

Lyndon Johnson and the Dominican Intervention of 1965
National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 513

Transcript of Tape No. 6: This is going to be bad in our country.

April 29, 1965 | 4:26 PM | LBJ and Bromley Smith | WH6504.06-7383 | LBJ Library

LBJ: Hello?

Bromley Smith: Yes. Tap Bennett has just talked to the task force commander in his office in Santo Domingo and they were under fire from snipers at the chancellery.

LBJ: Who is they?

Smith: The task force commander and Ambassador Bennett. The rebels were firing at our chancellery. And the newsmen are also in this melee and the firing is going on around our chancellery office, and the Marines have been ordered to fire back, and they are firing back. It would appear that the rebels are becoming more aggressive. The Salvadorian embassy has been violated. Ambassador Bennett-

LBJ: The what? Now, what is that [*unintelligible*]?

Smith: Well, the embassy of El Salvador, the rebels broke into that embassy. They are not ... By custom they are not permitted to go into that. And we don't know what happened, but they went in and wrecked the Salvador embassy. Now, the ... Bennett authorized the task force commander to bring the ships offshore in closer, preparatory to landing. And in response to your instruction they have already put ashore 500 more Marines. Now, the ambassador is saying that he would like to have 2 or 3 hours, additional, to review the total situation before making a recommendation to you and the Secretary, which he was asked to do.

LBJ: All right. I sure think that they ought to bring this to the attention of the Latin American people about how they're firing upon us and all that stuff as soon as they can. These embassy people.

Smith: The ... Ambassador Bennett had a meeting with the Latin American ambassadors down there, and they were all almost pleading with him. The only protection they really had were our Marines.

LBJ: Well, they ought to be telling their country that. Tell Bennett to be sure that they get this message to their country and ... before their country [*unintelligible*].

Smith: Right.

LBJ: This is going to be bad in our country.

Smith: Right. Well, we will pull the various pieces together, and I'm sure either [Tom] Mann or [George] Ball or someone will be in touch with you reasonably shortly.

LBJ: Thank you. I think we go in. Fine.