

Cubans believe, come out of misery, out of conditions like those of the old Cuba. Where such conditions continue and there's a mountain nearby, there'll be revolutions. And in Latin America and elsewhere there are many such countries still today in the old sloth. That is why this continent is going to become the scene of convulsions you've never dreamed of. . . . We're talking sense to you, Yankee; listen to us, please. . . .

Ours will be a simple, practical, flexible [political] system, we are sure of that. And it will take fully into itself the opinions of the people. Of course, we believe that minorities should have the means of expressing their opinions. For what is a political system but a way of protecting minority opinions? Otherwise, it is a dictatorship. We Cuban revolutionaries certainly know that! . . .

We want an absolutely free manifestation of the human spirit. That is our goal. We want a great and absolutely free intelligentsia. Up in the Sierra, nobody told us in which style we must act. Just so, men must write and paint freely. That liberty we revolutionaries have breathed; it is not some abstraction to us. It is what we have breathed in the streets, in the mountains, it is everywhere here in Cuba, everywhere that there is revolution. . . .

It was the U.S. pressure, it was the U.S. propaganda, it was what the U.S. has failed to do in connection with our revolution that has forced us, finally, to see that maybe we do *belong* in the Soviet political alliance. But whether we "belonged" with them at first, and whether we "belong" with them now—what choice has your Government *ever* given us about this? And that's one thing "Yankee" means to us: no choices given. . . .

So it seems to us, you're up against this: You've got to make your Government change its whole line of policy; you've got to argue for a completely new United States approach to the problems of the hungry world.

But to do that you've got to change drastically the whole economic system of your big corporations, at least as they operate outside the U.S.A.

You've got to smash Yankee imperialism from inside the United States. For you can't hope to make your Government—if it is your Government—change its line of policy unless you do smash that system. . . .

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The Alliance for Progress

John F. Kennedy

Less than two months after he took office in 1961, President John F. Kennedy pledged \$20 billion in public and private funding to help Latin America carry out the social changes that his administration considered necessary for the region's progress. Kennedy announced his plan for an Alliance for Progress to the Latin American diplomatic corps on March 13, 1961, only a month before the disastrous U.S.-sponsored invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. The timing of the two events highlighted the close relationship between the U.S. government's support for the Alliance and its fear of social revolution in the region. The Alliance for Progress built upon a commitment, extracted by Latin American leaders from President Dwight D. Eisenhower, for \$500 million for development projects (see Document No. 80).

It is a great pleasure for Mrs. Kennedy and for me, for the Vice President and Mrs. Johnson, and for the Members of Congress, to welcome the Ambassadorial Corps of our Hemisphere, our long time friends, to the White House today. One hundred and thirty-nine years ago this week the United States, stirred by the heroic struggle of its fellow Americans, urged the independence and recognition of the new Latin American Republics. It was then, at the dawn of freedom throughout this hemisphere, that Bolívar spoke of his desire to see the Americas fashioned into the greatest region in the world, "greatest," he said, "not so much by virtue of her area and her wealth, as by her freedom and her glory."

Never in the long history of our hemisphere has this dream been nearer to fulfillment, and never has it been in greater danger.

The genius of our scientists has given us the tools to bring abundance to our land, strength to our industry, and knowledge to our people. For the first time we have the capacity to strike off the remaining bonds of poverty and ignorance—to free our people for the spiritual and intellectual fulfillment which has always been the goal of our civilization.

Source: U.S. President, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*. "Address at a White House Reception for Members of Congress and for the Diplomatic Corps of the Latin American Republics," pp. 170-75. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1962.

Yet at this very moment of maximum opportunity, we confront the same forces which have imperiled America throughout its history—the alien forces which once again seek to impose the despotisms of the Old World on the people of the New. . . .

We meet together as firm and ancient friends, united by history and experience and by our determination to advance the values of American civilization. For this New World of ours is not a mere accident of geography. Our continents are bound together by a common history, the endless exploration of new frontiers. Our nations are the product of a common struggle, the revolt from colonial rule. And our people share a common heritage, the quest for the dignity and the freedom of man. . . .

But as we welcome the spread of the American revolution to other lands, we must also remember that our own struggle—the revolution which began in Philadelphia in 1776, and in Caracas in 1811—is not yet finished. Our hemisphere's mission is not yet completed. For our unfulfilled task is to demonstrate to the entire world that man's unsatisfied aspiration for economic progress and social justice can best be achieved by free men working within a framework of democratic institutions. If we can do this in our own hemisphere, and for our own people, we may yet realize the prophecy of the great Mexican patriot, Benito Juarez, that "democracy is the destiny of future humanity."

As a citizen of the United States let me be the first to admit that we North Americans have not always grasped the significance of this common mission, just as it is also true that many in your own countries have not fully understood the urgency of the need to lift people from poverty and ignorance and despair. But we must turn from these mistakes—from the failures and the misunderstandings of the past to a future full of peril, but bright with hope.

Throughout Latin America, a continent rich in resources and in the spiritual and cultural achievements of its people, millions of men and women suffer the daily degradations of poverty and hunger. They lack decent shelter or protection from disease. Their children are deprived of the education or the jobs which are the gateway to a better life. And each day the problems grow more urgent. . . .

If we are to meet a problem so staggering in its dimensions, our approach must itself be equally bold—an approach consistent with the majestic concept of Operation Pan America. Therefore I have called on all people of the hemisphere to join in a new Alliance for Progress—*Alianza para Progreso* [sic]—a vast cooperative effort, unparalleled in magnitude and nobility of purpose, to satisfy the basic needs of the American people for homes, work and land, health and schools—*techo, trabajo y tierra, salud y escuela*. . . .

With steps such as these, we propose to complete the revolution of the Americas, to build a hemisphere where all men can hope for a suitable standard of living, and all can live out their lives in dignity and in freedom.

To achieve this goal political freedom must accompany material progress. Our Alliance for Progress is an alliance of free governments, and it must work to eliminate tyranny from a hemisphere in which it has no rightful place. Therefore

let us express our special friendship to the people of Cuba and the Dominican Republic—and the hope they will soon rejoin the society of free men, uniting with us in common effort.

This political freedom must be accompanied by social change. For unless necessary social reforms, including land and tax reform, are freely made—unless we broaden the opportunity for all of our people—unless the great mass of Americans share in increasing prosperity—then our alliance, our revolution, our dream, and our freedom will fail. But we call for social change by free men . . . not change which seeks to impose on men tyrannies which we cast out a century and a half ago. Our motto is what it has always been—progress, yes, tyranny no—*progreso sí, tiranía no!*. . . .

The completion of our task will, of course, require the efforts of all governments of our hemisphere. But the efforts of governments alone will never be enough. In the end, the people must choose and the people must help themselves.

And so I say to the men and women of the Americas—to the *campesino* in the fields, to the *obrero* in the cities, to the *estudiante* in the schools—prepare your mind and heart for the task ahead—call forth your strength and let each devote his energies to the betterment of all, so that your children and our children in this hemisphere can find an ever richer and a freer life.

Let us once again transform the American continent into a vast crucible of revolutionary ideas and efforts—a tribute to the power of the creative energies of free men and women—an example to all the world that liberty and progress walk hand in hand. Let us once again awaken our American revolution until it guides the struggle of people everywhere—not with an imperialism of force or fear—but the rule of courage and freedom and hope for the future of man.