

## An Open Letter To The Visiting Governors

Gentlemen:

Several Puerto Ricans will greet you with banners and U. S. flags trying to prove to you that they are 1000 per cent Americans. Several other Puerto Ricans will greet you with banners calling you damned yankees who ought to go back home. But there is a vast majority of us who will not engage in this shouting, flag waving exercise. I write this letter as a member of this silent majority.

May I state at the outset that we have always been a hospitable people with a love of civility. We extend this hospitality to you and wish you a pleasant time in our island. With the positions that some of you have taken on behalf of basic human rights and social justice, many of us here are in heartfelf agreement. With the views that some of you espouse regarding the racial situation in the United States, we are in sharp disagreement and find them most obnoxious.

But it is not for us to tell you or tell the voters of your States what you ought to do. We don't feel that as a people we should interfere in that internal matter. We trust you will not unduly interfere in ours and that out of your deliberations, the democratic process will be strenghtened in the United States.

You come to an island which is going through difficult times. We are being hard hit by the U. S. inflation. Our unemployment rates are 12% or 13% or much higher, according to different definitions and standards - figures which in your States would be a sign of grave alarm. Our industrial development, which was a beacon of hope and achievement, is showing deep strain. Tourism is on the downgrade. Agricultural production, particularly sugar, is facing a tough crisis. Social ills have multiplied and with them discontent and outright protest.

Politically, we are pretty much divided. The clear majority sentiment in favor of full Commonwealth development, expressed in the 1967 plebiscite, has been sidetracked by those who, though lacking a definite popular mandate, are now engaged in an outright push for statehood and have in the immediate past solicited your official support. We are all in a cloud of confusion.

We ask you 1) to understand this situation; 2) to avoid expressions which will only add fuel to the present discontent; and 3) to support our self-determination. We welcome collaboration, not intervention.

May I add a few words on Latin America. As you begin your meetings here, the Economic and Social Council of the OAS will be meeting in Panama. All signs point to a most critical meeting where the United States will be at bay. The President's economic message has deeply hurt Latin America, an area which, contrary to Europe, shows an adverse balance of payments with the United States. Politically and psychologically, the scars are still visible of the rough American descent on the Dominican Republic in 1965, a

descent which showed little concern for Latin American opinion or sensitivity. The Nixon policy of "low profile" has turned into a policy of no profile - except for the sustained assistance to the military.

I trust the Latin American statesmen whom you have invited will mince no diplomatic words in telling you the stark picture the Hemisphere is facing.

The strength of the democratic system in the United States, in Puerto Rico and elsewhere lies in recognizing hard facts and stubborn realities. The times are out of joint and there is need for wisdom, imagination and a profound concern for human wants. I hope these virtues will preside over your deliberations.

Sincerely,

Dr. Arturo Morales Carrión