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under  
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Torreón, Coahuila, México

March 22, 1962

Hector P. Garcia, M.D., Chairman and Founder  
Board of Directors  
American GI Forum of the U.S.  
3024 Morgan Avenue  
Corpus Christi, Texas

Dear Doctor Garcia:

I am enclosing an editorial which appeared in one of the local newspapers, *La Opinión*, and which expresses the sentiments of every Mexican citizen. Every newspaper in the country has become acutely interested in the Mexicali Valley salt water problem, and is carrying un-American editorials.

The pertinent question is this: is devastating the crops of the Mexicali Valley, which feed 300,000 Mexicans, part of the Alianza para el Progreso? And, is this one way that the Kennedy administration thinks that it can completely dominate Mexico, one of the few forced friends which it has in Latin-America? I sincerely believe that the Kennedy administration is not totally responsible for what is being done to Mexico, not can I believe that it is too blind to see what is being done, either. I feel that such inhuman actions are the acts of certain individuals, who, insensitive to the misery and poverty of others, are, egotistically, trying to push their way into history. By way of example I offer the following illustration: recently, Senator Smathers was quoted as saying that since Mexico had abstained from voting for the ouster of the Castro regime from the Organization of American States, it (México) would now feel the abstinence of American support. Perhaps the U.S. Senate would better serve the country by checking what such demagogues went around saying and spouting, particularly if it affected our international prestige, instead of censoring what every petty colonel and major said.

Doctor, I don't think that we can attribute the high salt content in the Tijuana, Colorado, and Grande Rivers to mere accidents, as some, including the U.S. Department of Interior, would have you believe. Someone knew about this for some time but would do nothing about it. Now, President Kennedy has given the International Commission on Boundaries and Waters forty-five days to find a "plausible" solution to the problem.

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However, forty-five days to a farmer can mean the difference between prosperity and economic annihilation. You might be interested to know that the salt in these rivers does not in any way affect the American farmers.

But this is only one of the many tribulations, originating in the U.S., which confronts México. Do you know, for example, that Mexico's sugar quota to the United States has been cut. This will be, in concrete figures, approximately \$125 million pesos that will not come into the Mexican economy. And to a country like Mexico, this is an amount that it can ill afford to lose. Furthermore, due to the comments of Senator Smather's, which were widely circulated in the newspapers, comments which were vituperative towards Mexico, the tourist attraction has fallen. And, both you and I know that Mexico depends on tourists for over one fourth of its income. This loss of tourists is something very pernicious to the Mexican economy, too.

Doctor, I personally feel that all of these malevolent acts are nothing more than political movements to bring pressure to bear on a poor and under-developed country for not supporting American imperialism. I am an American; but I cannot stand to see my country bully a defenseless republic like Mexico. And I say this with all objectivity.

President Kennedy, in my opinion, has done nothing more than cast platitudes. He talked big, acted big, but has manifested and promulgated little. He has impressed everyone with, without limits, the youthfulness that he has introduced into the government under the aegis of the new frontier. But how has this youthfulness added to governmental efficiency? For example, it is a fact that the young Harvard graduate who wrote the Alianza para el Progreso neither spoke or understood Spanish, or had ever visited Latin-America, of which he probably knew, or knows, less than you or me. All of the intricate and dazzling newness of the Kennedy administration, in fact, had done nothing, by the end of its first year in office, nothing constructive, that is, that the immediate past administration did not do. I sincerely feel that Kennedy has failed to see that Mexico is the U.S.'s front and back door. He has not been able to perceive that if Mexico were to go communist, and there is not every possibility that it could not, the U.S. would be doomed- in spite of the Monroe Doctrine, with which Castro has done everything but slap us.

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I should like to analyze the more important facets of the Kennedy foreign policy, if Kennedy can be said to have a foreign policy, especially those which concern Latin-America in general, and Mexico in particular. First there is the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps is nothing more than a campaign promise which Kennedy had to keep, and which he probably now regrets. The Corps has not been practical, useful, and thus far, completely enigmatic to organize, operate, and run. Shriver has done nothing, nor has the fleet of people working under him, to promote good and sound relationships anywhere in Latin-America. There are at present no corpsmen in Mexico, a country where they are really needed and where sentiments are growing more anti-American everyday. If Kennedy were at all sincere about a Peace Corps, he would turn one entire branch of the armed forces into the corps.

