Latin American experts discuss U.S. role in hemisphere

By TERRY O'ROURKE

Bitter disagreements over how to halt Communist subversion have not hampered expanding cooperation among nations of the Western Hemisphere, contended U. S. Ambassador to Mexico Fulton Freeman.

Freeman keynoted the second annual Conference of Mexican and North American University students, which met at the University of Texas last week to discuss the twentieth century problems facing the Western Hemisphere.

Covert Intervention

Disagreements over Communist subversion often pre-empt the news columns and the attention of the people to the exclusion of wide areas of quiet cooperation which have developed and become institutionalized within the system, Freeman added.

The ambassador said that "covert intervention," not "direct intervention," is one of the most pressing problems now facing the inter-American system. He however recognized that covert intervention is susceptible to misuse or abuse.

Self-Determination

"It is more difficult to establish, to the satisfaction of all, the facts regarding covert intervention, since it is concealed and surreptitious in nature."

Freeman said, "The purpose of non-intervention is to assure states or peoples unhampered exercise of their right to self-determination." He added that non-intervention is not an end in itself but a means to the end of self-determination.

Following the Freeman address, Dr. R. R. Rubottom, vice-president of University Affairs at SMU, spoke on the historical background of the U. S. relations with Latin America, particularly the Mexican expropriation of the U. S. oil industry.

Expropriation Supported

Curiously none of the student round table discussions which followed the speeches expressed anything but approval of the Mexican takeover of this U. S. property. As one UT professor said, "No serious scholar today has any question that Mexico was absolutely right in its actions."

A State Department officer in charge of Peruvian Political Affairs, Curtis Cutter, described the successes of the Alliance for Progress. He brought recent facts showing the extent of the U. S. commitment to Latin American economic progress.

Cutter emphasized that, "Through the Alliance the U. S. does nothing to a country or in a country, but rather everything is done with a country." He cited the over 2000 credit unions which the U. S. through the Peace Corps and the Alliance for Progress, has established.

Inflation Alleviated

Another success Cutter cited is the "33.3 per cent Program," where the U. S. provides one third, the Latin nation provides one third and the people at village level provide one third of the funds to build schools.

Significant help through the Alliance for Progress has cut Brazil's infamous annual inflation of 140% to 40% through capital loans from the U. S. of over half a billion dollars.

The Latin American delegates provided balance to the conference by citing the many places where the Alliance has been a detriment to the affairs of nations. In Mexico, U. S. loans to the Bank of Mexico are re-loaned to private banks which buy up the large land holdings and enable the campesinos—poor Mexican farmers—to buy land.

This is the re-distribution of land that everyone wants, the Mexican delegates noted. However, too many times these campesinos are illiterate and have insufficient agricultural knowledge to make the newly acquired lands pay. Thus they may default on loan payments and the land returns again to the wealthy.

The Mexican delegates called for more educational aids to the people to insure effective land reform.

The Mexican delegates also told of the indirect U. S. intervention, which they said was more dangerous than military intervention in their country. This intervention takes place every year when the U. S. sets quotas on Latin products that it will buy at subsidized prices.

Sugar Quotas

They cited the example of U. S. sugar purchases. Presently the world sugar market is at a historic low of 1.25 cents per pound, but the U. S. buys sugar from Mexico at 6 cents per pound. This situation is perfectly acceptable to the Mexicans but the quotas change every year making rational planning of the Mexican sugar crop impossible.

America may commit itself to buy 100 million tons from Mexico at 6 cents per pound this year but next year announce that the quota has been changed to 50 million tons. This means that Mexico must dump its over-production of sugar on the world market and lower the price even further.

Making the sugar situation worse is that other Latin nations cannot fulfill their increased sugar quotas and buy from Mexico at 1 cent or 2 cents per pound and sell at 6 cents to the U. S.

Luis Macias, head of the Mexican delegation, reiterated, "It is this type of economic intervention in all our products from cotton to copper that we fear and denounce the most."

Benevolent Brother

The first U. S. representative of Mexican descent, Henry B. Gonzales, of San Antonio,