

Teodoro Moscoso Oral History Interview – JFK#3, 5/26/1964
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Moscoso, Teodoro; Ambassador to Venezuela (1961), United States Coordinator, Alliance for Progress, Agency for International Development (1961-1964). This interview focuses on John F. Kennedy's trip to Central America to meet with heads of state there and the Kennedy administration's response to military coups in Guatemala and the Dominican Republic, among other issues.

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Teodoro Moscoso– JFK #3
Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
110	Briefing John F. Kennedy [JFK] on his trip to Central America
111	JFK's interest in starting additional projects
114	Meeting with Central American presidents in San Jose
115	San Jose Declaration
117	JFK's desire to fix situation in Panama
118	JFK's concern about education and healthcare in Costa Rica
120	Speech at University of Costa Rica
121	Young people's reactions to JFK
122	Students travelling to Cuba
123	Meeting concerning the Guatemalan election
124	Meeting with the Regional Organization of Workers
125	Conversation with former president of Guatemala
126	Guatemalan elections
128	Coup in Guatemala
129	Disagreement over how to handle the situation in Guatemala
130	JFK's decision not to stop the coup
131	Military coup in the Dominican Republic
132	Determining the United States' response to the coup
133	Meeting on future response to coups
134	Ed Martin's article on military coups
137	Policy towards the Dominican Republic

Tape # 4

Miller: This is the 3rd session with Teodoro Moscoso in connection with the oral library project for the Kennedy Memorial Library, taking place on ~~JULY~~ ^{May} 26, 1964.

In March of 1963 the Pres. went to Costa Rica to visit with the 5 Central American Pres. plus Pres. ----- from Panama. You were present at the meeting with the Pres. prior to going and went with the Pres. on that trip. Isn't that correct?

Moscoso: We had a meeting on March 14 to brief the Pres. on the/his visit to Central America. At that time, both Mr. Martin and I informed the Pres. of the issues that he would be faced with over there. We went in great detail into the Central American common market and what had been accomplished up to date and suggested to the Pres. that this should be the key ~~item~~ in his discussion; that everything possible should be done to encourage the Central American countries in backing the common market. I also told him that whereas the economic sector businessmen; the ministers of economy and finance were backing the common market thoroughly, the politicians were not as enthusiastic. I suppose primarily because they felt if the common market were thoroughly successful there would be also political unification which would mean that perhaps 4 foreign ministers would be too many. The Pres. understood this perfectly; nevertheless he also wanted some tokens of appreciation of the U.S. for the good jobs

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that some of these countries were doing in the form of additional projects of some kind. We told the Pres. that anything that were done in that nature should be done before and on behalf of all of the countries and that as little as possible should be done on an individual basis, precisely to focus the attention of the public and of the Presidents of these countries that ~~are~~ main interest was in economic integration. The Pres. agreed to that and a number of very interesting projects we discussed including one which is right now being implemented; the setting up of a Central American FHA type of operation backed principally by the guarantees of all the banks of Central America; also some scholarship programs were discussed which have also been implemented and a loan to the Central American development bank to be used in ----- studies and a further loan for the implementation of road programs which would build highways to be used primarily for economic -----.

The Pres. also wanted to know about the political situation in Guatemala in particular. We went down the list of the ----- of each one of the executives he was going to meet; he seemed to be quite ----- with some of them, for instance, -----; the ----- boys and particularly -----, the Pres. He also wanted to know about ----- and also about the impending election in Guatemala. At that time I didn't realize why his great interest. The truth is that of course he was seeing

some of the CIA traffic; for all of the CIA traffic probably on this particular country and I wasn't. I was seeing only occasionally cables and memos of conversations. The trip to Central America.

Miller: Ted, you know how or why did the Pres. decide to go in this fashion to Central America?

Moscoco: In the first place he was interested in dramatizing the U.S. interest in the Central American common market. It seemed to him that this was something that stood out as a vital accomplishment, not only of the Central Americans but of the Alliance because we have given very good and close cooperation to Central Americans in common market movement; so much so that the only regional aid mission that this agency had is in Central America, ROCAP.

Miller: Did the Pres. think this up himself, do you think, or was it recommended by you or

Moscoco: I think that this came about through a play of words; maybe it was mentioned at some other meeting and he caught the word common market integration and so forth and it struck his fancy. I know that he asked questions continuously at other meetings about Central America; about how they were coming along. I also think that one of the things that he found extremely interesting from a U.S. national interest point

of view was the fact that Panama was not a member of the Central American common market. I think that he felt that if the U.S. gives full backing and endorsement indicated by his visit there, to the Central American common market concept, it might be possible to induce Panama to join. The principal thought behind this was of course that Panama's future was pretty much tied to the future of the rest of the Central American countries. What Panama cannot do singly it maybe possible to do jointly with all of these other countries, and this would of course, release some of the tensions of the canal issue.

