadorean high churchmen during the late 1920's and 1930's (see Ramon Lopez Jiménez, Mitras Salvadoreñas (San Salvador: Ministerio de Cultura Departamento Editorial, 1960). pp. 141ff.

[12]Ibid. Archbishop Belloso y Sánchez was the second Salvadorean to hold this high ecclesiastical office. As an Aristocrat he clearly saw the dangers to the traditional order from those who cried for social change. In his chapter on the Archbishop, Ramon Lopez Jiménez presents a good understanding of his arguments against social or economic change.

Executive office changed back and forth between the dominant families.[13] One of the most powerful, the Meléndez-Quinónez family, controlled the office of President from 1913 to 1927 with four successive presidents coming from this one family.[14] In 1927, Pio Romero Bosque became Salvador's first liberal President. At the end of his term he removed himself from further presidential aspirations because the Salvadorean Constitution prohibits a President from succeeding himself and impartially supervised what was to be the country's first truly free election. His successor, Arturo Araujo, identified with the lower class and promised unprecedented reforms in the face of traditionalist opposition and a budget deficit.

Since 1925 Communists had been infiltrating the country trying to exploit social imbalance and discover a way to ignite the volatile Salvadorean situation. Major A. R. Harris, the American Military Attaché to the Legation in San Salvador, sent this

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[13]Charles Gray Bream, "American Intervention short of Armed Force in Latin America" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1941), p. 185.

[14]Lilly de Johgh Osborne, Four Keys to El Salvador (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1956), p. 58.

cryptic report to the Department of State just one month before the bloody peasant revolt in January 1932:

> There is practically no middle class between the very rich and the very poor. 90% of the wealth of the nation is held by about ½ of 1% of the population. Thirty or forty families own nearly everything in the country. They live in almost regal style with many attendants, send their children to Europe or to the United States to be educated, and spend money lavishly (on themselves). The rest of the population has practically nothing. These poor people work for a few cents a day and exist as best they can.
>
> I imagine the situation in El Salvador today is very much like France was before its revolution, Russia was before its revolution, and like Mexico was before its revolution. The situation is ripe for communism and the communists seem to have found that out. On the first of December 1931, there was in the Post Office in San Salvador over 3,000 pounds of communistic literature emanating from New York City, which had been confiscated by the Postal authorities during the previous month.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The real danger of the situation is the fact that unscrupulous politicans for their own advacement will probably stir up the people against the present system. They are aided in this to a large extent by the reactionary ideas of practically all the large landowners, who do not want to let any of their land go, so that a middle class will be developed. Their arguments usually come down to this; "If we sell our land to these mozos we will have nobody to pick our coffee for us. The best thing for everybody is to keep things as they are.
>
> . . . . . .

> A socialistic or communistic revolution in El Salvador may be delayed for several years, ten or even twenty, but when it comes it will be a bloody one.[15]

The impoverished peasants, however, could not wait ten or twenty years for an amelioration of their plight. They needed and wanted immediate and meaningful change and were soon willing to die attempting to make their hopes a reality.

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[15]Major A. R. Harris, Military Attaché in San Salvador, to Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson, January 22, 1931, D.S. 816.00/828.

> We cannot deny . . . that every nation has a right to govern itself internally under what forms it pleases, and to change these forms at its own will . . .[1]
>
> --Thomas Jefferson

II. THE 1923 TREATY: ITS BACKGROUND AND EARLY USAGE

Threatened uprisings and actual revolutions, however, are seldom of importance only in the country where they originate. When such conflicts result in a change of government other nations are faced with the serious decision of how they are to carry out relations vis-à-vis the new regime. From the inception of Latin American independence, revolution, as a vehicle for governmental change, has had frequent use. Central America in particular has been especially prone to violent changes of administration. Because of their geographical proximity revolutions in the five Central American republics have been of particular concern to the United States, which since the construction of the Panama canal had prevented the survival of revolutionary regimes deemed a threat to stability.

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[1]Quoted by Thomas A. Bailey in A Diplomatic History of the American People (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1964), p. 84.

The numerous internecine and international conflicts marring the history of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Central American republics, prompted these governments to establish a treaty by which they could guide their future political interaction. A conference of the Central American countries was held in Washington in December, 1907, under the aegis of the United States and Mexico, whose vital interests would also benefit by Central American stability. During this Conference various agreements were entered requiring the Central American Governments and those of the United States and Mexico to refuse recognition to a Central American Government coming into existence through violent or illegal means.

The document resulting from this Conference was the General Treaty of Peace and Amity, signed December 20, 1907, and the Supplemental Treaty of the same date. Both of these Treaties were ratified by the five Central American countries.

Difficulties arising from the failure to form a Central American Federation and the continued fear that a war might be precipitated caused the presidents of Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador to call for a second

peace Conference in 1922. Confusion over the 1907 Treaty made a reaffirmation of this document necessary if its provisions were to have any real meaning in the area.

In response to this need the United States extended an invitation to the five Central American countries to meet in Washington for a conference on Central American Affairs. This Conference met from December 4, 1922, to February 7, 1923, and during this period various treaties were consummated. The major treaty produced by the Conference became known as the General Treaty of Peace and Amity of the Central American States (signed February 7, 1923).[2] The section of the Treaty concerning non-recognition of revolutionary governments (i.e. Article II) became the most controversial. It states:

> The governments of the contracting parties will not recognize any other government which may come into power in any of the five republics through a coup d' état or a revolution against a recognized government, so long as the freely elected representatives of the people thereof have not constitutionally reorganized the country. And even in such a case they obligate themselves not to acknowledge the recognition if any of the persons elected as President, Vice-President or Chief of State designate should fall under any of the following heads:

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[2]For the text of this Treaty see: Conference on Central American Affairs (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1923), p. 6.

> (1) If he should be the leader or one of the leaders of a coup d' état or revolution, or through blood relationship or marriage, be an ascendant or descendant or brother of such leader or leaders.
>
> (2) If he should have been a Secretary of State or should have held some high military command during the accomplishment of the coup d' état, the revolution, or while the election was being carried on, or if he should have held this office or command within the six months preceding the coup d' état, revolution or the election.[3]

Furthermore, in no case would recognition be accorded to a government which arises from election to power of a citizen expressly and unquestionably disqualified by the Constitution of his country as eligible to election as President, Vice President or Chief of State designate.

This doctrine of non-recognition originated in a note of March 15, 1907, by Dr. Tobar, Ecuadorian Minister of Foreign Relations. He wrote: "Intervention might consist at least in the non-recognition of de facto governments sprung from revolutions against the constitution."[4] Dr. Tobar's doctrine was incorporated into the

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[3]Manley O. Hudson, ed., International Legislation, Vol. II (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1931), p. 6.

[4]Lawrence H. Woolsey, "The Recognition of the Government of El Salvador," The American Journal of International Law, XXVIII (April, 1934) 327.

Treaty of 1907, the precursor of the Treaty of 1923, as follows:

> The Governments of the high contracting parties shall not recognize any other government which may come into power in any of the five Republics as a consequence of a coup d' état, or of a revolution against the recognized government, so long as the freely elected representatives of the people thereof have not constitutionally reorganized the country.[5]

At the Washington Conference this doctrine was expanded into the form of the above-quoted Article II of the Treaty of 1923.

This article, however, was not welcomed by all concerned. Dr. Dana G. Munro, who drew up the drafts of the Treaty, tried to delete this passage because of its "obvious dangers."[6] But at the insistence of Costa Rica, through Sumner Welles of the Department of State, the provision was reinstated. Welles said that it was their Treaty and that we should go along with it.[7]

The significance of this clause lay in its potential as an alternative to armed intervention by one

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[5]Ibid.

[6]Private interview with Dr. Dana Gardner Munro, Washington, D. C., December 29, 1967.

[7]Ibid.

country to prevent revolution in another.[8] Theoretically, without Central American or United States recognition no one of the five small states could carry on a viable government. Therefore without recognition and de jure status, the efforts of a revolutionary group would accomplish nothing. Owing to the size of the five Central American republics they had to depend on each other and the "Colossus of the North" economically and politically--good relations with the United States being a factor of primary importance.[9] Washington's prime concern was to find ways of cutting back on direct intervention in order to obviate further anti-American propaganda occasioned by our unilaterial interference in the Caribbean and Central America.[10] Because of the proximity of these areas to the Panama canal and to our southern shores, it was impossible for the United States not to interfere in order to protect its national interests. The problem was to find less odious means of doing so.

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[8]Edward O. Guerrant, "The Recognition of El Salvador in 1934," The Historian, VI (Autumn, 1941) 16.

[9]For an excellent discussion of the purposes of Article II, see: Chandler P. Anderson, "The Central American Policy of Non-Recognition," The American Journal of International Law, XIX (January, 1925) 164-166.

[10]Interview with Dr. Munro, December 29, 1967

Soon after the Conference of 1923, Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes announced that the United States would support the provisions of the Treaty even though America was not a signatory.[11] The Harding administration thereby established a recognition policy toward the Central American Republics that paralleled Woodrow Wilson's for all of Latin America,[12] although it deviated drastically from the policy used from 1792 to 1912. No longer would de facto revolutionary governments,--even though popular or Constitutional--be recognized by the United States without first meeting detailed, predetermined conditions. Secretary of State Stimson declared on February 6, 1931 in his speech before the Council of Foreign Relations,

> I think that no impartial student can avoid the conclusion that the treaty and the policy which it has established in that locality has been productive of very great good.
>
> Of course, it is a departure from the regular international practice of our government, and it undoubtedly contains possible difficulties and dangers of application which we in the State Department are the last to minimize and in case of which, should they arise, this government

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[11]Anderson, "The Central American Policy of Non-Recognition," p. 161.

[12]For an explanation of this policy see: "Secretary Stimson's Statement on Our Latin American Policy," Current History, XXXIII (March, 1931) 921.

> must reserve its freedom of action. But the distinction between this departure, which was suggested by the five republics themselves, and in which we have acted at their earnest desire and in cooperation with them, and the departure taken by President Wilson in an attempt to force upon Mexico a policy which she resented, must be apparent to the most thoughtless student.[13]

The only one of the five contracting countries to make any reservations to this Treaty was El Salvador. The Salvadorean Congress made three reservations in its decree of ratification May 26, 1925. Article II, as stated, was not accepted because it was in direct contradiction with the Constitution of El Salvador which guaranteed the right of revolution.[14] The other four countries, however, had already ratified the complete Treaty,[15] and they and the United States never accepted the Salvadorean reservations. This raises the question of whether or not El Salvador was legally a party to the Treaty without the approval of her reservations by the other signatories.

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Raymond Leslie Buell, "Union or Disunion in Central America," Foreign Affairs, IX (April, 1933) 405.

[15] Woolsey, "The Recognition of the Government of El Salvador," 327.

Despite the fact that the Conference which drew up the Treaty met at the invitation of the United States and that the United States participated in the deliberations this country declined to sign the document. Nevertheless, because of participation in the Conference and general approval of the result, the United States felt "morally bound" to the Treaty.[16]

The idea of the United States' "moral support" seems to have been that it could make untenable a new government coming to power through revolution. Curiously this non-recognition served as a justification for counter-revolution against unrecognized, de facto governments. Instead of bringing order and stability to Central America, this policy could prolong disorder and even necessitate more forceful sanctions (i.e. military intervention).[17]

The possibility of revolution in Honduras in June of 1923 precipitated the first use of Article II by the United States. Secretary Hughes, prompted by Francis

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Buell, "Union or Disunion in Central America," p. 486.

White, Chief of Latin American Affairs Division, announced to all concerned that the United States was "in hearty accord" with the policy of non-recognition and that it would stick to this position.[18] The Secretary of State informed the American Minister to Honduras that

> The attitude of the Government of the United States with respect to the recognition of new Governments in the five Central American Republics whose representatives signed at Washington on February 7, 1923, a General Treaty of peace and Amity, to which the United States was not a party, but with the provisions of which it is in the most hearty accord, will be consonant with the provisions of Article II. . . .[19]

Rather than going through an extended period of investigation and evaluation of new governments, the Department of State established a "rule of thumb" to be used to decide on recognition: if an individual or group who had held high positions in the previous government profited (by receiving actively or passively a higher office such as president or vice president) by

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[18]Interview with Dr. Munro, December 29, 1967.

[19]Secretary of State Hughes to Guatemalan Minister Carlos Morales, quoted in Foreign Relations: 1923, Vol. II (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1938), pp. 433-434. For further pertinent diplomatic correspondence see: Secretary Hughes to Commissioner Welles, April 8, 1924, D.S. 815.00/3077A.

the golpe, he could not be recognized.[20] All claims of constitutional rights of succession were useless if one profited directly from the removal of the previous government.

This policy was first used in connection with the unconstitutional continuance in the office of President by Lopez Gutierrez of Honduras in 1924.[21] In 1926, the Department of State used the doctrine to refuse

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[20]Interview with Dr. Munro, December 29, 1967.

[21]Early in 1923 the Department of State began receiving reports that Honduras was on the brink of revolution. According to Dr. Dana Gardner Munro (interview, February 14, 1968) it was Francis B. White, Chief of the Division of Latin American Affairs, who seized upon the idea of using the 1923 Treaty at this time to curb the quarreling factions from a revolutionary takeover. Although Dr. Munro and others in the Department were opposed to this idea the Secretary of State, Charles E. Hughes, followed the prompting of Mr. White and established Washington's "hearty accord" with the Treaty, and in so doing tacitly committed the United States to a Central American recognition policy based on Article II of the 1923 treaty.

