VICE PRESIDENT RICHARD M. NIXON’S TRIP TO SOUTH AMERICA, APRIL 27–MAY 15, 1958

42. Letter From the Secretary of State to the Vice President

Washington, March 6, 1958.

DEAR DICK: The other day you mentioned that you might be free to make a visit to South America this spring. I want to confirm that we would be very happy if you could see your way to doing so.

In the hope that it might assist you, I have gone one step further and have had a possible itinerary drawn up for you to consider. It would, I believe, extract the maximum advantages from a foreign policy standpoint from a short tour of the area by you. It suggests a Washington departure on April 13 with return ten days later and would include Venezuela, Uruguay, Argentina and Bolivia.

I have suggested Venezuela because of the recent revolution and change of government in that country and also because of the special economic and strategic interests that we have there. As for Uruguay, your visit would be very helpful in demonstrating the importance that we accord to that country. Our relations with Uruguay are among the most difficult that we have in the hemisphere. Argentina would be an important part of your trip because of the country’s prominence in inter-American affairs, the transition period through which the country is moving, the significant presidential election on February 23, and the desirability of your meeting the Argentine President-elect. La Paz is recommended because of the unique and important Bolivian economic development and social reform program to which the United States is heavily committed and which President Siles is courageously seeking to carry out.

If you approve the trip, I will undertake to ascertain from the governments of the countries concerned whether your visit will be agreeable to them. The Department would, of course, provide for your trip an escort officer and other suitable assistance.

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1 Source: Department of State, Central Files, 033.1100–NI/3–658. Confidential. Drafted by Terry B. Sanders, Jr., on March 4.
2 The proposed itinerary was not attached to the source text.
I hope that you will find it possible to make the tour to South America. I am confident that your trip would be of great benefit in the conduct of our relations with all countries of the area. 3

Sincerely yours,

Foster

3 In circular telegram 861, March 17, the Department of State informed the Embassies in Quito, Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Asunción, La Paz, Lima, Bogotá, and Caracas that Vice President Nixon intended to visit Quito April 27 or 28–29; Buenos Aires April 30–May 3; Montevideo May 3–5; Asunción May 5–7; La Paz May 7–9; Lima May 9–11; Bogotá May 11–13; and Caracas May 13–15. (Department of State, Central Files, 033.1100–NI/3–1758)

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43. Editorial Note

Vice President and Mrs. Richard M. Nixon, accompanied by Assistant Secretary Roy R. Rubottom, Jr., Samuel C. Waugh, Maurice M. Bernbaum, and members of the Vice President’s staff, departed Washington on April 27. They visited Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela, and returned to Washington on May 15, 1958.

Documentation on the bilateral aspects of the Vice President’s trip is printed in the compilations on United States relations with Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela. Additional documentation is in Department of State Central File 033.1100–NI as well as in the following Department of State lot files: ARA/EST Files: Lot 61 D 332; ARA Deputy Assistant Secretary Files: Lot 61 D 411; Rubottom Files: Lot 60 D 533; ARA Special Assistant’s Files: Lot 60 D 513; and Presidential Cabinet Meetings: Lot 68 D 350. At the Eisenhower Library, material on the trip is in the Dulles Papers, White House Telephone Conversations, and in the Whitman File, Cabinet Series.

44. Memorandum From the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Snow) to the Secretary of State

Washington, May 9, 1958.

SUBJECT

Vice President Nixon’s Trip to South America

Vice President Nixon has completed visits in five countries of South America (Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia and Peru). He is now (May 9) in Ecuador, and he will visit Colombia and Venezuela before returning to the United States on May 15.

The Vice President’s tour has thus far been well received by the government, the responsible press, and by the great majority of the people in each country.

In the capitals visited he has had cordial and useful conversations with government officials. Economic problems have been the predominant subjects discussed. The Vice President has, generally, expressed the desire of the United States Government to cooperate to the maximum extent its resources will permit and has stressed the importance of private investment. In Peru trade relations were emphasized, and the subsidy plan for minerals in the United States was helpful as illustrative of the desire of the United States to cooperate.

Press coverage in the United States has been extensive. The consensus of the press is that the Vice President’s tour is making a valuable contribution to United States-Latin American relations and that he showed courage and resourcefulness during the Lima episode described below.

An incident on the trip which received adverse play in the United States press was the Vice President’s arriving a few minutes late at the Congress Building in Buenos Aires for the swearing in ceremony of Argentine President-elect Frondizi. Actually, the ceremony started a few minutes ahead of time, and the Vice President was detained outside the building by crowds through which even the police could not make a passage for him quickly. The incident caused little comment in Buenos Aires.

The most dramatic and widely publicized feature of the Vice President’s tour has been the anti-United States demonstration in Lima presumably organized by a Communist minority. The Vice President was grazed, but unhurt, by a stone. The United States flag, depicted in flowers in a floral arrangement which the Vice President had placed on the statue of San Martin, was torn apart. The Peruvian

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1 Source: Department of State, Central Files, 033.1100–NI/5–958. Drafted by Sanders.
2 This incident occurred on May 8.
Vice President, the Foreign Minister, and the Embassy in Washington have expressed keen regret, and the Government of Peru promptly replaced the floral offering at the statue of San Martin. The press in Lima deplored the demonstration. The Vice President stated publicly in Lima that official Peruvian regrets had been expressed and that, as far as he was concerned, no United States protest was necessary. The Department informed the press through Mr. White on May 9 of the official Peruvian regrets and stated that the people of Peru may be assured that the United States does not intend to let the Communist-inspired incident impair the friendly relations between the two countries.

The incident in Lima may inspire similar ones in Quito, Bogotá, or Caracas. Before the Vice President reached Lima, there had been small demonstrations, also inspired by Communists, in Montevideo and Buenos Aires.

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3 Luis Gallo Porras.
4 Raúl Porras Barrenechea.

