A Diplomatic Pearl Harbor? Richard Nixon's Goodwill Mission to Latin America in 1958

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One of the enduring images of the 1950s is that of South American mobs cursing, spitting upon, and terrorizing Vice President Richard M. Nixon in May 1958. At the time many commentators believed that Nixon's violent reception in Lima, Peru, and Caracas, Venezuela, during a "goodwill" tour revealed the bankruptcy of U.S. policies in Latin America. Columnist Walter Lippmann called the mission a "diplomatic Pearl Harbor" because of the startling and unfavorable way in which it focused attention on U.S.-Latin American relations.[1]

Despite the drama and intense feelings unleashed by the mission, recent works have discounted its effect on U.S. policy toward Latin America. According to some interpretations the Eisenhower administration did not change its policies until after the Cuban Revolution and the rise of Fidel Castro. Such arguments downplay the changes initiated before 1959. The Nixon mission can be viewed as generating a period of creative tension that stimulated the United States to reshape long-standing policies toward Latin America and to recast them in major ways. This article will focus on the mission and explore its significance as a stimulus for change in U.S. policy toward the region.[2]

Ostensibly, the primary reason for the mission was that the United States needed to send a top official to the presidential inauguration of Argentina's Arturo Frondizi to signal U.S. approval of Argentina's return to democracy and to deflect criticism from Democrats and Latin Americans that

[1] *Washington Post and Times Herald*, 15 May 1958.

[2] Two recent works that discuss the Nixon mission in detail but downplay its effects are Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nixon: The Education of a Politician, 1913–1962* (New York, 1987); and Stephen G. Rabe, *Eisenhower and Latin America: The Foreign Policy of Anti-Communism* (Chapel Hill, 1988). Ambrose states that "certainly no policy changes resulted from the trip; nor any changes in United States-Latin American relations" (463).

the Eisenhower administration supported right-wing dictators such as Argentina's Juan Perón. Eisenhower officials also were concerned about the future course that Frondizi might take. While some officials admired Frondizi's courageous attacks against Perón, others perceived him as a leftist, a firm nationalist, and a politician not above catering to Communists. President Eisenhower had been invited to attend the inauguration but wished to schedule a visit to Latin America at a later time. Ailing Secretary of State John Foster Dulles considered attending the Frondizi inauguration himself but decided that a Latin American journey, if added to his past and forthcoming trips, might reinforce the general impression that he was away from his office much too often. Because Nixon had earlier asked Dulles to keep an eye open for trips for him that would be useful to the administration, it appeared logical to administration officials to ask Nixon to attend the Frondizi inauguration.[3]

Contrary to Nixon's recollection in *Six Crises*, invitations did not pour in from other nations once his intention to travel south became known. Although some nations volunteered invitations, others were solicited by the Department of State, perhaps as a way to convince Nixon that the trip was worthwhile. Neither Brazil nor Chile were included on the itinerary. Dulles intended to travel to Brazil later in the year, and Chile was omitted because Chilean leaders had been deeply angered by the Eisenhower administration's surprise announcement that it intended to resume import taxes on copper, which had been suspended since 1947. This blow to the Chilean economy caused President Carlos Ibáñez to cancel a scheduled visit to the United States and ensured that any representative of the United States would be badly received in Santiago.[4]

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[3] Richard M. Nixon, *Six Crises* (New York, 1962), 183–86; Harold F. Peterson, *Argentina and the United States, 1810–1960* (New York, 1964), chap. 26; John Foster Dulles to the president, 7 January 1958, John Foster Dulles Papers, White House Memorandum Series, General Correspondence File, 1958 (6), Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas (hereafter Dulles Papers, with filing information). Nixon was reluctant to attend the Frondizi inauguration because he preferred not to go on missions that "did not serve a vital governmental purpose" and because he did not wish to upstage Frondizi. See Department of State memorandums of conversation (Dulles and Nixon), 2 and 8 February 1958, Subject Series, Dulles Papers. The Department of State planned a series of trips for Eisenhower, Dulles, and Nixon to Latin America in 1958 to counter Soviet propaganda and economic overtures in the region. See [Assistant Secretary Roy] Rubottom to the secretary, 2 January 1958, General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, 033.1100–NI/1–258, National Archives, Washington, DC (hereafter RG 59, with filing information). It was Eisenhower who first suggested sending Nixon. In response to a letter from Dulles lamenting that he probably could not go to Latin America in the near future, Eisenhower asked, "Could we use Dick? Then plan a summer trip for you—when the climate is better?" See Eisenhower to Dulles, 31 December 1957, White House Memorandum Series, General Correspondence File, 1958 (6), Dulles Papers. Department of State documents were made available to the first named author under the Freedom of Information Act.

[4] Dulles explained to Eisenhower that the decision to resume copper import taxes "took the State Department and, above all, the Chilean press and public entirely by surprise [and was] therefore magnified at a very awkward moment, having regard to the prospective visit of the President of Chile." Dulles to Eisenhower, 17 April 1958, White House

Nixon decided that this trip, like his earlier overseas trips, would be primarily a public "goodwill mission" rather than one directed toward government contacts and fact-finding exercises. In keeping with Nixon's wishes, the Department of State forwarded a circular telegram to the appropriate American embassies, giving instructions on scheduling activities for Nixon: "Vice President desires to meet local citizens in reasonably large numbers including not only usual top political, business, information and cultural leaders but also representative elements [of] labor, farm groups, intelligentsia, educators, etc. He is anxious to meet man in street. He is willing [to] meet controversial figures and discuss controversial subjects but requests such figures be identified beforehand." Nixon also wished to visit universities and to interact with student leaders, while for his wife Patricia Washington planned a series of visits to hospitals and children's institutions.[5]

The Department of State's instructions to the eight embassies give some insight into perceptions of the administration about how best to quiet rising complaints in Latin America. As early as 1953 the administration had decided to send top officials on occasional goodwill junkets to curry favor among Latin Americans and to assuage their resentment of the United States. A strong feeling existed in Washington that the problem in U.S.-Latin American relations was primarily one of public relations, that Latin Americans unfairly criticized U.S. policies in part because the United States had made little effort to tell its side. Nixon's desire to meet with representatives of groups known to be antagonistic toward U.S. policies also reflected the administration's view that left-wing elements were gaining strength in the region. Nixon would try to demonstrate that spokespersons for democracy and capitalism had valid viewpoints that were reasonable and defensible in the marketplace of ideas; in promoting those ideas through public diplomacy he would also encourage like-minded politicians in Latin America to speak up on behalf of such concepts.

State Department instructions to the American embassies that factories or businesses visited were to have been developed by private money were a logical outgrowth of the administration's long-standing belief that economic development in Latin America could best be encouraged by private capital. The Eisenhower administration had contended that when the various nations set their political and economic houses in order, the needed capital and talent

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Memorandum Series, General Correspondence File, 1958 (6), Dulles Papers. Ibañez canceled the visit, due to "domestic political problems." See *El Comercio* (Lima), 7 April 1958.

[5] Department of State circular to American embassies in Quito, Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Asunción, La Paz, Lima, Bogotá, and Caracas, 26 March 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/3–2658. See also Ambrose, *Nixon*, 365–68. Nixon had already made two trips to Latin America. In February 1955 he traveled to Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, where he publicly and privately praised dictators Batista of Cuba, Somoza of Nicaragua, and Castillo Armas of Guatemala. He also traveled to Brazil in 1956 for the inauguration of Juscelino Kubitschek.

would begin to flow to meet developmental needs. Furthermore, policymakers asserted that development was primarily an internal matter; the United States could provide some marginal assistance, but the major tasks had to be performed by private-sector talent and capital in an atmosphere of stability and progress created by the individual governments.[6]

These particular orthodoxies, however, were being challenged within the Eisenhower administration. In a sense the Nixon mission occurred when administration policy toward Latin America was at a crossroad. Policies that seemed to entail economic neglect and that were reflected in a reluctance to join in negotiating price support programs for coffee, tin, copper, and other essential commodities, an emphasis on technical aid programs, an insistence that governments meet the terms for private investment, and a refusal to establish a separate development bank for Latin America were slowly giving way to new viewpoints on how to speed economic development and thus encourage political stability and democratic processes.

A number of factors combined to push the administration in new directions. There was a growing fear that the Soviet Union intended to redouble its earlier unsuccessful efforts to conclude attractive agreements with Latin American nations. The United States was afraid that such agreements would enhance the Soviet presence and undermine American influence in a hemisphere it considered its own. An alternative scenario envisioned the Soviet Union dumping commodities in several Latin American nations so as to wreck their economies. Havoc and internal unrest would follow with leftist regimes appearing in their wake. Fear was even expressed that economic warfare of this sort might have the capability to wreck the capitalist system. Central Intelligence Agency Director Allen Dulles warned at the annual meeting of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce early in May 1958 that the Russian economic offensive was replacing the Russian military threat as "the most serious challenge this country has ever had to meet in time of peace."[7]

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[6] Between 1953 and 1957 the Eisenhower administration insisted that private capital was the best way to support Third World economic development. To facilitate U.S. corporate investment, the executive branch encouraged trade liberalization, investment guarantee programs, and tax incentives, and placed diplomatic pressure on countries to create a favorable investment climate. The United States also supported the World Bank as the primary lender, so loans to Third World nations were made on "hard terms" primarily to promote private projects for which private capital was not available. See David A. Baldwin, *Economic Development and American Foreign Policy, 1943–62* (Chicago, 1966), 117–34. Officials also stressed that fostering economic growth must be primarily a local responsibility. See, for example, statement by John Foster Dulles, U.S. Congress, Senate, Special Committee to Study the Foreign Aid Problem, Hearings, *The Foreign Aid Problem*, 85th Cong., 1st sess., 1957, 398. Burton I. Kaufman notes that the Eisenhower administration's foreign economic policy gradually switched from emphasizing trade in the early years to encompassing both trade and aid. See Kaufman, *Trade and Aid: Eisenhower's Foreign Economic Policy, 1953–1961* (Baltimore, 1982).

