

**THE FUTURE OF  
THE ORGANIZATION OF  
AMERICAN STATES  
AND HEMISPHERIC SECURITY**



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These are exciting times. For me as an American ambassador, they coincide with that rare luxury of having a president who was ambassador to the United Nations, who knows the meaning of multilateralism, and who does not stop at rhetoric. The fact that we were able to pay our dues to the O.A.S. for the first time in nine years last year is not to my credit, as it is sometimes thought among my colleagues, but, very simply, President George Bush's.

It is an exciting time because of what is happening in Latin America. I cannot stress enough, from an American perspective, the meaning of the democratization of the region. Democratization creates a common bond, a solidarity. It enables us to look out at friends and fellow American republics, and, instead of rejecting—the way we instinctively do—regimes of force, we respond by trying to work on something. We can use democracy to solve common problems.

It is an exciting time because it is sort of vertiginous. I was sworn in on the 9th of November, 1989. Even I did not notice my swearing in, because I was busy watching the Berlin Wall come down. What has happened in terms of the structures and relationships, not only among world powers, but among continents, is really quite extraordinary. It has made working in the world's oldest regional organization, the world's oldest international organization, in these vertiginous times, a truly extraordinary privilege.

Where does the O.A.S. fit into all of this? The secretary general said earlier that what we should do is read the charter and implement it. I must say that I have felt from the start that the juridical instrument that we have in the O.A.S. is as close to perfection as our poor human minds can fashion. We do not even have a Security Council. In the Permanent Council, everyone belongs and everyone has the same rights. In that sense, we are, perhaps, a step up on a new international system that must be based on democracy among countries as well as within them.

We now are, again as the secretary general said, as close to universality in this hemisphere as we have ever been. The entry of Canada a year ago and

the entry just this year of Belize and Guyana are quite extraordinary. This enables us, again as the secretary general said, to look with some hope to the possibility that Cuba, the government of Cuba, may sufficiently democratize its policies and its regional relations to take its place again in the O.A.S.

So the question that emerges is: Why, Luigi Einaudi, if you are talking like this, did you go before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when you were being confirmed and say that you had just been given mission impossible? Well, the unfortunate fact is that there is a tremendous load of unfulfilled dreams associated with the O.A.S.

It is not just that the O.A.S. is in some way the institutional inheritor of the new world idea. It is also that North Americans all remember Nicaragua in 1979, when, from our perspective, the United States engaged in an act of self-restraint that was not reciprocated by the Latin American countries. And Latin Americans often remember what happened at the Falklands/Malvinas Islands in 1982, when the great mythological alliance of the United States with the rest of the hemisphere proved to be precisely that, mythological, from the Latin perspective, when faced with a challenge from the Spain of the United States, our *madre patria*, the United Kingdom.

I guess all of us felt that the O.A.S. was somehow less than what it was meant to be when it failed to deal with the debt issue. I realize that the debt issue is preeminently an economic issue, and that to politicize it beyond economic channels is to invite all kinds of repercussions. But there is no doubt that the failure of the O.A.S. throughout the 1980s to address debt was one of many things that seemed to consign it to the dust bin of history.

I think one of the reasons that we were not so consigned is reflected in the secretary general's remarks. His tact, discretion and sensitivity to political pressures in a very diverse institution is one of the reasons that, in fact, the institution survived the very difficult years of the 1980s and has arrived at a point now where it has a real future.

Let me quickly review three areas. First the best, and it is the one that the secretary general already has discussed. It is the political area. I would say that, even in our darkest days, we did rather well with the human rights commission, which stood as a beacon for the principle of democracy and

individual human rights, even when the hemisphere was sunk in the worst periods of dictatorship and disillusionment. We now face a much different situation, one in which the human rights commission is going to have to learn to deal with democracy, and to approach it with a degree of professionalism that may have been avoidable earlier when perhaps simpler targets were available. But certainly no one can take away the extraordinary record of that commission.

