

Vaughn Squeezes Love into Latin Alliance

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“WHAT IT MEANS,” said the United States official, “is that the bankers are giving way to the Peace Corps types.”

Standing by the edge of a dusty road in rural Ecuador, the official was referring to a speech that had just been delivered in perfect Spanish by a red-haired “gringo” named Jack Hood Vaughn. He is Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, and at that moment two weeks ago, he was midway through a 17-day, 28,000-mile tour of Mexico, El Salvador, Panama, Ecuador, Chile, Bolivia and Peru.

His objective, hammered at in an endless chain of speeches, was to assure Latin Americans that the Alliance for Progress still looms large in the affections of the Johnson Administration. He delivered this message in terms that were distinctly different from the tone with which Washington has addressed the Latins during the past year and a half.

Instead of the lectures on budget balancing and currency stabilization that the Latins have come to expect from visiting United States officials,

Vaughn talked mostly of the “human side” of the Alliance and of how President Johnson regards the ambitious scheme for social and economic change as the Latin American counterpart of the Great Society.

‘Ayaya Vaughn’

TODAY, VAUGHN is back at his desk in Washington. But the reasons for his trip are fixed in the kaleidoscope of images that arose as he traveled: the Aymara Indians on Bolivia’s windswept Altiplano hoisting him to their shoulders amid shrill cries of “Ayaya Vaughn” (“Long live Vaughn”); the elderly woman in the slums of Santiago, Chile, who gave Vaughn an apple because she wanted to do something for “a friend of President Kennedy”; the children in a Salvadorean village who had been taught by a Peace Corps volunteer to tootle the “Star Spangled Banner” on their grabbag collection of instruments.

Each of these incidents, spontaneous and free of government premeditation, illustrates the basic vein of goodwill that exists toward the United States

among Latin Americans. It is, however, a goodwill rooted in a situation that poses a special problem for the Johnson Administration.

Vaughn himself met this problem in Nogales, Chile, where he visited an emergency housing center for people made homeless by recent earthquakes. The residents, who were building a makeshift town square, told Vaughn and United States Ambassador Ralph Dungan that they planned to name it "John F. Kennedy Plaza" and inquired if the American Embassy could provide a bust of the late President.

It was only the latest in a flood of similar requests that the Embassy has received from all corners of Chile. But, as Embassy officials admitted under questioning, they have yet to be asked for a bust of Lyndon Johnson.

The Kennedy Era

IT IS CLEAR that United States popularity and enthusiasm for the Alliance built up during the Kennedy era has steadily declined.

To a great extent, this was inevitable. President Kennedy, as the creator of the Alliance, as a visitor to Latin America and as a man who died a martyr's death, was hard to replace in the favor of Latin audiences.

Even more, however, the Johnson Administration's lack of "image" in Latin America has been the result of the personnel and the policies directed at Hemispheric problems since Mr. Johnson entered the White House. But this, as the official standing in the dusty road said, is changing.

Essentially, the story can be summarized in the differences between two men. Vaughn, the people-oriented son of a Montana cowboy who entered the State Department from the Peace Corps; and his predecessor, Thomas C. Mann, the prototype of what the Administration likes to call the "hard-nosed professional" in diplomacy.

Until now, the story has centered on Mann, whom President Johnson invested with the joint titles of Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs and United States Coordinator of the Alliance. A specialist in economic matters, he was, in Mr. Johnson's words, "the one clear voice" of United States Latin America policy.

There is no question that the Alliance made striking advances under



Jack Hood Vaughn pours milk for children at the Mother and Child Center in Cuenca, Ecuador.

Mann's prodding. But these had to do with growth rates and other matters most readily measurable by the bar graphs that are understood and appreciated only by economists.

While this focus may have been necessary, it was hardly the heady stuff to which the Latins had become accustomed in the Kennedy period. Nor were matters helped any by the austere, reserved Mann's impatience with the Latin love of ceremony and by his tendency to hector the Latins in schoolmasterly fashion.

