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Reaction

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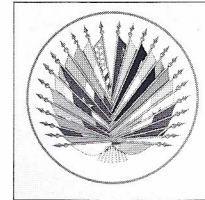
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REACTION



By Alfred A. Ratray

The issue of relationship between the United States of America, on the one hand, and the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean, on the other, is essentially a matter which lies within the control of the United States itself. It is essentially the attitude of the United States which will ultimately determine the state and nature of the relationship of each of the territories of the region. This is so because of the undoubted dominance of the United States in the region. Dominance in terms of the very fact that it is the dominant country in the world, economically and militarily; dominant because of its undoubted dominance within the region itself, economically, politically and militarily; and dominant because it is the essential point of the relationship of individual countries — not only with the United States itself — but among themselves.

I recall a statement by a prominent Latin American politician that if the United States sneezes, his country catches pneumonia. This, I think, is a very accurate synopsis of the nature of the relationship with the region, certainly in economic terms. Every single nation in the region desires amicable relationships with the United States and works towards that. At any point of time,

whether because of action by the United States or reaction by the United States, or because of reaction by any of the neighboring countries, the nature of that relationship may considerably be strained in political terms.

But I do not think that there is a single country which does not aim at mending and putting on a normal and acceptable basis the relationship with the United States. We see this relationship as one which should essentially be a partnership relationship and this partnership can only evolve if it starts out on the basis of mutual respect.

It is very easy for any of the individual countries to have a mistaken view of the United States' attitude and intentions, but in the final resort, it's incumbent on both sides to build the sort of relationship which acknowledges and supports the independence of the individual states and which seeks to avoid any infringement in whatever form on Latin independence.

Every territory in the region is very jealous of its independence and will react very strongly to any perceived infringement upon that independence.

There are certain areas of common ground, for example, in the human rights

area, where these nations and the United States have worked, in theory at any rate, very amicably, without much conflict.

In the economic field, however, it has been felt that the partnership had not necessarily emerged as it should, and that the members to this partnership have not each shouldered their respective obligations.

If I may use my own country as an example, we certainly seek a very strong partnership relationship with the United States. It is inevitable. It's inevitable because the United States *is* the principal purchaser of our exports and we purchase most of our goods from the United States. It's inevitable because we supply the United States with essential raw materials and because we look to the United States, in turn, for certain of the things we need — such as capital for markets and for support in other areas. This relationship cannot be seen as a handout by any one side to the other; it must be perceived as being essentially a partnership relationship.

And if we focus upon the nature of that sort of relationship, we must know that each partner has an obligation to identify and relate to the essential interest of the other partner in that relationship.

Again, using my own country, it would be

wrong if Jamaica were to have boycotted or embargoed the export of aluminum to the United States, particularly at a time when the United States was in great need of it. It would be wrong because we would have been denying our partner in trade and business one of its essential requirements.

Similarly, it would be wrong for the United States to do anything which impedes the flow of capital to Jamaica, anything which affects our ability in the international institutions to draw from them according to our needs.

It would be wrong for the United States to seek to impede the free flow of goods to this country and to deny us the markets upon which they know we must rely for our very survival and existence. And it would be wrong for the conditions of trade to be placed at such a level where it becomes unattractive, unprofitable and which denies us the resources which we must draw from trade with which to develop.

Until the parties to this partnership begin to look at the relationship in the sense that it is not a handout or a case of one country supporting another; it is not a case of one country demanding anything from the other; it is essentially the obligations that we owe each other in this relationship of partnership, and until we recognize it and

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work to achieve this sort of relationship, we will always have the expressions of concern about this state of the relationship of the United States with the region as a whole.

One other thing which was mentioned by the Secretary General is the need of the nations of the region to cooperate in this whole area of development. In the past, this has been attempted. You may recall the Alliance for Progress. At the present time, it is being attempted again, albeit, at the very incipient stages. But the essential difference this time is that the exercise is one which is based precisely upon the concept of the partnership, where all the nations of the region are taking the responsibility to identify and to evolve this development relationship, to identify the needs of the area, to plan towards it and to be all participants in it.

In former days, the feeling was that these efforts were an imposition by the dominant nation within the region upon the other nations of the region. Once these efforts started off on that premise, they were doomed to failure. And one of the tests of the relationship of the nations in development terms — in terms of this partnership relationship — is the commitment which they each bring to bear upon this new effort

to identify the areas in which they can cooperate for their new mutual benefit.

Finally, let me touch upon one or two of the short term needs of the area which were implicit in the statements made by the Secretary General. It is one thing to focus upon the long term — the development for the future — it is another thing, however, to be confronted with the consequences of the present and the recent past and to look to each other, to support each other, in the attempts to deal with these problems. I mentioned such serious problems as capital and the new situation that has occurred in the market, the very crucial problem of the death trap, a very rare, distressing, tenacious phenomenon which afflicts our region; the whole question of energy, which has created a new situation for our part of the world; and the fact that these are new and serious problems which we must all cooperate in a common endeavor to solve.

We feel that these issues loom large in any assessment of the relationship among the countries of the region and between the United States and the countries of the region. I do not think that any serious acknowledgment of this problem is at large, or that any serious attempt is yet in store for the nations of the region and the United States to cooperate in dealing with these problems. □