



**ADDRESS TO THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

by

GENERALISSIMO DR. RAFAEL L. TRUJILLO MOLINA
President of the Dominican Republic

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Members of the National Assembly:

Within a few moments you will administer the constitutional oath of office to the citizen elected by the people to the presidency of the Republic for the term beginning today and ending August 16, 1957.

The party of the majority has sponsored this healthful move wishing to show clearly the soundness of its political structure, as well as the maturity of the principles upon which its entire framework rests. Such a test was not initiated before because the abnormal circumstances under which world politics have evolved since 1939 had precluded it.

The dangerous contingencies of the war and the implications of the post-war period did not make it advisable to change course at a time when the Republic was committed not only to the fulfilment of indefectible international obligations to cooperate with the great powers united against the Axis, but also to the preservation of the substantial achievements made by us in the course of those crucial years.

On a previous occasion I stated that the period following the cessation of hostilities of the last world war caused us more hardships and greater worries

than the war itself, notwithstanding the painful loss of lives and ships that we suffered by the action of enemy submarines.

Along with the manifold problems inflicted on the nations of the world by the period of post-war readjustment, the Dominican Republic found itself besieged by certain shortcomings and anomalies caused by the inordinate influence that the agents of demagogy and shameless extremism succeeded in exerting in this part of the Caribbean.

The world is well aware of the incidents that took place during the perilous and troubled times through which international relations in this area went from 1945 until recently. Everyone knows the risks we took and how the evil-doing forces of communism made us for several years the target of their hatred, their sinister plottings and their cravings. It was neither practicable nor advisable during that period to think of anything but the preservation of our peace, the tranquility of the Dominican people and the internal, as well as the external, security of the Republic.

It would have been very disturbing for myself not to heed the call of my fellow citizens when they demanded my presence in office, inasmuch as shunning the responsibility of leadership at that particular time would have amounted to a defection such as those which history can never justify. That was the only reason inducing me to consent to the placing of my name at the top of the presidential contest in 1947. We were then in the very center of the storm

and I could not turn my back upon the sacred bonds that link me to the fate of the Dominican people.

I wish to say emphatically, without hesitation or evasiveness, that I shall never regret having acted as I did at that time. I am convinced that without my presence in the government matters would have taken a different turn indeed. I say this, not because of personal merits, but in view of the countless political circumstances that have placed me, as well as my career in government, at the very core of our people's confidence and of the respectability of our institutions.

I believe also that the decision taken by the Dominican people in 1947 to keep me in office greatly contributed to the preservation of peace not only in this country but in the entire Caribbean area as well. I believe further that such a determination on the part of the Dominican people was a paramount factor in the fight against the extremist systems and their corroding infiltration of the national, as well as the international, conscience of the nations sharing this strategic area.

I shall endeavour to make myself clear. In 1947 we Dominicans came face to face with a formidable coalition of governments unprecedented in the history of the Caribbean. Rómulo Betancourt's government in Venezuela, that of Juan José Arévalo in Guatemala, José Figueres' in Costa Rica, Ramón Grau San Martín's in Cuba, as well as those of Elie Lescot and Dumarsais Estimé in Haiti,

had concluded a tightly-knit pact of aggression against the Dominican Republic. Knowledge of this unique confabulation was gained by us as early as the middle of 1946. It is obvious that none of the coalition governments had reason for resentment either toward the government or the people of the Dominican Republic. We had not offended any of these gratuitous enemies of ours, nor had we made any move, either directly or indirectly, against the interests of any of those Sister Republics, which are linked to ours by very respectable ties of collaboration and friendship.

There can be no doubt that this planned aggression had an unconfessed ideological basis and that it responded to specific, clear-cut aims. The expansion of Soviet influence could not be completely successful in this area so long as one single country therein was capable of resisting and warding off the aims of communist imperialism. In 1947 the military might of the coalition made itself apparent in *Cayo Confites*, under the guise of the so-called *Caribbean Legion*, the latter being the instrument of the hidden intentions of the various governments committed against our Republic. One of those governments, that of Grau San Martín's, became directly involved in the preparations that were being made for the premeditated attack, the execution of which did reach a beginning on Cuban soil and in Cuban waters between July and October of 1947.

Later on, in 1949, Carlos Prío Socarrás and Juan José Arévalo concocted and launched a new

armed attack which came to a tragic end at *Luperon Bay*.

You are well aware of the events that took place in that secluded spot of our country at the time of the treacherous attack there. At the outset the Luperón townsfolk themselves took charge of the defense, while military reinforcements adequately prepared to crush the attempted invasion arrived at the scene. In view of this abnormal situation I traveled to the theatre of events in order to direct defense movements myself and prevent the tragic occurrence from going beyond the measure of a strict capture operation.