45. **Message From the President to the Vice President, at Quito**

**Washington, May 9, 1958.**

DEAR DICK: Your courage, patience and calmness in the demonstration directed against you by radical agitators have brought you new respect and admiration in our country. I am certain that the vast majorities of citizens both in Peru and in the United States deplore the incident caused by a few. I note with satisfaction that the Peruvian Government has already expressed to you its regret. Indeed, I feel that every participant in the mob will finally come to feel a sense of guilt and embarrassment because of his failure to show toward a friendly

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1 Source: Department of State, Central Files, 033.1100-NI/5-958. Unclassified; Priority. Transmitted in telegram 412 to Quito, May 9, with the notation “Codel Nixon.” Telegram 412, which is the source text, was drafted by Frank J. Devine; cleared with Sanders, Sandy M. Pringle, Joseph A. Silberstein, Orville C. Anderson, James C. Hagerty, and Fisher Howe; and initialed by Snow. It was repeated to Lima and to Paris for the Secretary. The text of the message was preceded by the paragraph: “Acting Secretary today telephoned following message from President to Vice President Nixon. White House plans Washington release 11:45 EDT this morning.”
visitor the ordinary measure of courtesy and hospitality. Give my love to Pat and warm regards to yourself.²

As ever,

Dwight Eisenhower³

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² In telegram 696 from Bogotá, May 11, Vice President Nixon thanked President Eisenhower for his message. *(Ibid., 033.1100–NI/5–1158)*
³ Telegram 412 bears this typed signature.

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46. Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Among the Minister-Counselor of the Embassy in Venezuela (Burrows), the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rubottom) in Caracas, and the Deputy Director of the Office of South American Affairs (Sanders) in Washington, May 13, 1958, 2 p.m.¹

SUBJECT

Attack on Vice President Nixon and His Party

I telephoned Mr. Burrows at Caracas. The telephone communication was frequently broken off. The following is what I understood him to say.

A large and unfriendly crowd met the Vice President and his party at the airport. There were hisses and boos and no friendly applause.

The automobile trip on the highway to Caracas was uneventful.

The party was to proceed through the city, lay a wreath on the tomb of Bolivar and proceed to the Embassy residence. In the city a short distance from the tomb the cars were stopped by a roadblock and a mob of some 4,000 people. The mob was made up of ruffians and riffraff and it was in an ugly mood. The mob closed in on the vehicles in which the Vice President and his party were traveling, and the Venezuelan police escort ran. The windows were broken out of the cars in which the Vice President and Mrs. Nixon were riding. Neither of them was hurt. Colonel Walters, who is the Vice President’s interpreter and who was in the same car with the Vice President, was cut around the mouth, and the Foreign Minister,² who was in the same

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¹ Source: Department of State, Central Files, 033.1100–NI/5–1358. Official Use Only. Drafted by Sanders.
² Oscar García Velatini.
car, was cut on the arm. The Embassy’s naval attaché, who was carrying the wreath, was attacked by the mob, roughed up, and the wreath was destroyed. The cars with the Vice President’s party managed to get through and away from the mob due to the arrival of a few troops who with drawn bayonets opened a way for them.

The Vice President and his party proceeded to the Embassy residence and will remain there.

Mr. Rubottom came on the telephone and the following is what he is understood to have said.

The highest authorities in Washington should be made aware that the situation in which the Vice President finds himself is critical. Everything will be subordinated to his and Mrs. Nixon’s personal security.

There has thus far been a serious lack of protection afforded the Vice President and his party. The Government of Venezuela is reluctant to take a firm stand in the face of mob action. Undoubtedly the attack on the Vice President was organized by the Communists. That attack may have profound consequences on the domestic political scene in Venezuela, but it is difficult to foresee what may develop.

The Vice President plans to remain at the Embassy residence and not keep any of the scheduled appointments unless the Government of Venezuela can assure that order will be maintained. There will be no publication of any possible movements by the Vice President. The Vice President intends to remain in Caracas for approximately the scheduled time and to reach Washington, as previously indicated, at 11:00 a.m. Thursday.  

The Foreign Minister and Ambassador Santaella have called on the Vice President to express their regrets.

Groups of people are gathering and milling about in front of the Embassy residence.

The Government of Venezuela has said that adequate protection will be provided, but that protection has not yet arrived. Mr. Rubottom will call back soon to give us a further report.

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3 Captain Robert E. Huse.
4 May 15.
47. Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Between the Secretary of State and the President's Press Secretary (Hagerty), Washington, May 13, 1958, 3 p.m.¹

TELEPHONE CALL TO MR HAGERTY

The Sec said we are calling in the Venezuelan Chargé.² He said we just had a telephone call and don’t know how we are going to get him out. H asked if the Pres knew—ok to tell him? The Sec said yes. The Sec said Herter has been in touch with White and are looking into the possibility of sending a helicopter in but the Sec does not think it is a good place to put one in. H asked if State is saying this fellow is coming in and the Sec said H can.³

Andy Goodpaster said the Pres said to say if Venezuela can’t guarantee the safety of the VP they should ask us to do it.

¹ Source: Eisenhower Library, Dulles Papers, White House Telephone Conversations. Transcribed by Bernau.
² Secretary Dulles spoke with the President at 4:01 p.m. that afternoon and informed him of the results of his discussion with the Venezuelan Chargé. Bernau’s transcript of this telephone conversation reads in part as follows: “The Sec said he talked with the Chargé but he knows nothing and the Sec said he spoke on the Pres’ behalf and his own to say we expected the Govt to do everything possible to protect the VP of the US and his wife who were the invited guests of the Venezuelan Govt and that if they did not have the will or capacity to do so we would want to know it in a hurry to concert on further measures on it.” (Eisenhower Library, Dulles Papers, White House Telephone Conversations)

48. Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Between Captain Kefauver, U.S. Navy, and the Deputy Director of the Office of South American Affairs (Sanders), Washington, May 13, 1958, 3 p.m.¹

SUBJECT

Dispatch of Marines to Caracas

Captain Kefauver called to say that he has orders from Admiral Burke to dispatch 500 airborne marines from Cherry Point, South [North] Carolina, immediately to Caracas, Venezuela to assure the

¹ Source: Department of State, ARA/EST Files: Lot 61 D 332, Vice President Nixon’s Trip—General. Confidential. Drafted by Sanders.
protection of Vice President Nixon and his party. The marines are standing by, ready to leave, and only the clearance of the Department of State is required.

