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MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY
TO THE INAUGURAL SESSION, AUGUST 5, 1961

Fellow Citizens of the Americas:

Twenty-five years ago one of the greatest of my predecessors, Franklin Roosevelt--addressed the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace, meeting at Buenos Aires -- a conference called to protect the peace and freedom of the Hemisphere.

That Conference was a great success. Its accomplishments were, in Roosevelt's words, "far-reaching and historic." New bonds of friendship and cooperation were forged. A new day in the history of the Americas had begun.

Yet, on his return from the Conference, President Roosevelt stopped in Montevideo--just a few miles from your meeting place--to warn that "We have not completed our task...that task is a continuing one. We seek new remedies for new conditions; new conditions will continue to arise...But the net result is that we move forward."

Today, a quarter century later, we meet to carry on that task --to demonstrate anew that freedom is not merely a word or an abstract theory, but the most effective instrument for advancing the welfare of man. We face new conditions and we must devise new remedies to meet them. And we are confident that we will move forward.

Those of you at this conference are present at an historic moment in the life of this Hemisphere. For this is far more than an economic discussion, or a technical conference on development.

In a very real sense it is a demonstration of the capacity of free nations to meet the human and material problems of the modern world. It is a test of the values of our own society--a proving ground for the vitality of freedom in the affairs of man.

The views of the United States on the important social and economic questions encompassed by the agenda will be fully explained by Secretary Dillon. Underlying those views are the simple and basic principles of the Alliance for Progress.

We live in a Hemisphere whose own revolution has given birth to the most powerful shaping forces of the modern age--the search for the freedom and self-fulfillment of man. We meet to carry on that revolution -- to shape the future as we have the past.

This means that all of our countries--nations of the North and nations of the South--must make new efforts of unparalleled magnitude.

For the developing nations it means careful national planning --the orderly establishment of goals, priorities, and long-range programs.

It means expanded export markets, closer economic integration within Latin America, and greater market stability for the major primary products.

It means the dedication of a greatly increased proportion of national resources and capital to the cause of development.

And it means full recognition of the right of all the people to share fully in our progress. For there is no place in democratic life for institutions which benefit the few while denying the needs of the many-- even though the elimination of such institutions may require far-reaching and difficult changes--changes such as land reform and tax reform and a vastly increased emphasis on education and health and housing. Without these changes our common effort cannot succeed.

The Alliance for Progress also means a greatly increased effort by the United States both in terms of material resources and deeper comprehension of the basic needs of Latin America. My country has already begun its contribution. During the year which began on March 13 with the announcement of the Alliance for Progress the United States will allocate more than one billion dollars in development assistance to Latin America. This amount, which includes less than half of the 500 million dollars appropriated under the Act of Bogotá, is more than three times that made available last year. It does not include the additional resources which will be made available through the World Bank, other international institutions, and private sources.

This rapid increase in the level of our assistance is only the first step in our continuing and expanding effort to help build a better life for the people of the Hemisphere--an effort to which I am devoting my personal attention. And as the nations of Latin America take the necessary steps--as they formulate the plans, mobilize the internal resources, make the difficult and necessary social reforms, and accept the sacrifice necessary if their national energy is to be fully directed to economic development--then I believe that the United States should supplement this effort by helping to provide resources of a scope and magnitude adequate to realize the bold and elevated goals envisaged by the Alliance for Progress. For, as I have said before, only an effort of towering dimension--an effort similar to that which was needed to rebuild the economies of Western Europe--can ensure fulfillment of our Alliance for Progress.

This heroic effort is not for governments alone. Its success demands the participation of all our people--of workers and farmers, businessmen and intellectuals--and, above all, of the young people of the Americas. For to them, and to their children, belongs the new world we are resolved to create.

The tasks before us are vast--the problems difficult--the challenges unparalleled. But we carry with us the vision of a new and better world, and the unlimited power of free men guided by free governments. And I believe that our ultimate success will make us proud to have lived and worked at this historic moment in the life of our Hemisphere.

With warmest personal regards,

John F. Kennedy

ES-RE-159