

Ousted Honduran Rips U.S.

Charges Coup Was Encouraged

By NAT CARNES
Miami Herald-Copley News Service

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Honduras' exiled former President Ramon Villeda Morales blames the U.S. for the military coup that ousted him last October.

Villeda insists that he is "a friend and admirer" of the U.S. but hints that U.S. policy is responsible for coups in Latin America.

In an exclusive interview, the dapper doctor turned politician said "the United States needs to change its view toward international politics, especially in the Western Hemisphere."



Villeda Morales
... ex-president

He suggested that some individuals and groups in the U.S. State Department, Pentagon and Central Intelligence Agency have been encouraging military coups, like the one that sent him into exile in Costa Rica.

Villeda says that "this U.S. element" acts without the knowledge or approval of the whole U.S. government.

Villeda's outburst came as a shock. It is recalled that the U.S. immediately suspended its relations with the military junta that took power in Honduras after Villeda's ouster and halted its military and economic assistance to the impoverished Central American country. Relations were reestablished 10 weeks later.

What is more, it is generally agreed in Honduras that the military pulled off its coup primarily to block the probable election of Modesto Rodas Avarado, presidential candidate of the governing Liberal party.

Rodas had declared that, if elected, as appeared likely as long as the government counted the votes, he would cut the budget of the Honduran regular army sharply and strengthen the Liberal party's own private army, known as the Civil Guard.

Villeda, now, however, seems anxious to set up the U.S. as a whipping boy.

He came here to join other

Latin Americans in an "International Study Group on Democratic Development."

Most of the participants in the study group, like Villeda, seem to feel that the U.S. should limit its role in the hemisphere to that of banker and should not attempt to guide the other American republics politically or ideologically.

Although they consider themselves intellectuals and profess admiration for the U.S., they often voice distortions of their own and Latin history in apparent attempts to discredit the U.S.

Pressed for specific recommendations as to improvement in U.S. policy toward Latin America, Villeda declared, "First, you need to understand Latin America. It is impossible to use the same approach for all of our nations. What is logical in Honduras may not work at all in Chile or Brazil."

He called for a single organization to represent all of Latin America and the U.S. Presumably he was referring to the Inter-American parliament that Latin American "democratic leftists" hope to organize later this year.

In what seemed an effort to take the edge off his complaints, Villeda declared that "all I say is in the form of constructive criticism. I consider the United States to be a decisive factor in the development of Latin America."