

Eyes Only

November 12, 1965

Subject: Our Tactics and the Rio Conference

I am delighted you are going to Rio. We need you badly. This memo is written with that in mind, and also in connection with your somewhat surprised question to me the other day as to whether I did not wish to remain in the very interesting and important field of Communism in Latin America.

Of course I would prefer to operate against the Communists in the Free World, where it is possible to maneuver more freely and where Eastern European experience is so badly needed. Unfortunately, ARA has been under the tight control of Tom Mann's clique. Mann still exerts extensive control through Bob Sayre, whom Mann made Deputy Assistant Secretary. I am certain Vaughn has misgivings about some of their policies and tactics, but he is inexperienced, uninformed, surrounded (I have never succeeded in having lunch with him), vulnerable, etc., and Mann has had the backing of LBJ. Vaughn is intelligent and has the warm liberal approach so badly lacking since Kennedy's death. His recent tour of Latin America was highly successful. Hopefully this strengthened his position up here to some extent, and perhaps he will become less timid, but the Mann policies still usually prevail. This has limited my opportunities to be effective. I have succeeded in getting through a good number of things and have even been able to change basic policy to some extent. But now I cannot even attend the ARA staff meetings or the LAPC meetings. There has been no trouble whatever as regards my personal relations in ARA, but I could have been much more effective if JFK had not been killed.

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 13292 Sec. 3.5
NLJ/LIS 06-34
By cbm, NARA Date 1-12-07

The following have been some specific, basic weaknesses in our policy and tactics during the past two years:

1. A tendency to regard all those who criticize, and disagree with, the United States and its policies as no good, naive, etc.

2. Strong conservative dislike of the entire left as subversive or at least naive and unreliable. One top ARA officer told me with great sincerity that he had never before heard the expression "democratic left".

3. A tendency to write off the elements included in 1 and 2, rather than trying to influence and persuade them. This weakness is particularly dangerous vis-a-vis Communist popular front tactics. Indeed, I believe the results of this weakness in the Dominican Republic encouraged the Communists to exploit the popular front tactic (reference last paragraph of my September 25 memo, attached).

4. A similar tendency in the labor field, where CLASC and all other critics of the AFL-CIO, ORIT, and the USA are regarded as no good. I have succeeded in getting Vaughn to agree in principle that CLASC representatives should be given leader grant trips to the United States, even when our labor people may be opposed. But, in practice, ARA fear of the opposition of George Meany usually results in blocking such trips.

5. Failure to understand the importance of explaining and discussing our tactics, policies and objectives extensively in liberal, democratic, ideological terms. Even references to the need for profound social and economic reform, peaceful social revolution, etc., are sarcastically referred to as "mother love" and "peachy cream". Along with this attitude goes the profound conviction that realis-

tic, pragmatic policies deal exclusively with "facts", not "words".

6. Extreme sensitivity over public criticism, and anger and contempt towards American critics (journalists, Senators, etc.,) of our Latin American policy. Along with this there is a compulsion to justify all actions, rather than using the much more believable argument that we make tactical mistakes like all the rest of the human race, but that our overall policies and motives are good.

7. Some of these weaknesses were responsible for the course of events in the Dominican Republic. As you know, I believe, and reported, that we were correct in going into Santo Domingo on April 28. But I also believe that the situation need not have deteriorated to the extent it had by the 28th. We had not maintained good contact and rapport with the Bosch Party (PRD). We did not mediate between the two sides when the PRD asked us to do so in the opening days. And there is no doubt that we were on the side of the military junta against Bosch. Now there is a danger we will help Balaguer against Bosch in the elections, rather than assuring all concerned that we are impartial towards all democratic candidates and are opposed only to the authoritarian right and Communist left. The Mann group and the Embassy apparently prefer supporting Balaguer, whereas Bundy and Allen Stewart prefer the latter tactic.

8. Attached are two cables on the Dominican revolt which I doubt you ever saw. One is the very first message sent from the Department. The other is an Embassy cable of the same day (April 25). They clearly show our anti-Bosch motives and tactics at the outset of the revolt.

You will see from all of the above that there is much to be done in the Latin American field, and that much of it has to be done here in Washington.

You might find it useful to look over the attached copy of CA-10716 of April 9, on "Effective Political Dialogue with Latin Americans", which sets forth the ideological presentation I have used in lengthy discussions with over 80 groups from Latin America during the past 18 months.

G Lister/