Miller: It was your impression then that the Pres. had part of the initiative in arranging this visit

Moscoso: Yes.

Miller: Whereas it wasn't just a staff recommendation that

Moscoso: No. I think that this was primarily his own idea. Another thing of course is that it struck him as something dramatic to meet with 4 Presidents all at once. That seemed to him something which would create the necessary headlines in Latin America; show the U.S. interest in the welfare. It would also help in his image here in the U.S. and undoubtedly for the first time, in the history of Latin America, would focus the attention of the whole world on this ----- group of nations.

He felt that that would be good for them.

Miller: The trip was about the 20th of March, 1963

Moscocco: That's right

Miller: and the President met with the five, or six I guess, Presidents in San Jose. Did the meetings go well with them?

Moscocco: The meetings went very well. I remember the only incident that probably left a little bit of bad taste in the mouth was the fact ~~xxx~~ that at the beginning of the meetings a dinner was given by President Orlich in the Presidential Palace in San Jose and everybody showed up in civilian clothing and of all the Presidents, the one that perhaps President Kennedy thought the highest of, President Rivera of ^{El Salvador} showed up in his military uniform.

This President felt very deeply later on - he felt he had made a faux pas because if there is anything that President Rivera has tried to do it's to eliminate his military background from civilian activities and he never wears the uniform in El Salvador property. I really believe that Rivera being a pretty modest guy never bothered to buy himself a suit of evening clothes for this kind of an occasion and having to wear evening clothes that day he just had to put on this military jacket. I mention this because this was the only untoward incident and just goes to show what a wonderful was this whole meeting. Some Presidents more, other Presidents less, they all had their rapport with the President. I really believe of course the President felt Rivera to be the most consistently socially responsible of all the Presidents - the one that had the best concept of what he would like to see his country do and the one

who asked the least from the United States. The President had joint meetings, of course, ~~with~~ at which all the Presidents participated but he also wanted to have bilateral meetings and these were held on the day before he left. He devoted half hour to each one of these Presidents. Of course, if the conversation went a little longer, President Kennedy was perfectly willing to sit and talk with them. The meetings with all the Presidents were more or less formal because, as you know, resolutions had been previously approved and circulated and the final communique had been more or less agreed to but, of course, there was quite a bit of re-drafting and quite a bit of pressure for adding this and adding that and the other thing. One of the things that the Central Americans wanted was some commitment of the United States that the United States would help finance their development plan if and when it was ever approved. And one of our jobs was to make sure that we didn't over-commit ourselves. First, for Congressional reasons and, second, we wanted to be sure of what we were getting into. Even the Latin Americans themselves had to concede that they had no plan - they didn't ~~know~~ know exactly what they were going So the wording of the San Jose Declaration was of such a nature as to give us quite a bit of leeway and I think we have complied pretty much with what we agreed at that time.

The President asked me to participate in some of these meetings and there was one meeting in which in typical Kennedy fashion he wanted to know ~~how~~ how satisfied ~~for~~ every one of the Presidents was with the aid program. Well, of course you give a President an opportunity like that and every one of them had all kinds of complaints that such and such a loan had been reduced, or

such and such a loan was not being disbursed fast enough, or such/an engineer had been imposed upon them when they had good local people that could do the job, etc. etc. But I think that generally speaking there weren't too many complaints. However, in view of the fact that there was a dirth of ~~projex~~ projects, a definite dirth of projects, and that we felt that perhaps more money had been allocated for Central America than they were going to be able to use unless something was done insofar developing projects, the President said "Ted, why don't you have a meeting after this one and bring together all of the people who have anything to do with ~~academic~~ the development ~~program~~ program." And I said, "All right, two weeks from now." Everybody agreed. We fixed the date and then the question arose where should it be held. Now the President there pulled a little trick of his -- I think he knew how much I objected to the

because I had a reputation for being against military men, dictators and so forth and it was pretty well known. So he looked at me and with a wry smile and, you know, the President had a fantastic sense of humor, he said, "Ted, how about doing it in Managua, Nicaragua?" Well, how on ~~earth~~ earth ~~xx~~ was I going to say in front of Louis Simosa who was there "I don't want think that I want to go Managua." So I swallowed and I said ~~xxxxxx~~ "Yes, all right, we'll do it in Managua." And then the President had a little bit of a smirk on his face that day he forced me to say this. Well, as a matter of fact, I didn't mind at all going to Managua afterwards because they did hold an

