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The middle men : the American Foreign Service and the dictators of Central America, 1930-1952

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Citation

Berk, J. H. H. van den. (2012, June 7). *The middle men : the American Foreign Service and the dictators of Central America, 1930-1952*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/19048>

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Title: The middle men : the American Foreign Service and the dictators of Central America, 1930-1952

Issue Date: 2012-06-07

Chapter 4

THE STUDENT AND THE MASTER Strongmen become dictators, 1934-1936

¿Qué mi importa el buen vecino?

~ Juan Bautista Sacasa, 1936

Early in 1936, Arthur Bliss Lane, the U.S. Minister to Nicaragua, was set to be transferred to the Baltic States. One afternoon, he discussed his farewell speech with the President of the Republic, Juan Bautista Sacasa. The president asked Lane whether he could mention in his speech that the United States supported constitutional government in Nicaragua. Sensing a trap, Lane answered diplomatically that he could mention U.S. interest in peace in the region and the progress that had been made under Franklin Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy in recent years. At this point the Nicaraguan president got "very hot" and exclaimed: "What do I care about the Good Neighbor?"¹

Much like Ubico and Carías, Sacasa was elected to office in 1932 in a contest that was deemed one of the fairest the country ever witnessed. The American role in this election was larger, and certainly more evident, than that in the Guatemalan and Honduran elections: U.S. Marines had occupied the Central American Republic since 1928 and had supervised the presidential elections there. An indication of the fairness of the elections, despite foreign meddling, was that the winner, Juan Sacasa, was a former rebel General who had spent years fighting the Marines. In Washington, U.S. policymakers congratulated each other for their open-mindedness in recognizing a rogue caudillo as the president in one of the sister republics. And as we have seen in Chapter 2, the State Department victoriously announced in 1933 that "[f]or the first time in the memory of Nicaraguans, the government in power, both president and Congress, is known to represent the freely manifested will of the Nicaraguan people".²

So why did Lane find it necessary, in 1936, to avoid mention of U.S. support for constitutional government? Why was Sacasa so disappointed in the Good Neighbor? The answer, as far as Nicaragua is concerned, is that Sacasa's election had depended on U.S. intervention on behalf of constitutional government in 1932. Since that time, however, the U.S. carefully moved away from intervention – a move which was completed under Franklin Roosevelt's Good Neighbor. Although this was not evident at first, the Good Neighbor would eventually renounce interference as well as outright military intervention: meaning that American diplomats in Latin America would refrain

¹ Lane to Corrigan, July 22, 1936, Arthur Bliss Lane papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, Yale University at New Haven, Connecticut (henceforth Lane Papers), Box 63, Folder 1126.

² See chapter 2, pages 94-96.

from any action that could be seen as an attempt to influence local politics, even if it was to support democracy. This is why Lane would only commit his government to a completely non-offensive policy of supporting peace.

The problem for Sacasa was that he had a mortal enemy in Nicaragua. Only a couple of years before, Nicaragua, much like Honduras, had no professional, centralized army organization. Instead, partisan militias battled each other for political influence. North American observers opined that this situation did not bode well for free elections. Therefore, U.S. Marines trained a *Guardia Nacional* which was to be a nonpartisan constabulary with a single mission: to protect Nicaragua's constitutional government. At the time of the founding of the Guardia, the then-government together with then-minister Matthew Hanna selected as the chief of the new organization one Anastasio Somoza—a charming fellow who spoke excellent English. Unfortunately, Somoza turned out to be something less than a non-partisan protector of the Nicaraguan constitution. After the Marines had left Nicaragua in early 1933, he remorselessly pursued the presidency together with his *Guardia*. By the time Lane was writing his farewell speech, both the presidential palace and the *Guardia* headquarters were heavily armed and fortified and ready for final battle.³

Because the Guardia inherited a virtual arms monopoly from the Marines, there was little that Sacasa could do, in a military sense, to save his presidency. His only hope was that the U.S. would *step in* to salvage his administration, but this was exactly what Good Neighbor Roosevelt had promised *not* to do. Minister Lane himself was certainly not immune to Sacasa's entreaties on behalf of democracy and against a military dictatorship that would certainly follow a Somoza coup. Opining that the Guardia was "pseudo-fascist" and "militaristic" and certainly inconsistent with American ideals, the Minister complained to a friend in the State Department that:

[T]he people who created the G[uardia] N[acional] had no adequate understanding of the psychology of the people here. Otherwise they would not have bequeathed Nicaragua with an instrument to blast constitutional procedure off the map. Did it ever occur to the eminent statesmen who created the GN that personal ambition lurks in the human breast *even* in Nicaragua? In my opinion it has been one of the sorriest examples on our part of our inability to understand that we should not meddle in other people's affairs.⁴

In the end, Somoza proved himself an astute enough politician not to "blast" his way into the presidential palace. But, using the *Guardia* as his power base, he did become his nation's chief executive—just weeks after Lane left Nicaragua. His ascendancy confirmed an important lesson that local politicians had taught the Americans earlier: after many years of elections under U.S. tutelage, *power* was to be the new kingmaker of Central America. The students became the masters.

³ This general overview is based on Crawley, *Somoza and Roosevelt*, Clark, *Diplomatic Relations*, Flacoff, "Somoza", and Walter, *The Regime*.

⁴ Lane to Beaulac, July 27, 1925, Lane Papers, Box 61, Folder 1102.

The current chapter will discuss the era of “*continuismo*”—a Spanish word which, in this context, refers to the illegal continuance of power of a government beyond its constitutional term. Somoza’s rise to power in Nicaragua presented only the endpoint of a learning process for the American diplomatic establishment. Beginning with Ubico, all the Central American presidents had themselves “reelected” around 1935, despite constitutional limitations on presidential terms in all of these republics. This event challenged U.S. diplomats’ perception of the local rulers as simply “strong” men who had come to power with the explicit or implicit consent of the people. After the successful *continuismo* campaigns in Central America, there was no question that these rulers were dictators. Much like Lane, U.S. diplomats in the region had some difficulty accepting this new fact. Most, if not all, of them assumed that *continuismo* would not meet with the approval of the State Department. However, the State Department valued its policy of non-intervention and the Good Neighbor much too highly to be willing to discard it in favor of supporting honest elections in Central America. This was not always easy to accept for the local diplomats who were as yet innocent of the rigidity of the Good Neighbor policy.

1. THE GOOD NEIGHBOR AND NONINTERVENTION

Throughout the years of Franklin Roosevelt’s presidency, the Good Neighbor policy came to have many meanings. It started with a fairly cryptic reference in Roosevelt’s first inauguration address, where the new president announced that his foreign policy would be based on the principle of the good neighbor: “the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others”. While no special mention was made of Latin America at first, the Good Neighbor policy eventually became synonymous with Washington’s inter-American policy. Exactly what that policy was, changed over time. During Roosevelt’s first term, foreign policy was mainly left to the devices of the State Department while the president focused on the causes and effects of the Great Depression at home. The Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, an ardent Believer in free trade, focused on improving economic relations with the rest hemisphere—which led to the negotiation of several new trade treaties. After 1936 however, the president himself began to take the lead in Latin American policy: attempting to forge a hemisphere-wide political alliance against the threat of Fascism emanating from Europe.

But before any new economic or political relationship between North and South could be formed, old wounds needed attention. Many of the neighbors to the south of the United States felt that the “colossus of the north”, as it was sometimes called, had been overbearing and arrogant in its dealings toward them over the past decades. A systematic campaign of public diplomacy and cultural outreach was one of the responses of the Roosevelt administration. Activities in this field ranged from high-worded speeches by equally high-placed American leaders, up to and including the President, during numerous inter-American conferences to Washington’s successful attempts to enlist the cooperation of Hollywood companies in producing more favorable

stereotypes of Latin Americans. While effective in themselves, these “public relations” efforts could easily have come to naught if Washington’s lofty words were not somehow backed up by deeds—or rather, the lack thereof.⁵

That is why, regardless of the great variety of initiatives that made up the Good Neighbor, the non-intervention principle was always considered as the backbone of Washington’s policy, both in the United States and in Latin America. Some discussion will always be current among historians about who was responsible for the introduction of the important principle. It is obvious that the Hoover administration was well underway to establish non-intervention as a fixture of its Latin American policies. But there were inconsistencies in the Hoover policy, such as the continued occupation of Nicaragua, among other nations, and the employment of the American navy when American lives were thought to be in danger, such as during the *Matanza*. It is also plain that diplomats at Latin American posts, men such as Whitehouse or Lay, had not yet internalized the principle of nonintervention.⁶

So whatever grounds had been cleared during the Hoover years, it was up to the Roosevelt administration to finish the job and to make nonintervention a consistent and unbreakable standard. In terms of high diplomacy, that job was completed by 1936. Already at the inter-American Conference at Montevideo in 1933, Secretary Hull promised that the United States would abide by the nonintervention principle. However, the language of that statement was somewhat vague on the issue of the protection of American lives and interests in the other American republics, creating a loophole that might leave the United States free to take action when its nationals were considered to be in danger. However, at the Pan-American Conference of 1936, Hull made a more definite statement which, theoretically at least, closed the door on U.S. intervention once and for all.⁷

There still remained an issue of day-to-day diplomacy, however. In principle, the concept of nonintervention had been something of a diplomatic dogma at least since the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, which established the modern concept of state sovereignty. The same principle had been recognized by the United States government shortly after its independence—a fact that is easily overlooked when studying the history of U.S.-Latin American relations. But regardless of any formal training that a U.S. diplomat might have received on this point, the reality was that intervention in the “backward” states of Latin America was considered quite appropriate, especially when it was dressed up in the language of a civilizing or democratizing mission. Especially during the first decades of the twentieth century, the U.S. navy had been so busy in the Caribbean that requests for Marines from the American Legations and Consulates in the region had become a

⁵ Many books quoted in these references offer some insight on the Good Neighbor policy. For a general introduction, Wood, *The Making*, passim, Jablon, *Crossroads*, passim and Gilderhus, *Second Century*, Chapter 3, are recommended. Also see Chapters 5 and 6, both section 1, below.

⁶ Wood, *The Making*, 123-135; Gilderhus, *Second Century*, Chapter 3, especially page 73; Schoultz, *Beneath the United States*, 293-296; Gellman, *Good Neighbor Diplomacy*, 3-29.

⁷ Gilderhus, *Second Century*, 78; Schoultz, *Beneath the United States*, 304-305.

matter of course, not to be given much though to.⁸ Thus, there was a very real risk that everything the State Department had tried to accomplish at inter-American conferences would be undone by careless officers in the field. For the Good Neighbor policy to be a success, Washington needed to educate its diplomats about the need to refrain from any sort of intervention or even interference. This job the State Department took upon itself only after considerable delay and confusion.

2. THE CONTINUISMO CAMPAIGNS

By the early 1930s, the Central American nations all had a long, if not entirely successful, history of republican government. Like so many other republics, those of the American isthmus regarded the development of a despotic government, either by a single person, a family dynasty, or an oligarchy, as their main existential threat. Hence, Central American constitutions allowed for short presidential terms, generally four years; listed strict limitations on appointment or election to office of two or more family members, even if it was to consecutive governments; and absolutely prohibited presidential reelection. Some constitutions included an additional obstacle to the ambitious caudillo, determining that any changes to the constitutional articles on reelection would not become effective until new general elections had taken place and a new government had been installed.

These constitutional obstacles were not always effective, but they had survived a century of political strife in Central America. Additionally, the 1923 Treaty boosted the prohibition against reelection by denying diplomatic recognition to unconstitutional governments. The latter did not only include regimes that came to power illegally, but also those that remained in office unconstitutionally. In this context, the United States had intervened several times during the 1920s to prevent Central American presidents from clinging to power, most notably in Nicaragua, but also in El Salvador where American actions led to Romero Bosque's election.