[7] Allen Dulles is quoted in the *Boston Daily Globe*, 1 May 1958. See also David W. K. Peacock, Jr., memorandum for the Honorable Maxwell M. Rabb, 14 January 1958, Special Assistants Series, Greene-Peacock File, Jan. 1958 (2), Dulles Papers; letter, and attachment on Communist economic warfare, Dulles to Nixon, 10 January 1958, Subject

There were other dynamic influences on administration policy. One stemmed from the growing realization in Congress and the executive branch of the need for more liberal and flexible policies toward the Third World. Congressional critics such as Senator Wayne Morse objected to the administration's hard-line emphasis on using primarily trade and private capital to promote Latin American economic development. In Latin America, governments had long played a central role in economic decision making, and capitalists had acquired an unsavory reputation. Thus it seemed to many observers that the administration had been hopelessly unrealistic in its development program for that area of the world. Such opinions received support in 1957 with the publication under congressional auspices of the Millikan-Rostow Report, which provided cogent arguments for implementing a wide-ranging, government-supported program to stimulate economically underdeveloped nations.[8]

A less hostile and less well publicized challenge to orthodox policies came from within the administration. A highly visible proponent of many of the new forces and ideas was Dr. Milton Eisenhower, the president's brother and a major adviser on Latin American policy. He gradually became convinced that the United States must modify its hard stand against supporting international commodity agreements, that aid must flow south for social purposes such as housing and hospitals, and that more soft loans (loans repayable in local currencies) must be made available for development. Dr. Eisenhower argued that a Latin America without hope of a better life was one that would be receptive to radical political ideas and that the United States had better act soon if it wished to see needed changes occur in nonrevolutionary ways. Some modification of the administration's

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box 6, folder: Vice President Nixon (2), Dulles Papers; memorandum of conversation (Dulles and Nixon) regarding Soviet economic warfare, 11 February 1958, Special Assistant's Chronological Series, box 12, folder: Greene-Peacock File, Feb. 1958 (3), Dulles Papers; Department of State, *The Sino-Soviet Economic Offensive in the Less Developed Countries* (Washington, 1958); and U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs, *Review of Relations of United States and Other American Republics*, 85th Cong., 2d sess., June 3–July 31, 1958, 252. Alfred E. Eckes has pointed out Eisenhower's sensitivity to the need for rapid access to minerals. See Eckes, *The United States and the Global Struggle for Minerals* (Austin, 1979), 206–8. See also Robert Allen, *Soviet Influence in Latin America: The Role of Economic Relations* (Washington, 1959); and Kaufman, *Trade and Aid*, chap. 4 and 162–63.

[8] Donald M. Dozer, *Are We Good Neighbors? Three Decades of Inter-American Relations, 1930–1960* (Gainesville, FL, 1959), 239–42, 275–76. Milton Eisenhower alerted his brother in 1954 that large aid programs to areas of the world other than Latin America would make "certain that our relations in this hemisphere will deteriorate." Milton S. Eisenhower to the president, 30 November 1954, Name Series, box 12, folder: Milton Eisenhower, 1954 (1), Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower as President (Ann Whitman File), Eisenhower Library (hereafter Whitman File, with filing information). Max F. Millikan and W. W. Rostow, *A Proposal: Key to an Effective Foreign Policy* (New York, 1957). This volume was prepared under congressional auspices by the Center for International Studies at MIT. For an analysis of the Millikan-Rostow reports see Kaufman, *Trade and Aid*, 96–98.

economic policies, he emphasized, seemed a modest price to pay in order to avoid the radicalization of Latin American politics. In his arguments he was actively supported by such persons as Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs C. Douglas Dillon.[9]

Although those advocating new policies gained credence from growing expressions of discontent within Latin America, most policymakers within the administration remained unpersuaded. Opponents of more liberal economic policies pointed to the recently completed Fairless Committee Report (President's Citizen Advisors on the Mutual Security Program, 1957) and to a report prepared for Congress by Ambassador David Bruce as evidence that the administration was essentially correct in its policies. Such hard-line policymakers as Treasury Secretary George Humphrey and his successor Robert B. Anderson found a large measure of self-pity in the hemispheric cries for help and a growing determination to place on U.S. shoulders the burden for economic problems that stemmed from natural and historical causes or that persisted through a lack of national economic and political discipline.[10]

By the beginning of 1958, U.S.-Latin American relations had reached a new low in the postwar era. Despite the perceived Soviet economic menace and a strong and growing sense that economic progress in less-developed countries must be quickened if political and economic disasters were to be avoided, the economic hard-liners remained in firm control of policy through 1957. At the Buenos Aires Economic Conference in August 1957, the United States agreed only "to study" urgent Latin proposals for commodity agreements, soft loans, and an inter-American bank, while Anderson expressed the administration's view that such programs were unnecessary.

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[9] For an indication of Milton Eisenhower's influence on his brother's administration see Stephen E. Ambrose and Richard H. Immerman, *Milton S. Eisenhower: Educational Statesman* (Baltimore, 1983). Dr. Eisenhower's views on Latin America are fully expressed in *The Wine Is Bitter: The United States and Latin America* (Garden City, 1963). See also Milton Eisenhower, Oral History Interview, No. 2, 101, Columbia Oral History Project, Eisenhower Library. Letters in the Eisenhower Library from Milton to "Ike" make it clear that the president depended on his brother's advice on Latin America, despite Dr. Eisenhower's lack of genuine experience and expertise in Latin American affairs. Ellis O. Briggs, who served as ambassador to Ecuador and Brazil during the Eisenhower administration, certainly thought little of Dr. Eisenhower's expertise. He commented on Eisenhower's "profound ignorance of Latin America, plus his view that his ignorance could be filled in a few brief hours of studying the problem." See Briggs, *Farewell to Foggy Bottom: The Recollections of a Career Diplomat* (New York, 1964); and Briggs Oral History Interview, No. 2, 15 October 1972, 66, Columbia Oral History Project.

[10] President's Citizen Advisors on the Mutual Security Program, *Report to the President, 3/1/57* (Washington, 1957). The Fairless Committee records and interim reports are in the Eisenhower Library. The Bruce Report is in U.S. Congress, Senate, Special Committee to Study the Foreign Aid Program, *Report on United States Foreign Assistance Program: South America (Peru, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil)*, by David K. E. Bruce, 85th Cong., 1st sess., 1957. On Humphrey's attitude toward Latin America and his efforts to curtail the lending activities of the Export-Import Bank see R. Harrison Wagner, *United States Policy toward Latin America: A Study in Domestic and International Politics* (Stanford, 1970), 91; and Kaufman, *Trade and Aid*, 29–30, 103.

Nixon's mission thus came at a time of growing controversy and concern within the United States over Latin American relations and economic problems, U.S. aid policies, and an anticipated Soviet economic offensive in the Western Hemisphere. Nixon himself had recently been charged by the president to establish a government committee to investigate Soviet economic strategy and to suggest measures necessary to check Soviet moves. While the old orthodoxies on the prerequisites for economic development (stability and encouragement of private enterprise) were still largely in place, Nixon supported minor modifications of administration policy to promote economic development. Among insiders Nixon was considered to be one of the administration's "Young Turks" because he favored taking more imaginative approaches to the problems of the less-developed countries.[11]

Despite all this movement, Nixon's mission, insofar as it had a public and defined purpose, seemed intended primarily to reassure the peoples of Latin America that the United States had not forgotten them or their concerns. Nixon had no power to negotiate agreements, but he would listen to grievances, warn government officials not to conclude economic agreements that might effectively increase Russian influence in the hemisphere of the Americas, and forcefully suggest that private funds be found for development. The presence of Export-Import Bank president Samuel Waugh in the official party clearly indicated that Nixon realized many government officials were likely to want development aid to come from sources other than the private sector and that he must be prepared to discuss assistance alternatives.

After much reshuffling of the itinerary the Nixon entourage was directed to eight nations: Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela. Courtesy stops were to be made in Trinidad on the first leg of the trip and in Puerto Rico on the way home. The official Nixon party consisted of Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Roy Rubottom, Jr.; Export-Import Bank president Samuel Waugh; and Maurice Bernbaum, director of the Office of South American Affairs in the Department of State, who functioned as trip manager. Over twenty reporters also traveled with the party.

Nixon's journey started in routine fashion. The party departed from Washington National Airport on 27 April 1958. On hand for the departure were the ambassadors and important embassy staff members of the countries the Nixons planned to visit. Tricia and Julie, aged eleven and nine, were assured by their parents that they would return home within three weeks and that this trip "was going to be just like a short vacation." Nixon apparently believed the mission would be a quiet, low-key one and claimed that he even

[11] On Nixon's role in developing administration policy see Wagner, *United States Policy toward Latin America*, 138–45; and Baldwin, *Economic Development and American Foreign Policy*, chaps. 4 and 5. Other "Young Turk" aid supporters in the administration were Nelson Rockefeller and Harold Stassen. Baldwin believes that the Young Turk point of view was in the ascendancy within the administration by 1957, 169–70.

advised newspaper friends not to waste time or money by accompanying him on the tour.[12]

In Montevideo, Uruguay, the first major stop, the public reception accorded the Nixon entourage was largely cordial but there were issues of intense interest to both sides that needed attention. Uruguay was primarily concerned with the precipitous drop in bilateral trade—a result of the Eisenhower administration's restrictions on wool and beef imports—from $100 million in value in 1952 to only $1 million in value during the first four months of 1958. With an annual trade deficit of $90 million and a rapidly weakening peso, Uruguay had already explored trade terms with the Soviet Union which offered Uruguay advantageous prices for its wool. With these negotiations in the background, Nixon and Waugh gave Uruguay's economic needs a full hearing. Discussions were held concerning loans from the Export-Import Bank and the Development Loan Fund, and there were also talks about agricultural assistance grants under P.L. 480. Nixon urged Uruguay to export more to the United States, for the balance of trade lay too heavily in America's favor, and he emphasized his government's desire to assist Uruguay in attaining this goal.[13]

Also troubling U.S.-Uruguayan relations was the Uruguayan government's having taken control of the local Swift and Armour meat packing plants in the week before Nixon's arrival. The companies were determined to take their case into the Uruguayan courts although most indicators pointed toward a successful government expropriation. Officials of both Swift and Armour approached Nixon during the visit and asked for U.S. support in the dispute. The State Department counseled judicious inactivity, advising the administration to await the decision of the Uruguayan courts and to state that the government had not expropriated the plants but had "intervened." Nevertheless the very real threat of the expropriation of the Swift and Armour companies was a matter of high concern to administration officials. Committed to the gospel of improvement through private capital, they feared that American and other foreign capital would bypass Uruguay and other nations that expropriated or adversely regulated foreign-owned companies. How the Uruguayan issues were resolved therefore appeared to

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[12] Nixon, *Six Crises*, 186–87.