Kennedy once remarked, when asked what he thought about the criticisms of his administration, that he was young and entitled to mistakes, and capable of making them at repeated times. And I think that this is exactly what is wrong. Kennedy's administration made mistakes; but it is continuing to make them. To see this we can take the Alianza para el Progreso. Kennedy thought that he could win Latin-America with the Alianza. Do you know, however, that every university newspaper in Latin-America condemned the Alianza as being false and an on-the-spot-expedient? This Alianza has done more to provoke discontent in Latin-America than has Fidel Castro because he is considered temporary and, to a certain extent, fanatical; the Alianza is considered bad and permanent. Continuing, the Alianza is condemned as a tool to compel Latin-America to pledge allegiance to the U.S. in exchange for millions of dollars. Now, and in particular, what has the Alianza para el Progreso done for Mexico, where help is really needed, and not just promises. This is the answer: N O T H I N G. And López Mateos and Manuel Tello know this, quite clearly.

Now, we know that Mexico, with justification, watches very carefully how the United States treats the Americans of Mexican origin. Let us at this time examine just the Mexican-Americans are treated by the Kennedy administration.

Doctor, you are more experienced than me; and astute, and you have had more of an opportunity to participate, at first hand, in the shaping of our national policy, and I think that you have acted very wisely in this particular. However, when it comes to sheer human decency and fair play, to altruistic

respect for others, I am obliged to stand against everything that the Kennedy people did, and is doing with regard to our people. Kennedy and McCormick et al, promised us much and gave us nothing.

We, the Mexican-Americans were so sure that Lyndon Johnson was our friend, and that he would hear our pleas; and that through him we would be able to get to the president. Yes, we were fools for that moment, when dizzy with promises, we signed the dotted line pledging our support. And we can be called fools for believing that Johnson was that great, to use his favorite phrase, "friend of the Texas Latins." We were sure taken for a ride. And Yarborough, the man whom you have been photographed hugging, what has he done for his Texas Latin friends? Yarborough can be compared, in my estimation, to Judas Iscariot. I prefer Price Daniel, whom I execrate, to either Johnson or Yarborough; they have been harmful, he has been indifferent to us. To prove this we have the federal district judgeship of southern Texas which Salinas was supposed to have had, but which went to one of the most vendidos or comprados, as you wish, of all traitors. A man so base, that seeing his people suffering, and completely in need of help, proceeded to personally recommend the continuation of the Bracero program. Truly, he can be called a Judas.

On the national scene we have the near-octogenarian Dennis Chavez, who despite the fact that he is third in senate seniority, is only chairman of the powerful(?) senate public works committee. Oh yes, we do have Tellez in Costa Rica, one of the more dormant and insignificant of Central American Countries.

As you yourself have repeated, let's not kid ourselves. We think that we have friends, but we don't. We think that somebody up there likes us, but they don't. I don't think that the Mexican-American, and I say this with all candor, has gone any further, on the national spectre, than he had twenty years ago. Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, and how Kennedy, all promised much but have given little in the end. It seems that we, like little waifs, sit on the curb and wait for handouts, hoping that the next one to come along will be more generous than the one before. And how disillusioned we have been. How long will this continue, doctor? How long will we be at the mercy of those two-faced characters, who, posing under sheep skins are nothing more than coyotes? We are like the lost children of Israel, lost and wandering, crying in the desert.

You may not believe this, but I think that the most wonderful thing that has come out of the Kennedy administration has been the statement that Bobby Kennedy made in the Far East when he



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said that the blemish on the lily-white cheek of the American nation was when it invaded Mexico in 1846-48. Doctor, perhaps we helped put the wrong man in the presidential rocking chair.

You were sent to the West Indies and invited to the White House for dinner. Are you satisfied with this? Do you think that Kennedy did this to bring recognition to your ethnic group, to show thanks for your help, or because he had it whispered in his ear that there was discontent in Texas, among the Latins, who threatened to go fishing come '64? I leave it to you to answer.

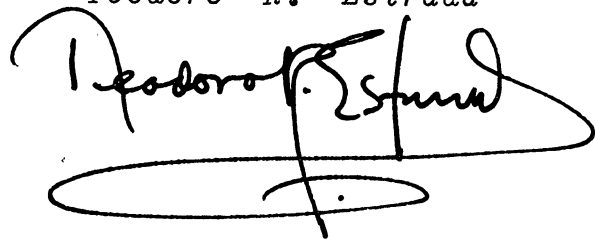
Doctor, you may reproach me for what I have said; but if you value my friendship, and I hope you do, you must realize that in the spirit of true liberalism, everything that I have said is true.

I have lost complete faith in the Kennedy administration and in the American Democratic Party and its set of value judgments. I hereby renounce all and any affiliations which I have had with it in the past, and unless the course of things should deem it otherwise, this is the last expressed opinion that I shall ever make on American politics, to you or anyone.

Thanking you for your attention and understanding I am,

Most sincerely yours,

Teodoro R. Estrada

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Teodoro R. Estrada'. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial 'T' and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom that loops back under the name.