At the same time however, an epidemic was developing in the Caribbean and swept Cuba and the Dominican Republic, promising to infect Central America next. The name of the new disease was *continuismo*. Its symptoms have been catalogued by Russel Fitzgibbon:

Continuismo (...) is the practice of continuing the administration in power in a Latin American country by the process of a constitutional amendment, or a provision in a new constitution, exempting the president in office, and perhaps other elective officials, from the historic and frequent prohibition

⁸ Wood states that it "should not be surprising that a certain sense of the normality, and even propriety of calling on the Marines, should have persisted beyond 1920, independently of the nature of the formal justification for such action; it was a habitual, nearly automatic response to 'disturbed conditions' or 'utter chaos' in a Caribbean country". Wood, *The Making*, 5. Gordon Connell Smith argues that "the Marines had been used to frequently as to seem, to the United States, part of the natural order of things". Gordon Connell-Smith, *The United States and Latin America. A Historical Analysis of Inter-American Relations* (London et al. 1974) 146-147.

against two consecutive terms in office. The precise form of the constitutional change may vary—the general pattern is simple and uniform.⁹

Continuismo was employed by the Cuban dictator Gerardo Machado in 1928 and the Dominican regimes of Horacio Vásquez and Rafael Trujillo in 1928 and 1934. The spread of this practice had been watched closely from Central America, but, due to U.S. involvement in the elections of the early 1930s, had not looked especially promising. That is, until Martínez was recognized in 1934.

During the negotiations that surrounded El Salvador's return to the American fold, Washington made it clear that it supported the "initiative" taken by Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua to maintain the 1923 Treaty among themselves. Officially, the treaty was maintained for another year or so, but those gifted with political acumen already considered it a dead letter. In January 1934, Ubico told the Legation that he did not "understand how President Sacasa and the Department can feel that the Treaty is not being violated [by recognizing Martínez]" and chargé Lawton opined that the "Guatemalan Government would not take a new or modified treaty very seriously".¹⁰ It should not be surprising, then, that Guatemala would be the first of the Central American republics to be touched by the *continuismo* epidemic.

2.1 *Continuismo in Guatemala*

Charge of the legation in Guatemala was transferred from Whitehouse to Matthew Hanna in July 1933. Hanna plays an important role in the "Somoza solution" narrative, because he was the United States minister to Nicaragua from 1929 to 1933—that is, the period when Marines left the country and Anastasio Somoza became chief of the *Guardia Nacional*. It is undeniable that Hanna played an important role in Somoza's selection as Guardia chief in 1932: the two were good friends and the minister believed that Somoza was the most capable candidate for the job. Concurrently, Hanna signed the agreement which made Somoza the most powerful man—in military terms—of Nicaragua. Not surprisingly, then, Hanna has been reviled in the historiography as the man who cleared the ground for the Somoza dictatorship.

This is not a fair assessment of the minister. Somoza's appointment as Guardia chief was due as much to the political realities in Nicaragua as it was to Hanna's involvement. For example, the list of candidates for the top position in the Guardia was compiled by Juan Sacasa, president-elect at the time and also Somoza's uncle. The final decision on who would be selected from Sacasa's list fell to Hanna and to Nicaraguan President José Moncada, Somoza's cousin. The political leaders of Nicaragua, therefore, were as much in favor of Somoza's appointment as Hanna was. Moreover, the political situation in Nicaragua around Somoza's appointment was so complex, that it would have been impossible for Hanna to foresee that the former was to install a military dictatorship four years later. Arguing that he did would be the same as saying that Sacasa could

⁹ Russel H. Fitzgibbon, "Continuismo: The search for political longevity", in: Hamill, *Caudillos*, 210-217, there 211.

¹⁰ The Chargé in Guatemala (Lawton) to the Acting Secretary of State, January 19, 1934, *FRUS 1934, Vol. V: The American Republics*, 241-243.

have foreseen this event. Since Sacasa was the one who was ultimately disposed from the presidency by Somoza, this seems highly unlikely.

Rather than an agent of the Somoza solution, Hanna was one of the officers in the Foreign Service who was best acquainted with the Good Neighbor policy and its stress on nonintervention—thanks to his experiences in Nicaragua. He was still the U.S. minister to Nicaragua around the time of the 1933 Montevideo Conference, where Secretary Hull promised his Latin American colleagues that the United States would forego military intervention. From a public relations point of view, it was pertinent that U.S. policy in Nicaragua was entirely in agreement with the nonintervention principle around the time of the Montevideo Conference. American Marines left the isthmian republic only months before and unless American policy toward that country was beyond reproach, the Latin delegations in Montevideo would not take Hull's promises seriously. Therefore, Hanna was thoroughly briefed on the non-intervention principle and he would take these lessons with him to Guatemala.¹¹

Around this time, Washington and the Legation still considered Ubico a legitimate ruler and assumed that he would transfer power to another elected president in 1936.¹² The prevailing image of the Guatemalan caudillo was represented in a State Department information bulletin, which, judging by its style and content, appears to be a summary of Foreign Service reports issued by Whitehouse and Hanna. The bulletin argues that the history of Guatemala was marked by “numerous coups d'état”, “several wars”, and “heavy-handed dictatorships”. This situation, says the leaflet, changed when Guatemala subscribed to the Treaties of 1907 and 1923. The last Treaty in particular allowed American minister Whitehouse to elbow Orellana out of office, after which Ubico was elected. The General was the “obvious choice” for the “articulate people of Guatemala” (in contrast to the large Indian population, whose way of life had remained essentially the same as that of their “pre-Columbian ancestors”) who flocked to Ubico because he was a man of “honesty, intelligence, and energy” while his predecessors were “corrupt” and “incapable”. During his tenure in office, continues the leaflet, Ubico took effective measures to battle the Depression and he freed the Indian from the “system of debt servitude” which tied them to their landlords indefinitely. The General had plenty of enemies and sometimes employed high-handed disciplinary actions, but this was mainly due to his honesty and anti-corruption measures. While Ubico himself was “well off” and could “afford to be an honest man” he had to keep his less affluent subordinates in line with “rigid discipline”. “The established of a strong and honest government, following a

¹¹ A good discussion on Hanna's portrayal in the historiography is in Andrew Crawley, *Somoza and Roosevelt. Good Neighbor diplomacy in Nicaragua, 1933-1945* (Oxford 2007) 19-22. Also see page 7-71 for a good analysis of American involvement in the rise to power of Somoza. Also see footnote 3 above and Chapter 8, section 1, and Chapter 9, section 2.1, below.

¹² Hanna to the Secretary of State, Despatch 402, October 30, 1934, (M1280, Roll 1) Political Affairs 1174; Hanna to Ubico, February 13, 1934, PR Guatemala, Vol. 311, cl. 800.1: Chief Executive; Hanna to the Secretary of State, Despatch 533, February 15, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol. 311, cl. 800.1: Chief Executive.

weak and corrupt one, cannot be accomplished without arousing discontent on the part of self-seeking interests” and in this context an “undercurrent of opposition” did develop against Ubico. While some of Ubico’s more heavy-handed measures against the press and the opposition were criticized by the Department, it still believed that it had put Guatemala on a sound footing with its support for the 1923 Treaty and was as yet unwilling to come to terms with the ominous events taking place in Guatemala.¹³

Shortly after Martínez received diplomatic recognition in 1934, Ubico began to solidify his position with a view on continuing in office after the end of the legal term in 1936. Hence, the circumstances in Guatemala at the time Hanna first encountered Ubico were very different from Whitehouse’s initiation into Guatemalan politics. On September 12 of 1934, the government dramatically revealed an extensive plot aimed at assassinating Ubico with a bomb. The plot was genuine, but it also offered a unique chance for Ubico to rationalize the solidification of his control over the nation. In the aftermath of the discovery of the plot many prominent military and political leaders (some of whom came from Ubico’s own party) were arrested, exiled, or even executed for their alleged involvement.¹⁴

Hanna sent a cable to the State Department on September 12, reporting that an official announcement had been made of a “communistic plot to overthrow the Government by assassination and establish a reign of terrorism”.¹⁵ The following days and weeks several arrests and executions took place while the government and the controlled press kept hammering on the theme of Communist terrorism and the “vigorous but just” government action that had prevented it.¹⁶

Hanna’s reports in this period are somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, he seemed to have been willing to go along with the official story, since it conformed with earlier reports on anti-government plotting (reports that Ubico probably made sure the minister would receive) and with his own prejudices. On the communistic nature of the plot, Hanna declares that “there would seem to be some evidence that the leaders of the recent abortive plot (...) were playing on the [*sic.*] criminal instincts of the masses in holding out to the latter the promise that, if the plot should succeed, they could commit all kinds of outrageous acts”. On the other hand, Hanna, who was after all a very experienced officer, remained skeptical about the official government position and seems to have been confused by the many contradictory rumors. He remembered that

¹³ Department of State, Information Series 89, August 3, 1935, (M1280, Roll1), Political Affairs 1240.

¹⁴ Grieb, *Guatemalan caudillo*, 117-118.

¹⁵ Hanna to the Department of State, Telegram 56, September 12, 1934, M1280, Roll 1, 1148.

¹⁶ Hanna to the Department of State, Despatch 402, October 30, 1934, M1280, Roll 1, 1174. Hanna to the Secretary of State, Despatch 362, September 29, 1934, M1280, Roll 2, 814.00B/24; Hanna to the Secretary of State, Despatch 364G, September 29, 1934, M1280, Roll 2, 814.00 General Conditions/82; Hanna to the Secretary of State, Despatch 406G, October 31, 1934, M1280, Roll 2, 814.00 General Conditions/ 83; Hanna, Memorandum for Mr. O’Donoghue, September 25, 1934, PR Guatemala, Vol. 305, cl. 800: Guatemala. Plot against President Ubico; Hanna to the Secretary of State, Telegram 7, September 27, 1934, PR Guatemala, Vol. 305, cl. 800: Guatemala. Plot against President Ubico; Hanna, Memorandum, September 28, 1934, PR Guatemala, Vol. 305, cl. 800: Guatemala. Plot against President Ubico.

the Guatemalan government was “extremely, if not almost fanatically, fearful of communistic influence”, while “other well informed observers seemingly feel that there is little or no true communistic sentiment in the country”.¹⁷

One of the effects of this episode was that Hanna became more sensitive to the dictatorial aspects of Ubico’s reign. Several weeks after the bomb plot was revealed, Hanna admitted that the nation was “completely under the domination of the executive” and that the latter’s reaction to the conspiracy was “ruthless” and “drastic”. At this point, Hanna was not sure whether the fear that Ubico inspired in his opponents would work to his benefit, as “Guatemalan history furnishes abundant evidence that the force of a long harbored and carefully nurtured desire for revenge eventually becomes so impelling as to give little or no heed to the risks involved”.¹⁸ Also, and for the first time, Hanna made a report on the spectacular public celebrations surrounding Ubico’s birthday on November 12. In hindsight, it is obvious that such celebrations were part of the developing “cult of personality” which surrounded the Guatemalan caudillo. Concerning Ubico’s 53rd birthday celebration (which lasted for three days and involved the whole nation in public celebrations and parades), Hanna pronounced the suspicion that the government planted the many laudatory stories about Ubico in the local press. Ignoring the official stance that all celebrations were completely spontaneous and voluntary, the minister also stated that “[p]erhaps having in mind the recent attempt against [Ubico’s] life, officials of the Government, private individuals and the press appeared to vie, each with the other, in offering homage to the President”.¹⁹

In February 1935, Hanna learned from an informant that plans were underway to amend the constitution. One of the articles that was on the list to be updated was Article 66, which limited the presidential term to six years and prohibited the president from succeeding himself. However, even at this advanced state of planning for Ubico’s continuance, Hanna still believed that the correct constitutional procedures would be followed and that, therefore, “Article 66 could not be amended (...) in time for President Ubico to succeed himself”. Although Hanna seems to have thought that the planned amendments to the constitution were of minor significance, he did foresee that “public discussion of [the] project (...) will give rise to suspicions and possibly to charges of an ulterior motive”. It seems probable, even though he did not state this explicitly, that Hanna did not believe that Ubico had “ulterior motives”. If any movement was underway to continue the latter in office, Hanna believed that it would originate from the “many persons who form a part of this administration or who profit in other ways through their connections with it”.²⁰

Hanna’s reluctance to come around to the fact that Ubico was preparing for a second term seems hard to explain. Rumors were rife inside Guatemala and the papers of the Legation show that Hanna could have been aware of discussions about Ubico’s

¹⁷ Hanna to the Department of State, Despatch 342, September 14, 1934, M1280, Roll 1, 1151.

¹⁸ Hanna to the Department of State, Despatch 402, October 30, 1934, M1280, Roll1, 1174.

