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ADDRESS BY LINCOLN GORDON
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS
SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING, UPI EDITORS AND PUBLISHERS
HOTEL MARIA ISABEL, MEXICO CITY
September 28, 1966 at 10 A.M. (12 Noon EDT)

Mr. Thomason, Mr. Collins, Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues.

I speak to you as colleagues, not because I have any professional connection with the world of journalism, but because you gentlemen of the fourth estate are more than ever involved in the shaping of foreign policy and international relationships.

To some degree, this has always been true. Thackeray wrote of the press, more than a hundred years ago:

"There she is -- the great engine -- she never sleeps. She has her ambassadors in every quarter of the world, her couriers upon every road. Her officers march along with armies, and her envoys walk into statesman's cabinets. They are ubiquitous."

And as James Reston points out in his article in July's Foreign Affairs, "the eighteenth-century American pamphleteers not only helped write the Constitution but thought -- with considerable justification -- that they created the union. They believed that government power was potentially if not inevitably wicked and had to be watched, especially when applied in secret and abroad, and they wrote the rules so that the press would be among the watchers."

We in the Department of State are accustomed to many watchers: the President and his aides in the White House; the Congress, its Committees, and their professional staffs; the General Accounting Office; and not least among them the working press, the would-be Secretaries of State otherwise known as columnists, and the editors and publishers so broadly represented here today. We are also watched by the chancelleries of more than a hundred nations and by a foreign press corps whose outlook often differs from that of their American colleagues.

This fish-bowl environment sometimes has its drawbacks. All of us have suffered our share of haphazard and distorted reporting, of premature leaks, and even of occasional malice. Nonetheless, as we contrast our lot with regimes which censor and control their press, we cherish our blessings.

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In the field of inter-American affairs, my own principal complaint concerning the press has been too little reporting rather than too much, and too narrow a view of the dramatic and newsworthy. Fortunately, there are signs of improvement on both these fronts. I hope that this meeting -- the first of its kind to take place in Latin America -- signifies an accelerated improvement. Surely there could be no more appropriate a location than Mexico, which, in addition to its natural beauties and justly renowned culture, is a living proof of Latin America's capacity for modernization without detriment to historic national values.

To some extent, tension between the press and the official makers of foreign policy is built into their differing responsibilities and time perspectives. Diplomats and foreign policy planners must think in terms of months, years, and even generations; a newsman with a deadline must get his story turned in in a matter of minutes.

We also have our stack of daily cables from the field and must fight a constant battle to avoid exclusive concentration on the day-to-day crises, reserving a due share of our time and energies for the larger actions which really matter in the long run. But we are trained to make the effort to observe long-run processes of change and to search for levers which may influence them constructively. For the press to do likewise requires a conscious exercise of will-power -- a conscious resistance to the easy temptation to let today's apparent but momentary and superficial drama drown out the story of where a nation and a continent has come from and where it is going.

So my plea to you is to press on with that conscious effort to redefine the dramatic and the newsworthy in Latin America. Even in the ten years that I have been actively concerned with Western Hemisphere matters, there has been a marked move in that direction. As Ambassador to Brazil, I received dozens of visiting American journalists, editors, and publishers, many of them seeing Latin America for the first time. Most of them were excited by their discovery of a new world -- the tremendous potential, the immense problems, the throbbing changes, the opportunities, the vital cultures.

It remains true that far more news from the United States is printed in Latin America than Latin American news printed in the United States. It is still true that bad

news travels faster and farther than good news; consequently the North American public more often gets exposed to dramatic headlines of disasters and golpes than of quiet achievements in Latin America.

Nevertheless, reporting from Latin America is becoming not only more intensified, but also more analytical. Writers for the news agencies and big dailies and the TV crews seem to be getting more of the "why" into their stories. While I may not always agree with their interpretations, this kind of interpretative reporting is immensely important for the entire hemisphere. I have no doubt that the present trend in this direction will continue, as editors and publishers such as yourselves recognize the need -- and the growing desire of their readers -- for more understanding of this neighboring continent immersed in truly dramatic and revolutionary change.

In a phrase, here is a Continent which during the last century, after the exciting period of winning its independence from Spain and Portugal, fell behind the mainstream of Western modern evolution, but is now coming actively to grips with its destiny. Today it is unlocking the opportunities which its superb endowment of human talent and natural resources make available to it. The key is institutional modernization.

It is an immensely difficult process. It confronts not only the inertia of manifold vested interests, but the burdens of a population growth rate higher than any other world region, rural isolation and agricultural backwardness, quantitative and qualitative educational inadequacies on a massive scale, and the fractionalization of national economies into areas too small for truly modern development.

