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## Comment:



# Funny Business in State Dept.

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The area of the U.S. State Department where policy is made for Latin America is being raided again.

In a pattern we have seen repeated many times in the past, State Department officials who have no responsibility for Latin America and no sympathy toward it are forcing thru policy decision that do great damage to U.S.-Latin American relations.

The case in point is a short, flat diplomatic note the U.S. State Department has just privately circulated among Latin American governments. A Latin American group of 16 countries had previously sent its own confidential aide-memoire to State asking for countries that are members of the Organization of American States to be given preferential treatment under the forthcoming U.S. Sugar Act.

The U.S. State Department's answer was a definite "No."

### NO CONSULTATIONS

Latin Americans are sure the wording of this note and the decision it embodies were never "consulted up" to top State Department levels, much less to the White House.

They believe they know who made the decision to slap them in the face on sugar. In the State Department there is an entrenched group who want to do away with the existing system under which the U.S. imports sugar.

These thinkers are looking years hence to a World Sugar Agreement. They want to toss the big U.S. sugar market into a big world basket with all the world producers and carve imports up from there.

This would obviously severely prejudice our Latin American sugar suppliers. The case can be made that it would also threaten the interests of the U.S. sugar consumer.

The State Department group who consistently struggle to down-grade Latin America can get their way on sugar only because the State Department's Bureau of American Republics is temporarily operating at less than full force.

### KNOWS THE ROPES

Under Secretary of State Thomas Mann is a tough and seasoned foreign service officer who had had one tour as Asst. Secretary of State for Latin America when President Johnson named him to the post. It took him six months to get control of Latin American policy.

The present Asst. Secretary of State for Latin America, Ambassador Jack Hood Vaughn, is seasoned in Washington's infighting, but not in the State Department's special kind of internal wars over policy.

He has only been in office a few months and is by no means yet capable of defending his area against the raiders when they move in.

At the moment the White House's prestige is deeply

involved in Latin America. In the Dominican crisis, Latin American countries, some of them, helped make the U.S. military action there into OAS action. These very countries have now been slapped in the face on sugar.