

# Speech

Organization of American States



**LUIGI R. EINAUDI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL OF  
THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES  
UPON APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEM 2, "GUIDELINES FOR  
THE OPERATION OF THE FUND FOR PEACE: PEACEFUL  
SETTLEMENT OF TERRITORIAL DISPUTES" OAS  
PERMANENT COUNCIL SESSION  
December 1, 2000 - Washington, DC**

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Thank you Mr. Chairman. I wanted to add a few comments to those already made by Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua about satisfaction with the approval of the Peace Fund guidelines. I believe this fund and the Belize-Guatemala subfund that we confirmed as the first item today are, in effect, a bet on modernity, on progress, on the fact that international cooperation can work, and specifically that it can work in helping to clear away some of the historic underbrush that hampers the process of full integration in the Hemisphere.

I think it is important to note that the difficulties that we have had in adopting these guidelines is not because the negotiators or the participants in these discussions were being difficult, obstinate, or had ulterior motives of somehow opposing the process. It is because these problems are quintessentially, extraordinarily difficult. They affect questions of sovereignty that are vital to all of our states and respect for which is fundamental to our cooperation. They are often problems that are therefore not admitted, but it is interesting that a small project, inspired by the adoption in Windsor of resolution AG/RES. 1756 (XXX-O/00), was conducted at the Columbus Memorial Library recently, the preparation of an index of references to disputes, as they have affected the OAS, between 1948 and June of 2000. This lengthy listing of documents show that conflicts are a pervasive, though sometimes undiscussed problem in our relations, and therefore the operationalizing of the Peace Fund constitutes, in my view at least, a demonstration of political will and provides a vehicle through which the international community can respond by channeling support for dispute resolution processes.

And if you will indulge me, I just want to make two points: a historical note and a direct appeal to the donor community, including many of our observer states.

El triángulo temático de los fundadores de la Carta de Bogotá —paz, seguridad y solución pacífica de controversias— no siempre ha podido ser realizado fácilmente en la práctica. Tanto la Comisión Interamericana de Paz de la Carta de Bogotá como la Comisión Interamericana de Soluciones Pacíficas, incorporada mediante el Protocolo de Buenos Aires de 1967, al ofrecer organismos preexistentes sujetos a estatutos y reglamentos rígidos habían llevado a congelar las posibilidades políticas de considerar en el ámbito de la OEA temas de esa naturaleza. A ello se sumaba el proceso incompleto de ratificación del Pacto de Bogotá. Y habría que agregar también las dudas permanentes y crecientes con el pasar de los años, asociados con el papel del Tratado de Rio y el sistema de cooperación militar.

La reforma de Cartagena, teniendo en cuenta los excelentes resultados que habían tenido las Comisiones ad hoc integradas para resolver el conflicto fronterizo de 1977 entre Costa Rica y Nicaragua, flexibiliza el sistema de solución pacífica de controversias y lo despoja de su tradicional rigidez tanto en lo que respecta a la integración cuanto al mandato. Procedimientos de naturaleza política diplomática han ido evolucionando hacia formas y mecanismos de eficiencia que en los últimos años han podido aportar soluciones realistas a diferendos territoriales que, más allá de la mera disputa fronteriza tienen dimensiones particulares en el ámbito económico. Varios ejemplos recientes nos van indicando que una dosis de buena voluntad de las partes

puede superar la complejidad de la historia y de la disputa y llevarla a un desenlace equitativo.

Es importante reconocer que el debate que hemos tenido en esta Organización, tanto en la preparación de la resolución como en los lineamientos, ha demostrado la participación positiva de casi la mitad de los Estados miembros. Yo he anotado muy rápidamente que han participado en forma sustantiva en esos debates Argentina, Brasil, Canadá, El Salvador, Honduras, Jamaica, México, Guatemala, Belice, Chile, Estados Unidos, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Costa Rica y Antigua y Barbuda. Eso representa efectivamente un compromiso común de buscar soluciones pacíficas.

I would like to end by saying something very simple by way of appeal on the importance of contributions to this fund. We all know that where conflicts exist the areas affected, the border provinces particularly, are held back and punished, often by their own central authorities, historically, for nothing that they had done but merely being in the way of a possible attack from another country. We are all aware of situations where roads could not be built because the road could be used by a neighbor to invade.

Today in this hemisphere that is increasingly less frequent. Border peoples are willing and eager to cooperate and central governments are increasingly aware of the costs of unsettled disputes. The real issue today, it seems to me, is that somehow we in the international community who are not parties to the dispute will, for various reasons of indifference, first allow conflicts and potential conflicts to fester and then allow agreements once they have been reached to be orphaned and left without the support that they deserve.

I have spent forty-five years working on US relations with Latin America and the Caribbean. And in those years I have seen some extraordinary things happen, as have all of you. Among them are things that we often forget. We have seen the end of military dictatorship in Latin America; we have seen the end of colonialism in the Caribbean; more recently, we have seen the end of armed conflicts in Central America. Yet in our discourse we are still often filled with doubts whether we can achieve irreversible progress, whether the details of our political relations and of our integration can be made to work.

I believe that today shows that the details are working. But the fact also is that we cannot be absent; we must create a mutual support mechanism, an engranaje of integration, of cooperation, of mutual responsiveness that will ensure that peace will last and that the problems that still exist can be resolved so that we can, together, reap the benefits of the twenty-first century.

I am sorry for that little bit of ending rhetoric. But this is what I believe.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Headquarters: 17th Street & Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, USA  
Tel. (202)458-3000 / Email: multimedia@oas.org

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