¹⁹ Hanna to the Department of State, Despatch 418, November 12, 1934, PR Guatemala, Vol. 306, cl. 800.1: Chief Executive.

²⁰ Hanna to the Secretary of State, dispatch 551, February 28, 1935, M1280, Roll 1, 1185.

plans for “reelection” in the Guatemalan exile communities in Costa Rica and New York.²¹ However, American Legation officials from minister down in both Guatemala and Costa Rica believed that the “emigrado politicians” should not be taken too seriously: they were a common appearance in Central America, where the “outs” were forever “disgruntled and bitter toward the ‘ins’”. Some of these exiles were even described as “pathetic”. Hanna himself was no more sympathetic to the exile community than his predecessor Whitehouse had been.²²

While Hanna was not a naïve man, and may have had his doubts about Ubico’s intentions for the future, he and his colleagues had great difficulty re-creating their image of Ubico in the face of evidence which suggested that the General had no intention to leave the presidential palace. Ubico and his supporters were, of course, working towards his continuance in office. They had been for years. The plan was to organize a Constitutional Assembly to consider some minor changes to the constitution. When the Assembly convened, it would be flooded with “spontaneous” petitions from thousands of citizens all over the country calling for the continuance of Ubico. At the same time, the government-controlled press would start a propaganda campaign in favor of Ubico and his many accomplishments. In face of the widespread “popular” clamor, Ubico would “reluctantly” announce his willingness to forgo plans for a quiet retirement and to continue serving his country. However, he would do so only if a special plebiscite demonstrated that it was the unanimous will of the people that he remained as their president for another term of six years. Winning such an election would be no problem in a country where voters were required to sign their ballots with their names.²³

From Ubico’s perspective, the internal situation seemed to be fairly well covered. The press was government-controlled; the army appeared to be loyal and appreciative of government support (especially because dissident officers were eliminated after the 1934 bomb plot); thousands of people in the capital—from the upper classes down to the lower classes—depended on government patronage and jobs; the business community, both foreign and local, was pleased with the peace and stability that the administration offered; the isolated Indian communities in the countryside could be cajoled or forced into submission; etc., etc. To deal with some of the more stubborn elements in the opposition, the Ubico administration still used the 1934 bomb plot and the specter of communist terrorism as a rationale to arrests hundreds as late as May 1935.²⁴

²¹ Leo Sack (U.S. Minister to Costa Rica) to Hanna, Despatch 1576, August 8, 1933, M1280, Roll1, 1122.

²² Eberhardt to the Secretary of State, Despatch 1576, August 8, 1933, M1280, Roll 1, 1122; Edward P. Lawton (U.S. Chargé d’Affaires to Guatemala) to the Secretary of State, Despatch 220, n.d. (March, 1933), M1280, Roll 1, 1134; Edward G. Trueblood (U.S. Chargé d’Affaires to Costa Rica), Despatch 220, April 26, 1934, M1280, Roll 1, 1139; Hanna to the Secretary of State, Despatch 193, May 17, 1934, M1280, Roll 1, 1141.

²³ Grieb, “The United States and General Jorge Ubico’s Retention of Power”, *Revista de Historia de América* 71 (January to June 1971) 119-135.

²⁴ Hanna to the Secretary of State, Despatch 666, May 31, 1935, M1280, Roll 1, 1222.

The international scene, however, was not so secure. The anxiousness of the Ubico administration over the potential international reaction to his intended continuance is demonstrated by his extreme sensitivity to reports about him in the international press. For one thing, Ubico expressed his great dissatisfaction with the reporting of U.S. newspapers. During late 1934, for example, *The New York Times* published several stories dealing with the alleged revolutionary upheavals in Guatemala. Although the reports had some nucleus of truth to them, since the situation in Guatemala had been tense after the revealing of the bomb plot in September, it exaggerated the extent of unrest in the country.²⁵ The Guatemalan Chief of Protocol protested the *Times'* publications, as did the Guatemalan envoy in Washington. The affair was eventually settled when *The New York Times* printed a correction.²⁶ Minister Hanna generally agreed that such "irresponsible" press accounts were damaging inter-American solidarity, but was otherwise somewhat surprised about Ubico's interest in what the foreign press had to say about him. He lectured the Foreign Minister, Dr. Skinner Klee, about the need to relax the strict censorship and to provide proper official information to the international press, so that the world would not remain ignorant of the "splendid administration of President Ubico".²⁷

Despite Ubico's frequent run-ins with the American press over the years, his "special irritation" was reserved for the Costa Rican press.²⁸ Costa Rica was the most liberal Central American state at the time and it tolerated a considerable degree of press freedom. Many of Guatemala's political exiles settled in the country because of its liberal atmosphere and they used the local press to vent their anger for Ubico. To Ubico's mind, these "diatribes" in the Costa Rican press could only exist because the local government actively supported them in a conscious effort to insult the Guatemalan Head of State. As a result, relations between Costa Rica and Guatemala steadily soured. At one point, an official rupture in diplomatic relations seemed eminent.²⁹ Perhaps remembering Ubico's reaction to the bomb plot, Hanna warned the Department that the General's patience was stretched to a "breaking point" by the Costa Rican affair. And since he was a man of "great energy and decision", Hanna believed that Ubico may be expected to "act with vigor" if, in his "exasperation", he should be guided by "the more violent impulses of his character".³⁰

²⁵ Hanna, untitled memorandum, September 29, 1934, PR Guatemala, Vol. 305, cl. 800: Guatemala; Wilson to Hanna, October 18, 1934, PR Guatemala, Vol. 305, cl. 800: Guatemala. As it turned out, the source of the story may have been El Salvador, which at the time used any favorable opportunity to blacken Ubico.

²⁶ Hanna, Memorandum, September 27, 1934, PR Guatemala, Vol. 305, cl. 800: Guatemala. Plot against President Ubico; Hanna, Memorandum, September 29, 1934, PR Guatemala, Vol. 305, cl. 800: Guatemala. Plot against President Ubico.

²⁷ Hanna, untitled memorandum, September 29, 1934, PR Guatemala, Vol. 305, cl. 800: Guatemala.

²⁸ Hanna to the Secretary of State, Despatch 448, December 7, 1934, M1280, Roll 1, 1181.

²⁹ *Idem*.

³⁰ Hanna to the Secretary of State, Despatch 441, November 30, 1934, PR Guatemala, Vol. 305, cl. 800: Guatemala.

To prevent such an outburst the U.S. became involved in mediation attempts between Guatemala and Costa Rica. After weeks of frustrating negotiations, the American legations in Guatemala City and San José got the two contending governments to agree that they would exchange diplomatic envoys to bring about an improvement in their relations. Since both countries were unwilling to take the first step—and in that way imply guilt—a complicated scheme was eventually set up whereby the governments would exchange telegrams at exactly the same moment.³¹ When, on March 7 of 1935, the Guatemalan Foreign Minister told Hanna that the plan for a simultaneous exchange of telegrams was also unacceptable and went on at great, great length about the insults that had appeared in the Costa Rican press, Minister Hanna—who had shown himself to be an extremely patient and tactful diplomat—finally exploded. Not yet aware of Ubico's delicate maneuvers toward *continuismo*, Hanna exclaimed that he found it "difficult to understand a mentality that attached so much importance to newspaper criticism". As an example, Hanna suggested that Hitler would have to break off relations with nearly every country in the world if he were to take foreign newspaper criticism so seriously. Perhaps to soften this comparison, Hanna subsequently suggested that Mexican newspapers also regularly criticized the U.S. government. Somewhat frustrated, Hanna told the Foreign Minister that he had worked hard to contradict the unjustified stories about Ubico among his colleagues from the U.S. and other countries, especially those stories dealing with Ubico's meddling in the affairs of his neighbors. If the Guatemalan government did not accept the current plan, Hanna threatened, "I very much [fear] that I would not be able in the future to express myself with the same clarity and conviction concerning the sincerity of this Government's desires and aims with respect to its Central American neighbors". After the interview with the Foreign Minister, Hanna went to the Legation's offices and dictated a very terse letter to Ubico to express his disappointment over the whole affair.³²

The next day, Hanna was received by Ubico personally. As Hanna explained that the U.S. would not back any Guatemalan demand for Costa Rica to apologize for alleged injustices, the Caudillo interjected that "the relations of Guatemala with the United States throughout its entire history probably entitled it to greater consideration than would be shown to Costa Rica when measured by the same standard". Having re-found his former composure, Hanna tactfully ignored this remark and got Ubico to agree to the—somewhat silly—plan to exchange telegrams with Costa Rica on a fixed date, but at a time of his own choosing. While Ubico at first jokingly remarked that both Costa Rica

³¹ Hanna, untitled memorandum, January 9, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol. 314, 800: Guatemala; Hanna, untitled memorandum, February 8, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol. 314, 800: Guatemala; Sack to Hanna, February 22, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol. 314, 800: Guatemala; Hanna to Sack, February 23, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol. 314, 800: Guatemala; Habba, untitled memorandum, February 25, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol. 314, 800: Guatemala; Hanna to Sack, February 27, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol. 314, 800: Guatemala; Sack to Hanna, February 28, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol. 314, 800: Guatemala; Hanna to Sack, February 28, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol. 314, 800: Guatemala.

³² Hanna to Ubico, March 5, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol. 314, 800: Guatemala; Hanna, untitled memorandum, March 7, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol. 314, 800: Guatemala.

and Guatemala would wait until midnight to send their telegrams, he must have eventually decided that he needed his friends: on March 20 at 11 o'clock in the morning, the Guatemalan government informed its Costa Rican counterpart that a new minister would be sent to the sister republic. One hour later, the Costa Ricans answered with their own telegram.³³

While the hostility between Guatemala and Costa Rica cooled down (temporarily), the real shake-up in Central America was yet to come. In early April of 1935, Ubico's plans for continuance in office went into effect. On April 6, Hanna reported that the national Legislative Assembly had convened to consider several amendments to the constitution. While the article that touched upon the limits of Presidential terms (Article 66) was not on the agenda, several petitions calling for a second term for Ubico were circulating the country. When the petitions were finally handed to the Assembly, Hanna understood this to mean that Ubico would definitely "be continued in office for a second term".³⁴ Hanna quickly resigned himself to the fact that Ubico "has definitely decided to continue in the Presidency and [he will not] be restrained from doing so by either national or international influences".³⁵

It should not be surprising that Hanna thought that he could not come between Ubico and his objectives. As minister to Nicaragua, he had been thoroughly briefed on the nonintervention principle and he had also witnessed Martinez' victory over U.S. resistance from close by. Furthermore, no-one inside Guatemala seemed to be willing to stand up to Ubico. Hanna recognized that the expressions of support that Ubico was receiving were not as spontaneous as his supporters claimed. In fact, people were apathetic to what was going on. After many decades of personal rule and continuismo, Guatemalans had few illusions about their leaders.³⁶ Besides, people were not on the whole opposed to Ubico: The "average man" appreciated the advantages of Ubico's rule. In Hanna's more immediate circle, the foreign business community hoped that six more years of Ubico would bring six more years of "comparative security". The diplomatic community viewed recent events as the outcome of world-wide "economic and political chaos". Most diplomats were content to stay on the sidelines and to regard Ubico's scheming as "a matter of internal politics which Guatemala itself must determine".³⁷ By

³³ Hanna, untitled memorandum, March 8, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol. 314, 800: Guatemala; Sack to Hanna, March 14, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol. 314, 800: Guatemala; Hanna to Sack, March 15, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol. 314, 800: Guatemala; Sack to Hanna March 15, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol. 314, 800: Guatemala; Hanna to Sack, March 20, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol. 314, 800: Guatemala.

³⁴ Hanna to the Secretary of State, Despatch 598, April 6, 1935, M1280, Roll 1, 1191; Hanna to the Secretary of State, Telegram 13, April 10, 1935, M1280, Roll 1, 1192.

³⁵ Hanna to the Secretary of State, Despatch 607, April 16, 1935, M1280, Roll 1, 1197.

³⁶ Hanna to the Secretary of State, despatch 619, April 30, 1935, M1280, Roll 1, 1202; Hanna to the Secretary of State, Despatch 631, May 3, 1935, M1280, Roll 1, 1204.