I asked the Captain who had originated the order. He replied that, so far as he knew, it had come directly from Admiral Burke, who was at the moment in a meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

I told the Captain that I would relay to the Acting Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs the information he had conveyed, that any clearance by the Department would have to come from the highest levels, and that we would call him back.  

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2 William P. Snow.

3 After his conversation with Sanders, Kefauver telephoned Snow, confirmed the information he had given Sanders, and informed Snow of Admiral Burke's desire to obtain Department of State clearance for the operation. Snow, in turn, raised the matter with Secretary Dulles and Under Secretary Herter. Dulles instructed Snow to notify Kefauver that Admiral Burke should refrain from despatching Marines at that time and to tell Kefauver that Marines should not land in Venezuela without the knowledge and consent of the Venezuelan Government. Snow and Sanders conveyed this decision to Kefauver and asked him to report the Department of State's position to Burke. (Memorandum of conversation by Snow, May 13; Department of State, Central Files, 033.1100–NI/5–1358)

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49. Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Between the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rubottom) in Caracas and the Acting Assistant Secretary of State (Snow) in Washington, May 13, 1958, 4:30 p.m.  

SUBJECT

Nixon Party—Caracas Situation

Mr. Snow inquired about the present situation and was informed by Mr. Rubottom that the situation was bad but that the complete party was in the Embassy Residence, where they will remain until departure.

Mr. Snow inquired about the guard and Mr. Rubottom said he thought it was adequate, based on the judgment of the Secret Service. Mr. Rubottom reported that there were armored cars and tanks at the front door. Mr. Snow asked if he thought the protection was adequate. Mr. Rubottom replied yes; that he was telling Mr. Snow what others had told him.

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Mr. Snow inquired about crowds and was informed that the crowds mentioned in the previous phone call had dispersed and that although they had heard rumors that crowds were going to move in that direction from the center of town, so far they had not materialized.

Mr. Rubottom reported that the Junta was due to arrive at any moment. They were going to call on the Vice President at the Residence rather than have the Vice President call on them at the Palace.

Mr. Snow asked what the Nixon party’s plans were and Mr. Rubottom replied that they would not be going outside to any meetings. The party will stay at the Embassy Residence and will leave the country on schedule, although plans have been made to leave earlier at any time it may be necessary. Adequate plans have been made to provide means of getting the party to the aircraft if need be.

Mr. Snow inquired whether the aircraft was o.k. and Mr. Rubottom said yes. Mr. Snow mentioned that there is an alternate airport only a few miles away. Mr. Rubottom knew about it.

Mr. Rubottom reported that the Vice President today had given a luncheon at the Residence, attended by 25 to 30 important opinion leaders. The Vice President gave a rousing anti-communist speech which seemed to sink in and Mr. Rubottom said he thinks we have gotten back to a much better posture.

Mr. Snow said that things seem to have quieted down. Mr. Rubottom said that no one within his immediate reach had been out on the streets. He heard that there were only a few people then at the Pantheon whereas there were six to seven thousand this morning.

Mr. Rubottom said they had not gone to the wreath-laying; that it was cancelled on the spot en route. There was a terrific mob and the Venezuelan flag—their own flag—had been desecrated, irrespective of any national honor or anything else.

Mr. Snow asked Mr. Rubottom if he could now tell the White House and the Secretary that Mr. Rubottom considers the protection adequate. Mr. Rubottom said that so far as he knows, and he has been checking every 15 minutes, the protection is adequate. Mr. Rubottom at this point in the conversation left to check again on security and reported once again that it seemed to be ample. Mr. Snow asked if the Secret Service thought so, too. Mr. Rubottom said yes and they have army units and armored cars and tanks at the Residence so the party can be evacuated if necessary.

Mr. Snow asked if there was a guard on the plane. Mr. Rubottom said that he was sure there was; there always had been and he thought it may have been doubled.
Mr. Snow told Mr. Rubottom that he had shortly before had a call from someone who wanted to send in 500 of General Shepherd’s friends and Mr. Snow said that the Department’s answer was no, and especially not without the prior knowledge and permission of the host country. Mr. Rubottom said he did not think it necessary.

Mr. Rubottom said he had just spoken with Sherwood who had reassured him on the points just discussed. The Venezuelan Government seemed to have the facilities to do the necessary. Mr. Snow said that during the previous call he gathered that Mr. Rubottom had been doubtful about it. Mr. Rubottom said this was due to the way the police had dispersed at a critical moment.

Mr. Snow said he had all the information he needed for the time being and asked Mr. Rubottom to keep in touch. Mr. Rubottom said that they would call again after the meeting with the Junta.

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1 Jack Sherwood was one of Vice President Nixon’s Secret Service agents.

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50. Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Among the Secretary of State, the President’s Press Secretary (Hagerty), and the President’s Staff Secretary (Goodpaster), Washington, May 13, 1958, 5:14 p.m. 1

TELEPHONE CALL TO GEN GOODPASTER (HAGERTY ON TOO)

The Sec said we have just finished talking with Rubottom at the Emb and the situation is improved. The Sec is inclined to think we should go ahead with at least some part of the troop movement. You can’t tell what will happen although he thinks the danger is over. He does not think it does harm for us to react in this way. H agreed. It is healthy to have it known we have the will and capacity. H said the Navy said they are beginning to get queries. The Sec said we should make a statement—that it is being done as a precautionary move. We don’t think it will be necessary to land them but in view of the instability of the situation it seems appropriate for us to do this. The Sec reported Snow is worried but is satisfied if we say it is a precautionary move designed to cooperate with the Ven Govt if it thinks it

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1 Source: Eisenhower Library, Dulles Papers, White House Telephone Conversations. Transcribed by Bernau.
necessary. He will try to work out something like that with Snyder and they agreed Navy would make statement. H said he wanted the same language as he would be getting queries.

51. Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Between the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rubottom) in Caracas and the Acting Assistant Secretary of State (Snow) in Washington, May 13, 1958, 9:15 p.m. 1

SUBJECT

Situation in Venezuela

Mr. Rubottom called to say that the Vice President’s press conference went well. 2 He said he had not received the telegram referred to in an earlier conversation 3 but they were getting reports through the AP and UP about military units being sent down their way, and asked for confirmation. When Mr. Snow said this was so, Mr. Rubottom said that action should not have been taken without consultation with them, that the Vice President definitely did not want anything like that done, and it had caused the Venezuelan Government some embarrassment. At this point Mr. Snow explained that the units were not being sent to Venezuela, only to nearer locations in the Caribbean and would not be moved from there unless requested by the host (i.e., Venezuelan) government. He then read the text of the Defense Department press release for a stenographer at the Embassy to take down.

Mr. Rubottom said they would have to find some means of counter-balancing that down there because the Junta is concerned about the reaction and wants the Embassy to put out some statement of denial which, of course, could not be done. He added he did not know what could be done or said at this stage but they might be able to work out some kind of statement indicating that the Venezuelans do not need the help. This whole matter will take a little undoing, he said.

1 Source: Department of State, Central Files, 033.1100–NI/5–858. Official Use Only. Drafted by Mary E. O’Brien on May 21.
2 For an account of Vice President Nixon’s press conference in Caracas on May 13, see Tad Szulc’s article entitled “Vice President Unhurt As Furious Crowds Halt Reception” in The New York Times, May 14, 1958, p. 1.
3 Presumably reference is to telegram 685 to Caracas, May 13, which transmitted the text of the Department of Defense press release announcing the fact that the United States was moving several companies of airborne infantry and Marines to American bases in the Caribbean area to provide assistance to the Government of Venezuela if such aid was requested. (Department of State, Central Files, 741B.5411/5–1358)
Mr. Rubottom then said that the Junta has been meeting with political leaders for the last hour or so. They are reported to be having trouble down town at this time. He promised to call Mr. Snow again later this evening at home to report further.

52. Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Among Captain Bettiger and Admiral Miller of the Department of the Navy and the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Snow), Washington, May 13, 1958, 10:55 p.m.¹

SUBJECT

Nixon Trip—Despatch of Naval Vessels

Mr. Snow asked if Capt. Bettiger were familiar with the Venezuelan situation and he replied that to a certain extent he was. Mr. Snow read him a copy of the clear cable to Embassy Caracas regarding the movement of airborne and marine units to Guantanamo and Ramie.

Mr. Snow went on to say that this had been drafted by Mr. Snyder of the Defense Department and himself under instructions from higher authority and that it had gone out, resulting in a certain flurry in Venezuela. We had now received a message from the Vice President and Mr. Rubottom regarding an AP wire they had heard of indicating that a Naval vessel was on its way to Venezuela and that the Venezuelan Government, which is rather shaky, was filled with consternation and thought this might cause the overthrow of the Government if it were true. Mr. Snow said that he had to send an answer back and that he had heard nothing from any source that the Navy Department was sending a war vessel in that direction. The State Department had put a routine evacuation alert message into circulation that afternoon simply to enable the Embassy to plan and draw on funds without further orders; that in such a procedure various Naval offices are on the routing list and Mr. Snow feared that someone outside had heard of this, and had started speculating about ship movements.

¹Source: Department of State, Central Files, 033.1100–NL/5–858. Official Use Only. Drafted by Bartimus on May 22.
Capt. Bettinger said he had been directed to refer such requests to the Flag Representative because the latter had whatever information could be released.

Mr. Snow said that he needed to know if a Naval vessel was on its way to Venezuela; that he had to send a message down there and was hoping that he would be able to say that no such vessel had been despatched.

Capt. Bettinger promised to check with the Flag Representative and call back.

Admiral Miller returned Mr. Snow's call at 11:15 p.m. Admiral Miller said that Naval vessels had been despatched from Guantanamo but that technically the answer was no, since no Naval vessel was on its way "to Venezuela". Their orders were not to go within sight of land so that their movements would not be known.

Mr. Snow wanted to know how the AP could have obtained this information but Admiral Miller did not know the answer. He said that the information had been carefully guarded by the Navy but that evidently someone had said something. Mr. Snow mentioned the movement of troops to areas in the Caribbean but said that no mention of Naval vessels had been made. Admiral Miller said that this was merely routine—a precautionary movement placing the ships closer to Venezuela should evacuation be necessary but that their orders were not to go within sight of land.

Mr. Snow again referred to the message from the Vice President and Mr. Rubottom, saying that if the report were publicly confirmed that a Naval vessel was on its way to Venezuela it might be enough to cause the downfall of the present Government and no one wanted that to happen. Admiral Miller agreed and said he did not know how anyone could know what orders the ships had—that they could be going on exercises. Mr. Snow said this was fine if only the AP had not said that a Naval vessel had been despatched to Venezuela. Admiral Miller said this was not true, and Mr. Snow replied that that is what he wanted to be able to tell Mr. Rubottom so he can deny it. Admiral Miller stated that he could deny that "a Naval vessel had been despatched to Venezuela".

Mr. Snow said that in his cable he could say "No repeat no Naval vessel has been despatched to Venezuela" and Admiral Miller approved, stating that this is one of those things where you can on a technicality deny an allegation.¹

¹ In his telegram to Rubottom, Snow stated that the source of press reports that one or more U.S. Navy ships had departed from Guantanamo for Venezuela was unknown, but that Naval vessels had departed from Guantanamo for the coast of Venezuela in response to an evacuation alert transmitted that afternoon. Since the ships had orders to avoid cruising within sight of land, it was technically correct, in Snow's view, to claim that no U.S. Navy ships had been dispatched to Venezuela. If the evacuation plan had to
Mr. Snow hoped that whoever was handling this would keep the ships out of sight of land and Admiral Miller replied that those were strict orders.

Mr. Snow asked whether this movement was in conjunction with the evacuation scheme and Admiral Miller replied that it was—that should evacuation be necessary they did not want to have to run any farther than necessary. He said he thought Mr. Snow was perfectly safe on this. Mr. Snow said that he wanted to be safe on this—that the Vice President and his party were there and not due out for another 27 or 28 hours. He went on to say that the complete party was in the Embassy Residence and planned to stay there until departure and that our latest communication with them was at 9:15 p.m. They were still o.k. and the Vice President had rather set his mind on sticking it out.