[13] Espy to secretary of state, 31 March [1958], RG 59, 033.1100–NI/3–3158. See also *Hispanic American Report* 11 (April 1958): 224, and ibid. (May 1958): 279–80. Uruguay accepted a Soviet offer for Uruguayan wool and in return agreed to purchase Russian oil. Ibid., 28. In discussions on 28 April with Carlos L. Fischer, president of the Uruguayan National Council of Government, Nixon warned against Uruguay's becoming economically dependent upon the Soviet Union. See memorandum of conversation between Vice President Nixon and Fischer, enclosure, Ambassador Woodward to Department of State, 23 July 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/7–2358. The report of the Committee for Economic Development singled out Uruguay as a prime participant in the Soviets' expanding hemispheric economic relations. The report of the committee is analyzed in *Washington Post and Times Herald*, 1 June 1958. Ambassador Robert F. Woodward initiated discussions on loans from the World Bank, the Export-Import Bank, the Development Loan Fund, and assistance under P.L. 480. See his three telegrams to the secretary of state on 22 April 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/4–2258.

have potentially serious consequences for the pattern of Latin America's future economic development. In his Montevideo press conference Nixon downplayed the significance of the meat packing plant crisis while emphasizing that it would be possible to attract sizable private capital only if the political and economic climate in Uruguay improved.[14]

After a meeting with labor leaders, an address to the Uruguayan General Assembly, and a dinner given by Nixon in honor of Acting President Justina Zavala Muniz, the Nixon entourage prepared on 29 April to depart for Argentina the next day. In keeping with his desire to meet students, however, Mr. Nixon determined first to visit the University of Montevideo. He had been told that some students were carrying signs reading "Fuera Nixon [Go home Nixon]," "McCarthyism," "Wall Street Agents," and "Little Rock" when his party arrived in Montevideo. Choosing to view these signs as a challenge, Nixon made an unscheduled stop on 29 April at the university's law school where he signed autographs, answered student questions, and by his own account soon had the majority of the students drowning out "Communist" hecklers by shouting "at the tops of their voices in Spanish, 'Long live United States and Uruguayan friendship.'" On this encouraging note he flew on to Argentina.[15]

To emphasize the symbolic importance of Frondizi's election, President Eisenhower appointed a sizable inaugural delegation to represent the United States—one heavy on agency bankers and successful businessmen. The chief delegates were: Nixon; Samuel Waugh; Willard L. Beaulac, U.S. ambassador to Argentina; James H. Smith, director of the International Cooperation Administration; Willard F. C. Ewing, board chairman of Alexander Smith, Inc.; and Allan A. Ryan, board chairman of the Royal McBee Corporation. Nixon caused a stir by arriving noticeably late at the inauguration ceremony, a discourtesy that he acknowledged was due to poor planning.[16]

During his four-day stopover in Argentina, Nixon tried to convey a series of interrelated messages to the Argentines. In both private discussions and public statements he emphasized that Argentina would receive no U.S. government assistance for development projects when private capital was available. He also stressed that there was sufficient private capital to finance

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[14] *Hispanic American Report* 11 (April 1958): 224; *La Prensa* (Buenos Aires), 2 May 1958; Vice President Nixon press conference, Montevideo, 29 April 1958, A/CDC/MR Central Files. On 4 May 1958, the normally anti-U.S. newspaper, *Acción*, commented very favorably on the discussions and noted Nixon's "good will and clear notion of realities" on the Export-Import Bank and the Swift and Armour issues. See a copy of the 4 May editorial in Amembassy, Montevideo dispatch no. 947 to the Department of State, 8 May 1958, re "Acción Editorializes Favorably on the Nixon Visit." RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–858.

[15] Nixon, *Six Crises*, 188. See also *La Prensa* (Buenos Aires), 29 and 30 April 1958, for accounts of Nixon's experiences with the university's students; and Roy Rubottom, "The Vice President's Visit to South America in Perspective," Department of State *Bulletin* 38 (30 June 1958): 1105.

[16] *New York Times*, 26 April 1958; *Boston Daily Globe*, 2 May 1958. Nixon omits any mention of his late arrival, which was due to heavy traffic, from *Six Crises*. He was hooted by a small crowd as he entered the hall during Frondizi's speech.

the major projects in Argentina and that it was incumbent upon the Argentine government to create an atmosphere and incentives to attract that capital. As Nixon stated at a roundtable discussion with Argentine business leaders, Argentina had the capacity to be "a great country, but it is up to the government and people of Argentina to decide its future. We do not in any way mean to suggest that we are attempting to impose conditions insofar as the loans are made which would force the government to take one action or another. But this is an instance in which the loans are available; there is money in the bank; the government of Argentina can qualify, if it wants to." Waugh added that the Export-Import Bank would shortly send a delegation to Argentina to explore project loans.[17]

One issue of great concern to both governments was the development of Argentina's petroleum industry. Nixon again stressed that private capital was available. Frondizi, who three years earlier had bitterly attacked the Perón regime for proposing an oil development contract with Standard Oil of California, indicated both privately to Nixon and publicly in his inaugural address that he now believed Argentina's petroleum resources could best be developed by private capital. Frondizi added that he hoped the U.S. government would extend credits to the Argentine government sufficient to encourage the flow of private investment into Argentina—a reasonable enough request given his startling reversal on the need to attract private development capital. Waugh noted, however, that Argentina's needs for capital were so large that it must prepare to borrow from a variety of sources, including French agencies.[18]

On 3 May Nixon met with a small group of faculty and students at the National University of Buenos Aires and addressed questions on both economic and political matters. In the roundtable exchange that was chaired by the rector, Dr. Riesieri Frondizi, brother of the president, Nixon underlined the usual cliches when he assured the group that "dictatorships are repugnant to our people," that the United States supported the principle of nonintervention in the affairs of the American peoples, that U.S. assistance in overthrowing the Arbenz regime in Guatemala in 1954 did not really constitute intervention, and that it was not U.S. policy to wreck the national economies of Latin America. All in all, the question-and-answer session was brisk but polite, perhaps leading the vice president to believe that he could handle succeeding student and faculty dialogue groups with skill and to the U.S. advantage. As he emerged from the meeting, however,

[17] A report on the Nixon-Waugh discussion with Chamber of Commerce members and other business leaders is included with Amembassy, Buenos Aires dispatch no. 1816 to the Department of State, 2 June 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/6–258.

[18] Peterson, *Argentina and the United States*, 492–93, 509; Beaulac dispatch no. 1617 to secretary of state, 2 May 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–258; the White House, supplement to staff notes No. 366, 10 May 1958, DDE Diary Series, folder: Toner Notes-May 1958, box 33, Whitman File.

he encountered a storm warning for about one hundred students whistled and booed him, some shouting "Go home Nixon, Argentina is not for sale."[19]

After four days in Argentina, the Nixon party flew on to Paraguay. The vice president believed it was his task to indicate American disapproval of dictatorships in general while maintaining a constructive relationship with the firm anti-Communist administration of strongman Alfredo Stroessner. State Department officials had initially considered bypassing Paraguay because President Stroessner's authoritarian regime represented nondemocratic political norms popularly linked to the United States. However, both Stroessner and the American ambassador to Paraguay, Walter C. Ploeser, were insistent in their demands for a short visit. On reflection it was decided that Nixon ought to stop briefly in Paraguay, give Stroessner a formal handshake, and then move along. As Nixon observed about his invitation to Paraguay, there was "no diplomatic reason to snub it frontedly."

It was an extraordinary one-day visit, however. The vice president received several delegations from organizations in bitter opposition to the government, as well as written complaints from other groups that could not be worked into his busy schedule. In his address to the single-party Paraguayan Chamber of Deputies, Nixon congratulated the country on its commendable anti-Communist stance and stressed that communism was best fought by governments that granted their peoples basic political and economic freedoms. Nixon's remarks were clearly an intrusion into Paraguayan politics, but Stroessner could at least be pleased that the Nixon party agreed that Paraguay deserved increased loans for a variety of capital projects.[20]

Having completed his gestures on behalf of a more liberal political order in Paraguay, Nixon journeyed next to Bolivia, a nation verging on bankruptcy and experiencing acute internal disorders. President Hernan Siles Zuazo drew a gloomy picture for Nixon, predicting that the country would slip into the Communist camp within eight months unless the United States granted his government a $200-million loan and took steps to shore up the international tin market through massive purchases. Siles also

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[19] United States Information Service, press release, 3 May 1958, "Vice President Richard M. Nixon Roundtable Discussion at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, National University of Buenos Aires" in R/CDC/MR Central Files; *Boston Daily Globe*, 4 May 1958; *New York Times*, 4 May 1958. Nixon met as well with a municipal workers' union and workers at a Goodyear tire and rubber plant.