³⁷ Hanna to the Secretary of State, Despatch 605, April 13, 1935, M1280, Roll 1, 1195; Hanna to the Secretary of State, Despatch 631, May 3, 1935, M1280, Roll 1, 1204.

late April, nearly everyone in Guatemala accepted Ubico's continuance in power as a "fait accompli".³⁸

While Hanna came to accept the fact Ubico would continue in office and counseled a neutral stand for the United States, this does not mean that he positively supported that plan. He shared some of the fears of the locals that "the end of it all will be a dictatorship and violence to terminate it".³⁹ In fact, the major reason for his reluctance to get involved in the matter was his fear that the United States would get itself entangled in a no-win situation. This was what the minister was trying the Department to understand from the very beginning. He expressed his views most clearly, however, in an informal letter to Edwin Wilson, dated May 18: Hanna argued that "Guatemala must be left to settle this problem in her own way (...) Should we interfere and fail, the situation will be much worse. Should we succeed, we certainly will be held responsible for the ultimate consequences of altering the present course of events, and the consequences might be grave and far reaching, if not even catastrophic".⁴⁰

Hanna's correspondence showed no inclination on his part to talk to Ubico about his career plans. While the minister recognized that Ubico would not be budged by either "national or international" pressure, he also observed that the caudillo was very anxious over Washington's reaction to his eventual "reelection". According to Hanna, this anxiety was the only reason why the General wanted to give his continuance in office a "semblance of legality" and this, the minister believed, should give him some leverage to steer Ubico in a direction that should be acceptable to the United States. Hanna would go no further, however, than to inform "private persons close to the president" that a way should be found to give a "semblance of legality" to his unavoidable continuance in office.⁴¹

Strangely, the minister had a better grasp of what nonintervention meant in the Guatemalan context than his superiors did. In far-off Washington, the State Department was still under the illusion that the 1923 Treaty had a bearing on the matter and it was unwilling to come to terms with Ubico's plans. The Division of Latin American Affairs immediately began a study of the Guatemalan constitution. It concluded that there was no way that amendments to Article 66 could legalize Ubico's reelection, since the constitution prescribed a delay of six years before any proposed change to Article 66 could even be considered by a Constitutional Assembly. Since the 1923 Treaty prohibited alterations to the "constitutional organization" of Guatemala and required its signatories to abide by the "principle of non-re-election", the report concluded that "we may have to come to a decision regarding our attitude to Ubico in the light of our relation to the 1923 Treaty". The only way out was a scenario in which Guatemala would denounce the Treaty (which could be done with one year's notice: exactly in time for the

³⁸ Hanna to the Secretary of State, Despatch 619, April 30, 1935, M1280, Roll 1, 1202.

³⁹ *Idem*.

⁴⁰ Hanna to Wilson, may 18, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol. 311, cl. 801.1: Constitution.

⁴¹ Hanna to the Secretary of State, dispatch 607, April 16, 1935, M1280, Roll 1, 1197.

start of Ubico's second term). Since El Salvador and Costa Rica had also withdrawn their support for the treaty, Guatemalan denunciation would nullify the Treaty for the remaining signatories, Honduras and Nicaragua, too: one of the Treaty's stipulations was that at least three countries had to support it to remain in force.⁴²

This situation directly affected U.S. policy in Central America and was discussed at the highest levels of the State Department. On May 7, Hull and Welles sent a telegram to the American legation in Guatemala: "This government is concerned over a tendency apparent in certain countries in Central America to endeavor to alter the constitutional manner of succession to the presidency by illegal methods in order that present incumbents may continue in office beyond the periods for which they are elected". The case of Ubico was a special one, according to the Department, because of his "great prestige" in the region. His actions would undoubtedly affect the attitude and future policies of other Central American leaders. The Department feared that the entire region might revert to a "system of personal rule" and the associated disturbances and international conflicts which "characterized the period prior to 1907 and 1923 when constitutional government was practically unknown in Central America". In this light, the Department told Hanna that "it will not have escaped your attention" that Ubico had the "unique opportunity" to greatly increase his prestige in the entire hemisphere by "resolutely declining to take part in any movement to continue him in office illegally".⁴³

What followed was a very confused correspondence between Washington and the Legation. The State Department may have interpreted Hanna's stoic acceptance of Ubico's maneuvering as a sign of sympathy toward the General (or at least, it feared that other observers would regard it as such). Cordell Hull and Sumner Welles therefore instructed the minister to make sure that "the impression, if it exists, that this Government sympathizes with any plan to amend the Guatemalan Constitution illegally, or to continue President Ubico in power contrary to its provisions, be not (repeat not) allowed to remain uncorrected". To really complicate things for Hanna, the instructions also said that the "Department does not, of course, wish to convey the impression that it is endeavoring to advise President Ubico concerning the course he should follow".⁴⁴

Hanna was naturally confused as to what was expected of him. As he was already following his own policy of non-interference, he interpreted his instruction to mean that he should take a tougher stand and inform Ubico that the United States were definitely unsympathetic to his plans for *continuismo*. In several telegrams and airmail reports dated May 2 to May 5, Hanna argued that Ubico did not have the slightest reason to believe that the U.S. sympathized with his actions and that any affirmative action to change the caudillo's mind would be futile. The minister feared that any statement he would care to make would offer Ubico an opportunity to draw him into a discussion on the legal aspects of the case. In that way, the General might provoke statements which would be prone to misinterpretation and the eventual result may prove to be

⁴² Division of Latin American Affairs to Wilson, April 16, 1935, M1280, Roll 1, 1193.

⁴³ Hull to Hanna, Telegram 15, May 7, 1935, M1280, Roll 1, 1201;

⁴⁴ Hull to Hanna, Telegram 11, April 30, 1935, M1280, Roll 1, 1197.

“embarrassing”. Instead, Hanna counseled a policy of “complete aloofness [so that] we will in nowise compromise ourselves and will retain absolute freedom for future action, especially when the question of recognition arises”.⁴⁵

Despite his personal reservations, Hanna tried to arrange an audience with Ubico on May 7. This proved to be difficult as the Chief of Protocol and the Minister of Foreign Affairs kept stalling his request and tried to learn why Hanna wanted to see the President. Some days later, Hanna finally got his interview with Ubico and read him a Spanish translation he had prepared on the basis of his instructions:

The Department of State does not of course wish to convey the impression that it is endeavoring to advise President Ubico concerning the course he should follow, which, naturally, is a matter for his own decision, but the Department nevertheless believes that it should make very clear to President Ubico that the Government of the United States is not in sympathy with any effort to alter the Guatemalan Constitution illegally or to continue President Ubico in office contrary to the provisions of that Constitution.

Immediately after Hanna finished his reading, Ubico remarked that “the clear meaning of the statement was that the Department of State did not want him to continue in the Presidency”. The General added that it was not his wish either, but the Guatemalan people and the Constituent Assembly would insist that he did.⁴⁶

Hanna studiously refrained from giving any comment, but in the days following the interview, the Foreign Minister kept calling upon him to get back on the statement. The initial efforts of the Foreign Minister, Dr. Skinner Klee, were bent on finding loopholes or ulterior interpretations for Hanna’s statement. When this had no effect on a stoic Hanna, Skinner Klee described in dramatic terms Ubico’s pain and surprise that the State Department did not trust or appreciate its staunch ally. When, in the course of several days, the Foreign Minister grew increasingly anxious over Hanna’s non-committal responses, he started to paint ever more gloomy pictures of a future without Ubico, which would certainly be marked by “political confusion, conflict and possible disorder”.⁴⁷

Interestingly, historian Kenneth Grieb hypothesizes that Ubico deliberately dramatized U.S. resistance to his continuance to force it to play down its statement or to stand accused of direct intervention.⁴⁸ If so, this may explain why the Department lost its nerve and finally—after almost two weeks of silence—decided that there had been a terrible misunderstanding. The blame was put squarely on Hanna. On May 24 Sumner Welles wrote Hanna a very strict letter, stating that “[t]he Department does not consider that the statement you prepared [for the interview with Ubico on May 10] accurately transcribes the” position of the United States. Referring only to instructions of April 30,

⁴⁵ Hanna to the Secretary of State, Telegram 17, May 2, 1935, M1280, Roll 1, 1199; Hanna to the Secretary of State, Despatch 628, May 3, 1935, M1280, Roll 1, 1203.

⁴⁶ Hanna, untitled memorandum, May 10, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol 311, 801.1: Constitution. Hanna reported his believe that the statement he read to President Ubico expressed “faithfully the attitude of my Government as it had been transmitted to me”.

⁴⁷ *Idem*; Hanna to Wilson, May 18, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol 311, 801.1: Constitution; Hanna, untitled memorandum, May 13, 1935, PR Guatemala, Vol 311, 801.1: Constitution.

⁴⁸ Grieb, “Jorge Ubico’s Retention of Power”.

Welles claims that the State Department only wished to correct any previously existing impression that the U.S. government sympathized with Ubico's continuance in office. Remembering Hanna's statement that he had informed private citizens close to the President that a "semblance of legality" could be given to Ubico's continuance, Welles now claimed that the State Department feared that these statements could be interpreted as active interest and sympathy for Ubico's plans. It was only this gaffe by the minister that the State Department had wished to correct when it wrote that Hanna should correct "the impression, if it exist, that this Government sympathizes with any plan to amend the Guatemalan constitution illegally". In fact, Welles goes on, the State Department did not have any views, "either of sympathy or lack of sympathy", toward the internal affairs of Guatemala and it would not have broached the issue if Hanna had not been so talkative. In conclusion, Welles argued that:

Since both President Ubico and the Minister of Foreign Affairs appear to have gained the impression that this government is opposed to President Ubico's continuance in the Presidency, you are instructed to (...) make it clear to those two officials that this Government has no attitude, either of sympathy or lack of sympathy, toward any movement of the character being discussed and neither approves nor disapproves of whatever action may be contemplated, which it considers an internal matter, in which it cannot intervene".⁴⁹

After Hanna had executed these orders—much to his personal embarrassment, one would imagine—he wrote a somewhat indignant report to the Department, asserting that: "My conception of the proper way to correct an impression that the Government of the United States did sympathize with any plan was to say that it did not sympathize with it".⁵⁰ While the minister was probably right, he was suddenly transferred out of Guatemala days later. After having spent almost two weeks "in transit", he was granted two months of "vacation leave".⁵¹ The first secretary of Legation, a very experienced officer called Sidney O'Donoghue, took charge of the Legation. Hanna never returned.

O'Donoghue was naturally much more careful not to get caught making any remark about the elections and Ubico was finally "reelected" with a wide margin. The State Department also kept a very low profile and instructed its Legations not to make any public statements which would tie the United States to the Treaty of 1923—on the basis of which Ubico's continuance should have been objected to.⁵² Although the United States did not officially recognize the fact that elections had taken place, it did acknowledge a note from Guatemala's Foreign Ministry which informed the State

⁴⁹ Welles to Hanna, Instruction 199, may 24, 1935, M1280, Roll 1, 1197.

⁵⁰ Hanna to the Secretary of State, Despatch 669, June 3, 1935, M1280, Roll 1, 814.00/1223. Emphasis in the original.

⁵¹ Leave of Absence Card for 1935, January 1, 1936, PR Guatemala, Box 1, cl. 123: Hanna. After a very brief return to his post, Hanna died suddenly in February 1936.

⁵² Beaulac to Wilson, October 1, 1935, M1280, Roll 2, 814.00/1254; Phillips to Lane, Instruction 337, July 17, 1935, M1280, Roll 2, 814.00/1255; Lane to the Secretary of State, Despatch 1064, September 20, 1935, M1280, Roll 2, 814.00/1256; Lane to the Secretary of State, September 27, 1935, M1280, Roll 2, 814.00/1257.

Department of the outcome of the elections. For all intents and purposes, this was a silent acknowledgement of Ubico's reelection.⁵³

2.2 *Continuismo in Honduras*

In general the situation is calm. Each party, however, is building political fences for the 1936 elections. Also, political deportations have occurred and one newspaper has been suspended. The Nationalists are still considering an extension of President Carías' term of office and the Liberals appear disorganized and discouraged.⁵⁴

Such was the political situation in Honduras as Leo Keena encountered it when he arrived at his post in July, 1935. This short summary immediately captures the main themes for the next two years: increased repression and censure, an opposition party in disarray, and, eventually, Carías' reelection.