election - by the way, the President-elect, President Schick, Rene Schick, was present at all these meetings. That was a very very fine thing that President Kennedy did because he tried to promote the U. S. tradition of the incoming president being ~~thoroughly~~ thoroughly briefed on things. I think that Simosa didn't mind it at all - to bring Rene Schick. So the President-elect of Nicaragua sat in every one of these meetings and he was completely cognizant of everything that was going on. Now, when I finally went back to Nicaragua for this meeting President Schick was also cranked into the ~~very~~ conference and participated. The last day was, as I say, devoted to these bilateral talks and it was there where after his talk with Schiati of Panama, President Kennedy told Ed Martin and me "Listen, we have to find a way - we have to convince our Congress. We ~~shouldn't~~ shouldn't do it this year because I realize ~~that~~ this is politically irritating and we may have some problems with the Congress but next year when we don't have an election, for heaven's sake, let us sit down and make an effort to convince the Congress that this injustice has to be redressed" and that's when he said "I think that way back in 1903 when we signed that treaty with Panama we gave the Panamanians a royal screwing."

Miller: What in his relationships with the individual Presidents - how did some of them go? Did the President develop any kind of rapport with Louis Simosa or

Moscogco: He thought Louis Simosa was quite sympatico - which he is - I mean Simosa can charm the skin off a rabbit. He's extremely cordial,

warm, he's a big fellow, like his father - he's a great raconteur and he can tell perhaps some of the better dirty stories that I've heard from presidential lips - not that I ever heard him tell one to President Kennedy, maybe he did but I wasn't there to hear it. I did hear his old man at one time tell some very good stories but he was brought up in that tradition of cordiality and bon amie, and so forth and he speaks very good English. As a matter of fact, he spoke the best English of all the Presidents present there so it made the relationship an easy one and, as you know, President Kennedy was not a ~~an~~ linguist and became quite uncomfortable when he wasn't able to communicate, With this fantastically rapid mind of his his thoughts because he had to go through an interpreter. Well, I think that is why he got the particular satisfaction of more or less forcing me to go to Nicaragua. In the case of Orlich President ~~Orlich~~, I had a problem with President Kennedy because President Kennedy was the President of the United States but he was also the city politician. He was thinking of terms of Boston politics - if you give people service they are going to keep on electing you and electing you and electing you. The old New Deal tradition of spend, spend, ~~tax~~ spend, tax, tax, tax, and elect, elect, elect. Which was good - which was good - that's how you get elected and when President Orlich came along and talked to him about additional primary schools, he would tell me (My God, my uncle got elected in Boston because of the school program. And I used to tell him "Look, Mr. President, he got elected not so much because of the school program but because of the eighty ~~odd~~ some odd speeches that he made about the school program." Then Orlich

said, "We need more hospitals, we need more maternal clinics". And I would tell President Kennedy, "Look, we have a problem in Costa Rica. Their investment ratio is probably the highest in Latin America - some 21 to 22 percent of the GNP is invested - very high ratio - number one. Number two - they have - well, they have the highest literacy rate in all ~~Latin~~ Latin America - one of the highest - right behind ~~Uruguay~~ Uruguay. Number three - they have one of the lowest death rates. Obviously, their schooling system is very good, obviously their health system is very good. And obviously they are investing too much in social welfare activities because in spite of the heavy investment, they have had no growth in GNP for the last eight or ten years. So the investments were being distorted. So , Mr. President, and I ~~think~~ think what we ought to tell President Orlich, and I said this in front of Orlich, is that we want to help but we want to help in productive enterprises - ~~in building industry~~ in industry, growth, etc., the infrastructure - the economic infrastructure where there is any need for this development, or in agricultural or industrial development. But these social welfare activities or these educational and health activities, quite frankly, do not have in our minds the priorities that he attaches to it." Well, this President Kennedy didn't like, because he put himself in the place of Orlich, and he put himself in the place of his uncle up in Boston getting elected and elected and elected because he was building hospitals, and schools and so forth. Well, here in the United States the private sector is so vigorous that the public sector can do a lot of ~~fix~~ foolish things - overbuild