Mr. Snow said that he was going to tell them that the Department wished they would advance their departure. There are reasons which make this seem advisable although they are not clearly established.

Both agreed that an early departure from Venezuela would be advisable. Admiral Miller said that no ship will go in there and Mr. Snow said that at least there are no orders from the Embassy for that now, but if the evacuation plan goes into effect, that is a different matter. Admiral Miller confirmed that the ship will not go in without the concurrence and consent of the State Department, and Mr. Snow said that concurrence of the Venezuelan Government would be necessary, or lacking that the highest level clearance in Washington would be necessary.

be implemented, however, the vessels would be in position to act. (Ibid., ARA Deputy Assistant Secretary Files: Lot 61 D 411, N—Vice President Nixon's Trip to South America)

53. Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Among the Secretary of State, the President's Press Secretary (Hagerty), and the President, Washington, May 14, 1958, 10:14 a.m.¹

TELEPHONE CALL TO MR HAGERTY

The Sec said he understands the Pres got through to Nixon. Anything significant? THE PRESIDENT GOT ON, and said he is carrying out a schedule today in the Emb. The advertised visits cause trouble.

¹ Source: Eisenhower Library, Dulles Papers, White House Telephone Conversations. Transcribed by Bernau.
He does not know when he is coming in but earlier than we expected. The Sec asked if he said anything about playing down the precautionary troop movements. The Pres said it was not mentioned. The Sec said to play it down. The Pres will so do. Nothing was needed so all forgotten. The Sec said the whole junta came in and apologized. The Pres said N said he has lots of friends—the people are very friendly. It is O.K. to talk re economic policies and the Sec added the Pres can give a plug for mutual aid and reciprocal trade.

54. Memorandum From the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Snow) to the Secretary of State


SUBJECT

Vice President’s Trip to South America (Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela)

The initial purpose of the trip was to provide high-level official United States representation at the important presidential inauguration in Argentina on May 1. The Vice President had attended the inauguration of President Kubitschek in Brazil in 1954 with success.

Another purpose was good will visits to various countries as a means of expressing U.S. interest in the area, to discuss problems of mutual concern with officials and other leaders, and to achieve the favorable public impact which we considered to be characteristic of the Vice President’s travels in foreign countries, including his trip to the Caribbean area in 1955.

These purposes were achieved except possibly in Venezuela. The visits in Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, Ecuador and Colombia can be clearly labeled as successful. Even in the case of Peru where there were a few hours of ugly demonstrations, there were fruitful discussions with government officials and on the whole a fairly good public reception.

Neither the Department nor our Embassies found adequate reason to recommend against the Vice President’s visit to any of the eight countries. In those instances in which there were reports of possible troubles, especially in Peru, Colombia and Venezuela, the governments gave assurances of adequate security measures. For example, up

to and including the day before the Vice President's arrival in Caracas, our Embassy reported that the Venezuelan Government was taking the necessary security precautions.

There were some minor but apparently harmless manifestations of anti-Americanism in Uruguay, Argentina, and Colombia. It was, of course, in Peru and especially Venezuela that hostile demonstrations were serious. The pattern of organization and of slogans in all cases points to Communist inspiration and direction, as do certain of the intelligence reports.

A number of factors have combined in Latin America to provide a fertile background which the Communists exploit. Economic instability, for example, has been intensified by declining export receipts (due in part to the U.S. recession). Political instability and weak governments characterize the countries emerging from dictatorships (Peru and Venezuela). There are numerous alleged or real grievances against the U.S. Most of these are currently in the economic field, such as tariffs, quotas, surplus disposals, and the magnitude of financial assistance. Some of them are political, particularly the issue of U.S. relations, both past and present, with dictatorships in the area and U.S. policy on granting visas to political exiles (such as ex-Venezuelan dictator Perez Jimenez).

The Communist bloc has intensified its efforts in the economic, political, and cultural fields in Latin America in the past few years. Soviet technological successes (particularly the earth satellites) have raised widespread doubts about U.S. scientific superiority. The preponderance of U.S. influence in Latin America is being challenged.

The hostile acts against the Vice President in Peru and Venezuela, as unfortunate as they are, may well serve the useful purpose of dramatizing the internal Communist menace, which the Latin Americans and their governments have too often ignored. A considerable amount of indignation and revulsion have been generated in the area against the treatment the Vice President received in Lima and Caracas.

Many implications for U.S. policy can, of course, be deduced from the Vice President's experiences. For example, the fact that the Communist agitators used students for the demonstrations suggests the desirability of our concentrating even more than we already are on students and other intellectual groups in our cultural and information programs. Also, since many of the issues which the Communists exploit are economic and derive from U.S. trade policies, the effect in Latin America of measures taken largely for domestic reasons in the U.S. should be given every possible consideration.
Our basic policies, as set forth in the pertinent NSC documents, are believed to be essentially sound, but the Nixon trip, once we have had an opportunity to evaluate it fully, may lead us to recommend modifications, changes in emphasis, and more effective methods of implementation.

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55. Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting, White House, Washington, May 16, 1958, 9:05-9:50 a.m.¹

[Here follow a list of attendees and brief reports by Secretary Dulles on the recent NATO meeting and on the Algerian situation.]

The Vice President, in reporting on the South American riots during his trip, emphasized that Communist inspiration was evident from the similarity of placards, slogans and techniques in all the areas in question. Particular items of American policy bearing on individual countries could not be considered the major cause. The Vice President believed that the political complaint against the United States for harboring refugee dictators was more important than various economic complaints such as the price of coffee, tariffs, and proposed legislation on lead, zinc, copper, etc. He did not, however, wish to underestimate at all the significance of the latter.

The Vice President stressed that the Latin Americans much prefer to be friends of the United States rather than Russia and that the great problem was how we could best cultivate this friendship. He stressed the advent recently of the lower classes into the political scene and the ensuing requirement that American ambassadors and other officials must begin now to broaden their contacts beyond the traditional elite to include university leaders, communications people, group leaders, etc. The United States must not, he said, do anything that would support an impression that it is helping to protect the privileges of a few; instead, we must be dedicated to raising the standard of living of the masses.