[20] Ploeser dispatch no. 224 to secretary of state, 14 March 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/3–1458. See also Nixon, *Six Crises*, 191; and Albert E. Carter [first secretary of embassy] dispatch no. 413 to the Department of State, 16 May 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–1658. Students tried to give Nixon the names of friends who were in prison. See "Nixon Visit Stirs Paraguay Youths," *New York Times*, 5 and 7 May 1958; *Hispanic American Report* 11 (May 1958): 281; and Rubottom and Waugh dispatch no. 659 to secretary of state, 5 May 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–558. Michael Grow has traced the expansion of U.S. influence in Paraguay between 1933 and 1945 in *The Good Neighbor Policy and Authoritarianism in Paraguay; United States Economic Expansion and Great-Power Rivalry in Latin America during World War II* (Lawrence, KS, 1981).

stressed that it was time for the United States to recognize the necessity for international agreements to undergird prices for commodities in temporary surplus. The United States' sporadic purchase of these commodities did not provide Bolivia sufficient timely income to support its national planning program.[21]

Access to Bolivia's mineral assets had been a special concern of the Eisenhower administration. Since 1953 Bolivia had received aid totaling approximately $100 million, half in agricultural products and half in development funds. Nevertheless, in part because of government mismanagement of wage and production policies, massive Russian sales of surplus tin on world markets, and recent U.S. import quotas on copper, lead, and zinc, Bolivia's economic crisis continued to worsen.

Distressing inflation, militant miners' unions, and deep social and political rifts combined to persuade Nixon that Bolivia's problems "seemed to defy even a beginning to a solution." Nixon reached this conclusion after discussions with representatives of labor, with managers of two great government cartels, with students, and in a press conference with "opinion leaders" whose deeply divergent attitudes toward the programs of the Movimento Nacionalista Revolucionaria government surfaced when two of the participants in the conference engaged in a heated exchange on the subject. Through Bolivian reporters, Nixon also became aware that many Bolivians believed American aid had been sadly mismanaged. He left Bolivia with a laconic comment that President Siles had made echoing in his mind. Noting that one of his predecessors had committed suicide and another had been hanged from a lamppost just outside the president's office, Siles said, "I often wonder what my fate will be."[22]

Nixon anticipated that Peru would be a "pleasant interlude after some rather difficult experiences on some of our previous stops." This expectation reflected the inadequate level of information provided him on Peruvian-American relations by Assistant Secretary of State Rubottom, who assured Nixon that while there were certainly problems in Peruvian-American relations, no country in the hemisphere "would provide a more gracious and friendly welcome."[23]

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[21] *Hispanic American Report* 11 (May 1958): 273–74. Nixon was forewarned by Dulles that Siles might ask the United States to purchase Bolivia's 8,000-ton tin surplus. Nixon was advised to say that such a purchase was not possible but that the United States would try to ease Bolivia's crisis in "other ways." Department of State telegram to Amembassy, Buenos Aires, 1 May 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–158. Nixon urged Bolivia to seek loans from the Development Loan Fund, to diversify its economy, and to do everything possible to attract private capital. See transcript of Nixon press conference, La Paz, 6 May 1958, A/CDC/MR Central Files.

[22] Nixon, *Six Crises*, 192. A lengthy and useful summary of the Nixon visit to Bolivia is found in R. A. Conrads [chief, Political Section, La Paz] dispatch no. 1061 to Department of State, 28 May 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–2858. Conrads wrote approvingly that Nixon, at a formal dinner given in his honor, "did not bat an eye when the band played the Missouri Waltz," former President Truman's standard musical number.

[23] Nixon, *Six Crises*, 193.

Peru in fact echoed with angry complaints against the United States. The U.S. government would not recognize Peruvian claims of jurisdiction in coastal waters up to 200 miles; the United States was invading Peruvian cotton markets and helping to hold down coffee prices; Japan received preferences in the U.S. fish market denied to Peru; Peru's sugar quota in the American market was too small; and, most serious of all, protectionist legislation recently passed by the U.S. Congress seemed likely to have a serious impact on Peruvian sales of copper, zinc, and lead to the United States. These complaints, together with the internal factors of mounting inflation, militant unions, an insecure government, resentment of American corporate activity, and great indignation over President Eisenhower's awarding the Legion of Merit to despised former dictator General Manuel Odria in 1953, all helped to create potential for high political drama in Peru. Furthermore, the American embassy in Lima had received signals that Peru's government was not especially receptive to the Nixon visit. And finally, San Marcos University in Lima was in a state of upheaval. Various student groups were contending for power, and the dental school students were on strike demanding that twenty of their professors be fired.[24]

Into this extraordinarily sensitive situation stepped an upbeat but ill-informed Nixon. Initial public and official receptions went as planned, although demonstrators had whistled menacingly outside his hotel from the time he arrived. During his forty-four hour visit Nixon explored economic and political issues with a variety of interest groups. But it was his decision to confront hostile students at San Marcos University, in the face of certain protests and possible mob violence, that caught the world's attention and eventually made a shambles of the visit to Peru.[25]

San Marcos University, one of the oldest seats of learning in the Western Hemisphere, had a proud and fiercely guarded tradition of autonomy from government control. Speakers were normally invited to campus only with the assent of the powerful student executive. When student leaders learned that Nixon had been invited to speak on campus by the rector, Dr. José Leon Barandiaran, they met and publicly announced that the American

[24] An excellent analysis of the Peruvian political and economic scene at the time of Nixon's mission is found in James C. Carey, *Peru and the United States, 1900–1962* (South Bend, IN, 1964), chap. 11. Ambassador Theodore C. Achilles provided an in-depth analysis of the "Affaire Nixon" in dispatch no. 907 to Department of State, 27 May 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–2758 (hereafter Achilles Report). A useful discussion of the downward trend of commodities prices in 1958 is found in Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America, *Economic Survey of Latin America, 1958* (New York, 1959).

[25] Nixon met with the Lima Chamber of Commerce, leaders of *Acción Popular*, and the secretary-general and local representatives of the Free Trade Union Movement (C.T.P.). He, Waugh, and Rubottom met privately with the minister of finance. He also discussed U.S. mineral and agricultural policies with members of the National Minerals Society and the National Agrarian Society. The P.L. 480 program had deprived Peru of markets in Colombia and Chile. Nixon canceled his appointment with leaders of the Christian Democratic Party in order to outwit the demonstrators at San Marcos University by arriving early. Party officials refused to reschedule the appointment. See Achilles Report, 6, 8, 10, 11–12, 21, 23.

vice president was certainly *not* welcome at San Marcos. They issued a written statement detailing why he must not be given a public platform at the university and condemning both Nixon and the policies of the government he represented.

Aware of possible danger, Rubottom and Ambassador Theodore Achilles nevertheless counseled Nixon to go to San Marcos. It might be politically wise to confront an unfriendly crowd, Achilles advised, even though considerations of safety indicated Nixon ought not go. Communist agitators would win a tremendous victory if he backed away. Concerned by the potential for a student riot, the vice president privately tried to persuade the university rector to withdraw the invitation or the Lima chief of police to advise publicly against the visit. Neither wanted to take such actions although they both advised Nixon to cancel his visit. The rector, caught in the angry swirl of student politics, suggested that he meet with Nixon in his hotel room, but Nixon refused when the rector declined to announce such a meeting as his idea. Placed in a difficult position, Nixon wrestled with the decision overnight. His hotel room echoed to parading students' chants of "Fuera Nixon, Fuera Nixon!" Finally, the embassy received official word that full protection would be given to Nixon if he went to San Marcos. Nixon records that after much deliberation, he decided to follow his instincts. "My intuition, backed by considerable experience, was that I should go."[26]

Nixon's intuition and fighting instincts propelled him into a humiliating encounter. Great numbers of students met him at the gates of the university with noise, rocks, and fruit. As tempers rose, Nixon "shook his fist at the mob" and tried to shout down the several hundred demonstrators, but they refused to listen. After considerable pushing, chanting, and tomato-throwing, the vice president left the scene in grand style, standing on the trunk lid of his convertible with hands held high "in a prize-fighter's gesture," shouting at the defiant students: "You are cowards, you are afraid of the truth! You are the worst kind of cowards!"[27]

Determined to be heard, Nixon then went directly to nearby Catholic University, where a backup plan had been made for him to meet privately with the rector. His Peruvian escort mistakenly drove Nixon to the wrong building. Unfazed, he entered the building and burst into a crowded

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[26] Nixon, *Six Crises*, 199. Nixon fails to mention that the student government made it clear that he was not welcome at San Marcos University. See Carey, *Peru and the United States*, 198–99, 202–5; and Achilles Report, 4, 9, 13. Nixon contends that students opposing his visit were Communists or Communist-inspired—a claim not supported by Carey's careful research. *La Prensa* (Buenos Aires) declared on 10 May 1958 that only a very small number of the protestors were Communists.

[27] Memorandum of [telephone] conversation, Maurice H. Bernbaum calling from Lima to William P. Snow, 8 May 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–858; Achilles Report, 16; *Chicago Tribune*, 9 May 1958; Tad Szulc, "Nixon Is Stoned by Peru Rioters Headed by Reds," *New York Times*, 9 May 1958; Nixon, *Six Crises*, 200–202. Nixon reported to Eisenhower from Bogotá that the "only casualties we have suffered are a couple of Ben Freeman's suits which I will be unable to wear again." Nixon to Eisenhower, 12 May 1958, Administration Series, box 28, folder: Richard M. Nixon 1958–1961 (3), Whitman File.

classroom where student elections were in progress. Nixon indicated he stood ready to debate or answer questions. Since the student leaders were not happy with this disruption of their elections, the Nixon entourage thronged into a second-year literature class, where the vice president again offered to take on all comers. Even here his reception was less than friendly, as a minority of students jeered and booed his responses to queries. The group of hecklers, which included some of the earlier demonstrators from San Marcos, was finally routed by Catholic University students wishing to hear Nixon speak. But as he returned to his hotel, Nixon later wrote, "one of the most notorious Communist agitators in Lima," a "weird-looking character . . . [with] bulging eyes" spat directly into his face. While a secret service agent roughed up the spitter, the aroused vice president, wishing "to tear the face in front of me to pieces," assuaged his anger and frustration by "planting a healthy kick" on the spitter's shins. Later in the day, emotionally exhausted, Nixon berated Rubottom and Bernbaum because they expressed their opinion that the riot had doubtless diminished the goodwill aspect of the Peruvian visit.[28]

The next day Nixon met with mining leaders to discuss Peru's need to market increased quantities of lead, copper, and zinc, with agricultural leaders who condemned U.S. sugar and cotton quota policies, and with the Lima Chamber of Commerce, whose president complained about the American government's double taxation policies on its overseas corporations. As Nixon listened to the complaints, it became apparent to him that the Peruvians held the United States responsible for their wretched financial and social conditions.[29]

Overshadowing the meetings, of course, were discussions of the violent demonstration at San Marcos. Many Peruvians were deeply embarrassed by the rudeness of the students and the government's failure to anticipate the extent and heat of the protests. Nixon incorrectly took the position that the riot was Communist-inspired and that his experience dramatically illustrated how quickly free discussion ended in a society where Communists became influential in the political process. Although the government subsequently arrested a number of Communist party members for their role in the demonstrations, perhaps as a sop to Nixon, the government was perplexed about the most constructive way to respond to the student violence. On 11 May the official government newspaper, *El Peruano*, reported only that Nixon "went to Catholic University, exchanging opinions with students in this center of learning." In Washington the Peruvian government expressed its "profound regret," but President Manuel Prado did not apologize to

[28] Nixon, *Six Crises*, 203–7. See also *New York Times*, 9 May 1958; and Achilles Report, 17–18. The "notorious Communist" agitator who spat in Nixon's face remains unidentified.