I think we are doing rather well as a forum. President Carlos Menem of Argentina referred to the Organization in one of his recent talks at the O.A.S. as a “caja de resonancia”—a sounding chamber for the hemisphere. He and many of the presidents of the hemisphere have used to the Permanent Council, as in fact Nicaraguan President Violeta Chamorro will do tomorrow morning, April 16, at 9:30am, as a place where they could speak out. Sometimes, or if the speaker is my friend Carlos Andrés Pérez, President of Venezuela, they will speak with such clarity that they send many people away reeling, looking for the protective veils of non-intervention, of the sovereign equality of states and of representatives.

So, the O.A.S., in fact, has been an organization where it has been possible to hear a great deal and to hear it from every member state of the hemisphere. As the departing Argentine Ambassador to the O.A.S., Juan Pablo Lohlé, recently said in his farewell, working at the O.A.S. is a little bit like taking a walk through the hemisphere.

I would say that it is extremely hard for us who are ambassadors to the O.A.S. to have an unbalanced view of the hemisphere because we must, as we look around the table, deal with each and every one of us, every one of the countries and their special and definite interests. So, I think the political area has been very successful for the O.A.S. Since the secretary general already has provided details about electoral observation, let me just add that one of the most impressive elements of the O.A.S.’s work is that it came early and stayed late. The O.A.S. has put knowledge of electoral procedure above loyalty to foreign offices and foreign ministries. It has been extraordinarily impressive in putting people in the field who are from the area, and who therefore understand its foibles, its difficulties, its small habits, and who do not make the types of gross mistakes that have underlaid all of the big interventions of our time.

Let me move to the area that troubles me most. I say this in the presence of Major General Bernard Loeffke, an old friend and currently chairman of the Inter-American Defense Board. We have from the first day worked very hard to work together. What we have achieved is evident in a number of areas. Certainly what he has achieved is dramatic. Earlier this evening he recounted his innovation of introducing the presence of civilian ambassadors to quiz military colonels on their graduation.

Nevertheless, there is, for me, great frustration in the inability to bring together the O.A.S. and the Inter-American Defense Board, the civilian political authority and the military institutional authority. It is clearly time that we translated the democratic solidarity that we have achieved in the hemisphere into a new definition and role for the military. We are very far from that still and, in a sense, some of the biggest successes of the O.A.S. underscore how far away we are.

The Nicaraguan example that is much before our minds this week brings to our attention the fact that not only has the O.A.S. observed elections in Nicaragua, but it also has fielded observers to keep the peace, people who have, in effect, acted as witnesses, as *tramitadores* in the most classic sense. Without guns, the O.A.S. has kept peace between a confused and over-burdened national bureaucracy and Nicaraguans of different political persuasions, the same way that unarmed observers of the O.A.S. did so much recently to contribute to the democratic outcome in Haiti.

That said, I will now declare myself before all of you as enough of a conservative to believe that no society can work without a degree of coercion. Peace and order cannot always be kept without guns. I think it is time that we figured out a way, somehow, to bring armed force and coercion in line with our democratic aspirations and, increasingly, our democratic behavior.

There is one last key area in which I have felt very privileged to have participated over the last year. It is the area of economics. It would be easy for me to praise the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative. But to me, more important in this past year has been the discovery that it is a mistake to look at hemispheric relations as North-South relations, as inherently a rich-poor, sardine-shark, conflictual relationship of zero-sum games.

On December 20, the Permanent Council, at the initiative of the Uruguayan representative, supported by the Argentine, who was at that time chairman of the Permanent Council, passed a resolution that called upon the European Community to show greater flexibility in the negotiations on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). We did not actually state that agriculture was the subject that was on our minds, but it was. In that resolution, what we did in a very simple way was take a first tentative step toward identifying a common, rather than a conflictive, interest in the hemisphere. We took an initial step toward a common interest on a fundamental economic front, one that unites Canada and Argentina, the United States and Brazil, and Mexico, Colombia and Peru in ways that will help unlock the hemisphere's great potential.

Let me close. It was a great French socialist, who, when asked fifty-plus years ago why he and his colleagues had not been able to foretell the future, responded that asking the question was quite a compliment. Most of us politicians, he continued, have a very hard time foretelling the present. What I am telling you is that the present of the O.A.S. is alive.