

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO THE ROCKEFELLER REPORT
- A SAMPLING OF THE UNITED STATES PUBLICATIONS

by

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

During the World War II, almost all Latin American countries received American aid and assistance under the lend-lease program. When the war ended the hemisphere was no longer of such importance to Washington. The United States appeared to lose interest in Latin America. The failure to provide a formal aid program in any way equivalent to the massive Marshall Aid Program mounted in Europe was regarded as an insult by Latin Americans. Most of Latin America had assisted the Northern Giant, 1941-1945, and recognition of such effort was expected.

The extremely low priority allotted to Latin America by State Department policy makers just after the war changed somewhat with the fall of the iron curtain. Latin American countries were drawn into the United States' anti-communist crusade. Something of this spirit was behind the Rio Pact of 1947 which affirmed Monroeism in the setting for the Organization of American States (O.A.S.). The pact of Bogotá in 1948 coordinated and unified in one instrument all the existing inter-American treaties, conventions, and declarations for the peaceful settlement of disputes among the member nations. The Conference, however, failed to reach any significant agreements in the economic sphere. At the 1947 meeting in Rio, Secretary of State

Marshall had promised that the economic situation would be thoroughly covered at Bogotá. Yet at the 1948 conference he made it clear that the United States found it beyond its capacity to finance more than a small portion of the vast development needed. The capital required through the years for Latin America's development would have to come from private sources, both domestic and foreign. To the Latin Americans, this attitude appeared to be a reversal of promised continental cooperation in favor of private American enterprise.¹ With the new O.A.S. as its instrument, rabid anti-communism became the dominant theme of American policy in Latin America, and any government was supported, no matter how dictatorial and repressive as long as it opposed communism or professed such.

Relations between the United States and Latin American countries were fast deteriorating. There was general dissatisfaction. José Figueres, a former President of Costa Rica, in 1958 told a United States Congressional Committee that the United States was in effect "Spitting" upon Latin American when it honored brutal dictators and refused to pay a "just price" for Latin American Products.² And by 1958 Venezuelan radical dissatisfaction was expressed in such a way that it endangered the life of Vice President Richard Nixon as he wound up a tour of South America. In April 1960 Colombian President Alberto

¹Federico G. Gil, Latin American-United States Relations, (New York: Harcourt, 1971), p. 199.

²Lewis Hanke, Mexico and the Caribbean - Modern Latin American Continent in Ferment, Vol. 1 (New York: Van Nostrand, 1959), pp. 105-107.