In short, if the Alliance has prospered materially these past two years, it has starved emotionally. And, as a result, it has fallen prey to a restless discontent that has caused critics to write the Alliance off as just another foreign aid program.

Now, the Administration apparently has elected to go back to first principles and attempt to reinfuse the Alliance with some of its old zeal. In this, the 45-year-old Vaughn has emerged as the operative figure.

His background seems to be excellent. He visited Mexico as a teen-ager, studied Spanish in college and taught it at the University of Pennsylvania. His two decades of government work included service as cultural affairs officer and Agency for International Development representative in Africa and Latin America. He was Director of the Latin American program for the Peace Corps and then became Ambassador to Panama.

But Vaughn, who inherited the Latin American portfolio when Mann moved

up to Under Secretary of State, has been an unknown quantity. Overshadowed by Mann and bogged down by the Dominican Republic crisis during his first weeks in office, his views on over-all Latin policy did not register clearly.

In the cornfields and housing projects of Latin America, however, they came through loud and distinct. Essentially, he said the future emphasis of the Alliance must be on the "human sector"—on providing the slum dweller and campesino with the education and care that will take him into the mainstream of modern life.

PERHAPS HE summarized it best in an address to the United States Embassy staff in Santiago. Noting that he had been a bureaucrat for almost 20 years, Vaughn said he wondered why bureaucrats were so afraid to use the word "love" in talking about American efforts to help underdeveloped nations and people.

"Tom Mann," said one listener, "would have gagged before he got a line like that out."

The diffident and soft-spoken Vaughn peppers his remarks with such unabashed sentiments. On the career foreign service, for example:

"If I had my way, every young foreign service officer who now spends his early career stamping visas would be forced to put in two years with the Peace Corps or two years in private business as a salesman or an assistant assembly line foreman—anything that would teach them how to deal with people and get along with them."

Regarding the future of the Alliance, Vaughn cites a long list of projects ranging from what he describes vaguely as "building institutions" to the "need to convince the wealthy Latins that they should take their money out of their European and North American bank accounts and put it into the development of their respective countries."

But the major need, he adds, is education. "And by that I don't mean building classrooms. I mean upgrading the quality of education from the primary to the university level, training more teachers and improving the skills of those who are already there."

In Chile, Vaughn points out, only 30 of every 100 children who enter the first grade finish primary school. "Yet Chile is one of the more advanced countries educationally. It just shows how much there is to be done in the

education field. If it's not done, the Latins are licked before they start."

Despite their zeal to strike out in new directions, Vaughn and his associates are careful to stress that the new emphasis does not mean a repudiation of Mann's basic approach to Latin America. What is being done now, they insist, is only the next logical step.

"Until now," Vaughn says, "the emphasis had to be on economics. There were several countries that had to be bailed out of bad financial fixes, and there had to be a drive for the basic economic changes like income tax reform and agrarian reform."

"Now, 14 of the 19 Latin countries in the Alliance at least have such reform laws on the books. Basic economic development has reached a point where much of it can be turned over to the Inter-American Development Bank and other lending agencies, and now we can concentrate the direct U.S. aid on the social sector."

IN ADDITION, Mann, who now is a third-ranking man in the State hierarchy, has general authority over United States policy in all underdeveloped areas (and thus continues to have the final say on Latin American matters. He also continues to be Lyndon Johnson's principal adviser on the area and is expected to remain so.

"But," says one State official who has worked under both men, "despite their different personalities and approach, there's really no dispute between Tom and Jack."

"Mann is sure to step in when there's an important economic question up for discussion or when it's something involving Mexico (a country where Mann served as ambassador and in which he retains a special interest). But the social development field just isn't his cup of tea, and he's sure to leave what's done there pretty much up to Vaughn."

The implication seems to be that while Mann will remain overseer of the Administration's Latin American strategy, the choice of tactics will be left to Vaughn.

In exercising this choice, he seems determined to heed the admonition once advanced by a now-forgotten Latin American statesman: "You must remember that your money is important to us. But it is not all that we want. We want your attention and your affection as well. We are like a woman that way."