Yet, it is not a hopeless process. With any reasonable time perspective it can be seen in motion. Casual visitors to this beautiful and dynamic capital of Mexico, or to a Brazilian city such as São Paulo, sense it instinctively, as do visitors to the new frontiers of the Eastern Andes, Mato Grosso, or lower Bolivia. Those who knew Latin America a generation ago fully appreciate how rapidly the thrust toward modernization is taking hold. But the pace is too slow and it must be accelerated. It needs vigorous effort in each nation; it needs intensive cooperation among the Latin American nations; and it needs sustained support from outside

Latin America, notably from the United States. That is the raison d'être of the Alliance for Progress, whose fifth anniversary we celebrated last month. And that is why the Alliance for Progress is in reality, and not merely as a slogan, the cornerstone of the Johnson Administration's policy in inter-American relations.

The Charter of Punta del Este was a revolutionary innovation in the historic process of building a true community of free peoples in our Hemisphere. From the earliest days of national independence, this has been one of the most cherished aspirations of far-sighted statesmen in Latin and North America alike. Like all great political movements, it has suffered periods of frustration and setbacks. But as we review the sweep of the decades, we can say with some pride that we have not built badly.

For over three-quarters of a century, the Pan American Union has fostered the cultural, educational, and technical interchanges that are the basis for mutual knowledge and understanding. For almost two decades, the Treaty of Rio and the Charter of Bogota have provided a framework of cooperation in political and security matters -- to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes, to strengthen representative democracy, and to guard against aggression of any type from any source.

Although the roots of economic cooperation in the Americas also run far back, it was only at Punta del Este that a sustained effort for economic and social progress took its rightful place as a major purpose of our Inter-American endeavors. At Rio de Janeiro last November, our Foreign Ministers agreed to incorporate the basic principles of the Alliance for Progress as permanent features of the OAS Charter -- a decision soon to be consummated in terms already agreed among our governments. And within a few months, it is expected that all the Presidents of OAS nations will meet to explore new ways to give added impulse to the Alliance.

I have occasionally heard it argued by Latin Americans that the inter-American system should be conceived as a sort of bargain in which Latin American support for United States' strategic and security interests is balanced against American support for Latin economic interests. This strikes me as a singularly erroneous view.

When German and Italian agents were seeking before and during World War II to subvert Latin regimes to the purposes of Fascism, the security of Latin America was engaged no less than our own. When only six years ago, the agents of Trujillo sought to assassinate a Venezuelan President, and more recently the agents of Fidel Castro sought to capture Caracas in a lightning coup d'etat, the security of Latin America was even more directly engaged than our own. The Havana Tri-Continent Conference last January, the guerilla activities in half a dozen countries, and contemporary speeches of Castro make clear that the danger of externally supported subversion continues and requires continuing vigilance.

Nor should the value of OAS action in resolving peacefully a whole series of potentially inflammable Latin American border disputes be underestimated as a contribution to Latin American security. In short, the security aspects of the system must be recognized as a convergent interest of all its members.

This is equally the case with the newer measures for cooperation in economic and social progress. We in the United States Government believe -- and we have had the consistent support of the Congress and public opinion in this belief -- that accelerated economic and social progress in Latin America is also decidedly in the interest of the American people and of the United States as a nation. This -- and not some imagined bargain of high strategy -- is why Latin America can expect our continued interest and support.

This is not to suggest any Pollyanna-like notion of universal identity of interest -- that what is good for Latin America is always good for the United States and vice versa. Of course we have differences, and often substantial ones. So do the Latin nations among one another, as history eloquently testifies. It is only to suggest that there is an even larger area of convergence, resulting from history, geography, economics, and above all a shared set of basic values -- of what gives life dignity and meaning and how essential to those values are not only material well-being but also freedom and respect for the individual.

It is clear that material progress is not synonymous with materialism, that modernization is not incompatible with spiritual values. Rather, the Alliance stands for what the great Mexican thinker José Vasconcelos once called -- speaking of the relations between Latin and North American cultures -- the "concurrence of the two great life-creating forces" of the hemisphere. It represents the "means" he sought by which these "two cultures, instead of expending and wasting themselves in conflict, should unite and collaborate for progress."

When President Johnson reviewed the first five years of the Alliance on August 17, he took encouragement from the record, especially in the last two years when overall growth rates have exceeded the minimum target of 2-1/2 percent per capita set forth at Punta del Este. More important even than these statistics of growth, and their physical counterparts in schools, roads, power plants, water systems, and factories, is the change in attitudes -- the growing conviction that progress can be and will be achieved under free institutions -- and the growing understanding of how to do it.