My first instructions to the troops going into action were to try by all means to capture the insurgents, always demanding their surrender before entering into actual combat with them. Thus were spared the lives of all those who, realizing their impotence, became willing to surrender unconditionally to a government that was only trying to safeguard the order, the peace and the tranquility of its people. Once the subversive attempt had been quenched, I delivered the prisoners to the ordinary courts of justice for trial under civil jurisdiction. They would still be serving the hard labor terms to which they were sentenced, had it not been because I, exercising a constitutional prerogative, granted all of them a full pardon and authorized the issuance of the necessary passports to enable them to leave the country whenever they wished.

It is presumable that our enemies could not operate in such a fashion unless they were affiliat-

ed with an intensive campaign by certain sectors of the international press primarily devised to discredit the government as well as the institutions of the Dominican Republic and thus, by means of a dastardly campaign of propaganda, succeed in hiding their innermost cravings to intervene in the internal affairs of our country and interfere with its political advancement. The enemy press and radio kept tirelessly heaping insult and insolence upon the Republic, its people and its leaders.

In the face of this situation, much levelheadedness, much self-confidence and an unshakeable determination were required to avoid a collapse of our peaceful aims that would have committed the nation to a war of unpredictable consequences for its own destiny as well as for that of all the other countries involved in the conflict.

For nearly four years we were in a state of non-declared war, under constant exposure to an attack by a disloyal enemy that deliberately employed the most sordid tactics in order to evade the responsibilities inherent to direct action. The Dominican Republic was the victim of incredible confabulations, all inspired by the methods and uses of piracy.

Meanwhile, in the face of this unique situation, the organs of the Inter-American System were proceeding very cautiously and parsimoniously in examining and correcting the dangerous abnormality, which was already beginning to be-

come chronic. When we were threatened by a third attack in the later part of 1949, this time by direct intrusion of the Cuban Red Cross, we were unable to do anything else but grab the bull by the horns and come to a showdown once and for all. The Republic could not remain at the mercy of its enemies any longer, in a continued state of affairs that necessarily contributed to a depletion of its energies and of its confidence in international cooperation.

I decided then, after waiting for four years, to place the deteriorated Caribbean situation into a solid mold for its final adjustment. We could no longer tolerate further vexations or permit the state of tension and restlessness in which the Dominican people lived to continue unchecked. Moreover, it was impracticable to continue investing the nation's monies for defense of a type that needlessly hindered the development and reconstruction program in which my government was engaged.

In December 1949 I asked the National Congress for constitutional powers to declare war on any foreign government that by any deliberate, overt or effective aid to the international organization operating at that time in the Caribbean area, might jeopardize the Dominican Republic into being the victim of a new armed invasion. In taking this extreme position I did nothing but exercise the inborn right to self-defense of the Dominican people, vis-a-vis threats of aggression which already had been perpetrated twice. I made it clear that my request for those special legal powers did not imply

any abandonment on our part of the methods for international conciliation, so long as the Republic could gain by these methods a real and effective insurance of security.

I can tell you in all sincerity that the times were extremely grave and that never before were we so close to Armageddon as then. Luckily, from that moment on matters became more reasonable and the process of readjustment took a definitely conciliatory turn. That is how I always wanted it, for the good of all concerned and for the advancement of Inter-American solidarity.

Notwithstanding this, only a few months ago we had to face a new scandalous machination by our enemies. I refer to the well-known story of the pirate ship *El Quetzal*, formerly a war vessel of the *Cayo Confites* concentration known at the time as *El Fantasma* (The Phantom). This ship, identified as the same one which assaulted the Dominican merchant motor vessel *Angelita* in 1947 while the latter was on a regularly scheduled voyage, was intercepted by Cuban military authorities in September 1947 as they approached the concentration of forces which would invade the Dominican Republic.

After this, the ship in question remained under the custody and surveillance of the Cuban government, in accordance with its international obligations. Despite this clear-cut fact, *El Fantasma*, now renamed *El Quetzal*, was returned to her former owners —the ringleaders of the *Cayo Confites* plot

— for subversive purposes, as is clearly established by the documents found aboard her, and in this temper she sailed from the port of *El Mariel* on July 25 of last year.

