

The second was connected with the invasion itself. When Castillo Armas mounted his attack from Honduras, Guatemala complained to the United Nations Security Council. A compromise resolution sponsored by France was passed, calling for the termination of any actions likely to lead to further bloodshed. When the attacks continued, Guatemala's foreign minister cabled Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov — the Soviet Union having supported Guatemala's attempts to obtain a more strongly worded resolution — appealing for Soviet efforts to secure implementation of the resolution. Molotov responded by expressing his sympathy and said that Soviet representatives at the UN had been instructed to pursue the matter. John Foster Dulles seized upon this exchange, charging that the Guatemalans had openly “connived” with Molotov. It suffices to note that open exchanges between members of the UN, concerning duly adopted Security Council resolutions, are not particularly extraordinary, especially when one party to the exchange has been effectively isolated by the dominant power of its region, is the victim of an invasion mounted by insurgents armed by that power and based in a neighbouring state, and is on the verge of collapse. Dulles' assertion that Molotov and Toriello (the Guatemalan foreign minister) were in “ill-conceived privity” seems excessive.³⁰ In short, the Soviet Union was not the instigator of this episode of regional instability. Its policy was essentially a reaction to local events over which it had little influence. To the limited extent that it did become involved, the opportunity to do so was provided largely by American policy. Its involvement was reluctant, cautious, and restrained.

Given this rather unimpressive array of evidence concerning the connection between Guatemala and the Soviet Union, one is left wondering why the United States made the claims that it did concerning Soviet involvement. Three interpretations suggest themselves. First, the connections between John Foster Dulles and a number of other prominent participants in the policy debate on Guatemala, on the one hand, and the United Fruit Company on the other, have often been noted.³¹ They may simply have been acting to defend the economic interests of themselves or their friends. Citing the communist threat facilitated the justification of action taken against the Arbenz Government to defend US economic interests.

³⁰ The above account of Soviet-Guatemalan relations draws extensively from Blasier, *op. cit.* (note 27), pp. 158-70.

³¹ See for example Schlesinger and Kinzer, *op. cit.* note 25, *passim*.