The President called for a raising of the targets -- from 2-1/2 to 4 or even 6 percent per capita annually. Such rates have been achieved in other developing countries in the recent past. There is no fundamental reason why they cannot be achieved in Latin America. Indeed they must be, if the rapidly growing urban labor force is to secure useful and productive employment, the standards of agricultural production raised, and a real attack made on the deficiencies in education, health, and housing.

That is the challenge the forthcoming Summit Meeting of American Presidents will face. It is not for me today to anticipate the results of that meeting. Each of the participants will have his own views on priorities. The task of joint preparation by governments and the appropriate international institutions is just getting under way.

President Johnson has made clear, however, his belief that three topics stand out as of the highest urgency: greatly accelerated progress toward Latin American economic integration; an intensified drive for the modernization of agriculture and rural living conditions; and a massive effort

in education with special emphasis on developmental needs for skilled manpower. If new efforts in these fields can be mounted in addition to -- and not in replacement for -- the progress in infrastructure, industrialization, the strengthening of private enterprise, the control of inflation, and the expansion of trade already well started under the Alliance for Progress, there is a good chance that higher targets of economic and social progress can in fact be realized.

You may suppose that my own emphasis on education merely reflects the bias of a former university professor with occasional nostalgia for the ivy-covered halls. I can assure you that there is much more to it. The fact is that no nation in modern times has achieved adequate rates of economic growth without a major expansion and reform of its educational system. The opening of opportunity to talent also has profound political and social effects in creating a basis for meaningful popular participation in public life, in expanding the middle class, and in encouraging social mobility. But even in the most narrow and severe economic terms, investment in education has been proven to yield higher returns than most forms of more conventional investment.

This is especially true today, when the more advanced nations are going through a second or even third phase of the industrial revolution, and when modern agriculture itself is becoming a highly capitalized and highly technified industry. If Latin America is to achieve the ambitious growth rate targets suggested earlier, one essential element will be to get on board this latter-day industrial revolution without going slowly and painfully through all the intermediate stages. This is already happening here and there in particular areas or industries. But it can become general only with a large supply of skilled manpower able to make it so -- engineers, scientists, medical doctors, middle-grade technicians, economists, administrators -- all in numbers far beyond anything on hand or in prospect with the educational systems as they now are.

This task is primarily one for national effort in each of the Latin countries, but it can be supplemented from the outside in various ways. One of the most promising is the concept of multi-national post-graduate institutes of science and technology briefly mentioned in President Johnson's speech of August 17. If established on a sound basis with

the support of governments and the professional groups concerned in each country, and if properly backed by qualified institutions in the United States, they could make a major contribution to Latin development through their own programs of training and research, through their effect in raising the standards of national undergraduate institutions, and -- not least -- through reversing the brain drain of highly talented young Latin Americans to the United States and Europe.

Major developments in economic relations, such as those I have touched upon here, inevitably have their political consequences. I believe there is a favorable political trend. Since December, 1963, over half the Latin American countries have held free democratic elections and installed in office the elected candidates. Three other countries will hold elections in the next few weeks. Certainly representative democracy is not yet universal practice in the hemisphere, and where it is at work -- as in the United States itself -- there remains ample room for further improvement. But the trend towards establishment of more permanent and more stable democratic institutions is on the whole encouraging.

Even in the Dominican Republic, still suffering the maleficent effects of three decades of dictatorship, the people have another promising chance for democratic growth following the orderly free election of June this year.

Unfortunately, Cuba still wears the chains of communist dictatorship imposed by Fidel Castro in repudiation of the promises he had made to the Cuban people. Five years ago, there was widespread fear that the Castro example might take hold elsewhere in Latin America. But today, throughout the hemisphere, people are looking at Castro's Cuba more with pity than with admiration. It appears that Latin Americans have decided they can make their own revolutionary changes, in peace with freedom -- and without empty promises of ultimate paradise or compulsions of instant paredón.

Surely in this panorama of challenge and response, of new civilization being built on the foundations of ancient cultures, there is ample material both dramatic and newsworthy. How it can best be communicated to the American people, all

of you know much better than I, but that it should and must be communicated I have no doubt.

It was said a few years ago that "it is one minute to midnight in Latin America."

Perhaps now it is well after midnight, and the dawn of a new day, a new era, is almost here. But this new day will be a working day, and we will want to be up and at it long before sunrise.

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