On June 30, 1923, Secretary Hughes explained Washington's position to Minister Carlos Morales of Honduras, asking him to communicate this position to all involved (see D.S. 815.00/2609). Although the other Central American Republics were invited to help mediate the Honduran crisis their involvement was precluded by President Gutierrez's acquiescence to the Treaty. Recognition was extended to the new government of President Barahona on January 21, 1925 (see Mr. Hughes to Charge Lawrence Dennis, January 22, 1925, D.S. 815.00/3527).

recognition of the Emilano Chamorro Government in Nicaragua,[22] and again against General Francisco de Orellana,[23] who had overturned the Government of Guatemala in 1930.

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[22]General Emilano Chamorro took control of the Nicaraguan Government on October 25, 1925. He was summarily informed by the American Minister that because of Washington's adherence to the 1923 Treaty it would not recognize Chamorro or any other revolutionary power in Nicaragua. Chamorro, however, felt that he could sustain himself without United States recognition. Deposing President Solorzano and banishing Vice President Sacasa, Chamorro arrogated the Nicaraguan Presidency.

The other farm nations of Central America agreed with Washington that Chamorro was not eligible under their mutual agreement (D.S. 817.00/3384, /3385, /3387, and /3390). Realizing his position was untenable Chamorro stepped aside, depositing the presidency with Adolfo Diaz who was accorded United States recognition concomitant with his inaguration (Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg to Charge Lawrence Dennis, November 11, 1926, D.S. 817.00/4037).

[23]On December 16, 1930, just four days after being appointed as Provisional President, Ricardo Palma was deposed by General Francisco de Orellana. Secretary of State Stimson ordered the American Legation to inform Orellano that he would not be recognized. Once the American Minister made the fact known Orellano allowed Reina Andrade to be elected. Since Andrade was eligible by Treaty and Guatemalan Constitutional standards he was recognized (Stimson to Minister Whitehouse, January 8, 1931, D.S. 814.01/43). The other Central American Republics agreed with the Department of State that the Andrade regime should be recognized (D.S. 814.01/29, /30, /32B, /33, and /35). For an evaluation of the 1923 Treaty's effect on revolutionary attempts see Stimson's address given just ten months before the golpe de estado in El Salvador; "Secretary Stimson's Statement on Our Latin American Policy," pp. 920-922.

In all the above cases the United States sent notes refusing to recognize the revolutionary governments and, in so doing, was able to place the revolutionary leaders in a weakened position.[24] They then capitulated to the wishes of the United States. The last usage of this policy was against the revolutionary government of General Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez of El Salvador.

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[24]Lawrence Dennis, "Revolution, Recognition and Intervention," Foreign Affairs, IX (January, 1932) 208.

KING RICHARD II. We are amaz'd;
and thus long have we stood,
To watch the fearful bending
the knee,
Because we thought ourself thy
lawful king.
And if we be, how dare thy joints
forget
To pay their awful duty to our
presence?
If we be not, show us the hand
of God
That hath dismiss'd us from our
stewardship;
For well we know no hand of
blood and bone
Can grip the sacred handle of
our sceptre,
Unless he do profane, steal, or
usurp.[1]

--Shakespeare

III. ARTURO ARAUJO AND THE GOLPE DE ESTADO[2]

Unlike her Central American neighbors, El Salvador, had been relatively free of political intrigue and revolution. In fact there had not been a successful revolution in the country since 1880. Politics in this small country were the private domain of a few very rich families. The presidency was usually rotated among

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[1]Shakespeare Richard II III.iii.72-81.

[2]A blow against the State. It is essentially the same term as the french "coup d' état".

the various families comprising the Salvadorean oligarchy. When political trouble did arise it was usually the result of some strong president trying to continue in office for a multiple term in defiance of the constitutional provision against such action.

In 1930 at the end of his constitutional term, Dr. Pio Romero Bosque resisted the temptations of continuismo[3] and called for fair and honest elections. This meant that he would avoid choosing a preferred successor--a choice not wholly unaffected by his political weakness.

Immediately after the call for elections went out, nine candidates declared their desire to be president. Romero Bosque realized that with such a great number of rivals the possibility of one man receiving a mandate was greatly diminished. He pleaded with all concerned to make alliances and decrease the number of aspirants. Despite his pleading and cajoling only two candidates withdrew in the early stages of the

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[3]This refers to the illegal continuation in office by a chief of state strong enough to defy a constitutional provision barring such action. This term may also be used to denote the practice of a previous president controlling his predecessor making him little more than a "puppet president".

campaign. By the end of January 1931, however, the number was down to five.[4]

The Salvadorean Constitution stated that a winning presidential candidate must receive a clear majority of the total vote cast to be declared victorious. If, as it seemed to be the inevitable outcome, no one candidate received a clear majority, the final outcome would be decided by the National Assembly in a run off between the top three aspirants.[5]

Arturo Araujo, the front running candidate, was an enigmatic figure. He was a scion of an aristocratic family, yet a deviant from the traditional culture;[6] he studied engineering rather than the humanities; he founded a Labor Party (Partido Laborista)[7] rather than

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[4]Warren D. Robbins, Minister to El Salvador, to Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson, January 21, 1931, D.S. 816.00/792.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Seymour Martin Lipset in his chapter "Values, Education, and Entrepreneurship," Cultural Elites in Latin America, ed. by Seymour Martin Lipset and Aldo Solari (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) pp. 3-60, has written an excellent account of the ethos of Latin America's aristocrats.

[7]Alberto de Mestas, El Salvador: Pais de Lagos y Volcanoes (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispanica, 1950), p. 493.

merely arguing politics in the typical gentleman's club. His appeal was directed to the lower classes who supported him in large numbers. Araujo was a Salvadorean novelty. He became the first to campaign for the support of the poor, and even more significant, he was the first to promise liberal reforms and an amelioration of economic and social conditions.[8]

The incipient Communist movement quickly rallied to the support of Araujo and his Labor Party ticket.[9] But the candidate constantly denied any alliance or understanding with them.[10] In a pre-election interview with the San Salvador newspaper, La Epoca, he denied favoring Communism as a system of government. He felt that his new Labor Party would be the best for the fulfillment of social needs; he was looking for a middle course between the rich and the poor, for the benefit of both. This new government he envisioned

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[8]Interview with Don Arturo Araujo reported in La Epoca, January 22, 1931, p. 1.

[9]Robert J. Alexander, Communism in Latin America (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1957), p. 367.

[10]La Epoca, January 22, 1931, p. 1.

would be nationalistic, yet it would not change the foreign policy of the previous President, Dr. Pio Romero Bosque.[11] Araujo wanted it known that he wished to continue warm relations with the United States.

With four other candidates in the contest it became obvious that an Assembly run-off would be the only way of establishing a winner. On January 20, 1931, Araujo met with Don Cordova, the leader of the National Evolutionist Party, and agreed with him that whichever received the most votes during the popular election would have the support of the other's deputies during the period after the elections (January 21-23) until the Assembly voted sometime during the first two weeks of February.[12]

There was, however, always the possibility of a revolution preventing elections. For a month previous to the elections the coffee owners worried about the possibilities of either a military take-over by the

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Robbins to Stimson, January 21, 1931, D.S. 816.00/792.

popular General Clarmount or General Martínez, who were both candidates, or a peasant revolt to demand more political power.[13]

The non-recognition and stiff warnings to Orellana in Guatemale served as a possible deterrent to a military golpe at this time. The American Minister to El Salvador reported the following conviction to the Department of State:

> The possibility of a fair and constitutional election here is enhanced by the Department's refusal to recognize the candidacy of Orellana in Guatemala. I am sure that, had the Department recognized Orellana, there was a military clique here that would have immediately followed the example set there. The fact that the Department refused to agree to such methods in Guatemala has, I hope and believe, shown the military leaders here that any such movement on their part would be a failure.[14]

This seems to have been the first mention of the 1923 Treaty in connection with El Salvador since its ratification. There is no evidence showing that Minister Robbins discussed the provisions of the Treaty with members of the Salvadorean military, and certainly

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[13]Robbins to Stimson, December 18, 1930, D.S. 816.00/781.

[14]Robbins to Stimson, January 2, 1931, D.S. 816.00/782.

there were no such discussions with the "young turk," junior officers. This makes it impossible to determine whether or not the Treaty worked as a deterrent in this case. As will be shown in the next chapter not all military leaders were aware of the Treaty or its significance.

The outcome of the popular election went as had been expected. Araujo received a plurality, but not a majority. Gomez Zarate, who received the second largest number of votes, decided to join the Araujo-Cordova alliance, affording Araujo the additional support of both the second and third place candidates' share of the Deputies in the run-off election.[15] This alliance assured Araujo a unanimous decision by the Deputies meeting in February.[16]

Araujo's Vice Presidential choice was General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez, who had opposed him during the campaign. The General had not fared well at the polls. Despite his popularity with the military he was unable to do better than fifth place

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[15]Robbins to Stimson, January 23, 1931, D.S. 816.00/793.

[16]Ibid.

in the popular election. Araujo, considering him innocuous, chose the General for the second spot in an apparent move to ingratiate himself with the ever-volatile military.[17] It is obvious that Araujo was elected without Martinez's support, but it is doubtful that he could have maintained the Government without him.

As early as January 23, 1931, the American Minister expressed concern that Araujo would be in danger of financial difficulties. The President's private fortune had been depleted during his campaign, and the country was already hard-hit by the debts of the previous administration.[18] No one questioned the sincerity or honesty of Araujo. His election was one of the fairest in the country's history.[19] His popularity was highest among the lower levels of society and the left wing groups who saw in him the possibility for liberal reform and new political power for the heretofore disaffected stratas of society.

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[17]Lieutenant Colonel Fred T. Cruse, Military Attaché in San Salvador, to Stimson, April 20, 1931, D.S. 816.00/803.

[18]Robbins to Stimson, January 23, 1931, 816.00/793.

[19]"El Salvador", Number 78, (Third in a series on Central American Countries, April 27, 1935), D.S. 816.00/807, p. 3.

These hopes soon proved ephemeral. Araujo quickly showed himself incapable of administering the country, and dissatisfaction became rampant. On March 3, 1931 Araujo announced his program for the remainder of his administration. He planned to:

1. Limit the sale of alcoholic liquor to six hours per day and modify the dependence which the Government placed on rum taxes.
2. Use the army as a means of primary education.
3. Increase the supply of water everywhere throughout the country so that no citizen would be without a sufficient quantity.
4. Improve municipal administration to permit the cities to use the taxes they collect for sanitation and the sustenance and education of the poor.
5. Protect Salvadorean labor, using foreign labor only as instructors. Unemployment to be solved by utilizing labor on public works such as rural housing schemes, a penal colony and new water supply systems.
6. Reorganize the primary schools and construct two hundred new rural schoolhouses.
7. Protect and raise the status of women.
8. Reorganize and improve the University.
9. Establish free medical aid throughout the country.[20]

The President went on to stress that he favored a renewed freedom of the press and free speech in general. For the time being, Araujo felt, there was nothing his

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[20]Patria, March 1, 1931, p. 1.

administration could do about agriculture or land reform.[21]

The Communists were the first to become openly hostile to the new administration. Although Araujo had not come under their influence, they had staunchly supported his candidacy because of his promised social and economic reforms. Soon after his election they became disillusioned. An educator and writer, Professor Alberto Masferrer, who had diligently campaigned for Aroujo, led the radical elements against him. The Professor had been pro-Communist in his writings during the preceding years, and it was Araujo's association with him that percipitated the charge of "Communist" against him during the campaign.[22]

Masferrer was disappointed in the Araujo program and called for "immediate social reforms which were wholly communistic."[23] The Professor also expected the appointment of various radicals to high government

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Cruse to Stimson, March 11, 1931, D.S. 816.00/800.

[23] Ibid.

posts. When Araujo refused on both accounts protests followed.[24] Students and workers joined forces to remonstrate with the Government, and noisy demonstrations and strikes followed.

The President responded to the student-worker demonstrations by arresting their spokesman Augustin Martí. His arrest prompted the radicals to issue an abusive denunciation of their new President. The Administration was labeled "a government of assassins and criminals," and a call was issued for all "workers and poor peasants of the world to demonstrate their solidarity with their brothers of El Salvador."[25]

Martí had been a Salvadorean University man who later became a self-styled "leader of the proletariat classes."[26] He had been a lieutenant of the notorious bandit-patriot of Nicaragua, General Sandino, and had thus gained first hand knowledge of guerrilla tactics. A colorful character, he spent time fighting with Sandino, and later lived in Mexico where he was jailed

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Alexandar, Communism in Latin America, p. 367.

[26] Excelsior, (Mexico), January 25, 1932, p. 1.

and subsequently deported back to El Salvador because of his "Marxist" activities.[27]

When arrested, Martí decided to go on a hunger strike to force the government to order his release. The tactic worked. He maintained his demonstration until the judicial authorities order him freed, stating that his imprisonment was illegal.[28] The hunger strike, his work with Sandino, and his own indomitable character provided Martí with great fame in El Salvador and a ready-made following.

Radical agitation resulted in a further weakening of the Government. After four months of the new regime the people were unable to note any achievement. Not only was Araujo's idealistic program not implemented, but the Government seemed to be following no definite policy of any kind.[29] By July of 1931, most observers were despairing that the Government would be able to accomplish anything.

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Chargé d' Affaires, ad interim, Harold D. Finley to Stimson, July 8, 1931, D.S. 816.00/807.