Despite the importance of events during Keena's service in Tegucigalpa, the Legation records do not show special concern for Carías' *continuismo*. This was partly a result of earlier events: Carías was by now entrenched in the presidency and the rival Liberal party was still in disarray, so there were no major disturbances or realistic alternatives to Carías' reign during this time. Also, the American Legation under Julius Lay had established an effective working relation with the Carías administration and was, on the whole, positive about its achievements. Naturally, Lay had assumed that Carías was a constitutionalist and in this sense the job of redefining Carías' rule fell to Keena. The fact that this redefinition was not accompanied with searching questions about America's role in Central America is, again, partly due to past happenings: the non-intervention principle was now more firmly at the center of U.S. policy toward Latin America and the question of recognizing *continuistas* was settled in Guatemala.

However, there is also a personal dimension to this question: as compared to Lay, the American ministers in other Central American republics, or even his secretaries, Leo Keena did not betray much intellectual curiosity about Honduran domestic politics or about the question of its relation to the United States. Nor did he show a great deal of initiative or assertiveness. His reports are fairly bland and devoid of original or personal observations on Honduran politics. Furthermore, Keena was always careful to confer with colleagues or with the Department on courses of action to follow, even if it concerned matters of ceremony. This was not necessarily a bad thing: Lay's personal observations about Honduras often betrayed a bigoted view and his assertiveness often bordered on intervention in local politics. These were the kind of things that the architects of the Good Neighbor Policy wished to eliminate. Whether Keena was an apt student of the Good Neighbor Policy or personally very conservative cannot be ascertained. The truth is probably somewhere in the middle: his personal style seamlessly fused with Washington's policy.

⁵³ Hull to Hanna, September 10, 1935, M1280, Roll 2, 1250.

⁵⁴ Keena to the Secretary of State, Despatch 14, August 7, 1935, PR Honduras, Vol. 212, cl. 800: General Conditions.

One of the first things the new minister did after his arrival in Honduras was to turn to his colleagues in Guatemala to inform himself on U.S. policy toward unconstitutional extensions of presidential terms in Central America: Assuming that the Secretary of State had provided instructions on how to deal with Ubico's *continuismo*, and since "action similar in effect may be taken or attempted in Honduras", Keena asked secretary O'Donoghue for a copy of the secretary's instructions. Unfortunately, O'Donoghue could not offer much in the way of policy guidelines: he only sent Keena a copy of a Department telegram acknowledging Ubico's "reelection". Naturally, government controlled papers in Tegucigalpa also learned about this telegram and about a letter from FDR to Ubico from a later date and presented them as examples of active American support for *continuismo*, despite the fact that the wording of both messages was the standard diplomatic dribble.⁵⁵

Keena initially thought that the *continuismo* campaign would cause renewed instability.⁵⁶ In August 1935, shortly after Keena arrived and before Carías had decided on a definite strategy for his continuance in office, the minister reported that the President was considering two courses of action: either he would proclaim his continuance in office unilaterally, or he would renounce a second term and appoint his own candidate for the presidential elections of November 1936. Keena believed that the first course of action would "undoubtedly lead to violence" while the second course "might result in a Nationalist victory in the elections" if the selected candidate could unite the Nationalist Party and attract a fair number of undecided voters. The minister also believed that *continuismo* "would be viewed with distinct disfavor by the Government of the United States".⁵⁷ At this early date, Keena still believed that Washington would actively seek a legal transfer of power in Honduras.

⁵⁵ O'Donoghue to Keena, September 30, 1935, PR Honduras, Vol. 212, cl. 800: Guatemala; Keena to the Secretary of State, Despatch 121, November 23, 1935, PR Honduras, Vol. 212, cl. 800: Guatemala. FDR's letter to Ubico, addressed to "my great and good friend", noted the "cordial sentiments" expressed by Ubico and expressed the wish that the "friendship" existing between the United States and Guatemala be continued. Such had been the standard of diplomatic correspondence with Latin American heads of state for decades. As an indication of loose connection between the wording of such messages and actual relationships: Theodore Roosevelt had once parodied the diplomatic wording of his communications to central American chiefs by cynically referring to them as "My great and good friends, the Presidents of the various Central American Republics, and the excessively free and independent peoples over whom they preside." Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable revolutions: The United States and Central America* (1993) 51.

⁵⁶ Examples of specific instances of repression in 1935: Keena to the Department of State, Despatch 57, October 2, 1935, PR Honduras, Vol. 212, cl. 800: Honduras; Keena to the Secretary of State, Despatch 59, October 4, 1935, PR Honduras, Vol. 212, cl. 800: Honduras; Keena to the Secretary of State, Despatch 71, October 18, 1935, PR Honduras, Vol. 212, cl. 800: Honduras; Keena to the Secretary of State, Despatch 139, December 5, 1935, PR Honduras, Vol. 212, cl. 800: Honduras. Keena believed that the heavy-handed action of the government would push people into open revolt: Keena to the Secretary of State, Despatch 72, October 18, 1935, PR Honduras, Vol. 212, cl. 800: Honduras; Keena to the Secretary of State, Despatch 50, September 25, 1935, PR Honduras (SCF), Volume 220.

⁵⁷ Keena to the Secretary of State, Despatch 26, August 22, 1935, PR Honduras, Vol. 212, cl. 800: Honduras.

Honduran oppositionists entertained the same notions. Venancio Callejas, a one-time vice-presidential candidate of Carías, but now an independent Nationalist who fled to Costa Rica when the repression accompanying the continuance program was well underway, wrote a personal letter to Franklin Roosevelt in which he slammed Carías for his cynical disregard of the Honduran Constitution, the 1923 Treaty, and democratic procedures in general. He expressed the conviction that “the Government of the United States will flatly refuse to extend its recognition (...) to the Dictatorship which General Carías pretends to establish by force upon Honduras”.⁵⁸ Likewise, Angel Zuñiga Huete who, despite a history of violence, had gracefully accepted his defeat in the 1932 Presidential elections and had since focused his attentions on ending Carías’ rule through the use of the ballot box⁵⁹, sent a manifesto to the State Department and all the U.S. ministers in Central America in which he gave a brief overview of the Honduran constitution and argued that the Carías regime was a “Government of delinquents” and a “dictatorship” which should not be recognized by the international community.⁶⁰

Honduran politicians continued to try to illicit a sympathetic response from the U.S. State Department with their high-minded manifesto’s, expounding the virtues of international treaties and constitutionalism, well into the second half of the century. Before being forced into exile in the 1930s, they had first hand experience with America’s policy of intervention and non-recognition of unconstitutional governments. In their writings they referred to treaties and constitutions which had become dead letters long ago. Apparently they believed that such talk would strike a cord with the Americans, a view that was most likely confirmed by high profile speeches on the sanctity of international obligations by American politicians (Zuniga regularly refers to such speeches in his writings). Sadly, they did not recognize that such speeches were intended for audiences in Europe: the only principle that the government in Washington would uphold in the Western Hemisphere throughout the 1930s and early 40s was that of non-intervention.

American diplomats in Central America referred to the manifestos that reached their desks as “the usual diatribes” to which they paid little attention. Unwilling or unable to consider that Central American politicians could truly entertain such idealistic notions, they regarded these writings as the opportunistic propaganda of the political “outs”.⁶¹ Keena was a little more conscientious than that: he had the Spanish manifestos duly translated and sent to the Department, sometimes accompanied by a dry analysis of his own. However, he too placed little value on them. He feared that Honduras, which now had to forego United States guidance, would revert to revolution and caudillo politics.

⁵⁸ Vicente Callejas (Honduran Opposition Leader) to Keena, December 11, 1936, PR Honduras, Box 8, cl. 800: Political Affairs.

⁵⁹ Thomas J. Dodd, *Tiburcio Carías. Portrait of a Honduran Political Leader* (Baton Rouge 2005) 192.

⁶⁰ Keena to the Secretary of State, Despatch 488, August 17, 1936, PR Honduras, Box 8, cl. 800: Despatches sent to Department.

⁶¹ The consistency of the ideas expressed in these writings, combined with the fact that many of their writers flocked to Guatemala after a socialistic democracy of sorts was established there in 1944, seems to belie this analysis.

Keena himself ascribed some legitimacy to the idea, locally held, that the Honduran peasant had a primitive notion of democracy: "The idea persists (...) in some quarters and possibly based on hope, that the Honduran *penco* [peon] bases his idea of liberty on the right to elect a president every four years and if this is denied him he will revolt and overthrow the government denying him that right". The minister believed that this "premise may be well founded", since "it is historically true that an urge toward revolution is latent in the Honduran *penco*".⁶² However, the lethargic masses of peons would only move if led by strongmen. In this regard, the exiled opponents of Carías "will have to show more personal daring in fomenting and leading a revolutionary movement than has been exemplified in the pamphleteering campaign carried on during the past year from the other side of a neutral border".⁶³ For much of 1936 Keena anxiously scanned the horizon for a man-on-horseback who would continue to cycle of revolutions and dictatorships that the United States had tried to stop only a couple of years before.

Remembering that the old policy was to prevent trouble in Central America by supporting local elections, Keena reported in January 1936 that the upcoming elections for a constitutional assembly that would take a decision on Carías' second term "cannot be considered with justice as fairly representing the will of the electorate as practically all prominent leaders of the opposition have been placed in detention by the Government or forced to leave the country to escape imprisonment". Confirming his cautious temperament, Keena respectfully inquired if "the Department wish[es] me to make any statements to the President of Honduras in regard to these elections?".⁶⁴ Shortly, Hull replied that the non-intervention principle of the Good Neighbor policy took precedence over concerns for local elections:

The Department does not wish you to make any statement to the President of Honduras regarding the conduct of the Honduran elections. However regrettable the conditions you describe may be from the point of view of a friendly observer the matter at issue is one solely of internal policy for the Honduran people themselves to determine.⁶⁵

When the Honduran Congress convened on January 1, 1936, it immediately started work on its most important task for that year: to legalize President Carías' continuance in office. First, responding to the "petitions" in favor of continuismo which had been filed by the municipalities, Congress called for a Constituent Assembly to reform the 1924 constitution which prohibited the reelection of a President. Elections for the Constituent Assembly were held on January 26 and, not surprisingly, only candidates who supported continuismo were elected. The government had been laying the groundwork for these elections throughout 1935: getting the municipalities in line, suppressing newspapers, and jailing or exiling opponents. Now the continuismo

⁶² Keena to the Secretary of State, Despatch 508, November 9, 1936, PR Honduras, Box 8, cl. 800: Despatches sent to Department.

⁶³ *Idem*.

⁶⁴ Keena to the Department of State, Telegram 12, January 1, 1936, PR Honduras, Box 8, cl. 800: Reform of the Constitution.

⁶⁵ Hull to Keena, Telegram 6, January 22, 1936, PR Honduras, Box 8, cl. 800: Reform of the Constitution of Honduras.

campaign moved along smoothly, although arrests of opponents continued throughout 1936. In March, the Constituent Assembly cranked out a constitution in just 20 days. The new constitution, which went into effect on April 15, appointed President Carías and Vice President Williams for a second term which was to last until January 1, 1943. The members of the Assembly also appointed themselves as the new National Congress, its period of office running to December 5, 1942.⁶⁶ As of January 1, 1937, the inauguration date of the President's new term, Carías would be in office for 6 more years with a rubber-stamp Congress to support him.

Keena remained in an anxious state throughout this whole process. Only after the inauguration of Carías did he become more optimistic about the prospects for continued peace in Honduras. Beginning in January, Keena took concrete steps to deal with a possible revolution during the elections: he ordered the consulates to compile lists of American citizens in their district, probably to prepare for a possible evacuation.⁶⁷ The elections, however, proceeded smoothly, somewhat to the surprise of the Legation and the consulates.⁶⁸ Carías' opponents used the occasion to flee Honduras unnoticed and prepared to overthrow the government from neighboring countries before the opening of the Constituent Assembly in March.⁶⁹ Just after the Assembly convened, Keena warned the Department that "the penitentiary and the barracks in Tegucigalpa are reported to be filled with political prisoners. This policy is causing a great deal of ill will against the government (...) It is regarded in all circles that in time an armed movement will be made against the Government". Keena believed that the strength of such a movement would depend on the support that the laboring classes were willing to give to an armed incursion of the opposition. Which way the sympathy of the lower classes would go, no one seemed to know.⁷⁰ Despite continuing rumors of revolution, the new constitution went into effect in April without any untoward incident. Yet Keena kept up a fairly constant flow of reports on the imminence of the great revolution that everyone in the capital was expecting.⁷¹ Not until the start of the rainy season, which seemed to make any military campaign impossible, did Tegucigalpa in general and Keena in particular utter a sigh of relief.

