

JOHN F.
KENNEDY
ON



KENNEDY
LATIN AMERICA

DURING the Presidential election campaign just ended, *Latin American Report* submitted to each candidate a questionnaire probing the candidate's attitude toward the broad general problems that confront the Latin American countries, and toward U. S. policies with respect to Latin America. It was the plan of *Latin American Report* to publish the views of the two candidates in juxtaposition in the pre-election issue. But the Republican candidate begged off, pleading insufficient time due to the pressures of the campaign, and so threw a monkey-wrench into our plans.

However, the Democratic candidate answered the questionnaire in some detail. In view of the latter's subsequent electoral victory, it is the Editors' belief that our readers will find Candidate Kennedy's pre-election views of interest as an indication of President Kennedy's policy thinking with regard to this important region.

The President-elect's answers to *Latin American Report's* queries follow in Question-and-Answer form, and affixed at the end is the by now familiar John F. Kennedy signature, taken from his letter. The reader should bear in mind that these questions were put, and the answers formulated, when the President-elect was still Senator Kennedy, and a candidate for the highest office in the land. He began his letter as follows:

"I want to thank you for the opportunity to express my views for *Latin American Report*, and to apologize because the pressures of the campaign have so long delayed my reply to your letter."

Q. Are you in accord with the aims of the so-called Eisenhower Plan, which would set up a \$500-million loan fund for aid of a social nature to the Latin American countries; and would you plan to implement this program if you are elected President of the United States?

A. It is extremely difficult to comment on the President's request for a \$500,000,000 special authorization for Latin America because there has been so little indication of what program, if any, is intended. United States loans and assistance to Latin America most certainly should be expanded in the years ahead, a fact which the Administration admitted at the time of its special request.

Q. Does the program recently advanced by the present Administration constitute, in your opinion, an adequate attack on the problems that beset Latin America, or must the United States go much farther in helping to seek a solution to these problems—perhaps something more on the stature of the Marshall Plan?

A. An adequate attack on Latin American problems, however, involves a great deal more than financial assistance. I have repeatedly urged over a number of years the necessity of a comprehensive program for economic and social progress for Latin America including, in addition to aid and loans, commodity stabilization, increased educational exchange, technical assistance and policies to increase the

flow of private investment with adequate safeguards for United States interests. By whatever name this may be called, it must include as critical points, mutual cooperation and mutual consultation along the lines that worked so successfully in the Marshall Plan in Europe.

Q. This recent program of the present Administration has departed from past policies by initiating an attack on problems of a social nature in the other Americas. Are you in accord with this thinking, that U. S. aid must reach into the social sphere?

A. It seems to me impossible as a practical matter to divorce the problems of economic and social programs. For the long run, sound economic development must provide the basis for Latin American progress. I believe, however, that education, health, housing and such social concerns are themselves essential to sound economic development.

Q. There has been voiced some criticism of U. S. private enterprise operating abroad on the grounds that it tends to exploit these countries to reap excessive profits. Must pressure be put on private enterprise to mend its ways in this respect if that which happened in Cuba is to be averted elsewhere in Latin America?

A. While private enterprise has for the most part done a constructive job in Latin America, there are, unquestionably, areas where improvement is possible and necessary. American business must take a long-range view of its interests in Latin America beyond the goal of the largest immediate profits. It must accept the necessity to work within a pattern of interests, beliefs and social objectives of its host country. Above all, it must demonstrate its sympathy with the aspirations of Latin America and avoid the mistake sometimes made in the past when American companies have unfortunately appeared to identify their interests with those of dictatorial regimes. Our government has added responsibility for a much improved cultural and information program to create among Latin Americans greater understanding and acceptance of the United States and for its representatives in the business community abroad.

Q. There have been rumors that pressure may be applied through administration of the Eisenhower Program to get Latin American Governments to help themselves more by initiating social changes, such as land reform, and by initiating or revising income tax programs within their countries. Do you see the need for government-to-government pressure of this nature?

A. With effective leadership in our own government, there should be no necessity to exercise "pressure" in Latin American relations. United States leadership and cooperation, however, can do much to help the Latin American countries achieve the social goals that are necessary for progress.

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Q. Latins have been given grounds to accuse the United States of erratic and discriminatory tariff policies in regard to certain important commodities. How do you stand on the tariff question?

A. The structure of United States tariffs can only be changed on a basis of item-by-item consideration and negotiation under the Reciprocal Trade Program. However, we must take as a long term objective the expansion of our mutually profitable trade with Latin America. We must recognize the importance of United States markets to our Latin American friends and the extreme impact of our trade policies on the Latin American economies. For this reason we should make special efforts to avoid trade policies which discriminate against Latin America.

Q. Latins have accused the United States of failing to take a positive stand on the question of common markets in this region. What is your position with regard to Latin American common market arrangements?

A. Progress toward regional markets in South and Central America should have the full support of the United States. Such markets can be of great value to the region's economic development.

Q. It has been the policy of the present Administration, at least until recently, to deny aid to state-owned enterprises such as Brazil's oil industry. This policy has incurred for the United States no little resentment on the part of Latins, who believe it their right to develop their resources as they see fit. Would you be inclined to reverse this policy?

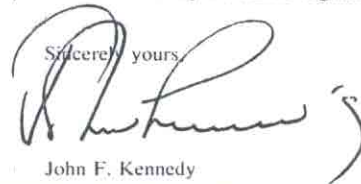
A. There is no formal United States policy to deny aid to state-owned enterprises in Latin America, whatever may be the practice of the present Administration. Here again, the actual decision in each case must be governed by the spe-

cific circumstances, with due respect for the traditions and aspirations of the countries involved. While I believe that where possible we should make every effort to encourage the Latin Americans to rely on private enterprise in preference to state enterprise, it is important that we retain a position of flexibility and that the United States Government not be vulnerable in Latin America to the charge of serving merely as the instrument of American business interests.

Q. How do you look at the problems that face the United States with respect to the situation that prevails in Cuba?

A. I have stated at some length during the course of the campaign my views with regard to Cuba. It is my belief that the present situation in Cuba reflects repeated failures of United States policy over a number of years. While I am in general agreement with the Administration's conduct over the past few months, I believe the time has long since passed when action was required and would have been effective; and that the long run solution to the Cuban problem is inseparable from the more general need for a drastic improvement in our policies toward Latin America. For the short run we can only seek to rebuild our friendship with the Cuban people themselves, to stand firm on our rights at Guantanamo and to pursue energetically the claims of Americans for properties confiscated by the Castro regime.

Sincerely yours,



John F. Kennedy

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