[29] Achilles Report, 21–22, 36–37.

Nixon for the San Marcos incident at a banquet following the riot, referring to it as a "small incident."[30]

While Ambassador Achilles expressed great admiration for the vice president's courage in confronting the demonstrators, his summary judgment was that the visit had undermined an already shaky government. The visit, he concluded, "once more pictured the government, as no other event could have, as incapable of exercising authority properly." Achilles speculated that the government had wanted a small demonstration at San Marcos to support a scare-tactic strategy to gain further loans from the United States. But the demonstration had gotten out of hand and the Peruvian government now stood humiliated before the world community.[31]

Leaving Peru with its government weakened by his goodwill visit and with U.S.-Peruvian relations even more deeply troubled than before, Nixon flew on 9 May into Quito, Ecuador, where the government and citizens were determined to be a model of courtesy—in sharp contrast to their hated Peruvian rivals. President Camilo Ponce Enriquez pointedly stated that "in this country there is no freedom for savage acts" and he made every effort to see that his poor-but-proud country treated Nixon hospitably. Friendly crowds greeted Nixon throughout his visit, and the usual receptions were held in a spirit of cordiality. President Ponce and Minister of Economic Development Frederico Intriago handed the receptive vice president a lengthy list of projects needing U.S. aid. Ponce stressed the need for private capital to help develop Ecuador but also proposed a special inter-American conference on economic matters, to which Nixon agreed, stipulating only that the meeting should be informal. In turn Nixon warned Ecuador about Soviet economic overtures, requested that Ecuador repeal its discriminatory measures against U.S. shipping, and indicated that he would request the expedition of Export-Import Bank loans to Ecuador.[32]

Despite the pleasant reception, Nixon initially canceled a planned visit to Quito University, no doubt in reaction to his bitter experience at San Marcos University. But he rescheduled the visit following a private meeting with former president Galo Plaza Lasso. As the American-educated Galo

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[30] Achilles Report, 25–29; *El Comercio* (Lima), 11 May 1958. Miguel Grau, chargé d'affaires at the Peruvian embassy in Washington, extended Peru's "profound regret" to the Department of State. Memorandum of conversation, 9 May 1958, re "Peruvian Embassy Expresses Regret over Anti-Nixon Demonstrations in Lima," RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–958. Fourteen persons were arrested in the wake of the demonstrations, among them the head of Peru's Communist party, Raul Acosta Salas. See *Hispanic American Report* 11 (June 1958): 331–36.

[31] Achilles Report, 32–36, 39.

[32] *New York Times*, 11 May 1958; [Second Embassy Secretary G. H.] Summ, dispatch no. 20, "Visit of Vice President to Quito May 9–11, 1958," 15 July 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/7–1558 (hereafter Summ, "Visit"); and [White House] staff notes No. 374, 27 May 1958, "Aid to Ecuador" in DDE Diary Series, box 33, folder: Toner Notes-May 1958 (1), Whitman File. Ecuador had placed a 1 percent differential on goods traveling on all foreign ships. See Amembassy, Quito dispatch no. 667 to Department of State, 3 April 1958, "Current Economic and Commercial Problems," RG 59, 033.1100–NI/4–358. Ponce's statement is quoted in *New York Times*, 10 May 1958.

Plaza predicted, the students at the university proved extraordinarily courteous to Nixon. He was also encouraged by the enthusiastic reception given him by some ten thousand fans at a soccer game. Nixon walked onto the field, shed his jacket, and proceeded to practice heading the ball. He also kicked out the game ball, presented a trophy to the game winner, and told the crowd that he had long since given up trying to play soccer because "I couldn't learn to use my head." The astonished crowd shouted "Viva Nixon" as he performed on the field below. Embassy officials later learned, however, that Nixon's grandstanding public diplomacy offended some of Ponce's advisers, who believed that politicians should conduct themselves in public with a greater measure of dignity.[33]

Fully satisfied with his stay in Ecuador, Nixon and his entourage prepared to push on to Colombia, where the elections on 4 May had marked the last days of the ruling military junta. President-elect Alberto Lleras Camargo, former secretary-general of the Organization of American States and the National Front candidate, was scheduled to assume power on 7 August. Although there had been some tension between the United States and Colombia because of U.S. reluctance to enter into an international coffee price support agreement and because Colombians believed their past and present support of U.S. policies merited greater economic assistance, on the whole relations were positive. The junta had supported the elections, and Nixon was in the comfortable position of being able to praise the junta as well as the nation's recent step toward democratic government.[34]

Prior to Nixon's arrival Ambassador John Moors Cabot had warned of possible demonstrations and even a threat against Nixon's life—news that struck a somber note amidst otherwise pleasant expectations—but by all accounts the forty-two hour visit went smoothly. Nixon made contact with the usual groups. More important, the vice president indicated publicly that "he personally felt the need for a more positive U.S. policy toward the problems of single-export Latin American nations" and he "would recommend that the U.S. participate fully—not just as observers—in the next coffee conference." Nixon's announcement constituted a form of pressure on the Eisenhower administration to move ahead in support of commodity agreements and certainly provided a pleasant conclusion to his journey to Bogotá. After reminding Colombian officials at a concluding banquet of the need to abolish poverty and of their responsibility "to work

[33] *Chicago Tribune*, 11 May 1958; *New York Times*, 11 May 1958; *Boston Sunday Globe*, 11 May 1958; Summ, "Visit," 2–3. Summ called Nixon's performance at the soccer game "the high point of his visit." This episode, together with Nixon having his hair cut in a common barbershop, "endeared him more than anything else to the Ecuadorian people."

[34] Cabot to secretary of state, Bogotá, 10 May 1958, incoming telegram No. 695, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–1058. Just two days before the election of 4 May in Colombia, Lleras Carmargo and four members of the junta had been seized briefly in an abortive coup led by the military police. See *New York Times*, 3 May 1958.

to that end" Nixon departed Bogotá for Caracas, Venezuela, at 7:15 A.M. on 13 May.[35]

In Venezuela the issues in dispute seemed likely to be more political in nature than economic, although the Nixon party was aware that the Venezuelans wanted the United States to buy a greater share of their oil. But it was America's steady support for former dictator Marcos Pérez Jiménez, to whom President Eisenhower had awarded the Legion of Merit, that generated tremendous anger among those who had suffered Pérez Jiménez's widespread abuses of civil liberties until his ouster by liberal forces in January. U.S. officials were now anxious to make amends for their identification with Pérez Jiménez and to demonstrate that the United States truly preferred to see popularly based anti-Communist governments in power. Precisely how sending Richard Nixon for a brief visit could correct such perceptions of U.S. policy was not clear; hopefully, broad smiles, a few kind words for democracy, and an *abrazo* or two would help to assuage Venezuelan anger. But with Pérez Jiménez and his hated secret police chief, Pedro Estrada, handsomely ensconced in Miami, the American smiles and embraces would be received with cynicism and even bitterness.[36]

Nixon had been alerted about possible disturbances in Venezuela. There had been numerous warnings about planned violence from a variety of sources and the possibility of an assassination attempt was discussed at length. An alarmed State Department even asked Nixon to plan no university visits. Reports of trouble were serious enough that Nixon left the door open for Venezuela's invitation to be withdrawn. But the Venezuelan government, which had been prodded initially to invite the Nixon party, responded by assuring the State Department that Nixon's safety was not in doubt. The large, angry crowd that greeted him at the airport outside Caracas

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[35] Milton K. Wells [American chargé d'affaires ad interim] dispatch no. 913 to Department of State, 21 May 1958, "Visit to Bogotá of Vice President Nixon," RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–2158; memorandum of [telephone] conversation, 12 May 1958, between Maurice Bernbaum, calling from Bogotá, and Mr. Conover concerning "Status Report on Departmental Papers [Mann-Turkel Memorandum] on Commodity Problems," RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–1258. The memorandum indicated that commodity problems were to be discussed later that week in the Council on Foreign Economic Policy. C. Douglas Dillon was to present the State Department's views, which were sympathetic to a coffee price support agreement. Bernbaum indicated that Nixon agreed with the department's proposals. Wells wrote that the Colombians expected a "drastic change in U.S. policies toward them." Wells dispatch no. 993 to Department of State, Bogotá, 18 June 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/6–1858.

[36] Background on the revolution is found in Philip B. Taylor, Jr., *The Venezuelan Golpe de Estado of 1958: The Fall of Marcos Pérez Jiménez* (Washington, 1968). For an analysis of U.S.-Venezuelan relations see Stephen G. Rabe, *The Road to OPEC: United States Relations with Venezuela, 1919–1976* (Austin, 1982). Nixon wrote that Pérez Jiménez "was probably the most despised dictator in all of Latin America," but does not mention the Legion of Merit and defends granting sanctuary on the grounds that the United States "does not believe that deposed rulers, no matter how despicable, should be put before firing squads without trial." (*Six Crises*, 211). Roy Rubottom reportedly signed the papers permitting the dictator to take up residence in the United States. See *Washington Post and Times Herald*, 19, 24, and 30 May and 5 June 1958.

therefore surprised Nixon, as did the government's failure to provide his party with an adequate security guard.