⁶⁶ The following document provides a good summary of this process and includes references to all relevant correspondence on the subject: Keena to the Department of State, Despatch 600, January 8, 1937, PR Honduras, Box 23, cl. 800: Honduras.

⁶⁷ Keena to the North Coast consulates, January 13, 1936, PR Honduras, Box 8, cl. 800: Political Affairs; Keena to the Department of State, Despatch 208, January 17, 1936, PR Honduras, Box 8, cl. 800: Despatches sent to Department.

⁶⁸ Keena to the Department of State, Despatch 233, January 31, 1936, PR Honduras, Box 8, cl. 800: Despatches sent to Department; Stewart to Keena, January 8 1936, PR Honduras, Box 8, cl. 800: Reports from the consulates.

⁶⁹ Keena to the Department of State, Despatch 263, February 20, 1936, PR Honduras, Box 8, cl. 800: Despatches sent to Department.

⁷⁰ Keena to the Department of State, Despatch 292, March 6, 1936, PR Honduras, Box 8, cl. 800: Despatches sent to Department.

⁷¹ Keena to the Department of State, Despatch 355, April 17, 1936, PR Honduras, Box 8, cl. 800: Despatches sent to Department; Keena to the Department of State, Telegram 62, September 2, 1936, PR Honduras, Box 8, cl. 800: Despatches sent to Department.

The American legations drew some important lessons from the 1936 *continuismo* campaign. The first lesson, clearly established by Department instructions during the first half of 1936, was that the legation could not play any positive role in local events. The Department made it clear that the old policies of supporting elections and the 1923 Treaty were now obsolete. A second lesson was that both the Liberal opposition to Carias and the general population's taste for revolutions were not as strong as expected. Even if it had been, the Nationalist government proved much more powerful than expected. Stability now seemed assured by the indecisiveness of Liberal leaders, the lethargy of the people, and the modern repression techniques of the government: systematic arrests, wholesale press censorship, a working agreement with neighboring caudillos, and the airplane.⁷² American guidance to promote stability was no longer necessary: the future of Central America would be determined by force, not by treaties and elections.

2.3 Constitutionalism in El Salvador

Obviously, Martínez and the United States got off to a bad start. If the Department of State was serious about adopting El Salvador into the hemispheric system of friendly states that was being built with the help of the Good Neighbor, it needed to mend some fences. What better way to do that than to send a diplomat who could give a personal touch to the new relationship. The choice for a new Minister fell to Francis Corrigan: a political appointee who could give the impression of being intimately connected with the Roosevelt administration, rather than just to the Department, and also an Irishman who would doubtlessly be considered *más simpático* by the Latinos than an Anglo Saxon.⁷³

Corrigan's tenure in San Salvador initiated a brief honeymoon between the Legation and the Martínez regime. The new minister was initially friendly to the government, welcomed local journalists to his office to propagate FDR's Good Neighbor, and negotiated a new reciprocal trade agreement between the United States and El Salvador. Corrigan was clearly willing to let bygones be bygones and painted a sympathetic picture of the local government: arguing that it enjoyed a great degree of public support because it had rectified the economic and financial dislocation that had characterized the Araujo administration (significantly, the 1931 coup and 1932 uprising were not mentioned for a while). In January 1935, Corrigan approvingly stated that "the political philosophy of this administration seems to have a definite trend toward a strong, scientifically operated financial system centrally controlled and a gradual decentralization of ownership of land".⁷⁴

Corrigan did have to swallow some bitter pills to be able to continue his labors toward reconciliation: in 1934, the Martínez regime negotiated a trade pact with Germany before U.S.-Salvadoran negotiations on a new trade agreement even started.

⁷² Hoffman to the Secretary of State, Despatch 619, February 9, 1937, PR Honduras, Box 23, cl. 800: Honduras.

⁷³ See Chapter 1, page 44.

⁷⁴ Corrigan to the Secretary of State, Despatch 138G, January 12, 1935, PR El Salvador, Vol. 128, cl. 800: General Conditions Reports.

In that same year, the administration also extended diplomatic recognition to the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo in formerly Chinese Manchuria. The U.S. minister carefully explained that these dealings were not an indication of Salvador's sympathy with these dangerous regimes, but merely a result of diplomatic pressure from Germany and the relative inexperience of Salvador's Foreign Minister.⁷⁵

Another potential irritant in U.S.-Salvadoran relations was Martínez' "election" to the presidency in 1934. It should be remembered that, formally, Martínez had only been Araujo's replacement in the past years. When Araujo's tenure officially ended in 1935, Martínez could, according to the letter of the constitution, present himself as a candidate for the presidential elections: since he was never *elected* to the presidency, the constitutional ban on *reelection* did not apply to him. The only obstacle to Martínez' election was a constitutional ban on the election of any presidential candidate who had served in the previous government in the six months preceding the election. This ban was intended, of course, to prevent a government that came to power by extra-constitutional means (say, a coup) from legalizing its reign by getting itself elected to office. In short, it was directed against Martínez. The general, however, skillfully dodged the issue by abdicating six months before the end of Araujo's term and handing the reins of government to his trusted aide and vice-president, General Menendez. Shortly after Martínez' inevitable election to the presidency, Menendez was just as easily reinstated in his old position of vice-president.⁷⁶

Minister Corrigan double-checked the legality of these maneuvers and eventually concluded that the whole affair complied with "the letter" of the constitution. His superiors in the Department let it go at that.⁷⁷ The Legation's and Department's quiet acceptance of what was obviously an attempt to get around *the spirit* of the Salvadoran constitution (an interpretation that was carefully avoided) probably stemmed from a genuine desire to normalize the relationship with El Salvador by not getting into another debate on the legality of its government. The last disagreements on that point had been put to rest—at great costs to U.S. prestige in the region—only months before.

⁷⁵ Corrigan to the Secretary of State, Despatch 33G, July 9, 1934, PR El Salvador, Vol. 128, cl. 800: General Conditions Reports; Corrigan to the Secretary of State, Despatch 6G, May 9, 1934, PR El Salvador, Vol. 128, cl. 800: General Conditions Reports; Corrigan to the Secretary of State, Despatch 45G, July 31, 1934, PR El Salvador, Vol. 128, cl. 800: General Conditions Reports.

⁷⁶ Corrigan to the Secretary of State, Despatch 33G, July 9, 1934, PR El Salvador, Vol. 128, cl. 800: General Conditions Reports; Corrigan to the Secretary of State, Despatch 45G, July 31, 1934, PR El Salvador, Vol. 128, cl. 800: General Conditions Reports; Corrigan to the Secretary of State, Despatch 66G, September 4, 1934, PR El Salvador, Vol. 128, cl. 800: General Conditions Reports; Corrigan to the Secretary of State, Despatch 17, June 6, 1934, PR El Salvador, Vol. 130, cl. 800.S; Corrigan to the Secretary of State, Despatch 110, December 5, 1934, PR El Salvador, Vol. 130, cl. 800.S; Corrigan to the Secretary of State, Despatch 159, February 15, 1935, PR El Salvador, Volume 135, cl. 800: General Conditions Reports; Corrigan to the Secretary of State, Despatch 211G, April 12, 1935, PR El Salvador, Volume 135, cl. 800: General Conditions Reports.

⁷⁷ Beaulac to Wilson, June 29, 1934, Lot Files, Individual Countries, Box 45, folder marks El Salvador, 1933-1940

After the elections, the Government did lift the state of siege which had been in force, in Corrigan's words, since the "so-called [*sic.*] 'communistic' uprising" of 1932.⁷⁸ It also relaxed its censorship over the press and invited exiles to return home. These actions, combined with seemingly spontaneous popular celebrations on the occasion of Martínez' election⁷⁹, led Corrigan to conclude that "a trend toward greater liberality" was perceptible in El Salvador.⁸⁰ Whether Martínez liberalized his regime specifically to sugarcoat his election for the Americans is uncertain. This move is probably merely an indication of the growing confidence the president had in the security of his position.

Martínez was, however, anxious to improve his image with the *yanquis*. His colleagues in neighboring countries provided an excellent opportunity for just that. The *continuismo* campaigns in Guatemala and Honduras—and Somoza's naked ambition for the Nicaraguan presidency—allowed Martínez to present himself as the standard bearer of constitutionality in Central America. While policymakers in Washington were moving away from an interventionist policy based on treaties and constitutions, U.S. policy in Central America continued, for a while, to be discussed in those terms both by Central Americans and by Legation officers. In fact, Corrigan himself introduced the Good Neighbor policy to the Salvadoran press by explaining that its objective was to prevent the rise both of dictatorship and of communism and to further the spread of democracy in the hemisphere.⁸¹

Corrigan's words and past experiences must have inspired the Salvadoran president to set up an *anti-continuismo* campaign (although opposition against the phenomenon among his compatriots and even close collaborators must also have played a role in this tactic). Martínez' campaign started in May 1935—the exact month in which rumors about U.S. objections to Ubico's *continuismo* campaign started to surface—when the Salvadoran President expressed his approval for calls to change the country's constitution which were emanating from the National Assembly. Martínez immediately declared that a revised constitution should prohibit the reelection of a president or the extension of his term.⁸² In a personal interview with Corrigan in August, Martínez further expressed his opposition to changes in the Guatemalan constitution and his fear that Carías' *continuismo* campaign in Honduras and Somoza's ambition for the presidency of Nicaragua would renew the disturbances that haunted Central America

⁷⁸ Corrigan to the Department of State, Despatch 176, March 9, 1935, PR El Salvador, Vol. 136, cl. 800: El Salvador.

⁷⁹ Corrigan to the Department of State, Despatch 211G, April 2, 1935, PR El Salvador, Vol. 135, cl. 800: General Conditions.

⁸⁰ Corrigan to the Department of State, Despatch 179G, March 13, 1935, PR El Salvador, Vol. 135, cl. 800: General Conditions.

⁸¹ Corrigan to the Department of State, Despatch 598, February 20, 1936, PR El Salvador, Box 2, cl. 500: Economic Conferences.

⁸² Corrigan to the Department of State, Despatch 244G, May 10, 1935, PR El Salvador, Vol. 135, cl. 800: General Conditions; Corrigan to the Department of State, Despatch 228, April 30, 1935, PR El Salvador, Vol. 136, cl. 800.1: Constitution.

before the signing of the 1923 Treaty.⁸³ Backing up his words with action (in the diplomatic field at least) Martínez claimed that he had sent two personal envoys to Somoza to dissuade the latter from seizing power by force.⁸⁴ Underlining the irony of the new situation, the Salvadoran Sub-Secretary of Foreign Affairs told Corrigan that, not so long ago, the Central American states had refused to recognize the unconstitutional government of Martínez, but now the same states that still adhered to the 1923 Treaty on paper were destroying their own constitutions while Martínez had come out in favor of constitutionalism.⁸⁵

The Salvadoran President's lobby for constitutionalism struck a cord with Corrigan, who concluded that "Martínez stands for public order and constitutionality".⁸⁶ The public stance of the Salvadoran Government also attracted refugees from all over Central America who opposed the *continuismo* campaigns in their own countries. The presence of these men—some of them not as politically pure as they would like to claim—reinforced Martínez' portrayal of the situation in Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. For example, General Solórzano from Guatemala told the American legation that his native country was the scene of wholesale executions and that a revolution against Ubico was eminent.⁸⁷ The Honduran General Callejas claimed that civil war in Honduras could only be prevented if the United States told Carías to step down.⁸⁸ Former president Sacasa of Nicaragua, who was finally kicked out of the presidential palace and had made his way to San Salvador, told Corrigan that Somoza had destroyed three decades of patient labor toward constitutionality in Nicaragua. The result, said the president-turned-refugee, could only be complete chaos.⁸⁹

Proceeding from the information available to him locally, Corrigan concluded that Ubico and Martínez stood on opposite sides on the matter of their Central American policy. While Ubico had a "Napoleon complex" and tried to dominate the region with his "Machiavellian" tactics, the more moderate and "Erasmian" Martínez was solely concerned with the wellbeing of his own country. Corrigan recognized that vigorous leaders like Ubico and Martínez represented the future of Central America in contrast to Costa Rican President Jiménez, "the aging older statesman (...) with his wise and liberal viewpoint". The two however, were "of totally different type and temperament". Carías and Somoza both admired Ubico as their "prototype" and the former at least wanted to

⁸³ Corrigan to the Department of State, Despatch 381, August 19, 1935, PR El Salvador, Vol. 136, cl. 800: El Salvador.

