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Weekly Contributions, D/LA  
(CIA Working Paper)  
Situation Memorandum 68-49

29 November 1949

The Current Inter-American Situation

(Summary -- There have been no significant recent developments in intra-Hemisphere organizational affairs. The machinery of OAS and of recent inter-American treaties for the maintenance of the peace of the Hemisphere has been tested, but not to the extent necessary to provide a clear-cut indication of their effectiveness. Ill feeling exists among several Latin American countries which, in some cases, has even involved the severance of diplomatic relations. Generally speaking, countries in Latin America continue to support US policies in world affairs, although they are disappointed by what they consider US neglect of the economic needs of the Western Hemisphere.

-- Inter-American solidarity has, if anything, deteriorated recently; other US security interests, however, are not seriously affected.)

Intra-Hemisphere Issues

OAS and inter-American treaties: The only recent development of note within OAS has been the minor incident caused by the public statement of its Secretary General, Dr. Alberto Lleras Camargo, deploring the disturbing political situation existing in his native country, Colombia. Despite considerable activity by the OAS since its creation at Bogotá in 1948, the Charter remains unratified by the great majority of American states (Mexico, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic are the only ones which have deposited ratification), and activities are carried on by virtue of Res. XL of the Final Act of Bogotá which provided for the provisional functioning of the Charter until its ratification had been completed.

The Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance of 1947 (Rio Treaty) has been ratified by sixteen American nations and has been in force since December 1948; it was invoked during the same month by Costa Rica in its dispute with Nicaragua. The American Treaty on Pacific Settlement of Disputes of 1948 (Pact of Bogotá) has been ratified by only Mexico and Costa Rica, but Nicaragua has agreed to be bound by it in any dispute with Costa Rica as a result of the Pact of Friendship between the two countries signed 21 February 1949.

The failure of five nations (Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Peru) to ratify the Rio Treaty weakens its effectiveness, and these states, with the possible exception of Ecuador, have given little evidence

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of intent to ratify in the near future. The failure on the part of the great majority of American states, including the US, to deposit their ratifications of the Pact of Bogotá made certain members of COAS reluctant to use it in the most recent Costa Rican-Nicaraguan controversy. As a result, neither the invocation of the Rio Treaty nor the attempted invocation of the Pact of Bogotá demonstrated any great strength on the part of our inter-American machinery, and US security, to the extent that it depends upon this machinery for unity in the Western Hemisphere, will continue to be vulnerable in the event of future disturbances.

Relations among American states: Revolutionary changes in government or charges of intervention in internal affairs made by some nations against others have caused strained relations between certain members of OAS, and in some cases even diplomatic breaks. Panama has not been recognized by the US; Colombia has not resumed normal relations with Paraguay; Bolivia, Chile, Guatemala, and Uruguay have not recognized the Venezuelan Junta; Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, and Uruguay have not accepted the legitimacy of the Peruvian military government; and Bolivia, Chile, and Uruguay have not restored to normalcy their diplomatic relations with El Salvador since the recent revolution. The whole atmosphere of tension existing in the Caribbean — of which the disputes between Costa Rica and Nicaragua and between Haiti and the Dominican Republic have been symptomatic — has also resulted in ruptured or strained diplomatic relations between the Dominican Republic and four of its neighbors, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, and Haiti, as well as between Guatemala and Nicaragua.

This situation has created a decided breach in Western Hemisphere solidarity and has weakened the US security position in the area. Many of these countries feel that the US policy of recognition of governments which have come into being through force is not in accordance with the traditional US policy of encouraging democracy in the Hemisphere.

#### Extra-Hemisphere Issues

UN and specialized agencies: Generally speaking, Latin American countries continue to support US policies in the UN when issues hinge on some aspect of the East-West struggle; however, in other matters, these countries often agree in their caucus to sponsor a program which may not in every instance accord with the position assumed by the US. For example, on the question of the disposition of the Italian colonies, the Latin American countries formed an effective bloc and managed to get some of their views accepted in the UN. Their interest in and sympathy for

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colonial peoples have made them more outspoken than the US in the Trusteeship Committee; this sometimes embarrasses the US in its relations with Western European colonial powers. These differences between the US and Latin America, however, do not appreciably impair US security.

Latin American nations have been very interested in the work of the specialized agencies of the UN because they hope to obtain help from these organizations in developing their economies. They have, however, taken issue with the US on certain economic matters dealt with by these agencies. These countries want to industrialize and feel that they cannot do this unless it is possible to protect industry in its embryonic state; therefore, the majority of Latin American countries have not supported the US in its campaign to lower trade barriers. This division of opinion on the approach to a vital world economic problem, coupled with the failure of the US to make extensive loans to Latin America in the postwar period, and the consequence of that failure in terms of Latin American attitudes toward the US, will continue to obstruct the full realization of US international economic policy objectives during the coming months.

Relations with nations outside the Western Hemisphere: Spain: At the third session of the UNCA, Bolivia, Colombia, Brazil, and Peru joined to sponsor a resolution to allow full freedom of action as regards diplomatic relations with Spain. Although the GA did not adopt this resolution, Brazil and Peru have resumed their normal diplomatic relations with Spain. Others, such as Argentina, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Venezuela, either had normal relations or had completed preparations for a return to normalcy before the vote in the GA. Venezuela has not actually sent an ambassador as yet. In this matter, Latin American countries took the lead rather than waiting for the US. US security interests, however, are not affected.

USSR: At the present time, only Argentina, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay, and Venezuela have representatives in Moscow, although some of the smaller countries have technical diplomatic relations. Brazil, Chile, and Colombia, which broke with the USSR within the past two years, have taken no steps to renew relations. None of the Latin American countries, however, is expected to exploit its relations with the USSR in such a way as to impair US security interests.

Support of important US foreign policies: The vast majority of Latin American nations continues to stand behind the US in its cold war with the USSR and to support ECA and the Atlantic Pact. While they realize that Europe and Asia are much more crucial in the East-West struggle, they still

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are of the opinion that the US should give more consideration, especially along economic lines, to its neighbors in the Hemisphere since it is to the interest of the US that a politically democratic and economically sound Latin America exist. Such attitudes on the part of Latin America weaken our intra-Hemispheric policies and US security in that area.

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