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Why Our Latin Aid Plan Needs A Reshuffling

Kennedy Relied on Brazil's Quadros Who Flew the Coop

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Daily News Foreign Service

RIO DE JANEIRO—Just how badly President Kennedy's Alliance for Progress was damaged by recent events in Brazil is still a moot question.

But it is no secret that as originally planned Brazil under Janio Quadros was to have played a pivotal role in the Kennedy scheme to save Latin America from itself.

Now that Quadros has flown the coop and Brazil is going through an uneasy and uncertain period of political and economic readjustment, Washington also will have to do some readjusting of its own.

Why did the Kennedy administration pin so much hope on Quadros?

It now appears that some warning voices were raised against such a move. But Quadros had an extremely influential friend in Washington—Richard Goodwin, special presidential assistant who has been operating in brass as a Latin American "expert."

A 29-year-old Massachusetts lawyer, Goodwin became well known when he was bought the food-for-peace program that Goodwin was trying to persuade the U.S. president to support.

When Mrs. Goodwin, Mrs. Goodwin's special assistant to Quadros, had been engaged probably by the Brazilian economic Goodwin was given royal treatment because Quadros needed the plus foods.

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At various times Goodwin was quoted as saying in effect that to Quadros "financial stability isn't merely good business, it's a religion."

On at least one other occasion he described Quadros not only as an "outstanding leader" but also as the "savior of Latin America."

But while Goodwin was attempting with some success to spread such a line in Washington and elsewhere, some other and more experienced State Department hands were frantically trying to warn the White House about Quadros. They wanted to see in which direction he was heading in foreign policy and his attitude toward the Soviets, etc.

VARIOUS reports described Quadros as unstable, unreliable and in the best questionable. But in the face of all that, Goodwin's counsel prevailed and Quadros was picked to receive the lion's share of Uncle Sam's bounty.

Goodwin probably shouldn't have been so harshly...
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The jokesters in Rio tell the story that after Quadros had been carried aboard the ship taking him into British exile, his wife prevailed upon him to consult the ship's psychiatrist.

When the psychiatrist had finished with Quadros some hours later, Mrs. Quadros ran into the doctor's office and anxiously inquired, "is he really crazy?"

The psychiatrist thought for a moment and then said, "I'm not sure but the 6,000,000 Brazilians who voted for him certainly were."