In August the Salvadorean budget for 1932 was passed by the Assembly. To save money the President called for drastic--at least by Latin American standards--reductions in the War Department. This meant that some of the military hangers-on had to be informed that their services were no longer necessary. Of this group, the first seven notified telegraphed the President that they would not obey the order relieving them from command. The ever-weakening Araujo recinded the directive.[30] Despite the inability to cut back the War Department, the new budget was already thirty per cent greater than Salvadorean revenues.[31]

When, in September of 1931, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Reyes Arrieta-Rossi, called on the American Minister, the situation was steadily worsening. The President's popularity was waning seriously. His personal honesty and sincerity made it difficult for him to see that his appointed officials were adding to the financial problem via perquisites and peculation;

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[30]Finley to Stimson, August 8, 1931, D.S. 816.00/811.

[31]Charles B. Curtis, American Minister to El Salvador, to Stimson, December 15, 1931, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/49.

This in turn caused the politically aware to demean not only the reprobate ministers, but Araujo himself. Arrieta-Rossi confided that he considered the President weak and lacking in ability. Strong remarks were even made regarding recurring insanity in the Aroujo family.[32] The Foreign Minister added that he no longer considered the President trustworthy. To overcome the imminent crisis, Arrieta-Rossi said his country needed a strong dictator to bring it out of difficulties, "With a dictator, the Constitution could be brought up to date, relatively speaking in ten minutes."[33]

The most necessary constitutional change was in regard to taxation. The President, like the other officials and Deputies to the National Assembly, held vast tracts of land, and the mere proposal of a property tax or income tax would have been fatal to any government, especially one that was rapidly losing favor with all segments of society.[34]

Dr. Arrieta-Rossi considered the President's

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[32]Finley to Stimson, September 11, 1931, D.S. 816.00/813.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid.

trips into the interior a definite risk to his life; the fact that while on these trips he continued to make promises that he could not keep only exacerbated the danger. The President's popularity within his own Government had waned. Many of his appointees were only interested in pillaging the National Treasury. Realizing the Government could not last much longer, they only increased their peculation. The Foreign Minister even refused to share intelligence reports with the President claiming that he could not be trusted.[35] With such egregious disloyalty and perfidy in his administration, it is no wonder that Araujo was unable to accomplish his idealistic programs.

As the situation worsened Araujo became increasingly arbitrary. He was

> . . . both obstinate and vacillating. His opinions were frequently those of the last person with whom he had talked, but once an idea became fixed in his mind he stuck to it with the utmost stubbornness. By both stubbornness and vacillation he lost immensely in popularity, much more so in fact than by his financial incompetence.[36]

As the economic situation deteriorated, Araujo refused

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[35]Ibid.

[36]Curtis to Stimson, December 5, 1931, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/35.

to give consideration to the country's financial crisis. The manager of the Banco Agricola Comercial, Rudolfo Duke, and many others tried to warn him of the rapidly approaching crisis,[37] but he stubbornly refused to see the danger and continued spending far more than any of his predecessors for the Presidential household and other affectations of his office.[38]

The American Minister to El Salvador, Charles B. Curtis, considered Araujo one of the "worst administrators" ever seen in Central America. As will be shown later, this pejorative appraisal could apply to Curtis' role on behalf of the United States.[39]

At approximately ten o'clock on the evening of December 2, 1931, the Presidential Mansion was fired on by the El Zapote Barracks across the street.[40] The actual revolt, however, came as a complete surprise. The usual manifesto distributed beforehand and/or an ultimatum were conspicuously absent. It was a purely

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[38] Ibid., It was estimated by the American Minister that Araujo spent in excess of $4,000 monthly on his personal household.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Curtis to Stimson, December 8, 1931, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/36.

military golpe directed by a group of junior officers without civilian support or participation, and had been planned for only a week to ten days in advance.[41]

The confused President drove to various points in San Salvador as the shooting continued and later went to Santa Tecla some seven miles away. Both the El Zapote Barracks and the second San Salvador Infantry Barracks were in revolt. Strangely, neither tried to advance from their original position, but spent its time shooting aimlessly down the streets surrounding its respective barracks. Curtis went to the El Zapote Barracks to determine the nature of the insurrection. When he arrived he met with seven young officers who claimed to be the Directorate for the revolution. Soon, however, some fifteen other officers came in making the same claim. Curtis could not discover any cohesiveness about their plans or unity regarding their goals.[42] At the second Infantry Barracks the same scene was repeated. In fact, the two centers were not even in commnication.[43]

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Curtis to Stimson, December 5, 1931, D.S.816.00-Revolutions/35.

[43] Ibid.

The demands made by the leaders of the second group differed markedly from those of the first. To Curtis it became apparent that there was no real coordination involved. Not until the morning of December 3 did the two groups get together to unify their positions.

Later investigation proved Curtis' observation accurate.[44] The revolution was poorly planned and ill-organized, almost impromptu in nature. It succeeded only because of the unpopularity of the Araujo Government.

On the morning of December 3 Curtis was able to arrange a cease fire. Once this was established he met again with the Military Directorate and received from them their list of demands. The final terms agreed on by the delegates of the two regiments were:

1. The immediate resignation of the President.
2. The President's departure from the country within twenty-four hours.
3. And, the resignation of all members of the Cabinets.[45]

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[44]Frank P. Corrigan became American Minister to El Salvador in 1934. Shortly after his arrival he began an exhaustive study of the 1931 golpe de estado and its aftermath. Frank P. Corrigan, American Minister to El Salvador, to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, June 6, 1934, D.S. 816.00/1934.

[45]Curtis to Stimson, December 12, 1931, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/35.

The President summarily rejected these terms and sent Curtis back to the Directorate with an offer of amnesty for all who would surrender to his Government.[46] Meanwhile, the Police of San Salvador, who had been casually returning the fire from the two Barracks until Curtis established an armistice, promptly surrendered to the revolutionists, and the National Guard Barracks followed their lead.[47]

Most of Araujo's supporters quickly joined the revolt after offering token resistance for the sake of honor. When Curtis returned to El Zapote Barracks with the President's offer, the revolution was over for all practical purposes. Of the twenty-five generals and high military leaders that were with Araujo when Curtis visited him that morning at Santa Tecla, eight joined the revolution later that same day, including one general whom Araujo had described earlier that morning as "the best general in the country."[48]

Leaving behind a document depositing the office of President with the Third Designate Maximilano Olano,

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

Araujo sought refuge in Guatemala the following day.[49] With the President out of the country the Military Directorate declared its victory and began to set up a new government.

The Military Directorate charged the Government with corruption and inefficiency. They cited lagging social reform as a major cause for their action. The people, they said, had become severely critical and impatient with Araujo's inability to deliver any of his pre-election promises, and the revolutionists siezed upon this as one of the justifications for their action. Other reasons given included the Government's inability to get better prices for the country's major export--

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[49]. . . Article 81 of the Constitution provides that the President shall be succeeded by the Vice President in case of the death of the President, his resignation, removal of any other impediment; if there is no Vice President, the Executive Power shall be excerised by one of the designates in the order of their appointment. It seems clear therefore that President Araujo could not place the Presidency in the hand of the Third Designate. Article 92 of the Constitution prohibits the President from leaving the territory of the Republic without leave granted by the Legislative Power unless the necessity of a war requires it. It is to be noted that the Legislative Power had not granted any such permission at the time. Araujo's hasty departure complicated the process because he left the country without permission, and still attempted to deposit the Presidency.

coffee,[50] and the spate of communistic literature that was coming into the country designed to incite the poor.[51] The economic crisis was the major reason for the debacle of the Araujo administration. The revolutionists, however, charged not only that their pay was several months in arrears, but that the administration lacked concern for the military's prestige.[52] This was the precipitating, and probably the paramount factor, causing the golpe.[53]

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[50]It is true that coffee prices had fallen off drastically. However, in 1930 the whole world was in a financial crisis. The following figures show how this drop effected El Salvador. The 1928 crop brought $2,577,701 in revenue; in 1929 it was $3,407,200, in 1930 it fell back to $2,501,107, and in 1931 it was only $2,096,482. See, The Salvadorean Ministry for Finance to the American Legislation, October 31, 1935, D.S. 611.1631/130.

[51]Curtis to Stimson, December 30, 1931, D.S. 816.01-Caffery Mission/12.

[52]New York Times, December 14, 1931, p. 1.

[53]Ibid. Salvador had about 3,500 men of all ranks, including police national guard, and army at this time. According to Dr. Arrieta-Rossi the armed forces cost the country about $1,000,000 annually. High officers were paid relatively good salaries, but with their pay several months in arrears they were not able to live the life they felt entitled to. The vast majority of officers were scions of wealthy land owners, however, not usually first sons or heirs to the family lands.

The regular army soldier was paid approximately

The deposition of Araujo was generally received as a triumph for all Salvadoreans. One of the least productive administrations in the country's, and for that matter all of Central America's, history had come to an end. There seemed to be little harsh feeling against Araujo personally, the problem being that he had chosen dishonest and disloyal administrators to run the country. Managers of three banks in San Salvador stated emphatically that if Araujo had remained in office another three months, there would have been currency inflation and consequent destruction of Salvadorean credit at home and abroad.[54]

The central role of the American Minister during the golpe requires an appraisal of his competence. New York Times correspondents at the time portrayed him as an heroic figure, and in later accounts

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twenty-five cents a day, while the national guard troops received about seventy-five cents daily. These troops without their regular pay were in real need. Also, the officers, from the top downward, were always paid first. This may explain why the junior officers were the leaders of the revolt. See Finley to Stimson, September 11, 1931, D.S. 816.00/813.

[54]Curtis to Stimson, December 8, 1931, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/38.

Edward O. Guerrant[55] and Charles Gray Bream[56] judged him accordingly. It is true that Curtis worked diligently to stop the shooting and restore a modicum of order, keeping bloodshed to a minimum;[57] but that is only part of the story.

The Department of State assumed that Curtis had made clear to the revolutionaries the United State's accord with the 1923 Treaty, and their ineligibility for recognition by the United States and the Central American nations because of Article II. As a matter of fact, Curtis was unaware of the Treaty and its effect on United States and Central American policy.[58] When

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[55]See Edward O. Guerrant, "The Recognition of El Salvador in 1934: an Alteration in the Foreign Policy of the United States," The Historian, VI (Autumn, 1941) 15-24.

[56]See Charles Gray Bream, "American Intervention Short of Armed Force in Latin America," (unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago 1941). The chapter on "El Salvador" is especially interesting because Bream is completely reliant on newspaper articles for his facts. Much that is brought to light by diplomatic correspondence was not released to the press.

[57]Despite all the noisy shooting there were only three killed and five wounded. See New York Times, December 20, 1931, III, p. 6.

[58]Interview with Dr. H. Freeman Matthews, June 12, 1968.

the Department telegraphed Curtis about this matter, the Treaty was mentioned as the guiding factor that they assumed he was following. Curtis replied to the Department on December 5, 1931, using a bit of sophistry in an attempt to cover his lack of knowledge and subsequent mistake:

> The Department's telegram No. 56 of December 4, 12 noon, assumes that I have made clear to the leaders of the revolution the policy of the United States, based upon the provisions of the Treaty of 1923 regarding the Non-recognition of Governments coming into power through revolution. This matter was constantly in my mind but I regret to have to report that I did not bring it to the attention of revolutionary leaders until the success of the revolution was already certain. Anyone who saw the utterly irresponsible youths with whom I had to deal in the beginning, and whose opinions on all subjects except the resignation of President Araujo were as far apart as the two poles, and who saw the almost endless discussion whether an armistice should last for three hours or only two, would appreciate my reasons for forming the opinion that it was futile to mention this subject and that nothing should be mentioned which was not absolutely essential to the obtaining of an agreement on the subject of an armistice.[59]

When the Department of State realized that Curtis was not able to handle the situation on his own, Jeffer-

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[59]Curtis to Stimson, December 5, 1931, D.S. 816.-Revolutions/35. The underlined portion is not in the original.

son Caffery, a past Minister to El Salvador,[60] and Dr. H. Freeman Matthews from the Division of Latin American Affairs, were sent to San Salvador to advise him and the Department. Dr. Matthews quickly realized that Curtis had no real knowledge of the 1923 Treaty. Searching through Curtis' own library he found a copy of the Treaty and presented it to him for him immediate perusal.[61] But the damage was already done. Acting on his own initiative Curtis had informed the rebels that they would not be recognized unless their new government was headed by the only person eligible under the Salvadorean Constitution, General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez. This egregious blunder was made obvious by the following correspondence where an alternative to Martínez is being discussed:

> . . . on the morning after the revolution when Minister Curtis spoke to them at the Zapote Barracks Mr. Curtis suggested that Martínez as Vice President was the person according to the constitution who should assume the Presidency and that if this were done the

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[60] Caffery was American Minister to Bogota, Colombia at the time but happened to be in Washington when the trouble began.

[61] Interview with Dr. H. Freeman Matthews, June 12, 1968.

> United States would recognize the change in government. They said that they did not want a similar state of affairs if [First Designate, Colonel] Garay assumed office and asked for a written statement that Garay would be recognized. Of course this put me in a most awkward position but the Honduran Minister explained to them the absolute good faith of Mr. Curtis in endeavoring to help in solving a difficult problem and said that this certainly was simply a misinterpretation of the meaning of the treaty on the part of Mr. Curtis who was incapable of deceiving them intentionally.[62]

It is quite possible that if Curtis had not demanded Martinez as the Constitutional successor to Araujo, there would have been no major problem to bar the United States from recognizing a new administration. Several Distinguished diplomats, experts on American policy at the time, have privately expressed their convictions that Curtis demonstrated extremely poor judgement and blundered severely at this time.[63]

In two other dispatches Curtis confused matters even farther. "According to the Salvadorean Constitution,"

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[62]Chargé d' Affaires, ad interim, San Salvador, to Stimson, April 4, 1932, D.S. 816.01/145.