Sec. Dulles stated his agreement with the analysis of the problem, then pointed to the difficulty of dealing with it since democracy as we know it will not be instituted by the lower classes as they gain

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power—rather they will bring in more of a dictatorship of the masses. In regard to broader contacts, the Secretary noted strictures on ambassadorial activity, hence the need for broader non-official contacts.

The Vice President thought his trip would have effect in dissipating naiveté to Communist influence in these countries. He then stressed the importance of educational exchanges and his hope that our exchange programs could be at least doubled. In response to Sec. Benson’s question, he indicated that US businessmen in South America tend to mingle only with their American associates and Latin American counterparts without going farther afield.  

[Here follows discussion of unrelated subjects.]

56. **Memorandum of Discussion at the 366th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, May 22, 1958, 9:03 a.m.**

[Here follow a paragraph listing the participants at the meeting and agenda item 1, “Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security,” a report by Allen W. Dulles.]

2. **Report by the Vice President on His Trip to South America**

In his opening remarks, the Vice President pointed out that he had already made various reports on his trip to Latin America. He had reserved, however, a few items of information as of special interest to

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1 Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records. Top Secret. Drafted by Gleason on May 23. The time of the meeting is from the President’s Daily Appointment Book. (Ibid.)
the National Security Council. Later on he said he would submit his ideas in writing. Meanwhile, what he was about to say was intended only for the ears of those in this room.

First of all, continued the Vice President, we should all get clearly in mind that the threat of Communism in Latin America was greater today than ever before in history. Why was this so? One ran into some very interesting speculations, particularly when one recalled all our fine words about the development of democracy and free enterprise in Latin America.

The southern continent was certainly evolving toward a democratic form of government. Normally we would hail such a development, but we should realize that such a development may not always be in each country the best of all possible courses, particularly in those Latin American countries which are completely lacking in political maturity. In country after country in Latin America we have seen the end of dictatorships. These dictatorial leaders are nearly everywhere being replaced by completely new political types, like Frondizi in Argentina. The Vice President said that he had talked at length and very frankly with all these new Latin American leaders. The significant thing about them as a group is, with the exception of Prado in Peru, that there is not one who represents the old upper-class, wealthy politician of the past. Instead, these new leaders are drawn from the middle class and from the evolving intelligentsia. While they are honest men, they are certainly oriented in the direction of Marxist thinking, even though they realize at the same time the necessity of getting along with the United States in order to secure its economic assistance. Being the kind of men they are, they are very naive about the nature and threat of Communism, so much so that their attitude is frightening. They regard the Communists as nothing more than a duly-constituted political party. This is understandable because in many instances the Communists have assisted these new leaders in overthrowing the old dictatorships. Moreover, the Communist leaders are playing a very clever game in Latin America, using, for instance, the familiar Popular Front line.

The Vice President then turned to make a rather different point. In talking to the heads of the governments in Latin America, he had noted that, with the exception of Stroessner in Paraguay, all of them would say, in effect, we would like to adopt policies which would invite into our country private capital from abroad and which would support the private enterprise system. Nevertheless, Frondizi and the others had added that they simply could not get the support of their public for such policies. Moreover, our own Ambassadors generally agreed with this point of view.

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2 No such document has been found in Department of State files.
As for the issue of Communism, Frondizi and the other new leaders had not only stated that the Communist problem was not serious, but went further and said that when it came to dealing harshly with the Communists they would again fail to secure public support. This stemmed from the fact that the people of most of these countries were so weary of dictatorships that they felt that the danger of the old-fashioned dictatorship was much more to be feared than any danger from Communism. The Vice President then explained that when these new leaders thus stated that they could not gain public support for policies they might actually think wise, they didn’t mean the support of the masses. By public support they mean, rather, the support of the growing middle class, the intelligentsia, and the growing labor union movement. They also mean in particular the support of the so-called opinion-makers—that is, the journalists and the radio and TV people. The Vice President pointed out that there were very, very few pro-American newspapers in Latin America, at least among the rank and file, even though the editors and owners of some of these papers were friendly to the United States. The same was true in the fields of television and radio.

The Vice President then turned to the situation in the universities of Latin America. These were of great importance, not only for the obvious reason that they were providing the future national leaders, but also because they were a strong and vocal political force.

To sum up what seemed to the Vice President the important point, he emphasized that while we are thus witnessing the development of democracy in Latin America, we are at the same time witnessing the development of a serious Communist threat. There could be no doubt that International Communism was making a major effort throughout Latin America. There were 250 Communist-controlled newspapers. There were some 50 Soviet friendship societies, and scores of Communist book-publishing houses. The Communist effort was being directed at those elements of the population who could be in a position to overthrow governments—namely, the labor unions and the universities. In illustration of his point, the Vice President singled out Uruguay as the country which was in greatest real danger of a Communist take-over. Yet Uruguay was the most democratic country in the Western Hemisphere after the United States and Canada. It was just impossible to convince the Uruguayans of the dangers of Communism while they were facing such severe economic problems as now confronted them.

As another illustration, the Vice President cited Venezuela as the country in Latin America which had made the greatest economic progress and where private enterprise was the strongest. But here again the Communist danger was almost as great as that which faced Uruguay.
Accordingly, the Vice President deduced that neither the democratic system nor the system of private enterprise is necessarily a safeguard against Communism.

As to his conclusions, the Vice President pointed out initially that there existed a Latin American deficit of $1 billion annually in trade with the United States, a deficit which we in one way or another are obliged to make up. How were we to deal with this and with other problems facing us in Latin America? The Vice President said he felt that the answer was certainly not just better publicity for our policies and our actions in Latin America. He said that he had found the quality of the USIA personnel stationed in Latin America to be higher than the quality of such personnel that he had observed on any other of his trips abroad. Yet, even so, we somehow failed to reach the people with our message. In illustration of this point, the Vice President cited a lengthy conversation with a Colombian General who was a very intelligent man and strongly pro-American. He said that he and the other leaders of Colombia were perfectly well aware of all the assistance which the United States had provided and was providing to Colombia. On the other hand, the people of Colombia, the ordinary run of people, were not aware of such U.S. assistance. Accordingly, continued the Vice President, the problem was how to get our story across to the rank and file. [2 sentences (5½ lines of source text) not declassified] We will have to contemplate here a long-range campaign. [1½ lines of source text not declassified] we must contemplate an increase in the activity of the USIA and vastly increased exchange programs with the key population elements of the intelligentsia, the labor leaders, and the newspaper people.