Incredible scenes followed his landing at Maiquietia Airport on Tuesday, 13 May. As Nixon and his wife left their Air Force DC-6 and walked with measured pace on a red carpet toward their car, hoping to escape the taunts of the hostile and primarily youthful crowd, the Venezuelan ceremonial band struck up the Venezuelan national anthem. The Nixons immediately came to attention as protocol demanded. While they waited for completion of the national anthem, hundreds screamed for the Nixons to go home and spat and threw garbage on them from an overhanging airport terminal observation deck. Pat's new red suit quickly turned a dirty brown with tobacco juice stains. Only with considerable effort was the now-alarmed party, assisted by six forceful U.S. Secret Service agents, able to push through the chanting and cursing crowd in the terminal building to their waiting limousines.[37]

On the twelve-mile drive into Caracas vehicles filled with hostile demonstrators darted in and out of the loosely organized official motorcade. Some tried to stop the motorcade by throwing sizable banners over the automobile windshields. Thoroughly angry, Nixon wiped the spittle off his face and suit and took the opportunity to give the foreign minister, Dr. Oscar Garcia Velutini, "both barrels" because his government did not have the "guts and good sense" to control Communist-led mobs. As the motorcade approached its scheduled stop at the Pantheon for a wreath-laying ceremony at the tomb of Simón Bolivar, the normally heavy midday traffic stalled and made the motorcade vulnerable to a mob that appeared suddenly and began to stone the motorcade, smashing the safety glass in Nixon's car with pipes and clubs, and almost succeeding in overturning the car in which Nixon and the (now injured and moaning) foreign minister rode. Rocks, dung, and dirt flew everywhere through twelve minutes of terror. Nixon later observed that the mob seemed out for his blood. One outraged and frightened Secret Service agent in Nixon's embattled car finally pulled his gun and called out, "Let's get some of these sons-of-bitches," only to be restrained by Nixon. The few Venezuelan policemen accompanying the entourage seemed reluctant to challenge the mob, perhaps remembering the unhappy fate of those officers who had played major roles in subduing the populace during the Pérez Jiménez years. Only a bit of luck and the timely arrival of a few soldiers enabled the American caravan to escape the mob and make its

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[37] Nixon, *Six Crises*, 211; Christian A. Herter, memorandum on telephone calls, Monday, 12 May 1958, Telephone Calls Series, Dulles Papers; John Foster Dulles to Amembassy, Caracas, 17 April 1958, [Sender blacked out] to Amembassy, Caracas, 9 May 1958, Edward J. Sparks to secretary of state, 10 May 1958, memorandum of telephone conversation concerning "Official Venezuelan Assurance of Protection to Vice President and His Party," 13 May 1958, all in RM/R Central Files. The scene at the airport is described in Earl Mazo, *Richard Nixon: A Political and Personal Portrait* (New York, 1960), 222–26; Nixon, *Six Crises*, 213–16; *Time Magazine*, 26 May 1958; and Sam Moskowitz to Ambassador Sparks, memorandum on "Sequence of Events Immediately Preceding Arrival and Trip to Caracas of Vice President Nixon on May 13, 1958," Enclosure No. 3, 1–3, in Sparks dispatch no. 871 to Department of State, 21 May 1958 (hereafter Moskowitz, "Sequence of Events"), RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–2158.

way to the welcome safety of the American embassy. Here the Nixon party hunkered down, fearful that even in the embassy the danger remained, for riots continued on into the evening in downtown Caracas.[38]

Nixon's lectures on the need to crack down on Communists did nothing to improve strained relations with his hosts, particularly because Communists had contributed vitally to Pérez Jiménez's ouster. Government embarrassment turned to humiliation and anger when word flashed across the wire services that Eisenhower had deployed several hundred marines and paratroopers to Guantanamo and Puerto Rico and two aircraft to Curaçao to rescue Nixon in the event that the Venezuelan government proved unable to protect him.

Nixon himself expressed considerable private distress over "Operation Poor Richard," for he and his delegation were secure in the American embassy by the time the troops were deployed. Rubottom told the State Department by telephone that the deployment "should not have been taken without consultation with them, that the Vice President definitely did not want anything like that done, and it had caused the Venezuelan Government some embarrassment." Eisenhower, it seems, had either panicked or had simply reacted in anger. Deploying American military forces certainly served to remind Latin Americans that behind the North Americans' *abrazos* and repeated declarations of juridical equality and hemispheric partnership lay the continued U.S. readiness to flex its military muscles in the region.[39]

"Operation Poor Richard" predictably created an indignant uproar within Venezuela and throughout Latin America. In a firm tone, Foreign Minister Garcia stated his government's position that "under no circumstances could the Government and people of Venezuela request or permit the intervention of foreign military forces on the national territory."[40] Through Ambassador Edward J. Sparks, Secretary Dulles replied in a measured way designed to

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[38] *New York Times*, 14 May 1958; Mazo, *Nixon*, 227–35; *Chicago Tribune*, 14 May 1958; *Time Magazine*, 26 May 1958; Moskowitz, "Sequence of Events," 3–6; Samuel Waugh to Dear Family, 26 May 1958 (hereafter Waugh to Family), Samuel Waugh Papers, box 1, folder: Correspondence—Personal and Business, 1954–1968, Eisenhower Library.

[39] Memorandum of [telephone] conversation between Ber nbaum and [William P.] Snow, "Situation in Venezuela," 13 May 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–858; memorandum of [telephone] conversation between Captain Kefauver, William P. Snow, and Terry B. Sanders on "Sending of Marines to Caracas," 13 May 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–1358; Mervyn U. Pallister [American Consul General, Curaçao] dispatch no. 222 to Department of State, 20 May 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–2058; *Boston Daily Globe*, 14 May 1958; "The Nixon Airlift," *Washington Post and Times Herald*, 16 May 1958.

[40] Oscar Garcia Velutini to Ambassador Edward J. Sparks, 17 May 1958, enclosure, Sparks dispatch no. 867 to Department of State, 20 May 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–2058. Venezuelan press reaction universally condemned the troop movement. Even the conservative Catholic paper *La Religion*, Sparks informed Dulles, "states United States troop movement worse than acts against Nixon in Caracas." Sparks dispatch no. 790 to secretary of state, 18 May 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–1858. Sparks also noted that prominent political leaders saw the deployment as a fundamental contradiction of the Good Neighbor policy and cited statements by Senators Hubert Humphrey and Estes Kefauver to support their view. Sparks dispatch no. 784 to secretary of state, 16 May 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/5–1658.

calm troubled waters: "There is no discrepancy between the views of the governments of the United States and of Venezuela on this matter."[41] Dulles tried to be conciliatory, hoping that the Venezuelan government would not press the issue to the point where further damage would be inflicted on relations.

There seemed little left for Nixon to do in Venezuela once the violence had occurred save to meet briefly with a few groups in the American embassy and to receive an outpouring of apologies from individuals deploring the mob's conduct. In his press conference Nixon maintained his composure and again pointed out that such disturbances could occur when Communist elements in a society were not controlled. He also invited the Venezuelan government to invoke its extradition treaty with the United States if it wished Pérez Jiménez and Estrada returned home for trial. Virtually a prisoner in the army-surrounded American embassy, Nixon decided to shorten the visit by one day. There was some thought of taking a helicopter from nearby La Carlota Airport to Maiquietia Airport in order to avoid another mob scene, but the idea was discarded when someone noted that Pérez Jiménez had fled the country in that very way just three and one-half months earlier. The issue was settled when the governing junta members insisted that it was entirely safe for Nixon to leave directly from Maiquietia Airport, with full honors, and they arranged to accompany him there to guarantee his safety with their presence.

When the Nixon party departed for the airport following lunch with junta members at the *Circulo Militar* officers club, they were accompanied by the junta in automobiles well-stocked with small arms, tear gas canisters, and submachine guns, and were escorted by a riot-ready army filling nine buses and three trucks. Citizens who happened to find themselves on the exit route as the speeding Nixon entourage approached were herded together and driven back by soldiers armed with machetes and tear gas. That was their last memory of Richard M. Nixon's goodwill visit.[42]

In order to end the mission on a more positive note, an unusually cordial public reception was quickly organized in Puerto Rico by Governor

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[41] Edward J. Sparks to Dr. Oscar Garcia Velutini, 27 May 1958, copy enclosed in Charles R. Burrows [deputy chief of mission], Amembassy, Caracas, dispatch no. 917, 6 June 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/6–658.

[42] *New York Times*, 14 May 1958; Nixon, *Six Crises*, 226–27; Mazo, *Nixon*, 243–44; *Boston Daily Globe*, 15 May 1958; memorandum of conversation, Glen H. Fisher [second secretary of embassy] with Gustavo Machado, 30 September 1958, enclosure in Fisher dispatch no. 279 to Department of State, 3 October 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/10–358. Machado, a Venezuelan Communist, claimed that the party rank and file had been "carefully coached to avoid such items as spitting and rock throwing." The Caracas episode led Eisenhower to ask Dulles why Pérez Jiménez had been granted asylum. See memorandum of conversation with the president, 18 May 1958, White House Memorandum Series, Dulles Papers. General Joseph M. Swing, commissioner of U.S. Immigration and Naturalization, wished to deport Pérez Jiménez and Estrada, but the State Department wanted to force a reluctant Venezuela to invoke its extradition treaty with the United States. See *Washington Post and Times Herald*, 24 May and 5 June 1958. *El Universal* (Caracas) stated on 15 May 1958 that the episode would help to enlighten the United States about Latin American problems.