[63]Dr. Dana G. Munro, December 29, 1967; interview with Ambassador Willard Leon Beaulac, February 14, 1968; interview with Dr. H. Freeman Matthews, June 12, 1968; also, private letter from Dr. Dana G. Munro, January 5, 1968.

he wrote on December 5, "this revolution has been entirely Constitutional!" Again, on December 8, he wrote:

> I do not know what the effect of recognizing the government of General Martínez would have on future revolutions in this or other Central American countries but I believe that the great majority of the people of this country want him as President at the present moment. He assumed authority only after he had been informed that the President had left the country and it will probably be impossible to obtain any proof that he participated in the revolution, although I shall continue to investigate this. Unless Minister of War is "a military command" or a "Secretary of State" his government can probably be recognized under the 1923 Treaty.[64]

Somehow the facts that Martínez was Araujo's Vice President, and that now, after the golpe, he was to be President, never seem to have affected Curtis' thinking. As for Martínez, he sat out the revolution in El Zapote Barracks as a prisoner of the confused Military Directorate.[65]

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[64]Curtis to Stimson, December 8, 1931, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/35.

[65]This was first reported by Dr. Arrieta-Rossi. See Curtis to Stimson, December 12, 1931, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/39. By 1934 this was considered to be completely true, see Corrigan to Hull, June 6, 1934, D.S. 816.00/1934.

> It is a greater crime to kill an ant than a man, for when a man dies he becomes reincarnated, while an ant dies forever.[1]
>
> --General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez

IV. THE MARTÍNEZ GOVERNMENT: NON-RECOGNITION AND INSURRECTION

General Martínez was an anomaly as far as Latin American military men were concerned. He was not the brash, boastful, bon vivant strutting about ostentatiously flashing his numerous medals, and endlessly pursuing young ladies, as the stereotype seems to demand. Quite the opposite, Martínez was a taciturn individual who enjoyed the company of his books and pets more than his fellow officers.

As a young man he had studied law but soon gave it up because "it had no spiritual content."[2] He became

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[1]Lewis Hanke, Mexico and the Caribbean. (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1959), p. 19.

[2]Martin and Sylvia Lawrence, "Four Strongmen and a President," Harper Magazine, September, 1942, p. 421.

a "Theosophist and something of a wizard,"[3] a devout student of abstract philosophy; yet he taught in the Salvadorean Military School. Far from being an extrovert, he was diffident and unsure of himself. He spoke with reluctance and avoided direct answers, and when he spoke it was in a soft, low voice. His slight build and bad posture were possible reasons for his introverted nature; he even preferred to wear white suits rather than the gaudy uniforms so cherished by his colleagues.[4]

Despite the attributes of a mild-mannered man, he was both determined and capable. His popularity within the army was a factor that motivated Araujo to choose him for Vice President. It was Araujo's personal popularity

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[3]Charles W. Anderson, "El Salvador," Political Systems of Latin America, ed. by Martin C. Needler. (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1964), p. 58. Anderson described Martinez as ". . . a Theosophist and something of a wizard. He made it known that he had occult powers that enabled him to know what individuals were thinking. He would conjure up magic formulas to solve vital national problems. He advised the peasants on mysterious procedures of planting corn, an animistic form of technical assistance. During a smallpox epidemic, he had green lights strung throughout the capital and assured the citizens that these would halt the spread of the disease. He exposed bottles of colored water to sunlight, and recommended them as cures for cancer, heart disease, and appendicitis."

[4]Martin and Sylvia Lawrence, "Four Strongmen and a President," p. 428.

that Martínez was by his side that allowed the President to maintain his administration without military interference.[5]

On the evening of December 2, 1931, just a few hours before the shooting started, Martínez, the Vice President and Minister of War, called upon President Araujo. The purpose of his visit was to urge the President immediately to pay the army all its back salary. This appeal so angered Araujo that he summarily dismissed him from his office as Minister of War, informing him that the Sub-Secretary of War would replace him in this Cabinet post.[6] Curtis further demonstrated his naivete by concluding his report of this incident with: "It hardly seems possible, however, that this could have had any real influence on the situation."[7] Although this paper supports the assertion that Martínez was not involved directly in the golpe, the above statement by Curtis, with its obvious logical fallacy, went far in creating the belief that the General was a conspirator.

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[5]Cruse to Stimson, April 20, 1931, D.S. 816.00/803.

[6]Curtis to Stimson, December 5, 1931, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/35.

[7]Ibid.

When the revolt started Martinez made his way to the El Zapote Barracks and was taken prisoner. According to Dr. Arrieta-Rossi the young officers had considered killing the General because he was the Constitutional successor to Araujo.[8] While Curtis was arranging a cease fire with the Directorate he saw Martínez briefly.[9] It was his conviction that the General was indeed a prisoner, and was in no way participating in the revolt.[10] Perhaps it was this conviction, coupled with his eagerness to restore constitutional government, that prompted him to name Martinez as the only acceptable heir to the Presidency. The Directorate, wishing to have good relations with the United States, took the Minister's advice.

On December 4, Curtis informed the Department of State that the leaders of the revolution were going to recognize Vice President Martinez as Provisional President. The following day Martínez announced "I now assume

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[8]Curtis to Stimson, December 11, 1931, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/39.

[9]Curtis to Stimson, December 5, 1931, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/35.

[10]Curtis to Stimson, December 11, 1931, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/39.

the Presidency of the Republic."[11] Curtis and Caffery agreed that ". . .under the Salvadorean Constitution there is no impediment to Martínez automatically succeeding to the Presidency; in fact there is no way for him not to succeed."[12]

On December 8, Curtis communicated to the Department the evidence he gathered regarding the golpe, and in particular the role played by the General. He listed four points which hinted at Martínez's culpability:

1. He was unharmed by the revolutionists.
2. He was in the El Zapote Barracks during the revolution and still has his office there.
3. He did not fight against the revolutionists.
4. He had just been dismissed as Minister of War by President Araujo.[13]

In defense of Martínez he offered the following points:

1. He was confined within the Barracks.

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[11]L. H. Woolsey, "The Recognition of the Government of El Salvador," The American Journal of International Law, XXVIII (April, 1934), 326.

[12]Curtis to Stimson, December 22, 1931, D.S. 816.01-Caffery Mission/7.

[13]Curtis to Stimson, December 8, 1931, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/36. For a more detailed and biased set of charges see Appendix A.

2. At seven o'clock on Thursday morning (December 3) he was unable to talk privately with me.

3. He was not consulted by the leaders of the revolt on such important matters as whether or not there would be an armistice, the duration of the armistice, or the conditions to be laid down.

4. At eight-thirty that morning he was not wanted for President by the leaders of the revolt in the (second) Infantry Barracks.

5. He was not present during any one of the three interviews I had with the leaders on December 3, and was not referred to in any manner as having a voice in decisions.

6. He was not a member of the Military Directorate.

7. He was Minister of War until almost the last moment, he would have had a high sense of duty and may well have been kept in ignorance of the plot.[14]

Curtis' defense of Martinez was intended to imply that he should be recognized as the de jure President. This defense of the General and desire to see him recognized may well have been a smoke screen to obscure the fact that it was his insistence which placed Martínez at the head of the new Government. When Caffery and Matthews arrived on December 19, they were continually thwarted in

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[14] Ibid.

their attempts to suggest an alternative to the General by the insistence of the Military Directorate that they had acted in accord with the Constitution. Like Curtis the young officers had not given any consideration to the 1923 Treaty.

Following an investigation of the Salvadorean Government by Caffery and Matthews, the State Department, acting on their advice, refused to recognize the new regime:

> After thorough consideration the Department has come to the conclusion that the regime headed by General Martinez is barred from recognition by the terms of Article 2, of the General Treaty of Peace and Amity of 1923. With reference to that Article it is clear (1) that General Martinez has come into power through a revolution and that the country has not been constitutionally reorganized by the freely elected representatives of the people; and (2) that even in the event of such constitutional reorganization General Martinez could not be recognized inasmuch as he held office as Minister of War within six months preceding the revolution.[15]

In other words, the simple "rule of thumb" was being applied; since Martínez, a high official of the former Government, profited from the revolution he would not be recognized. All of Curtis' attempts to show that his

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[15]Stimson to Curtis, December 20, 1931, D.S. 816.01/25A.

succession was in complete accord with the Salvadorean Constitution were irrelevant. The fact that Martínez was the legal and constitutional President of El Salvador had no effect on the recognition policy based on the 1923 Treaty. Dr. Matthews said that the paradox was "rather silly, but there was nothing we could do because of the Treaty."[16] Both Caffery and Matthews agreed that if it were not for the Treaty there would have been no question of Martinez's recognition.[17] Personally, they were impressed with him and his conscientious approach to the problems at hand.

Secretary of State Stimson, during a press conference on December 23, 1931, replied to a question of whether or not our non-recognition meant that Martínez must withdraw, by saying he could stay on as long as he liked without our recognition. "We are going to do what the Treaty says," he added, "and that is the limit of our responsibility."[18]

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[16]Interview, June 12, 1968.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Wilson to White, Memorandum, June 11, 1932, D.S. 816.00/877.

The other four countries of Central America went along with the Department's decision.[19] But Martínez determined to maintain his office and hoped to legitimatize his de facto Government. Since the United States did not send troops to remove him he was able to continue. Nevertheless, he resented non-recognition, and with the Salvadorean National Assembly declared, on February 14, 1932, that the right to revolt was constitutional, adding that "nothing in the Treaty of 1923 could affect the legitimacy of the (his) Government."[20] In ratifying the Treaty, the Salvadorean Assembly had issued a reservation on Article II because it was their Constitutional right to revolt. The United States, however, did not recognize this reservation and remained obdurate on the question of recognition.

The American Minister was recalled to Washington on January 10, 1932, and the Legation was left in the care

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[19]On December 21, 1931 the other four countries responded to the Department of State that they concurred in non-recognition of Martínez, D.S. 816.01/28, /29, /30, and /25.

[20]"El Salvador," April 27, 1935, D.S. 816.00/807, p. 3.

of Chargé d' Affaires William J. McCafferty, who was instructed that he should be guided by the following principles with reference to the existing situation:

> (1) In view of the provisions of the 1923 Treaty Martínez can under no circumstances be recognized. This is not due to any animus against Martínez, but because of the clear provisions of the Treaty. The other Central American states are in agreement concerning this. It would be useless for Martínez or his adherents to send a representative to Washington to seek recognition for him, and if anything of this nature is proposed you should discourage it.
>
> (2) It is the earnest hope of the Department that a Government may be established in Salvador at the earliest possible moment on a basis permitting its recognition by the other Central American countries and by the United States.[21]

Realizing the adverse effects of non-recognition, Martinez continued to seek some means of accommodation with the United States. Several international lawyers were retained by him to find ways around the impasse. Luis Anderson, a prominent jurist from San Jose, Costa Rica, fervently argued the legality of the Salvadorean position.[22] Anderson criticized the Department of State

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[21]Stimson to McCafferty, January 13, 1932, D.S. 816.01/50A.

[22]New York Times, February 2, 1932, p. 8.

for continuing with a recognition policy predicated on Wilsonian idealism: "With reference to the United States, it seems to me that the intention, initiated during the administration of Woodrow Wilson, to make the United States arbiters or judges of the legality of constituted governments, has no judicial authority whatever."[23]

Despite the lack of United States recognition the "influential and substantial classes" rallied to the General's support. The military and the coffee growers were the only ones, according to Dr. Matthews, who had a voice in the country's political affairs, and they supported the new regime.[24] Martínez had decided to remain in office without recognition. As he tried to consolidate his power the "unheard" masses of peasants and workers attempted to make their voices heard also. They had been disappointed in Araujo's inability to act on his promises. Gradually they had come to realize that their hopes and aspirations were not going to be achieved by the President they had elected. When Martinez took

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Interview, June 12, 1968.

control of the Government these people believed that the new military regime had put their hopes still farther out of reach. The reformist ideals of the lower classes, however, were not shared by the land owners, who fully supported Martínez.

As early as 1924, advocates of Communism were beginning to establish an organized movement in Central America and Mexico. Their plan called for a strong headquarters in Guatemala to direct all activities in the area.[25] From this central point they hoped to establish subordinate groups in each of the Central American Republics. Mexican and Guatemalan agents worked among the students and workers in El Salvador establishing the first semblances of organization in 1925.[26] Owing to the strong grip on Guatemala, held by its long-term dictator, General Jorge Ubico, the Guatemalan Communists were unable to continue their work openly, losing all control over the subordinate groups by 1931. The area's leadership reverted to the International Red Aid, in New York City. This agency was founded as a means for

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[25]Rollie E. Poppino, International Communism in Latin America (London: Free Press of Glenco, 1964), p. 79.

[26]Ibid.

raising funds to provide legal aid for party members and fellow radicals jailed by "reactionary regimes."[27] The Salvadorean movement went under the name of Liga Prolucha-dores Pereseguidos (League for the Defense of Persecuted Fighters).[28] Robert J. Alexander points out that the New York agency worked as a world wide "Red Cross"; its affiliate in America was the International Labor Defense Agency.[29]

When McCafferty replaced Curtis in January of 1932, he began studying the Salvadorean situation. Up to this point his career had been quite undistinguished. While working at the Legation in Managua, Nicaragua, under Dr. Munro he had never shown much in the way of industri-ousness or perseverance.[30] However, during the Orellana affair in Guatemala, he learned in detail the Depart-ment's position regarding the 1923 Treaty. Acting on instructions from the Department, McCafferty dealt dir-ectly with Orellana and finally caused him to step

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[27] Ibid., p. 156.