schools or not build any and they still - ~~z~~ the economy keeps on moving. But in a very brittle economy like the one in Costa Rica you can overturn the ~~z~~ rather easily. Well, that's just a side issue but it sort of shows how the President always put himself in the other fellow's position and always sort of ~~z~~ - as he would think of it - insofar as political acceptance of a program was concerned. Not that he wasn't mindful of the economic needs but, of course, like here in the United States, the economic needs of the country are pretty well taken of with good sound policy. It's not a question of large appropriations for industrial development or anything like that. Maybe, in a recession, for public works but that's about all. The speech that the President made the last few minutes that he was in Costa Rica - he probably did the finest job conveying his enthusiasm to the youngsters of Latin America. At the University of ~~z~~ This was a performance such as I have never seen. Dick ~~z~~ had slaved ~~xxxx~~ over his speech that he had prepared for the President and the President had ~~z~~ with that speech. He was a little bit nervous because this was his first face-to-face ~~z~~ confrontation with the youth of Latin America. Prior to that - well, it had been business people, ~~z~~ professional and government people and so forth, but this was all youngsters - there wasn't a face there that was older than 20-21 years old and there were thousands of them. And he knew how important it was to win these youngsters over, to make them feel that he had the torch of ~~z~~ that he was going to place in

their hands and that they had to run with it. He read the first page or so of his speech, he threw it aside and then he waded in, in his own inimitable way and in a few minutes he had that crowd eating out of his hand. So much so that ~~h~~ when he finished there was an outburst - and here these Costa Rican youngsters who are relatively mild in their reaction in comparison to Latin American students - just trying to grab him, trying to shake his hands, they destroyed the platform - the darn thing caved in - it was impossible - the Secret Service people finally had to grab him and hold him up to protect him and put him in the helicopter which was about 100 paces away and off we took. I think that the whole incident shows his recognition of the need of making the Alliance a good thing. These youngsters had to have a cause - the Communists have been able to create that mystique and I think that he made the best possible attempt that I have seen to create that mystique in the people who are going to have the most to say about Latin America which are the young people because Latin America is a very very young continent because of the very high death rate, because of the fabulously high birth rate, this is a continent of young people and there are young people all over, young people running government, young people as Ministers of Finance and so forth. Here was this young man from the United States, very vigorous and very idealistic, and all they wanted was to follow a leader, a good leader, and here was a leader. Well, of course, this made it doubly difficult for any Latin American

to step into his shoes and to do the job. So, in a way, it was unfortunate that he preempted the opportunity for any Latin American to ^{be the} torchbearer of the Alliance. Which is probably one of the reasons why the ^{has been} created.

Miller: Did the President give any other kind of indication that he recognized that the students were the ^{of the future in Latin America?}

Moscoso: Always - always. For instance, when we ~~we~~ were preparing some goodies to take down to ~~Latin~~ ^{Central} America, he wanted to know, "All right, what are we going to do about education?" "What ~~we~~ are we going to do about scholarships?" That was the thing that he was concerned the most about.

Miller: Did he seem to be concerned about ~~we~~ students going to Cuba?

Moscoso: Yes, he felt that - well, you know - as a result of the San Jose Conference another conference was held - unfortunately, also in Managua - which was the negative type of operation which unfortunately at that time and in view of the subversive activities of ^{also had to take place} which was a meeting of the Ministers of Justice to see if they could get together on some kind of an agreed method of operation to prevent so much travelling to Cuba.

Miller: Did the President talk to you about the problem at all - of students travelling to Cuba and what kind?

Moscoso: No, this was the kind of ~~the~~ thing that he ~~talked~~ talked primarily with Ed. He did want to know what we were doing to bring these people into the United States. Well, thank God that in that respect ever since I got into

the agency we have made a very strenuous effort to build up our training program and the participants had increased - almost trebled - in the past three years. I think that we had a pretty good showing in that respect. Now, there was one meeting with - I think I mentioned before - that to me was a real letdown. I unfortunately do not find it here in my book - it had taken place on March ~~21~~ 25th - I wonder if that is the exact date - at which it was held.

Miller: What occurred at the meeting?

Moscoso: This was meeting ~~at~~ ⁱⁿ which the decision ~~was~~ ^{is} made with regard to the Guatamalean election and our participation in, if nothing else, the rather weak spark of democracy ~~is~~

Miller: It must have ~~at~~ been about this time - would you describe the

Moscoso: The meeting was held in the President's office and, if I recall correctly, Ed ~~was~~ Martin was there, Jack Bell was there, and and people were there - I think King, we also had Cordemeyer, I don't know who else was there but there ~~was~~ were maybe one or two other people.

Miller: At some time about this time you had in Mexico City, I believe.