There can be no justification, either morally or legally, for the delivery of that ship to the leaders and sponsors of the *Caribbean Legion*. Such a delivery involved, to be sure, a serious insult to the Dominican people, because out of that ship's operations in the high seas could come only anxiety, unrest and further sacrifice to this country. *El Quetzal's* capture clearly demonstrated the nature of the subversive mission entrusted to her, and opened the doors of the Dominican courts for the proper punishment of the conspirators.

Prío Socarrás' government appealed the legal validity of the trial, before Inter-American organs, but without success. Thus were clearly established once again, before the bar of international judgment, the soundness of our institutions and the deep sense of equanimity with which we have acted throughout the entire convulsive and tearing series of plots and intrusions in which we have been the victims.

In order to honor a kindly petition by His Excellency Andrés Martínez Trueba, President of the Republic of Uruguay, a petition that was translated into a visit to this city by Ambassador Martínez Thedy, and wishing to satisfy also a request by the Cuban colony in our country, I decided to pardon the foreign members of *El Quetzal's* seditious

crew, after having been prosecuted and convicted by Dominican courts.

I wish to mention at this point an element of prime importance to the elucidation of this whole unheard-of series of events. I refer to the book that was published recently in Buenos Aires by Ambassador Enrique V. Corominas under the title of *En Las Areas Políticas del Caribe*.

Mr. Corominas, as his country's first Ambassador to the Organization of American States, was the first Chairman of the Organization's Council and a member of the Peace Commission established by Resolution XIV of the Second Meeting of Consultation of Foreign Ministers, held in Havana. In both of his capacities Mr. Corominas participated directly and prominently in the solution of the grave conflicts that had been taking place in the Caribbean since 1947. He visited nearly all the countries involved in the controversy and thus had an opportunity to survey the situation personally and meet the men that were active in it. His book therefore has the validity of a first-hand document produced by the person who by reason of his having had to devote his official attention to these events so often, was best qualified to write it. No testimony could deserve greater attention than that given by a foreign official who is completely removed from the interests and passions that were unleashed by the conflict. Ambassador Corominas' book contains the first unabridged and objective appraisal of the peculiarities involved in the contest, and exposes here-

tofore unpublished papers and documents which he had occasion to handle and scrutinize by virtue of his important international functions.

The Dominican government can take pride in the observations and conclusions in Mr. Corominas' book because therefrom emerges our Republic's crystal-clear position as one of the best elements of wisdom that came into play during that entire chaotic period of unrest, intrigue and hatred in which no less than seven American nations were involved.

The impartiality and sense of justice of this illustrious Argentine jurist and diplomat sharply contrasts with the niggardliness and sectarianism of such other Spanish American writers as Germán Arciniegas who has shamelessly foresaken his own basic ties of blood in order to plunge into the infamous task of discrediting his own country, as well as other sister nations, by means of publications that are translated on his behalf and which he will not subscribe in Spanish. In order to serve his masters from Moscow, he, with a total lack of consideration, with full consciousness of his own baseness, and from foreign lands, bemires the purest sources of the race and of the ancestry which kindled the spark of his own life as well as those of his countrymen.

It can be readily inferred from all that I have told you that we took our stand against the advancement of the extremist influences in this part of the hemisphere when we refused, even at the risk of an ill-fated collapse, to let our country fall into the



maws of Marxism's subversive expansionism. Had we permitted the coalition of governments that threatened us to cahnge at their will and pleasure our own system of domestic organization —and by means of armed intervention to subvert the very administrative system that had been chosen by the Dominican people in the exercise of their own rights —we would have in effect forsaken the soundest principles and the loftiest ideals of the American family of nations.

The best evidence of this government's peace-full aims was clearly given by me when I asked the Congress to revoke the powers that it had seen fit to grant me, as I realized that the successful turn taken by the action of the Provisional Organ of Consultation of the Organization of American States rendered my original measure unnecessary.

The request for and granting of those special powers was truly impressive. While the pressing circumstances of the hour prompted us to exercise the supreme right of self-defense, we conducted ourselves with the greatest composure and without ever deviating from the straight course of the law. Nothing stood in the way of our using the same infamous methods that were being employed against us. We could have organized a mercenary brigade, just as aggressive and destructive as the *Caribbean Legion*, in order to fight our enemies and cunningly sow the seeds of unrest and anxiety in certain neighboring countries. We could have fought piracy with piracy and thus accentuate to our advantage

the elements of confusion, anarchy and turmoil that stood in the way of normal international relations in this area. But surely such methods would not have yielded any constructive or decent result.

It was altogether wiser to meet the problem with the same seriousness it involved and loyally let the world learn all the implications and consequences that might have arisen from the prevailing disorder. We did it that way and do not regret it.