[28] Alexander, Communism in Latin America, p. 367.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Private letter from Dr. Munro, January 15, 1968. Dr. Munro described McCafferty's work in El Salvador in these words: "He did a good job of reporting and showed courage when it was needed."

down.[31] It was this experience that prompted Stimson to appoint him Chargé d' Affaires when non-recognition of Martinez necessitated the recall of the American Minister.

Within ten days of his arrival, McCafferty reported his anxiety over Salvadorean Communism.[32] He reported that during the previous three years it had spread freely throughout the country. Propaganda was distributed actively in all cities, and the leaders were evidently trying to stir up the farm workers against what they called a "reactionary government."[33] Besides the students and workers, the Communists were actively recruiting in the San Salvador Infantry Barracks and among the former followers of Araujo.[34] At first the Government, anxious for stability, tried to woo the Communists' support. Martínez invited them to participate in the municipal and Assembly elections in early January. Subsequently, however, the Communists claimed to have

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[31]Stimson to McCafferty, December 20, 1930, D.S. 814.00-Revolutions/68.

[32]McCafferty to Stimson, January 20, 1932, D.S. 816.008/44.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid.

won, a fact not in accord with the official tally. When they tried to see Martínez to protest they received no satisfaction. They then decided to try another route to power.[35]

On January 10, 1932 a small revolt had broken out around the city of Ahuachapan, followed by similar, possibly unrelated clashes throughout the country. The Communists, seeing that the situation was highly volatile, decided to make El Salvador their first Central American revolutionary test. The Party's Central Committee set up a Revolutionary Military Committee and set January 22, as the date for revolution.[36] From the military ranks they chose "commanders" and sent them detailed instruction from the San Salvador Headquarters.[37]

According to Alberto de Mestas and Jules Dubois, it was the New York City agency that made the initial call for revolution.[38] How true this is cannot be fully

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[35]Alexander, Communism in Latin America, p. 368.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Poppino, International Communism in Latin America, p. 156.

[38]Alberto de Mestas, El Salvador: Paise de Lagos y Volcanes (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispanica, 1950), p. 494. See also Jules Dubois, Operation America: The Communist Conspiracy in Latin America (New York: Walker and Company, 1963), p. 237.

ascertained using present evidence. It is known, however, that the Salvadorean party had been issuing proclamations on its own since late 1930.[39]

The order to arm the mestizo and Indian population was issued on January 21, 1932, in the hope that the revolt would take on the appearance of a popular or national uprising.[40] Despite careful planning, the element of surprise was lost. The Ubico regime in Guatemala inadvertently gained possession of certain documents containing the plans of the Salvadorean Communists.[41] This information was passed on to Martínez in order to avert an uprising which could spill over into Guatemala.

Martínez moved first. On January 18 he declared a state of siege in San Salvador and moved against all known Communists and sympathizers. Agustin Martí and the editors of the Communist paper, Estrella Roja, were among the first arrested.[42] Vigilance committees were

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[39]Poppino, International Communism in Latin America, p. 80.

[40]Dubois, Operation America, p. 80.

[41]Alexander, Communism in Latin America, p. 368.

[42]Ibid.

organized among the Government's supporters.[43] These bands roamed about the capital as a supplementary body to the regular military. Their orders were simple:

> . . .nobody is allowed in the streets after 9 o'clock at night. . . instructions are to halt anyone seen after that hour and to shoot to kill if he does not stop after a second command to halt. If a group of more than two or less than five is seen, the command to halt should be given only once and if more than five are met, fire should be opened on them without any command to halt.[44]

It was soon obvious that anyone outside after dark was a "Communist" and subject to summary execution. The New York Times on February 7, 1932, stated that no one "was allowed on the streets after 9 p.m. on penalty of being shot." The Times went on to say that a "cow and two burrows" had paid with their lives for this infraction.

Martínez, possibly hoping to gain American favor as an anti-Communist President, ruthlessly put down the insurrection with copious bloodletting. Reports of the number of peasants killed range anywhere from five hundred to twenty-five thousand.[45] The reason for this

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[43]McCafferty to Stimson, January 23, 1932, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/62.

[44]See Appendix D, paragraph 2.

[45]See Appendix E.

great divergence of opinion is the way in which the revolutionaries were killed or better said, exterminated. When the General ordered all the known Communists and their sympathizers arrested, the unwritten, yet widely used Ley de Fuga,[46] was employed. An American who accompanied one of the vigilance committees reported,

> The Government has been arresting all those who were listed as Communists. I understand that in San Salvador alone there were 9,000 men listed. They are being arrested as rapidly as they can be located and after one or two days in jail are taken out late at night and conducted to some isolated spot where they are told to disperse and machine gun fire opened on them. They are usually buried where killed.[47]

Given the above circumstances, occuring in several different cities, it is no wonder that no definitive statement can be made regarding the actual number killed. The American author, John Dos Passos, wrote concerning the insurrection:

> The extraordinary thing about it was that there had been many educated people involved. They had stirred up the masses against the army officers and coffee planters. . . . The communists had stirred up the wild Indians and the town workers and part of the army. Prominent

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[46]This simply means that the prisoner is shot "trying to escape."

[47]See Appendix D, paragraph 3.

> officers had been shot, some of them tortured, eyes burned out with cigars . . . agitating against imperialism, demanding land for the Indians, higher wages for plantation workers. In fact they were planning to expropriate all the coffee and banana lands. It was the communists behind it, agents from Moscow undoubtedly.
>
> The government of El Salvador was making a thorough clean-up. They'd been shooting two or three hundred people a week. All kinds of people, doctors, lawyers, students, people of education and breeding that you wouldn't have expected to be mixed up in a criminal business like this. They're keeping a firm hand on the situation. "Now that they've got communism stamped out. . . I suppose the government of the United States will feel more like recognition. Yes, you really ought to recognize them now."[48]

Although the revolt received very little press attention in the United States, the press of Central America and Mexico afforded it major coverage. On February 10, 1932, Adolfo Ortega Diaz, a Nicaraguan writer who had spent the previous ten months in El Salvador, stated in an interview with Diario De Costa Rica:

> I am horrified. I know of the blood spilt in Nicaraguan strife; I also knew the small value of human life as an outcome of the many years of revolution in Mexico; but I could never have imagined, even after reading of the Turkish ferocity or of the Russian pogroms, that there could occur such wholesale slaughter of the innocents as was the case in El Salvador. This was

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[48]John Dos Passos, "Another Plea for Recognition," The New Republic, March 28, 1934, p. 187.

> an ignominious crime, one which is not yet ended, for the murder of these poor people continues.[49]

Ortega Diaz claimed to be "thoroughly conversant" with the activities of the Salvadorian Revolutionaries and of their brutal suppression by Martinez. He asserted that the Salvadoreans were led to violence by an "undigested" understanding of Communism. The acts of violence and cruelty perpetuated by the people were, in his opinion, modest compared to the brutality of Martinez's butchers.

Ortega Diaz is quoted as saying that the communists were acting in accord with well laid plans. The failure to sieze the first objective--the cavalry barracks at San Salvador and its arms--precluded their success. Consequently the populace had to fight with their machetes. He deeply regretted that there had not been time to stop the revolt after this initial setback.[50]

The international community of San Salvador was quite apprehensive about a possible attack on the city.

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[49]Enclosed in a dispatch from Charles C. Eberhardt, American Minister to Costa Rica, to Stimson, February 11, 1932, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/154. Translated from Diario De Costa Rica, February 10, 1932.

[50]Ibid.

The revolutionaries were threatening an attack on the capital, but it never materialized. Most of their strength was in the western departments where they had taken five of the major cities: Sonsonate, Ahuachapan, Izalco, Nahuizalco, and Juayua.[51] Italian, British, and American diplomats agreed that the presence of American and/or British war ships in Salvadorean harbors would ensure the safety of the foreigners and possibly prevent bloodshed in the capital.[52] The United States sent three war vessels from Panama, the USS Rochester and two destroyers, the Phillip and Wickes.[53] The British had two war ships in the vicinity and ordered them into the port of Acajutla.[54]

No American Marines were landed at any time. The British Legation requested that their troops be landed, but assurances from Martinez that he had the situation in

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[51]Alberto de Mestas, El Salvador: Pais de Lagos y Volcanes, p. 494.

[52]McCafferty to Stimson, January 23, 1932, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/62; Acting Secretary of State Castle to McCafferty, January 23, 1932, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/64.

[53]Castle to McCafferty, January 23, 1932, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/66.

[54]Castle to McCafferty, January 23, 1932, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/58.

hand obviated such action.[55] As the danger passed, the Navy Department on January 29 informed the Commander of the Special Services Squadron to withdraw the American war vessels from Salvadorean waters at his discretion.[56] Martinez had survived the attacks without external interference.

American businessmen in El Salvador appreciated the "efficiency" and "protection" of Martinez during this crisis. On January 28, 1932, Bertin L. Moisant and Louis N. Hockwald telegraphed their appreciation to the State Department.

> As American citizens owning properties here we wish to convey an expression of confidence and gratification for the admirable manner in which President Martinez and other authorities are handling [the] present situation. They are giving us adequate armed protection of the properties and cooperating in every way. Also we wish to express our appreciation for the assistance and cooperation of Mister McCafferty at the Legation.[57]

The de facto Government of President Martinez also faced a financial crisis at the height of the insurrection. Outstanding debts from the two previous

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[55]McCafferty to Stimson, January 25, 1932, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/70.

[56]Stimson to McCafferty, January 29, 1932, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/90.

[57]Bertin L. Moisant and Louis N. Hockwald to Stimson, January 28, 1932, 816.00-Revolutions/83.

administrations caused the new regime to exist on a marginal basis. When the revolt began the need for funds to pay the military became immediate. Salvadorean opinion held that the United States' non-recognition had made the economic crisis more acute. Martínez gathered the necessary funds via three means: first, he requisitioned funds for the immediate payment of the military from the Banco Agricola Comercial of San Salvador;[58] second, he met with the wealthy coffee growers, bankers, and merchants and convinced them to support his administration financially;[59] finally, he informed the Legation that the repayment of the American loans would be curtailed indefinitely in order that all customs revenues could be used to stabilize the economy.[60]

This default on the American loan of $21,000,000, (made in 1922) caused Washington to consider the advisability of establishing a customs receivership in El Salvador. Many countries, however, were defaulting on

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[58]McCafferty to Stimson, January 23, 1932, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/62.

[59]Ibid.

[60]New York Times, March 20, 1932, II, p. 9.

their loans, and it became obvious that direct intervention in El Salvador would bring on a storm of protest injuring President Hoover's Latin American policy. The knotty problem was resolved by a bit of clever sophistry--since the United States had not recognized the Martinez regime it could not demand payment from that Government. Raymond Leslie Buell stated: "This seems to be the only case on record where our recognition policy has actually benefited the non-recognized government:"[61]

The fact that Martínez was forewarned of the revolution allowed him to catch the leaders unaware. Realizing that their plan was known, the Communist leaders who had avoided early arrest desperately tried to get out countermanding orders to stop the uprising.[62] This only resulted in more confusion. Many groups never received word and attacked a prepared enemy. Troops loyal to the Government recaptured the fallen cities by January 26.[63] These troops also marched on eleven rebel

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[61]Buell, "Union or Disunion in Central America," p. 484.

[62]Alexander, Communism in Latin America, p. 368.

[63]McCafferty to Stimson, January 26, 1932, D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/71.

villages, summarily executing all suspected party members.[64] Robert J. Alexander described the de facto Government's suppression of the revolt as destroying "the Communist Party, all its front organizations, and the labor movement as well, and installing Martinez as dictator of a regime which lasted for a dozen years."[65]

For Martínez the uprising was a blessing in disguise. Due to the harsh methods employed to put it down, and the support he demanded and received from the wealthy Salvadorean capitalists who were the target of the revolt, he was able to strengthen his de facto Government. The excuse of stamping out Communism provided him with ample justification for instituting a reign of terror. Soon the term "Communist" was used to denote all who opposed or criticized the Government; for that matter, anyone who dared to walk the streets at night automatically became a "Communist" and liable to summary liquidation. Influential Salvadoreans, thoroughly alarmed by the revolt, were grateful to their President for the efficient way he crushed the revolt, and rallied more than ever to

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[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., p. 396.

his support. This made the de facto Government even stronger and Martínez's popularity and influence very great.

While Communists were involved in the plot to overthrow the "reactionary" regime, it does not seem legitimate to term the whole uprising "Communistic." In the first place, it was not Communists who participated in the initial conflicts but impoverished peasants. Those who had been disappointed became desperate when Martínez took control of the new Government. These people were not even invited to join with the Communists until ten days after the amorphous uprising began. The Communists had always recruited their followers among the students and workers rather than peasants.

The peasants were not the only element to become desperate at this time. Many of the same young officers and soldiers who had inadvertently brought Martinez to power were later expelled from the Army by an Executive decree. Some of these men and officers were with the uprising.[66] Also, many of Araujo's disgruntled followers[67]

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[66]This statement was made by ex-President Arturo Araujo to the United Press in Guatemala City. Quoted in Literary Digest, February 6, 1932, p. 16.

[67]"El Salvador," April 27, 1935, D.S. 816.00/807, p. 3.

and a number of opportunistic bandits joined in.[68] Add to these elements the fact that ninety per cent of the wealth of the nation was held by one-half of one per cent of the total population[69] and that this wealthy minority was made up solely of whites, in a country ninety per cent mestizo and five per cent Indian and the result contained elements of what would now be termed a "race war." A struggle for a modicum of power by the racially, politically, and economically disaffected appears to be a more apt description than "Communist revolution."