Muñoz Marin. Eisenhower then arranged a hearty and supportive welcome home for the embattled vice president who found himself returning in the unusual role of a rumpled but triumphant hero. At the airport Nixon was met and applauded by the president, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson, House Speaker Sam Rayburn, Senate Republican leader William Knowland, and a host of other politicians and well-wishers. Signs held high by those greeting him read "Remember the Maine," "Don't let those Commies get you down, Dick," and "Communist cowardice loses—Nixon courage wins."[43]

As Nixon reflected upon his mission, he concluded that it was at least a qualified success. He had held constructive conversations with many officials, groups, and individuals in the countries visited. He had also succeeded in turning a diplomatic disaster into a personal triumph by showing genuine courage in the face of two mobs and by skillfully laying the blame for mob scenes primarily upon Communists. J. Edgar Hoover commented that the mission had made anticommunism respectable again. Nixon's domestic political standing and visibility were greatly enhanced, at least temporarily, for Gallup polls showed that he had taken a substantial lead over Adlai Stevenson and Estes Kefauver when matched against them as a possible presidential candidate two years hence. Most important, he believed, his mission had alerted his own nation that its relations with Latin America needed attention on a wide variety of fronts.[44]

As might be expected, the press at first focused on who had sponsored the mission and why Nixon had encountered so much hostility. Columnists such as Roscoe Drummond and Walter Lippmann criticized the State Department for neglecting Latin America and noted the irony of supporting a "goodwill" visit to an area of the world where anti-Americanism was rampant. Lippmann thought heads should roll and called for a fundamental reassessment of American foreign policy. James Reston asserted that Nixon was sent south as a substitute for any real policy.[45]

Nixon's disaster also spurred congressional action. Senator Wayne Morse, long a critic of U.S. policy toward the region, announced that he would conduct hearings of the Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs. Immediate hearings were called as well for the

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[43] Memorandum of [telephone] conversation between Governor Luis Muñoz Marin and Mr. Hoyt, 14 May 1958, re "Arrival of Vice President Nixon in Puerto Rico," RG 59, 033.1100-NI/5-1453; *New York Times*, 16 May 1958; Nixon, *Six Crises*, 227–28; *Washington Post and Times Herald*, 16 May 1958. Although Nixon blamed the riots on Soviet-directed Communists, Undersecretary of State Robert Murphy admitted to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that Moscow was not responsible for the demonstrations. See "Review of Recent Anti-American Demonstrations," Department of State *Bulletin* 38 (9 June 1958): 952–61.

[44] Nixon, *Six Crises*, 228–30; Ambrose, *Nixon*, 480–82. The polls showing the great increase in Nixon's support as a presidential candidate when matched against Stevenson and Kefauver are in *Washington Post and Times Herald*, 13 and 16 June 1958.

[45] Roscoe Drummond, "Latin Lessons," and Walter Lippmann, "Too Complacent," in *Washington Post and Times Herald*, 19 and 22 May 1958; "A Good Will Fiasco," *Boston Daily Globe*, 15 May 1958; *New York Times*, 11 May 1958; Ambrose, *Nixon*, 482.

Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Those hearings began in June and featured the grilling of several State Department officers. Senator Theodore Green, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, expressed considerable skepticism that all of Nixon's grief could be laid at the feet of Communists—a view supported by Senator John Sherman Cooper. Shortly after Nixon's return, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee announced a two-year policy review that would be conducted by private organizations and pursued through staff research and hearings.[46]

In August eight members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (including presidential hopefuls John F. Kennedy and Hubert H. Humphrey) publicly criticized Eisenhower's reliance on military aid over economic assistance. Eisenhower responded by appointing Retired Major General William Draper to head the President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program. Popularly known as the Draper Committee, this blue ribbon panel included many of the men responsible for shaping postwar foreign and military policy, such notables as John J. McCloy, Arthur Radford, Joseph Dodge, James Webb, Dillon Anderson, and Alfred Gruenther. Included among the Draper Committee's staff were Max Millikan, Lincoln Gordon, Charles Bolté, Edward Lansdale, and Paul Nitze. Although the committee did not complete its work until 1959, its staff had already been assembled and its work was well advanced by the end of 1958.[47]

In truth, the mission forced a reassessment of the administration's policy toward Latin America. Although aroused and indignant over the

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[46] House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Report No. 354, "Report on United States Relations with Latin America by the Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs," 85th Cong., 2d sess., and 86th Cong., 1st sess., 12 May 1959. Morse's subcommittee recommended government loans for state-sponsored projects and for social programs such as land reform and housing improvements, and less emphasis on using private capital for development. During committee hearings on the foreign aid bill, held just after Nixon's return, Morse offered an amendment directing the president to take a hard look at military assistance going to the dictators in Latin America. Senator Bourke Hickenlooper also offered an amendment to "seek to strengthen cooperation in the Western Hemisphere to the maximum extent by encouraging programs of technical and economic development." See *Washington Post and Times Herald*, 24 May 1958. Both amendments were approved in committee. The final report of the two-year Senate Foreign Relations Committee study was almost 900 pages long. See *United States-Latin American Relations*, Compilation of Studies, 86th Cong., 2d sess., 1960.

[47] The Draper Committee conducted its study by interviewing American and friendly foreign officials concerned with U.S. foreign and military policy. The letter from the senators requesting a review of aid policy, the list of staff members, and other relevant documents concerning the Draper Committee are in the President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program (Draper Committee), *Conclusions Concerning the Mutual Security Program* (Washington, 1959). Oil man James Webb (former undersecretary of state) and former Inter-American Defense Board chairman Charles Bolté headed the Latin American subcommittee. Their "Preliminary Report," which was issued on 25 February 1959, just two months after Castro's seizure of power and before U.S.-Cuban relations had deteriorated substantially, contained most of the recommendations later accepted by the Draper Committee. See Draper Committee Records, box 2, Eisenhower Papers.

hostility and mob scenes encountered by the vice president, many thoughtful Americans appreciated that such demonstrations could be generated only because Latin Americans were deeply dissatisfied with existing policies. In the public arena Nixon argued that U.S. policies were basically sound but badly misunderstood; more propaganda, increased intellectual and student exchange, and more earnest efforts to understand each other would help to defuse the anger in Latin America. But Nixon also showed an awareness that certain fundamental changes in American policy, both in the economic and political areas, had to occur before the waters could be calmed. He touched on this theme at the elaborate reception given him at Washington National Airport. Furthermore, in reporting to the cabinet on 16 May, Nixon stated that continued friendly relationships with dictatorships were a fundamental source of discontent with U.S. policy in Latin America. He urged increased contacts with those outside traditional circles of power and stated that U.S. policies must be devoted to "raising the standards of living of the masses, rather than protecting the privileges of those already wealthy." Secretary Dulles, to be sure, was decidedly displeased with Nixon's report and believed his comments maligned the State Department. To Undersecretary Christian Herter he groused that "it was a bit presumptuous for N. to think he could go down there for a couple of days in many countries and think he has all the answers."[48]

Dulles, however, was out of step with the general assessment that it was now time to reexamine U.S. policies toward Latin America. The well-publicized violence accompanying the Nixon mission, the public perception that ill-advised policies were being followed, the administration's desire to blunt criticisms in the forthcoming congressional election campaigns, the ever-present fear of possible Russian advances in the hemisphere, and the efforts already underway within the Eisenhower administration to reshape its Latin American policies all combined to assure that the Nixon mission would increase momentum toward redirecting policies. The Nixon mission also provided the occasion for President Juscelino Kubitschek of Brazil to urge fundamental policy reconsiderations upon the Eisenhower administration. On 28 May, just days after Nixon's return, President Kubitschek wrote to Eisenhower on the partial pretext of reflecting upon Nixon's experiences. Kubitschek stressed that it was time to rethink questions relating to hemispheric solidarity and the pressing need for economic development in Latin America. His ideas on development were quickly taken up and labeled "Operation Pan America" by those throughout the hemisphere who wanted the Eisenhower administration to make fundamental changes in its policies and they played a central role in moving

[48] Nixon's report to the cabinet is found in Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, 16 May 1958, Cabinet Series, box 11, folder: Cabinet Meeting of 16 May 1958, Whitman File. See also Telephone Calls Series, 18 and 19 May 1958, Dulles Papers; *Chicago Tribune*, 15 May 1958; "Remarks by Vice President Nixon, May 15, 1958," Department of State *Bulletin* 38 (9 June 1958): 950–52.

the United States toward President Kennedy's Alliance for Progress program.[49]

Major government policies usually change slowly, as practitioners and students of government are aware. The Eisenhower administration began as early as 1956 to review its Latin American policies on tariffs, international commodity price support agreements, the funding of welfare projects from public monies, and the establishment of specialized banks to make larger and longer loans repayable in local currencies, and it began to reconsider its friendly policies toward right-wing dictatorships. But the reconsideration process moved at a casual pace. There were institutional arrangements and ideological viewpoints arguing for maintaining policies already in place, other areas of the world seemed in greater need of American assistance, and the ideas to undergird a new economic approach were only beginning to gain acceptance in Washington. The Nixon shock helped to lend a new sense of urgency to Latin American problems.

Export-Import Bank president Samuel Waugh noted that the Nixon mission was a "great success" because it "brought into sharp focus the problems with which we are confronted in Latin America." Allen Dulles believed that the mission was a "shock" but that it "brought South American problems to our attention as nothing else could have done and hence may have long range benefits for the South American countries." As Nixon himself observed, the episodes in Lima and Caracas were so dramatic and so expressive of dissatisfaction with U.S. policies that State Department officials were able to use them as leverage in urging support for measures to bolster Latin American economic development.[50]

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[49] According to the Committee for Economic Development, Eastern bloc trade with Latin America had increased 609 percent between 1952 and 1956. See *Washington Post and Times Herald*, 1 June 1958. Kubitschek's letter resulted in a meeting of OAS foreign ministers in September, which in turn led to the establishment of a "Special Committee to Study the Formulation of New Measures for Economic Cooperation," or "Committee of 21." This committee later completed the preparations for the Inter-American Development Bank and Social Development Fund. Kubitschek and Eisenhower exchanged numerous letters over the next two years. Their correspondence is in the Ann Whitman File, International Series, Eisenhower Library. The Brazilian government also published the letters, as well as official documents related to Operation Pan America, in *Operacão Pan Americana*, 7 vols., (Rio de Janeiro, 1958–1960). Although the Eisenhower administration publicly endorsed Operation Pan America, privately officials resisted the initiative. See W. Michael Weis, "Roots of Estrangement: The United States and Brazil, 1950–1961" (Ph.D. diss., The Ohio State University, 1987), 314–73. Francis Parkinson places Kubitschek's proposal in the setting of his larger foreign policy goals in Latin America, in *The Cold War, and the Third World Powers 1945–1973: A Study in Diplomatic History* (Beverly Hills, 1974), 54–55. Burton I. Kaufman points out that Kubitschek had approached the administration as early as 1956 on the issues that surfaced following the Nixon mission. See Kaufman, *Trade and Aid*, 164.