As you will find, my presence in office during the ten-year period of the last two presidential terms, was, rather than a wish of mine, a command dictated by the circumstances in which we found ourselves by reason of the instability brought on by World War II.

During that period our services were devoted to the great cause of democracy, and we complied meticulously with the commitments and obligations imposed upon us by our alliance with the great nations engaged in the struggle for that noble cause. Within the bounds of our resources, and often beyond them, we cooperated, both during and after the hostilities, with the United States of America and Great Britain in the war against Nazi-Fascism. Later, after victory, when Soviet Russia showed its sinister designs for conquest, we remained true to the interests and ideals of the two Anglo-Saxon powers, even to the extent of seriously jeopardizing our own security as we found ourselves faced with the predicament of having to defend ourselves by ourselves against the continued aggression of armed communism in the Caribbean.

Not long ago, on November 16 of last year, we decided to join in with those allied powers in order to face together the possibility of a third world war. I refer to the Treaty of Assistance which we subscribed with the Washington and London governments, and under which our territory and our jurisdictional waters are to be placed on a war footing whenever the use of guided missiles may become necessary for the defense of the North Atlantic. This treaty automatically turns us into a belligerent the moment either one of our two allies becomes involved in war actions that may threaten their power in those particular sea areas. This substantial collaboration was requested of us as a contribution to the security of the hemisphere and we did not hesitate to give it as a token of our love for the liberty and solidarity of the Americas.

The details of this important negotiation, as well as the characteristics of the agreement itself, are set forth in my message of December 10, 1951 to the National Congress, with which I submitted the instrument for congressional action. I have nothing to add at this time to my statements in that message. It is well to bear in mind, however, the extraordinary scope of the agreement to which I am referring. Under its provisions our international position is defined as that of an ally of the United States and Great Britain, at least until 1961. That resolute position is the logical outcome of the stand taken by our government against Communism's excesses and eccentricities and against its designs for world domination.



Parallel with the work accomplished by the administration during the last two constitutional terms in order to promote and develop progress in our nation, and irrespective of the serious difficulties of an international character that I have already mentioned, we have made also considerable efforts to place the Republic in a worthy position of international respect by fomenting and strengthening its relations with friendly nations.

With the exception of Guatemala, where a regime operates that is completely estranged from the traditional spirit of the family of American nations, and Costa Rica, the Republic maintains cordial and friendly relations with all the republics in this hemisphere.

As there was never any reason for estrangement from any of our sister nations in the Americas, save for the unbridled wilfulness of a few governments, already vanished, to intervene inconsiderately in the management of our domestic affairs, we have taken great pains to bring back to a normal and harmonious status our relationships with all those nations.

Insofar as our international relations are concerned, I believe that the greatest single achievement of my administration has been the successful overcoming by peaceful means of the grave problems of the last few years, without bloodshed and without ever causing a breach in the Inter-American System. Such an attitude on my part, however, entailed great sacrifices for the Dominican people. I

wish to place that on the record in this solemn occasion because it is highly desirable that our future generations can grasp the full historical significance of that gloomy period of which I have spoken and in which we were choiceless protagonists.

All circumstances now point to our increased hopes for the restoration of the ancient spirit presiding over the relationships among the peoples of the Caribbean. Sensible men, men who are earnestly preoccupied by the welfare and progress of their peoples, such as those in power in Venezuela, Cuba and Haiti, who are free from shameful commitments with Russia, have decided, with a true sense of historical responsibility, to oppose the increasingly dangerous onslaught of confusion and infamy that threatens us all. The mere presence of leaders such as General Fulgencio Batista, General Paul Magloire and the members of the Venezuelan Government Junta, constitutes a constructive element for the common security. That is my most profound conviction.

But we must ever be mindful of the fact that the enemy does not slacken and that the critical area in which we live is closely tied in with world strategy and with the very fate of the great North-American nation. As of today, political unity among all the peoples in the Caribbean is vital to the success of the democracies in a third world war. The continuous infiltration of this area by the communist virus represents an imponderable danger to the future of America and the rest of the world. Russia

is well aware that in this vicinity began the downfall of the greatest empire the world has ever known and it will therefore never give up its efforts to dominate by force the strategic abutment on which the security of the entire hemisphere is hinged.

I do not wish to trouble your mind with an unseasonable statement, nor do I wish to be unnecessarily taken for a pessimist, but I would not be true to myself were I not to tell you on this memorable occasion that the forces of evil are not scattered thinly about and that our enemies' aims are being pointed, on orders from Moscow, towards a new and sinister international conspiracy.

