

Lyndon Johnson and the Dominican Intervention of 1965
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Transcript of Tape No. 5: Then let him, listen for him to cough right loud, and if he doesn't, why, let's move.

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LBJ: Yes, Mr. Secretary?

Robert McNamara: I just talked to [Director of Central Intelligence William] Red Raborn, as you asked him to call me.

LBJ: Right.

McNamara: My suggestion, Mr. President, is that we go ahead and order the 500 additional Marines in there immediately, for the same old mission. In the meantime, take an hour or two to try to get from the ambassador [William Tapley "Tap" Bennett Jr.] a recommendation as to what he thinks ought to be done.

LBJ: Is there no way of instantaneously talking to him? Even if the damn wire is open?^[11] Why wouldn't we say that we have a report and quote one sentence from that report that a fellow gave me and you that this danger to our people is very great and say—

McNamara: Because [*unintelligible*]—

LBJ: -therefore we are doing this?

McNamara: Yeah.

LBJ: And then let him yell if he wants to, bloody murder, and we could evaluate it.

McNamara: Yeah, well, let me just see if I can't get that done.

LBJ: That's what I would do.

McNamara: Yeah.

LBJ: Failing in that, I'd just go on and order them in. Like I told 'em this morning at 8:30, 9:00.

McNamara: Yeah. Yeah.

LBJ: There's one thing, only one thing, you can be sure of on this situation: that they are a bunch of ants working like hell.

McNamara: Yeah.

LBJ: And we're testifying around on foreign aid and everything else. I rather think that we ought to do that. Then, I think, we ought to try to, if necessary, have [Secretary of State Dean] Rusk cancel his meeting and try to get together here.^[14]

McNamara: Yeah.

LBJ: Mac's [Bundy] off and making a speech somewhere. But I know that these ants are at it. And we're going to be reading about it if we—

McNamara: Yeah. Well, the first thing to do is get in touch with the ambassador, and I'll do that.

LBJ: You talk to him. Tell him that, and just say that "I am distressed at this message and that we are proceeding to take action." Then let him, listen for him to cough right loud, and if he doesn't, why, let's move.

McNamara: [*Unintelligible.*]

LBJ: And then I'd think we ought to give serious thought to—you ought to talk to State and see when they are ready to talk, and we ought to do it as soon as we can.

McNamara: Very good.

LBJ: Bye.