

9 April 1957

Dear President Reitz:

I deplore that pressure of work, as well as reasons of health, have prevented me from making an earlier acknowledgment of your letter of March 11, in which you convey an invitation to speak at your Eighth Annual Conference on the Caribbean to be held at Gainesville on December 5, 6 and 7, 1957.

I am deeply appreciative of this invitation and hope very much to attend and prepare a paper on the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. All the students of the Caribbean area are grateful to the University of Florida for its outstanding work in studying the basic problems and trends of this region.

Sincerely yours,

ARTURO MORALES CARRION
Commonwealth
Under Secretary of State

Dr. J. Wayne Reitz
President
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida

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Dear Mr. Wilgus:

I am deeply sorry about the delay in replying to your letter of February 22. As you know, my health has not been too good of late. However, I hope that I shall be sufficiently recovered to participate in the Eighth Annual Caribbean Conference at Gainesville. I am attaching a copy of the letter I have sent to President Reitz.

I wonder if it is not too late to make some further suggestions regarding the title of the conference. Would it not be more appropriate to discuss the "Evolution of self-government in the former dependencies of the United States, Great Britain, Holland and France in the Caribbean?" While your recommendation of the phrase "U.S. area" would not bring about much misunderstanding in the United States, I am afraid it would carry in the view of Latin Americans some connotation of dependency in regard to Puerto Rico. As you know the central idea of our present Commonwealth status is that Puerto Rico is a Latin American country which has established a close political association with the United States, based on common citizenship and other essential features, but no longer "belonging" to the United States. Under our compact, there is Federal jurisdiction regarding certain matters in Puerto Rico but we are fully self-governing in the rest. We are trying to emphasize as strongly as we can, in presenting the Commonwealth in its proper light to Latin Americans, this idea of a free association of peoples of different cultural background and inhabiting different geographical areas. As you may see, it is more than mere semantics. I hope I shall be able to make clear this thought in my talk, but would appreciate a drafting of the general theme which would help in clarifying in Latin America and the Caribbean, the significant relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States.

If it is not too late, I would like to suggest the names of Dr. Eugenio Fernández Méndez, College of Social Sciences, University of Puerto Rico,

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Dr. A. Curtis Wilgus
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for "The Society", and Dr. Antonio J. Colorado, for "The Economy". Both are effective speakers, and well versed in their respective subjects. I am certain they would make a good contribution to the Conference.

Best regards from,

ARTURO MORALES CARRION
Commonwealth
Under Secretary of State

AMC/gcv