Dr. Munro has since reflected, "Wherever there was a messy situation we (the Department of State) looked for some Communist to blame it on." Regarding the Salvadorean uprising, he believed that it was dissatisfaction and rebelliousness that motivated the peasants and not the Communists. "The Communists at this time," he added, "were willing to aid revolutions but they did not need to start them, the revolutions would go on without them."[70] Dr. Matthews agreed with the above statement,

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[68] New York Times, February 7, 1932, III, p. 8. See also the comment from the Panama Star and Herald quoted in Literary Digest, February 6, 1932, p. 16.

[69] Harris to Stimson, December 22, 1931, D.S. 816.00/828.

[70] Interview, December 29, 1967.

adding, "It was the vast gap between the wealthy and the poor that precipitated the revolt; the Communists were there, but they were a relatively small factor."[71] The fact that they tried to take over a revolt that was already started and that the Communist leaders were arrested before their plans were activated seems to be sufficient reason to deny them the leadership of the uprising.[72]

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[71]Interview, June 12, 1968.

[72]Poppino, International Communism in Latin America, p. 141.

This is alone beyond the power
of Heaven,
To make what has been to have
been.[1]

--Greek poet quoted by Aristotle

V. THE PROBLEM OF RECOGNITION

Having successfully put down the January insurrection, the de facto President discovered that his position was greatly strengthened. The influential Salvadorean coffee growers might have preferred a president who would have had international recognition before the uprising, but now Martínez had won their full support. With the financial support of the wealthy property owners and the cooperation of the military the General had maintained his de facto Government. From that point two factors helped him stay in power. The first was the people's memory of the blood baths by which he christened his administration; the second was his policy of paying the military well and promptly.[2]

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[1]Quoted by John Fisher Williams, "Some Thoughts on the Doctrine of Recognition in International Law," Harvard Law Review, XLVII (March, 1934), 705.

[2]Martin and Sylvia Lawrence, "Four Strong Men and a President," Harper Magazine, September, 1942, p. 187.

The Department of State had expected Martinez to step aside as did Orellana of Guatemala when faced with a similar situation. But the General remained obdurate. After the uprising had been thoroughly crushed he concentrated his attention on finding a means of securing American recognition or of remaining in office in spite of it. Through McCafferty the Department continued to press for a change of government, but the de facto President always replied that communistic movements made it impossible to change the executive in the near future.[3] This situation was exactly what those in the Department who had opposed Article II from the beginning feared would happen: someone had called our bluff.[4] Because of internal acceptance and the lack of external force, the General succeeded.

Martínez was urged to select Designates not proscribed by the 1923 Treaty and then step aside.[5] He offered to solve the problem by "depositing" the Presidency in the First Designate, who in turn would resign in

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[3]McCafferty to Stimson, February 3, 1932, D.S. 816.00/838.

[4]Interview with Dr. Dana G. Munro, December 29, 1967, and Dr. H. Freeman Matthews, June 12, 1968.

[5]McCafferty to Stimson, February 3, 1932, D.S. 816.00/838.

six or seven months. In the meantime, the General would return to his elected position of Vice President until the First Designate "happened to resign," making him the constitutional President.[6]

Secretary of State Stimson refused to go along with this deception, claiming that the Salvadorean Constitution made no provision for such an act, and that it was "a clear cut violation of the 1923 Treaty."[7] As far as Stimson was concerned the only acceptable plan was for Martinez to "resign outright."[8]

The National Assembly, on February 8, 1932, had already declared Martínez to be the constitutional President.[9] Their decree contained four provisions which declared the constitutionality of the Martinez Government.

1. The golpe de estado of December 2, 1931, was declared an insurrection of the people permitted by Article 36 of the Constitution.

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[6]McCafferty to Stimson, February 2, 1932, D.S. 816.00/848.

[7]Stimson to McCafferty, February 27, 1932, D.S. 816.00/850.

[8]Ibid.

[9]McCafferty to Stimson, February 8, 1932, D.S. 816.00/851.

2. The deposition of Arturo Araujo from the Presidency was declared legal and permanent.

3. The assumption of the Presidency by General Martinez was ratified.

4. It was declared that the 1923 Treaty could in no way affect the legality of the Martinez Government.[10]

From this point on the General would not consider the alternative of resignation. He had offered the Department a plan whereby he would temporarily resign and later become constitutional President via legal succession but was turned down. After this denial he steadfastly maintained the position that his administration was the legal and constitutional Government of El Salvador. By June 10, 1932, the de facto Government claimed overwhelming national support with everyone from the coffee growers to the "mothers of Cuscatlan," reportedly encouraging Martinez to remain in office despite non-recognition.[11]

McCafferty became impressed with the "good government" that was being provided in El Salvador. He went so far as to say that the current administration was providing

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[10]McCafferty to Stimson, February 8, 1932, D.S. 816.00/851.

[11]See Appendix B.

the best government in the country's history. He added:

> . . . although General Martínez is not a man of strong character and at times has allowed himself to be influenced by the bad advice of self-seeking friends, it seems to be generally the opinion of responsible people that he is administering the country in an honest and able manner, and that the regime is above the average of those usually found in Central America. He also appears to have the support of a majority of the people and the army at the present time, and no strong or organized opposition exists.[12]

Regarding the effect of non-recognition, McCafferty reported.

> I am convinced that the principal reason for the present good administration in El Salvador is the non-recognition of the United States, and that General Martínez and his collaborators hope that if they can demonstrate their ability to govern in an efficient manner, they will in time obtain recognition from the American Government.[13]

McCafferty believed that it was the General's desire to gain United States approval and ultimate recognition that caused him to provide a good administration.

Recognition in itself is not constitutive, but declaratory; it accepts, but it does not create.[14]

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[12]McCafferty to Stimson, September 26, 1932, D.S. 816.00/902.

[13]Ibid.

[14]John Fisher Williams, "Some Thoughts on the Doctrine of Recognition in International Law," Harvard Law Review, XLVII (March, 1934) 785.

Therefore a refusal of recognition could not alter the existence of objective political realities. The purpose of non-recognition was to cause a non-acceptable or non-cooperative government to fail. Owing to the economic dependence of the Central American countries on the United States, non-recognition was little more than indirect intervention designed to dispose of unacceptable governments. For the most part it was an effective deterrent to the establishment of illegal regimes, but in the case of the irrepressible Martinez the policy faltered.

Washington's continuation of this policy caused its position to appear inconsistent. Within the same period (1930-34) the United States had recognized revolutionary governments in South America, Panama, and the Dominican Republic.[15] This inconsistency bordered on hypocrisy. The Roosevelt-Hull administration needed a collective recognition policy if it were to be saved from future unrest and criticism from Central and Latin America. Two divergent policies for recognition, one for the

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[15]Buell, "Union or Disunion in Central America," p. 485.

Central American republics based on a punctilio of a treaty the United States had never signed, and the second, for the rest of the world, based on the de facto control of a government over its nation, were incompatible.

The fact that Martínez was providing his country with a stable and relatively honest administration made Washington's continued stand on non-recognition seem all the more untenable. In March of 1932, the British Ambassador to Washington informed the Department of State that his country was now considering recognition of Martínez. The British position was simple: "if and when Martínez had consolidated his position and his continuance in power were obvious," he would be recognized.[16] This started something of a diplomatic rift between the United States and Great Britain with Washington claiming that Salvadorean recognition would amount to an infraction of the catch-all Monroe Doctrine. Stimson added:

> The Department is distinctly disappointed at the lack of cooperation of the British Government in

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[16]Stimson to the American Embassy in London, March 9, 1932, D.S. 816.01/124A.

> this connection and feels that in view of the fact that when there is trouble in Central America the latter has often in the past asked this Government to protect its nationals there, this Government could expect that the British Government would cooperate with it in the matter of non-recognition of a revolutionary regime in Central America, rather than with European powers having no considerable interests there, especially when the whole policy and endeavor of this Government, in this case as in general, is to bring about peace and stability and the maintenance of order in Central America.[17]

Stimson seemed particularly piqued by the idea that the British were going to leave the matter of recognition to the judgment of their Chargé d' Affaires in San Salvador. This man was not a career diplomat, but a coffee planter. As such he was pro-Martínez, having already signed a statement to his Government declaring that the new Government was not revolutionary.[18] Stimson further stated:

> Since the matter of British recognition is to be left to the Chargé d' Affaires it will follow shortly. He is pro-Martínez and convinced of his non-participation in the 1931 revolt. The question of Martínez's participation in the revolt is academic as he is barred by other provisions of the Treaty.[19]

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[17] Ibid.

[18] New York Times, March 12, 1932, p. 6; see also, Ibid., March 13, p. 23.

[19] Stimson to the American Legation in London, March 9, 1932, D.S. 816.01/124A.

The British, however, were unimpressed by American arguments and in October of 1932 extended their recognition to El Salvador. The British Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Captain Anthony Eden, gave the following reasons for the British actions: "Because the present government of El Salvador has given evidence of stability, and in order that there might be more effective representation of British commercial and financial interest in that country."[20] British recognition opened the way for other nations to follow its lead. By August of 1933, Martínez, still unrecognized by the United States and the rest of Central America, had been recognized by twenty-seven countries in Europe and Asia and by nine in Latin America.[21] Realizing that the Treaty of 1923 was the only stumbling block to recognition, the

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[20] New York Times, October 26, 1932, p. 4.

[21] According to the Salvadorean Ministry of Foreign Affairs (August, 1933), the Martinez government had been recognized by Austria, Belgium, China, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Great Britain, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Norway, Persia, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, Siam, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the Vatican; and in Latin America by Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela., Thompson, Foreign Policy Reports, June, 1933, p. 147.

President of Costa Rica (by decree, December 23, 1933) and Martínez (also by decree, December 26, 1933) denounced the Treaty, effective January 1, 1934. Their action was directly concerned with Article II.

This action by the Salvadorean Government was not surprising. Since the de facto Government had not been recognized, its denunciation of the Treaty was actually meaningless. What it did demonstrate was that if the purpose of the United States, via non-recognition, had been to dislodge Martínez or weaken his regime to the point of collapse it had failed. Possibly the reason for his ability to last without recognition was that his Government was not hampered by other forms of pressure usually present with non-recognition, particularly economic sanctions. This proved that non-recognition alone could not remove a problematic regime. If this measure were to be effective it must be accompanied by some other sanctions "to put teeth into it."

The Salvadorean denunciation, however, was not challenged; and with two of the five nations denouncing the Treaty only one more was needed to make the Treaty void. Written into the Treaty was a clause that provided for its abrogation at such time as three of the

five Central American republics agreed it was necessary. The prospects of finding a third country to do so were slight without the United States' overt or covert agreement.

The United States preferred to work within the context of the Treaty avoiding its abrogation. On the other hand, Washington realized that Martínez was scrupulously maintaining the best possible relations with the United States under the existing circumstances. In May of 1933, the National Assembly negotiated an agreement with the representatives of the bondholders for the 1923 loan to begin again the payment of the loan that had been interrupted in January of 1932. This agreement was acceptable to the fiscal agent in San Salvador and the New York bondholders.[22] Martínez kept his word that the interruption was temporary and not a repudiation of the debt; it had been an emergency measure to get his administration through a crisis caused, at least in part, by American non-recognition. This became the first instance

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[22]See Chester Lloyd Jones, The Caribbean Since 1900 (New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1936), p. 466, for an account of how this was achieved and the terms agreed upon.

during the depression where a country that had previously suspended foreign loan payments voluntarily resumed its payment obligations.[23] Despite non-recognition, contacts between the two countries were as cordial as possible. The San Salvador newspaper, La Republica, reported on September 19, 1933, "In brief, it may be asserted that the relations of El Salvador with the United States are at present as cordial as before, and if the Government of which General Maximiliano H. Martínez is not yet recognized, this is due to the maintenance of a point of view which the North American Government must rectify in the future."[24]

Ambassador Willard Leon Beaulac filled in for Charge McCafferty briefly while the latter was on leave in the United States. During this period, he said, "interaction between the two Governments was such that non-recognition existed only as so many words on paper. There were no meaningful differences in the day-to-day relationship of the two countries."[25]

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[23] New York Times, June 25, 1932, II, p. 10.

[24] La Republica, September 19, 1933, p. 1.

[25] Interview, February 14, 1968.

Because of El Salvador's history of economic dependence on the United States and the concomitant decline in Salvadorean-American trade, the diplomats, lawyers, and legislators connected with the de facto regime were leaving no stone unturned in their quest to gain de jure recognition. The National Assembly, on August 26, 1932, seized upon a point of international law to aid their case. They declared that since the Treaty had not been registered with the Secretary of the League of Nations, under Article 18, it was invalid.[26] This appears to have been a valid point. Ironically, they also charged that the Treaty had not fulfilled the purpose for which it was intended, i.e. to prevent revolutions.

The United States was faced with the realization that Martínez was the Government of El Salvador and that it was losing support in its policy of non-recognition. Costa Rica on January 3, 1934, formally recognized Martinez and with El Salvador became the second signatory to denounce the Treaty of 1923.[27] The Martinez Government

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[26]Woolsey, "The Recognition of the Government of El Salvador," 328.

[27]Dana G. Munro, The United States and the Caribbean Area (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1934), p. 213.

had now successfully maintained itself in office for two full years despite the lack of the United States' recognition.