I feel quite at ease as I leave the office of president of my own accord. My government's achievements, deeply rooted in the people's awareness, are destined to stand for a long time because they spell and amount to the only substantial revolution of cause and effect recorded by the history of the Republic. I do not consider it fitting to elaborate at this time on the domestic phase of those achievements and their effects both on the immediate and distant future of this nation, as I have done so in recent occasions. Instead, this address is devoted to expounding upon and examining the foreign policy of this government during my tenure of office.

Being keenly aware of the necessity confronted by us in the direction of a careful revision of what might be called the religious statute of our country, which is the cradle of American civilization, I decided as far back as February 26, 1950 to

establish contact with the Holy See in order for the two States to examine the situation and find, by means of a thorough revision thereof, the religious methods best suited to the spiritual needs of our people, who are profoundly Catholic. The talks have been carried on in this city under my personal direction and thus far they are proceeding satisfactorily.

Contacts designed for wider expansion of the survey undertaken are kept on an active basis, with a view to covering, by means of one or more basic arrangements, the entire framework of our relations with the Vatican. The negotiations are already at a peak, with only the final touches pending. I wish to make it clear that everything that may be concluded on this subject will rest on the basis of the freedom of worship consecrated by the Constitution as inherent to the human personality. In seeking new methods for the discharge of the religious activities of the Dominican people, I have taken into account the Catholic majority, without detriment to the rights of confession of the dissenting minority, provided, however, that such declarations of faith will not interfere with established customs, with the legal statutes or with the nation's security.

I have always thought that one of the most striking consequences of our past wants and troubles was the seclusion in which we confined ourselves for a long time with regard to international relations. The Republic, constantly burdened by count-

less financial obligations, lacked adequate means for even a modest representation abroad and consequently did not have an opportunity to broaden its relations with the rest of the world in the proper manner. It is beyond question that this aloofness influenced the development of our national character. At various crucial points in our public life there was a need for greater flexibility in our institutions and for a broader adaptability of their as well as of our statesmen's outlook to international life.

This situation prompted me since the early days of my administration to seek to broaden and strengthen our sphere of action in the international field. Small countries such as ours, lacking in mighty material resources, should hinge their security on the constructive common action of true internationalism. The progressive advancement of world juridical organization towards interdependence is the best guaranty of tranquility and respect for the smaller members of the family of nations.

True to this belief, I labored diligently in order that the Republic might emerge from its seclusion, seeing to it that it was represented at all those meetings for international cooperation that may prove of value to its interests and to its requirements as a sovereign State. Nations are now more dependent than ever upon the interchange of interests. I am prepared to assert without hesitation that the Dominican Republic is linked by active participation to all those organizations of a general character sustaining the system of universal political and juridical relationships.

As regards direct international intercourse, as established through representative diplomacy, I can also tell you that our country maintains diplomatic missions and consular representation in the majority of countries and that these in turn maintain their own in our country. We have reached this goal by dint of continued, painstaking governmental action. I have never spared the economic sacrifices that such international activity entails, because as I have said before I believe that isolation and the lack of real diplomatic experience have been a source of highly deplorable ills for the Republic.

The group of nations that have joined with us in this happy occasion constitutes further evidence of the lofty spirit presiding over the Republic's relations today. Friends from all over the world have united their amicable feelings toward us in a cordial demonstration of solidarity that will command the gratitude of the Dominican people forever.

I lift these sentiments from the bottom of my heart and offer them to Your Excellencies the Ambassadors and Ministers on Special Mission that have been accredited to this government in order to witness the transfer of power which will take place in a few moments. Please convey to your respective governments equal feelings of gratitude for having commissioned you to partake with us the true rejoicing that touches us all today.

I am especially moved, Your Excellency President Somoza, by your presence at this ceremony. Having taken pains to come and join us here, ac-

accompanied by your most gracious wife, in order to show personally your friendly feelings, as well as those of your people, for the Dominican government and people, you have made a constructive demonstration of solidarity that not only honors us but touches our deepest sentiments as members of the American community of nations, which has been put to such severe tests during this turbulent period. Please accept my friendliest expressions of affection and do convey to the people of Nicaragua the sympathy and appreciation of the Dominican people.

Mr. President-elect:

I could not close my remarks without expressing my heartiest congratulations to you for the token of confidence and affection with which your people presented you as they elected you President of the Republic, nor without offering you, for the success of your administration, the aid of my experience and profound love for the noble cause that you will personify from now on. May God illuminate your mind and comfort your spirit that you may see all your hopes and dreams as a leader and a statesman come true. The satisfaction of having done your duty will be the best reward for your labors and sacrifices.



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