Moscoso: ~~Yes~~, Yes, this was October of '62 - during the Cuban Crisis when Mr. Dillon had to leave persistently to participate in the National Security Council meeting and I took over the delegation. I also took over

all of the commitments that he had made for interviews and I do know almost all the Latin American delegations wanted to have a few minutes of bilateral talks with the head of the U. S. delegation. So I took on these meetings. The last of the commitments that had been made was one for a Saturday - the Saturday that the meeting broke up about 1:00 - with the Orek - that's the Regional Organization of Workers - which is backed by the AFL-CIO and the free trade movements is headed by and - reliable person, is backed by the AFL - CIO - not ~~x~~ only backed politically but also with funds and I had no premonition of what was going to happen. ~~Mick~~ I was not prepared - neither was Mr. - he showed up with three or four people because usually labor ~~for~~ people go around in groups - some people say it's because they don't trust each other - I don't think that's right - I think that is one way to have a lot of people participate in meetings and help in making selected judgments~~x~~ as to what's been said. The meeting was very brief - I happened to have a luncheon appointment that day and we ~~were~~ were very late in breaking up the meeting so - it was almost close to two o'clock and we just discussed the several programs which we had not only in Mexico but in other countries in the training of labor leaders. We discussed the American for labor development and we discussed the participation of workers ~~in and how to do so~~ in the housing program and I told them about Phil Dougherty, Jr., and the very good job that he was doing with the social program and wondered how much Orek was collaborating with him, or if they were, etc., etc.

One of the gentlemen that _____ had brought along looked ~~k~~ more like a college professor than anything else - and he introduced him to me but since I ~~didn't~~ didn't have my hearing aid at the moment, I didn't get his name.

So _____ when they were leaving repeated the name and said, "Of course, you realize this is the ~~form~~ former ~~pres~~ president ~~of~~ _____ of Guatemala."

"Oh, yes, how are you?" and _____ turned and said "I'm going to see your friend in Venezuela, _____" "Ah, give him my greetings" then I said -

oh, he said "I hope that some day we will be able to talk some more about my acceptability to the United States." And I said, ~~that's all right~~ "Well, why don't you ~~talk~~ talk to R. _____ about that? ~~He's~~ He's pretty expert on gaining acceptability from the United States for his policies."

He said, "Oh, well, I will talk to him - goodbye, goodbye". That was the end of that. I am told by State Department people and I think it is perfectly correct that this came out - and that is that _____ gave a press interview later on saying that he had been invited to see me and that I had invited him for lunch. ~~The lunch was really a luncheon given by~~ by the way the luncheon ~~was really a luncheon given by~~ was really a luncheon given by

for a group of people who had

Well, of course, that immediately got currency ~~g~~ throughout Guatemala -

this, of course, being used by _____ to convince his followers that he did have U.S. backing and therefore they should go along with him. Now, I don't know _____ from Adam - I do not know whether or not he is a Communist.

I did try at one time to find out upon instructions from the Department in Venezuela - I went to see President _____ one afternoon at the express request and under instructions from the Department to find out.

_____ had ~~not~~ allowed _____ to enter the country and _____ was teaching, I believe, at the University - Central University. _____ knew very little about _____. Apparently, he had made an effort not to be too much in front of _____ and he said, "Look, I don't know - I don't think he's a Communist but I just wouldn't be the person to tell you this because I have, in fact, very little contact with him."

Miller: Guatemala, at this time, during the month of March 1968 was undergoing - or was in the midst of Presidential campaigns as I recall.

Moscoco: That's right

Miller: _____ was running.

Moscoco: No - _____ couldn't succeed himself. On the other hand, it was said that _____ had made a deal with _____ to allow _____ to run and to back him in taking office if he won provided that _____ protected his ill-gotten gains. That's the rumor that went around. The truth is that _____ did not object to _____ candidacy, and it was either one of two things - ~~it was~~ either the deal was a true one or ~~it was~~ else _____ just didn't think that _____ was the Communist that people thought he was. and the other fact undoubtedly was that ~~it was~~ _____

was quite popular in Guatemala and that is why some of the people were concerned ~~about~~ about a Communist being elected in Guatemala. Some of their fears were so great. However, at this meeting in the White House when the President asked me, and why I was asked to that particular meeting I don't know, because quite frankly it was purely a political meeting in which a political ~~decision~~ ^{position} was going to be taken, - he went around and asked the opinion of some of the people there and when he got to me, he said: "What do you think - what shall we do about this?" because one of the proposals was "Is this a military coup - a military takeover - elections will be avoided and Mr. _____ will not get elected." The coup, of course, would be but it appeared that there wasn't too much objection on the part of _____ just so long as he was able to get some of his ill-gotten gain out of it. Well, quite frankly, I thought that this was a very bad thing to do. Particularly in view of the fact that we were not sure whether the man was a Communist. I wasn't sure. I asked Cordemeyer, whose opinion I respect, ~~directly~~ directly, in front of the President, "Are you sure that he is a Communist?" and ~~obviously~~ Cordemeyer said, "No, I don't think so". I said, "Well, Mr. President, this is the same situation that I was faced with when I went to Venezuela if you will recall. I had all kinds of facts, CIA evaluations on Mr. _____. I was told that he had been, that he was a card-carrying Communist at one time, etc., etc., I had quite a number of people in my Embassy who never referred to him except as 'that Communist'.