⁸⁴ Corrigan to the Department of State, Despatch 433, October 1, 1935, PR El Salvador, Vol. 136, cl. 800: El Salvador.

⁸⁵ Corrigan to the Department of State, Despatch 561, January 21, 1936, PR El Salvador, Box 4, 800: El Salvador.

⁸⁶ Corrigan to the Secretary of State, dispatch 381, August 19, 1935, PR El Salvador, Vol. 135, cl. 800: El Salvador.

⁸⁷ Corrigan to the Secretary of State, dispatch 795, September 18, 1936, PR El Salvador, Box 4, cl. 800: Guatemala.

⁸⁸ Corrigan to the Secretary of State, Telegram 11, March 2, 1936, PR El Salvador, Box 4, cl. 800: Guatemala.

⁸⁹ Corrigan to the Secretary of State, dispatch 763, August 19, 1936, PR El Salvador, Box 4, cl. 800: Nicaragua.

emulate Ubico's tactic of *continuismo*. Corrigan only foresaw trouble and uprisings resulting from these actions and hoped that older, democratically inclined statesmen like the Honduran ex-President Paz Barahona would have a moderating influence in these "American Balkans".⁹⁰

Corrigan was a medical doctor with the temperament of an academician, not that of a weathered diplomat. He liked to tackle abstract and philosophical problems and even though he was a good representative, he did not have that sixth sense for intrigue and infighting that some of the better political reporters in the Foreign Service had. While his political preferences or ideologies do not seem to have differed markedly from his colleagues in neighboring countries, he did express them more eloquently and vigorously. In his reports, he liked to touch on the Big Issues of diplomacy, those that, to paraphrase the minister's own word, would be studied by historians and judged by history.⁹¹

This streak in Corrigan's character was reinforced by his friendship with Arthur Lane, the U.S. minister to Nicaragua. Much like Corrigan's, Lane's convictions do not seem to differ that much from contemporaries, but he did share the doctor's way with words and he was an unusually conscientious man on top of that. In 1935, the Department sent Lane to Salvador on a visit for consultation and an exchange of views. Lane gave Corrigan a few of his more important reports, based on his experience in Nicaragua, to serve the new minister as reference materials.⁹² The 1935 files of the Salvadoran Legation still hold one of the most interesting of these, in which Lane recounts his struggle to reconcile the "Good Neighbor" with "non-interference", eventually concluding that:

We should not interfere in Nicaraguan internal affairs; should we feel, however, that a word from us might serve to maintain the peace of the country and consequently avoid bloodshed or disorder we should not refrain from assuming the responsibility of the "good neighbor" by expressing our views, preferably as the personal views of our diplomatic representative.⁹³

While stated in neutral terms, in the Nicaraguan context, this memo clearly implied that Lane intended to use his personal influence to prevent Somoza from committing a violent coup against the Sacasa Government. Indicative of the latitude that the State Department permitted its envoys at the time, Sumner Welles had approved above interpretation of the Good Neighbor policy.⁹⁴

Lane was transferred to the Baltic states in 1936, but with Corrigan the Central American diplomatic corps retained an articulate advocate for interference, or, as he

⁹⁰ Corrigan to the Department of State, Despatch 448, October 16, 1935, PR El Salvador, Vol. 135, cl. 710: Political Relations. Treaties.

⁹¹ Corrigan to Beaulac, April 15, 1936, Corrigan Papers, Box 1, folder marked Beaulac, Willard; Corrigan to Franklin Roosevelt, March 17, 1937, Corrigan Papers, Box 9, folder marked, Roosevelt, F.D. and Eleanor.

⁹² Fisher, Memorandum for the Files, n.d., PR El Salvador, Vol. 136, cl. 800: Nicaragua.

⁹³ Lane to the Secretary of State, May 4, 1934, PR El Salvador, Vol. 136, cl. 800: Nicaragua.

⁹⁴ Welles to Lane, May 21, 1934, PR El Salvador, Vol. 136, cl. 800: Nicaragua.

might have put it himself, a “responsible” Good Neighbor.⁹⁵ As Lane was packing up in Nicaragua, Corrigan reported to the Department his expectation that the continuismo campaigns in Guatemala and Honduras would be confronted with revolutionists bearing the banner of constitutionalism. Local people were looking to the powerful American legations for some guidance and in this light, said the minister, it was imperative that the United States develop some positive side to the Good Neighbor, which was currently focused too much on a negative stance of non-intervention. Corrigan himself opined that the U.S. missions should apply their influence to prevent bloodshed or dictatorship and to stimulate liberal and democratic policies: “It takes more than one good neighbor to make a good neighborhood”.⁹⁶ Some weeks later, as Somoza was poised to take over the presidential palace, Corrigan expressed himself more frankly:

Cynical disregard of constitutional guarantees, first by General Ubico in Guatemala, second by General Carías in Honduras, and now imminently by General Somoza in Nicaragua, for their own personal interests, will have destroyed the result of a generation of patient diplomatic effort to advance these countries (some of them still embryonic) on the road to become constitutional democratic republics.

The Department’s retreat from Central America had gone far enough, the minister opined, and it should be prepared to offer friendly and tactful advice to the sister republics.⁹⁷

By this time however, Washington’s thinking was entirely out of step with that in the Central American Legations. The Department had indulged Lane’s musings about the “responsible” Good Neighbor, had derailed Hanna’s essentially correct handling of Ubico’s continuismo, and had deflected Keena’s questions about the elections in Honduras, but in 1936—finally—it was ready to lay down the law:

[T]he Department expects its diplomatic representatives in Central America to conduct themselves in their relations with the Governments to which they are accredited, and with the people of the countries, in exactly the same manner they would if they were accredited to one of the large republics of South America or with any non-American power; that is to say, they should abstain from offering advice on any domestic question, and if requested to give such advice they should decline to do so.⁹⁸

While these instructions fitted the general trend of U.S. policy—the adoption of non-interference as official policy was made public in the same year—the State Department told its envoys that the Central Americans themselves were to blame for the U.S. retreat from a pro-constitutionalist policy. It was, after all, the signatories themselves who

⁹⁵ This was Lane’s description of his own methods.

⁹⁶ Corrigan to the Secretary of State, Despatch 561, January 21, 1936, PR El Salvador, Box 4, cl. 800: El Salvador.

⁹⁷ Corrigan to the Secretary of State, dispatch 684, may 14, 1946, PR El Salvador, Box 4, cl. 800: El Salvador.

⁹⁸ Hull to the U.S. Legations in Central America, Instruction 216, April 30, 1936, PR El Salvador, Box 4, cl. 800: General.

abrogated the 1923 Treaty: first Ubico by continuing himself in office and then Carías and Sacasa by recognizing this step.⁹⁹

It should be noted with special emphasis, however, that Washington's withdrawal from the 1923 Treaty—and, more broadly, from a pro-democratic stance or any other kind of interference—was not an *ex post facto* nod of approval to Ubico and Carías: As the Department noted, both presidents would have been happy to keep the Treaty in the books, as it would protect them from coups and revolutions. According to the Department, by publicly withdrawing its support from the Treaty, the U.S. was saying that it would not object if either Ubico or Carías was overthrown. This was not an academic point: In Honduras at least, a revolution was thought to be brewing. Washington's only regret at this time was that its new policy would leave the fate of the Sacasa Government in the hands of General Somoza.¹⁰⁰

Corrigan cared very little for the argument that Hondurans themselves would take care of Carías, and even less for the fact that Somoza would take care of Sacasa. The old circle of dictatorship followed by revolution followed by...etc. was exactly the one that had to be broken up by the moderating influence of the U.S. legations: "Dictatorships with their tyrannies, imprisonments, political exiles and political executions are abhorrent to the spirit of America. A swing to the other extreme always follows". The Isthmian and Caribbean countries, argued Corrigan, needed the United States. Betraying his medical background the minister stated that "they are politically embryonic and still need obstetrical care lest they be born badly and grow up idiots". Therefore, Corrigan objected to the 1936 instructions: The U.S. should not have to bend over backwards to keep its hands off.¹⁰¹ It was an objection for the record. The Roosevelt administration was not going to change the course of its Latin American policy to humor the constitutionalist factions of Central America. Minister Corrigan realized as much and, in the end, decided that "like a good soldier [I will] go along and follow orders".¹⁰²

"Good soldier" was perhaps a bit modest. Corrigan was hopelessly ambitious. He was not a man to stay put and fight a losing battle for his ideals. Nor was he so principled that he left the Foreign Service in disgust (which is what Arthur Lane did, eventually¹⁰³). In fact, he was pulling strings to get appointed to a more prestigious post. And what strings! Letters went out throughout 1937 to other ambassadors, senators, Undersecretary Welles, Secretary Hull, and (why not?) President Roosevelt. Spain, Chile, Cuba, even Peru would be "acceptable", but privately, Corrigan entertained the hope of being appointed Assistant Secretary. Alas, while Roosevelt apparently thought that

⁹⁹ "Recommendation that American Policy in Central America no longer be affected by any Provision of the Central American General Treaty of Peace and Amity of 1923, February 18, 1936, PR El Salvador, Box 4, cl. 800: General.

¹⁰⁰ *Idem*.

¹⁰¹ Corrigan to Beaulac, May 20, 1936, Corrigan Papers, Box 1, folder marked Beaulac, Willard.

¹⁰² Corrigan to Beaulac, April 15, 1936, Corrigan Papers, Box 1, folder marked Beaulac, Willard.

¹⁰³ Arthur Bliss Lane, *I saw Poland betrayed. An American ambassador reports to the American people* (Indianapolis and New York 1948).

Corrigan was the best of the political appointees, it was determined that he was most needed in Panama. The doctor left Salvador in September 1937.¹⁰⁴

Corrigan never objected to Martínez' rule; his gall was reserved for Ubico, Carías, and Somoza. Up to Corrigan's leave, the Salvadoran General himself kept a low profile and a relatively clean house. Some incriminating rumors reached the American legation at times: the government was said to be relaxing its standards of honesty; journalists complained of intimidation; a young sergeant was executed in the city's graveyard, the blood stains remaining visible for days.¹⁰⁵ But Corrigan obsessed over the Big Issues. Not until right up to his transfer did he get a sense that Martínez was moving in the same direction as Ubico and the other apostles of continuismo. On March 13, 1937, Corrigan allowed that the Salvadoran regime might be called a "military *semi*-dictatorship". But as it was made up of lower army officers and "liberals", it should still be recognized as a "middle class movement and may be considered as a step toward democracy".¹⁰⁶ Two months later, Corrigan reported on the growing cult of personality surrounding Martínez. The Assembly's recent decision to bestow the title of "benefactor of the nation" on the executive was a case in point. As the U.S. minister ominously noted, such flattery might "affect [Martínez'] future plans".¹⁰⁷

The inversion of cause and effect in Corrigan's analysis of Martínez' future plans is emblematic of his interpretation of local politics. It seems much more probable that the Salvadoran chief of state had left the door to continuismo ajar even as he criticized his neighbors. Such cynical maneuvering was not unheard of. In 1927, for example, President Machado of Cuba had declared—with tears in his eyes, one imagines—that "a man whose lips had never been defiled by a lie, would lower his dignity, and dishonor himself, if after a political labor of twenty-five years during which he opposed the principle of reelection with the word and the sword in two revolutions, he should now

¹⁰⁴ Corrigan to Bulkley, February 20, 1937, Corrigan Papers, Box 2, folder marked Bulkley, Senator Robert J.; Bulkley to Corrigan, May 29, 1937, Corrigan Papers, Box 2, folder marked Bulkley, Senator Robert J.; Bulkley to Corrigan, June 3, 1937, Corrigan Papers, Box 2, folder marked Bulkley, Senator Robert J.; Bulkley to Corrigan, July 24, 1937, Corrigan Papers, Box 2, folder marked Bulkley, Senator Robert J.; Corrigan to Hull, March 20, 1937, Corrigan Papers, Box 4, folder marked Hull, Cordell; Corrigan to Moore, December 19, 1936, Corrigan Papers, Box 7, folder marked Moore, R. Walton; Corrigan to Franklin Roosevelt, March 17, 1937, Corrigan Papers, Box 9, folder marked Roosevelt, F.D. and Eleanor; Corrigan to Welles, June 4, 1937, Corrigan Papers, Box 10, folder marked Welles, Sumner.