Generally speaking, the Vice President insisted that U.S. policy and what the United States is doing today in Latin America is not subject to very much criticism. Our policies and actions were generally correct, but the problem was essentially more subtle and hence more difficult to solve. We must join the battle in Latin America on the field of propaganda. Otherwise the Communists would ultimately win out.

The Vice President closed his remarks by stating that if the rumors that Milton Eisenhower's trip to Central America was going to be cancelled were true, the Vice President would regard the cancellation as a serious mistake.

When the Vice President had concluded his report, Mr. George Allen commented that as head of USIA he was naturally much interested in the Vice President's remarks. He personally was very glad indeed that the Vice President had made this trip; but the results of the trip would only be useful, as he himself had said, if it caused us here in Washington to take a very hard look at the situation in Latin America. As for organizing pro-U.S. groups among students in the Latin American universities, the real problem was what we were going to give
them as a message to rally round and about which they could become enthusiastic. Once we succeeded in setting up such groups, we will need a real program. [1 sentence (1 line of source text) not declassified]

As to the exploitation of petroleum and the use of private capital, Mr. Allen pointed out that the USIA has been sending about the world an exhibit called "People's Capitalism". While often successful in its impact, this exhibit sometimes arouses considerable grumbling and disapproval because in Latin America, for example, there was no such thing as people's capitalism and, accordingly, many Latin Americans could not distinguish between people's capitalism in the American style and the old-fashioned capitalist imperialism.

Mr. Allen went on to say that according to every indication available to him, not a single politician could get elected to high office in any Latin American country unless he insisted that his program assured government exploitation of the petroleum resources of the country. This is an absolutely fixed idea in Brazil, in Argentina, and in Mexico. Accordingly, if these proposed student and other groups [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] in Latin America are to go out and fight for pro-American causes, we must avoid giving any overemphasis to our policy of trying to keep Latin America as a safe preserve for U.S. private enterprise and U.S. private investment. We must, rather, try to go along more with the sentiments of the people of Latin America. This may sound like promoting socialism, but nevertheless this was the fixed point of view of most Latin Americans.

The Vice President replied that he found himself more or less in agreement with Mr. Allen's point. As to the question of providing a program for the pro-U.S. student groups, the Vice President believed that you could attack this problem both in a negative and in a positive way. Negatively, these groups could attack the Communists on the ground that they were advocates of dictatorship, rather than on the ground that they were socialists. On the positive side, the program would stress the fact that foreign investment in Latin America would be the means of raising living standards there and not, as often thought in the past, merely a means for foreign exploitation of the resources of these nations.

Secretary Dulles said that he was in general agreement with the Vice President's views. He said that we must realize that in Latin America, as well as in the Middle East and other parts of the world, there was a definite swing away from the old-fashioned ruler or king, in favor of the kind of dictatorship of the proletariat which was represented by a Nasser or a Sukarno, with their mass appeal. [2 sentences (5½ lines of source text) not declassified] We must develop a greater potential.
One of the weaknesses in our position, continued Secretary Dulles, was represented by our system of labor attachés. These labor attachés were almost universally bad. As the system worked, they were nominated for their posts by the Labor Department, which, in turn, got its candidates from the CIO and the AF of L. Unhappily, the CIO and the AFL usually presented as candidates labor leaders that they wanted to get rid of in the United States. There could be no change for the better in the quality of our labor attachés until this patronage system of the AFL and the CIO was itself changed. The Vice President strongly confirmed Secretary Dulles’ view, and stated that he had not met a single effective labor attaché in the course of his entire trip.

Secretary Dulles then went on to say that there was one more very important factor in the Latin American problem which the United States faced. This was the collapse of religion generally in Latin America. We all believe in this country that religion, with its emphasis on the rights and freedom of the individual under God, is the very core of our democratic system and that it is also the greatest bulwark against atheistic Communism. Unhappily, the monopoly of the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America has had very serious repercussions, to a point where organized religion had practically no influence on the mass of the people as opposed to the aristocracy. Admittedly, said Secretary Dulles, he did not know what we could do about correcting this very grave situation, but it was certainly at the heart of our problem in Latin America.

The Secretary of State added that he was in complete agreement on the need of our stepping up our exchange programs with the Latin American countries.

The President commented that he had two specific points that he thought we should keep thinking of. The use of the term “capitalism”, which means one thing to us, clearly meant to much of the rest of the world something synonymous with imperialism. We should try to coin a new phrase to represent our own modern brand of capitalism. On the negative side, continued the President, why don’t our people in Latin America talk more about Hungary as an example of the fine fruits of Communism? We should stress this example to show what happens to a country under Communist dictatorship.

The Vice President expressed his belief that we should frame our arguments in the following context: We should base our position on the understanding that dictatorship now constitutes the most emotional issue in Latin America. From this premise we should accordingly in Latin America attack Communism not as Marxist economic thought but as a dictatorship and, worse than that from the Latin American point of view, a foreign-controlled dictatorship. In so doing
we could combine and exploit the two chief hatreds of Latin America—namely, dictatorship and foreign control. Hungary exemplified both.

Mr. Allen commented that the USIA had been doing its best to keep alive the lessons of Hungary. Recently in France they had undertaken a survey to find out how effective they had been in keeping the Hungarian story alive. The survey had shown a dismaying lack of interest among most Frenchmen. It had been next to impossible to keep the Hungarian story vivid in the minds of these Frenchmen. When our people had brought up Hungary, one Frenchman had replied, "Why not talk about the Punic wars?"

The Director of Central Intelligence said he felt obliged to point out [3 lines of source text not declassified]. The trouble was that even though we had the goods on the Communists, we simply could not get any support from the Latin American governments to do anything about the disclosures which we had made. After what had happened during the Vice President’s tour, we may at long last get the necessary support of these governments against the Communists. We are all ready to go if we can get such support.