And, nevertheless, who is the staunchest friend of the United States at this time? Who is the greatest ~~xxxxxx~~ enemy of the Communists in all of Latin America? ~~E~~ Who is the target of all these attempts at assassination?

_____ . So I think that these judgments have to be made very very carefully and unless we have evidence that the man is really a Communist, I think that we shouldn't condemn him this way. Another thing, couldn't we really make an effort - have we even tried to make an effort to find out if we can influence _____ into the right track in case he has deviated. Couldn't we, in view of the fact that everybody seems to ~~think~~ think ~~is~~ that he is impressionable, couldn't we try to impress him, could we, by holding his hand, by offering him some kind of aid and assistance, try to conduct him to the right way. In view of the fact that he seems to be so popular, apparently he would get elected anyway. And, for heaven's sake, let's be careful how we treat democracy in these countries, unless we nourish it, unless we promote it, unless we educate the people in the ways of democracy, these people will never learn how to govern themselves." Well, the President turned around and asked Jack Bell, "Well, what do you ~~think~~ think?" And Jack Bell said, "Well, I think rather not have an election than have _____ ~~xxxx~~ elected." And the decision was taken right then and there.

Miller: The decision was whether or not ~~at~~ to attempt to count the coup rumors that had been cropping up - probably during March. The coup actually took place on March ~~xxxx~~ 30th.

Moscoso: Yes, a few days later - a few days later.

Miller: And so our action would have been to inform the military leaders that we were opposed to any kind of coup or that they could go ahead with it.

Moscoso: Now, let me tell you - this kind of an operation in a country like Peru, Chile, Argentina, Brazil may not achieve any results as we saw quite well in the case of Peru. But in a country such as ~~Guatemala~~ Guatemala in Central America, I assure you, that the influence of the United States is so preponderant that we could have, we could have democracy there. Now, were we willing to undertake the very very difficult task of trying to hold ~~xxxx~~ on to someone who ~~xxxx~~ might be an ultranationalist, who might be leftwinger, who is not a Communist, in the right path - apparently that takes a little more doing and we were not willing to do it. That is what I resented.

Miller: Was there anyone else at the meeting

Moscoso: May I finish this - we had had the same experience in ~~Puerto~~ Puerto Rico and I told the President so. Governor _____ was also called a very _____, ~~x~~ Communist, and ~~xxxxxxx~~ there was even a ~~fix~~ footnote in one of our _____, The Vital Country, to the effect that _____ was a Communist, etc., etc., which wasn't true either. This is one of those things that at one time or another in the life of a person can be easily applied to because anyone who has had startling ideas, ideas which are contrary to the traditional thinking of the people, the conventional _____, immediately are tarred with that brush. And, for heaven's sake, I thought that the least we

could do ~~x~~ is to either make a thorough investigation and come up with a better judgment than the one that offhandedly some people made over there.

Miller: Did anyone else at the meeting support your view of this or did anyone else

Moscoco: Cordemeyer was the only one who said that I do not think that this man - we don't have evidence that this man is a Communist.

Miller: But other than that, the ~~xxx~~ collective recommendation of the people present in the ~~xxxx~~ room to the President was that we should not interfere with the coup, was it not?

Moscoco: Jack Bell, I think went further. I think that he was in favor of encouraging it. That is my opinion. He went just a little ~~xxxx~~ beyond trying to stop the coup.

Miller: How did the President make ~~xxxx~~ up his mind after he had heard you and Jack Bell and

Moscoco: ~~He~~ He looked at the carpet, thought for a minute, and said, "O.K. This is it. "

Miller: "This is it" would mean that

Moscoco: that we are not going to stop this coup. Now, I realize that some of these very tough decisions have to be made. I also realize that the President cannot be 100% right but I had, perhaps foolishly, held the President on such a high pedestal that he came down at least a step or two when he made that decision. I just didn't particularly like ^{to see} the fate of a country decided right

there in front of ~~the~~ coffee table at the White House - I think the fate of the country should be decided by the country themselves.