The policy of non-recognition had been the subject of much criticism. Perhaps the most obvious weakness was that it was a form of intervention designed to produce a period of uncertainty detrimental to the country concerned. Other critics have asserted that the Treaty discouraged justifiable revolutions against oppressive dictatorships.[28] The idea that a successful revolutionary government should be faced with a complicated set of regulations designed by another country, or group of countries, to legitimatize its position in order to gain recognition belongs to the area of academic idealism. Imagine facing a group of revolutionaries with demands like:

> No Washington, Franklin or Hamilton of the revolution may head the new government; no new government may immediately consolidate its position by de jure recognition; the revolutionary disturbances must be followed by months of the uncertain vicissitudes of a constitutional

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[28] Ibid.

> convention, political manoeuvers, campaigning, and finally by general elections held by the provisional government--all before the country can settle down to normal political life.[29]

On the other hand, it may be cogently argued that the unstable Central American countries needed a damper on their internal and international conflicts. Since 1907, when the policy was originated, there were no international wars and relatively few revolutions in Central America. It may well be true that the less stable Central American countries' fear of non-recognition by Washington had deterred political activists from revolutions designed to gain office or personal fortune.[30] In Dr. Munro's words, "The provisions of the Treaty discouraged revolutions during the 1920's; all the leaders wanted to stay on the sidelines in order to be eligible for recognition in the next government."[31]

Professor J. Fred Rippy, an astute critic of the Central American policy of the Department of State,

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[29]Dennis, "Revolution, Recognition and Intervention," p. 212.

[30]New York Times, February 4, 1934, IV, p. 8.

[31]Interview, December 29, 1967.

attacked Stimson's doctrinare use of the 1923 Treaty. Stimson claimed that American policy in the area was predicated on our desire for stability and order, adding, "We have acted at their [the Central American republics] earnest desire and in cooperation with them."[32] Professor Rippy took issue with Stimson's statement pointing out that the pronoun "them" can only refer to Presidents of Central America in 1923.[33] The fact that there had never been a plebiscite or Central American referendum showed that it certainly could not refer to the people of these countries. In other words, for any of the Presidents ratifying the 1923 Treaty it could be used as a sort of legalized continuismo to keep them and their friends in office. Professor Rippy described this Central American policy as being "apparently based upon these three assumptions: That revolutions are not necessary there; that orderly, democratic self-government, after the manner of England and the United States is possible in the region; and that the United States has

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[32]Henry L. Stimson, "Secretary Stimson's Statement on Our Latin-American Policy," Current History, XXXIII (March, 1931), 920.

[33]J. Fred Rippy, "The Right of Revolution in Latin America," Current History, XXXIV (April, 1931), 12.

the right and duty to maintain order in the Caribbean area."[34] The truth of the matter is, however, that since fair and intelligent elections seldom were held in dictatorship-prone Central America, often the only vehicle for change was revolution. Professor Rippy further asserted:

> It would appear that the present policy of the United States is neither wise nor just. It exposes the United States to the charge--difficult to refute--of using its great strength to advance the interests of its own capitalists and of preferring profits and world power to human liberty. It is not just to the people of the Caribbean to fasten a succession of dictators upon them by denying them the right of revolution. It would be better for these people if the State Department took the additional step of guaranteeing free elections, but this would involve the United States in further intervention in their domestic affairs. It would seem wiser either to return to the old policy of de facto recognition and strict non-intervention, or to accept the cooperation of other nations in developing the political life of the region.[35]

Owing to the fact that El Salvador and Costa Rica were by their own actions no longer bound to the Treaty of 1923, the other three Central American republics had to reconsider their policy irrespective of the Treaty. If for no other reason than expediency, they made known

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[34] Ibid., p. 15.

[35] Ibid., p. 16.

to the Department of State their willingness to recognize the Martínez Government.[36]

Realizing that Martínez had consolidated his regime and that he would be recognized by Costa Rica on January 1, 1934, the Department desired to find a means of recognizing the General and still maintaining a treaty relationship between the Central American republics. Ambassador Willard L. Beaulac came up with this plan to solve the problem:

1. That the American Minister to Nicaragua should informally ask President Sacasa to agree with the Presidents of Guatemala and Honduras among themselves that the provisions of the 1923 Treaty would no longer be applicable to El Salvador and Costa Rica because of their previous denunciations; and

2. that the Presidents of Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras would agree that the Treaty was still in force with respect to their countries; and

3. that all five countries would agree to resubscribe to a document similar to the 1923 General Treaty of Peace and Amity, at a conference to be held in the future at Washington

4. President Sacasa, if he agrees, should be encouraged to put this plan forward to the

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[36]New York Times, January 27, 1934, p. 14.

Presidents of Guatemala and Honduras as his own initiative.

5. If these Presidents agree to the plan, and subsequently extend recognition to El Salvador, the United States would do likewise.[37]

President Sacasa agreed and the plan was put into operation. The three countries still bound by the Treaty declared that since El Salvador had denounced it that they could act toward her as a country outside of the Treaty's scope of influence.[38] In view of all the circumstances, they came to the conclusion that it was not feasible to follow a treaty policy outside the circle of treaty members.

The State Department made known its desire to have Martínez recognized and encouraged the signatories to action on recognition.[39] In what appears to have been a face-saving gambit by the Department of State, the United States waited until the remaining three countries had recognized Martínez to make it appear that Washington was only following the wishes of the signatory nations.

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[37]Interview, February 14, 1968. See also The Acting Secretary of State, Phillips, to Hull, January 3, 1934, D.S. 816.01/344A.

[38]Woolsey, "The Recognition of the Government of El Salvador," 328.

[39]The American Chargé d' Affaires Lawton, to Guatemala, to Stimson, January 24, 1934, D.S. 816.01/401.

Assistant Secretary Welles made this ploy clear in his note to President Franklin D. Roosevelt calling for our recognition of El Salvador after its recognition by the signatories of the 1923 Treaty.[40]

Further face-saving is seen in the invitation extended by Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras to El Salvador and Costa Rica to re-subscribe to the Treaty of 1923, or to a modification instrument of the same general scope.[41] Once again the United States would agree to the new or modified Treaty.[42] On January 26, 1934, the United States instructed the American representative in El Salvador to extend recognition to the Government of that country.[43]

The concepts of the "new Deal" and "Good Neighbor" policies, and the attitude of the United States expressed at the Montevideo Conference evidently

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[40]Assistant Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, January 25, 1934, 816.01/405. Quoted in Foreign Relations of the United States: 1934, Vol.5, pp. 255-256. See also Appendix C.

[41]See Appendix C.

[42]Woolsey, "The Recognition of the Government of El Salvador," 326.

[43]Stimson to McCafferty, January 26, 1934, D.S. 816.01/412.

precipitated the end of Salvadorean non-recognition.[44] No longer would Washington force its wishes on the Latin American countries via direct intervention.[45] A new era of reciprocity and mutual respect was tenuously ushered in at this time.

The benefit to the United States from the abrogation of this Treaty is obvious. The Roosevelt-Hull administration could now apply the same policy of recognition throughout all of Latin America, at least to the extent that Washington would no longer be blamed for imposing unpopular pacts on weaker countries and maintaining a doctrinaire position on their enforcement. With this measure taken, the Roosevelt-Hull administration had taken a further, decisive step in clearing up grievances in Latin America.[46] Dr. Munro commented, "We were glad to get out of it; there was always the danger that someone would call our bluff."[47]

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[45]Bryce Wood, The Making of the Good Neighbor Policy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 149.

[46]Dennis, "Revolution, Recognition and Intervention," p. 208.

[47]Interview, December 29, 1967.

With Martínez recognized, the United States was freed from the last vestige of the Wilsonian recognition policy. While this action seemed to imply a change of policy toward the Central American republics, their proximity to the United States, economic dependence, and relative weakness still made the expression of any American position a form of intervention. The only real change was that the foreign policy of the United States had reverted to the practice it had followed from Jefferson to Wilson; only the paradox created by a double standard had been removed.

> Here in El Salvador there are three classes: the rich, the poor, and Maximiliano Hernández Martínez.[1]
>
> --Salvadorean Saying

VI. EPILOGUE

With recognition extended by the United States and the other Central American Republics, Martínez further strengthened his hold on the nation. The more substantial elements of the country remained squarely behind his regime. Because of the evident will of the politically articulate, Martínez acceded to "their wish" for him to remain President. In response to their wishes the General scrupulously observed every punctilio of the Constitution, resigning his office in August of 1934 in favor of his Minister of War. Upon assuming the Presidency, he in turn named the General Minister of War. This accomplished, Martínez announced his candidacy for the Presidency for the term beginning in March of 1935. As the sole candidate he was easily elected, choosing the interim President as his Vice President.[2] Again in

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[1]Martin, "Four Strongmen and a President," p. 422.

[2]Corrigan to Hull, January 15, 1935, D.S. 816.00/977.

1939 and 1943 Martínez was able to continue as President, setting aside the constitutional provision prohibiting presidents from succeeding themselves. Thanks to his ability to satisfy the military and the wealthy plantation owners, the General was able to hold office without real opposition. When World War II broke out the United States' strong desire for Latin American stability helped him practice effective continuismo in maintaining his Presidency. His popularity, however, had begun to wear thin.

The end of his regime did not come in the usual way. There was no conspiratorial or activist revolt; in fact there was no real revolt. A spontaneous general strike in 1944 completely immobilized the country, ultimately paralyzing all economic activity. One observer described the strike as follows:

> The people carried out a general shutdown, private and public offices closed, railroads and busses stopped running. Everything stopped. The Government searched for the leaders to capture them and end the revolution. But there were no leaders. The University started it; but, after that, it was all the people spontaneously.[3]

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[3]Quoted by Charles W. Anderson, "El Salvador," in Political Systems of Latin America, ed. by Martin C. Needler. (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1964), p. 58.

In the face of the ubiquitous demand for his resignation, Martínez was forced to step down. He had been well prepared for a revolution or guerrilla movement, but a full-scale general strike carried out peacefully accomplished what mobs and barricades could not.

Owing to the paternalism that permeates much of Latin American life, strong dictators like Jorge Ubico, Rafael Trujillo and Maximiliano Martínez tend to be remembered more as stern fathers than bloody dictators. As the Dutch sociologist, Gerrit Huizer, has written, the Salvadorean peasants

> . . . don't seem to care much about civil liberties. They prefer order and security. Martínez was a "man," according to them. He knew how to keep order and to prevent murder and other crimes with a strong hand. Now there is more danger everywhere. Besides this he carried out great works, like the Pan-American Highway and other things that gave employment. He also leased much land for low rents to poor campesinos for many years, so that they got some feeling of security.[4]

It is true that the General had included certain public improvements in his programs and that after his disposition Salvadoreans pointed proudly to the roads,

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[4]Gerrit Huizer, "Some Observations in a Central American Village," América Indígena, XXIII (1963) pp. 222-223.

bridges, and financial stabilization as part of his legacy. But there was another part of that legacy--a precedent was established that lasts to this day--the belief that in the Western Hemisphere vicious fratricide and ruthless suppression of the impoverished masses can be justified under the guise of "fighting Communism."

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A[1]

THE AMERICAN MINISTER TO GUATEMALA, WHITEHOUSE, TO SECRETARY OF STATE STIMSON

DECEMBER 9, 1931

President Araujo sent his former Postmaster General to see me last evening to request that I transmit to you the following memorandum which he handed me:

CHARGES AGAINST THE VICE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY OF WAR GENERAL MARTÍNEZ:

One. [He] received orders and money to pay (the) Army, however, the Army had not been paid for months; in some of the departments it was unpaid since June. Accounts can be verified in the books of the Tesoreria General (Mr. Salvador Trigueros).

Two. [He] ordered all the good armament from the garrisons of the different departments to be sent to the two cuarteles of San Salvador that rebelled. Only one hundred fifty rifles, old ones, and 1200 rounds of ammunition were found by the Government in Sonsonate and less than that in Santa Ana. The orders for the remittance of these arms to the capital issued by the War department can be found at the Comandant's offices in all [fourteen] departments.

Three. About ten days before the revolt he changed his residence from within the city to the neighborhood of the Zapote.

Four. He insisted on having the Escuela de Cabos and Sargentos divided in two sections and placing one in each of the two cuarteles that rebelled.

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[1]D.S. 816.00-Revolutions/37.

Five. Not a single change was made in the personnel of the whole War Department where he persistently refused to appoint persons loyal to President Araujo or of his party.

Six. President Araujo, the firing having already started, went to his private office and spoke by phone to General Martínez and after telling him what was happening ordered him to come immediately to the President's House. General Martínez said "Senor President llego immediateamente" instead of doing that he went in the other direction to the garrison El Zapote from where he directed the movement ordering the chief officer of the military school to join him with the cadets. The fact that General Martínez disobeyed orders from his superior, from the highest military authority, strict orders to report to the President and disobeyed, is enough to condemn him. It is ridiculous to believe that a garrison firing at anything that comes in sight two or three blocks away would open its doors to General Martínez and "take him prisoner." If he had not been in connivance with them he would have had the same fate that Mr. Francisco Espinsoa, Secretary of Finance, met.

It is true that the Constitution provides the right of revolt in case of a tyrannical government but in that case only from the people and never under any circumstances for the army officers who have taken an oath of loyalty . . . .

APPENDIX B[2]

MANIFESTO OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL PRESIDENT, GENERAL MAXIMILIANO HERNANDEZ MARTÍNEZ, TO THE SALVADOREAN PEOPLE

Fellow Citizens:

An overwhelming majority of you has requested me to continue at the head of the destinies of the Nation as Constitutional President of the Republic, and different social organizations and groups in the country, in unison with the mothers of Cuscatlan, have cause to be brought to my knowledge, the desire of all of you that the efforts cease for obtaining the recognition of the sister and foreign countries which have maintained and are maintaining with our Government the best international and friendly relations in spite of the lack of recognition. As a patriotic citizen, as a soldier and as Constitutional President of the Republic, in view of your insistence and of the moving and patriotic manifesto which the Army addressed to the Salvadorean people making it known that it supports my Constitutional Government, I must at this time tell you: that I accede to your desire and that I will continue at the head of the Government for the term which our Constitution provides.