¹⁰⁵ Corrigan to the Secretary of State, Despatch 578, February 6, 1936, PR El Salvador, Box 4, cl. 800: El Salvador; Corrigan to the Department of State, Despatch 743, July 17, 1936, PR El Salvador, Box 4, cl. 800: El Salvador; Corrigan to the Department of State, Despatch 710, June 10, 1936, PR El Salvador, Box 6, cl. 891: Public Press; Fisher to the Secretary of State, Despatch 841, November 3, 1936, PR El Salvador, Box 4, cl. 800: El Salvador.

¹⁰⁶ Corrigan to the Secretary of State, Despatch 975, March 13, 1937, PR El Salvador, Box 9, Vol. VI, cl. 800: El Salvador. Emphasis added.

¹⁰⁷ Corrigan to the Secretary of State, Despatch 1024, June 2, 1937, PR El Salvador, Box 9, Vol. VI, cl. 800: El Salvador.

accept the principle for himself".¹⁰⁸ A little over a year later, Machado had himself reelected in a single-candidate election. Likewise, Ubico and Cárías had started out with a strong constitutionalist program. Now Martínez was ready for his 180 degree turn.

In May 1935 Martínez had approved a plan to rewrite the Salvadoran constitution and, at the time, had voiced his demand for the adoption of stricter laws against reelection. Since that time however, the president had not seen fit to convene a constitutional convention, even though a complete draft for a new constitution was ready to be discussed. Throughout 1937, Martínez carefully kept alive the hope that a constitutional convention would be organized shortly. When asked whether he entertained plans for *continuismo*, the President remained noncommittal. The Government controlled press however, floated several trial balloons in the form of editorials calling on the chief to continue his labors. Whether Martínez was so circumspect because he feared Washington's reaction is unknown. It seems more probable that he had to take into account local opposition to his *continuismo*. El Salvador had a much stronger constitutional tradition than its neighbors, and any untoward designs on the nation's first law were considered unacceptable. In fact, opposition against *continuismo* was so strong inside Martínez' own government, that several sub-secretaries and lower officials resigned in 1937 to protest the unofficial plans for reelection.¹⁰⁹

The American Legation, now under the leadership of Minister Robert Frazer, a career officer who was temperamentally more akin to Keena than to Corrigan, closely watched and meticulously reported the process. Frazer sympathized with government professionals, journalists, and liberal aristocrats who objected to Martínez' evident plans for *continuismo*. The illiterate masses, opined the minister, were incapable "of forming intelligent political opinions and virtually do not count in a juncture of this kind".¹¹⁰ Even if there were some socialists and communists among them who opposed *continuismo*, the

¹⁰⁸ Russel H. Fitzgibbon, , "Continuismo: The search for political longevity", in: Hugh M. Hamill, *Caudillos: Dictators in Spanish America* (Norman and London 1992) 210-217, there 211.

¹⁰⁹ Salvador Hoffmann to the Secretary of State, Despatch 318, September 27, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs; Hoffmann to the Secretary of State, Despatch 1174, October 22, 1937, PR El Salvador, Box 9, Vol. VI, cl. 800.1: Chief Executive; Hoffmann to the Secretary of State, Despatch 1110, September 29, 1937, PR El Salvador, Box 9, Vol. VI, cl. 800: El Salvador; Hoffmann to the Secretary of State, Despatch 1132, October 30, 1937, PR El Salvador, Box 9, Vol. VI, cl. 800: El Salvador; Frazer to the Secretary of State, Despatch 48, January 25, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs; Frazer to the Secretary of State, Despatch 129, April 22, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs; Frazer to the Secretary of State, Despatch 202, June 22, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs; Frazer to the Secretary of State, Despatch 224, July 11, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs; Hoffmann to the Secretary of State, Despatch 281, August 18, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs; Hoffmann to the Secretary of State, Despatch 294, September 2, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs; Hoffmann to the Secretary of State, Despatch 308, September 14, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs; Hoffman to the Secretary of State, Despatch 327, October 7, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs.

¹¹⁰ Frazer to the Secretary of State, Despatch 444, January 19, 1939, PR El Salvador, Box 21, Vol. VII, cl. 800: El Salvador II.

suppression of the 1932 uprising had been so ruthless and complete that this group was no longer a faction in local politics.¹¹¹ Aside from a small group of discontents who opposed Martínez for selfish reasons, Frazer argued that the most important opposition emanated from the wealthy and educated “honorable citizens” who appreciated Martínez’ excellent administration but valued the “ancient principles” of the constitution.¹¹²

The Legation was pessimistic, however, about the opposition’s chances to successfully resist *continuismo*, as it suffered under the restrictions of press censorship and the suppression of free speech and remained inarticulate and unfocused.¹¹³ While the “brightest minds” left the government in protest, they were not expected to take their opposition any further.¹¹⁴ Moreover, the State Department had become much more careful in keeping its Legations out of local politics: a timely telegram instructed Salvadoran mission that it was to express no opinion whatsoever on the “controversial” reelection of Martínez.¹¹⁵

Martínez’ constitutional coup began in earnest in July 1938. Discontented army officers and government officials were replaced and the independent newspaper *Diario de Hoy* was closed down. One liberally-minded editor was given a canoe and told to row upriver and not get out until he reached Honduras.¹¹⁶ In October, government organized elections brought together government sponsored deputies for a Constituent Assembly. The new deputies, opined Frazer, were of so little ability that original ideas were not to be expected from the Assembly. It would doubtlessly serve as a rubber stamp congress only. Indeed, on January 24, 1939, a new constitution was promulgated which prohibited reelection, but at the same time made an “exception” for President Martínez, who was to remain in office until March, 1945.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ Frazer to the Secretary of State, Despatch 48, January 25, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs.

¹¹² *Idem* and Frazer to the Secretary of State, Despatch 129, April 22, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs.

¹¹³ Hoffman to the Secretary of State, Despatch 294, September 2, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs; Hoffman to the Secretary of State, Despatch 318, September 27, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs.

¹¹⁴ Hoffman to the Secretary of State, Despatch 327, October 7, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs.

¹¹⁵ Welles to Hoffman, Instruction 88, September 29, 1938, PR El Salvador (SCF), Box 1. Hoffman to the Secretary of State, Despatch 294, October 7, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs.

¹¹⁶ Frazer to the Secretary of State, Despatch 249, July 23, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs; Hoffman to the Secretary of State, Despatch 281, August 18, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs; Hoffman to the Secretary of State, Despatch 294, September 2, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs

¹¹⁷ Frazer to the Secretary of State, Despatch 430, January 6, 1939, PR El Salvador, Box 21, Vol. VII, cl. 800: Political Affairs II; Frazer to the Secretary of State, Despatch 449, January 24, 1939, PR El Salvador, Box 21, Vol. VII, cl. 800: Political Affairs II; Frazer to the Secretary of State, Despatch 348, October 29, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs; Frazer to the Secretary of State, Despatch 368, November 15, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 800: Political Affairs; Frazer to the Secretary of State, Despatch 386, November 28, 1938, PR El Salvador, Box 13, Vol. VI, cl. 801.1: Constitution.

The end...almost. In January 1939, four generals of the Salvadoran army approached the secretary of the American Legation. How would the United States feel about a coup against Martínez, they wanted to know. The United States has no feelings either of sympathy or lack of sympathy toward such a development, was the (now standard) reply. This pleased the generals.¹¹⁸ It told them that the United States felt no obligation to protect the status quo, as had been the norm under the defunct 1923 rule. For what it was worth, there were a handful of individuals in Central America who understood that the State Department's quiet shelving of the 1923 Treaty was not a mark of approval or an implicit invitation for *continuismo*.

It was worth very little, though. A grand total of four generals might seem like a formidable force in a small country like El Salvador, but in fact, the Salvadoran army boasted some 30 generals of the brigade rank only (while the army itself was no larger than a single American brigade). In any case, the four rogue officers were no match for the security apparatus that Martínez had developed in the preceding years. The generals were arrested before they even had a chance to execute their plans.¹¹⁹ Times had changed: the caudillos were building modern, centralized states with all the newest techniques for the suppression of dissent at their disposal. Political stability no longer required the tutelage of the U.S. legations. Whether the attendant gain in state sovereignty equaled the loss of political liberties is a question no historian could answer.

3. DICTATORS RULE THE ISTHMUS

In 1934, Arthur Lane drew the Department's attention to the large outlay of funds that the Nicaraguan Government made available for its army: "When a country which has nothing to fear from its neighbors spends 60 per cent of its budgeted income on the maintenance of its army, there cannot be much optimism for its economic and educational development".¹²⁰ Some weeks later, Lay echoed that:

The Government here [in Honduras] has contracted for 3,000 modern rifles, 1,250,000 cartridges, clips for same, about 100 machine guns, 500 airplane bombs, and the budget provides for three more bombing airplanes. There seems to be no good explanation for the purchase of this enormous quantity of munitions at this time. There is no internal revolt in sight, anyway, for two years. Nicaragua is no longer a real menace, although they sometimes try to make me think it is. By a process of elimination I have come to the conclusion that the purchase of these munitions and arms is for graft.¹²¹

At the time, both Lane and Lay missed the point, which was that the governments of Central America were thinking in terms of power. Both the Legations and the Department were still thinking in terms of treaties and moral suasion: Undersecretary Welles' only suggestion regarding the increase of weaponry was to express his devout hope that the

¹¹⁸ Lamson-Scribner to Frazer, January 13, 1938, PR El Salvador (SCF), Box 1.

¹¹⁹ Des Portes to the Secretary of State, Despatch 42, July 3, 1936 (M1280, Roll 2, frame 1288).

¹²⁰ Lane to Welles, February 10, 1934, Lane Papers, Box 9, Folder 180.

¹²¹ Lay to Lane, August 14, 1934, Lane Papers, Box 9, Folder 179.

ongoing discussions on arms reductions that the Central American governments had themselves engaged in would offer a solution.¹²²

The American conception of “progress” in Central America had imagined constitutional stability under the watchful eyes of American observers. The Central American governments, meanwhile, entertained a vision of strong and dynamic states that would rule for the people, rather than being ruled by the people. The idea of a ‘Somoza solution’, whereby the United States ruled Central America by dictatorial proxy, denies the fact that during the early 1930s, Central Americans were shaping the Central American future. That the future they imagined was unattractive in terms of American ideas of good government was entirely beside the point. Martínez’, Ubico’s, and Carías’ ability to stay in power in spite of American reservation or even resistance, demonstrates that they were the actors, not those acted upon. The masters, not the students.

Caught between an increasingly passive State Department and increasingly dynamic and dictatorial states, the diplomatic corps experienced considerable difficulty in coming around to the new balance of power in Central America. Doubtlessly, the realization that its guidance was no longer appreciated by the local government was a bitter pill to swallow. The traditional perception of Central America as a region that would be subjected to chronic cycles of dictatorship and revolution if it was not for American tutelage, accounts for the fear expressed by the Legations of Guatemala and Tegucigalpa that *continuismo* would lead to revolution. Lane and Corrigan may have been the most vocal proponents of intervention in favor of constitutionalism, but even timid minister Keena expressed a need to “talk to” Carías about the reelection campaign. It seems highly doubtful that “friendly advice” would have made a difference at this point anyway. There is no reason to assume that Ubico and Carías would fail to withstand American pressure while Martínez had held out and eventually triumphed over it.

The *continuismo* campaigns required a new conception of the relations between the local regimes and the legations. As we shall see in the next chapter, one interesting effect of the reelection campaigns—combined with international developments—was that the American legations began to report on the many “Fascist” tendencies of Ubico, Carías and Martínez. It must have been clear to the latter also that if they meant to win back the American sympathy they had enjoyed after their initial election, they had to come up with new ways to make themselves useful to the *yanquis*.

¹²² Welles to Lane, February 19, 1934, Lane Papers, Box 9, Folder 180.