Miller: Were there detailed recommendations on ~~this~~ this subject or was the meeting called at which people explained the problem

Moscoco: I arrived there without a piece of paper in my hands - maybe the others had - I don't know - maybe the others had - maybe the others had the advantage of a lot of traffic of CIA and so forth. That's why I pointed to ~~forced~~ Cordemeyer directly and asked him the question. Besides I have known Cord perhaps better among the CIA people than the others, than _____ for instance, or any ~~one~~ of the others and I had a lot of respect for his judgment ~~on~~ and that's why I thought, well, maybe I don't have the facts ~~on~~ but he will have the facts - now let's see what he says.

Miller: We might, while discussing the coup, discuss the coup that occurred in the Fall of 1963 as well. Let me ask first, were you present at any other meetings on the Guatemala coup problem?

Moscoco: No. But I was present at the time the Dominican Republic ~~had~~ difficulties began and I remember being present at ~~that~~ the meeting - I think it was on a ~~FR~~ Friday - October the 4th, was it?

Miller: Yes, that was the meeting at which both you and _____ were present

Moscoco: That's right - and I wasn't happy about what took place there either.

Miller: Well, in September, as I recall - or all through the Summer of '63 there were persistent rumors ~~about~~ coming from the Dominican Republic that

a coup was ~~intended~~ impending

Moscoso: That's right

Miller: There had been a good deal of traffic between the Department and the Dominican Republic about the impending coup and _____ and Ambassador Martin had been sending constant cables. I think the coup occurred in the latter part of September or early October that year. ~~Was~~ You were called to the White House on the 4th of October and did have a meeting with the President - the coup had actually occurred on ~~the~~ 25th of

Moscoso: Yes, this was about 10 days after the coup that we had this meeting. Ambassador Martin had come up and the question was how do we behave after this coup, what do we say, how do we react, do we accept this triumvirate that has been set up and I guess I had my strong ~~my~~ feelings - which I've always had I guess - dictatorship against a constitutional procedure - primarily because I think anything which we do to encourage the Latin Americans to follow constitutional procedures is to the good and anything we do to discourage them by accepting unconstitutional procedures is to the bad.

Miller: We had not at that time resumed relations with

Moscoso: We had not resumed relations - on the contrary, we had been pulling ~~people~~ people out of there to the great chagrin of Ed Martin who thought we shouldn't pull out as quickly as all that and I said that we must make known to

Dominican people and to the rest of ~~Latin~~ Latin America how ~~objectionable~~ objectionable this whole procedure is to us. Now, I agree that _____ was at fault - _____ was a dreamer, was relatively weak, particularly in the administrative field - he had never governed anything or managed anything - no business experience - he had never even managed an office of two or three people - he'd been a teacher and a writer all his life - but I had had some experience with people like that - Governor _____ was a poet too. All that he had ever done was write articles for the Review ~~Republic~~ Republic and the _____ so that he could get enough money to buy himself a beer or maybe a scotch and a pack of ~~cigarettes~~ cigarettes every once in a while and he had led a Bohemian life in ~~the~~ Greenwich Village - he could never keep an appointment, he was always anywhere from two to five hours late for an appointment - he had no method, no organization, no concept - he knew nothing about administrative management. _____ and by backing him up, a bunch of us, he now happens to be recognized as one of the good executives, not only in Latin America, in the United States - now, for God's sake, why couldn't we have done the same thing with _____?

Miller: The meeting on the 4th of October was to determine the future posture

Moscoso: The future posture and also to discuss rather briefly - we didn't have it in front of us - a statement that Ed Martin was going to make in which the policy of the United States would be articulated perhaps for the first time

with respect to ~~the military coups~~ military coups- some being good and others. It's like pregnancy and birth - some are good and some are not -- even though they might not be married at all. No, I just don't think that that is a good

Miller: The President had before him - as I understand

Moscoco: Not only that but - excuse me - supposing that we ~~xxx~~ - I mean the President, his Cabinet and his wisdom decided that this was an impossible situation - this man was incredibly incompetent - which he was not - ~~xxxxxx~~ that he was unsalvageable - which I don't think - I think that he could have been salvaged by someone more ~~sympathetic~~ sympathetic, by someone who could communicate with him which was not possible because _____ could not talk the language. Even if that had happened, even if we had ~~agreed~~ agreed that this so-called Martin Doctrine was a pragmatic one which we had to at this state of developments in Latin America we had to accept for this continent - even if that ~~had~~ were the case, articulating it was the worst possible mistake because all we were doing was just opening the doors wide. Any third rate tinhorn military man could walk into ~~the~~ government and say Well, the United States thinks that military coups may be good - maybe this is a good one.