Fellow Citizens:

I thank you and promise you that the rule of my acts shall be our Fundamental Law and your noble aims that the Constitution be respected by national and foreigners.

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[2]Enclosed in a dispatch from the American Charge d' Affaires, William J. McCafferty to Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson, June 10, 1932, D.S. 816.00/876.

I do not deem it necessary to call to the attention of the national conscience the constitutionality of my Government, since a great majority of you elected me Vice President in the ballots of January 1931. In doing so it was in the exercise of constitutional right, and the Honorable Legislative Assembly received by solemn oath to carry out the duties of my post.

For reasons which you know, the titular President, Engineer Arturo Araujo, abandoned the National territory, and the Military Directorate, on the fourth of December last, called me to the exercise of the post which I am now filling with the approval of the vast majority of you. And on demonstrating tc you my unbreakable purpose of remaining in the office of Chief Magistrate of the State, within the Constitutional canons, I pledge to you once more my honor as a military man and a patriot that I will endeavor to continue deserving the confidence which you have placed in me and that I will have no other aspiration than the greatness and welfare of our Fatherland.

APPENDIX C[3]

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE, SUMNER WELLES, TO PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

WASHINGTON, JANUARY 8, 1934

My Dear Mr. President: I am submitting for your consideration, with the approval of the Secretary of State, who has been consulted by cable, a suggested procedure for arriving at the recognition of the present government of El Salvador by the United States.

The Central American countries, meeting in Washington, in 1923, at the invitation of the Government of the United States, signed a Treaty of Peace and Amity, intended principally to discourage revolution, in which, among other things, they agreed not to recognize as president, in the case of a Central American Government coming into power through a revolution or coup d' état, anyone who had been a leader of the revolution or coup d' état or who had held a cabinet office in the six months preceding the revolution or coup d' état.

In December, 1931, a military revolt in El Salvador resulted in the elevation to the presidency of General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez. Since General Martínez had been Minister of War until within two or three days prior to the revolution, the other Central American Republics declined to recognize him as President. In accordance with a policy, already announced and well established, of supporting the Treaty, the United States also declined to recognize General Martínez.

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[3]D.S. 816.01/348. A copy of this letter (D.S. 816.01/350) is initialed, "OK FDR."

Subsequently, however, both El Salvador and Costa Rica denounced the Treaty in accordance with provisions contained therein, to take effect as of January 1, 1934, and on that date Costa Rica extended recognition to the government of General Martínez. His government is still unrecognized by Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and by the United States.

In view of the denunciation of the Treaty by El Salvador and Costa Rica, it is suggested that the three remaining Central American countries, to which the Treaty still applies, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, might agree among themselves to regard the Treaty as being in force with respect to the relations maintained by said three States with each other, but not in force with respect to the relations of those States with Costa Rica and El Salvador, the agreement not to apply its terms to countries that have denounced it would be followed by the three Central American countries mentioned, and by the United States.

The agreement would also contemplate the calling, at some future date, of another conference of the Central American States to consider a revision of the General Treaty of Peace and Amity and such action relating to the other treaties signed in 1923 as might appear appropriate. It is believed that such a conference should be held in some other place than Washington; and that the United States should take no active or leading part in the proceedings, while holding itself ready to lend unofficial aid or counsel, in the role of an observer, if requested to do so by the Central American States.

It is the intention, if the present plan meets your approval, to instruct Minister Lane, in Nicaragua, to suggest it informally to President Sacasa with the suggestion that the latter, if the idea appeals to him, put it forward as his own initiative with the Presidents of Guatemala and Honduras.

It would be our purpose throughout the suggested negotiation to have the initiative taken by the Central American States and to have any suggestions emanating from this country regarded as strictly confidential.

Reports from El Salvador indicate that General Martínez has given his country a relatively efficient government and is strongly supported by public opinion. His government has been recognized by a majority of the principal nations of the world. There are indications that the three Central American Governments which have not recognized El Salvador would be glad to extend recognition if they could do so consistently with their treaty obligations. The procedure suggested herein, by leading to the recognition of El Salvador by the three Republics of Central America which have withheld recognition, and by the United States, would constitute another and important step in the establishment of normal, friendly relations among all the nations of America.

Faithfully yours,

SUMNER WELLES

APPENDIX D[4]

CONCLUDING PORTION OF AN UNSIGNED LETTER WRITTEN TO THE AMERICAN LEGATION IN SAN SALVADOR

JANUARY 30, 1932

The Communists had planned a general attack throughout the Republic during the night of the 22nd. It materialized only in the western cities and around Colcon and Santa Tecla. The Communists took several towns, like Juayaua and Izalco, committing indescribable atrocities with men, women and children. The stories heard were appalling. The Indians (mestizos) were repelled where the Government forces were strong but where they were small such forces were annihilated and mutilated: Heads were cut off and exhibited; little girls attacked; men killed wantonly; towns burned; pillage was rampant. The government mobilized loyal forces to combat these hordes of wild bloodthirsty Indians (mestizos). Everyone was allowed to arm himself to protect his person, family and property and all prominent people are seen through the streets carrying pistols and belts heavy with ammunition. Telephone service was discontinued in the city of San Salvador and some long distance telephone wires were cut by the rebels.

Vigilance Committees were organized in the cities to protect them from attack by the Communists. The young men of the best families in San Salvador have joined these committees and mount guard around the National Palace and other Government buildings. To see how this worked I

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[4]Unsigned, unnumbered letter written to the Legation from the Hotel Nuevo Mundo, by an American. Contained in file 816.00, 1932.

joined one of the groups and have done patrol duty at the National Palace, at the cemetery where the Communists were supposed to congregate, and along two of the roads leading into the city. By military order nobody is allowed in the streets after 9 o'clock at night. Our instructions are to halt anyone seen after that hour and to shoot to kill if he does not stop after a second command to halt. If a group of more than two or less than five is seen, the command to halt should be given only once and if more than five are met, fire should be opened on them without any command to halt. After 10 p.m. there is desultory firing going on but this due only to the inexperience of some of those.

The Government has been arresting all those who were listed as Communists. I understand that in San Salvador alone there were 9,000 men listed. They are being arrested as rapidly as they can be located and after one or two days in jail are taken out late at night and conducted to some isolated spot where they are told to disperse and machine gun fire opened on them. They are usually buried where killed. I understand about 600 have been so disposed of in this city alone during the past week. Three waiters of this hotel, who were active campaigners for Communism, have been shot, also one of the barbers from the hotel barbershop. While the city is quiet during the day, it takes a very different aspect after 9 p.m. Rumors of attacks by Communists and of searches by the Government are forever present.

APPENDIX E

ESTIMATES OF THOSE KILLED IN THE SALVADOREAN INSURRECTION OF JANUARY, 1932

SOURCE	APPROXIMATION
General Maximiliano H. Martínez	500[5]
Ambassador Willard L. Beaulac	600[6]
New York Times	1,000[7]
"El Salvador"	several thousand[8]
Charles A. Thompson	3,000-7,000[9]
El Chronista	6,000 plus[10]
John D. Martz	9,000-12,000[11]
Ambassador Thorsten V. Kalijarvi	10,000-20,000[12]
Jules Dubois	14,000[13]
Rollie E. Poppino	25,000[14]

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[5]General Maximiliano Martínez in a statement to the United Press, January 27, 1932. Quoted in Literary Digest, February 6, 1932, p. 16.

[6]In an interview on February 14, 1968, Ambassador Willard L. Beaulac related that when he temporarily took over the post in El Salvador in 1933, he attempted to discover from the Department the number of actual casualties. He was informed that there was no such information available. His personal opinion is that the numbers given by others are vastly exaggerated.

[7]New York Times, February 7, 1932, III, p. 8.

[8]"El Salvador," Third in a series on Central American Countries, No. 78, Department of State, April 27, 1935, D.S. 816.00/807, p. 3.

[9]Charles A. Thompson, "The Caribbean Situation: Nicaragua and El Salvador," Foreign Policy Reports, IX, No. 13, August 30, 1933, p. 147.

[10]El Chronista, (Tegucigalpa, Guatemala), February 13, 1932, p. 1.

[11]John D. Martz, Central America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), p. 82.

[12]Ambassador Thorsten V. Kalijarvi represented the United States as Ambassador to El Salvador from 1957 to 1961. His estimate is in his book: Central America: Land of Lords and Lizards (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, In., 1962), p. 112.

[13]Jules Dubois, Operation America: The Communist Conspiracy in Latin America (New York: Walker and Company, 1963), p. 238.

[14]Rollie E. Poppino, International Communism in Latin America (London: Free Press of Glenco, 1964), p. 141.

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The major source for the preparation of this thesis has been the diplomatic material contained in the State Department Records in the National Archives. The correspondence regarding El Salvador in Decimal Files 816.00, 816.01, and 816.00-Revolutions provide the bulk of material for this paper. Along with the National Archives collection, the correspondence printed in the Foreign Relations of the United States series has provided much assistance. This diplomatic material, however, would not have been as valuable as it later proved to be if it were not for the gracious assistance given in interviews by some of the diplomats who had written the above documents. Their recollections and observances helped immensely in providing insight into the general tenor and mood of the period

as well as better understanding of the people and emotions directly involved. For an overview of the whole period and an introduction to the scope of the problems facing the Department of State at this time, the help of Dr. Dana Gardner Munro--given in an interview among the files of the National Archives--is without equal. From the vastness of his own recollection, and the immediacy of the research he is doing among these same files he graciously afforded much that could not otherwise have been discovered in any written form.

For the history of El Salvador there is no comprehensive work in the English language. Bits and pieces of this history can be gathered from the usual textbooks and several good area studies. Among the best of these latter studies are Dr. Munro's two books: The United States and the Caribbean Area and The Five Republics of Central America. Although these works are somewhat dated they are still important because of the author's firsthand knowledge. Alberto De Mestas has written a valuable historical-cultural study of his home land in El Salvador: Pais de Lagos y Volcanes. Other English works of value are John D. Martz's Central

America, and Franklin Dallas Parker's The Central American Republics. These works, however, tend to be too general for a scholarly study of the 1930's. Of more value for this period are Chester Lloyd's The Caribbean Since 1900 and Dexter Perkins' The United States and the Caribbean.

Although sociological studies of Latin America have been of rather recent vintage, there have been several good ones. Among the best studies of elitist elements of Latin America in general is the collection of essays edited by Seymour Lipset and Aldo Solari entitled Elites in Latin America. This work's only major drawback is the overemphasis placed on behavioral studies in a few of the chapters, but in general it is an excellent contribution to this imporant area of study. For information dealing directly with El Salvador during the period of this paper's scope, Richard N. Adams' Cultural Surveys of Panama, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras is unsurpassed for its detailed research and scholarly approach. For insight into Salvadorean culture Lilly de Jongh Osborne's book, Four Keys to El Salvador, is an excellent study.

The main work which relates solely to the Salvadorean Church and its leaders, their opinions and social convictions is Ramon Lopez Jimenez's Mitras Salvadoreñas.

The studies of Central American Communism are regrettably few. The best of these is Robert J. Alexandar's Communism in Latin America. The author has done very careful research, and the resulting work is remarkable free of political bias. Jules Dubois' Operation America: The Communist Conspiracy in Latin America is a valuable source, but the author's bias tends to color events in such a way as to detract from the work's overall value. Another valuable source on Communism's growth and spread in Latin America is Rollie E. Poppino's International Communism in Latin America. This work is also the most up-to-date.

The most difficult parts of this paper to find trustworthy sources for were the sections relating to international law and criticisms of the 1923 Treaty. The most valuable primary source in this area was Secretary of State Stimson's speech recorded in Current History, XXXIII. Fortunately, this speech was intended to be a summary of the two types of recogni-

tion being used in Latin America covering the period up to the Salvadorean golpe of 1931, but before it occurred. There have been several articles of great value regarding the United States' recognition policy for Central America, and in particular the problem of recognition as it related to General Martinez's Government. Chandler P. Anderson's "The Central American Policy of Non-Recognition" in the January 1925 American Journal of International Law, was especially helpful. Two articles by Raymond Leslie Buell, "Union or Disunion in Central America", (Foreign Policy Reports, July 22, 1933) and, "The United States and Central American Revolutions," (Foreign Policy Reports, July 22, 1932) are both excellent treatments of the problems of international law in Central America. For good criticisms of the American Latin American Policy, see J. Fred Rippy's "The Right of Revolution in Latin America" in Current History, XXXIV (April, 1931); and Charles A. Thompson's "The Caribbean Situation: Nicaragua and El Salvador," in Foreign Policy Reports (August 30, 1933).

The most valuable source for an understanding of the changes that had to be effected to bring about the Good Neighbor Policy is Bryce Wood's The Making of the Good Neighbor Policy. Charles W. Anderson's chapter on "El Salvador" in Political Systems of Latin America (ed. by Martin C. Needler) is a good summary of Salvadorean political history and also provides an introduction to the various power blocs of the country.

In general the most rewarding sources in connection with paper's research have been the interviews with Dr. Dana G. Munro, (December 29, 1967, Washington, D.C.), Ambassador Jefferson Caffery (by telephone, June 12, 1968), Dr. H. Freeman Matthews, (also by telephone, June 12, 1968), and Ambassador Willard Leon Beaulac, (February 4, 1968, St. Louis). These men have graciously given of their time and provided some of the most perceptive analysis used in this paper.

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