

# Decade of Failure Ends for Alliance

WASHINGTON.—The deadline slipped by virtually unnoticed last week, and it was probably just as well.

For few American ventures have been launched with such high promise and accomplished so little.

The Alliance for Progress was born almost exactly one decade ago, a dramatic and visionary innovation of the sparkling new Kennedy era. As his major legacy to history, President Kennedy proposed no less than total social and economic reform of all Latin America. For the price of \$1 billion in aid a year, this country would make the rest of the continent safe for democracy. And it would all be done in ten years.

The alliance was compared to the Marshall Plan and described as a cure-all for the instability, poverty and social injustice that plague most Latin American countries. If the alliance failed, President Kennedy warned, the way would be clear for Castroites and Communists to move in throughout Latin America.

The alliance has indeed poured roughly \$1 billion annually into Latin America the last ten years, just as President Kennedy promised. But on the anniversary that was to have marked its triumphant conclusion the Alliance for Progress is a forgotten dream.

President Nixon has given such a low priority to Latin American relations that he did not even deliver a policy speech on the region until nearly a year after his election. In that speech the President gave up trying to foster the development of representative governments, saying he was willing to work with whatever governments existed, military dictatorships or no.

In fairness to President Nixon, it must be said that the Alliance for Progress was dead for most practical purposes by the time he was elected. In fact, although nobody was ready to admit it, the alliance was deathly ill by the time Lyndon Johnson came to the White House five years earlier.

The alliance was supposed to spur economic growth. In fact, the growth rate is only 1.5 percent. Latin American imports have actually declined from 21 percent to 13 percent of all imports to this country.

The alliance was supposed to increase education for the masses. But 750,000 more children are out of primary school now than when the alliance was launched. More schools were built, but not enough to keep up with the population growth.

The alliance was supposed to stabilize democratic governments. But in the last eight years there have been 16 coups in Latin America.

Where did the Alliance for Progress go wrong?



PRESIDENT KENNEDY  
... shattered legacy

highest in the world. One billion dollars a year, which sounds like a lot, was not enough to spread over many countries with massive problems, and achieve significant results.

Privileged, wealthy Latins proved more stubbornly reluctant to change their way of life and help their poorer countrymen than this country had expected. The ruling classes were not sufficiently scared of the Communist threat to permit vital land and tax reforms.

Too, much of the enthusiasm for the alliance both in this country and in Latin America died with Kennedy at Dallas. Psychologically it didn't have the same push without the personal symbolism of its creator.

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