

It seems to me that U.S. assistance should be directed toward encouraging a greater regional commitment toward reform of the agricultural sector. This should include regional efforts to diversify agricultural production from the traditional coffee, cotton, and banana crops. The endeavor may have to include everything from research and experimental stations, to extension services, to credit for small farmers participating in the undertaking. In some instances it may include land redistribution matters.

If the road to regional cooperation on agricultural questions looks steep, it is nevertheless vital to get on with the venture before the industrial expansion sparked by the Common Market tilts the regional economy askew.

I am confident that the Central Americans can approach their agricultural problems with the same vigor, persistence, and spirit of cooperation that they have demonstrated in constructing their remarkable Common Market experiment.

The experiences of my trip reaffirmed my basic support for the U.S. role in support of Central American economic integration. I think ROCAP has proved to be an extremely effective instrument for furthering Alliance for Progress goals in Central America. Above all, it is heartening to note that Central American initiative and self-help, bolstered by timely U.S. assistance, are producing tangible results of fortunate consequence for the peace and security of the entire hemisphere.