

The Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, Maryland

Copy.

Department of History

January 28, 1928.

Mrs. Truxton Beale,
28 Jackson Place, N.W.,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mrs. Beale:

Thank you very much for sending me your letter to The World on our Latin-American policy. My views are thoroughly in accord with yours. I believe that we can accomplish everything that we should wish to accomplish in Latin America by a conciliatory policy as well as by a resort to coercive measures. In the long run I think that a high minded policy based on principle will accomplish more than dollar diplomacy.

Please remember me cordially to Mr. Beale. I have had the pleasure of attending with him several dinners given at the Metropolitan Club by our friend Frederic Bancroft, and I remember delightful foregatherings on more than one occasion at your home before proceeding to the Club.

Yours very sincerely,

John H. Latané

January 24, 1928

Until today there has seemed to be general satisfaction evinced by most editorial writers on the Havana conference. The refusal of our delegation to accept what was expected to be their role--domination of the conference by grabbing the strategic posts on committees, and the swift attack by Mr. Hughes of the Nicaraguan question before we could be assailed, seems to have persuaded them that the air has been cleared and that we have been saved from a renewal of the acrimonious criticism long prevalent in the South American press.

Only today comes in the "World" an expression of doubt and discontent headed "HALF-TRUTHS AT HAVANA". All this editorial says and more, seems appropriate. To its criticism that we have glossed over the truth about Nicaragua; that our statement that we have only intervened at the request of the Nicaraguans is disingenuous since we had really gone in originally unmasked, it could be added that even a request, could hardly save us from censure since it follows inevitably that the faction to whom we had lent money and from whom Americans had obtained concessions would ask, when threatened, our armed support. It would be pertinent here also to suggest that if principle kept us from intervention in China last Spring when England so urged us to combine with her, would not the same ideals be applicable on this continent. Is it only that we produce an ideal when our economic interests are not paramount?

Deserting the concrete question of Nicaragua one asks, what is our real desire in our relations with Latin America? Do we not really wish and need their friendship, cooperation and their trade? If so, why continue to do things which so strain our relations as to make it

impossible to attain these ends. That this is only too true is apparent by the apprehension of untoward incidents at the conference and the defensive position in which our delegation finds itself.

At the inception of the Monroe Doctrine, Latin America was emerging from its struggle for independence. We only, had the force necessary to insist that she must not be interfered with. From that has grown our paternalistic policing and setting them to rights, to prevent foreign powers from intervening to protect their investments and their nationals. But years have passed. There are now many great nations instead of struggling republics to the south of us. Their consciousness of their full-grown position has often been demonstrated. When Germany threatened Venezuela on the pretence of collecting debts due her and Roosevelt so ably circumvented her sinister plans and forced her to arbitrate, Luis Drago, Foreign Minister of Argentine and one of the world's most able international lawyers, announced as spokesman for Latin America, "that here was something that vitally concerned them all. That they would not admit that any nation had the right to intervene in a South American Republic for the collection of a public debt." He pointed out: "that South American nations must be allowed to go through with the same period of international irresponsibility through which each of the European nations", and he might have added, the United States as well, "had passed." He insisted "that if foreign bankers bought bonds of a notoriously revolutionary nation they must know they would get into trouble and that the principle of 'caveat emptor'--let the buyer beware--should be applied. That certainly he would have no right in international law, to invoke military authority to help him out of the results of his own folly."

Here we see not only sound reasoning as to the justice of the case, but we see the assertion of national dignity and self respect. How can they admit our independent action without feeling that it applies to them all. Put ourselves in their place,-- how would we view the independent action of any one of them in the affairs of another--and they are of the same family so to speak--and further, how would we, and one hardly can envisage such a contingency, view their interference in our own internal affairs?

That we have no intention of land-grabbing seems very clear. It is fair to suppose that Latin America is as interested as we, in keeping the peace and establishing stable government everywhere in the new world. We may also conclude that they are in accord with us about the desirability of maintaining the Panama Canal or seconding our efforts to establish another waterway from which those great commercial nations to the south must receive enormous benefit. We also can think that they recognize the wisdom of closing the door to any political interference in the Americas by the powers of the other hemisphere. If these premises are correct, where then comes the friction? It can only be in our arrogant assumption of the right to control their destinies. There is something in our reluctance to cease meddling which savors of what has become our most striking national trait --"control of other's conduct", which, to quote an eminent writer, "takes precedence over cooperation for common ideal ends. Not the prophet, the poet or the pioneer, but the policeman is the symbol of our civilization."

Instead of a national spirit as shown in smug editorials such as "Stooping to Conquer," "Not for the Fun of It", "America will do its Duty", "We Rest on our Record in Cuba", would we not do well to counsel cooperation and consultation, the only course which leaves

our neighbors their self-respect, instead of persisting in the original implication of the Monroe Doctrine without consideration of the march of events. To relax control and power when the time is ripe, is not without precedent. England gracefully did so when she surrendered the Ionian Islands to Greece, and only lately when seeing that her Dominions have risen to world power, she has accorded them practical autonomy. Can we do better than now to admit the Monroe Doctrine as hitherto construed, obsolete?

Mrs. Truxtun Beale.

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