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Johnson Accepts Mann's Resignation From State Department

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WASHINGTON, April 29 — President Johnson today accepted "with regret" the resignation of Thomas C. Mann as Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs.

The resignation of Mr. Mann, who for the last two years had a dominant and controversial role in setting policy toward Latin America, was announced by the Presidential press secretary, Bill D. Moyers.

As far as can be learned, there were no motives of policy or politics behind the departure of Mr. Mann. There has been criticism that Mr. Mann reintroduced a hard line in hemisphere policies, with an excessive emphasis on combating subversion and a deficient understanding of revolutionary pressure. But President Johnson has responded each time by expressing his faith in Mr. Mann.

Mr. Mann, according to associates, has sought for some time to return to private life. His health has been harmed to some extent by illnesses picked up in his 24 years of service in a variety of posts in Latin America.

He is also said by friends to want to spend more time with his family and, as one put it, "to earn some money." Although his plans were not disclosed, associates predicted that he would eventually return to the practice of law.

Thomas C. Mann



a strong advocate of a sympathetic approach by the United States to the problems of Latin America. He played a central role in getting the Administration to move toward arrangements to stabilize the prices of commodities—a chief source of Latin American export earnings—and he campaigned actively against European tariff arrangements that discriminated against the hemisphere.

On the other hand, he demonstrated, often cuttingly, a contempt for the rhetoric of revolution made current by President Kennedy in the Alliance for Progress. Some of his fiercest critics—who reflect the descriptions of Mr. Mann by the less friendly as a pro-militarist, reactionary—believed that he was dangerously blind to the deep-seated nationalist and radical currents in Latin America.

Mr. Mann, who was appointed by President Johnson as his chief Latin-American adviser in December, 1963, pushed ahead with the more flexible attitude toward military government that had begun to develop in the last months of President Kennedy's Administration. He became the main architect of the United States intervention in the Dominican Republic, although associates say that his first instinct was to oppose it.

Withdrew Perceptibly

In recent months, after the appointment of Lincoln Gordon as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Mr. Mann withdrew perceptibly from hemisphere matters. There was a general impression, however, that he would continue to exert influence in the area. If only in his role as the senior State Department official responsible for economic and trade matters.

Inasmuch as Mr. Mann's departure was not apparently a policy matter—although Latin-American diplomats did considerable, telephoning around town to make sure today—there is no evidence that it will have any immediate political significance.

But it raises a question that to a number of Latin Americans has been obvious for some time: Who will provide high-level political direction for the United States stance in the hemisphere?

Mr. Gordon, who has taken to his new post with energy and a determination to run things his own way, is expected to try. His third-echelon status at the State Department may not be a hindrance in gaining access to the President, but some rank-conscious Latin-American diplomats think it will.

At the White House, the senior official with a history of active concern with Latin America is Walt W. Rostow, a Special Presidential Assistant concerned with national security matters. It is not clear whether Mr. Rostow's responsibilities for policy in other parts of the world will make his interest in Latin America sporadic.