Miller: Did you state your view on the Martin article which was not yet completed

Moscoso: Well, the article had been seen by Ralph Duggan and was not shown to me. The President had not seen it either - he was going to see it after the meeting.

Miller: Ed Martin outlined what he had to say?

Moscoso: He outlined it very briefly. Quite frankly, by that time I was so beaten that at that time I decided to leave - quite frankly, ~~know~~ that was the time when I made the decision. At that time ~~xx~~ I thought that there was going to be grave difficulty in getting the United States to really come up with ~~my~~ a constructive policy in so far as political education, democratic development - but I didn't take a wholly negative attitude - I talked with Ray _____ who seems to know all the institutional ramifications here to find out who best could probably do a good job of analysis of the situation, who best could make recommendations for a strong program of political development which, to my mind, is perhaps just as important, ~~xx~~ if not more important than all the other technical assistance programs that we have. I brought the matter up to the _____ Committee, _____ group, _____ prepared a good paper which I thought was well-written but I thought it was sort of negative - I talked to Fields Haviland over at Brookings - we had several talks about this thing. He agreed that something ought to be done, and began to prepare some guidelines for a major ~~■~~ research job - Can you really do something about political development, Can you

stimulate it, or do you have to let it slide and let it grow over time - can you bring in fertilizers and seed and technology to make democracy flower a little faster and stronger - Well, we were in the midst of that when President Kennedy was killed and I hope that something will ~~eventually~~ eventually be done about.

Miller: At that October 4 meeting, the President decided tentatively ~~to go~~ subject to seeing the draft, to go ahead and have published this document that Martin was preparing explaining coups, is that correct?

Moscoco: Yes, he was going to see it - Ed Martin said, however, that Ralph Duggan had seen it. Ralph was there too. Ralph apparently had not only seen it - had participated in preparing it - had had over here and Ralph thought it was pretty good. Now, to add insult to ~~the~~ injury - to have a doctrine of this kind - as important as I thought it was to Latin America - articulated by a high official of the United States government in a Republican newspaper on a copyright basis - I thought was really the ultimate.

Miller: Did this document - which hadn't really been seen yet - rather operated, ^{would} ~~operate, as~~ I gather, as a operative document which ~~was discussed~~ determine our ~~Domestic Policy~~ Dominican Republic

Moscoco: And our stand on the future in Latin America. This was going beyond the need of the moment.

Miller: So that the article in intent was to discuss, rather than our policy toward the Dominican Republic as such,

Moscoso: Look, I am not so unrealistic as not to recognize that in some instances democracy must ~~be~~ defend itself and, ~~xxx~~ as a matter of ~~a~~ fact, one of the great question marks in those who study political science is how far do you go in destroying some of the rights that democracy gives you in order to protect democracy itself - do you allow Communists to vote, knowing quite well ~~xxx~~ that if they win they are going to destroy ~~xxx~~ democracy - should you allow that. Well, in Latin America, the most sophisticated country, Chile, ~~xxx~~ said - Why not - why not. So this is not a question that has been decided yet. Now, on the other hand, if we pragmatically feel that the higher interests of the United States demand this kind of a policy be adopted, for didactic reasons I say - don't articulate it - keep it quiet - act but don't say it - don't say it. We worked that way and I participated in implementing a policy of this kind in Ecuador. The military took over because an ~~xxx~~ incompetent, drunken person was destroying all the dignity of the people - the self-contempt of the Ecuadorians was reaching the point where these people were going to destroy themselves. So, a group of idealistic military men took over. No one died, the man was deposed and his worldly goods were given to him and he was put on a plane and taken out. What did we do - eventually we recognized ~~x~~ them and we worked with them - I visited them - they had among the group

that runs the government - they have a Colonel there - Colonel Scanta who's an intellectual, an idealist, a thorough democrat, comes from the middle class and who thought this is going to be a intraregnum which will permit us to undertake all of the social reforms that we have not been able to achieve in this country because the _____ has been running this country to fit their needs and their wishes. So, in view of the transformation that these people were trying to achieve, I thought that we should try to help them in every possible way but I didn't get up on a platform and say - My God, how good certain military coups can be and so forth because you just encourage this kind of thing.

Miller: On the ~~Six~~ 4th of October I believe the Honduras coup also took place. Was this subject discussed in terms of the Honduran crisis.

Moscoso: The Honduran crisis was also discussed at that time. As a matter of fact, it was discussed at the time the Guatamalan