Mr. Allen then said he had one more suggestion to make with respect to the problem of trade with Latin America. We have been for some time promoting the development of a Common Market in Europe. Why could we not make a similar effort on behalf of a Common Market for Latin America? Secretary Dulles commented that while the idea had much to recommend it, he was not sure that the Latin American states would want a Common Market with the United States a member of it. Secretary Anderson in turn pointed out that at the Buenos Aires meeting the Treasury people had strongly supported the idea of developing a Common Market in Latin America, although they had pointed out that the United States itself would not join such a Common Market. One of the great difficulties was that the countries of Latin America were in many cases geographically so far apart and with very poor transportation between them. This was quite unlike the compact area of Western Europe, where a Common Market would not meet such severe geographical obstacles.

Secretary Dulles indicated that there was yet another difficult aspect of the plan for a Common Market. If there were a Common Market in Latin America and the United States were to be a member of it, the effect would be to perpetuate the status of the Latin American states as producers of agricultural and raw materials and the United States as the manufacturer of the finished products. What the countries of Latin America really want and really need was, rather, a diversification of their economies.
The National Security Council.\(^3\)

Noted and discussed an oral report by the Vice President on his recent trip to South America.

[Here follow the remaining agenda items: United States policy toward the Soviet-dominated nations in Eastern Europe and a consideration of United States policy toward Italy.]

S. Everett Gleason

\(^3\) The paragraph that follows constitutes NSC Action No. 1913, approved by the President on May 24. (Department of State, S/S–NSC (Miscellaneous) Files: Lot 66 D 95, NSC Records of Action)

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57. Memorandum From the Secretary of State’s Staff Assistant (Boster) to the Secretary to the Cabinet (Patterson)\(^1\)

Washington, September 12, 1958.\(^2\)

You have asked me informally for a brief status report on certain Cabinet action items. Following is the information which I have obtained on them:

[Here follow items 1–4: the question of returning vested German and Japanese assets, the management and use of U.S.-controlled local currency, the popular impact of economic aid in underdeveloped areas, and problems associated with accepting gifts from foreign dignitaries.]

5. Discussion of the Vice President’s Trip—RA-58-105.

Below is set forth the action which has been taken as a result of the Vice President’s suggestions made at the Cabinet meeting on May 16, 1958:

1) The Department of State’s International Educational Exchange Service (IES) has proposed to all posts in Latin America a project for substantially increasing the exchange, in groups, of Latin American and United States professors and leading university officials. Replies are expected shortly. IES also recently conducted a meeting of US non-governmental experts on Latin American cultural affairs to advise on


\(^2\) The date is handwritten on the source text.
ways and means of quickly implementing an expanded exchange of persons program in Latin America, including projects for the exchange of leaders, university presidents, etc.

2) The following steps have been taken to widen and support more effectively the reservoir of firm friendship for the US in all the Latin American countries:

a. Dr. Milton Eisenhower visited Central America and Panama from July 12 to August 1, 1958 on a good will and fact-finding mission, and undertook frank and candid discussions with some 1200 government and other key leaders in the six countries.

b. The Secretary met with Brazilian officials in Brazil between August 4 and 7, 1958 to discuss bilateral and hemisphere matters of interest to the two countries. This was the Secretary’s first visit to Brazil.3

c. The Secretary has invited the Foreign Ministers of the other American Republics to meet in Washington on September 23 and 24, 1958 for an informal discussion and exchange of views on current matters of common interest.4 This will presumably consider the possibilities of more frequent meetings of this type, Brazil’s plan for Operation Pan America, and economic matters including the proposed Inter-American Development Institution (see below).

d. The Secretary has continued and extended his periodic briefings of Latin American Ambassadors on world problems and crises. Such briefings have been appreciated by the Latin American countries and have contributed to their feeling of partnership with the US and the Free World.

e. During the Special Session of the UN General Assembly, the Secretary undertook to meet with the Latin American delegations to explain the US position on the Middle East problem.

f. Official invitations have been issued to President Frondizi of Argentina and President Lemus of El Salvador to visit the US in 1959.5

g. On August 12, 1958 Under Secretary Dillon announced that the US was now prepared to support the formation of a regional economic development institution to aid in economic development in the hemisphere.6

h. Since June 11, 1958 the US has participated in an international coffee study group to examine coffee trade problems and recommend measures to be taken to meet them.7

3) Educational and technical exchanges are being substantially increased during the current and ensuing fiscal years. IES received from Congress a $2,000,000 additional appropriation earmarked for

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3 See Document 252.
4 The Latin American Foreign Ministers met in Washington on September 23–24, 1958.
5 Regarding the visits to the United States of President Frondizi of Argentina and President Lemus of El Salvador, see Documents 166 ff. and Document 307, respectively.
6 For text of Under Secretary Dillon’s announcement, see Department of State Bulletin, September 1, 1958, p. 347.
7 Regarding U.S. participation in an international coffee study group, see Documents 7 ff.
Latin America. An OCB Ad Hoc Committee on Student Contacts has developed the following ten-point program. (The agency responsible is noted in parentheses.) (1) Short-term seminars in U.S. universities for Latin American student leaders (IES); (2) An increase in the number of ICA-financed university-to-university contracts to increase exchange of faculty and students in technical fields (ICA); (3) Surveys of educational requirements of certain countries, as requested (ICA); (4) An increased number of grants to U.S. student leaders for visits to Latin American universities (IES); (5) An increased number of grants to both Latin American and U.S. professors for visits to universities (IES); (6) Establishment of binational student centers in Latin American universities (USIA); (7) An increase in the book presentation program for Latin America (USIA); (8) Increased number of grants to U.S. secondary school teachers to teach American educational principles and practices in Latin America (IES); (9) Exchange of teachers between U.S. schools and American-sponsored schools in Latin America (IES); and (10) Increased use of Puerto Rican educational facilities to improve the quality of technical education at Latin American universities (ICA).

The OCB Subcommittee on Latin American Student Activities is continuing to study additional proposals in this general field.  

D.E. Boster  

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* See Documents 1 ff.  
* Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.