

NEW YORK TIMES

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Program for Latin America

TO THE EDITOR:

On March 19 you carried an alarming story from Washington to the effect that Thomas C. Mann, Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs, had told a State Department conference that the Administration would not worry about dictators so long as they were on our side; that is, non-Communist. This would be a reversal of President Kennedy's announced policy.

Since our opposition to Communism is chiefly to its denial of democracy and individual right, we would cut the ground from under our own feet by this acceptance of dictator-

ship so long as it might be non-Communist. And we should invite ultimate and disastrous defeat in Latin America.

On March 20 you published a weasel-worded attempt by the State Department to disclaim or modify this new policy. But your correspondent, Tad Szulc, concludes "that Mr. Mann had started a gradual change of emphasis leading to a basic modification of the entire United States philosophy of dictatorships."

It is hard to believe that that is the intention of a President so honorably firm on civil rights at home as Mr. Johnson. But the report reminded me uncomfortably of the insistence of some of my Dominican friends that, although our Ambassador was all right, some of our military and C.I.A. had encouraged the coup which overthrew the democratically elected Government of Juan Bosch.

In any event, not only the State Department but the President should hear strong protests against the program attributed to his chief agent in Latin-American affairs, Thomas C. Mann.

NORMAN THOMAS.

New York, March 23, 1964.