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JOHNSON TO SCAN U.S. LATIN POLICY

Envoys Called to Discuss Future of Alliance

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WASHINGTON, March 8 — President Johnson will begin a broad inquiry this week into United States relations with Latin America.

The President plans to meet with high State Department officials and the United States envoys to the hemisphere countries in what may develop into the most comprehensive policy review since the Alliance for Progress was inaugurated three years ago.

Mr. Johnson is expected to meet with Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Thomas C. Mann, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs.

The ambassadors and chiefs of mission of the Agency of International Development in 18 Latin-American countries have been called here for three days of meetings, tentatively set to begin March 16. The United States has no relations with Cuba and Panama, the remaining two Latin republics.

Meetings Have Intervened

Such an ambassadorial conference was first mentioned three weeks ago. Since then, President Johnson has conferred with President Adolfo Lopez Mateos of Mexico, and only last week a group of 20 Mexican legislators visited Washington, and exchanged ideas with Senators, Representatives and members of the Administration.

Most of the meetings during the three-day policy conference will be under the chairmanship of Mr. Mann, but President Johnson expects to have one or more sessions with the envoys at the White House.

The President was said to have two aims in mind:

¶To obtain a direct account of the area's problems, an appraisal of the relations of individual nations with the United States and of the effectiveness of Alliance programs. He is also expected to gauge the climate in the hemisphere for sanctions against Cuba by the Organization of American States.

¶To impress on United States personnel in the field his own views and hopes for the future

of Western Hemisphere relations. He is eager, his aides say, to give a personal imprint to the Alliance based on his experiences in the Administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Mid-March is an appropriate time for such a review. It was on March 13, 1961, that President Kennedy pledged his Administration's full support to the program the Alliance for Progress seeks to implement.

\$2 Billion Yearly Cost

The United States contribution to the plan is estimated at the rate of \$2 billion a year in public and private funds.

The program has had the general support of Congress, although lately it has been threatened by growing opposition to foreign aid.

There has also been considerable criticism, both here and in Latin America, concerning its administration.

President Johnson made a pointed reference to Congress at his news conference yesterday in what seemed to be an implied appeal for continued support for the Alliance.

Speaking in the East Room, where Mr. Kennedy proclaimed the alliance to the Latin-American ambassadors, Mr. Johnson said:

"My commitment to the Alliance for Progress is complete, and it also enjoys strong support from Congress. We will be working with our ambassadors and aid directors to strengthen our efforts in this field."

Administration officials concede privately that the support of which Mr. Johnson speaks is far from unqualified.

O.A.S. to Hear Johnson

The Latin-American policy examination will be highlighted by a speech Mr. Johnson is preparing to deliver before the O.A.S. here on March 16. The meeting will inaugurate the Inter-American Committee for the Alliance for Progress, a new high-level coordinating agency.

The timing of the conference will prevent Mr. Rusk and Mr. Mann from attending the inauguration of President-elect Raul Leoni in Venezuela Thursday.

Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall will head the United States delegation.

The absence of any major foreign policy official has dismayed the Venezuelans, particularly because of Washington's high regard for outgoing President, Rómulo Betancourt.