[50] Waugh to Family, 26 May 1958. Allen Dulles, personal and private memorandum for the secretary of state concerning "The Likelihood of Anti-US Demonstrations during Dr. Eisenhower's [planned] Central American Tour," 27 May 1958, White House Memorandum Series, Conversations with Allen Dulles File (3), Dulles Papers. See also Nixon, *Six Crises*, 229. The gradual change in U.S. policy toward Latin America is a major theme of

Apart from these claims that the Nixon trip was instrumental in bringing about policy changes, and apart from the public outcry that the trip engendered, what evidence is there that the Nixon mission provided significant impetus for policy change? The evidence is impressive. Just after Nixon's return, the administration decided to reverse course and support negotiating international price support agreements for commodities such as coffee; the process of doubling the lending authority of the World Bank from $10 to $20 billion was begun in October 1958 on a motion from the American representative of the board of governors; in May 1958, ten days after Nixon's return, a decision was made to increase the lending authority of the Export-Import Bank from $5 to $7 billion; in August the administration revised its standing policy and announced support for an inter-American development bank; the lending authority of the Development Loan Fund was raised from $300 to $550 million and the first loans were made available to Latin America in 1958; the administration accepted the creation of an international development association as a multilateral soft lending agency; and, at the September meeting of foreign ministers of the Organization of American States, the United States announced its support for the creation of a Latin American common market. The increased sensitivity of the administration to Latin America was also visible in its rapid response to the financial problems in Venezuela. Vigorous efforts were made in June and July to identify banks willing to loan Venezuela $250 million to help put its finances on a sound basis. Not all of these measures were effective or were implemented with dispatch or enthusiasm, but together they indicate that the break with past policies was under way.[51]

Eisenhower's *The Wine Is Bitter*; and Wagner's *United States Policy toward Latin America*. It is also supported by Kaufman, *Trade and Aid*.

[51] Richard P. Stebbins, *The United States in World Affairs, 1959* (New York, 1960), 364–69. The measure to increase the lending authority of the Export-Import Bank was authorized within ten days after Nixon returned. It passed both the Senate and House Banking and Currency committees unanimously and was virtually unopposed on the floor of Congress. On the World Bank see International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Fourteenth Annual Report, 1958–1959* (Washington, 1959), 6. David A. Baldwin views 1958 as the year the United States came to "adopt soft lending as a legitimate technique of statecraft—a technique ... it had earlier regarded as anathema." See Baldwin, *Economic Development*, 207. See also U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs, 85th Cong., 2d sess., June and July 1958; and U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Banking and Currency, *Hearings: Inter-American Development Bank Act*, 86th Cong., 1st sess., 1959, 54. Former Secretary of State Dean Acheson told the House Banking and Currency Committee that the Nixon mission helped to make a strong argument for the Inter-American Development Bank. Burton I. Kaufman states that the Nixon mission "had a decisive impact on administration policy" in persuading the administration to support a regional development program for Latin America. See Kaufman, *Trade and Aid*, 164–65. On 29 May, Paul H. Cullen reported to Clarence B. Randall, special assistant to the president on foreign economic affairs, that the State Department had urged the Council on Foreign Economic Policy to study "ways to help the developing countries with their surplus commodity problems." See memorandum to Mr. Randall, 29 May 1958, U.S. Council on Foreign

There are other aspects of the Nixon mission apart from its policy implications that bear comment. First, one must wonder why it was that Richard M. Nixon was sent to Latin America on a public goodwill mission. He was widely perceived by many Latin Americans as the prime North American spokesman for "rapacious capitalism" and as a firm supporter of the McCarthyite excesses of an earlier day. In sending the unpopular and combative vice president to Latin America, Eisenhower and Dulles exhibited truly questionable judgment. Roy Rubottom must also accept responsibility for sending Nixon, for Rubottom presumably was knowledgeable about inter-American affairs and was in an excellent position to know of Nixon's unpopularity among liberal and leftist groups and of the widespread dissatisfaction with U.S. policies.[52] Eisenhower's desire to keep an ambitious and restless vice president constructively occupied—a nettlesome problem for most presidents—may help to explain why Nixon was sent despite his known unpopularity among certain political groups.

Nixon's mission should also serve as a sharp warning that public diplomacy gone awry can directly affect the fortunes of an administration and a political party. In the presidential campaign of 1960, John F. Kennedy repeatedly attacked the Eisenhower administration for "years of deceit and evasion" in Latin America and for economic and political neglect of the area. Nixon, a hero upon his return from Latin America, found it difficult in the presidential campaign to defend the Eisenhower policies in Latin America

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Economic Policy Records, 1955–61, folder: Chronological File May 1958 (1), Eisenhower Library. When the foreign ministers of all the American republics (the Committee of 21) met in Washington late in September 1958, they found the United States finally ready to establish an Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and willing to help stabilize raw material prices. See *Hispanic American Report* 11 (September 1958): 524. Milton Eisenhower credits himself, Roy Rubottom, and C. Douglas Dillon with championing the IDB in the United States. See Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 230. R. Harrison Wagner believes that the IDB resulted in part from the Nixon visit but also from the administration's decision to sponsor a Mideast regional bank. It seemed politically impossible not to support a regional bank for Latin America at the same time. He also argues that the change of policy on commodity agreements was "most directly influenced by the Nixon riots." See Wagner, *United States Policy toward Latin America*, 134, 138–39. U.S. assistance to Venezuela is noted in *Hispanic American Report* 11 (June 1958): 325 and ibid. (July 1958): 387. Colombia also received a quick $78 million loan from the Export-Import Bank. See *Washington Post and Times Herald*, 14 June 1958.

[52] Roy Rubottom had little understanding of the explosive situation in Venezuela and the low regard in which Nixon was held by liberal and leftist elements. See memorandum of conversation between Rubottom, C. E. Bartch, and Venezuelan Ambassador Dr. Marcus Falcon-Briceno, 31 December 1958, RG 59, 033.1100–NI/12–3158. See also Rubottom's statement before the Subcommittee on Latin America of the House Foreign Affairs Committee on 3 June in Rubottom, "The Vice President's Visit to South America in Perspective," Department of State *Bulletin* 38 (30 June 1958): 1104–9. Carleton Beals comments that to Venezuelans Nixon represented McCarthyism and witch-hunting. See Beals, *Latin America: World in Revolution* (London, 1963), 218.

because his own goodwill mission had so clearly highlighted the decline of Good Neighbor attitudes south of the border.[53]

Finally, the Nixon mission underscores the ofttimes equivocal nature of diplomatic failures—or successes. As a result of the mission, new attention was focused on Latin America, and that was doubtless a plus in educating the American people about hemispheric policies. Yet because of the mission the Eisenhower administration suffered a setback, for congressional and press critics accused administration officials of gross neglect and of a failure to understand Latin American nationalism and economic development needs. Taking the long view, one can say that the Nixon mission had considerable significance as one of the events that gradually persuaded the American people to accept a major share of responsibility for Latin America's economic development. In the latter part of the Eisenhower administration and during the Kennedy administration's highly publicized Alliance for Progress, hopes for genuine economic progress were raised to new heights. Yet those new expectations proved unrealistic and left a legacy of anger and profound disappointment.[54] If the Nixon mission was a "diplomatic Pearl Harbor" as Lippmann claimed, the mission contributed, like that more famous episode of 7 December 1941, to results that were deeply ambiguous and are subject to a variety of contrasting interpretations.

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[53] The Kennedy attack on the administration's Latin American policies during the four debates with Nixon in the presidential campaign of 1960 can be followed in *The Great Debates: Background—Perspective—Effects*, ed. Sidney Kraus (Gloucester, MA, 1968), 370–71, 377, 381, 414–15, 418, 428; Jerome Levinson and Juan de Onis, *The Alliance That Lost Its Way: A Critical Report on the Alliance for Progress* (Chicago, 1970), 51–52; and Kent M. Beck, "Necessary Lies, Hidden Truths: Cuba in the 1960 Campaign," *Diplomatic History* 8 (Winter 1984): 37–59.

[54] The policy continuities between the Eisenhower administration and Kennedy's Alliance for Progress are argued in Milton Eisenhower's *The Wine Is Bitter*; and supported by Kennedy's Secretary of State Dean Rusk. In 1971 Rusk noted that the emphasis on large-scale aid "was started by Milton Eisenhower in the closing days of the Eisenhower administration." Kennedy, Rusk said, "took up the idea, gave it a new name, and articulated it brilliantly to the nations of the hemisphere. But the essential idea for the Alliance for Progress was not a new invention of the Kennedy administration." See *New York Times*, 23 March 1971. The disappointing failures of the alliance are noted in several sources. For overviews see Simon G. Hanson, *Dollar Diplomacy Modern Style: Chapters in the Failure of the Alliance for Progress* (Washington, 1970); Victor Alba, *Alliance without Allies: The Mythology of Progress in Latin America*, trans., John Pearson (New York, 1965); Levinson and Onis, *The Alliance That Lost Its Way*; William D. Rogers, *The Twilight Struggle: The Alliance for Progress and the Politics of Development in Latin America* (New York, 1967); and Herbert K. May, *Problems and Prospects of the Alliance for Progress: A Critical Examination* (New York, 1968).