



## **August 25, 1966 Latin America: A Note for the Forthcoming Tripartite (Non- Aligned) Meeting**

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### **Summary:**

This document describes the overall regional environments in Latin America after the Cuban Missile Crisis (1960s)

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FROM: R. Tandon, Deputy Secretary, AMS

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The most significant development in this region during the sixties has been the growth of a sentiment in favour of an independent foreign policy., although in the Latin American context, this concept can mean little more than a slight digression from a rigid alignment behind the USA. In this sense developments commencing from the Cuban revolution of 1959 may be briefly surveyed with a view to assessing the present attitude of Latin American countries towards the concept of non-alignment.

The Cuban Revolution of 1959 and the progressive deterioration of US-Cuban relations leading to a rupture of diplomatic relations between the two in January 1961, was an event of the profoundest significance in Latin American history. A small country about the size of 6 million peopled dared to defy one of the superpowers and a next door neighbor, and yet managed to survive. The Bay of Pigs fiasco during April 1961 gave considerable encouragement to anti-American forces in Latin America. The "missile crisis" of October 1962 further enhanced the widespread impression that disapproval of the USA need not necessarily spell the doom of a Latin American nation.

As a counterpart of the growth of this sentiment in favor of less rigid alignment with the USA, there was a progressive realization in the USA that the undisputed hegemony enjoyed by her in the Western Hemisphere is something which cannot be taken for granted. A policy of friendly cooperation rather than of paternalism backed by force was needed. This realization resulted in the policy formulated by Kennedy for influencing economic and social trends in Latin America called "Alliance for Progress." This policy has undergone a major change of emphasis after Johnson became the US president. This Alliance is now clearly recognized as an instrument of US policy designed towards stemming anti-American trends.

The Organization of American States is, however, the principal US instrument of domination and control over the Latin America. At the recent deliberations and conference of the OAS particularly the July 1964 conference held at Washington, it is worth noting, that not all the Latin American countries followed the advice of the US government in declaring Cuba as an outcast. The resolution asking the OAS members to break diplomatic relations with Cuba was opposed by Mexico, Chile, Uruguay, and Bolivia. However, except for Mexico, the other three countries gave in and have broken diplomatic relations with Cuba. Apart from Mexico, Chile is another country which has attained a measure of success in her pursuit of a less aligned posture in her foreign policy. President Frei of Chile undertook a grand tour of Europe in July 1965 during which he repeatedly stressed the need for developing bilateral ties between Latin America and Europe. In France he declared, We are a small country. We do not want to recognize hegemony of any sort. It is a fact that the US is a world power and it exerts hegemony in several parts of the world. Amongst the people of Latin America, there is a desire for true political and economic independence. I want a system without hegemony."

When developments in the Dominican Republic started assuming the form as in Cuba before the Revolution, President Johnson emphatically declared May 2, 1965 that "the American nation cannot, must not and will not permit the establishment of another Communist Government in the Western Hemisphere." This declaration has come to be known as the "Johnson Doctrine."

The United States tried hard to get the support of the OAS for her military intervention in the Dominican Republic. After a long and bitter debate the Organization of American States at a conference held in Washington voted on the morning of 6<sup>th</sup> May 1965, in favor of establishing an inter-American Peace Force to police the Dominican Republic with a bare minimum 2/3 majority. Of the 20 members, Mexico, Chile, Uruguay, and Bolivia voted against and Venezuela abstained. In the 14 votes in favor of the Inter-American forces, a representative of the Dominican Republic was allowed to vote even though no recognized government existed in that country.

The recent elections held in the Dominican Republic have been hailed as an evidence of success of US policies in Latin America. A candidate (Belaguer) approved by the US Government was duly elected after a "democratic" election which was conducted while Dominican Republic was surrounded by US Naval vessels. After the election the OAS Peace Keeping Force, which overwhelmingly consisted of American Marines, would withdraw from the Island.

Taking advantage of these trends, the activities of the Leftist forces of Latin America were intensified. The Tri-continental Solidarity Congress, held in Havana January this year was the high water-mark of these forces which were sweeping the continent. Among the more notable resolutions passed at this Congress, which was attended by official delegations from the Soviet Union, People's Republic of China and a medley of Leftist parties and groups from Asian and African countries, was an explicit commitment that "the armed revolutionary struggles for national liberation" will be actively helped. At this Conference the growing rift between the USSR and China, and Cuba's economic difficulties which appeared to have reached a crisis point, prevented a more defiantly anti-American front from emerging. These economic difficulties coupled with geographic realities are being progressively stressed by the USA in her present carrot and stick policy towards Latin America. The fear of external interference entailed in the Resolution mentioned above, has been a boon to USA in her efforts to wean away many of the Latin American proponents of an independent foreign policy. Johnson's emphatic assertion regarding the complete impermissibility "of a second Cuba" has been rigorously pressed.

In Latin America some appreciation of policies of being followed by African and Asian countries is perceptible. The non-aligned Conference which was held in Cairo in 1964 was attended by the following Latin American countries as observers: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Jamaica, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

A few words may be said in this regard concerning the Caribbean region. British Guyana became independent on May 26, 1966. Barbados another British possession is likely to attain Independence during this September. These Islands, as they attain Independence, would have a choice of joining the OAS and coming within the American sphere of influence or of retaining a measure of freedom from US domination. On July 20-22, 1966, a conference of independent Caribbean Islands was held in Ottawa. The following countries attended: Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts, St. Lucia and St. Vincent. It is possible that these islands would welcome the Canadian initiative and retain their Commonwealth link perhaps with a new orientation towards Canada if for no other reason than to remain outside the sphere of US influence.

The hesitation of the newly emerging Caribbean nations in joining the OAS has been well expressed recently by Prime Minister Erroll Barrow of Barbados – "Barbados might have walked into the Organization of American States with its eyes shut if it had not been for US intervention in the Dominican Republic. Now we must be careful of what we are doing. It still think the Commonwealth countries can make a contribution to the OAS but we don't want to substitute one form of imperialism for another. I am a bit alarmed that the OAS should have allowed on member to intervene in the internal affairs of another without consulting fellow members."