

"Pan American Day 1992"
Remarks by Ambassador Luigi R. Einaudi
Protocolary Session of the OAS Permanent Council
April 15, 1992

I will limit myself to two points.

First, I would like to read the Proclamation issued yesterday by the President of the United States while traveling in Dearborn, Michigan. I think you will find it particularly apt to the situation we face in this organization's one hundred and second year.

Second, I will make a brief comment of my own.

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
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April 14, 1992

PAN AMERICAN DAY AND PAN AMERICAN WEEK, 1992

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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

This year, the peoples of the Americas are deeply mindful of our common heritage as we celebrate Christopher Columbus's historic journeys to this region half a millennium ago. Yet today we celebrate not only the great meeting of our cultures that was initiated by Columbus and his crew but also our shared commitment to democratic ideals and to the advancement of human freedom and progress throughout the Western Hemisphere. Those shared aspirations and values form the basis of the unique international alliance that we celebrate each year during Pan American Day and Pan American Week.

The Inter-American System dates back to 1890, with the establishment of the International Union of American Republics -- later known as the Pan American Union. Our present commitment to inter-American solidarity and freedom is embodied by that institution's successor, the Organization of American States. Recognizing that "the historic mission of America is to offer man a land of liberty, and a favorable environment for . . . the realization of his just aspirations," signatories to the OAS Charter agreed to work together to strengthen the peace and security of the American states, to prevent possible causes of difficulties among them and to facilitate the peaceful settlement of disputes, and to promote, through cooperative action, their economic, social, and cultural development. Signatories to the OAS Charter also declared that:

. . . the true significance of American solidarity and good neighborliness can only mean the consolidation on this continent, within the framework of democratic institutions, of a system of individual liberty and social justice based on respect for the essential rights of man.

After a century of partnership, we know that any real and lasting progress within the Inter-American System has gone hand in hand with our commitment to this ideal.

The United States firmly believes in the value of the Inter-American System as a force for promoting peace and stability in the region. In recent years, the Organization of American States has proved to be an effective vehicle not only for the settlement of disputes but also for the promotion of representative government and human rights. With the principal exception of Castro's Cuba, we have come close to achieving the world's first completely democratic hemisphere. Today the OAS is playing a key role in efforts to restore democracy in Haiti and Peru.

As part of their expressed commitment to democratic ideals, members of the OAS have recognized that all human beings have the right "to attain material well-being and spiritual growth under circumstances of liberty, dignity, equality of opportunity, and economic security." Accordingly, the United States and its friends and neighbors have also been working together to promote investment and free and fair trade in the region, to alleviate the problems of official debt, and to encourage protection of the environment. These goals form the heart of the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative, which recently took another step forward with the establishment of

the Multilateral Investment Fund. This new fund will provide targeted support for Latin American countries as they transform lumbering state-run industries into efficient private enterprises.

Because the security and well-being of our peoples -- and the stability of entire governments -- also depend on our success in the fight against drugs, we remain committed to achieving the goals of the 1990 Cartagena Declaration, which laid the foundation for the development of a comprehensive, multilateral anti-drug strategy. At our recent summit in San Antonio, the United States and six of our Latin American neighbors agreed to move beyond the achievements of Cartagena and to strengthen interdiction, alternative development, and demand reduction efforts. In these and other endeavors, we are heartened by the prospect of extending human freedom and progress throughout the hemisphere -- from Point Barrow, Alaska, to Puerto Williams, Chile, and to every point in between.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Tuesday, April 14, 1992, as Pan American Day and the week of April 13 through April 18, 1992, as Pan American Week. I urge the Governors of the fifty States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and officials of other areas under the flag of the United States, to honor these observance with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

My own comment is this. Today is almost three years to the day that Secretary Baker asked me if I was interested in becoming the Permanent Representative of the United States to the Organization of American States. I said I was, and I have worked with you and with our distinguished Secretary General since then.

We have been fortunate to work in a world that was not only changing rapidly, but also changing in ways that facilitated our work and our objectives. The continuing democratic revolution. New interest in multilateralism. New economic beginnings in many member countries. New interest in regionalism.

Of course, we still have many problems. Organization. Resources. Priorities. Information. Even sometimes self-definition. It is an aspect of self-definition that I wish to comment on now.

The entrance to the OAS as full members of Canada in 1990 and of Belize and Guyana in 1991 have brought our numbers to 35, meaning that all independent states of the Western Hemisphere today belong to the OAS. This is a fact worth not only noting but celebrating, for it gives this Council and this Organization unprecedented perspective from which to consider the many pressing problems of the hemisphere.

The passage of these countries to full membership has had another consequence as well: it has actually eliminated one type of observer -- the implicit category of "member in waiting" or, if you wish, "potential member." With all 35 independent states of the Western Hemisphere now in the OAS as members (even if the government of one, Cuba, remains suspended), the remaining observer states are here not because they are interested in full membership, but because they are interested in cooperating with us and in learning about us.

Interestingly, over the past three years, despite the passage of some observers to membership, the total number of observers has grown by some 50% to 30 states beyond the hemisphere. Clearly, the interest in us of the outside world is increasing.

The same is, or should be, true for us. We are, or should be, increasingly interested in the outside world. After all, we are part of the globe as well as of the Americas.

Yet sometimes I feel we are so turned inward to the problems of the Americas that we may not be maximizing our opportunities to affirm our interests in the changing world order. Nor indeed to enlist the cooperation of the outside world in solving our many pressing problems.

In the still inconclusive discussion of a "new world order," one point has so far become evident. The United Nations is playing a much greater role than in the past. This is, of course, partly a reflection of its role in the Gulf War. But it is also a reflection of its willingness since then to take on massive responsibilities in peacekeeping operations elsewhere as well.

Now, it is quite apparent that the OAS is not the UN. But it is obvious also that despite the UN's new responsibilities there is still considerable room for regional organizations

such as the OAS to help shape the new world order. Indeed some UN leaders, including Secretary General Boutros Gali, seem willing to welcome activity by regional organizations. This is certainly true in my government and in the United States Congress.

It is of course true, as Ambassador Opertti of Uruguay has just indicated, that the OAS has recently grown outwardly as well as inwardly. Last year, our Secretary General and the Chairman of this Permanent Council visited Europe to present some common hemispheric concerns stemming from the GATT negotiations. Just this past month, the OAS Commission to monitor the embargo on Haiti met with representatives of the European Community.

Even so, as was coincidentally noted just this morning in another meeting of this organization, during the just-concluded ad-hoc Meeting of Ministers on Peru, the distinguished diplomats who represent their countries as Permanent Observers were excluded without discussion from the private meetings -- as if they were journalists.

That action excluded Peru's largest aid donor. Japan is not a member of this organization, but it is an observer. We need the cooperation of Japan to help Peru resolve its problems.

I submit that we have reached a stage in world history in which we of the Americas -- North, Central, Caribbean, and South -- must learn to cooperate with others, not only beyond our borders, but beyond our hemisphere.

So I am taking advantage of this Pan American day to ask all of us to look to our ties beyond this hemisphere. I would ask us to add the question of the role of observers to the key problems facing the OAS: Organization. Resources. Priorities. Information. Observers: What may we expect of them? What should they expect of us?

FOR INFORMATION FOLLOWS THE LIST OF COUNTRIES ACCREDITED TO THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES AS PERMANENT OBSERVERS AS OF April 1992: Algeria, Angola, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, European Communities, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Morocco, Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia.