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Canada And The OAS: From Dilettante To Full Partner

by

Peter McKenna

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

at

**Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia**



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by Peter Leonard McKenna
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Helen Heron, who was a woman of incredible strength and courage. Throughout the course of this thesis, she was--and still remains--an unfailing source of inspiration. She was someone who believed in me--even when she was facing the most difficult challenge of her own life. I hope that I can be half the person that she was. Even though she endured tremendous pain and suffering, she still managed to touch those around her in a very special way. I will be forever grateful to have been one of those people...

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ABSTRACT

Since the early 1900s, Canada's relations with the inter-American community have not engendered a great deal of attention among policy-makers and opinion-makers in Canada. For the most part, Canada's involvement in the hemisphere has consistently occupied a low priority in the conduct of Canadian foreign policy. However, the issue of Canada's association with inter-American political institutions--namely, the Pan American Union (PAU) and the Organization of American States (OAS)--has tended to dominate Canadian-Latin American relations. More specifically, the question of Canadian membership in these bodies has been not only a recurring issue, but also a contentious one.

In late 1989, though, the Conservative government--in opting to join the OAS--settled the membership debate once and for all. After more than fifty years of aloofness toward the body, the government of Brian Mulroney felt that it was time "for Canada to occupy the vacant chair at the OAS that has been reserved for us all these years." The reasons for undertaking this move, however, have remained somewhat of a mystery. What is for certain is that Canada became the thirty-third member of the OAS in early January 1990, when Canada's Ambassador to the OAS, Jean-Paul Hubert, took his seat in the Council chambers.

Broadly speaking, this study focuses on Canada's association with the principal political institutions of the Inter-American System. In addition to detailing the evolution of Pan Americanism and its institutional offshoots, it discusses Canada's position or attitude toward these institutional entities. It also examines how the OAS's record of performance (during a number of hemispheric crises or conflicts), and the various reform movements within the body, have influenced Canada's position on the membership question. Furthermore, it outlines the key actors in the membership debate as well as their respective positions on admission. Moreover, it analyses the reasons underpinning the Conservative government's decision to join the hemispheric forum in late 1989. Lastly, it concludes with a discussion of both the opportunities and constraints which Canada will have to contend with as a full-fledged member of the OAS.

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Chapter One

Introduction

"Canada is not a Greta Garbo among the nations: we do not want to be alone."¹

Since the founding of the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1948, successive Canadian governments have--until only recently--opted consistently for a distinct, though aloof role from the body.² Prior to the Conservative government's announcement to seek admission to the "club" in late 1989, the official file on the OAS had been opened and subsequently closed on several occasions, and Parliament had mused over the possible advantages and disadvantages of membership in the hemispheric forum for decades. But the answer almost invariably remained the same--namely, that Ottawa was not prepared to drop its remote Garboesque mentality and become one of a "cast of dozens."

¹ This is taken from a speech given by de Montigny Marchand, Canada's former Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Americas Society in New York, 15 November 1990, p.2.

² The term "aloof" is used throughout the text to describe Canada's position toward the Organization of American States (OAS) and its predecessor, the Pan American Union (PAU). According to The Concise English Dictionary, the word "aloof" is defined in the following way: "To take no part in, keep away; remain by oneself, remain unsympathetic." This definition tends to capture aptly Canada's cautious and unenthusiastic approach toward the inter-American system's principal institutional entities.

In the summer of 1989, however, the Department of External Affairs (DEA), after reviewing Canada's policy toward Latin America, recommended that the Canadian government should join the OAS as a full-fledged member. While Prime Minister Mulroney and U.S. President Bush first broached the subject privately in late August, the actual policy change itself was not made public until the end of October.³ During his address to seventeen hemispheric leaders--gathered in San José to celebrate 100 years of Costa Rican democracy--the Prime Minister noted: "Our government has concluded that the time has come for Canada to occupy the vacant chair at the OAS that has been reserved for us all these years."⁴ This announcement was followed by the November 13 signing of the OAS ceremonial documents by then External Affairs Minister Joe Clark in Washington. On 8 January 1990, Canada became officially the

³ Much to the chagrin of senior DEA officials, Mulroney informed the press of his discussions on the OAS, and in particular his government's intention to review the membership issue, with President Bush. Jennifer Lewington, "Mulroney, Bush vow action on drugs, trade," The Globe and Mail, 1 September 1989, p.A1. Foreign policy mandarins were perturbed by the fact that Mulroney spoke about the OAS at Bush's summer retreat in Kennebunkport, Maine rather than in official Ottawa. They were concerned about Mulroney's remarks in Kennebunkport creating the public perception that Canada was once again being pressured to adjust its foreign policy to the whims of the behemoth to the south. Confidential interview with a former senior DEA official, 12 August 1991.

⁴ Notes for an address by the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, San José, Costa Rica, 27 October 1989, p.5.

33rd member of the organization, when it formally ratified its signature of the OAS Charter.⁵

It is important to remember, though, that the road to occupying the so-called "empty chair" was a long, and often difficult, one. Indeed, as this study indicates, Canada has had a lengthy and varied history with inter-American political institutions--specifically, the Pan American Union (PAU) and the OAS. Canadian political leaders, for their part, have traditionally sought to skirt the issue of membership in these bodies, but they did not seek to isolate Canada totally from these hemispheric institutions. Over the years, Canadian governments have opted for full participation in a handful of specialized OAS organizations. And by the early 1970s, Canada had obtained "permanent observer" status in the hemispheric forum, joined the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and had begun playing a larger role in various other inter-American bodies.

Broadly speaking, this thesis examines Canada's association, or lack thereof, with both the PAU and the OAS. More specifically, it looks at how Canadian governments, over the years, have approached the oft-repeated notion of full membership in these bodies. It also

⁵ The membership fee for Canada was roughly assessed at \$6.3 million, with another \$1.8 million going to the organization's voluntary fund for aid and development.

discusses the reasons why these particular institutional entities were viewed in a cautious manner by officialdom in Ottawa. In order to grapple with such issues as Canadian membership in the OAS, the Mulroney government's decision to join the body in late 1989, and what potential role(s) Canada can perform as member of the "club," it is useful to recognize Canada's myriad linkages with the wider hemispheric community.

Canadian linkages with the inter-American community

In addition to the above-mentioned institutional attachments, Canada has maintained a number of ties with the wider inter-American community.⁶ And Canada is well-positioned as a Western industrialized nation, a member of the Group of 7, and a sizeable foreign aid donor to play a leading role in hemispheric affairs. Moreover, its willingness to work assiduously within the confines of other international organizations bodes well for Canada's

⁶ This section is not intended to be a detailed history of Canada's numerous ties with the inter-American system. Rather, it is designed to inform the reader of the fact that Canada has, over the years, established a wide variety of contacts with this hemisphere. This, in turn, helps to dilute the notion that the decision to join the OAS was akin to a "bolt out of the blue."

involvement in inter-American institutional life.⁷ Perhaps more important, though, is Canada's unique situation with regard to the Western hemisphere itself. Not only is it a trusted ally of Washington and a leading member of the Commonwealth, but it also has extensive commercial relations with Latin America--as well as the distinction of never having invaded any country in the region.

Canada's long-standing role in the Caribbean is well documented, underscored by the fact that it has received a considerable amount of attention from successive governments in Ottawa--reflected, over the years, in their significant aid disbursements and even debt-forgiveness.⁸ By the late 1980s, Canada's relations or linkages with the Commonwealth Caribbean were becoming increasingly more solidified. Although commercial relations between Canada

⁷ Canada has been active in the United Nations, the Commonwealth, and La francophonie in dealing with such issues as African economic recovery, apartheid South Africa, and Third World debt. See, for example, John W. Holmes, "The United Nations in Perspective," Behind the Headlines, 44:1 (October 1986), pp.1-24; Clarence G. Redekop, "The Mulroney Government and South Africa: Constructive Disengagement," Behind the Headlines, 44:2 (December 1986), pp. 1-16; and John Kirton, "Shaping the Global Order: Canada and the Francophone and Commonwealth Summits of 1987," Behind the Headlines, 44:6 (June 1987), pp.1-17.

⁸ For a historical examination of Canadian-Caribbean relations, see, James J. Guy, "The Caribbean: A Canadian Perspective," in Brian Douglas Tennyson, (ed.), Canadian-Caribbean Relations: Aspects of a Relationship, (Sydney, Nova Scotia: University College of Cape Breton, 1990), pp.257-299.

and the Commonwealth Caribbean were, for many years, disappointing, the trade picture in 1989 showed signs of improvement, with two-way trade totalling some \$632 million--with Canada experiencing a surplus of some \$48 million.⁹

While the trade statistics are less than spectacular, Canada's development assistance to the area has been noteworthy, and is respected throughout the region. In fact, the Caribbean Commonwealth, on a per capita basis, has been the largest regional recipient of Canadian aid. In March of 1990, Prime Minister Mulroney participated in a Commonwealth Caribbean heads of state meeting in Barbados, at which he promised to increase aid to the region--which amounted to \$100 million in 1989--by five per cent annually over the next two years.¹⁰ At the same gathering, he announced--with much fanfare--the "forgiveness" of some \$182 million in debt owed to Canada by Commonwealth

⁹ Linda Hossie, "Caribbean leaders laud Canada's 'commitment'," The Globe and Mail, 21 March 1990, p.A11. By way of comparison, two-way trade in 1981 was roughly \$477 million. See, Statistics Canada, Catalogue 65-202, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1991), pp.4-5 and Statistics Canada, Catalogue 65-203, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1991), pp.4-5.

¹⁰ Linda Hossie, "\$182 million in debt is forgiven, PM tells Caribbean countries," The Globe and Mail, 20 March 1990. p.A1.

Caribbean nations.¹¹

Like the Commonwealth Caribbean, the countries of Latin America have been witness to a number of prime ministerial promises over the years.¹² Unlike the Commonwealth Caribbean, though, those promises have tended to be long on rhetoric and short on substance. Indeed, it would not be a terrible flight of fancy to suggest that Canadian-Latin American relations--particularly during the 1970s--have been characterized by more "pop" and less

¹¹ Like its ties with the Anglophone Caribbean, Canada's relations with Haiti, a predominantly French-speaking country, have been excellent. For many years, it was the largest single recipient of Canadian development assistance in the Caribbean. In 1988, though, Ottawa decided, largely in response to the nation's serious political difficulties, to channel its aid primarily through non-governmental organizations and multilateral agencies. More recently, aid figures show that Canadian assistance totalled more than \$22 million for 1989-1990. See Rheal Sequin, "PM takes rights campaign to Paris," The Globe and Mail, 18 November 1991, p.A1. A recent illustration of close Canadian-Haitian relations was signified by the presence of Pierre Côté, Québec's chief electoral commissioner, and the head of the OAS observer team monitoring the December 1990 elections in Haiti. Moreover, the newly-elected president, Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, received much of his formal theological training in Montreal. Given the nature of Canada's relations with both Haiti and the Commonwealth Caribbean, it is well-placed to exercise a fair amount of influence in the region.

¹² It is, of course, simplistic to speak of Latin America as a single whole or entity. Within Latin America, there exists a variety of peoples, with linguistic and cultural differences, and political economies.

"sizzle."¹³ Nonetheless, Canada has managed, over the years, to establish a host of linkages with many Latin American countries, and has recognized the importance of substantially developing these ties.

Throughout the 1980s, Canada has sought to cultivate favourable trade relations with the major players in the region--namely, Brazil, Mexico, Cuba, and Venezuela. By 1983, the region as a whole, and these countries in particular, represented Canada's most important export market after the U.S, Western Europe, and Japan.¹⁴ Five years later, two-way trade was still in excess of \$7 billion--greater than Canada's trade with Asian countries and China combined--with Canadian exports to the region totalling close to \$2.9 billion.¹⁵

In terms of aid to the region, successive Canadian governments have been less than forthcoming. Traditionally, a large portion of assistance was channelled through the Inter-American Development Bank. As late as the mid-1970s, however, only 4 per cent of Canada's overall budget for

¹³ For a recent discussion of Canada's past and present involvement in inter-American affairs, see, James J. Guy, "Canada Joins The OAS: A New Dynamic In The Inter-American System," Inter-American Review of Bibliography, 34:4 (1989), pp.500-511.

¹⁴ For a recent treatment of the trade dimension, see, Wilson Ruiz, "A View From The South: Canadian/Latin American Links," (Ottawa: North-South Institute, 1988), pp.1-5.

¹⁵ Statistics Canada: Catalogue 65-003.

development assistance went to Latin America.¹⁶ In 1981-82, by comparison, Ottawa's contribution had increased to 11 per cent, with a total disbursement to the region of some \$79 million. Four years later, aid to the region was projected to reach approximately \$123 million.¹⁷ By 1987-88, Canada's development assistance contribution to the region was increasing, with aid to the region amounting to some \$375 million.¹⁸

Canada's linkages from an official standpoint, in contrast to the foreign aid dimension, have been more troublesome. In fact, it was not until the early 1970s that Canada finally "discovered" Latin America on an official level. Prime Minister Trudeau's high-profile state visit to Mexico, Venezuela, and Cuba seemed to engender a reservoir of goodwill toward Canada.¹⁹ Moreover, during the 1980s, a

¹⁶ See, James J. Guy, "Canada and Latin America," The World Today, 32:10 (October 1976), p.384.

¹⁷ David Kilgour, "Canada and Latin America," International Perspectives, (January/February 1986), p.20. See also George W. Schuyler, "Perspectives On Canada And Latin America: Changing Context...Changing Policy?," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, 33:1 (Spring 1991), pp.31-33.

¹⁸ Linda Hossie, "Costa Rican summit celebrates democracy," The Globe and Mail, 27 October 1989, p.A4.

¹⁹ In addition to opening a political dialogue with the leaders of these countries, Trudeau sought to sell such Canadian products as Dash-7 aircraft, CANDU reactors, and railway equipment. See, George Radwinski, "Trudeau in Latin America set stage for closer relations," International Perspectives, (May-June 1976), pp.6-10 and J.L. Granatstein and Robert Bothwell, Pirouette: Pierre Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press,

number of Cabinet ministers, including Allan MacEachen and Joe Clark, visited various parts of the region in hopes of solidifying Canada's presence and interest in Latin America. More recently, diplomatic activity has been on the rise, with Prime Ministerial visits to Costa Rica and Mexico,²⁰ ministerial visits to Paraguay and Mexico, and a visit to Cuba by Louise Fr chet te, former assistant deputy minister in DEA's Latin America and Caribbean bureau.²¹

Although relations with Latin America have exhibited somewhat of a revival lately,²² they do not, of course, approach the scope and depth of the overall Canada-U.S. relationship. As this thesis will illustrate, the Ottawa-Washington axis is a major component of Canada's hemispheric relations. It is important, therefore, to understand fully the dynamics of that axis. The nature and extent of commercial interactions between the two countries, not to mention the wide range of private sector

1990), p.274.

²⁰ Linda Hossie, "Canada, Mexico enter 'new era' in relations," The Globe and Mail, 17 March 1990, p.A6.

²¹ Charlotte Montgomery, "Canada seeks to thaw frost in U.S.-Cuban relationship," The Globe and Mail, 14 April 1990, p.A7.

²² In part, this has been in response to changing political and economic realities, including the possibility of a trilateral free trade agreement. Madelaine Drohan, "Canada vies for trilateral trade," The Globe and Mail, 22 September 1990, p.B1 and Drew Fagan, "Canada joins trade talks," The Globe and Mail, 25 September 1990, p.B1.

ties, is particularly noticeable. These two countries maintain the largest trading relationship in the world, amounting to almost \$200 billion annually. Roughly 25 per cent of all U.S. exports are sent across the Canada-U.S. border.²³ On the other hand, Canada exports approximately 73 per cent of its total exports to the U.S. market.²⁴

Accompanying this intertwining of economic as well as investment interests is a long-standing network of intimate intergovernmental or bureaucratic interactions. This unique component of the Canadian-American "diplomatic culture" largely consists of extensive day-to-day working-level contacts, hundreds of face-to-face meetings, and literally thousands of telephone conferences each year. In addition to saving enormous time and effort, this familiarity with those comprising the Washington policy community also provides Ottawa with an opportunity to influence or moderate the direction in which U.S. policy is heading.

Clearly, these linkages with the United States, and indeed with the Commonwealth Caribbean and Latin America, establish Canada as a hemispheric "actor." Canada's credentials, derived largely from this wide range of linkages or ties, have furnished Ottawa with a stock of

²³ See, Casper Garos, Canada-U.S. Free Trade: Background, Issues and Impact, (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1990), p.4.

²⁴ Ibid., p.4.

diplomatic goodwill. It has a solid reputation not only for working diligently within international organizations, but also for espousing pragmatic solutions and shunning ideologically-tainted positions (witness Canada's constructive relations with Castro's Cuba and Sandinista Nicaragua. Indeed, Canada--along with Mexico--was the only nation of the Americas not to break relations with Cuba in 1962). Simply put, the nature and extent of these linkages place Canada in a unique position with regard to hemispheric affairs. They provide Ottawa with a certain degree of influence, which Canadian officials will have to use judiciously.

Within this contextual environment, however, the issue of joining the OAS almost invariably seemed to be first and foremost in the minds of politicians, political pundits, and Latin Americanists. The membership question had, for decades, spurred intense debate and discussion in Canada. Those individuals espousing support for admission, as well as those who advocated non-membership, proffered a series of pros and cons concerning this issue. Foreign policy reviews, along with specific examinations of the membership issue itself, were undertaken on several occasions by officials in External Affairs. In 1982, a parliamentary sub-committee--which focused on Canada's overall relations with Latin America and the Caribbean--looked specifically at the membership question. Simply put, the issue of

joining the OAS, while only occasionally front and centre, never seemed to disappear completely from the Canadian political landscape. Still, Canadian governments were--for decades--reluctant to seek full membership and settled instead for a firm posture of aloofness toward the organization.

Given Canada's proclivity for a liberal-internationalist foreign policy, this reluctance to join the OAS seems somewhat odd. Traditionally, Canadian governments in Ottawa--true to their embrace of "middlepowermanship"--have engaged in a particular form of foreign policy or middle power behaviour.²⁵ Indeed, they illustrated a penchant for promoting actively such liberal ideas as community-building, trade liberalization, and multilateralism (or international organization). Within this context, the calling cards of Canada's middle power internationalism were unquestionably bridge-building,

²⁵ For a fuller treatment of this subject area, see John W. Holmes, "Canadian External Policies Since 1945," International Journal, 18:2 (Spring 1963), pp.137-147; Jack Granatstein, Canadian Foreign Policy Since 1945: Middle Power or Satellite, (Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1973); Denis Stairs, "The Political Culture of Canadian Foreign Policy," Canadian Journal of Political Science, 15:4 (December 1982), pp.669-690; Michael Hawes, Principal Power, Middle Power, Or Satellite?, (Toronto: York University Research Programme in Strategic Studies, 1984); Kim Richard Nossal, The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy, (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1985) and Cranford Pratt, (ed.), Middle Power Internationalism: The North-South Dimension, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990).

mediation, and peacekeeping.

Interestingly enough, these same governments tended not to apply--at least to its fullest extent--the tenets and behaviour of liberal internationalism to the inter-American system. Initially, U.S. opposition to Canada's participation in inter-American affairs worked against possible Canadian involvement. In later years, beginning ostensibly with the end of World War II, Canadian governments preferred to keep their distance from inter-American political institutions and entanglements. This conscious decision to remain outside these institutions was taken for a number of reasons, including the lack of official government interest in the region, a concern about possible negative implications for the Canada-U.S. relationship, a preference for cultivating Canada's European or North Atlantic connection, and a belief that the UN was more institutionally palatable to Canada. This raises the question, of course, of why the Mulroney government opted for full membership in the OAS in late 1989.

The purpose of this dissertation is to show that the Mulroney government's reversal of Canada's previous position toward the OAS was not a significant redirection of Canadian foreign policy. In other words, the decision itself was less a fundamental shift in Canada's policy toward the hemisphere, but rather was more a change in the

"means" of executing that policy. And a change, moreover, that represented the culmination of years of drawing closer to the inter-American system. To be sure, by seeking greater involvement in hemispheric affairs and by signalling a serious commitment to cultivating closer relations with Latin American countries, successive Canadian governments were essentially preparing the groundwork for Canada's entry into the OAS family. While that preparation was often incremental and notably unenthusiastic, it still represented steady (if somewhat sluggish) movement in the direction of full membership. In short, this thesis illustrates that the decision to join the hemispheric body was not so much a bold or dramatic initiative as it was the final piece in the evolving Canada-OAS puzzle.

It is important to look at the OAS decision for a number of reasons. First, the issue had been the subject of lengthy debate and discussion in Canada in particular and, for decades, a sore point in Canadian-Latin American relations in general. Secondly, the decision to join was a key component in a larger strategy to broaden Canada's ties with Latin America. Thirdly, Latin America itself is rapidly becoming an important area in Canada's external relations. Clearly, the continuing negotiations for a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the possibility of a wider hemispheric free trade area, point to the

region's growing importance to Canada. Other issues, such as the environment, drug-trafficking, emigration, and debt--all within the purview of the hemispheric body--cannot help but have implications for Canada. With these and other issues looming on the horizon, it seemed an opportune time to reexamine the state of Canada-OAS relations.

Over the last fifty years or so, interested observers and students of inter-American affairs have looked at Canada's involvement in hemispheric life.²⁶ In the main, these analysts have tended to focus on Canada's linkages with the inter-American system as a whole. For example, they would examine the nature and extent of Canada's political, economic, diplomatic, and security ties with the hemisphere. Within this context, they would point to Canada's sporadic participation in various inter-American conferences or to its establishment of diplomatic relations with various Latin American countries.

This same group of specialists would normally put forth two very distinct and different view points. On the one hand, there were those who would advocate closer ties with Latin America--largely on the strength that this region was going to become politically and economically important to Canada in the years to come. On the other hand, there were those who opposed strengthening relations

²⁶ For a sampling of these individuals, see footnote number twenty-seven.

with this region of the world--in part because it was thought insignificant to the Canadian public and more likely to bring Canada into conflict with the United States. At some point or another, each of these pundits would usually come out either in favour or against Canadian membership in inter-American political institutions.

To buttress their respective positions, each analyst would outline a bevy of arguments and observations. Analysis of the subject area was basically confined to detailing the advantages and disadvantages of closer relations with Latin America. Some of the arguments for and against stronger ties were emotional in nature (i.e. that Canada was a true nation of the Americas and that French-speaking Canadians shared a certain affinity with their Latin brethren or that Canadians would not be able to get along with the loquacious Latins) rather than substantive. In any event, the analysis normally resolved around how greater involvement in the hemisphere would either advance or damage Canadian interests. For the most part, it did not deal specifically--or in a comprehensive fashion--with Canada's attitude toward the Pan American Union (PAU) or the Organization of American States (OAS).

Undertaking this dissertation topic was, in part, spurred by this glaring lack of available published and unpublished works on the topic. With the exception of an occasional graduate study on the subject, one is left with

John P. Humphrey's 1942 The Inter-American System: A Canadian View or Marcel Roussin's 1958 Le Canada et le système interaméricain.²⁷ Moreover, much of the scholarly work on Canada's involvement in hemispheric affairs has focused primarily on Canadian-Latin American relations or on Canada's association with the inter-American system or community. Within this context, some analysts have examined a variety of linkages--political, economic, diplomatic,

²⁷ Humphrey, The Inter-American System: A Canadian View, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1942) and Roussin, Le Canada et le système interaméricain, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1958). Others have examined various aspects of Canada's ties with the inter-American system in general and Latin America in particular. See, for example, F.H. Soward and A.M. Macaulay, Canada and the Pan American System, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1948); Marcel Roussin, "Evolution of The Canadian Attitude Toward The Inter-American System," The American Journal of International Law, 47:2 (1953), pp.296-300; John D. Harbron, Canada and the Organization of American States, (Canadian-American Committee, 1963); W. Arthur Irwin, "Should Canada Join the Organization of American States?," Queen's Quarterly, LXXII:II (Spring 1965), pp.289-303; David Edward Smith, "Should Canada Join the Organization of American States?: A Rejoinder To W. Arthur Irwin," Queen's Quarterly, LXXII:I (Spring 1966), pp.100-114; J.C.M. Ogelsby, Gringos From the Far North, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976); D.R. Murray, "The bilateral road: Canada and Latin America in the 1980s," International Journal, XXXVII:II (Winter 1981-82), pp.108-131; Edgar J. Dosman, "Hemispheric relations in the 1980s: A Perspective from Canada," Journal of Canadian Studies, 19:4 (Winter 1984-85), pp.42-60; James J. Guy, "Canada Joins The OAS: A New Dynamic In The Inter-American System," Inter-American Review of Bibliography, XXXIX:IV (1989), pp.500-511; James Rochlin, "The Evolution of Canada as an Actor in Inter-American Affairs," Millennium, 19:2 (1990), pp.229-248 and George W. Schuyler, "Perspectives On Canada And Latin America: Changing Context...Changing Policy," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, 33:1 (Spring 1991), pp.19-58.

strategic, and cultural--existing between Canada and a host of Latin American states. From a thematic standpoint, they have essentially limited their studies to outlining Canada's various interests in Latin America, indicating possible roles that Canada could play in the region, and detailing the advantages or benefits to Canada of strengthening its ties with a number of Latin American countries.

It is instructive to note, however, that this thesis is not intended to focus specifically on the dynamics of Canadian-Latin American relations. Of course, it does touch upon several aspects of Canada's relations with the region, but not in any detailed or in-depth fashion. Such an undertaking would have undoubtedly created problems of clarity and manageability as well as produced a more unwieldy and diluted focus. For these reasons, this study restricts itself to examining the nature and extent of Canada-OAS relations.

Needless to say, there exists a huge lacuna in the extant literature on this topic. There is also a paucity of material on the various debates surrounding the issue, and on why successive Canadian governments refrained from joining the hemispheric body. Put simply, there is an obvious need not only to fill this literature vacuum, but also to update the subject area by incorporating recent developments in Canada-OAS relations.

Examining the OAS decision also has implications for the study of political science. While this study does not attempt to break new theoretical ground, it does contribute to the understanding of Canadian foreign policy. Indeed, focusing on Canada's long association with hemispheric political institutions, and on the actual decision itself, helps to shed some explanatory light on how Canadian foreign policy is formulated.²⁸ It may even provide some insights into why other foreign policy decisions were taken.

To begin with, an analysis of the OAS decision reveals

²⁸ According to "conventional wisdom," Canadian foreign policy is formulated differently than say domestic policy in Canada. The process of public policy formulation is influenced by, among other things, the political leadership, the bureaucracy, political parties, Parliament, the media, "attentative publics," and public opinion. But as Kim Richard Nossal contends: "By contrast, foreign policy is formulated and conducted by government officials, mostly without any direct input by societal actors." Nossal, The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy, (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1985), p.xii. For the most part, these officials tend to reside in two principal ministries or departments--namely, External Affairs and Finance. Individuals from each of these departments shape or determine Canadian foreign policy by developing various policy options, positions, and recommendations for their political masters. The final decision on any particular foreign policy matter rests, of course, with the Cabinet and the political leadership in Canada. On this subject, see, Harald von Riekhoff, "The Structure of Foreign Policy Decision Making and Management," in Canada Among Nations, edited by Brian W. Tomlin and Maureen Appel Molot, (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, Publishers, 1987), pp.14-30 and John Kirton, "The Foreign Policy Decision Process," in Canada Among Nations, edited by Maureen Appel Molot and Brian W. Tomlin, (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, Publishers, 1986), pp.25-45.

the key actors--such as central political figures and senior bureaucrats--who were intimately involved in the making of Canadian foreign policy. Additionally, it illustrates the reasons why this particular decision was made. In this context, it outlines the various factors--political, economic, social, bureaucratic, and external--which influence the formulation of Canadian foreign policy. Above all, however, it demonstrates clearly that the decision to join the OAS was the product of a long, complex governmental process that entails widespread discussion and consultation between high-level politicians, foreign policy officials, other government departments, outside groups, and foreign leaders. The Mulroney government's decision to join the OAS, then, was not merely the product of prime ministerial whim, a means of generating domestic political support, or blind acquiescence to foreign (read U.S.) pressure. Rather, it was the end result of a lengthy process of internal and external governmental analysis, consultation, and deliberation.

The decision to opt for a "case study" methodology was based on two essential factors. First, it was consistent with an interest in the topic primarily for analytical as

opposed to theoretical purposes.²⁹ Secondly, this type of methodology provided a useful approach in terms of facilitating a thorough and extensive examination of the subject area. This, in turn, helped to produce a greater knowledge of Canada's relations with the inter-American system and to formulate some generalizations about the foreign policy-making process in Canada. In short, utilizing the case study method offered a comprehensive means of looking at Canada-OAS relations and the dynamics of Canadian foreign policy.

Some of the research for the case study was drawn from governmental publications (and pertinent documents), correspondence with interested academics, and newspaper reports. A large body of information, however, was gleaned from a number of confidential interviews with high-ranking past and present DEA officials. Indeed, included among those interviewed were four of the five Canadian permanent observers to the hemispheric body. Also interviewed were a number of the key players--both in Canada and the United States--who were intimately involved in the policy process that preceded the Conservative government's decision to join the OAS. Given the limited number of individuals

²⁹ This examination of Canada-OAS relations fits nicely into what Arend Lijphart has referred to as "atheoretical case studies." See his "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," The American Political Science Review, LXV:III (Sept. 1971), p.691.

involved directly in Canada-OAS affairs, these interviews were a particularly integral source of information. Moreover, a significant portion of information was obtained through archival research at the National Archives of Canada and the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa. Most of the remaining text was largely based on secondary sources, including books, journal articles, and book chapters.

Accordingly, this dissertation seeks to explore the nature and extent of Canada-OAS relations in general and the 1989 decision to join the hemispheric body in particular. In order to facilitate a thorough explanation and better understanding of the subject area, the thesis is divided into nine chapters. In addition to the introduction, chapter two provides a historical account of how the OAS has evolved as well as a discussion of the main legal "pillars" which underpin the body. Chapter three concentrates on the successes and failures of the OAS since its inception. Chapter four, while still focusing on the OAS, looks at the various attempts to reform the institution and the actual reforms themselves.³⁰ These two

³⁰ It is worth mentioning that both chapters three and four are important from a Canada-OAS standpoint. These two chapters outline a number of the problems associated with the functioning, as well as the reforming, of the OAS since its birth in 1948. Understanding the dynamics or politics of the hemispheric body--in terms of its operations and its continuous self-examination--helps to provide a context within which to explain Canada's approach toward the organization. Clearly, the ability of the OAS not only to

chapters are important not only because they shed some light on how the OAS has/has not performed over the years but also how this record of performance (and the attendant movements for reform) has influenced the Canadian government's attitude/position toward the body in general and the membership question in particular.

Chapter five, for its part, examines Canada's early association with inter-American institutional life. It also outlines the positions of successive Canadian governments--from 1931 to the late 1960s--toward the OAS, and why they opposed steadfastly joining the organization. Chapter six looks specifically at the Trudeau government's view of the OAS, and its reasons for remaining aloof from the body. By looking at the Trudeau years, and the state of Canada-OAS relations during that period, one gets a sense of the slow movement toward full membership in the hemispheric forum. Chapter seven, drawing on the two preceding chapters, outlines the various actors, and the positions they espoused, on Canadian membership in the hemispheric forum.

Chapter eight, and perhaps the most important, focuses directly on the actual decision of the Mulroney government to seek membership in the OAS. By utilizing Charles F.

play an important and effective hemispheric role, but also to reform itself have been factors in determining Canada's position on membership in the forum.

Hermann's foreign policy framework,³¹ it identifies the major players involved in the decision-making process. In addition, chapter eight details the various reasons underscoring the decision to opt for full membership. The dissertation concludes with a number of observations on Canada-OAS relations and a discussion of Canada's membership in the organization itself.

Examining the dynamics of Canada-OAS relations has proven to be both challenging and enlightening. And it is a study that needs to be told in a clear and comprehensive fashion. Obviously, some questions on, or aspects of, the subject area may never be known. But as Marcel Riussin, a long-time student of Canadian-Inter-American relations, once remarked:

As far as Canada is concerned, so many things have been said about the possible participation of Canada in the O.A.S. that it might seem both fastidious and presumptuous to try adding any new views on the subject. Nevertheless, our country has reached a turning point in its relations with the other nations of the continent and in the planning of its policy within the framework of the Inter-American System.³²

31 Charles F. Hermann, "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy," International Studies Quarterly, 34:3 (1990), pp.3-21 and Margaret G. Hermann and Charles F. Hermann, "Who Makes Foreign Policy Decisions and How: An Empirical Inquiry," International Studies Quarterly, 33:4 (1989), pp.361-387.

32 Marcel Roussin, "Latin America: Challenge And Response," (Banff, Alberta: Banff Conference on World Development, 1964), p.10.

Chapter Two

The Evolution of Inter-American Institutions

It is a grand conception to consolidate the New World into a single nation with a single bond uniting all its parts. Since the different parts have the same origin, language, customs, and religion, they ought to be confederated into a single state; but this is not possible because of differences of climate, diverse conditions, opposing interests and dissimilar characteristics divide America. How grand it would be if the Isthmus of Panama should become for us what the Isthmus of Corinth was for the Greeks! God grant that we may have the fortune some day to install there an august congress of representatives of the republics, kingdoms, and empires to deliberate upon the high interests of peace and of war with the nations of the other three-quarters of the world.

-- Simón Bolívar¹

The history of Hispanic-American relations, to which Bolívar alludes, has experienced times of indifference and distrust as well as periods of harmony and co-operation. Not surprisingly, the movement toward Pan Americanism--originating officially in the late 1800s--has oscillated in a similar fate. Grappling with how this movement unfolded is important because it enables us to gain a better under-

¹ Taken from Vicente Lecuña, Cartas del Libertador, (New York: 1948), p.55.

standing of inter-American affairs, past and present. At the same time, it sets the stage for comprehending not only the dynamics at work in hemispheric interactions, but also how and why the inter-American system evolved the way it did. This is crucially important because too often analysts tend to reduce Latin American, and indeed inter-American, events to an over-simplified explanation, when it is truly an extraordinarily complex multilateral reality.

Clearly, a proper historical grounding is important in terms of providing a sense of perspective and context. The purpose of this chapter, then, is two-fold: to examine and explain the evolution of Pan Americanism from 1889 to 1948; to delineate the major principles, functions, and organs of the three pillars of the inter-American system: the Rio Treaty, the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Pact of Bogota. The chapter concludes with some general comments and observations about the nature of Pan Americanism.

The evolution of Pan Americanism

As early as 1815, Simón Bolívar, who is often (perhaps mistakenly)² referred to as the "father of Pan American-

² Some commentators note that other Latin Americans, including the likes of San Martín, Martínez de Rojas, and Bernardo Monteagudo, supported the idea of hemispheric cooperation and confederation. On this point, see, J. Lloyd Mecham, The United States and Inter-American Security, 1889-1960, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), p.29.

ism," issued a clarion call for Spanish American unity and co-operation. More specifically, the celebrated revolutionary envisioned a Spanish American League or confederation, operating under the protective umbrella of Britain.³ Such an arrangement, he believed, would inspire respect and allow Hispanic America to resist any attempt on the part of Spain to restore its colonial grip. In addition to common defence, Bolívar saw the possibility of establishing a firmer peace within the hemisphere as well as furthering mutual development.

However, it was the United States, in the early 1880s, which actually assumed the leadership of the incipient Pan American movement. Indeed, under the stewardship of U.S. Secretary of State James G. Blaine, the first full-fledged International Conference of American States was convened in Washington in October of 1889.⁴ This initial gathering of hemispheric nations marked the beginning of what was to become a long, and frequently acrimonious, process of inter-American dialogue.

³ See, Arthur P. Whitaker, The Western Hemisphere Idea: Its Rise and Decline, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1954), p.26.

⁴ While there were earlier Hispanic-American Conferences, such as the Congress of Panama in 1826, delegates from the United States failed to reach Panama. For a useful discussion of these earlier conferences, see, Ann Van Wynen Thomas and A.J. Thomas, Jr., The Organization of American States, (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963), pp.6-12.

For the U.S., hemispheric dialogue and interchange, which was consistent with the notion of the "Western Hemisphere idea,"⁵ was important from both an economic and a politico-strategic standpoint. Economically speaking, U.S. production levels had soared in the 1880s and thereby precipitated a great demand for foreign export markets.⁶ Naturally, Latin America presented itself as an attractive focal point for overseas economic expansion. Some political and business leaders even had ambitions of supplanting the European nations in trade with the region.⁷ Latin America also offered tremendous investment opportunities and profit

⁵ For further elaboration of this point, see, Arthur P. Whitaker, op. cit.

⁶ Increasing U.S. production levels also necessitated a greater demand for raw materials. Indeed, by the early 1900s, the bulk of U.S. imports from Hispanic America consisted of oils, iron, tin plate, and metal products. By way of comparison, total U.S. exports to Hispanic-American countries in 1850 amounted to some \$9 million. By 1875, however, total U.S. exports had climbed to roughly \$28 million, just over a three-fold increase. And by 1890, this export figure had increased dramatically to over \$105 million. All these figures were drawn from William Spence Robertson, Hispanic-American Relations With The United States, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1923), pp.204-213.

⁷ In fact, from the period 1890-1914, trade between the U.S. and Hispanic America increased markedly. Imports from the Latin American republics, even for the years 1900 to 1914, grew by some \$300 million. U.S. exports to the region, for the same period, increased from a modest \$105 million to more than \$273 million. As William Spence Robertson notes: "With the states of Central America the import and export trade of the United States had increased so markedly that, on the eve of the World War, the United States had a larger share in this commerce than either Great Britain or Germany." Ibid., p.221.

margins for U.S. capital. In fact, U.S. investment over the course of the next 25 years climbed from a miniscule amount to some \$1.5 billion.⁸

Hence, the U.S. Congress, in enthusiastically endorsing the first conference of American republics, recognized the likelihood of such a meeting "considering questions relating to the improvement of business intercourse and means of direct communication between said countries, and to encourage such reciprocal commercial relations as would be beneficial to all and secure more extensive markets for the produce of each of the said countries."⁹ Clearly, officialdom in Washington hoped to convert inter-American collaboration into an increase in foreign trade, especially since the U.S. had an unfavourable trade balance with its hemispheric neighbours. Indeed, imports to the region in 1875 totalled some \$78 million, while U.S. exports to Latin America were only \$28 million.¹⁰

The U.S. government also attached considerable significance to the geo-strategic import of Latin America. It would be pure folly not to emphasize the importance of the Monroe Doctrine, which was enunciated in 1823, in shaping

⁸ Ibid., p.278.

⁹ F.V. García-Amador, The Inter-American System: Its Development and Strengthening, (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1966), p. xx.

¹⁰ Robertson, op. cit., p. 210.

inter-American affairs. Some writers have even gone as far as to suggest that "the story of the Monroe Doctrine is the story of inter-American relations."¹¹ In any event, it was the classic guiding instrument for U.S. policy toward Latin America, embodying both the strategic and ideological wellsprings of that policy. More specifically, it was intended to prohibit untoward European as well as any other foreign political influence from intervening in the internal political affairs of Latin America. The United States was, in effect, staking out its claim to be the self-proclaimed guardian of the hemisphere. According to Jerome Slater, the doctrine established the basis for the U.S. to profess that it has "both the moral right and the imperative national interest to continue to treat the Western hemisphere as its sphere of influence."¹²

Successive administrations in Washington--true to the precepts of the Monroe Doctrine--have been preoccupied with preserving U.S. hegemony over Latin America.¹³ Consistent with this view has been the long-standing goal of excluding

¹¹ See, Gaston Nerval, Autopsy of the Monroe Doctrine: the Strange Story of Inter-American Relations, (New York, 1934), p.v.

¹² Jerome Slater, "United States Policy In Latin America," in Jan Knippers Black, (ed.), Latin America: Its Problems And Its Promise, (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984), p.221.

¹³ On this point, see, Gordon Connell-Smith, The United States and Latin America, (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1974), pp. 107-145.

European influences from the hemisphere. Intervention from Europe, it was argued, would only serve to call into question the axioms of the Monroe Doctrine.

Senior U.S. officials, including Secretary Blaine, were thus concerned about the nature and extent of Western Europe's (primarily England, France, and Spain) presence in the region. Great Britain had greatly penetrated Argentina, while France, Germany, and a number of other European nations touched--in some form or another--almost every country in Latin America. The European powers were also resorting more frequently to armed intervention, in hopes of protecting their growing interests. To be sure, Napoleon III's five-year intrusion into Mexico in the 1860s and the Spanish government's reannexation of the Dominican Republic in 1861 were pointed reminders of European meddling.

Moreover, officialdom in Washington believed that European economic and financial penetration of Latin America would inevitably pose a number of difficult commercial and political problems for American policy-makers.¹⁴ For instance, the fact that Argentina refused to support the movement for Spanish American union, largely because of

¹⁴ The term "American" is being used here solely for stylistic reasons. In general, Latin Americans find the loose usage of this term mildly insulting. To them, all the inter-American republics are part of the Americas and therefore they are all Americans. To avoid being slighted, they would prefer the term norteamericano (-a) instead of americano (-a).

pressure from European commercial interests, was a disturbing precedent. Furthermore, European involvement in the construction of an interoceanic canal at Panama, which possessed strategic as well as commercial import for the United States, shocked and alarmed the Americans. According to Arthur P. Whitaker, this was "striking proof of the way in which European private enterprise as well as government action could effect a penetration of Latin America to the direct injury of the United States."¹⁵

Similarly, U.S. policy-makers feared that continued conflict in the area (such as the Paraguayan War of 1864-70 and the War of the Pacific of 1879-83), coupled with Europe's growing economic stake in the area, would only precipitate additional European intervention. However, the establishment of a foundation for hemispheric economic cooperation, along with a plan for arbitrating disputes peacefully, could serve as an effective hedge against future extracontinental involvement. Put another way, inter-American collaboration would not only function to keep in check further European intervention, but would also foster a friendly environment wherein U.S. trade and investment in the region could be increased. In short, this collaboration served as a means of solidifying Washington's economic and political grip on the region as a whole.

¹⁵ Whitaker, op. cit., p.75.

Latin American representatives, for their part, saw the movement toward hemispheric collaboration in slightly different terms. From a juridical standpoint, they viewed the inter-American conference as an excellent forum within which to state their position that all hemispheric nations, according to the precepts of international law, were equal.¹⁶ Latin nations, for the first time, had an opportunity to stress the fact that all nations, irrespective of size, population, wealth, and military power, were equal before the court of international law. Stated differently, it made absolutely no difference whether a state was a great or weak power; it would still have to operate within the norms of acceptable international conduct. The codification of international law was viewed by many Latin American delegations as a potential equalizer in what was essentially an asymmetrical Pan American arrangement.

There was also a general feeling among Latin American political and economic elites that alignment with an emerging world power--the U.S.--would be both prudent and

¹⁶ See, Jack Child, "The 1889-1890 Washington Conference Through Cuban Eyes: José Martí and the First International American Conference," Inter-American Review of Bibliography, 39:4 (1989), pp.452-53.

beneficial.¹⁷ Economically speaking, they thought that the burgeoning Pan American Movement would help the struggling Latin American nations secure higher prices for their products, gain better access to new technologies and valuable skills, and obtain substantial U.S. government loans to spur economic development.¹⁸ Of course, closer ties with the United States provided these same elites with an excellent opportunity to further their own interests and standing. Moreover, they believed that co-operation among all the American republics held out the possibility of altering, or at least modifying, U.S. policy toward Latin America. The thinking here revolved around the notion that a United States committed to the concept of Pan Americanism would be more amenable and susceptible to Latin American persuasion. In other words, it would serve as a potential counterpoise to the Colossus to the North. Similarly, they hoped that more formalized inter-American interaction would provide Latin American governments with a useful means of influencing--if only tangentially--the U.S. policy-making process.

¹⁷ See, E. Bradford Burns, "The Continuity of the National Period," in Jan Knippers Black, (ed.), Latin America: Its Problems And Its Promise, (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1984), pp.69-70.

¹⁸ See, Gordon Connell-Smith, The Inter-American System, (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p.23.

While the motives or expectations of the participating American governments were grandiose, to say the least, they were not reflected in the results of the first conference. Not only was the customs union proposal rejected--a chief objective of the conference--but the plan to conclude a firm treaty of pacific settlement of inter-American disputes never reached fruition. Instead of dealing in a meaningful fashion with the principal items on the conference agenda, the delegates merely agreed upon a series of non-binding recommendations.

The customs union was viewed by most Latin American delegations as impractical and detrimental to their interests.¹⁹ They saw little value in the idea of weakening traditional ties with Europe in exchange for promised U.S. tariff reductions. Argentina, in particular, was not prepared to give preferential market treatment to the U.S.--over European nations--while Washington reciprocated with only minor trade concessions.²⁰ More important, a committee studying the question suggested that such an union would inevitably involve a loss of national sovereignty.²¹ Not

¹⁹ It is instructive to note that all of the participating republics were dependent upon customs duties as their major source of revenue.

²⁰ See, J. Lloyd Mecham, op. cit., p.53.

²¹ John P. Humphrey, The Inter-American System: A Canadian View, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1942), p.45.

surprisingly, Latin officials were loath to allow the United States to add economic domination to its political hegemony over the hemisphere.

Concerning the arbitration of disputes, the proposed treaty elicited opposing views. Since it called for disputes to be settled by a tribunal in Washington through binding arbitration, Latin American delegations regarded the proposal as one-sided and entailing an unacceptable surrender of sovereignty.²² While the United States was prepared to accept binding arbitration, the Chilean delegation, in particular, had strong reservations about the plan. It was concerned about the possibility of the proposal jeopardizing recent territorial claims--in Bolivia and Peru--stemming from the War of the Pacific.²³

Notwithstanding these objections, the conference did produce some tangible results. First, the firm commitment to regularize the holding of inter-American conferences was clearly a significant development. Secondly, because this conference was the best attended of any heretofore hemispheric gathering (with only the Dominican Republic failing to send a representative), it provided an excellent opportunity to foster important human relationships. Thirdly, it produced the first genuine manifestations of

²² Child, op. cit., p.452.

²³ Connell-Smith, The United States and Latin America, p.112.

inter-American institutional life, with the establishment of the International Union of American Republics. (In addition to being composed of all those nations represented at the conference, it was responsible for organizing future conferences.)

The permanent organ of the newly-created "Union" was labelled the Commercial Bureau of the American Republics, which had its seat in Washington. Evidently, it functioned under the watchful eye of the acting U.S. Secretary of State. Moreover, the appointment of American William E. Curtis as acting Director, coupled with the fact that the building was headquartered in Washington, reflected U.S. domination of the Bureau. According to Connell-Smith, it "gave that institution the appearance of a colonial office and was the cause of rising Latin American dissatisfaction."²⁴ In any event, when it finally gained official existence in November 1890, the Bureau concerned itself primarily with the publication of the Bulletin of the Bureau of the American Republics. However, in the aftermath of an investigative committee report on the Bureau's future, its activities were enlarged "to cover all matters concerned with the economic life and growth of the American republics instead of the mere collection and

²⁴ Connell-Smith, The Inter-American System, p.44.

dissemination of commercial information."²⁵

While this first truly inter-American conference did provide the initial building blocks for future institutional development, it was notable more for what it failed to produce. Nevertheless, the conference itself, as a harbinger of things to come, must be regarded as a major event in hemispheric political life. For instance, the general tenor and dynamics of the conference clearly revealed the major players and driving forces underpinning inter-American affairs. It also captured vividly the diverging interests between the rising great power (with expansive ambitions) and the weaker Latin American countries (with designs of invigorating economic development). In turn, these disparate interests, varying issue-agendas, and the nature of international political/state relationships help to explain why effective international organization in the Western hemisphere was so problematic.

While there were serious misgivings about the concept of international organization, hemispheric conferences continued apace. The next significant gathering, at least in terms of institutional development, was held in Buenos Aires in 1910.²⁶ This fourth major meeting of inter-American

²⁵ Ibid., p.45.

²⁶ The Second International Conference, held in Mexico City in 1901-02, was notable for its agreement on constituting a Governing Board for the International Bureau of American Republics, which consisted of the U.S. Secretary of State and the diplomatic representatives of Latin

officials, though skirting most of the controversial matters, still managed to reach a consensus on re-naming the two original institutional entities. The International Union of American Republics dropped the "International" to become the Union of American Republics. The International Bureau of the American Republics, undergoing a similar facelift, became the Pan American Union (PAU).

In addition to a change in appellation, the Pan American Union experienced a number of other modifications. While it still maintained its seat in Washington, it took up residence in the Building of the American Republics.²⁷ (And by way of resolution, its existence would continue for another ten years.) Furthermore, it was authorized by the participating delegates to execute all resolutions flowing from inter-American conferences. This, in turn, meant that the PAU would have its original commercial responsibilities expanded to include cultural as well as archival matters. There was also a corresponding increase in internal administration, influence, and experience. Simply put, the PAU was beginning to emerge as a permanent secretariat,

American governments. The following conference, which took place in Rio de Janeiro in 1906, was best remembered for its emphasis on the threat posed by U.S.--as opposed to European--influence in the hemisphere. For further elaboration of these two conferences, consult Gordon Connell-Smith, op. cit., pp.45-51.

²⁷ The building was erected largely on the basis of funds provided by Andrew Carnegie, who had been a U.S. delegate to the initial Washington Conference.

albeit one restricted in its powers.

More important, there was a perception, especially among Latin American political elites, that the PAU was essentially dominated by the United States. To be sure, the fact that it was financed mainly by the State Department did little to diminish this view. And with its headquarters in Washington, a U.S. citizen as its Director General, and the U.S. Secretary of State as chairman of the Governing Board, Latins were concerned about the decidedly U.S. flavour of the institution. Moreover, other members of the Governing Board were Latin American diplomats, whose chief function was to cultivate friendly relations with the host country. Faced with this stark reality, it was understandable why Latin American governments-- irrespective of organizational claims of absolute equality of states--began to see themselves in a rather unenviable position. Not surprisingly, they were vigorously opposed to any hint of investing the PAU with functions of a purely political nature.²⁸

By the time of the fifth conference in Santiago in 1923, pressures for changing the PAU had reached a crescendo. As a result, two key changes were introduced-- specifically, the chairmanship of the Governing Board would

²⁸ Given U.S. intervention in the Caribbean and Central America, Washington was fully in favour of not "politicizing" the PAU.

now be elective and an American republic with no diplomatic representation in Washington would be permitted to make a special appointment to the Board. Five years later, at the Havana Conference, a resolution was passed to organize the PAU on the basis of a convention prepared by the Governing Board.²⁹ There were also musings about the possibility of having the Board composed of representatives appointed by the American republics themselves.

Despite the positive atmosphere engendered by changes to the PAU,³⁰ succeeding inter-American conferences produced only meagre results.³¹ And when this was coupled with

²⁹ Up to this point, the PAU had been operating under a series of resolutions, which could be modified at any time. For an excellent discussion of the various proposals for reform proffered by such countries as Mexico, see, William Manger, "The Pan American Union at the Sixth International Conference of American States," The American Journal of International Law, 22:4 (July 1928), pp.764-75.

³⁰ At the 1945 Mexico conference, further changes to the PAU were instituted. In addition to the fact that members of the Governing Board would no longer have to be accredited ambassadors to the United States, the chairmanship of the Board would be opened to Latin Americans. Furthermore, the positions of Director General and Assistant Director of the PAU would not be eligible for re-election and should not be succeeded by a person of the same nationality. Again, this measure offered Latin Americans a greater opportunity to occupy a high profile position within the institution. For a discussion of this conference, see, Josef L. Kunz, "The Inter-American Conference on Problems of War and Peace at Mexico City and the Problem of the Reorganization of the Inter-American System," The American Journal of International Law, 39:3 (July 1945), pp.527-33.

³¹ For a thorough analysis of the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth conferences, see, Ann Van Wynen Thomas and A.J. Thomas, op. cit., pp. 21-24. In a general sense, though, there was a noticeable absence of any inter-American

mounting dissatisfaction with a perceived U.S. domination of hemispheric affairs, the future of the inter-American system appeared bleak.³² However, the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Continental Peace and Security, staged in Rio in 1947, proved to be particularly eventful. To be sure, it was there that the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, popularly referred to as the Rio Treaty, was proclaimed.

Before examining the Rio Treaty, as well as the other two pillars of the inter-American system, it is important to understand the international climate prevalent during the period 1945 to 1948. Arguably, the years 1945 through to 1948 represent the most important period in the history of hemispheric affairs. It was in these years that inter-

machinery for mutual defence. Furthermore, there was no adequate peace instruments for resolving hemispheric disputes or controversies. Finally, the burgeoning inter-American system had completely failed to address the hemisphere's more pressing economic difficulties.

³² By the early 1940s, after more than 45 years of inter-American dialogue and interaction, the hegemonic tendencies embodied in the Monroe Doctrine still remained the cornerstone of U.S. policy in the hemisphere. Over these years, a majority of Latin Americans developed a deep distrust and fear of U.S. power and influence. Clearly, U.S. intervention in Mexico (1914), Dominican Republic (1916), Nicaragua (1926), and harassment of Cuba (1933) all caused resentment and left a bitter taste in the mouths of Latin American peoples. Moreover, U.S. economic influence and control of Latin American resources, restrictions on Cuban and Panamanian independence, denial of the right of revolution to Central American republics, and a high tariff policy only served to reinforce the sense of U.S. domination and control.

American interchange, particularly from a Latin American standpoint, seemed to reflect a sense of urgency. Indeed, hemispheric discussions took on added significance and momentum, culminating in the forging of all three pillars of the inter-American system.

In the immediate postwar period, the political leadership in Latin America was concerned about developments in the security/strategic realm. World War II had painfully illustrated how vulnerable the region actually was to extra-continental intervention (e.g. German U-boats). In addition, there was a general fear of the Soviet Union and a distrust of Moscow and its communist system.³³ Furthermore, there was a strong sense of insecurity and suspicion among Latin American governments themselves (especially during Perón's reign in Argentina).³⁴ Put simply, security considerations--both internally and externally--were beginning to make their way to the top of the Latin American policy agenda.

But economic and social questions were still foremost in the minds of Latin American leaders. They were very much concerned about the socio-economic hardship and disruption that a transition from wartime to peace would cause. As a Chilean official opined at the time: "There loom

³³ Arthur P. Whitaker, op. cit., p.172.

³⁴ This point is made by William Everett Kane. See his, Civil Strife in Latin America: A Legal History of U.S. Involvement, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), p.150.

two dramatic question marks that beset the man who likes to think ahead: (1) what will be done with the millions of men who will lose their employment upon the advent of peace, and (2) how will readjustment be made of raw materials upon termination of the requirements of war industries?"³⁵ To help soften the readjustment period, they requested a massive influx of financial assistance for the region. Realizing, of course, that a war-devastated Western Europe was in a state of virtual economic ruin, they focused their attention on the United States.

In the wake of World War II, the United States emerged as a bona fide world power. In addition to a population and a nation largely intact, the U.S. could boast of a military machine second to none. On the economic side, the war effort furnished it with a finely tuned industrial complex, with a desirous and voracious appetite for raw materials, export markets, and investment opportunities. Simply put, the United States was in a position to assume a leading role in shaping the emerging post-1945 world.

Unfortunately for Latin America, Washington was more concerned about rebuilding West European nations through the Marshall Plan and various other economic initiatives. This decisive shift to Western Europe, coupled with the onset of the Cold War and strong currents of anti-communism in U.S.

³⁵ Quoted in J. Lloyd Mecham, op. cit., p.257.

society, left Latin Americans wondering if they would ever find a sympathetic hearing in the White House. More disconcerting for Latin Americans, though, was the apparent shift away from regionalism toward universalism. To be sure, the strong showing of support for Western Europe and Washington's enthusiastic endorsement of the United Nations (UN) was a stark reminder to Latin Americans of how rapidly their stock could decline. Clearly, it became increasingly evident to Latin American governments that the United States was beginning to ignore its desperate and impoverished hemispheric brethren.³⁶

The Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance

With this prevailing contextual environment in mind, it was not surprising to see the forging of a collective security arrangement. Given the exigencies of Cold War diplomacy and the security concerns of Latin Americans, the idea generated considerable support. Building upon the Act of Chapultepec--a key resolution of the 1945 Inter-American Conference on Problems of War and Peace, which was held in Mexico City--the Rio Treaty sought to address these concerns.

³⁶ There was no Marshall Plan for Latin America to help the economies of these nations, distorted by the war, to adjust to peace-time conditions.

After receiving the requisite notices of ratification, the Rio Treaty formally came into effect in 1948 (it was eventually ratified by all the signatories).³⁷ Stemming from years of prior inter-American deliberations, the Rio pact represented, in effect, a system of collective responsibility for purposes of hemispheric security.³⁸ According to Thomas and Thomas, the defence treaty "distinguishes the obligations to be undertaken and the procedures to be followed in the event of an armed attack and the obligations to be undertaken and the procedures to be followed in the event of other acts of aggression or potential threats to continental peace."³⁹ Stated differently, what had heretofore been an association of like-minded republics was now suddenly transformed into a full-fledged regional security organization. Interestingly enough, this treaty provided the inter-American community with provisions for enforcement without first establishing a formal constitution or meaningful provisions for pacific

³⁷ It is interesting to note that the Rio Treaty's hemispheric security zone--as delineated in article 4--encompasses Canada. And as Thomas and Thomas explain: "If Canada were subject to armed attack arising against its territory or within its security zone, it could request the other American states as ratifiers of the Rio Treaty to come to its aid." Thomas and Thomas, op. cit., p.281.

³⁸ It does not, however, establish a form of military co-operation or a system of military forces under collective command.

³⁹ Thomas and Thomas, op. cit., p.249.

settlement.⁴⁰ This transformation marked a watershed in U.S.-Latin American relations, since security arrangements were now taking precedence over formalizing an inter-American constitution and instituting adequate mechanisms for resolving hemispheric disputes.

The treaty itself, for all intents and purposes, rests on a solid legal footing.⁴¹ It is consistent with Article 51 of the United Nations (UN) Charter, which permits members of a regional grouping to take immediate action--under the right of individual and collective self-defence--against an armed attack. Furthermore, it is subject to the regional stipulations of Articles 52-54 (Chapter VIII) of the UN Charter, which precludes the use of enforcement action (except with the prior authorization of the Security Council), in the case of any other act or threat of aggression. But since Chapter VIII is not mentioned in the legal text, Article 51 represents the judicial basis of the treaty. This is significant because it enables members of the inter-American system⁴² to take action without first

⁴⁰ On this point, see, Margaret M. Ball, op. cit., p.26.

⁴¹ For a thorough analysis of the various articles, see. Thomas and Thomas, op. cit., pp. 249-276.

⁴² According to Gordon Connell-Smith, a keen student of inter-American affairs, the "inter-American system" includes "certain treaties and agreements between the American nations; numerous inter-American institutions created to further common objectives and the observance of agreed principles; and a form of multilateral diplomacy through which the American states conduct a part of their

having to seek prior Security Council authorization.

The notion of taking action--and what precisely those actions would entail--is delineated more succinctly in Articles 6 and 8 of the treaty. Article 6 refers to the convening of the "Organ of Consultation" (Meeting of Foreign Ministers) if the "inviolability or the integrity of the territory or the sovereignty or political independence of any American State should be affected by an aggression which is not an armed attack or by an extra-continental or intra-continental conflict, or by any other fact or situation that might endanger the peace of America."⁴³ Article 8, for its part, details the following menu of available measures: "recall of chiefs of diplomatic missions; breaking of diplomatic relations; breaking of consular relations; partial or complete interruption of economic relations or of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, telephonic, and radio telephonic or radio telegraphic communications; and use of armed force."

In a clear case of an armed attack against an American republic--whether from an intra- or extra-regional source--a number of obligations and procedures would be set in motion.

international relations." Connell-Smith, op. cit., p. xv.

⁴³ Unless otherwise indicated, quotes are taken directly from the Rio Treaty itself. Organization of American States, Inter-American Treaty Of Reciprocal Assistance, Applications I, (Washington, D.C.: General Secretariat, 1973), pp.423-430.

Contracting parties to the treaty have a right as well as a duty to take measures, as requested by the victim, to help in meeting the attack. While this obligation to assist the injured in question is clear, each state is free to decide for itself the appropriate action. Once the Organ of Consultation has been enjoined to meet, a further obligation is placed upon the signatory states to arrive at a set of collective measures. After the Meeting of Foreign Ministers agrees upon collective measures, the parties are obliged to comply with their decision, which is made on the basis of a two-thirds vote. Although each country is bound by the decision to employ the specified measures, no state is required to use armed force without its consent.

Formalizing these procedures and obligations, particularly from a U.S. perspective, was an important accomplishment. Clearly, the Rio Treaty enabled the U.S.-- the unabashed leader of the Western world--to further strengthen its hold on Latin America. Strengthening its grip was important from an economic, politico-strategic, and superpower prestige (sphere of influence) standpoint. To be sure, the security pact was an effective mechanism for insulating the hemisphere from extra-continental political, economic, and military influences. Further solidifying this hold was the fact that Washington could be certain that it could--given its enormous economic and military power--marshall the requisite number of American republics to

support or block any hemispheric security-related petition. Moreover, since it would be the United States that would supply the military might to back up the treaty, it would invariably have a decisive and influential voice on Rio Treaty deliberations.

It also provided Washington with an effective instrument for preventing "indirect aggression," orchestrated mainly from Moscow, and thereby preserving hemispheric stability. This, in turn, presented ideologues in the White House, ever bent on maintaining the political status quo, with a pretext for protecting those military-dominated governments favourably disposed toward the United States. In effect, it allowed officialdom in Washington--overly concerned about Eastern Europe, the threat of international communism, and Soviet expansionism--to solidify U.S. hegemony in the region.⁴⁴

Latin American governments, for their part, saw the Rio Treaty in a different light. While they were cognizant of the ramifications of World War II, and what appeared to be U.S. observance of non-intervention commitments, they feared the possibility of Washington manipulating the security pact in such a way as to impose its will on its

⁴⁴ This point is made most forcefully by Jerome Slater. See his study, A Revaluation of Collective Security: The OAS in Action, (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1965), pp.24-25.

weaker neighbours.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, they were determined to prevent any possible intervention, particularly of an extra-hemispheric nature, in the maintenance of regional peace and security.⁴⁶ There was also a deep-rooted feeling that the inter-American security system should be distinct from the UN, thus effectively avoiding the pitfalls of the world body. At that time, the UN was perceived to be suffering from a paralysing veto system. More important, though, was the fact that the treaty provided a critical hedge against any threats--intra or extra-hemispheric in nature--to the sovereignty of Latin American states. Since any threat, whether from the Soviet Union or expansionist-minded Latin American states, would immediately activate the collective security measures and procedures of the pact, cherished Latin American sovereignty would be protected. The Rio Treaty, then, was consistent with long-standing Latin principles--namely, establishing legalistic frameworks, preventing extracontinental intervention, and maintaining

⁴⁵ However, these same governments would receive more protection--from intra- or extra-continental aggressors--if the United States was bound to a collective security system. With the U.S. tied to the inter-American system, it also provided Latin Americans with greater leverage over the American behemoth. On this point, see, Ibid., p.37.

⁴⁶ See, John C. Dreier, The Organization of American States and the Hemisphere Crisis, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962), p.26.

political independence.⁴⁷

The Charter of the Organization of American States

Although the Rio Treaty touched upon several key principles, it was the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS), promulgated in 1948, which actually codified them.⁴⁸ Similar to the Rio Treaty, the OAS Charter was a product of the international milieu in which it was forged. Latin American concerns about Washington's apparent penchant for universalism, financial assistance (growing dependence on U.S. trade and investment), and constraining U.S. interference all factored into the OAS Charter equation. The U.S., for its part, recognized another opportunity to further isolate the hemisphere from outside influences, especially from the Soviet Union.

As for the Charter itself, it was the consolidation of decades of experience and deliberation on the principles and procedures of hemispheric relations. Put simply, the delineation of these principles in point form effectively "constitutionalized" the inter-American system. Before the Charter was officially enunciated, the inter-American system

⁴⁷ The actual invocation of the Rio Treaty is discussed more fully in the next chapter.

⁴⁸ For purposes of this study, the "Protocol of Amendment to the Charter of the Organization of American States," which was approved in 1967 and entered into force in 1970, will be used.

functioned primarily in accordance with a multitude of conference resolutions. With a formal treaty, however, changes or modifications to the inter-American system would require more than simply passing resolutions. This, in effect, signalled the placing of hemispheric affairs on a stronger legal footing.

While the OAS Charter was the crowning legal achievement of the Ninth International Conference of American States, held in Bogotá in 1948, it was fashioned in a cautious and timorous environment. To be sure, the Bogotá conference was not the realization of Bolívar's vision of a veritable hemispheric community, complete with a high degree of political, economic, and social content. According to Jerome Slater, the foreign ministers from each of the participating republics chose "the far less ambitious aim of building a security system with capabilities for political action limited to the minimum required for the keeping of the peace."⁴⁹

Several factors help explain why the United States and the other American republics were reluctant to accord the newly-emerging inter-American system greater significance. First, U.S. officials were intent on avoiding any commitment that would inevitably require the transfer of huge sums of economic assistance to Latin American countries. Secondly,

⁴⁹ Jerome Slater, The OAS and United States Foreign Policy, (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1967), p.39.

they believed that any notion of a truly hemispheric community would only serve to constrain or limit the formulation and implementation of American foreign policy.⁵⁰ The Latin Americans, on the other hand, were well aware of the strength of Latin American nationalism and thus were loath to advance any sovereignty-threatening political arrangement. Moreover, the wide chasm between the U.S. and Latin America and among the Latin American nations themselves--particularly in terms of foreign policy objectives, economic and social models, military capabilities and political institutions--made forging an all-encompassing inter-American fraternity extremely difficult. To be sure, the preponderance of U.S. economic, political, and military power, compared with its hemispheric cousins, played heavily on the minds of Latin American publicists and officials. Intra-regional border and boundary disputes, along with Argentina's designs on expansion, made co-operation among Latin American governments problematic indeed.

Notwithstanding these misgivings, the OAS Charter is imbued with significant hemispheric import. Indeed, it is the culmination of more than a hundred years of inter-American principles, aspirations, agreements, resolutions,

⁵⁰ In fact, the U.S. delegation actually favoured limiting the scope of the OAS Charter. On this point, see, Connell-Smith, op. cit., p.197.

and rules. At the same time, the document contains what the member countries agree to be the structure and procedures of the organization. The various principles and structures of the body are dealt with in precise terms in the Charter, which is divided into three main parts.⁵¹

The first part of the Charter deals with the nature, purposes, principles, and membership of the OAS. It includes virtually every basic inter-American principle, which has received popular or official support, since the early nineteenth century. In addition, it addresses the fundamental rights and duties of states, pacific settlement of disputes, collective security, and economic, social, educational/scientific, and cultural standards.

The "purposes" of the hemispheric body, as set forth in the Charter, are not completely foreign to inter-American political discourse. Indeed, there is a conspicuous emphasis on the strengthening of continental peace and security, the prevention and pacific settlement of disputes, the invocation of common action against aggression, the resolution of political, legal, and economic problems, and the promotion of co-operative action in the areas of economic, social, and cultural development. In terms of "principles," the Charter discusses respect for

⁵¹ The subsequent discussion of these three sections is not intended to be an exhaustive evaluation of the Charter. Rather, it is designed to give the reader a clearer sense of what the document actually represents.

international law, promotion of representative democracy, non-recognition of territorial conquest, recognizing an attack against one American state as an attack against them all, pacific settlement of disputes, respect for basic human rights, and regard for social justice and cultural values.⁵²

Under the fundamental rights and duties of states heading, the Charter echoes many of the advances made in 1933 at Montevideo, the site of the Seventh International Conference of American States. For example, Article 18, in reflecting and reaffirming the long-standing Latin American preoccupation with non-intervention, states the following: "No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State." Furthermore, Article 19 notes: "No State may use or encourage the use of coercive measures of an economic or political character in order to force the sovereign will of another State and obtain from it advantages of any kind."⁵³

The pacific settlement of disputes, according to the Charter, "shall be submitted to the peaceful procedures" outlined in the document. Pursuant to Article 24, the peaceful procedures involve: "direct negotiation, good

⁵² For a thorough treatment of these principles, see, Margaret M. Ball, op. cit., pp. 43-67.

⁵³ Interestingly enough, it was the Cuban delegation which was actually the driving force pushing for inclusion of a statement condemning economic aggression.

offices, mediation, investigation and conciliation, judicial settlement, arbitration, and those which the parties to the dispute may especially agree upon at any time." As for collective security, Charter Article 27 is quite specific: "Every act of aggression by a State against the territorial integrity or the inviolability of the territory or against the sovereignty or political independence of an American State shall be considered an act of aggression against the other American States."

The second section of the Charter, in contrast with the first, sets out the various "organs" through which the OAS achieves its purposes. The General Assembly, for instance, co-ordinates the work of inter-American agencies, strengthens co-operation with the United Nations, promotes collaboration--in the economic, social, and cultural fields--with other international organizations, approves the program and budget of the OAS, determines or fixes member quotas, and sets standards to govern the operation of the General Secretariat. The Meeting of the Consultation of Foreign Affairs, for its part, "shall be held in order to consider problems of an urgent nature and of common interest to the American States." (Any member may request a Meeting of Consultation, but it requires the support of an absolute majority before it is actually held.)

The Permanent Council,⁵⁴ as outlined in Article 80, "takes cognizance of any matter referred to it by the General Assembly or the Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs." It also has the important function of acting provisionally as Organ of Consultation under the Rio Treaty. Moreover, it has responsibility, inter alia, in the areas of pacific settlement, in electing members of certain agencies, in preparing the draft agenda for the General Assembly, and in convoking the Meetings of Consultation.

The Inter-American Judicial Committee, as the Charter indicates, "is to serve the Organization as an advisory body on judicial matters," and "to promote the progressive development and the codification of international law." It is also enjoined to "undertake the studies and preparatory work assigned to it by the General Assembly, the Meeting of Consultation of Foreign Affairs, or the Councils of the Organization. It may also, on its own initiative, devote itself to "such studies and preparatory work as it considers advisable, and suggest the holding of specialized judicial conferences." The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights,⁵⁵ on the other hand, seeks "to promote the

⁵⁴ The Permanent Council is composed of a single representative, with the rank of ambassador, from each of the member states.

⁵⁵ For a recent evaluation of the Commission, see, Tom F. Farer, "The OAS at the Crossroads: Human Rights," Iowa Law Review, 72 (1986-87), pp. 401-413.

observance and protection of human rights and to serve as a consultative organ of the Organization in these matters."

The General Secretariat, according to the Charter, "is the central and permanent organ of the Organization of American States." As such, it is responsible for promoting "economic, social, juridical, educational, scientific, and cultural relations among all the Member States of the Organization." Furthermore, it advises other organs in the preparation of agendas, prepares the proposed program-budget of the organization, provides adequate secretariat services for the General Assembly and other organs, serves as a custodian of documents and archives, and submits to the General Assembly an annual report on the activities of the Organization.

The Secretary-General, for his part, is elected by the General Assembly for a five-year term (and may not be re-elected more than once or succeeded by a person of the same nationality). The holder of this office "shall direct the General Secretariat, be the legal representative thereof" and "be responsible to the General Assembly for the proper fulfillment of the obligations and functions of the General Secretariat." The Secretary-General, however, "participates with voice but without vote in all meetings of the Organization."

Specialized Conferences, previously known as technical inter-American conferences, "are inter-governmental meetings

to deal with special technical matters or to develop specific aspects of inter-American co-operation." While such conferences may be held at the request of the General Assembly, Meeting of Consultation of Foreign Ministers, one of the Councils, or on its own initiative, the agenda and rules of procedure "shall be prepared by the Councils or Specialized Organizations concerned."

As for these Specialized Organizations, they have had a long, and occasionally memorable, association with the inter-American system. Collectively, the six Specialized Organizations--the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences (IAIAS), the Inter-American Children's Institute (IACI), the Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW), and the Inter-American Indian Institute (IAII)--represent an "organ" of the OAS.⁵⁶ According to Article 130 of the

⁵⁶ In addition to these Specialized Organizations, there exists a number of other important OAS agencies. For instance, the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB), which was established in 1942, is the principal agency in charge of planning the defence of the Western hemisphere. With its sizeable budget, it studies, plans, and recommends to governments measures to repel aggression. Moreover, it prepares and maintains plans for collective defence, and it engages in other military matters, training courses, liaison, and inspection trips. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Inter-American Committee on Peaceful Settlement, and the Inter-American Statistical Institute are also official or semi-official agencies of the OAS. Furthermore, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), though considered part of the inter-American network, is not linked formally to the OAS. This important international lending agency is, however, used extensively

Charter, Specialized Organizations "are the intergovernmental organizations established by multilateral agreements and having specific functions with respect to technical matters of common interest to the American States." In other words, these organizations are intended to promote co-operation in certain technical fields, mainly through studies, exchange of information, and recommendations to governments.⁵⁷ Although they enjoy "the fullest technical autonomy," they are required to submit to the General Assembly annual reports on the progress of their work and budget expenses. They are also urged to "establish cooperative relations with world agencies of the same character," all the while maintaining strenuously "their identity and their status as integral parts of the Organization of American States, even when they perform regional functions of international agencies."

by the hemispheric body to help develop Latin American economies. It also works to promote the investment of capital for development purposes, to utilize its own capital to accelerate the process of economic development in member countries, and to provide technical assistance for the formulation and implementation of development plans. Bank decisions are made on the basis of a weighted voting system. While the United States--with roughly 40 per cent of the shares in the bank--lacks the voting power to dictate every IDB decision, its vote is by far the most powerful. For an excellent discussion of these agencies, see, Margaret M. Ball, op. cit., pp. 365-407.

⁵⁷ For a critical assessment of these organizations, see, Thomas and Thomas, op. cit., pp. 131-33.

The crafting of the OAS Charter, with its formal language on various organs and agencies, was very much a product of a Latin American obsession with legalism.⁵⁸ In fact, the formal-legalistic bent of the Charter, as exemplified in the 150 articles of the organic pact, reflects a Latin American penchant to install judicial safeguards primarily against the overwhelming power of the United States. Consistent with this excessive preoccupation with "judicializing" hemispheric interchange is the third major legal document or pillar of the inter-American system, the American Treaty on Pacific Settlement.

The American Treaty on Pacific Settlement

The basic aim of the American Treaty on Pacific Settlement, popularly known as the Pact of Bogotá, was to provide a comprehensive mechanism for settling inter-American disputes peacefully. This treaty, however, is regarded by many as far less significant than the Rio Treaty or the OAS Charter.⁵⁹ Like the Charter, though, the Pact of Bogotá was a product of the 1948 International Conference of American States, which took place in Bogotá. Unlike the

⁵⁸ The strengths and weaknesses of the Charter are examined more thoroughly in chapter two.

⁵⁹ It is instructive to note that the ineffectiveness of the American Treaty on Pacific Settlement resulted in the creation of the Inter-American Peace Committee. See, Connell-Smith, The Inter-American System, p.215. Also see, Larman C. Wilson, op. cit., p.54.

Charter, it has not been ratified by a sufficient number of states. (As of 1982, thirteen countries have ratified the pact.)⁶⁰ In the main, the pact is not taken seriously by OAS members. According to L. Ronald Scheman and John W. Ford, it has been "one of the world's finest legal and worst political documents, it has a major flaw: It has been virtually ignored since it was signed."⁶¹

The compulsory nature of the treaty--especially in the areas of arbitration and jurisdiction of the International Court--makes for a strong legal document, but a poor political arrangement. For this reason, the issue of revising the pact was placed on the agenda of the Tenth International Conference of American States, which was held in Caracas in 1954. While the United States and Brazil favoured modifying the document, Mexico argued that those states which have failed to ratify the treaty should simply be encouraged to do so. By 1957, the OAS Council, after recognizing that a majority of states were not in favour of revision, effectively closed the matter.⁶²

⁶⁰ Those states which have not ratified the Pact of Bogotá are still bound by the earlier instruments that they have ratified and by the mechanisms for pacific settlement embodied in the Rio Treaty and the OAS Charter.

⁶¹ L.Ronald Scheman and John W. Ford, "The Organization of American States as Mediator," in Saadia Touval and I. William Zartman, (eds.), International Mediation in Theory and Practice, (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985), p.198.

⁶² Margaret M. Ball, op. cit., p.428.

Nevertheless, this notion of settling disputes peacefully was widely discussed at several "special" conferences and has appeared on the agenda of every International Conference of American States.⁶³ The Pact of Bogotá, despite its obvious failings, did represent an attempt on the part of delegates at the ninth conference to formalize, in treaty form, the pacific settlement of disputes. To be sure, it sought to consolidate, in a single document, the various procedures for peaceful settlement, which had appeared in earlier conciliation treaties and agreements. In the words of Dreier, "it was the culmination of more than a century of effort by the Latin American states to make effective their desire to ban the use of force in their international controversies and to settle disputes by peaceful means."⁶⁴

The settling of disputes by peaceful means--a long-standing principle of the inter-American system--is to be accomplished through an array of recognized procedures. These procedures, however, would only be activated in cases where normal diplomatic channels proved unproductive. In such circumstances, the disputants could avail themselves of the following procedures: good offices and mediation (usually by a third country), investigation and conciliation

⁶³ Gordon Connell-Smith, op. cit., p.209.

⁶⁴ John C. Dreier, op. cit., p.37.

(normally by a commission), judicial procedure (through the International Court of Justice), and arbitration (by way of a tribunal). If these procedures, however, fail to precipitate a peaceful settlement, the parties have recourse to whichever procedure they deem most appropriate.

Summary

As one goes through this chapter, it becomes increasingly clear just how small a place Canada occupied in the world of Pan Americanism. For the most part, Canada has watched the evolution of Pan Americanism as a passive spectator. As subsequent chapters will demonstrate, officials in Ottawa tended to downplay this evolutionary process. For a variety of reasons, not the least of which was a decidedly Canadian orientation toward Europe, these same officials preferred to remain on the sidelines of Pan American developments. At any rate, the gradual forging of an inter-American community, just like the wrangling and collaboration that accompanied the development of such legal documents as the Pact of Bogotá, has been punctuated by periods of co-operation and intransigence. Through the 1889-1948 time frame, U.S. and Latin American officials--while participating in inter-American conferences and various fora--managed to construct a solid constitutional basis for guiding inter-American affairs. There was also widespread agreement on finding appropriate mechanisms to settle

hemispheric disputes peacefully, on expanding inter-American trade, and on facilitating economic development throughout the Americas.

More striking, however, was the fact that this same period was marked by confrontation and frustration, which fostered animosity and resentment. Indeed, continued Latin American frustration over its attempts to ensure the sanctity of non-intervention has served to harden attitudes and heighten inter-American tension.⁶⁵ Latin Americans in particular, after witnessing several instances of "Gringo" intervention and trying to cope with life under U.S. hegemony, have developed a deep-seated distrust of Washington. And successive U.S. governments--whether acting under the aegis of the Monroe Doctrine, the Roosevelt Corollary or the Truman Doctrine--have only exacerbated this fear.

While the concept of Pan Americanism experienced difficulties and strains through the 1889-1948 period, it still remained a dominant theme. There was a realization among Latin American political and economic elites, irrespective of the fact that forging an inter-American community would be an uneasy marriage, that Pan Americanism offered the best possible option. Given the depressing

⁶⁵ Disputes among Latin American nations, particularly in the area of bitter border controversies, were also a major source of discontentment and ill-will.

nature of Latin America's economic and political standing throughout this period, the need to settle intra-regional border skirmishes and boundary disputes, and the desire to curb Argentinian expansionism, they had little choice but to pursue this avenue.

Greater inter-American co-operation also held out the possibility of increased benefits gained through closer ties with the American behemoth. In addition to acquiring much-needed technology, Latin American elites saw Pan Americanism as a means to secure large sums of economic, political, and military assistance. And as long as those carrots were dangled in the eyes of those elites, the idea of Pan Americanism would be worth pursuing aggressively. The firmness of Pan Americanism, then, was in some part a function of Washington's ability to provide those entitlements.

From a U.S. standpoint, Pan Americanism was viewed through a different set of perceptual lenses. Economic considerations, particularly in areas of trade and investment, seemed paramount in the minds of American policy-makers. This is not to suggest, however, that geo-strategic concerns were unimportant. On the contrary, Washington was very much interested in preventing extra-continental intervention as well as protecting U.S. security interests. Politically speaking, the Monroe Doctrine continued to hold currency throughout this period, with

unstinting emphasis on controlling a U.S. "sphere of interest" and maintaining hegemony in the region. For these reasons, it was not surprising to see the United States play a major role in the creation of the inter-American system.

Within this context, the results of Pan Americanism--at least over the course of the 1889-1948 period--can best be described as mixed. Administrations in Washington were successful in solidifying their hold on, and leadership of, the Western hemisphere. Latin Americans, while failing to receive their expected economic windfall, found themselves increasingly dependent upon the Colossus to the North. But they did manage to establish the legal and institutional framework within which to advance their interests. Clearly, the Rio Treaty, the OAS Charter, and the Pact of Bogotá--each reflecting a culmination and codification of past accomplishments and experiences--offered them an opportunity to constrain U.S. foreign policy behaviour. On balance, then, Pan Americanism has turned out to be what one might expect it to be: neither a notable success nor a complete failure. Perhaps one could argue that, in subsequent years, this would also prove to be the case.

Chapter Three

The OAS in Action: A Mixed Record

Just as the results of Pan Americanism were mixed, so, too, is the specific record of accomplishment of the Organization of American States (OAS). While the institution amassed a shiny image in the late 1940s and 1950s, the sheen soon began to fade in the mid-1960s. By the 1980s the OAS seemed, at least in the eyes of many of its members and such non-members as Canada, to be suffering from a host of chronic ailments. Former Venezuelan President Jaime Lusinchi even went as far as to suggest in 1980 that "it is on the road to becoming a cadaver."¹ And the role of the institution--before and after--the U.S. invasion of Panama has done little to dispel this perception. With that said, this chapter outlines some, but by no means all, of the OAS's major successes and failures.² It also discusses

¹ Quoted in Francis X. Gannon, "Will the OAS Live To Be 100? Does it Deserve To?," Caribbean Review, 13:4 (Fall 1984), p.13.

² Obviously, the words "success" and "failure" pose some definitional problems. While they are difficult to quantify and admittedly artificial, they do provide a means of classification. For purposes of this thesis, the term "success" denotes the fact that the OAS was a major player in an inter-American dispute, a useful and constructive institutional instrument, and a determining factor in bringing a particular dispute to a peaceful conclusion. As for the term "failure," it refers to cases where the hemispheric body was not a force to contend with in an inter-American dispute, where it was conspicuously dilatory

whether or not these successes or failures shaped Canada's view of the hemispheric forum. The ensuing discussion is intended primarily to give the reader a general sense of why the hemispheric body has been successful in some cases and not in others. This is instructive because too often the OAS has been the subject of facile, one-dimensional treatments by panegyrists and critics alike. A more balanced interpretation, in comparison, brings to the fore the "true colours" of the organization.

In terms of actual operational capability, the OAS has exhibited flashes, particularly early in its career, of competence and effectiveness--as illustrated by the case histories delineated below. At the same time, it has shown itself, largely in the post-1965 period, to be susceptible to utter ineffectiveness and ineptitude. The purpose of this chapter, then, is threefold: first, to understand why the OAS adroitly handled border disputes, promoted constructive dialogue, negotiated temporary ceasefires, and prevented hostilities from breaking out; secondly, to grapple with why, in some cases, it was marginalized and fragmented, used as a blatant instrument of U.S. foreign policy, and virtually left as a spectator on the sidelines of inter-American affairs; and thirdly, and perhaps most important,

and ineffective, and where it was unable to play a leading role in resolving a hemispheric conflict--despite its desire to do so.

to show how this "record of performance" influenced the Canadian government's attitude or position toward the organization.³

Accordingly, this chapter is useful in terms of understanding Canada's association with the Inter-American community. For instance, it helps to illuminate why Canadian governments were reluctant to seek full membership in the hemispheric forum. Needless to say, the ability of the OAS to respond in an effective manner to crisis situations in the hemisphere, or to play a meaningful role in inter-American affairs in general, influenced decision-makers in Ottawa. Clearly, then, they were not about to opt for membership in an organization that was totally ineffective or, perhaps worse, irrelevant to events unfolding in the wider hemisphere.⁴

³ It is important to emphasize the fact that there is little in the way of Canadian government documentation on the early period of the OAS, particularly from 1948-1957. In looking through copious archival material, there was virtually no references to the early successes of the body. This is due, in part, to the fact that Canada's association with the organization--and especially the issue of membership--was not a major priority for the Liberal government of the day.

⁴ In addition, it is important--particularly from a foreign policy-making standpoint--to grapple with the strengths and weaknesses of the OAS. Canadian officials and diplomats should be cognizant of what the organization can and can not do or where it can and can not be effective. By recognizing what types of roles the OAS is best suited for, it will enable policy-makers to formulate possible areas where Canada can make a valuable contribution.

OAS success stories

Only days after the Rio Treaty entered into force⁵, the hemispheric body was put to its first official test. On 10 December 1948, the Costa Rican government charged that an armed force, allegedly launched from neighbouring Nicaragua, had violated the territorial integrity of Costa Rica.⁶ Pursuant to the provisions detailed in the OAS Charter, it demanded an immediate meeting of the Council. One day later, the Costa Rican representative on the OAS Council requested the invocation of the Rio Treaty, specifically under the

⁵ The treaty received the fourteenth notice of ratification (and thereby obtaining the requisite two-thirds) on 3 December 1948, when incidently Costa Rica deposited its instrument of ratification in Washington. See, Manuel R. García-Mora, "The Law of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance," Fordham Law Review, 20 (March 1951), pp.1-20.

⁶ The Nicaraguan government, in turn, claimed that Costa Rican authorities supported the unsavoury Caribbean Legion, a band of mercenaries who threatened the peace of the region. For this dispute, see, Organization of American States, Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance Applications, I, 1948-1959, (Washington: Pan American Union, 1964), pp.27-65. (Hereafter referred to as OAS Applications, I) Also see, Robert D. Tomasek, "The Organization of American States And Dispute Settlement From 1948 to 1981--An Assessment," Inter-American Review of Bibliography, 34:1 (1989), p.467.

terms delineated in Article 6.⁷

On December 12, with the OAS machinery fully activated, the Council undertook a more detailed assessment of the Central American situation.⁸ Apparently, each nation was given roughly 48 hours to obtain relevant information in which to buttress their presentations before the Council. Two days later, the Council decided, on the strength of the briefings, to request a Meeting of Consultation--to be attended by the Foreign Ministers of those nations that had ratified the Rio Treaty--in which the place and date were to be announced later. After meeting the requirements of Article 6 of the security pact--namely, calling for a Meeting of Consultation of Foreign Ministers--the Council, at the suggestion of Washington, then took it upon itself to serve provisionally as Organ of Consultation. But this convocation, as Charles G. Fenwick explains, "was for the time being no more than a technical justification for the

⁷ Article 6, as mentioned in the previous chapter, refers to the convening of the Organ of Consultation in cases where the sovereignty of an American state has been violated "by an aggression which is not an armed attack or by an extra-continental or intra-continental conflict, or by any other fact or situation that might endanger the peace of America."

⁸ It is instructive to note that the 1948 Costa Rican-Nicaraguan controversy focused international attention upon the OAS. It was clear that its actions in this case would ostensibly set the standard for future inter-American disputes. In short, there was enormous pressure on the institution to meet this initial challenge head on, to produce a favourable settlement, and to prove to its critics that it was indeed a viable international organization.

assumption by the Council of the power to act as a provisional organ."⁹ In effect, the Council--and this is important to note--was empowered to confront this dispute at its discretion.

The decision by the Council to act provisionally as the Organ of Consultation was made for several reasons. First, it provided the Council with the necessary latitude to investigate the facts of the dispute and to work toward a peaceful settlement. Secondly, the Meeting of Foreign Ministers, with all its attendant powers under the Rio Treaty, was not particularly suited for conciliation purposes. It did, however, furnish the Council with a potentially decisive trump card--specifically, the serious consequences that could follow from a convocation of a formal Meeting of Foreign Ministers, especially under the auspices of the security pact. Most important, though, was the fact that the techniques of good offices and mediation could be employed "in a less formal and less institutionalized framework."¹⁰

Following this decision, the Council moved on December 14 to appoint a Committee of Information, which was charged

⁹ Charles G. Fenwick, "Application of the Treaty of Rio to the Controversy between Costa Rica and Nicaragua," The American Journal of American Law, 43:2 (April 1949), p.330.

¹⁰ Edgar S. Furniss, "The Inter-American System And Recent Caribbean Disputes," International Organization, 4:4 (November 1950), p.588.

with the responsibility of conducting an on-the-spot investigation.¹¹ The subsequent inquiry lasted some 6 days, from the 18th to the 23rd, and it took the members to San Jose and Managua. Once there, they interviewed government and military officials from both governments and spoke with Costa Rican exile leaders in Nicaragua. Amid a growing sense that both sides were prepared to settle the controversy, the Committee presented its report to the provisional Organ of Consultation on 24 December.

Based on the findings of the report, which specifically censured Nicaragua for allowing its territory to be used by the invading force, the Council responded promptly. It instructed both parties to refrain from further hostilities and admonished each government to eliminate those "conditions" which engendered the dispute in the first place. The Council also requested that each party should observe religiously the long-standing principle of non-intervention. Furthermore, it called for the creation of an Inter-American Commission of Military Experts to ensure the fulfilment of its recommendations.¹²

¹¹ The Committee was composed of members from Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, and the United States. The delegation flew to the region on an aircraft placed at the disposal of the Committee by the U.S. government. See, OAS Applications, I, p.32.

¹² It was sent to the area to ensure that the border between the two countries was closed. Secondly, it was empowered to verify that rebels on both sides put down their weapons and phased out their illegal activities. Several months later, the Military Commission reported to the

The Nicaraguan-Costa Rican dispute was effectively brought to close in late February, 1949. After lengthy negotiations, under the stewardship of the Council, an agreement between the two nations was finalized. On February 21, during the course of a formal session of the full Council, a Pact of Amity and Friendship was signed by representatives of the two governments. While common sense ultimately prevailed in this particular case, the intermediary role of the OAS was noteworthy.¹³

This 1948 controversy was clearly a case where the OAS was successful. According to John C. Dreier, "the OAS came through its first test with flying colors."¹⁴ To be sure, it responded to the challenge with swiftness, creativity, and vigour. In fact, the prompt response of the Council may well have prevented the dispute from taking on a more ominous character, since hostilities had already resulted in the deaths of several people and the possibility of a full-blown war involving forces from both sides was always present. In addition, it exhibited a willingness to apportion responsibility as well as to seek the basis for a negotiated

Council that the Costa Rican government had disarmed the Caribbean Legion and indicated that Nicaragua had closed its border with Costa Rica and was interning any remaining pockets of the revolutionary movement. Ibid., p.33.

¹³ Ibid., pp.38-42.

¹⁴ Dreier, The Organization of American States and the Hemisphere Crisis, p.60.

settlement. Simply put, it played a leading role in the dispute, it discharged its responsibilities effectively, and it facilitated a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

As the Nicaraguan-Costa Rican dispute faded from the scene, another controversy involving Haiti and the Dominican Republic developed. In February of 1949, the Haitian government accused the Dominican Republic of harbouring aggressive forces on its territory.¹⁵ More specifically, it argued that Santo Domingo had given asylum to, and was supporting the activities of, Astrel Roland, a former Colonel in the Haitian army who was charged with plotting the overthrow of the Haitian government. Like the previous Nicaraguan-Costa Rican episode, the Haitian government admonished the OAS Council--while acting as provisional Organ of Consultation--to intervene on its behalf.¹⁶

After listening to statements from both sides, the Council decided that the dispute, since it did not actually involve the violation of Haiti's territorial integrity or political independence, did not warrant the convocation of the Organ of Consultation. On 3 January 1950, the Haitian government, once again fearing a possible attempt to remove it from power, invoked the Rio Treaty against the Dominican

¹⁵ For a look at this case and others, see, Robert D. Tomasek, "Caribbean Exile Invasions: A Special Regional Type of Conflict," *Orbis*, 17:4 (Winter 1974), pp.1354-1382.

¹⁶ OAS Applications, I, p.125.

Republic.¹⁷ Evidently, it claimed "that officials of the Dominican Republic had been involved in the plot and that now the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and political independence of Haiti were threatened and the peace of the Americas was endangered."¹⁸ Three days later, the Council met to consider the veracity and seriousness of the Haitian complaint.

Accordingly, the Council, as it had done previously, decided to constitute itself as provisional Organ of Consultation.¹⁹ It called for a Meeting of Foreign Ministers, but did not set a date or location. It then authorized the chairman of the Council to appoint an investigative committee, entrusted with the task of determining--in a reliable and accurate fashion--the nature of the Haitian-Dominican Republic situation. The Investigating Committee, composed of representatives from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Uruguay, and the United States, was thus instructed to conduct on-site investigations in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Guatemala.²⁰

¹⁷ Santo Domingo, in response, charged that Haiti, along with Cuba and Guatemala, was supporting hostile activities against the Dominican government. Furniss, op. cit., pp.586-87.

¹⁸ Thomas and Thomas, The Organization of American States, p.299.

¹⁹ For the actions of the Council, see, OAS Applications, I, pp.129-132.

²⁰ Ibid., p.134.

The Committee officially began its inquiry on 22 January, and concluded its investigation on 15 February. Its final report was submitted to the provisional Organ of Consultation on 13 March. The Dominican Republic was singled out in the report for encouraging an attempted overthrow of Haiti's constitutional government. At the same time, it found that the Cuban and Guatemalan governments had indeed been supportive of activities aimed at the destabilization of the Dominican government.

In April of 1950, the Council delivered a carefully-worded decision.²¹ It recommended that the Dominican Republic take effective and immediate steps to prevent government officials from assisting seditious movements.²² Additionally, the Council established a special provisional committee or "watchdog" to ensure that its recommendations were fully complied with. When all parties agreed to cooperate with the Council resolutions, the dispute was, for all intents and purposes, defused.

Once again, the OAS was highly successful in its efforts to resolve peacefully the Haitian-Dominican incident. As in the prior Nicaraguan-Costa Rican dispute, it reacted quickly and prudently. Similarly, it was not afraid

²¹ Ibid., p.136.

²² For a fuller elucidation of the various recommendations, see, Thomas and Thomas, op. cit., pp. 300-301.

to ascribe blame or to set out the terms of a possible settlement. In many respects, the Council was beginning to emerge as an important instrument for the peaceful settlement of inter-American disputes. The OAS, certainly in the eyes of a sceptical international community, was starting to generate a reputation as an effective multinational entity.²³

That image of respectability was further fortified, strangely enough, by the resurfacing of the Nicaraguan-Costa Rican controversy. On 11 January 1955, Costa Rican authorities claimed once again that their country had been attacked by hostile forces emanating from neighbouring Nicaragua. Subsequently, the Costa Rican representative in Washington requested a meeting of the OAS Council and invoked the Rio Treaty.²⁴ During the course of the Council session, agreement was reached on the question of convening a Meeting of Foreign Ministers, but without actually fixing the date or the venue. Not surprisingly, the Council proceeded--in accordance with the OAS Charter--to serve provisionally as the Organ of Consultation.

²³ It is important to remember that these notable successes had little impact on Canadian attitudes toward the body. Given Canada's unenthusiastic response to these cases, it is conceivable that officials simply did not view the OAS as a significant institutional entity. By their relative indifference, these same officials would tend to confirm the view that Canada-OAS affairs was not a major foreign policy priority.

²⁴ OAS Applications, I, p.168.

Almost immediately, an Investigating Committee was established, with the full consent of both Costa Rica and Nicaragua.²⁵ In addition, both governments promised to refrain from any actions that might further aggravate an already tenuous situation. The Committee, for its part, was charged with conducting an on-site investigation, ascertaining the pertinent facts, and submitting a final report.²⁶ More specifically, it was responsible for establishing the location and nature of the alleged invading forces, the origins of those forces, and the actual supplier of military aircraft and sundry materiel.

In its report, the Committee backed the Costa Rican allegation that the aggressor forces had indeed come south across the Nicaraguan-Costa Rican border. Consequently, the Council met on January 16 to consider an appeal from the Costa Rican government for military assistance. Consistent with past OAS efforts at conflict resolution, there was a great reluctance on the part of many member governments to

²⁵ Peaceful observation flights, never before used as an inter-American peace measure, took place over regions that were reportedly strafed and bombed from aircraft apparently flying out of the north (read Nicaragua). See Ibid., p.170 and Tomasek, "The Organization of American States And Dispute Settlement," op. cit., p.467.

²⁶ The Investigating Committee was composed of representatives of Mexico, Brazil, Paraguay, Ecuador, and the United States. Once the Council decided to establish an air patrol, under the direction of the Committee, the governments of Ecuador, Mexico, Uruguay, and the United States made planes available. OAS Applications, I, pp.172.

provide military support. However, heavy pressure from the Investigating Committee,²⁷ and the White House, resulted in an OAS consensus to assist Costa Rica. On the basis of a Council resolution, the United States sold Costa Rica four combat planes (at the cost of \$1 apiece), a development which was decisive in altering the military balance of forces.²⁸

By January 25, a ceasefire was in place and most of the rebels had crossed the border back into Nicaragua, where they were summarily interned. The OAS, in turn, watched over the negotiations between the two nations. The Council also established a military presence on the scene to maintain the ceasefire, while the negotiations continued under OAS supervision. In fact, regular border patrols by an OAS force--under the guidance of the Investigating Committee--were subsequently implemented.²⁹

After several months, the two governments arrived at a mutually satisfactory settlement. On 9 January 1956, Costa Rica and Nicaragua signed two bilateral agreements: one

²⁷ At one point, the Committee threatened possible sanctions, which would have been unprecedented action, under the Rio Treaty. However, with the departure of the invading forces, this idea was quickly shelved. Ibid., p.174 and Tomasek, "The Organization of American States And Dispute Settlement," op. cit., p.467.

²⁸ After the dispute was resolved, Costa Rica returned the planes to the United States. Mecham, The United States and Inter-American Security, 1889-1960, p.404.

²⁹ OAS Application, I, pp.201.

reaffirming their commitment to the 1949 Costa Rican-Nicaraguan Pact of Amity and a second agreeing to the competence of the Committee of Investigation and Conciliation. The formal signing of the two accords effectively terminated the dispute.³⁰

Clearly, the OAS had functioned commendably and had risen to the occasion. The role of the institution, writes Jerome Slater, "represented the most far-reaching intervention of the inter-American system in a hemispheric conflict until that point."³¹ It sent a signal to the rest of the world that the regional body would have to be a force to contend with in inter-American affairs. As Dreier contends: "It brought the prestige of the OAS to a high point not only in the hemisphere but in the world at large."³²

It was perhaps a textbook example of a case in which the machinery of the OAS was quickly activated and highly responsive. The OAS Council, through the creation of the Investigating Committee, was able to contain the dispute and restore a sense of normalcy. Its willingness to sanction

³⁰ It is instructive to note that the OAS was not committed to condemning or punishing the illegal actions of Nicaragua. Rather, it was more interested in bringing Nicaragua back into the OAS fold and normalizing relations between the two countries.

³¹ Slater, The OAS and United States Foreign Policy, p.73.

³² Dreier, op. cit., p.62.

military support, in conjunction with threatening additional punitive measures, was instrumental in bringing the two protagonists to the negotiating table. And its resolve in overseeing the ceasefire and employing the border patrols compelled the two countries to reach a peaceful settlement. It is understandable, then, why Gordon Connell-Smith noted in the mid-1960s that it was "perhaps the most successful action taken by the OAS to date."³³

Not long after Nicaragua resolved its difficulties with Costa Rica, it became embroiled in a border dispute with Honduras. The long-standing boundary controversy was revived when the Honduran authorities established a new province, which included some of the territory claimed by Nicaragua.³⁴ On 1 May 1957, the Honduran representative in the OAS invoked the Rio Treaty, alleging that Nicaraguan forces had invaded Honduran territory.³⁵ The very next day, the Nicaraguan government also invoked the Rio Treaty and

³³ Gordon Connell-Smith, The Inter-American System, (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p.237.

³⁴ While most of the disputed area was mainly jungle borderland, there were some reports that a portion of it contained oil deposits. From a historical standpoint, the territory in question was the subject of an arbitrated award in 1906, in which the King of Spain supported the claim by Honduras. Nicaragua, however, never accepted the validity of the award. See, Tomasek, "The Organization of American States And Dispute Settlement," op. cit., p.468.

³⁵ See, C. G. Fenwick, "The Honduras-Nicaragua Boundary Dispute," The American Journal of International Law, 51 (1957), p.762.

counter-charged that it was Honduran aggression which was actually increasing tensions in the area.

The Council held a special session on May 2, after Nicaraguan authorities charged that Honduran troops had killed an unspecified number of Nicaraguan soldiers.³⁶ The Council, as it had done in the past, decided to call a Meeting of Foreign Ministers, the seat and date of the meeting to be fixed later. Then, it took it upon itself to act provisionally as the Organ of Consultation. By May 3, an Investigating Committee had been established, with a mandate to determine the facts of the dispute. Two days later, the Committee, after some frantic shuttle diplomacy, was able to secure a temporary ceasefire between the two sides.³⁷

Following the ceasefire agreement, both governments agreed to withdraw their troops. On May 16, the Investigating Committee submitted its report to the Council. It was the Committee's view that it was next to impossible to determine responsibility for the alleged aggression. It did, however, recommend the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee to help supervise negotiations aimed at fashioning a peaceful settlement.³⁸ Once again, the collective

³⁶ OAS Applications, I, p.246.

³⁷ The Committee was comprised of representatives and military experts from Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico, Panama, and the United States. Ibid., p.248.

³⁸ Ibid., p.250.

contribution of the organization, buttressed by the moral support of the inter-American community, had succeeded in averting a potentially explosive confrontation.

As a first step, both sides agreed to place the territorial dispute before the International Court of Justice, and to abide by its ruling. In November of 1960, the Court handed down its judgment confirming the validity of the King of Spain's 1906 award.³⁹ In response, Nicaragua requested the good offices of the Inter-American Peace Committee in resolving questions arising from the Court's decision. The Committee, after visiting Honduras, Nicaragua, and the disputed territory, decided to set up a Honduran-Nicaraguan Mixed Commission. By early 1962, the Peace Committee reported that the boundary dispute was, for the most part, settled.⁴⁰

While this controversy ended in more of an agreement to disagree, both sides refrained from further acts of aggression. The OAS played a central role in putting out the brush fire and normalizing relations between the two countries. By placing the OAS machinery in high gear, by activating the Committee mechanism, and by acting as a catalyst for negotiations, it set the groundwork for a diplomatic solution. Indeed, by responding in a swift and

³⁹ Tomasek, "The Organization of American States And Dispute Settlement," op. cit., p.469.

⁴⁰ OAS Applications, I, pp.300.

effective manner, it was able to arrange a ceasefire and have a calming effect on the disputants.

The early 1960s also saw the OAS front and centre in a ground-breaking inter-American dispute involving Venezuela and the Dominican Republic. In mid-February 1960, the Venezuelan government complained to the OAS Council that the flagrant violation of human rights in the Dominican Republic was heightening international tensions in the Caribbean.⁴¹ The Council promptly referred the investigation of this serious charge to the Inter-American Peace Committee. On June 6, the Committee's report concluded that the Dominican government had, in fact, been guilty of widespread violations of basic human rights.⁴²

In early July, Venezuela requested an immediate convocation of the Organ of Consultation, under Article 6 of the Rio Treaty, to consider acts of aggression perpetrated by the Dominican regime of General Rafael Trujillo.⁴³ The OAS Council once again called for a Meeting of Foreign Ministers (without setting the date or location) and

⁴¹ Mecham, op. cit., pp.419-421 and Mecham, A Survey of United States-Latin American Relations, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), pp.185-187.

⁴² Dreier, op. cit., pp.72-73.

⁴³ It would be an understatement to say that Trujillo was disliked by his own people. While the military dictator was staunchly anti-communist, he was despised and shunned by the wider Latin American community. Slater, The OAS and United States Foreign Policy, p.205.

declared itself provisional Organ of Consultation. At the same time, it appointed an Investigating Committee to look into the Venezuelan charges.⁴⁴ Subsequently, the Committee found evidence which supported the claim that the Trujillo regime plotted to overthrow the Venezuelan government.⁴⁵

By mid-August, the first ever Meeting of Foreign Ministers--acting as the Organ of Consultation under the Rio Treaty--was convened in San José, Costa Rica. The meeting focused, inter alia, on the interventionist activities of the Dominican Republic, including its involvement in the attempted June 24 assassination of Venezuelan Chief of State, Rómulo Betancourt. Venezuela, for its part, pushed for the full application of sanctions available under the terms of the Rio Treaty.⁴⁶ The majority of Latin American members, however, preferred the imposition of only moderate punitive measures (such as the breaking of diplomatic relations).⁴⁷

The Organ of Consultation, then, recommended the employment of punitive sanctions, for the first time in

⁴⁴ The Committee was composed of representatives from Argentina, Mexico, Panama, Uruguay, and the United States. Ball, The OAS in Transition, p.453.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp.453-454.

⁴⁶ Slater, The OAS and United States Foreign Policy, p.189.

⁴⁷ The United States, which had coveted Trujillo's anti-communist disposition, opposed the adoption of sanctions. Dreier, op. cit., p.100.

inter-American history, against an American state.⁴⁸ Pursuant to Articles 6 and 8 of the security pact, the Organ of Consultation severed diplomatic relations with the Dominican Republic and suspended trade in arms and implements of war.⁴⁹ In January of 1961, the OAS Council recommended extending the suspension of trade with the Dominican Republic to include oil, petroleum products, trucks, and spare parts.⁵⁰ According to Dreier, these sanctions were intended "either to punish the Dominican government for its past crime; or to bring about a fundamental change in the government."⁵¹ General Trujillo subsequently resigned in November of 1961 and was later assassinated. Shortly thereafter, an OAS Special Committee recommended the lifting of sanctions on the grounds that the Dominican Republic no longer posed a threat to hemispheric peace and security.⁵² That recommendation was approved, and the punitive measures were discontinued, in January of 1962.

⁴⁸ Ball, op. cit., p.454.

⁴⁹ It also retained discretion to study the feasibility and desirability of extending the trade sanctions to other articles.

⁵⁰ Since the United States was the Dominican Republic's largest trading partner, the new sanctions were, for the most part, unilateral. Reportedly, Washington turned on the Trujillo regime in an effort to secure future Latin American support against Castro's Cuba. See, Mecham, op. cit., p.421.

⁵¹ Dreier, op. cit., p.98.

⁵² Ball, op. cit., p.454.

The OAS response in this particular case is important for a number of reasons. First, it was willing to move dramatically and with considerable resolve. Secondly, it was not afraid to confront the thorny issue of punishing one of its members. In the words of Ronald St. John Macdonald, it "marked one of the few occasions in the recent history of international organizations generally that a member state has been punished in peace-time by its own organization for actions against another member state."⁵³ Perhaps more important, it exhibited a firm interest--largely through the imposition of sanctions--of intervening uncharacteristically in the internal affairs of a member state. Despite its unstinting commitment to the principle of non-intervention, the OAS felt that intervention was key to resolving the controversy peacefully. It justified its qualification of the doctrine of absolute non-intervention by pointing to the fact that the Dominican Republic, through its own actions, had itself violated the sanctity of non-intervention. Put another way, the OAS would practice non-intervention only toward those member states which adhered to the principle of non-intervention.

In its formative years, as these cases clearly illustrate, the OAS was able to live up to its expectations.

⁵³ Ronald St. John Macdonald, "The Organization of American States In Action," The University of Toronto Law Journal, 15 (1963-64), pp.371-72.

It was able not only to fulfil its obligations and responsibilities as outlined in the OAS Charter, but also to promote the principles and objectives of that document as well. From an institutional standpoint, it showed that it had in place the requisite machinery to deal with one of the hemisphere's most explosive type of situation--namely, the outbreak of hostilities. Indeed, it was quick to engage itself in the various disputes, and in a meaningful and decisive fashion.

The OAS, at least on the basis of the cases outlined above, functioned as a key institutional entity in the peaceful resolution of inter-American conflicts. It was politically relevant, exhibiting an ability to respond actively to a variety of pressing hemispheric disputes. To be sure, it showed that it could--if it has the necessary political will--act as a useful intermediary, arbiter, and bridge-builder.⁵⁴ This record of securing successful outcomes should, however, be weighed against instances of the OAS's failure to do so.

⁵⁴ It is worth reiterating here that these OAS successes did not register in any discernible fashion on officials in Ottawa and diplomats in the field. One could argue, of course, that Canada's foreign policy focus at this time was geared more toward Western Europe and the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In addition, the government of Louis St. Laurent--as later chapters will illustrate--exhibited little interest in moving Canada into the inter-American orbit.

OAS failures

While the OAS has performed effectively on several occasions, it has been unable to do so on a number of others.⁵⁵ For instance, in 1954, the popularly elected Guatemalan government of Jacobo Arbenz was under siege from CIA-backed rebels who invaded the country from Honduras (and possibly even Nicaragua).⁵⁶ The anti-communist Guatemalan exile group was led by former Guatemalan army officer Lieutenant-Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas. By June of 1954, the Arbenz government, unable to fend off the invading forces or defend itself against an international propaganda war stage-managed from Washington, had collapsed.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Interestingly, in cases where the OAS proved to be ineffective--as opposed to those occasions when it played a constructive role--there was a fair degree of Canadian reaction.

⁵⁶ Prior to the actual onset of the Guatemalan crisis, the Tenth Inter-American Conference was held in Caracas, Venezuela in March 1954. At this conference, the United States delegation pressed for, and succeeded in obtaining, a firm declaration on anti-communism. In the words of Arthur P. Whitaker: "Guatemala was not mentioned by name, but the reference was clear." Whitaker, "The Organization of American States," The Yearbook of World Affairs, 13 (1959), p.129. For a fuller discussion of the Caracas conference, see, Gordon Connell-Smith, The Inter-American System, pp.229-231. For an excellent analysis of the Guatemalan crisis itself, see, Piero Gleijeses, Shattered Hopes: The Guatemalan Revolution And The United States, 1944-1954, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).

⁵⁷ It is important for contextual reasons, to understand the prevailing international climate at the time of the Guatemalan crisis. First, the Korean War, which was in many ways portrayed as a struggle against communist forces, had recently come to a close. Secondly, the final

Clearly, the Guatemalan controversy served to tarnish the shining armour of the OAS.⁵⁸ First, there was no constituting of any Investigative Committee--as was the practice on previous occasions--to discover the facts of the case or to arrange any temporary ceasefire. Secondly, the OAS Council did not place in motion its previously successful consultative machinery.⁵⁹ In fact, it only called for a Meeting of Foreign Ministers to be held on 7 July 1954 in Rio de Janeiro--incidentally, "to consider the situation created by the intervention of international communism in Guatemala"--when the collapse of the Guatemalan government looked imminent. To be sure, the toppling of the government in June ensured that the meeting never took place. Similarly, the Inter-American Peace Committee, after some

chapter of the McCarthy era was just being written. With rabid anti-communism flourishing in the United States, the Eisenhower Administration was very sensitive to any hint of communist infiltration in the Western hemisphere. In the eyes of the Eisenhower White House, the Arbenz government, even in the face of scanty evidence, was decidedly communist. And its view was clear: since the risk from any possible spread of communist influences in the region would be great, the Arbenz government would have to be removed. For a critical assessment of U.S. interference in Guatemala, see, Philip B. Taylor, "The Guatemalan Affair: A Critique of United States Foreign Policy," The American Political Science Review, 50:3 (September 1956), pp.787-806 and William Everett Kane, Civil Strife in Latin America, pp.186-197. For a more favourable view, see, Dreier, op.cit., pp.52-54.

⁵⁸ In some respects, the actions of the OAS were more in line with an anti-communist alliance than a collective security arrangement.

⁵⁹ Thomas and Thomas, op. cit., p.310.

initial confusion on the part of Guatemala, waited sufficiently long before deciding to go to Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.⁶⁰ But by the time that it had started its investigation, Arbenz had already been removed from power and a new government in Guatemala had been installed.

Initially, the Arbenz government sought to avoid the OAS altogether, thinking that the hemispheric body was dominated by Washington, and thus would generally be unsympathetic to its plight. It hoped, however, to bring the invasion of Guatemala to the attention of the UN Security Council, and to request that the Security Council dispatch immediately a fact-finding mission to Guatemala.⁶¹ The United States, in arguing vigorously against this course of action, pushed for the matter to be first referred to the OAS.⁶² By bringing the case before the OAS, at least

⁶⁰ Taylor, op. cit., pp.800-801.

⁶¹ Kane, op. cit., pp.194-95.

⁶² By limiting the jurisdiction of the UN, Washington could effectively head off any pressure from within the world body to curb or thwart the U.S.-sponsored invasion. Secondly, it would prevent the Soviet Union, which was sympathetic to the Arbenz government, from utilizing its veto in the Security Council. In the OAS, though, the Eisenhower Administration would be better able to control events and more likely to generate support and backing for the intervention. Washington was, in effect, using the "try the OAS first" argument to bolster its position on freezing out the UN. Interestingly enough, the majority of Latin American governments espoused the view that American states could, if they so wished, appeal directly to the Security Council before approaching the OAS. On this point, see, Inis L. Claude, "The 'Try OAS First' Issue," International

according to Inis L. Claude, "the United States was recommending what it hoped would prove a suicidal act."⁶³

It was considered suicidal in the sense that the OAS would do little or nothing to prevent the demise of the Arbenz government. In fact, the OAS treated Guatemala as if it were the "defendant" rather than the "plaintiff."⁶⁴ Instead of condemning the CIA-backed invasion or offering assistance, as it had done in similar instances when non-communist states were invaded, it remained strangely inactive. In an overly critical comment, Arthur P. Whitaker noted that "the situation in Guatemala and the neighbouring countries unfolded in the traditional Central American way, almost as if neither the OAS nor the United Nations had ever come into existence."⁶⁵ In other words, the OAS in particular, and the UN to a lesser extent, did little or nothing to respond to what was clearly a flagrant violation of the organization's key principles and tenets.

The Guatemalan "affair"--or the failure of the OAS to respond effectively--marked a low point for the hemispheric body. In dragging its feet, the OAS Council allowed the situation to mushroom into a full-blown crisis. On an issue

Conciliation, 547 (March 1964), p.61.

⁶³ Ibid., p.30.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.30.

⁶⁵ Arthur P. Whitaker, op. cit., p.131.

which involved illegal activities on the part of the United States and Honduras against another American state, the OAS simply remained on the sidelines as if nothing untoward had happened to a member state.⁶⁶ To be sure, in the face of serious violations of inter-American norms and principles, the OAS not only played a peripheral role, but was also clearly unwilling to provide protection to an American state under attack. According to Thomas and Thomas, whose interpretation typified the assessment of most informed observers, "the OAS did present a sorry spectacle in coping with this case."⁶⁷ Even Dreier, a supporter of U.S. policy, pointed out that the case of Guatemala "had somewhat stained the shining armor of the OAS."⁶⁸

While the events surrounding the Guatemalan affair produced little in the way of an "official" Canadian response, it did not go totally unnoticed. In the House of Commons, for instance, parliamentarians raised the issue with the government of Louis St. Laurent. In June 1954, Stanley Knowles--member for Winnipeg North Centre--asked the then-Secretary of State for External Affairs if he had "any

⁶⁶ As Slater further indicates: "It had not even helped in the post-hostilities negotiations, which were dominated by the United States." Slater, The OAS and United States Foreign Policy, pp.126-27.

⁶⁷ Thomas and Thomas, op. cit., p.310.

⁶⁸ Dreier, op. cit., p.62.

comments to make on the situation in Guatemala."⁶⁹ Mr. Lester Pearson, who was seemingly not in command of all the facts, simply responded with a curt: "No, Mr. Speaker."⁷⁰ Four days later, Pearson rose in the House to respond to a second Knowles question on the subject by stating the following: "The political situation in regards to developments in Guatemala is certainly not clear, although the military position would appear on the information at our disposal, to be reaching a climax."⁷¹

Although it is difficult to discern precisely how the Guatemalan controversy influenced Canada's position on membership in the OAS, it seems clear from what evidence exists that it was not favourable. In other words, the Guatemalan imbroglio did little to sway decision-makers in Ottawa that now was a good time to join the hemispheric body. To be sure, the developments preceding the crisis seemed to set the precise tone of the Canadian response. In an April 1954 letter from Jules Léger, then Canada's Ambassador to Mexico to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, he explained: "The Caracas Conference as seen from

⁶⁹ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, First Session--Twenty Second Parliament, Vol. 6, 19 June 1954, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1954), p.6278.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.6279.

⁷¹ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, First Session--Twenty Second Parliament, Vol. 6, 23 June 1954, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1954), p.6519.

here has not strengthened hemispheric solidarity nor has it made United States' leadership more attractive to the rest of the American community."⁷² He went on to say that there "is no great cause for rejoicing in the victory of Mr. Dulles on his anti-communist resolution although it may have brought the peril of communist infiltration closer to home in this part of the world."⁷³

It seems clear from Ambassador Léger's correspondence that he was unimpressed with the results of the Tenth Inter-American Conference and with the OAS itself. As he was at pains to point out in his letter: "Latin Americans are getting more and more restless. The regional organization, on the other hand, does not show any marked progress towards acquiring more strength. This could very well result in the slow disintegration of the OAS as a serious regional organization."⁷⁴ Similarly, in an April 1954 letter to the Canadian Embassy in Mexico (and circulated throughout the region) from R.A. MacKay, Acting Under-Secretary of State, he recognized the troubles plaguing the body. He indicated that "the problems of the O.A.S. and the Tenth Inter-American Conference are still fresh in the minds of many Latin American officials, and this is, therefore, an

⁷² National Archives of Canada, "Tenth Inter-American Conference," 1 April 1954, File RG-25 2226-40, Vol.28, p.3.

⁷³ Ibid., p.3.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.3.

excellent time to obtain information on the Organization which would be valuable to the Department."⁷⁵

From MacKay's letter, it seems as though DEA was not particularly upbeat about the OAS. The very fact that he was looking for information on the body would tend to confirm the fact that Canada was far from making any decision on joining the organization. In fact, the response from Canada's Ambassador to Venezuela, H.G. Noonan, was decidedly negative on this issue. In a letter written around the time of the Guatemala crisis, he suggested that "the Organization was rather futile, potentially embarrassing and far too costly (in time and money) considering its achievements."⁷⁶

But perhaps the most damning statement--written by C.F.W. Hoops at the time of the crisis--about Canada's position on OAS membership came from a DEA memorandum. In the words of Hoop: "On examining the record of the O.A.S. up to date, I have been unable to find anything that this Organization has done, or is likely to do which would be deemed an advantage to Canada."⁷⁷ On the question of Canadian membership, he was was even more blunt. As he

⁷⁵ National Archives of Canada, "Organization of American States," 28 April 1954, File RG 25 2226-40, Vol.28, p.1.

⁷⁶ National Archives of Canada, "Canadian Membership In The O.A.S.," 13 May 1954, File RG 25 2226-40, Vol.28, p.6.

⁷⁷ National Archives of Canada, "Organization Of American States," 9 June 1954, File RG 25 2226-40, Vol.28, p.1.

explained: "My conclusion, for what it is worth, is that in joining the O.A.S., Canada would be attaching itself to a body which has accomplished little for its present members and would do nothing but create useless work and expense for us for many years in the future."⁷⁸

Although the OAS was roundly criticized for being dilatory and ineffective in the case of Guatemala, it was severely excoriated for its role in the Dominican Republic crisis of 1965.⁷⁹ In April of that year, revolutionary elements within the Dominican military establishment began an effort to overthrow the government of Donald Reid Cabral.⁸⁰ On April 27, the Inter-American Peace Committee,

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.3.

⁷⁹ See, for example, Jerome Slater, "The Limits of Legitimization in International Organizations: The Organization of American States and the Dominican Crisis," International Organization, 23:1 (Winter 1969), pp.54-58 and A.J. Thomas and Ann Van Wynen Thomas, "The Dominican Republic Crisis 1965 Legal Aspects," in John Carey, (ed.), The Dominican Republic Crisis 1965, (Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1967), pp.1-83.

⁸⁰ For a more detailed discussion of the Dominican crisis, see, Abraham F. Lowenthal, The Dominican Intervention, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972). It is instructive to note that in February 1963, a freely-elected chamber of deputies as well as a senate was installed in Santo Domingo. At the same time, Juan Bosch was proclaimed the first popularly-elected president in Dominican history. Seven months later, he was overthrown in a bloodless coup, which was orchestrated primarily by the military and the Dominican upper class. By 1965, though, the country began experiencing the instability of a pro-Bosch revolution. The Cabral government was unable to quell the unrest and young military officers subsequently began agitating for the restoration of the former constitutional government of Bosch.

at the behest of the United States, convened to consider the Dominican situation. The next day, U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic, W. Tapley Bennett, informed President Johnson that the lives of U.S. and other foreign nationals were in danger. (Apparently, it was Bennett who requested the landing of U.S. forces on the beaches of the tiny Caribbean country.) Shortly thereafter, U.S. marines, numbering close to 20,000, landed on the shores of the Dominican Republic, with the avowed objective of protecting U.S. lives.⁸¹

On April 29, in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion, the OAS Council met and urged the establishment of a ceasefire and stated its desire to be kept informed of developments in the country.⁸² That same evening, the Council met again to

⁸¹ It is important to note that at the time of the U.S. intervention, Cuban-U.S. relations were in a disastrous state, Cold War diplomacy was flourishing, and the threat of "international communism" was foremost in the minds of U.S. decision-makers. To be sure, the possibility that the Dominican Republic could turn out to be "another Cuba" was a potent force underpinning U.S. policy toward the Caribbean nation. See, Slater, The OAS And United States Foreign Policy, p.52 and Michael J. Kryzaneck, "The Dominican Intervention Revisited: An Attitudinal and Operational Analysis," in John D. Martz, (ed.), United States Policy in Latin America, (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), pp.140-141.

⁸² Evidently, the OAS was not consulted beforehand by the United States and, more important, was only brought into the picture after Washington had secured its primary objectives. The White House was well aware of the fact that it would have been unable to muster the two-thirds majority to authorize the invasion. Moreover, President Johnson regarded the hemispheric body as largely inconsequential. His view was succinct: "The OAS can't pour p ___ out of a boot if the instructions were written on the heel." Quoted

consider a request by the Chilean representative that a Meeting of Consultation--under Article 39 of the OAS Charter--be convened on May 1 to discuss the crisis.⁸³ At the same time, there was agreement on a proposal to declare a "neutral zone" in the embassy area of Santo Domingo wherein foreign nationals would be given safe haven.

Following a report from the Papal Nuncio in Santo Domingo, the Council decided on April 30 to send the Secretary General, José A. Mora, to the island nation to establish an OAS presence at the scene.⁸⁴ In addition, he was instructed to assist the Nuncio in his efforts at securing a ceasefire and to provide immediate on-the-spot reports to the Meeting of Consultation. When the Meeting of Consultation was convened on May 1, it had before it a number of draft resolutions. For instance, a Mexican proposal called upon the United States to withdraw its forces from the country immediately. In any event, it concluded with the adoption of a resolution creating a Special Committee, which was charged with investigating the Dominican situation, seeking a possible ceasefire, and

in Robert D. Schulzinger, American Diplomacy In The Twentieth Century, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p.279.

⁸³ Ball, op. cit., p.472.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.473.

helping to evacuate scores of refugees.⁸⁵

By late May, the Meeting of Consultation had moved to address the Dominican crisis on a number of fronts. There was agreement reached on the establishment of an Inter-American Peace Force (IAPF)--composed mainly of U.S. forces--for the Dominican Republic, which was responsible for restoring normal conditions in the country.⁸⁶ On June 2, the Meeting of Consultation established a new Committee (the Ad Hoc Committee) to continue the work of the Special Committee and the Secretary General.⁸⁷ Through this committee, and its work in finding some common ground between the rightists and

⁸⁵ Thomas and Thomas, "The Dominican Republic Crisis 1965," op. cit., p.37.

⁸⁶ The United States, in pressing for its creation, viewed the IAPF as an effective hedge or defence against any outside communist threat. Latin American governments, for their part, saw the force as more of a defence against Washington. Simply put, they hoped that the IAPF would remove from the U.S. the self-imposed task of protecting the hemisphere from extra-continental aggression. There were, however, some concerns among the Latins that the establishment of "collective intervention" would create a dangerous precedent in inter-American diplomacy. That OAS backing would, in effect, legitimize what was essentially a unilateral U.S. operation. Needless to say, there was no serious movement afoot within the OAS to revise the Charter to incorporate a permanent force. The creation of the IAPF, as Ball notes, "had been the best way to make the best of a bad business, not something to be desired for its own sake." Ball, op. cit., p.480.

⁸⁷ The Special Committee was widely regarded as a complete failure. After about two weeks in Santo Domingo, it resigned in a cloud of controversy and returned to Washington. For more details of the Committee's failings, see, Jerome Slater, Intervention and Negotiation: The United States and the Dominican Crisis, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970), pp.81-84.

the constitutionalists (led by Antonio Imbert), a Provisional Government was installed on September 3, under the leadership of Hector García Godoy. And with the coming to power of a new government, the Inter-American Peace Force began to leave the country on September 21.

Clearly, the OAS was involved in the Dominican crisis, but the nature of that involvement was less than exemplary.⁸⁸ Not only did the body not condemn the intervention on the part of the United States, but, in addition, it did absolutely nothing to prevent it from happening.⁸⁹ It had little impact at all on setting the agenda or in shaping the evolution of U.S. policy toward the Dominican Republic. And when Washington took control of events in the country, the OAS did remarkably little to

⁸⁸ The Ad Hoc Committee that negotiated the final settlement was influenced by Ellsworth Bunker, the U.S. representative. According to Slater, "there is no doubt that Bunker dominated the Committee, planned its general strategy, and was the source of almost all its initiatives." Slater, "The Limits of Legitimization in International Organizations," *op. cit.*, p.61.

⁸⁹ Not surprisingly, most Latin Americans and their governments viewed U.S. intervention with anger and dismay. As Connell-Smith explains: "The intervention was a profoundly humiliating experience for Latin Americans, recalling the worst humiliation of the past." Connell-Smith, The United States and Latin America, p.245. There were some states, however, which actually encouraged and backed U.S. interference (e.g. El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua). But, for the most part, it was viewed as a flagrant and painful reminder of Washington's proclivity for violating the cherished principles of non-intervention. It would be an understatement to suggest that the invasion left a bitter taste in the mouths of Dominicans and, for that matter, the majority of Latin Americans.

constrain the United States, let alone hold it accountable for its actions. In short, the role of the hemispheric body, as compared to that of officialdom in Washington, was at best ostensibly peripheral and at worst a willing agent of U.S. hegemonic designs.⁹⁰

The image of a hapless OAS was further bolstered by its inability or unwillingness to oversee the actions of Dominican as well as IAPF forces. It failed to condemn repeated violations of the ceasefire by troops loyal to the Imbert faction, "including a major drive that resulted in the killing of hundreds of constitutionalists or innocent bystanders and the jailing of thousands of others."⁹¹ Nor did it do much to prevent a summer of murder and repression by Imbert's police and soldiers. Similarly, nothing was done to stop the IAPF from a series of alleged overreactions, which resulted in the loss of more than 60 Dominicans in one June incident.⁹²

In many respects, then, the Dominican crisis marked a low-water mark in OAS affairs. Serious image difficulties, widespread anti-OAS sentiment, and general disillusionment

⁹⁰ Slater does praise the OAS for pressing for a ceasefire, helping to keep the lines of communication open, and for playing a useful "lightning rod" role. Slater, "The Limits of Legitimation," op. cit., pp.61-62.

⁹¹ Slater, "The Limits of Legitimation," op. cit., p.64.

⁹² Ibid., p.64.

with the body flourished in the aftermath of the crisis.⁹³ This development alone was a pointed illustration of just how badly the OAS fared in the Dominican crisis. According to Slater, "many did not expect the Organization to be able to play a significant role in hemispheric political affairs in the near future."⁹⁴

Moreover, its questionable performance did little to enhance the institution's self-proclaimed contentions of independence and impartiality. Not only was its legitimacy challenged, but it became the target of intense hatred and ridicule. Some Latin Americans even went as far as to refer to it as "Otro Engaño Americano" (Another American Fraud). The OAS became increasingly perceived in Latin America as a front or cloak for promoting U.S. hegemony in the region. Stated differently, its implacable support for U.S. anti-communist policies left the OAS in a tide of rising scepticism and outright hostility.

Like the 1954 crisis in Guatemala, the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic exacted a minor response from Canadian authorities. Unlike the Guatemalan affair, though, the discussion tended to focus specifically on the issue of OAS membership. Indeed, in early May 1965, the MP from Red

⁹³ See, for example, Jerome Slater, "The Decline of the OAS," International Journal, 24:3 (Summer 1969), pp.497-506.

⁹⁴ Slater, "The Limits of Legitimization," op. cit., p.68.

Deer, R.N. Thompson, asked Prime Minister Pearson the following question: "Does he not think it would be advantageous at this time if Canada were a member of the Organization of American States, and does he not think that the reservoir of goodwill and the good offices of Canada could be used to better effect at this particular time if Canada were within the organization instead of without?"⁹⁵ But rather than take this opportunity to speak directly to the question of membership, the Prime Minister chose not to express his views on the subject. He simply responded by saying that "I am very interested to receive the hon. gentleman's opinion on this matter."⁹⁶

Shortly thereafter, the MP from Oxford, W.B. Nesbitt, once again brought the question of membership before the House. Given the facts of the Dominican crisis, he expressed his relief that Canada had not opted for full-fledged membership in the hemispheric body. As he indicated in his comments:

Had something been done I think Canada's position under the present circumstances in relation to the Dominican Republic would have been a difficult one indeed. No matter what we might then do we would make enemies. If we sided with the United States, as I think we should, we would unquestionably alienate a number of our Latin American friends. If our image is not very good in the United States

⁹⁵ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, Third Session--Twenty Sixth Parliament, Vol.1, 3 May 1965, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1965), p.831.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.831.

at this time, it certainly would be far worse under these circumstances. I think it is advantageous⁹⁷ that nothing has been done in this regard.

There was a sense that the Liberal government--in the midst of the Dominican crisis--was shying away from the membership issue. In response to another question in the House, this time from John Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition), on the notion of an inter-American peace force, Pearson was clear and succinct. He stated that "we would prefer peace keeping forces of this kind to be under the United Nations rather than under any regional organization."⁹⁸ Later, Diefenbaker himself, in recognizing Pearson's (as well as Paul Martin's) lukewarm response toward the OAS, opined: "That is a long step backward from the views expressed by the hon. gentleman in 1959, 1960, 1961 and 1962, when he and the Prime Minister of the day stood so firmly for Canada joining the Organization of American States. Have they forgotten about that?"⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, Third Session--Twenty Sixth Parliament, Vol.11, 10 May 1965, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1965), pp.1108-1109.

⁹⁸ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, Third Session--Twenty Sixth Parliament, Vol.11, 12 May 1965, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1965), p.1203.

⁹⁹ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, Third Session--Twenty Sixth Parliament, Vol.11, 28 May 1965, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1965), p.1786.

The reverberations from the Dominican crisis also filtered through the Department of External Affairs. For the most part, the fallout from the crisis tended to work against the idea of Canada opting to join the OAS as a full-fledged member.¹⁰⁰ In a letter to DEA from Canada's Embassy in the Dominican Republic, the feeling was decidedly anti-OAS. According to the note, "recent developments in the Dominican Republic would hardly indicate that some minor Caribbean countries and Canada together, could have much influence in the OAS framework when the United Nations and major countries of the Western world, apart from the U.S., were quite hard-pressed to ameliorate aspects of the IAPF policies here, which to say the least, seemed rather unusual for this day and age."¹⁰¹

This general feeling of dissatisfaction with the OAS was even present within the ranks of the foreign service some twelve months later. In a May 1966 letter to the department from Canada's Ambassador to Peru, F.X. Houde, this negative sentiment was palpable. Ambassador Houde, among other things, noted: "I, for one, am far from convinced that Canada should join the OAS as it is now, nor are the prospects of substantial changes in the latter

¹⁰⁰ Interview with a former director of the Latin American division, 1964-66, 29 January 1992.

¹⁰¹ Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Dominican Miscellany," 16 December 1965, File 20-4-OAS-4-1, Vol.4, pp.3-4.

organization very bright at the moment."¹⁰² Similarly, in a June 1966 DEA memorandum, the events surrounding the Dominican Republic were singled out for particular attention. It suggested that the U.S. invasion "registered heavily and unfavourably with some Commonwealth Caribbean nations as evidence of U.S. domination of the OAS, particularly in Caribbean affairs, and of the weakness of the OAS."¹⁰³

While the implications of the Dominican crisis were felt in Canada, the political fallout that accompanied the Dominican crisis was long lasting in Latin America and, in some ways, resurrected by the Falklands/Malvinas dispute in 1982. To be sure, both crises represented major turning points in the evolution of the hemispheric body. Like the crisis in 1965, many Latin American countries--in the wake of the Falklands/Malvinas dispute--felt that the OAS was manipulated by the U.S. and thus not the proper forum for advancing their interests. In other words, both crises did a great deal to dissuade Latin American governments from taking the body seriously. In fact, the Falklands/Malvinas conflict delivered a serious blow to the image of the institution in the eyes of many Latin Americans. Besides

¹⁰² Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Canada and the OAS," 31 May 1966, File 20-4-OAS-4-1, Vol.4, p.1.

¹⁰³ Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Membership in the Organization of American States," 29 June 1966, File 20-4-OAS-4, Vol.2, p.3.

engendering a conspicuous polarization within the organization--pitting the English-speaking Caribbean countries against the Spanish-speaking member states--it convinced the Latins to look increasingly toward "made in Latin America" initiatives and prescriptions.

In any event, on 13 April 1982 the OAS Permanent Council, in its first formal action, offered to assist in getting peacekeeping efforts underway.¹⁰⁴ By April 20, Argentina called for, and succeeded in arranging, a meeting under the procedures of the Rio Treaty.¹⁰⁵ From April 26-28, the Meeting of Consultation of Foreign Ministers met to discuss the looming crisis. Much to the dismay of the

¹⁰⁴ The purpose of this discussion is not to uncover which nation has legal ownership or rights to the disputed territory. For a legal perspective, see, Raphael Perl, (ed.), The Falklands Dispute in International Law and Politics: A Documentary Source Book, (New York: Oceana Publications, 1983). Nor is it interested in describing the military actions of both Britain and Argentina. See, Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, The Battle for the Falklands, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1983). Rather, it is concerned with outlining the role the OAS played throughout the crisis. See, Barbara Crossette, "O.A.S. Unable to Agree On Falkland Resolution," The New York Times, 13 April 1982, p.A16, Bernard Gwertzman, "President Appeals To Falkland Foes To Show Restraint," The New York Times, 21 April 1982, p.A1, and Barbara Crossette, "O.A.S., by 17-0, Calls for a Truce In The Falklands," The New York Times, 28 April 1982, p.A1.

¹⁰⁵ The Reagan Administration lobbied hard to have the session meet under OAS Charter procedures. Washington was hoping to utilize the votes of the English-speaking nations of the OAS, most of which had not ratified the Rio Treaty and were allies of Britain. It is also worth mentioning that the Reagan Administration's abstention in the Falklands/Malvinas case marked the first time that the Rio Treaty was invoked without the backing of the United States.

Argentinian contingent, it was unable to muster the necessary two-thirds majority to invoke punitive sanctions under the Rio Treaty.¹⁰⁶

The Meeting of Foreign Ministers did, however, produce a mild resolution urging the cessation of hostilities, but without mentioning the use of sanctions.¹⁰⁷ But when it met again in late May, with British forces ashore on the island, it seemed to be more receptive to Argentina's plight.¹⁰⁸ While it was still unable to come away with formal Rio Treaty sanctions--under Article 8--the sharp anti-U.S.

¹⁰⁶ This lack of support for Argentina can be explained by several factors. First, Argentina has traditionally been disliked by many Latin American countries for a number of reasons, not least of which were its designs on regional leadership. Secondly, these same nations were very uneasy about the fact that Argentina was willing to resort to force to settle a long-standing territorial dispute. Grave concerns about establishing a dangerous precedent weighed heavily on the minds of Latin America's political leadership. Perhaps more important, though, was the fact that none of these countries were prepared to jeopardize their interests for the sake of Argentinian claims to a group of islands, particularly when the government in question had been condemned by human rights groups throughout the world for its policies of institutionalized terrorism.

¹⁰⁷ Though the details are sketchy, it did criticize the European Community for imposing punitive measures against Argentina. Barbara Crossette, "O.A.S., by 17-0, Calls for a Truce In the Falklands," The New York Times, 28 April 1982, p.A1.

¹⁰⁸ "Excerpts From O.A.S. Resolution on the War," The New York Times, 30 May 1982, p.16.

rhetoric heard in that forum was unprecedented.¹⁰⁹ In the end, though, Argentina had to settle for a general resolution condemning the British and called for each member to support Argentina "in the manner each considers appropriate."¹¹⁰ With little or no support forthcoming, Britain's regaining of control over the islands, and the collapse of Argentina's resistance on June 14, the dispute was replaced by more pressing Latin American issues (e.g. debt, the Central American quagmire, and the drug trade).

The 1982 Falklands/Malvinas dispute, followed by the 1983 U.S. invasion of Grenada, has become almost synonymous with an ineffective OAS. For Connell-Smith, "another chapter was written in the story of its decline."¹¹¹ Not only were Anglo-Latin tensions within the OAS heightened, but the OAS peace and security components were shown to be largely ineffectual. Its failure to embrace a larger role, to engage its peacemaking procedures, or to act more decisively--

¹⁰⁹ Jack Child, "War in the South Atlantic," in John D. Martz (ed.), United States Policy in Latin America, (Lincoln, Neb.:University of Nebraska Press, 1988), p.216.

¹¹⁰ While most Latin American governments refrained from offering any assistance, Brazil reportedly lent Argentina some reconnaissance aircraft. But no country severed diplomatic or commercial relations with the United Kingdom. Interestingly enough, Chile was actually singled out by some observers as a major source of military intelligence for the British. See Gordon Connell-Smith, "Latin America And The Falklands Conflict," Year Book of World Affairs 1984, 38 (1984), p.85.

¹¹¹ Connell-Smith, "Latin America and the Falklands Crisis," op. cit., p.88.

particularly in regard to the Rio Treaty--was duly recorded by Latin American officials. As the President of Venezuela, Carlos Andrés Pérez, recently commented: "The obvious preference of the United States for the interests of NATO destroyed the credibility and legitimacy of the Rio Treaty, to the point that few would today be inclined to invoke it even were the situation identical to others that in the past mobilized mechanisms of conflict resolution."¹¹² In fact, there was a growing sense that perhaps Latin America as a whole should think seriously about developing a more distinctive role or identity in world affairs. More specifically, a role in which Latin nations could align themselves with other Third World developing countries, where they could attempt to wean themselves from U.S. hegemonic influences, and where they could shy away from the OAS in favour of the UN.

The impact from the Falklands/Malvinas War also registered on policy-makers and opinion-makers in Canada.¹¹³ And it did have implications for Canada's position toward membership in the OAS. At the political level, there was a sense of relief that Canada, at the time of the crisis, was

¹¹² Speech by Pérez to the OAS in Washington, 27 April 1990, p.2.

¹¹³ See, Gwynne Dyer, "Self-interest still thicker than blood," The Montreal Gazette, 1 June 1982, p.B3.

not a member of the organization.¹¹⁴ Generally speaking, Cabinet sentiment--as the imposition of economic sanctions against Argentina would attest--was solidly on the side of Britain.¹¹⁵ In other words, the government appeared, at least on the face of it, to favour its North Atlantic links as opposed to its ties with the Inter-American community. The crisis itself certainly did nothing to convince the political leadership that joining the OAS was an idea whose time had come.¹¹⁶ If anything, it seemed to reinforce the prevailing view that non-membership in the OAS was far more an attractive option for Canada.

From a bureaucratic standpoint, the effects of the crisis seemed to be more obvious. Officials in the Latin America and Caribbean bureau viewed it as another example of the general ineffectiveness and decline of the body.¹¹⁷ One thing is for sure, it tended to strengthen the resolve of those in the bureau who were against the idea of Canadian membership in the OAS.¹¹⁸ Simply put, it was seen as a

¹¹⁴ Interview with former Liberal Cabinet minister Gerald Regan, 21 January 1992.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Confidential interview with a former Canadian permanent observer to the OAS, 27 January 1992.

¹¹⁷ Confidential interview with a former senior official in the Latin America and Caribbean bureau, 20 January 1992.

¹¹⁸ Confidential interview with a former Canadian permanent observer to the OAS, 27 January 1992.

disturbing development in inter-American affairs and thus a potent reminder of the potential "risks" that full membership for Canada would entail.¹¹⁹

While it was not a decisive factor, the crisis did serve to put the OAS membership question in a different light. Foreign policy officials were more cognizant of the fact that the OAS was becoming increasingly polarized--spurring discussions by some Latin American countries (Venezuela and Peru) to muse out loud about creating a truly "Latin American" organization. In the words of one official:

While this extreme position has not won any significant support nor been actively pursued, the fact remains that there has been tension and difficulties within the organization between the Latin members on the one hand and the United State and the English-speaking Caribbean members on the other hand which could have a serious, although, yet undetermined effect on the Organization.¹²⁰

This same official went on to state that the Falklands/Malvinas crisis does "present us currently with a greater potential political hazard so far as OAS membership

¹¹⁹ It certainly reinforced the proverbial argument of not seeking membership in the body because of the Rio Treaty. It pointed to the perils of Canada joining the organization and finding itself in the awkward position of having to take a stand under the terms of the security pact. Confidential interview with a former senior official in the Latin America and Caribbean bureau, 20 January 1992.

¹²⁰ Written correspondence with a former senior official in the Latin America and Caribbean bureau in the early 1980s, 27 January 1992.

is concerned than our customary fears about a falling-out with the USA on Cuba would suggest."¹²¹

Within the department, then, there was a general sense that Canada's non-membership in the OAS was a blessing of sorts. As one departmental paper explained: "It was fortunate that we were not members of the OAS in April, 1982 and were not seated at the meeting of Consultation of Foreign Ministers as the only Member State to have imposed sanctions on Argentina (i.e. at the first session, before the USA did the same.)"¹²² In a similar vein, it went to state the following: "As an Observer State, we were never named specifically as the perpetrators of 'economic aggression' against Argentina but as a Member, we could scarcely have avoided marked attention."¹²³ The paper seemed to be concerned about the possible negative impact that Canada's stance during the crisis would have on its chances for eventually membership. It suggested that a wide variety of Latin American opinions should be canvassed so as to "be absolutely certain before we take any steps formally to seek membership."¹²⁴ In short, there would not be a recommendation coming forward in the coming months

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Confidential paper on Canada and the OAS, 1983, p.24.

¹²³ Ibid., p.24.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p.24.

advocating full membership in the forum.

The above mentioned polarization and irrelevancy of the OAS--which was particularly acute in the minds of the political leadership in Latin America--helped to spawn an upsurge of Pan-Latinism.¹²⁵ There was a tendency to look inward, toward greater regional co-operation, in solving Latin America's panoply of problems. For instance, debilitating civil wars in Nicaragua and El Salvador were virtually ignored by the hemispheric forum. It was as if the organization believed that the conflicts would miraculously go away by themselves. In light of this situation, the Contadora and Esquipulas vehicles for peace, in working outside the auspices of the OAS, were instrumental in bringing some semblance of stability to war-torn Central America.

At the same time, certain sub-regional Latin American bodies, including the Latin American Economic System (SELA), were imbued with more political and diplomatic significance. Bolstered by the leadership of such influential Latin

¹²⁵ The decidedly pro-British stance adopted by Washington at the time of the Falklands/Malvinas conflict was, for many Latin American governments, a major slap in the face. With the Reagan Administration openly siding with Thatcher, imposing sanctions against Argentina, and providing covert military support for the British task force, it was no wonder that Latin American officials felt a deep sense of betrayal. It was quite evident that Pan Americanism was sacrificed at the altar of North Atlanticism. For an excellent discussion of these and other points, see, Jack Child, op. cit., pp.229-28.

American countries as Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and Venezuela, economic issues were brought onto the front burner. There were discussions and consultations on various proposals for increasing regional trade, reducing barriers to goods and capital, and moving toward greater economic integration.

On the crippling issue of external debt, about which the OAS has done remarkably little, a number of Latin American nations joined forces in the mid-1980s. Debtor countries, in forming the Cartagena Group, sought to publicize their plight and to seek relief from their creditors. More important, these countries hoped that their grouping would not only politicize the debt problem, but would also formulate a panoply of solutions.

By 1986, the Rio Group--which is composed of the major states in Latin America--was firmly established. This grouping of key countries sought to confront the region's long list of critical economic and social difficulties. In addition to economic and political questions, it set out to resolve the increasingly violent Central American crisis. In short, this group--in conjunction with the other sub-groupings--started to supplant the OAS as the principal voice of Latin American concerns and aspirations.

The further decline of the OAS, and Latin American dissatisfaction with it, was evidenced by its role in the

1989 U.S. invasion of Panama.¹²⁶ While not all the details on how the OAS responded to the invasion are yet in the public domain, some things are clear. On December 20, one day after "Operation Just Cause" had been launched, the OAS Permanent Council met to consider events in Panama.¹²⁷ Nicaragua introduced a resolution calling on all OAS members to condemn the use of force against a member state and demand the immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces. Reportedly, the December 21 session was abruptly halted, only five minutes after it convened. Representatives were apparently divided over the precise wording of a proposed resolution condemning the intervention.¹²⁸ By December 22, the OAS passed a resolution which deeply regretted the invasion of Panama and urged "the immediate cessation of hostilities and

¹²⁶ For details of the invasion and its aftermath, see, Richard L. Millett, "The Aftermath of Intervention: Panama 1990," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, 32:1 (Spring 1990), pp.1-15 and Raul Leis, "Panama: The Other Side of Midnight," NACLA Report on the Americas, 23:6 (April 1990), pp.4-6.

¹²⁷ While Canada was not an "official" member of the OAS at the time of the U.S. invasion, it had already proclaimed its intention to join. It was unlikely, therefore, that the government would have reversed its decision in light of the developments in Panama. In fact, Prime Minister Mulroney, before consulting with officials in External Affairs, indicated his support for U.S. actions. Confidential interview with a former senior DEA official, 20 August 1991; Linda Hossie, "Is Lester Pearson smiling on the Tories?," The Globe and Mail, 17 October 1991, p.A1 and Ross Howard, "Critics anticipate diplomatic problems after endorsement," The Globe and Mail, 22 December 1989, p.A4.

¹²⁸ See, Eloy Aguilar, "Embassies encircled in hunt for Noriega," The Globe and Mail, 22 December 1989, p.A1.

bloodshed."¹²⁹ In other words, despite a clear violation of the OAS Charter, the best that it could do was to muster a mild rebuke of Washington's intervention. Although the situation and circumstances are obviously different, the response of the OAS was very reminiscent of its lackluster performance in both the 1954 Guatemalan and 1965 Dominican crises.

Besides issuing a tempered criticism of U.S. actions, the OAS was essentially a bit player in the invasion of Panama. Washington did not even bother to inform the hemispheric body beforehand of its invasion plans.¹³⁰ There was no talk of convoking a Meeting of Consultation, sending an Investigating Committee to monitor events in Panama, or even demanding the withdrawal of U.S. forces. Put simply, the OAS, when it was faced with a situation wherein a member state violated the sacred principle of non-intervention, remained practically invisible.

Although military strongman Manuel Noriega was thoroughly disliked throughout Latin America, most leaders

¹²⁹ The vote was 20 in favour, 1 opposed, and 6 abstentions. Five representatives, including El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Honduras, were absent when the vote was taken. "Washington's action 'deeply regretted' OAS resolution says," The Globe and Mail, 23 December 1989, p.A5.

¹³⁰ For a critical analysis of the U.S. response to Panama, particularly from an international legal standpoint, see, Charles Maechling, Jr., "Washington's Illegal Invasion," Foreign Policy, 79 (Summer 1990), pp.113-31.

in the region would have clearly preferred a diplomatic solution to the crisis.¹³¹ yet the OAS made only a half-hearted attempt to have Noriega move aside and allow for a peaceful transition of government. The reality was that the OAS, ever reluctant to interfere in the internal affairs of member states, was loath to go much further. As Carlos Andrés Pérez, the President of Venezuela, explains:

Nonintervention, by omission, became a passive intervention against democracy and in favor of a dictator, since no account was given to the fact that instead of protecting the people of Panama, whose sovereignty had been trampled by the denial of its will expressed in elections, non-intervention protected the dictator Noriega who intervened in the electoral process.¹³²

As a result, it effectively brought on what most people had hoped to avoid--namely, unilateral intervention on the part of the United States.

¹³¹ Latin American reaction to the invasion was swift and overwhelmingly critical. Officials viewed the intervention as reminiscent of the days of "gunboat diplomacy" and "an era that was thought to have been surpassed in inter-American relations." The Peruvian government even went as far as to recall its ambassador in Washington. Venezuela condemned U.S. intervention and, in a released statement, "awaits the withdrawal of the invading forces of the United States." Brazil criticized Washington and issued a statement maintaining "its support of people's self-determination and deeply laments this event." Mexico added, in a toughly worded response, that "fighting international crimes is no excuse for intervention in a sovereign nation." See, James Brooke, "U.S. Denounced by Nations Touchy About Intervention," The New York Times, 21 December 1989, p.A24 and "Latin American leaders condemn U.S. move," The Globe and Mail, 21 December 1989, p.A5.

¹³² Pérez speech to the OAS, op. cit., p.3

Summary

From the preceding discussion, it seems quite obvious that those cases where the OAS was unsuccessful, it had the most impact on Canada's position/attitude toward that body. It is instructive to note that in those cases where the OAS was conspicuously ineffective, a number of forces were at play. For example, in most of these cases, there did not appear to be a keen interest on the part of the governments involved to avail themselves of the OAS. In fact, Guatemala had no intention of approaching the hemispheric body in 1954. Furthermore, the OAS Council showed no particular interest in taking an active role in the Dominican crisis of 1965, the Falklands/Malvinas dispute in 1982, or the U.S. invasion of Panama in 1989. In all of these cases, the OAS seemed content with simply sitting on the sidelines and watching stoically as events unfolded before it.

It is important to recognize the fact that all of these cases placed the idea of Canadian membership in the OAS in a negative light. While all of these cases were different, as well as the circumstances surrounding them, they still tended to strengthen the option of non-membership. In the case of Guatemala in 1954, the documents examined clearly indicated that the OAS was not held in high regard by Canadian authorities. In a general sense, it was viewed as an ineffective and disadvantageous to Canadian interests in the region. And it seems from the sharp tone of some of the

letters that the Guatemalan affair did little to dispel this sentiment. If anything, it tended to reinforce the notion that joining the OAS would not be an appropriate move to undertake. Indeed, there was a real sense that Canada might be better off remaining outside of the organization.

Similarly, the 1965 Dominican crisis appeared to work against the likelihood of Canada seeking full membership in the body. It tended to highlight a number of negative implications--such as the fact that the organization was heavily dominated by Washington, the possibility that Canada would inevitably find itself caught between the U.S. and Latin American governments, and the general ineffectiveness of the hemispheric forum--of the OAS itself and Canadian membership in particular. Simply put, it was a pointed reminder to officialdom in Ottawa that the OAS was not compatible with Canadian interests.

If the Dominican crisis muddied the waters, then the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas debacle knocked the wind out of the Canada-OAS sails. Its impact was not lost on the minds of policy-makers--clearly strengthening the hand of those who were opposed to the idea of Canadian membership in the OAS. To be sure, if there had been some doubts about the potential costs of Canadian admission, they were suddenly removed by the Falklands/Malvinas crisis. It was another visible symptom of a growing problem--namely, the increasing ineffectiveness and irrelevancy of the OAS. Within this

context, Canadian officials were convinced that the benefits derived from membership did not outweigh the perceived costs of joining.

Interestingly enough, in these cases like the Falklands/Malvinas where the OAS was unsuccessful, it is worth reflecting upon the nature of these disputes. Stated differently, they were all cases which impinged upon the larger foreign policy interests of the hemisphere's reigning superpower. In the Guatemalan and Dominican Republic crises, removing the alleged threat from "international communism"--as perceived from Washington--took precedence over allowing the OAS to play a meaningful role. In the Falklands/Malvinas controversy, the White House chose the North Atlantic link over Pan Americanism. And as for Panama, Noriega suddenly became a liability when he started to talk openly about his support for the U.S.-backed contras and the existence of plans for a possible U.S. invasion of Nicaragua. In cases, then, which impinged or affected larger questions of U.S. foreign and security policies, the OAS has been effectively marginalized.

Clearly, the role of the United States in all of these disputes has been a common thread. In all of the OAS failures, administrations in Washington have been the dominant or driving force, thereby leaving the OAS with little room in which to manoeuvre. This fact alone goes a long way toward explaining why the OAS was largely

ineffectual in these cases. In other words, when the U.S. has been committed to espousing its own agenda or securing its own narrowly-conceived interests, the OAS has failed woefully.

In light of some of these serious difficulties, there have been a number of attempts made at reforming the hemispheric body. Particularly after the Dominican crisis of 1965, Latin American officials have clamoured for meaningful reforms to the OAS Charter. They have expressed a keen interest in reforming the body so as to make it better able to deal with the hemisphere's myriad difficulties. Member states have also been unanimous in their support for measures designed to mould the organization into a more responsive and politically relevant forum. Attempts at reforming the institution--and their impact upon the Canadian position toward the organization--will be the subject of discussion in the next chapter.

Chapter Four

A Chronicle of OAS Reform

In the wake of the 1965 U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic, the prestige of the OAS had declined precipitously--with many Latin officials referring disparagingly to the organization as merely an adjunct of the U.S. State Department. In fact, OAS Secretary General Galo Plaza felt that it was important for him to tour Latin America in order to alter "the image of some that the OAS is the Ministry of Colonies of the Government of the United States."¹ Additionally, it was criticized sharply for its inability to deal effectively with on-going inter-American disputes (e.g. OAS-Cuban relations and border disputes between Ecuador and Peru and between Argentina and Chile), to control what appeared to be a growing and unwieldy bureaucracy, and to confront pressing socio-economic difficulties in Latin America (e.g. population growth, high inflation, rising unemployment , and declining agricultural

¹ Quoted in Jerome Slater, "The Limits of Legitimation in International Organizations: The Organization of American States and the Dominican Crisis," International Organization, 23:1 (Winter 1969), p.68.

production).² In short, governments throughout the region-- as well as the Canadian government--began to question seriously the very efficacy of the institution itself. A senior Chilean official even went as far as to suggest that "the inter-American system is looked upon with suspicion by the peoples of America or, at least, ignored as a thing alien to their vital interests."³ In light of these developments, it was not surprising to see the subject of OAS reform catapulted to the top of the organization's issue-agenda.

Accordingly, this chapter explores the "politics" of OAS reform. In addition, it examines whether or not these various reform movements shaped the Canadian government's attitude toward the hemispheric body.⁴ (It is not,

² These difficulties are catalogued in William P. Glade, "Economic Aspects of Latin America," in Jan Kippers Black, (ed.), Latin America: Its Problems and Its Promise, (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1984), pp.133-147.

³ Quoted in Jerome Slater, op. cit., p.68.

⁴ For many years, Canada has kept abreast of these movements and has maintained an interest in seeing the organization strengthened and rejuvenated. In fact, before actually joining the OAS, then External Affairs Minister Joe Clark indicated his firm support for reforming and revitalizing the body. "Notes for remarks by the Right Honourable Joe Clark, P.C., M.P. Secretary of State for External at the Meeting of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States," Washington, 13 November 1989, p.6. Even today, Canada is an active participant in the high-level Consultative Group on the Inter-American System, which is examining, among other things, the future role of the OAS in the hemisphere. Canada, Department of External Affairs, "Canada's First Year in the Organization of American States," January 1991, p.6.

however, intended to assess the substance or value of each of the amendments incorporated into the Charter over the years.) The aim of this chapter is twofold--first, it is designed to shed some light on those factors which help to explain why and how the various reform movements evolved and secondly, to illustrate the extent to which these reform movements influenced the Canadian government's position toward membership in the OAS. By concentrating on these areas, this study will provide a better understanding not only of the dynamics at play in reforming the OAS will result, but also of how this process, in turn, moulded Canada's view of the organization.

It is useful to examine reform of the organization with an eye toward Canada-OAS relations. Over the years, Canadian governments have pointed out that the hemispheric body will have to reform itself if it hoped to have Canada participate as a full-fledged member.⁵ Or, they indicated their unwillingness to join because the organization was in the process of reexamining its role and administrative structures.⁶ Clearly, governments in Ottawa were not going to opt for membership if the forum was incapable of

⁵ See, for example, Canada, Department of External Affairs, "Speech to the Organization of American States by Richard V. Gorham, Roving Ambassador for Latin America and Canadian Permanent Observer to the Organization of American States," Washington, 7 September, 1988, pp.18-19.

⁶ "Canada won't join alliance but 'we're moving closer,'" The Toronto Star, 10 September 1977.

reforming itself or if the process of reform was proving to be less than meaningful. In this sense, Canada's position toward the organization can, in part, be explained in terms of the politics of OAS reform.

Additionally, the whole issue of OAS reform--especially since about 1989--had loomed large as a key reason why Canada should seek admission to the body. In fact, both former Secretary of State for External Affairs (SSEA) Joe Clark and senior officials in DEA believed that Canada could make a valuable contribution in this area. There was a recognition on their part that the OAS was not a perfect institution and that it needed to become more active and thus responsive to inter-American concerns. In light of this situation, it is important to understand more fully the various attempts at reform as well as the difficulties and pitfalls involved in reforming the OAS.

This chapter posits that since 1948, the OAS has been in an almost constant state of reviewing and reevaluating its institutional machinery and its activities. By the early to mid-1960s, there were noises about the need to make the organization more responsible and responsive to hemispheric concerns. Similarly, the 1970s seemed to be witness to a steady stream of calls to revise the OAS Charter, in hopes of making the body more politically and economically relevant. The early 1980s were, of course, no different--with Latin American member states on the verge of distancing

themselves from the organization altogether. Notwithstanding more than thirty years of talk about reforming the body, serious efforts aimed at realizing this goal have been remarkably few in number. More important, these same efforts, as this chapter outlines, have at times been long on style, but short on substance.

Reforming the OAS: the Protocol of Buenos Aires

In order to understand fully the forces pushing for OAS reform in the mid-1960s, it is important to grapple with the events preceding that movement.⁷ By the early 1960s, there was a general and growing sense of dissatisfaction with the existing institutional arrangements contained in the OAS Charter, particularly in the areas of economic and social development. And with President Kennedy's Alliance for Progress showing early signs of failure, there was increasing pressure to orientate the organization in more of a socio-economic direction. Moreover, there was a feeling that the OAS was rapidly becoming little more than a "debating club," and a very unproductive and ponderous one at that. To be sure, the supreme policy-making organ of the body--the Inter-American Conference--had last been convened

⁷ Since the principal focus of the various reform movements has been the OAS Charter, this chapter focuses exclusively on that document. For a discussion of changes to the Rio Treaty, see Mary Jeanne Reid Martz, "OAS Reforms And The Future Of Pacific Settlement," Latin American Research Review, 12:2 (1977), pp. 176-186.

in 1954. As a result, governments were left with no other choice but to resort to meetings of American Presidents and foreign ministers to forge decisions on matters of an inter-American nature. In many ways, the very *raison d'être* of the forum was being supplanted by the "real world" diplomacy of bilateral interaction.

Besides a failure to hold a major Conference, despite strict stipulations to this effect in the 1948 Charter, there were a number of other institutionally-related complaints. For instance, there was a noticeable dissatisfaction with the multi-faceted role of the OAS Council and the concentration of powers invested in it. An additional source of contention stemmed from a general dislike of some of the activities performed by the Council's subsidiary organs.⁸ Lastly, critics pointed to the terms of office of both the Secretary General and the Assistant Secretary General, which tended to work against more frequent rotation.

But the quintessential reason behind the clamour for amendments was based on institutional deficiencies in both the economic and social fields. Many countries in Latin America were still largely underdeveloped and overly

⁸ See, Margaret M. Ball, The OAS In Transition, (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1969), p.29.

dependent upon the United States.⁹ Needless to say, the social climate in these countries--often a function of the prevailing economic conditions--was growing increasingly precarious. And the fact of the matter was that the OAS, though well-intentioned, had done little to improve the socio-economic lot of a majority of Latin Americans or reverse the declining fortunes of political economies throughout the hemisphere.

Underscoring this push for reform was the fact that various bodies and initiatives, including the UN Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), Operation Pan America, and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), produced only modest results in the areas of economic and social development. Additionally, the much-heralded Alliance for Progress--intended to jump-start the economies of Latin America--showed few signs of realizing its lofty goals.¹⁰ The Kennedy Administration, in hoping to rectify the

⁹ Up until about the mid-1950s, growth rates for such countries as Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico had been rising steadily. By the mid-1960s, however, they had fallen dramatically to an annual rate of 1.8 per cent. See, Jeannine Swift, Economic Development in Latin America, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), p.60 and Keith Griffin, Underdevelopment in Spanish America: An Interpretation, (London: George Allen And Unwin Ltd, 1969), pp.54-55. On the issue of dependence, all of the Latin American republics, with the exception of Argentina, derived up to 60 per cent of their national income from the foreign trade sector. Griffin, op. cit., p.87.

¹⁰ For a critical evaluation of the Alliance, see Jerome Levinson and Juan de Onís, The Alliance That Lost Its Way, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), pp.8-13.

deplorable socio-economic conditions prevalent in much of the Americas, envisaged some \$20 billion in capital flowing into Latin America over a ten-year period.¹¹ In many ways, it was an anti-communist programme designed to prevent the conditions in which communism would flourish--namely, low incomes, poor housing, inequitable income and land distribution, and inadequate health and educational structures. It was a 1960s-styled Marshall Plan, funnelling money into an impoverished region of the world with hopes of fostering economic development and democratization. To further these aims, the Kennedy White House set out to create the requisite political climate--opposing military coups and dictatorships in Latin America and supporting moderate social democratic governments.

For the most part, the Alliance for Progress was an economic, social, and political failure. For instance, seventeen military coups took place in Latin America during this period, and there was a general move toward increasing repression and authoritarianism. There was little in the way of any flowering of democracy or a new-found respect for human rights and more of a continuation of denying the masses participation in the region's varied economic and

¹¹ By 1965, U.S. government aid commitments had amounted to only \$4.9 billion. Griffin, op. cit., p.139.

political systems.¹² In addition, little was achieved in terms of land reform, equitable distribution of incomes, increased investment, and the elimination of adult literacy. Moreover, few states were able to reach the Alliance's vaunted economic growth rates.

Accompanying this growing sense of economic desperation among Latin elites was a noticeable upsurge in nationalism throughout Latin America. In countries like Mexico, Chile, and Brazil, and to a lesser extent in Peru, Argentina, and Colombia, nationalist sentiments were becoming more prevalent. This nationalist upswing, in turn, had considerable impact on the foreign and domestic policies of these countries. Consequently, states looked increasingly toward economic integration in Latin America as a key means of escaping their poverty straightjackets. In fact, both the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA) and the Central American Common Market were established in the early 1960s as part of the region's response to the prevailing economic conditions. In short, there was a stark realization among Latin political elites that economic growth and development would have to be generated by Latin Americans for Latin Americans. At the same time, there was a belief that the hemisphere's traditional institutional entities,

¹² Jerome Slater, "United States Policy In Latin America," in Jan Kippers Black, (ed.), Latin America: Its Problems and Its Promise, (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1984), p.230.

including the OAS, would have to be restructured if they were to meet the region's socio-economic needs.

With pan-Latinism on the rise, coupled with Latin America's mounting dissatisfaction with their socio-economic plight, the time seemed ripe for revitalizing or at least modifying the inter-American system. In other words, the system had to be altered so as to reflect and respond to present hemispheric realities. To be sure, without some sort of meaningful change, economic conditions would only deteriorate further, social injustices would continue to rise, and military dictatorships and other non-democratic regimes would become the order of the day.¹³ Fearing the prospect of these developments, Latin American governments looked to the OAS as a possible hedge against this increasingly debilitating scenario and thus began calling for the strengthening of the body from an economic and social standpoint.

By late 1964, the countries of Brazil, Guatemala, and Uruguay had expressed a keen interest in staging a Special Conference on overhauling the inter-American system. However, the process of Charter reform did not begin

¹³ Latin elites were also eager to institute changes that would lock the United States into a more consistent policy of economic and social assistance. John C. Dreier, "New Wine and Old Bottles: The Changing Inter-American System," International Organization, 22:2 (Spring 1968), p.481.

officially until the fall of 1965.¹⁴ From November 17-30, OAS representatives gathered in Rio for the staging of the Special Inter-American Conference. The Conference agenda was dominated by such issues as economic and social development, structural change, pacific settlement, protection of human rights, and support for representative democracy.

In revising the Charter, the United States, not unexpectedly, played an important role. Officialdom in Washington, along with a handful of other governments, wanted to increase the role of the Council in the area of maintaining the peace. It was felt that new powers in this area would provide for a more flexible and less-politically-charged venue for mediation and thereby be more successful in resolving minor border or jurisdictional disputes.¹⁵ Other governments feared the prospect of the Council--already widely believed to be dominated by Washington--being invested with more authority. Some delegations were strongly opposed to the idea of a newly-empowered Council geared toward the promotion of representative democracy and the

¹⁴ Canadian officials were cognizant of the reform movement and tended to monitor the process fairly closely. See, for example, Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Canada and the OAS," 4 September 1964, File 20-4-OAS-4-1, Vol.3, pp.1-2 and Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Implications For Canada Of Joining The OAS," 20 January 1967, File 20-4-OAS-4, Vol.2, pp.11-12.

¹⁵ See Jerome Slater, "The Decline of the OAS," International Journal, 24:3 (Summer 1969), p.501.

protection of human rights.¹⁶

Notwithstanding these reservations, a resolution on Charter reform was supported by Brazil, Bolivia, the United States, Chile, Uruguay, Peru, Haiti, Argentina, and Mexico.¹⁷ Latin American officials, in contrast with their U.S. counterparts, were determined to strengthen the Charter's language on economic and social standards, economic assistance, and the promotion of regional economic integration. According to Margaret M. Ball, they hoped "to redress the balance of commitments and obligations which they felt had previously been weighted on the side of the political and security aspects of the OAS by adding to the Charter extensive provisions relating to social and economic cooperation."¹⁸ Stated differently, they wanted principles such as financial assistance, mutual security, and hemispheric cooperation entrenched--on a treaty basis--in the economic field of the inter-American system.

Decision-makers in Washington, for their part, were particularly unreceptive to any notion of institutionalizing

¹⁶ For the most part, this opposition was based on nationalist sentiments and long-standing concerns about any form of intervention.

¹⁷ The resolution, which was titled "The Act of Rio de Janeiro," reaffirmed the principles and standards contained in the 1948 document and called for a Third Special Inter-American Conference to consider proposed amendments to the Charter. Ball, The OAS in Transition, p.33.

¹⁸ Ball, Ibid., p.36.

extensive U.S. economic commitments to the region. To be sure, they were not prepared to pledge the United States to any specific, long-term policies in the areas of hemispheric trade and foreign assistance. For political and financial reasons, coupled with the fact that the U.S. Congress has legislative power in these areas, the U.S. delegation balked at the idea of binding Washington to such treaty language. It was, however, interested in incorporating a provision for establishing a permanent inter-American military force, despite widespread Latin American opposition. (The response to this proposal was, not surprisingly, overly negative and thus was quickly dropped from the agenda of the Second Special Conference at Rio). Similarly, they were in favour of inserting a clause calling for voluntary contributions to international peacekeeping operations, as a means of reducing the level of U.S. outlays.

While the 1965 Rio meeting did not produce any agreement on a precise package of reforms, it did serve as a useful starting point for OAS reform.¹⁹ In fact, a Special

¹⁹ There was no agreement, for instance, on a proposal by some Latin American governments to "decentralize" the OAS or at least reduce the level of concentration in Washington. There was some talk about relocating some of the Councils, although the OAS Council would remain in Washington. The Economic and Social Council would, however, be moved to somewhere in South America, while the Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Council would be located in Mexico. See, A.H. Robertson, "Revision Of The Charter Of The Organization Of American States," The International and Comparative Law Quarterly, 17 (1968), p.354.

Committee on the Revision of the Charter was instructed to prepare--for future incorporation into the 1948 Charter-- additional standards in the economic and social fields. In 1966, the Special Committee met in Panama City from February 25 to April 1 to consider a wide array of possible Charter amendments. In June of that same year, the Inter-American Economic and Social Council, while meeting in Washington, revised the draft amendments proposed by the Special Committee.

With the draft proposals of the Special Committee and the Economic and Social Council before it, the Third Special Inter-American Conference met in Buenos Aires in 1967. The Conference delegates, meeting from February 15-25, approved what became known as the Protocol of Buenos Aires. It was signed by the representatives of OAS member states on 27 February 1967. And it came into force, after the requisite two-thirds of the signatories deposited their instruments of ratification, on 27 February 1970.

Under the terms of the Protocol, a number of changes were made to the 1948 OAS Charter. The various reform measures, when taken together, would influence the organization from both a structural and functional standpoint.²⁰ Although the original Charter principles and

²⁰ For a highly critical, though thorough, examination of the 1967 Protocol, see William Manger, "Reform of the OAS: The 1967 Buenos Aires protocol of amendments to the 1948 charter of Bogotá: an appraisal," in Paul A. Tharp, Jr., (ed.), Regional International Organizations/Structures

purposes remained intact, there were major changes to the clauses pertaining to the admission of new members, the Inter-American Conference, the OAS Council (and subordinate councils), pacific settlement, the Secretary General, and new language on economic and social standards.²¹ And these changes, particularly from a Canadian perspective, were generally viewed in a positive light.

The protocol--in line with the procedures agreed upon at the First Special Inter-American Conference in 1964--incorporated the provisions for the admission of new members.²² According to the newly revised document, any independent American State "that desires to become a Member of the Organization should so indicate by means of a note addressed to the Secretary General, in which it declares that it is willing to sign and ratify the Charter of the Organization and to accept all the obligations inherent in

and Functions, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971), pp.141-151.

²¹ Under the revised 1967 Charter, the issue of human rights was also given more attention. Indeed, Article 51 stated that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights was designated a principal organ of the OAS. On this point, see, Thomas Buergenthal, "The Revised OAS Charter And The Protection Of Human Rights," The American Journal of International Law, 69:4 (October 1975), pp.828-836.

²² See, Dreier, op. cit., p.484.

membership."²³ Given the fact that this change would open up the body to Commonwealth Caribbean members, it was not lost on the minds of Canadian officials. Still, any subsequent applications would then be considered by the Permanent Council and the General Assembly for possible approval and acceptance of the requisite instrument of ratification (of the Charter). However, the protocol clearly states:

The Permanent Council shall not make any recommendations nor shall the General Assembly take any decision with respect to a request for admission on the part of a political entity whose territory became subject, in whole or in part, prior to December 18, 1964, the date set by the First Special Inter-American Conference, to litigation or claim between an extracontinental country and one or more Member States of the Organization, until the dispute has been ended by some peaceful procedure.

(In effect, the tiny countries of Belize and Guyana were unable to join the organization because of their outstanding territorial disputes with Guatemala and Venezuela.)

As for the original Inter-American Conference, the principal policy-making body of the OAS, it was replaced by a General Assembly. In the words of William Manger: "It will decide the general action and policy of the Organization, determine the structure and function of its organs, and consider any matter relating to friendly relations among the

²³ Hereafter, all quotations from the protocol are drawn from "Protocol of Amendment to The Charter of The Organization of American States," (Washington: General Secretariat, 1967), pp.1-38.

American states."²⁴ It differs, however, from its predecessor in several important ways. For example, instead of convening every five years, as was the practice in the past, the General Assembly was now to meet annually and "in accordance with the principles of rotation." (It was felt that annual meetings would increase the level of contact between the organization and the various countries and their peoples). More important, it was invested with authority in a number of areas previously considered to be within the purview of the OAS Council. For instance, it was assigned supervisory and coordinating functions, such as over the OAS program-budget, the annual reports and the activities of the specialized organizations, and liaison between the OAS and the UN.

As for the OAS Council, generally regarded as the executive body of the institution, it took on a different look.²⁵ Renamed the Permanent Council, and directly responsible to the General Assembly, it was no longer the

²⁴ Ibid., p.146.

²⁵ The changing nature of the OAS Council reflected, in some way, opposition to its exercise of political authority.

main Council of the OAS.²⁶ In addition, its supervisory power over the Pan American Union (renamed the General Secretariat) was weakened and its linkages with the technical councils, the Specialized Organizations, and any foreseeable Specialized Conferences were severed.²⁷ While it still retained its ability to serve provisionally as Organ of Consultation under the Rio Treaty, it was not given any new authority in the area of pacific settlement.

Still, the Permanent Council "shall keep vigilance over the maintenance of friendly relations among the Member States" and "effectively assist them in the peaceful settlement of their disputes." But it was not empowered with any new authority to undertake a meaningful role in ensuring a peaceful resolution of those disputes.²⁸ In fact, it could only intervene in a dispute when both parties agreed to avail themselves of its "good offices."²⁹ And if one party

²⁶ In fact, the Permanent Council, along with the Inter-American Economic and Social Council and the Council for Education, Science, and Culture (replacing the Inter-American Cultural Council), were all placed on an equal footing. Each of the Councils would be autonomous and thus entrusted with the responsibility of determining its own statutes. They would, however, have to report to, as well as take instructions from, the General Assembly.

²⁷ Manger, op. cit., p.143.

²⁸ A newly-created Inter-American Committee on Peaceful Settlement was to function as a subsidiary organ of the Permanent Council.

²⁹ This stipulation in the peaceful settlement provisions stemmed mainly from Latin concerns about protecting national sovereignty and fears about the potential for intervention. One group of states, led by

refused to involve the Permanent Council, it "shall limit itself to submitting a report to the General Assembly." In the main, the Permanent Council--in the area of pacific settlement--was to function as more of a channel of communication as opposed to an active interlocutor.

With regard to the Secretary General, the revised Charter incorporated few substantive changes. His/her term of office was, however, reduced from ten to five years, with the possibility of re-election not more than once. Secondly, the Secretary General was to be responsible for the administration of the General Secretariat and for the formulation of the annual program budget. Nevertheless, the post was unaltered from a non-administrative standpoint--the Secretary General could speak at meetings but could not vote.

While these changes were admittedly modest in nature, important new strides were made in the area of economic and social development. In some ways, the proposed changes in the economic realm tended to worry Canadian officials somewhat. Nevertheless, new and strengthened language on

Ecuador, supported the view that Permanent Council involvement should be triggered by the entreaties of a single party. In contrast, a second grouping of countries, including Mexico, Brazil, and Chile, held a totally different view from that of the Ecuador. These countries objected strongly to any hint of the Permanent Council interfering in the internal affairs of any member country. In the end, the Ecuadorian proposal was rejected and the implacable non-interventionists prevailed.

economic and social standards was inserted into the Charter. Compared to the two articles in the 1948 document, the 1967 Protocol included some fourteen articles on economic and social matters. Article twenty-nine, for instance, stipulated that member states "pledge themselves to a united effort to ensure social justice in the Hemisphere and dynamic and balanced economic development for their peoples." On the subject of social standards, the member states recognized that every individual had "a right to material well-being and to their spiritual development under circumstances of liberty, dignity, equality of opportunity, and economic security." Although these provisions of an economic and social nature mark an improvement over the previous Charter language, the willingness to act on these changes is left to the individual state to decide. Simply put, the implementation of the new treaty language on social and economic development--a principal Latin American objective--is totally dependent upon the political will and convictions of the various member states.

From a Canadian standpoint, the evidence--largely based on archival research and interviews with key officials--indicates that the Buenos Aires reforms did not go unnoticed. Generally speaking, decision-makers in Ottawa and Foreign Service Officers (FSO) in the field looked

favourably upon the proposed reforms.³⁰ There was also a sense that the reform movement in the late 1960s--and indeed throughout the 1970s and 1980s--was a process that should be watched closely.³¹ More important, there was a widely-held view that the OAS was a forum which was desperately in need of reform and rejuvenation.³²

As early as April 1964, in a despatch from the Canadian Embassy in Mexico, this sense that the OAS was in need of reform was evident. The letter noted that "officials argue that the OAS is passing through a time of troubles and might well do with some remodelling."³³ This acknowledgement of the troubled state of the OAS did little to encourage diplomats in the field that joining the organization was a good idea. For instance, Canada's Chargé d'Affaires in Ecuador, S.C.H. Nulting, argued in a September 1964 letter to DEA that the time was inopportune for considering membership. Nulting noted the following: "Events in the last two years have shown that the OAS members are by no means

30 Interview with Mitchell Sharp, former Secretary of State for External Affairs, 21 January 1992 and confidential interview with a former deputy head of the Latin American division, 1969-1970, 22 January 1992.

31 Confidential interview with a former Canadian permanent observer to the OAS, 22 January 1992.

32 Interview with Mitchell Sharp, 21 January 1992.

33 Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Mexico, Cuba and the OAS," 3 April 1964, File 20-4-OAS-4-1, Vol.2 , p.2.

agreed as to what the role of the OAS is; how its charters and other instruments should be interpreted; the scope of its authority; the extent of its limitations."³⁴

Nulting went on to state in a cautious tone that perhaps at the end "of this period we should know whether the OAS is to be a strong, effective force capable of further growth, or a weak, moribund institution holding an annual convention at which representatives make the usual platitudinous remarks."³⁵ He did, however, express his support for possible membership in the organization if "it becomes reasonably clear that it can develop into a strong, useful organization."³⁶ Nevertheless, he warned that "if the OAS evades the most pressing issues of the day, it will be plain that most member-states do not want it to become much more than a loosely-knit fraternal organization. In that event, we may not find membership worthwhile."³⁷

On the other hand, there were those officials who felt that OAS reform and Canadian membership were not incompatible. Canada's Ambassador to Chile--in an October 1964 letter to External Affairs--tended to support the idea

³⁴ Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Canada and the OAS," 4 September 1964, File 20-4-OAS-4-1, Vol.3, p.2.

³⁵ Ibid., p.2.

³⁶ Ibid., p.4.

³⁷ Ibid., p.3.

of admission. As he explained: "The Secretary General has recently suggested a programme of reform. It will no doubt be argued that Canada could well wait to see what reforms develop and defer our decision for the result. Surely, however, we would be wise to be in those discussions with rights to discuss as a member."³⁸ A December 1964 despatch from Bruce Rankin, Canada's Ambassador to Venezuela, seemed to echo the sentiments of Canada's Ambassador to Chile. He pointed out that "if the OAS is in need of refurbishing, it might be as well to be present and influence its re-organization."³⁹

This favourable sentiment toward the OAS--at least among some diplomats in the field--appeared to continue after the 1965 Rio Conference on reform.⁴⁰ In a December 1965 letter from Canada's Ambassador to Peru, F.X. Houde, he relayed to External Affairs a conversation that he had with

³⁸ Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Possible Entry of Canada into the Organization of American States," 29 October 1964, File 20-4-OAS-4-1, Vol.3, p.6.

³⁹ Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Possible Entry of Canada into the Organization of American States," 7 December 1964, File 20-4-OAS-4-1, Vol.3, p.4.

⁴⁰ In Ottawa, the reform movement was being monitored closely by departmental officials. A brief for the External Affairs Minister, prior to his appearing before the External Affairs Committee, indicated: "The reports from our observers at the Rio Conference have been very informative and useful and we will follow with interest the changes that are contemplated in the structure of the OAS." Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Notes for Minister's Statement on Canada and the OAS to the External Affairs Committee," 10 May 1966, File 20-4-OAS-4-1, Vol.4, p.4.

the Chilean Ambassador--"who made the point that now would be an appropriate time for Canada to reconsider her position vis-à-vis the OAS since the Organization is going to undergo a complete revision of its structures, he claimed, as a result of the Rio Conference."⁴¹ He went even further by stating:

I would personally be inclined to agree with the Chilean Ambassador that perhaps the next few months might prove to be the beginning of a new era for the OAS, and that we should have another look at the question of participation, especially if the Organization were to be re-launched on a basis promising a brighter future.⁴²

There were those in External Affairs, however, who were more circumspect about the proposed reforms. According to a January 1967 internal DEA paper, the proposals to be considered at the Buenos Aires conference in February "are possibly relevant to the question of Canadian membership but the only proposed amendment which has been so far agreed which might raise problems for Canada is the amendment which would commit member countries to work toward the establishment of a Latin American common market."⁴³ The paper also noted that the other possible amendments of an

⁴¹ Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Canada and the OAS," 13 December 1965, File 20-4-OAS-4-1, Vol.4, p.1.

⁴² Ibid., p.2.

⁴³ Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Summary of Main Points On Paper On 'Implications For Canada Of Joining The OAS,'" 16 January 1967, File 20-4-OAS-4-1, Vol.5, p.3.

economic nature "could create difficulties for Canada; in particular, any actual commitment to work toward the elimination of tariff preferences not extended to OAS members would raise a serious problem in view of the continuance of Commonwealth preferences."⁴⁴

Concerns of an economic and commercial nature--and how they would affect the membership issue--seemed to be paramount in the minds of officials in Ottawa, especially the proposals for eliminating trade preferences and other discriminatory practices. In a January 20 DEA report, specific mention was made of these concerns. As the report pointed out: "While most of these propositions are of a kind which Canada normally supports in principle, depending on the way in which any Charter provisions on such points were finally written some or all of them might create difficulties for Canada as a member of the OAS."⁴⁵ Three days later, a second DEA study appeared to cast more doubt on the efficacy of Canada joining the OAS. This scepticism stemmed, in part, from the news that Chile was preparing to push for a new article that would require important OAS matters to be decided by an affirmative vote of 15 (two-thirds) of the pre-1965 member states. As the study

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.3.

⁴⁵ Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Implications For Canada Of Joining The OAS," 20 January 1967, File 20-4-OAS-4, Vol.2, p.11.

remarked: "The significance of any such formula for Canada, of course, would be that Canada, along with the Commonwealth Caribbean countries, would be excluded from voting upon important matters in the OAS."⁴⁶

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the issue of reform was starting to be felt in official Ottawa. The fact that Commonwealth Caribbean countries would be admitted to the OAS was well-received in bureaucratic circles. There was a feeling that a Commonwealth contingent in the OAS would make the body more compatible with Canadian interests.⁴⁷ While this was not considered a decisive factor, or one that would precipitate a decision to join, it was viewed as a positive step forward.⁴⁸

In the Department of External Affairs, these reforms were looked upon favourably and as a process that should be further encouraged.⁴⁹ For the most part, there was a positive reaction to the reforms as well as the fact that the reform movement was active within OAS circles. At the same time, though, there was a feeling that the organization

⁴⁶ Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Joint Study With Commonwealth Caribbean Countries of Implications of Joining the OAS," 23 January 1967, File 20-4-OAS-4, Vol.2, p.1.

⁴⁷ Confidential interview with a former deputy head of the Latin American division, 21 January 1992.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Interview with Mitchell Sharp, 21 January 1992.

had not suddenly converted itself into a more responsive and effective forum.⁵⁰ Put simply, the general view in the department was that the OAS would still have to go further before the government would be prepared to see the body as useful to Canada.⁵¹

Nevertheless, the foreign policy review of the late 1960s--which produced Foreign Policy for Canadians, took note of these reforms. In the booklet on Latin America, under the section on Canada and the OAS, reference was made to these changes. "In recent years," the booklet explained, "there has been an injection of considerable dynamism and farsightedness into the planning and administration of the OAS."⁵² It mentioned specifically that the hemispheric body "is now entering a fresh phase with the coming into force of its new charter."⁵³

In a more positive vein, the booklet responded directly to the change admitting new members. It suggested that recent "accessions give it a somewhat more truly hemispheric character. Three of the Commonwealth Caribbean countries--

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Confidential interview with a former Assistant-Under Secretary of State (Economic), 24 January 1991.

⁵² Foreign Policy for Canadians, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970), p.21.

⁵³ Ibid., p.21.

Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago--have joined."⁵⁴ Furthermore, it recognized that "Latin American and Commonwealth Caribbean members have formed their own caucus within the OAS on economic issues and social problems."⁵⁵ As for the reforms in the socio-economic realm, the booklet acknowledged: "In the coming decade, the Inter-American System will provide a framework for efforts to reach agreement both on questions of this kind and on such political and security problems as may arise."⁵⁶ Lastly, it suggested that if "the OAS succeeds under its new charter in orienting itself toward economic, social, and cultural goals, it may become the sort of instrument with which Canada could co-operate very effectively."⁵⁷ Notwithstanding this optimism, the government in the early 1970s remained sceptical of the reforms and of the OAS itself.

Cosmetic reform: the Protocol of Cartagena de Indias

Throughout the 1970s, the OAS was once again the object of derision and criticism. It was taken to task, as it was in the 1960s, for its failure to confront head-on the major problems of the hemisphere. The crisis in Chile in

54 Ibid., p.21.

55 Ibid., p.21.

56 Ibid., p.21.

57 Ibid., p.22.

1973 and Cuba's continued estrangement from the organization pointed to its weaknesses in the political realm. Its inability to deal effectively with Latin America's declining economic fortunes was a painful reminder of its impotence in the area of economic development. By the early to mid-1980s, it was becoming increasingly clear that the OAS was heading toward obscurity at worst and irrelevancy at best.

To grasp fully the Charter reforms of 1985, it is important to understand the setting in which the mid-1980s reform movement took place. In some ways, the prevailing hemispheric climate is almost as important as the actual amendments themselves. Without a sense of context, the various reasons underpinning the proposed reforms are difficult to discern. To be sure, the 1985 reforms must be viewed with an eye toward the changing mood in Latin America. Clearly, the reforms themselves reflect--or were a response to--the state of Latin American economic and political life.

Conditions in Latin America, particularly during the early 1980s, can perhaps best be described as dismal. Economically speaking, many countries in the region were experiencing falling or negative growth rates, struggling with declining commodity prices, and barely coping with a

paucity of investment capital.⁵⁸ Furthermore, economic mismanagement and widespread corruption, along with numerous inefficient industries and outdated technologies, only exacerbated an already debilitating economic climate. Adding further to this precarious situation was the ubiquitous suffering flowing from the unbearable weight of foreign indebtedness.⁵⁹ In short, the economies of a majority, if not all, of the countries in the region were virtually tottering on the brink of collapse.

From a political standpoint, conditions were not much better. Political unrest, in some cases brought on by corrupt military and authoritarian regimes, seemed to be the norm in many Latin American countries. Violations of basic human rights, including innumerable "disappearances" and violent deaths, only compounded the problem throughout the

⁵⁸ In the face of two oil crises, recessionary pressures, high inflation, and saturated domestic markets, the 1970s were not kind to Latin America. In hopes of bridging the gap, a large number of countries turned to foreign indebtedness. Between 1970 and 1980, these countries increased their external debt from \$27 billion to \$231 billion--draining annual debt-servicing payments of some \$18 billion. See Peter H. Smith, "Crisis and Democracy in Latin America," World Politics, 43:4 (July 1991), pp.612-617. Clearly, the 1970s were very much the "lost decade" of development for Latin America.

⁵⁹ By 1982, Mexico had accumulated a total foreign debt of some \$86 billion, and proclaimed publicly its inability to pay. Four years later, the collective debt of Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina was in excess of \$244 billion. See Robert Gilpin, The Political Economy of International Relations, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp.317-328.

1970s and much of the 1980s. And the political leadership in many countries seemed more interested in consolidating their hold on power and furthering their own interests than in fostering democratic development and respect for human rights and basic freedoms.

In Central America, which represented a sort of microcosm of Latin American political life, internal strife and political uncertainty were reaching crisis proportions. A debilitating civil war in El Salvador--pitting a U.S.-backed rightist government against leftist guerrillas--was producing a country bitterly divided and severely battered. Furthermore, governments in both Guatemala and Honduras in the 1980s, following decades of military dictatorship, merely maintained a civilian façade, while the military further entrenched its corrupt and authoritarian ways. And in Nicaragua, a brutal contra war, sponsored primarily by the Reagan White House, left Nicaraguans demoralized and devastated. Given the fact that conflicts were still raging in both Nicaragua and El Salvador, along with the consolidation of military-dominated governments in Guatemala and Honduras, any semblance of democracy and peace in the region remained a chimera.

Within this context, some Latin American governments began to question the efficacy of a seemingly ineffective OAS. Indeed, the hemispheric body, in the face of a growing list of pressing inter-American issues, remained strangely

silent and almost invisible. It was almost as if the organization was waiting for some kind of formal invitation before it was willing to become involved. This growing disillusionment with the hemispheric forum was noted in a pointed fashion by the Foreign Minister of Barbados when he stated:

The symptoms of the crisis are everywhere; widespread public apathy and cynicism about the usefulness of the Organization and its failure in the past five years to tackle, let alone resolve, any of the major political and economic problems besetting the hemisphere. Powerless to avert a tragic war in the South Atlantic, a mere spectator of the conflicts in Central America, helpless in the face of the Latin American debt crisis, unable to meet the security needs of the micro states of the Caribbean, marginal to the development needs of the region, and now, like the proverbial last straw, facing a financial situation so desperate that it may soon verge on bankruptcy, the OAS seems consigned to total irrelevance and inaction.⁶⁰

In the end, disgruntled member states simply side-stepped the body and turned increasingly toward more informal arrangements.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Quoted from Richard Gorham, Canada, Department of External Affairs, "Some Preliminary Thoughts About Latin America and the Organization of American States," 11 May 1988, p.6.

⁶¹ For instance, the Contadora Group, which was working toward a resolution of the conflicts in Central America, began in earnest in 1983. Initially, the group was composed of Mexico, Panama, Venezuela, and Colombia. In addition, the Cartagena Group, which was comprised of eleven Latin American debtor nations, met in Colombia in 1984 to address the region's crushing debt problem.

Faced with the prospect of being marginalized, the OAS General Assembly--while meeting in Brasilia in November of 1984--agreed to schedule a special session of the assembly. At this session, which was tentatively scheduled for sometime in late 1985, various proposals for amending the OAS Charter would be examined. Accordingly, the Permanent Council prepared the proposed draft amendments and subsequently submitted them to the Fourteenth Special Session, which was held in Cartagena, Colombia in December of 1985. On 5 December 1985, the proposed amendments were approved and thus emerged the so-called Protocol of Cartagena de Indias. And when El Salvador, Bolivia, Panama, and Nicaragua deposited the appropriate instruments of ratification at the Eighteenth General Assembly in San Salvador, the amended Charter entered into force on 16 November 1988.

Many Latin American countries--in light of the OAS's glaring inability to play a leading role in hemispheric affairs--were solidly in favour of changing the Charter. Once again, they wanted the document to reflect current realities and be strengthened in the economic field. At the same time, they pressed for new language on trade and commercial matters, in hopes of seeking some redress for their myriad economic difficulties. The Peruvian delegation, for instance, put forth a proposal to introduce clearly defined precepts on collective economic security and co-

operation for development as well as greater access to the benefits of trade and technology.⁶² Key actors like Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, and Uruguay spearheaded the efforts to reform the Charter from a political standpoint. In fact, they were intent on strengthening the document in the area of pacific settlement (making it more of an informal procedure) and in the actual powers of the Secretary General. By doing so, they hoped to empower the body with the ability to confront the region's pressing political conflicts, especially those raging in Central America. Canadian officials, in recognizing this commitment to change and reform, began to view the OAS in a more positive light.

Many countries in Latin America supported the reform effort whole-heartedly, although that endorsement was not universally shared. Leading opposition to the Cartagena reform proposals was the Mexican government. Since the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965, Mexico has viewed the OAS in a less than favourable light, believing it to be highly susceptible to pressure from Washington.⁶³ As a result, it was steadfastly opposed to any reform proposals that would have invested the organization with more

⁶² See Enrique Durand, "Modernizing the OAS," Americas, 37:6 (November-December 1985), p.53.

⁶³ On this point, see, L. Ronald Scheman, "Rhetoric and Reality: The Inter-American System's Second Century," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, 29:3 (Fall 1987), p.9.

responsibility.

Notwithstanding Mexico's strident opposition, the OAS Charter was amended in several key areas. To appease the pro-noninterventionist forces, Article 1--which discusses the powers of the OAS flowing from the Charter--goes on to state that "none of whose provisions authorizes it to intervene in matters that are within the internal jurisdiction of the Member States." Added to the essential purposes section of the Charter, specifically Article 2, was a clause on promoting and consolidating representative democracy, "with due respect for the principle of nonintervention." At the same time, another provision was inserted on achieving "an effective limitation of conventional weapons that will make it possible to devote the largest amount of resources to the economic and social development of the Member States." The only change to the Charter's section on principles, which was partly in response to events in Central America, was the inclusion of the following: "Every State has the right to choose, without external interference, its political, economic, and social systems and to organize itself in the way best suited to it."

The Protocol of Cartagena also made a key change in the area of OAS membership--which would prove to be warmly received by Canadian officials. Clearly, the addition of Article 8 was a direct response to the membership

difficulties of both Guyana and Belize, which have long-standing political and territorial disputes with Venezuela and Guatemala respectively. The article, in an attempt to overcome these differences, specifies that OAS membership "shall be confined to independent States of the Hemisphere that were members of the United Nations as of December 10, 1985." And in Article 151, falling under the so-called transitory provisions, states that no decisions on membership shall be made "on the part of a political entity whose territory became subject...to litigation or claim between an extracontinentalist country and one or more Member States of the Organization, until the dispute has been ended by some peaceful procedure. This article shall remain in effect until December 10, 1990." In other words, both Guyana and Belize would be eligible for membership in the OAS, despite protestations from Venezuela and Guatemala, anytime after 10 December 1990.

On the economic front, the revised Charter does respond to the deteriorating economic conditions in Latin America. But instead of calling for specific economic initiatives or policies, it replaces the previous "economic standards" with the new concept of "integral development."⁶⁴

⁶⁴ As with the economic standards, the subheadings for social standards and educational, scientific, and cultural standards were also removed from the 1985 Protocol. Evidently, these various concepts, which were such a big part of the 1967 reforms, have been all rolled into the notion of integral development.

According to Article 29, integral development "encompasses the economic, social, educational, cultural, scientific, and technological fields through which the goals that each country sets for accomplishing it should be achieved." There are some five articles which touch upon this concept, with Article 33 admonishing member governments to "agree that equality of opportunity, equitable distribution of wealth and income, and the full participation of their peoples in decisions relating to their own development are, among others, basic objectives of integral development."

In addition to integral development, the Protocol of Cartagena introduced some amendments of a commercial or trade nature. Article 35, for example, points out that transnational or multinational corporations and foreign investment "shall be subject to the legislation of the host countries and to the jurisdiction of their competent courts." Similarly, Article 38 refers to the necessity of favourable conditions "of access to world markets for the products of the developing countries of the region." And it is precisely those conditions, it goes on to specify, which are "conducive to increasing the real export earnings of the Member States, particularly the developing countries of the region, and to increasing their participation in international trade."

With regard to the OAS Permanent Council, the 1985 amendments only slightly altered its role within the

hemispheric body.⁶⁵ In the area of pacific settlement--a crucial issue because of the ongoing conflicts in Central America--the responsibility of Permanent Council was increased somewhat. Instead of referring hemispheric controversies to the Inter-American Committee on Peaceful Settlement (although it was created under the 1967 reforms, it was dismantled under the Cartagena reforms), it would be empowered to establish the so-called "ad hoc committee" for the peaceful resolution of disputes. These committees, moreover, would have, according to Article 85, "the membership and the mandate that the Permanent Council agrees upon in each individual case, with the consent of the parties to the dispute." Still, if one party to the dispute chooses not to avail itself of the committee or to any of the other procedures for peaceful settlement outlined in the Charter, the Permanent Council can only "inform the General Assembly, without prejudice to its taking steps to secure agreement between the parties or to restore relations between them."

Perhaps the most innovative change to the Charter can be found in the provisions detailing the role of the

⁶⁵ The Permanent Council was, however, given the added responsibility of considering the various reports not only of the Inter-American Juridical Committee and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, but also the reports of the three Councils, the General Secretariat, the specialized agencies and conferences, and of the organization's other bodies and agencies.

Secretary-General. While the Secretary-General still participates with voice but without vote, he/she appears-- under the Cartagena Protocol--to be approaching some of the powers conferred upon the UN Secretary-General. Indeed, according to Article 115, the Secretary General "may bring to the attention of the General Assembly or the Permanent Council any matter which in his opinion might threaten the peace and security of the Hemisphere or the development of the Member States." To some extent, this amendment was incorporated to enable the Secretary-General to play a more active role within the organization.⁶⁶

As was the case with the Protocol of Buenos Aires, the reforms stipulated under the 1985 Cartagena Protocol received a fair degree of attention in External Affairs. There were those in the Latin America and Caribbean bureau who were very sceptical about the "success rate" of this

⁶⁶ In 1987, a proposal by Secretary-General Joao Clemente Baena Soares to establish an Inter-American Fund of Priority Assistance--to help in strengthening basic principles of representative democracy in Haiti, was accepted by the Permanent Council. He also took the initiative to offer the services of the OAS to help in promoting the peaceful resolution of the conflicts raging in Central America. Moreover, it was unprecedented for a Secretary-General to have full member status, as Baena Soares had on the International Verification and Follow-Up Commission (CIVS) set up under the Esquipulas II accord, on an international control commission. See, Hugo Caminos and Roberta Lavalle, "New Departures in the Exercise of Inherent Powers By the UN and OAS Secretaries-General: The Central American Situation," The American Journal of International Law, 83:2 (April 1989), pp.395-402.

reform movement.⁶⁷ Some had previously heard the Latins promise a great deal, only to be unable to deliver in the end. Others were simply so disillusioned with the OAS itself that they felt that the reform process was doomed to failure.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, most of the proposed reforms were welcomed and certainly viewed in a favourable light.

In a March 1986 brief on the OAS, it was clear that DEA officials were fully aware of the proposed reforms. Besides outlining the key Latin American countries spear-heading the reform movement (i.e. Colombia, Brazil, and Argentina), it pointed out that the protocol "provides for a greater role for the Permanent Council in the peaceful settlement of disputes; reduces reliance on the Rio treaty in case of conflicts in the region; gives increased powers to the Secretary General..."⁶⁹ It went on to state that "our impression so far is that the OAS now has the potential to enhance its role in continental affairs."⁷⁰

This seemingly positive assessment of the proposed reforms was not shared by all those involved in inter-American issues. In May 1988, Richard V. Gorham, Canada's

⁶⁷ Confidential interview with a former Canadian permanent observer to the OAS, 22 January 1992.

⁶⁸ Interview with a former senior official in the Latin America and Caribbean bureau, 21 January 1992.

⁶⁹ Archives, Department of External Affairs, "General OAS Brief," 3 March 1986, File 20-4-OAS-1, Vol.14, p.1.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.1.

Roving Ambassador To Latin America, argued in a DEA paper-- which was circulated among Canadian embassies and missions in Latin America and the Caribbean--that there was "a deep malaise and spirit of crisis in the Organization and to an as yet poorly articulated but deep desire for changes in the Organization to enable it to cope with the reality of the modern hemisphere and its complex social, economic, and political problems and its interdependence with the wider world."⁷¹ In regards to the Cartagena Protocol, he stated that it was "still far short of ratification--indeed only three Latin members (but all Caribbean members) have ratified it so far--and it is questionable whether the necessary ratification by two-thirds of the OAS membership will ever be achieved in order to bring it into force."⁷² One of the reasons for this dilatory attitude, he claimed, was the fact that some Latin countries "obviously dislike the idea of admitting Guyana and Belize which would increase the number of English-speaking Caribbean votes to 12, i.e. more than one-third of the total membership which would enable the Caribbean new members to block any motion or resolution requiring a two-thirds majority."⁷³ He also suggested that the delay in ratification of the protocol was

⁷¹ Gorham, "Some Preliminary Thoughts About Latin America," op. cit., p.4.

⁷² Ibid., p.4.

⁷³ Ibid., p.4.

linked to Latin concerns about "a more active role for the Secretary General could lead to contradictions to the doctrine of non-interference, especially in such a case where the Secretary General might be a citizen of the United States."⁷⁴

Still, Gorham seemed to believe that the very fact that the organization was contemplating reforming itself was a positive development.⁷⁵ But as for the role of Canada in this process, he was less certain. As he explained: "A number of member countries agree that our presence as a member of the OAS and our likely activism would help accelerate the process of reform but they also concede that this same activism which they desire could annoy some members to the detriment of our bilateral relations and that our cautions about full membership are well founded."⁷⁶ If there was any doubt about where Gorham stood on the question of Canadian membership, he clarified things in his final paragraph of the paper. He stated:

Because of the current broad consensus among member countries that the OAS is in a state of crisis, close to financial bankruptcy and is need of fundamental structural reforms or even replacement by some as yet undefined but new and more relevant organization, there would be no useful purpose served and no advantage to

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.4.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.10.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.10.

ourselves for joining the present Organization so long as it continues in its present state.⁷⁷

In a memorable speech before the Organization of American States in September 1988, Ambassador Gorham--wearing the "hat" of Canadian permanent observer--heavily criticized the body. He focused, among other things, on the Cartagena Protocol, pointing out once again that it "still remains unratified by some of the most important members of the organization."⁷⁸ He even wondered aloud about the extent to which the member states of the OAS actually supported and believed in the body.⁷⁹ Notwithstanding his pointed criticisms of the forum, Ambassador Gorham ended his speech on a positive note when he referred to the reform package by saying: "We...hope that it will achieve that revitalization that many of its members desire to make it more relevant and meaningful as an instrument to deal with important challenges and problems of this hemisphere. In my personal view, such a revitalization would have a highly positive impact on public opinion in Canada with important implications for the question of eventual Canadian membership."⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.11.

⁷⁸ Gorham, "Speech to the Organization of American States," op. cit., p.18.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.19.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.19.

When the Cartagena Protocol was eventually ratified in November 1988, External Affairs adjusted its position accordingly. People in the department, including Ambassador Gorham himself, saw this as a very positive development.⁸¹ In addition to the ratification of the Protocol engendering a favourable view, but so, too, was the passage of a resolution establishing a ministerial task force to look at ways of improving and strengthening the OAS. There was also a realization that Latin American governments--by ratifying the Protocol--were prepared to take the organization more seriously.⁸² And once officials realized that the proposed reforms were going to be amended to the Charter, and that the task force was going to be created, they began to look more favourably toward the body.⁸³

Summary

Clearly, the various reform movements within the OAS were watched and monitored by Canadian diplomats in the field and officials in Ottawa. In this way, the proposed reforms were shaping opinions and attitudes on the question of Canadian admission to the organization. It certainly was

⁸¹ Interview with Ambassador Gorham, 20 January 1992.

⁸² The fact that both Belize and Guyana would be eligible for admission in 1990 under the Cartagena reforms was viewed as a constructive development. Interview with Gorham, 27 January 1992.

⁸³ Interview with Ambassador Gorham, 27 January 1992.

something that the Latin American booklet in Foreign Policy for Canadians could point to as a constructive and encouraging development. And since the reforms were generally viewed in a favourable light, the natural inclination would be at least to review Canada's position toward the OAS. Stated differently, the amended reforms over the years seemed to prod the government into giving serious consideration to a closer association between Canada and the OAS.

In addition, these reforms appeared to influence the way Canada viewed the OAS in general and the membership question in particular. First, the fact that the OAS was undergoing a process of reform was seen as a positive step forward. Of course, the reforms themselves--while not going to suddenly revitalize the body overnight--were also viewed in a favourable light. While it is true that a reformed OAS was not solely responsible for Canada's ascendancy to permanent observer status in 1972, it was a factor.⁸⁴ In other words, the reforms made more palatable for Ottawa to be willing to draw closer to the Inter-American system.

By the late 1980s, it seemed clear that the ratification of the Cartagena Protocol influenced the Canadian government's thinking toward the OAS. Put another way, it began to see not only the constructive nature of the

⁸⁴ Interview with Mitchell Sharp, 21 January 1992.

reforms themselves, but also the willingness (or political will) of the organization to reform itself. This strengthening of the body put the whole question of Canadian membership in a different, and increasingly favourable, light. According to Brian Stevenson, "the calls for reform of the OAS by the Rio Group, the ratification of the Protocol of Cartagena and signs that member states in Latin America began to pay their dues in 1989 all influenced the Canadian government in a positive way."⁸⁵ In short, the Cartagena reforms, and the reform process in general, increased the likelihood of Canada opting for full membership in the body.

It is instructive to point out that by the early 1990s, the results of Charter revision have been less than spectacular. While the image of the hemispheric body has improved somewhat in recent years, it still has not evolved into a leading force or voice in inter-American affairs. The impact of the Secretary General, particularly on such issues as foreign debt, drug-trafficking, economic development, disarmament, and deforestation, is--to say the least--not easily discernible. On the conflicts in Central America, especially in El Salvador, the OAS has had only a marginal impact. It seems to prefer to maintain an arm's-length

⁸⁵ Stevenson, "Entering the Inter-American System: Canada and the OAS in the 1990s," (unpublished paper, February 1991), p.45.

approach--as the whole Panamanian imbroglio indicated--to the hemisphere's precarious political state.

On the socio-economic front, OAS reforms have evinced even fewer signs of improvement. Death squads, torture, and violations of basic human rights continue at a frightening pace in many Latin American countries. The OAS appears reluctant to censure countries engaged in these types of criminal activities let alone to intervene on behalf of those whom are its victims. At the same time, desperate economic conditions, with millions living in squalor and unsanitary barrios, still remain the norm throughout most of Latin America. Moreover, crushing debt burdens, along with unfavourable terms of trade with the North, have only exacerbated an already deplorable economic situation. Clearly, amendments to the OAS Charter have done little to alter the continuing downward spiral of socio-economic life in Latin America.

The difficulties involved in the process of OAS reform have a great deal to do with the nature of international politics itself. States are simply not prepared to concede their independence, sovereignty, and decision-making authority to a hemispheric institution. Political leaders almost invariably profess that choices and decisions of a political nature must rest ultimately with each individual nation. It may be that Charter revision is simply no match for international political behaviour and the nature of

state relationships.

Put another way, "internationalist" tendencies on the part of states are often overshadowed by those of a nationalistic bent. Accordingly, a more active OAS would be strongly resisted on purely noninterventionist grounds. The long-cherished principle of nonintervention is still espoused by a majority of Latin American governments. They are simply unwilling to invest new powers in an institution that they perceive as taking its instructions from the U.S. State Department. As a result, they have traditionally been wary of any reform efforts designed to carve out a larger role for the OAS in the internal affairs of member countries. Put simply, member governments are not about to sacrifice the perceived virtues of nonintervention for the sake of OAS reform.

Reforming the OAS, then, is plagued with a host of problems. While there is general agreement on strengthening the OAS from a socio-economic standpoint, there is little support for investing the body with powers of a political nature. Given the attachment to the principle of nonintervention, there appears to be a willingness on the part of member governments to accept a less politically relevant and active OAS. There is a sense that a marginally effective OAS is more palatable to these states because it somehow better ensures their political independence and sovereignty. Notwithstanding Canadian expectations, OAS

reform does not appear to hold out much hope of engendering a more responsive and relevant hemispheric organization.

Chapter Five

Canada and the Inter-American System, 1890-1968

Canada's involvement in inter-American affairs, particularly for the years 1910-1968, can best be characterized as irregular. Successive Canadian governments have waxed and waned over the question of drawing closer to the hemisphere's principal political institutions--namely, the Organization of American States (OAS) and its predecessor, the Pan American Union (PAU). Their seemingly "on-again, off-again" disposition toward greater involvement in the inter-American system has engendered a panoply of confusing and contradictory signals--domestically as well as internationally. The reasons underpinning this peculiar behaviour, which this chapter will elucidate, goes some way toward explaining why Canada has adopted such a seemingly ambivalent attitude toward inter-American institutional life.

This chapter seeks to outline the evolution of Canada's position on greater hemispheric involvement. It is not meant, however, to provide a detailed account of Canada's multifaceted association--be that economic, strategic, cultural or religious--with the inter-American

system.¹ Rather, it is intended to focus attention, for the most part, on Canada's stance toward the hemisphere's major political institutions. By doing so, it is hoped that a better understanding may result not only of the key actors which shape Canadian thinking on inter-American affairs, but also of where hemispheric relations rank on Canada's foreign policy agenda. The principal purpose of this chapter, though, is to outline the factors which have influenced, up until 1968, Canada's position toward hemispheric institutional life.

Historical background: Canada and the Pan American Union

In a January 1888 U.S. Congressional bill, which instructed the President to petition representatives from the nations of the Americas to attend a conference in Washington, Canada's participation was mentioned. However, when the amended legislation became law in May, no provision for inviting Canada was included at that time.² It is likely that Canada's close ties with Britain, and the fact that its foreign policy was directed exclusively by the British Foreign Office (up until about the mid-1920s), were factors

¹ For a useful discussion of some of these matters, see, J.C.M. Ogelsby, Gringos From The Far North, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976).

² In 1893, Canada was represented at the First Pan American Medical Conference held in Washington. See, Marcel Roussin, "Canada: The Case of The Empty Chair," World Affairs, 116:1 (Spring 1953), p.15.

which--at least initially--disqualified it from participation in the burgeoning Pan American movement. (It is worth noting in passing, however, that Canada was not precluded from attending the conference due to the fact that it was a constitutional monarchy.) At that time, though, it was unlikely that the Canadian government would have accepted an invitation, even if one had been forthcoming.³

In many ways, the events of the late 1800s mirrored Canada's association with inter-American political life for the next two decades. According to R. Craig Brown, "Canadian interest in Latin America and awareness of the problems and aspirations of Latin America was notable for its non-existence."⁴ Indeed, its commercial interest in the hemisphere was at best minor, its attendance at special Pan American conferences was sporadic, and it steadfastly avoided membership in the newly-created inter-American institutions. While it did take part in the work of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau (the forerunner of the Pan American Health Organization) and was a member of the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain in the early 1900s, it remained

³ John P. Humphrey, The Inter-American System: A Canadian View, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1942), p.44.

⁴ R. Craig Brown, "Some Honest Differences Of Opinion: Latin America," Writings on Canadian-American Studies, Volume 2, (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Michigan State University, 1967), p.3.

largely outside the parameters of Pan Americanism.⁵

Notwithstanding its predilection to remain on the sidelines of inter-American affairs, Canada could not--even if it wished--distance itself from hemispheric developments altogether. However, as early as 1909, John Barrett, the then-Director General of the Union of American Republics, paid a courtesy visit to Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier in Ottawa. Apparently the two discussed, among other things, the possibility of Canada's entry into the inter-American family.⁶ From Laurier, and from a later visit to Sir Robert Borden, Barrett received little in the way of encouragement. While both Laurier and Borden expressed guarded interest, they shied away from going any further.

Interestingly enough, in 1910, the U.S. Secretary of State Elihu Root indicated, at least symbolically, his interest in having Canada become a full hemispheric partner. He instructed his officials to place the Canadian coat of arms on the cornices of the inner court--with those of the other twenty-one republics--of the newly-built headquarters of the Pan American Union (PAU).⁷ In addition, the boardroom

⁵ F.H. Soward and A.M. Macaulay, Canada and the Pan American System, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1948), p.18.

⁶ Eugene H. Miller, "Canada and the Pan American Movement," International Journal, 3:1 (Winter 1947-48), p.28.

⁷ It is unclear whether Ottawa was consulted beforehand or if it even approved of Root's actions.

was to have a Canadian panel mounted and a chair with "Canada" inscribed on the back for use at the Council table. This chair has, over the years, come to be ignominiously referred to as the "empty chair."

Despite the placing of chair for Canada in the PAU headquarters, Canada still remained aloof from the hemispheric body. Official Ottawa was more interested in channelling its energies and resources into developing its West and Northern territories, achieving independence (in a foreign policy sense) from Britain, and protecting its sovereignty from the behemoth to the South.⁸ The Canadian public, for its part, was uninformed and uninterested in Pan Americanism and maintained a general attitude of indifference.⁹ Similarly, the Canadian business community had very little commercial/trade or investment interest in Latin America and the Caribbean.¹⁰ Businessmen in Canada, according to P.E. Corbett, believed that "the peoples south of the Río Grande were of such a different sort that the

⁸ Heath Macquarrie, "Canada and the OAS: The Still Vacant Chair," The Dalhousie Review, 48:1 (Spring 1968), p.1.

⁹ Miller, op. cit., p.35 and Marcel Roussin, "Evolution of The Canadian Attitude Towards The Inter-American System," The American Journal of International Law, 47:2 (1953), p.298.

¹⁰ Up until about 1914, rarely did Latin America absorb as much as three per cent of Canada's total exports. And Canada imported an even smaller percentage of the region's total exports. See Humphrey, op. cit., p.2.

less we had to do with them the better."¹¹ Simply put, Canadian interest or involvement in hemispheric affairs was, for all intents and purposes, remote.

There were other reasons why Canada preferred to view the PAU from outside its corridors. In the wake of World War I, Canada looked increasingly toward the emerging British Commonwealth and the fledgling League of Nations. Participation in these multilateral fora, as opposed to inter-American institutions, was viewed by Canadian officials as more important. There was a sense that Canada's overall interests could best be safeguarded in a "global" rather than a "regional" institutional environment. At the same time, official government interest in Latin America was miniscule; there were no ambitions of an imperialistic nature and economic interchange with the region was largely insignificant.¹²

Similarly, public opinion in Canada--particularly in the postwar period--was uninterested in inter-American developments. Although French-speaking Canadians, largely for cultural and religious reasons, expressed a greater

¹¹ P.E. Corbett, "Canada in the Western Hemisphere," Foreign Affairs, 19:4 (July 1941), p.781.

¹² While the business community in Canada was generally uninterested in the region, some Canadian banks, public utilities, and insurance companies were involved in the area. Chartered banks such as the Royal and the Bank of Nova Scotia had numerous branches throughout Latin America. Brazilian Traction, Light and Power was particular active in Brazil's mining sector.

interest in Latin America, the general populace was decidedly unenthusiastic about the region.¹³ Some Canadians felt that increased involvement in inter-American political life would have the undesirable effect of weakening Canada's traditional ties with the British Commonwealth.¹⁴ Others were simply suspicious of Pan Americanism and feared the possibility that the United States might be intent on absorbing Canada. As John P. Humphrey notes: "In the opinion of most Canadians, Pan Americanism was little more than a cloak for Yankee hegemony and imperialism."¹⁵ As a result, it was virtually ignored in government, commercial, and media circles.

Canada's disposition toward things Pan American was not altered by the coming to power of Mackenzie King in 1921. There still existed an acute lack of interest, on the part of many Canadians, in closer relations between Canada and the inter-American system. This state of indifference was also unaffected by the results of the 1926 Imperial Conference. The resulting Balfour Declaration--which formally acknowledged that the Dominions were no longer

¹³ See, Iris S. Podesa, "Pan American Sentiment in French Canada," International Journal, 3:4 (Autumn 1948), pp.334-37.

¹⁴ David R. Murray, "On Diplomatic Unrelations," in Jorge Nef, (ed.), Canada and the Latin American Challenge, (Guelph: Ontario Co-operative Programme in Latin American Studies, 1978), p.171.

¹⁵ Humphrey, op. cit., p.5.

subordinate to Britain--was not followed by any great outpouring of public or official support for Canada to play a larger role in inter-American institutional life. To be sure, a wide body of opinion continued to evince a preference for maintaining traditional links with both Europe and the United States. From an official standpoint, moreover, the King government was more interested in fostering Canada's own political development and in coping with the ramifications of living next door to a major power.¹⁶

To assist Canada in coping, Ottawa established direct diplomatic relations with the United States in 1927. And for the first time, Canada's membership in the PAU became a matter worthy of serious discussion. Much of the discussion, though, revolved around Washington's reservations about Canada's constitutional status and its British-influenced foreign policy. The U.S. State Department, in particular, disliked the idea of Britain, through its utilization of Canadian membership in the PAU, interfering in what was perceived as a U.S. sphere of

¹⁶ Canada's admission to the League of Nations in 1919 was a factor in precipitating some preliminary discussions on possible Canadian participation in the Pan American Union. Following World War I, the issue was first raised in the House of Commons in February 1923, where Prime Minister King responded by saying: "We have not received an invitation to join such Union. When it comes we will consider it." Canada, House of Commons, Debates, Second Session--Fourth Parliament, Vol., 21 February 1923, (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1923), p.496.

influence.¹⁷

Despite U.S. misgivings, the 1928 International Conference in Havana did broach the topic of Canadian membership. In fact, both the Mexican and Chilean delegations indicated, albeit unofficially, their support for Canada's entry.¹⁸ Furthermore, the U.S. delegation, while unwilling to initiate such a motion, was apparently prepared to accept Canadian membership.¹⁹ In the end, no formal resolution on the issue was introduced at the conference. In any event, the Canadian government was unenthusiastic about the prospect of obtaining admission at that time.²⁰

Not even the proclamation of the Statute of Westminster in 1931, legally affirming Canada's independence, altered Canada's position toward inter-

¹⁷ See, for example, National Archives of Canada, "The Attitude of the United States towards Canadian Entry into the Pan American Union," 20 January 1943, RG 25 B-3, Vol.2152, File 148, pp.1-2 and National Archives of Canada, "Pan American Union: General File:1943," 7 January 1943, RG 25 B-3, Vol.2152, File 148, p.2.

¹⁸ National Archives of Canada, "Canada And The Pan American Union," 15 December 1942, RG 25 B-3, Vol. 2152, File 148, p.11.

¹⁹ Douglas G. Anglin, "United States Opposition To Canadian Membership In The Pan American Union: A Canadian View," International Organization, 15:1 (Winter 1961), p.3.

²⁰ National Archives of Canada, "Pan American Union: General File: 1928-1937," 9 January 1928, RG 25 B-3, Vol.2152, File 148, pp.1-2 and Soward and Macauley, op. cit., p.23.

American affairs. Indeed, complete control over the direction of Canadian foreign policy did not translate immediately into any heightened awareness on the part of officialdom in Ottawa of Pan Americanism.²¹ Additionally, the Canadian Parliament and public, along with the business community, still evinced no interest in forging closer links with their hemispheric brethren.²² In this context, questions about Canada's membership in the PAU were simply brushed aside with the curt response that no official invitation had been received.²³

However, by the time of Roosevelt's enunciation of the "Good Neighbor policy" and the 1933 International Conference in Montevideo, such a response was no longer valid. At the conference itself, Ecuador introduced a resolution inviting Canada to take its logical place within

²¹ This is not to suggest that officials such as O.D. Skelton and Vincent Massey were unaware of the Pan American Union. On the contrary, senior officials like Skelton were aware of the potential commercial advantages of joining the body. But he was also cognizant of "the rivalries between the United States and the Latin-American countries, and of the fact our entrance into the Union is desired by our Latin-American friends in order that we may serve as a counterpoise to the United States, we are of the opinion that, for the present at least, it would not be desirable to join." Canada, Department of External Affairs, Documents On Canadian External Relations, 4 (1926-1930), edited by Alex I. Inglis, (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1971), p.676.

²² Ogelsby, Gringos From The Far North, p.16

²³ Miller, op. cit., p.33.

the Pan American movement.²⁴ While Mexico and Chile were more enthusiastic about Canadian membership in the PAU, Peru was reluctant to formalize the official invitation, largely for procedural reasons.²⁵ The United States, for its part, actually took steps to ensure that the question of admission did not come before the conference. Instead, the discussion of Canada's entry--at the behest of the U.S. delegation--was merely mentioned in a report and not formulated in terms of any official recommendation.²⁶ Washington was less concerned about the "technical difficulty" of Canada being a constitutional monarchy (as opposed to a republic) and more apprehensive about the possibility of having the British meddling in its own "backyard."²⁷

Still, the Canadian government expressed no serious interest in the idea of joining the PAU as a full-fledged member. Nor, it seems, were a handful of Latin American governments entirely comfortable with the notion of Canadian

²⁴ National Archives of Canada, "Canadian Entry Into Pan-American Union," 24 November 1941, File RG 25 2226-40, Vol.134, p.3.

²⁵ The Peruvian delegation was concerned about having to change the convention of the Union of American Republics to accommodate Canada, which was not a 'republic.' Ibid., p.4.

²⁶ Anglin, op.cit., p.4.

²⁷ See, "The Attitude of the United States," op. cit., p.1 and a letter written by Vincent Massey to O.D. Skelton, Canada, Department of External Affairs, Documents On Canadian External Relations, 4 (1926-1930), edited by Alex I. Inglis, (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974), p.677.

membership. There were some doubts about the possible benefits that would be derived from the admission of another predominantly English-speaking nation. Interestingly enough, Brazil's mild opposition appeared to stem largely from its fear that any invitation to the Canadian government would be promptly rejected.²⁸

By 1939, Prime Minister King--in his classic go-slow approach--stated what several Latin American governments had sensed all along, namely, that Canadian membership in the PAU "should be given consideration in the future."²⁹ He hinted, however, at the fact that public opinion in Canada had not sufficiently galvanized around the issue to warrant a change in Canada's position.³⁰ With the exception of some Quebec nationalists, a bevy of Canadian isolationists, and a few newspapers in Canada, the general populace was not enamoured by the notion of Canadian participation in inter-American affairs.³¹ Moreover, the outbreak of World War II

²⁸ National Archives of Canada, "Pan American Union: General File: 1943," 16 January 1943, RG 25 B-3, Vol. 2152, File 148, pp.1-2.

²⁹ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, Fourth Session--Eighteenth Parliament, Vol.3, 30 March 1939, (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1939), p.2421.

³⁰ National Archives of Canada, "Canadian Entry into Pan American Union," 24 November 1941, RG 25 File 2226-40, Vol.134, pp.1-2.

³¹ In some respects, this lack of Canadian interest and awareness of things Latin American is reflected in the trade figures for that period. Prior to the outbreak of World War II, Latin America accounted for less than 3 per cent of Canada's total business abroad. See, Vincent Massey, "Canada

effectively placed the whole question of Canadian membership in a political deep freeze.

Nonetheless, Canadian indifference toward Pan Americanism, particularly from a political and economic standpoint, seemed to be showing some signs of change. Officials in Ottawa, gravely concerned about the German conquest of Europe, started to look seriously at cultivating allies on this side of the Atlantic, as a possible hedge against such an eventuality. The government also began to reexamine its strategic position and Canada's geographical proximity to the American republics.³² Consequently,

And The Inter-American System," Foreign Affairs, 26:4 (July 1948), p.697. Indeed, Canada's exports to Latin America in 1938 consisted of a paltry \$33 million. Ogelsby, Gringos From The Far North, p.27.

³² Security concerns, highlighted by the outbreak of war, were also factored into Canada's changing attitude toward inter-American affairs in general. Not only were Canadian officials worried about an overt threat to North American security interests, but they were also concerned about the possibility of a Nazi foothold gaining ground in Latin America. National Archives of Canada, "Pan American Union: Canadian Entry: 1945," 17 March 1945, RG 25 B-3 Vol.2127, File 628, p.1 and National Archives of Canada, "Canada And The Inter-American System," 16 February 1945, RG 25 B-3 Vol.2127, File 628, p.15. Canada, it has been argued, actually entered into the inter-American system through its endorsement of the declaration produced at Ogdensburg, New York in August of 1940. The wording of the agreement, according to Humphrey, implies that Canada has interests and responsibilities "that extend to at least the equator and include, therefore, not only the North American republics of Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama, but three republics and a number of colonies in the Caribbean sea, and Colombia, Venezuela, the Guianas, and parts of Brazil and Ecuador in South America." Humphrey, op. cit., pp.17-18.

Canadian officials exhibited more interest in the inter-American system than they had at any other time.

Closer ties with Latin America also made sense from an economic standpoint. The realization that Canadian markets would disappear in continental Europe because of the war necessitated a shift to the emerging Latin American marketplace. (Given Canada's poor trade balance with the United States, government officials thought that earning "hard currency" from these countries would help ease Canada's foreign exchange difficulties.)³³ As a result, Canada's trade relations with both Brazil and Argentina showed signs of improvement in 1940, with exports growing from \$8.5 million to over \$11 million.³⁴ According to P.E. Corbett, "a year of war did more than fifteen years of illustrious trade commissioners."³⁵

In addition to commercial and financial considerations, there were growing pressures from both the United States and Latin American countries for Canada to increase its involvement in hemispheric affairs. Washington

³³ National Archives of Canada, "The Attitude of Canada to the Pan American Union," 7 February 1942, RG 25 B-3, Vol.2152, File 148, pp.5-6.

³⁴ It is interesting to note that Canada's trade with Latin America was governed principally by treaties which Britain had negotiated. In the case of Argentina, trade between the two countries was governed by a treaty which Britain signed in 1825.

³⁵ Corbett, op. cit., p.779.

felt that a small power such as Canada--with no hegemonic designs--would be given a better hearing in Latin American capitals.³⁶ It also saw Canada as a friend who would be useful in bringing the neutral republics on the side of the Allied war effort.³⁷ Lastly, it wanted allies in its plan, largely for reasons of hemispheric security, to support the forces of democratic pluralism against the perceived threat of creeping totalitarianism.

Latin American governments, in contrast, were eager to establish diplomatic relations with Canada.³⁸ The process of establishing diplomatic contacts began in 1940, with the exchanges of envoys with both Argentina and Brazil. Shortly thereafter, negotiations began in earnest for the

³⁶ National Archives of Canada, "Canada And The Pan American Union," 15 December 1942, RG 25 File 4889-40, Vol.3182, p.2 and Ibid., 20 January 1943, p.1.

³⁷ Canada, Department of External Affairs, Documents On Canadian External Relations, 7 (1939-1941), edited by David R. Murray, (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974), pp.1104-1106.

³⁸ Prior to World War II, Canada had no formal diplomatic relations with any of the countries of Latin America. By the end of the war, Canada had established legations in most of the major countries in Latin America. By the end of 1940, Canada had incipient diplomatic relations with the so-called "ABC" powers--Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. Some four years later, Canada had diplomatic legations in Peru and Mexico. The process of establishing relations with the major Latin American countries was the result of perceived trade advantages as well as from pressure from the accredited countries themselves. Canada, Department of External Affairs, Documents On Canadian External Relations, 1:7, edited by David R. Murray, (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974), pp.45-89.

establishment of Canadian missions in Chile and Mexico.³⁹ Not wanting to be left out, a number of countries in the region petitioned Ottawa about the possibility of exchanging diplomatic representatives.

The Department of External Affairs (DEA), while somewhat reluctant to support the exchange of emissaries with Latin American countries, was unenthusiastic about Canada joining the PAU.⁴⁰ But with momentum seemingly building, the Canadian government informed Brazilian authorities of its desire to participate in the 1942 Meeting of Foreign Ministers in Rio. And in a startling turn of events, Ottawa made known its intentions in December of 1941 that it would be willing, if formally invited, to enter the PAU.⁴¹

The King government was evidently prepared to accept the responsibilities, commitments, and ramifications of PAU membership. The report of a trade mission, which had toured

³⁹ For an excellent treatment of Canada's incipient diplomatic contacts with Latin America, see, D.R. Murray, "Canada's First Diplomatic Missions In Latin America," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, 16:2 (May 1974), pp. 153-172.

⁴⁰ Officialdom in Ottawa, although flirting with strengthening contacts with the inter-American community, was still more interested in solidifying ties with Western Europe and the British Commonwealth.

⁴¹ National Archives of Canada, "Pan American Union: General File: 1942," 15 December 1942, RG 25 B-3 Vol.2128, File 141, p.1 and National Archives of Canada, "Pan American Union: General File: 1943," 24 February 1943, RG 25 B-3, Vol.2152, File 148, p.2.

Latin America in 1941, recommended that Canada should "immediately" join the Pan American Union.⁴² Support for membership was also in response to the government's desire to attend the 1942 Rio meeting, which was to discuss a number of pressing hemispheric security issues.⁴³ (Canada was very interested in participating in the deliberations on the production and control of strategic materials.)

There were other reasons why December of 1941 was a turning point for Canada on the issue of PAU membership. Clearly, the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, effectively bringing the U.S. into the war, brought close to home the importance of hemispheric security.⁴⁴ A sudden enthusiasm within DEA favouring admission was also a crucial factor, with people like O.D. Skelton (chief adviser to King), Jean Désy (Ambassador to Brazil), Hugh Keenleyside and Escott Reid (senior foreign policy mandarins) all

⁴² National Archives of Canada, "Canadian Entry into the Pan American Union," 31 October 1941, RG 25 File 2226-40, Vol.134, p.17. and Canada, Department of External Affairs, Documents On Canadian External Relations, 1:7 (1939-1941), edited by David R. Murray, (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974), p.1108.

⁴³ King makes reference in his private papers to Norman Robertson putting pressure on him to have Canada attend the conference. The Mackenzie King Diaries 1932-1949, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 17 December 1941, p.1164.

⁴⁴ National Archives of Canada, "Canada And The Pan-American Union: Summary," 21 November 1941, RG 25 File 2226-40, Vol.134, pp.1-2.

pushing for Canadian entry.⁴⁵ In short, then, international events, heightened security concerns, and bureaucratic factors, when taken together, help to explain why Canada was finally willing to enter the PAU in late 1941.⁴⁶

This tangible commitment on the part of Canada, along with its interest in inter-American affairs in general, was received warmly by the majority of Latin American governments.⁴⁷ However, when Washington realized the full nature and extent of Canada's growing commitment to the hemisphere, it reacted unfavourably. Needless to say, Canada's decision to seek full membership in the PAU raised

⁴⁵ Officials in DEA based their support for Canadian admission at this time on commercial and security concerns. There were some fears that a German attack against Canada could be launched from somewhere in the Americas. Commercially speaking, they began to view the region as a potentially lucrative market for Canadian goods and services. See, National Archives of Canada, "Pan-American Union," 3 November 1941 (letter from Escott Reid to Norman Robertson), File 2226-40, Vol.134, p.1, "Pan-American Union," 21 November 1941 (letter from Escott Reid to Hugh Keenleyside), *Ibid.*, pp.1-2, and "Canada And The Pan-American Union," 21 November 1941, *Ibid.*, pp.1-4. Also see, James Rochlin, "Canada, The Pan American Union And The Organization Of American States," (A paper presented at the Canada-Latin America Opportunities Conference, University of Calgary, 6 May 1991), pp.4-5.

⁴⁶ National Archives of Canada, "Legation in Washington to SSEA," (letter from H.Hume Wrong in U.S.), 16 December 1941, RG 25 File 2226-40, Vol.134, pp.1-4.

⁴⁷ National Archives of Canada, "Canada And The Pan American Union," 15 December 1942, RG 25 B-3, Vol.2152, File 148, pp.6-7.

the ire of White House officials.⁴⁸ They were particularly upset over the fact that Ottawa had approached the Brazilians before discussing the matter with them first. President Roosevelt himself was strongly opposed to the idea of Canada even participating in the meeting of foreign ministers let alone joining the PAU--primarily because of Canada's Commonwealth connection.⁴⁹

On the question of Canadian membership in the PAU, the Roosevelt Administration was particularly adamant. The upcoming meeting in Rio, as far as Washington was concerned, was strictly for American republics.⁵⁰ It was also intent on preventing the issue of Canadian membership from diverting the foreign ministers' attention away from other key wartime questions. More important, the White House was still very concerned about the possibility of Britain--through Canada--insinuating itself into hemispheric affairs.⁵¹ It was

⁴⁸ Canada, Department of External Affairs, Documents On Canadian External Relations, 9 (1942-1943), memorandum from Hume Wrong, Minister, Legation in United States, edited by John F. Hilliker, (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1980), p.903.

⁴⁹ National Archives of Canada, "Canada, The Pan-American Union And The United States," 13 April 1942, RG 25 File 2226-40, Vol.134, pp.1-3.

⁵⁰ Canada, Department of External Affairs, Documents On Canadian External Relations, 9 (1942-1943), edited by John F. Hilliker, (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1980), p.904.

⁵¹ U.S. officials were also concerned about the possibility that membership might open the door for Canada to compete with the United States for Latin American markets. Additionally, they were concerned that Canada's

obvious that Canada's decision to follow Britain's lead into the war did little to mollify or assuage U.S. reservations. In the words of Douglas G. Anglin, "the thoughts and actions of Canadians seemed altogether too British for United States liking."⁵²

Clearly, in the face of strident U.S. opposition, Prime Minister King was not about to challenge Washington on the issue of PAU membership. (There has been some suggestion that King was not too keen on the PAU and, therefore, not particularly upset with U.S. resistance to Canadian participation at the Rio meeting of foreign ministers or, for that matter, to admission to the body.⁵³) While Canada refrained from attending the 1942 Rio meeting, it did not pull back entirely from the hemisphere. Canada did take part in the 1942 Pan American Sanitary Conference in Rio and the Inter-American Conference on Social Security in Santiago. In

admission to the PAU would spur Ottawa to demand the same kinds of concessions that Washington was prepared to offer the countries of South America. Ibid., pp.905-906.

⁵² Anglin, op. cit., p.12.

⁵³ King's support for admission was predicated more on the advice from External Affairs than on his own personal view, which tended to question the merits of joining. He wrote in his diary the following: "I was agreeable to having Canada represented there if an invitation were extended but made clear I thought we should ascertain the views of the U.S. Gov't first." 17 December 1941, The Mackenzie King diaries 1932-1949, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), p.1164 and National Archives of Canada, "Canada And The Pan American Union," 15 December 1942, RG 25 File 4889-40, Vol.3182, p.3.

1943, Ottawa also decided to become a member of the Inter-American Statistical Institute, a specialized agency of the PAU. The issue of Canadian membership would, however, have to wait until after the war.

Following the conclusion of the war, though, Prime Minister King seemed to shy away from the notion of drawing closer to the inter-American system.⁵⁴ Curiously enough, King's change of heart coincided with the U.S. State Department's warming to the idea of Canada's admission to the PAU.⁵⁵ Its past concerns and reservations about Canadian membership seemed to suddenly fade in the aftermath of the war and now, after more than 35 years of opposition, favoured entry.

⁵⁴ In response to a question in the House of Commons, King noted: "I am convinced that Canadian participation in such an organization could be based only upon a wide general appreciation in this country of the purposes and responsibilities of the pan-American union. I am not convinced that such appreciation now exists." Canada, House of Commons, Debates, Fifth Session--Nineteenth Parliament, Vol.6, 4 August 1944, (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1945), pp.5912-5913.

⁵⁵ Canada, Department of External Affairs, Documents On Canadian External Relations, 2:11 (1944-1945), edited by John F. Hilliker, (Ottawa, Supply and Services Canada, 1990), p.1152-1153 and Canada, Department of External Affairs, Documents On Canadian External Relations, 12 (1946), edited by Donald M. Page, (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1977), pp.1221-1222.

Canada's reluctance to become part of the Inter-American family stemmed from a number of reasons.⁵⁶ Not the least of these was King's belief, despite advice to the contrary by Latin American governments, that Latin America was essentially unimportant to Canada and to Canadians.⁵⁷ In 1947, a public opinion survey was released that reinforced King's coolness toward the region in general and the PAU in particular. In the poll, roughly 70 per cent of those Canadians surveyed knew absolutely nothing about the PAU.⁵⁸

Indifference toward things Pan American also began to surface among Parliamentarians as well as the media. Within the DEA, an erstwhile proponent of Canadian membership in the PAU, there was growing opposition to the idea. Some officials pointed to the "caucus tactics" of Latin American delegations, which disturbed Canadian foreign policy-makers, at the UN and other international gatherings.⁵⁹ These same

⁵⁶ One of the principal reasons was a preference among some officials to focus more on the creation of a world body. National Archives of Canada, "Report On Canadian Representation In And Relations With Latin American States," 17 April 1944, RG 25 File 7145-40, Vol.3291, pp.9-11.

⁵⁷ See "72 P.C. Canadians Haven't Heard Of Pan-America Union," The Toronto Daily Star, 12 January 1944.

⁵⁸ Canadian Institute of Public Opinion, Gallup Poll of Canada, 12 January 1944, p.1

⁵⁹ John W. Holmes makes the point that Canadian officials were finding it increasingly difficult to get along with their Latin American counterparts. Holmes, "Our Other Hemisphere: Reflections on the Bahia Conference," International Journal, 27:4 (Autumn 1961-62), p.416.

policy-makers also saw more benefits in supporting, and bolstering, the globally-orientated UN as opposed to a regional organization like the PAU.⁶⁰ Not surprisingly, then, the Canadian government chose to concentrate its energies and resources on ensuring international peace and security through the UN.

In 1947, U.S. Senator Arthur Vandenberg, the powerful Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, provided the clearest expression of the U.S. position on Canadian membership in the PAU. He injected new energy into the membership debate in Canada when, in a Pan American Day speech, he noted: "By every rule of reason we should wish her here. I would welcome the final and total New World unity which will be nobly dramatized when the twenty-second chair is filled and our continental brotherhood is complete from the Arctic Circle to Cape Horn."⁶¹ Lester B. Pearson, then Under Secretary of State for External Affairs,

⁶⁰ In March 1945, Lester B. Pearson, then Canadian Ambassador to the United States, indicated to Norman Robertson that "this formal joining of a Pan American Union was not a question which could be decided at the present time; that, in any event, we should wish to see how world organization plans, with their relationship to regional groupings, were worked out at San Francisco." National Archives of Canada, "Pan-American Union: Canadian Entry: 1945," RG 25 B-3, Vol.2127, File 628, p.1 and Canada, Department of External Affairs, Documents On Canadian External Relations, 12 (1946), edited by Donald M. Page, (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1977), pp.1219-1220.

⁶¹ Quoted in John W. Holmes, The Better Part of Valour: Essays on Canadian Diplomacy, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1970), p.228.

expressed the government's position with regard to the PAU in a March 1947 address to a U.S. audience.⁶² He stated that Canada's decision not to join the PAU was based on its membership in the Commonwealth and the UN as well as its belief that Canada's relations with the Americas could proceed in a positive fashion outside of the hemisphere's principal institution. Decision-makers in Ottawa were also intent on participating in more lofty international institutions, and not just those dominated solely by the United States (read the PAU).⁶³ In the end, it was King who actually told U.S. President Truman not to press Canada on the issue of joining the hemispheric body.⁶⁴

Notwithstanding King's request, interest in having Canada join the PAU continued to hold currency in

⁶² Pearson indicated that "we are satisfied that our relationships of friendship and mutual interest with the other American countries will continue to grow irrespective of membership or non-membership in any formal organization." p.3. For more details of Pearson's speech to the Herald Tribune Forum in New York, see, Canada, Department of External Affairs, "Canada In The Americas," Statements and Speeches, 47:7, 8 March 1947.

⁶³ James J. Guy, "Canada Joins The OAS: A New Dynamic In The Inter-American System," Inter-American Review Of Bibliography, 39:4 (1989), p.501.

⁶⁴ In his 23 April 1947 diary entry, after he met with Truman in the White House, King noted the following: I spoke about the Pan American Union. I said I thought it was just as well not to have that pressed too strongly at present and hoped there would be no official invitations sent without a word with our government first." 23 April 1947, The Mackenzie King Diaries 1932-1949, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), p.371.

Washington. U.S. officials, in concert with other Latin American diplomats, even took the step of removing from both the 1947 Rio Treaty and the 1948 Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS) the term "American Republics" and replacing it with "American States." This change in phraseology, however, had little impact on the Canadian public, which still remained largely uninterested in events south of the U.S.-Mexican border. In fact, many Canadians were more keen on the UN and did not want Canada, through increased hemispheric commitments, growing closer to the U.S.⁶⁵

Canada and the Organization of American States (OAS)

By 1949, Canada had begun to shy away from inter-American concerns and turned its attention increasingly toward a recovering Western Europe. And with the Cold War heating up, Canada played a leading role in the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).⁶⁶ Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent, not unlike King, began to emphasize the significance of North Atlanticism as opposed to Pan Americanism. At a press conference in the chancery of

⁶⁵ Ogelsby, Gringos From The Far North, p.300.

⁶⁶ For discussion of Canada's North Atlantic foreign policy orientation, see, John W. Holmes, The Shaping of Peace and the search for world order 1943-1957, Vol.2, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp.98-122 and James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada: Growing Up Allied, Vol.4, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp.68-128.

the Canadian Embassy in Washington, he made this orientation perfectly clear: "At the present time we consider it much more urgent to bring about this North Atlantic Union than to extend one that might be regarded as exclusive for the Western Hemisphere."⁶⁷ He went on to mention "Canada's potential domestic political difficulties concerning Canada's membership in the O.A.S. These difficulties stem mainly from indifference of the Canadian public to the O.A.S., due possibly to lack of knowledge. It was not likely, under present circumstances, that the Government would wish to join the O.A.S. outright."⁶⁸

Canada's position toward the OAS, then--especially under St. Laurent--appeared to echo the dilatory sentiments of Mackenzie King.⁶⁹ Indeed, it was not until March 1953 that the government's position on Canada's participation in the hemispheric forum was articulated in the House of Commons. He informed the House that the "position of the

⁶⁷ National Archives of Canada, "Extract from Minutes of Press Conference Held by The Prime Minister," 12 February 1949, RG 25 Vol.11, File 2226-40, p.1.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.2.

⁶⁹ In fact, in a March 1949 letter from External Affairs to the Canadian Minister to Cuba (E.H. Coleman), it pointed out: "There has been no change in the policy of the Canadian Government regarding participation in the Organization of American States since the then Prime Minister made a statement of policy in the House on August 4, 1944." National Archives of Canada, "Canada and the Organization of American States," 11 March 1949, RG 25 File 4900-B-40, p.3.

government of Canada in this respect has not changed since I last referred to this subject on February 12, 1949, when I spoke at a press conference in Washington."⁷⁰ He noted that in his opinion: "'So far it has not appeared to us that there would be any decided advantage in a formal membership in the Pan American Union.'"⁷¹ One year later, Lester Pearson, then Secretary of State for External Affairs, responded to a question in the House about possible Canadian membership in the OAS by saying: "In reply to that question I can only say that the necessity for making such a decision has not arisen because we have not received such an invitation."⁷²

The general feeling in External Affairs also seemed to be against the idea of membership.⁷³ In an October 1952

⁷⁰ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, Seventh Session--Twenty First Parliament, Vol.4, 27 March 1953, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1953), p.3341.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.3341.

⁷² Canada, House of Commons, Debates, First Session--Twenty Second Parliament, Vol.3, 8 March 1954, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1954), p.2749.

⁷³ It would be wrong, of course, to argue that every Foreign Service Officer (FSO) was opposed to Canadian membership in the OAS. For a positive response to admission, see, National Archives of Canada, "Canada and the Organization of American States," 9 October 1956, RG 25, Vol.28, File 2228-40, pp.1-2. Most of my archival research (for the period 1949-1957), however, tended to show that Canadian officials were generally against joining the body. Some of the reasons for not doing so included a reluctance to have to side with either the U.S. or Latin America countries, an unwillingness to be utilized by the U.S. Government to counteract anti-U.S. propaganda in Latin America, and the general sense that the organization itself

memorandum from L. Dana Wilgress to the SSEA, Wilgress was concerned about sending out any signals that would illustrate any sort of Canadian interest in seeking a closer association with the OAS. In his words: "I am not convinced that membership in the O.A.S. would benefit Canada or improve our situation to a degree corresponding to the effort involved."⁷⁴ He concluded by saying that "I do not feel I can recommend that we become more closely associated with the O.A.S. at this time."⁷⁵ A March 1953 DEA memorandum also captured this negative attitude toward the membership question when it pointed out: "It should not be overlooked that one reason which has impelled Latin American countries to think seriously about our membership in the O.A.S. is the desire to have a counterweight to the United States."⁷⁶ Similarly, a February 1955 DEA brief from the Latin American section suggested that "the great majority of resolutions passed are words and little else. I think that the main

was largely ineffective. See, for example, National Archives of Canada, "The Organization of American States--OAS," 28 April 1953, RG 25 File 2226-40, Vol.28, pp.4-7 and National Archives of Canada, "Canada and the Organization of American States," 9 October 1956, RG 25 File 2228-40, Vol.28, pp.1-3.

⁷⁴ Canada, Department of External Affairs, Documents On Canadian External Relations, 18 (1952), edited by Donald Barry, (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1990), p.1594.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.1394.

⁷⁶ National Archives of Canada, "The Organization of American States," 12 March 1953, RG 25 File 2226-49, Vol.28, p.1.

argument against joining the O.A.S. is one which cannot be advanced too openly and that is that the Organization is ineffectual and for the time and money spent on it achieves very little."⁷⁷ By early 1957, the department's position on possible Canadian entry into the hemispheric forum was fairly solid: "Canada would prefer, for the time being, not to receive an invitation to join the Organization."⁷⁸

By the end of St. Laurent's term in office, it was clear that the government was content to remain aloof from the OAS.⁷⁹ Hence, it was really not until the Conservatives came to power in June 1957, under the leadership of John Diefenbaker, that the whole membership debate received somewhat of a revival. He seemed attracted to the idea of charting a new and different foreign policy for Canada,

⁷⁷ National Archives of Canada, "Canada's Relations with the O.A.S.," 8 February 1955, RG 25 File 2228-40, Vol.28, p.2.

⁷⁸ National Archives of Canada, "Annual Review of Events in Peru for the year 1956," 26 February 1957, RG 25 File 4900-B-6-40, p.3.

⁷⁹ The St. Laurent government's polite detachment from the OAS was confirmed in a June 1958 DEA letter to the newly-appointed Canadian Ambassador to Peru, Alfred J. Pick-one year after the Diefenbaker government assumed office in Ottawa. As the letter explained: "The present government has had no occasion to take a public stand vis-à-vis the Organization, but it may help you to know that in August 1957, Cabinet decided that, for the time being, the previous policy of this question should be considered, i.e. that is Canada is not seeking an invitation to become a member of the O.A.S. and would prefer not to receive one." National Archives of Canada, "Letter of Appointment for new Ambassador to Peru," 23 June 1958, RG 25 File 4900-B-6-40, pp.1-2.

particularly with regard to Latin America.

Sidney Smith, Diefenbaker's newly-appointed Secretary of State for External Affairs, expressed an interest himself in acquiring a greater knowledge of Latin America. In 1958, he visited Brazil, Peru, and Mexico, where he detected a great deal of eagerness on the part of Latin American officials for Canada to join the OAS.⁸⁰ After returning from the region, he was apparently prepared to push the idea of Canada joining the hemispheric body.⁸¹ However, Smith's sudden death in March of 1959 effectively placed the issue, at least temporarily, on the political back burner.

When Howard Green succeeded Smith in the portfolio, he exhibited a keen interest in expanding diplomatic contact between Canada and Latin America. Officials in External Affairs, for their part, began recognizing the potential ramifications of the large bloc of Latin votes at the UN.⁸²

⁸⁰ Trevor Lloyd, Canada in World Affairs 1957-1959, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968), p.228.

⁸¹ While he tended to support membership, Smith was also aware of the potential drawbacks that membership would have on Canada's relations with the United States and Commonwealth countries and on an already over-burdened foreign service. "Canada May Join Organization of American States," The Washington Post, 6 March 1959.

⁸² External Affairs Minister Green believed that increased contact with Latin America could pay dividends in the world body. For instance, he felt that Canada, with the support of the Latin American delegations, would be well-positioned to secure its UN objectives--namely, arms control, disarmament, and peacekeeping. George Bell, "Canada And The OAS: Going Around The Buoy Again?," in Canada, The Caribbean, And Central America, edited by Brian Macdonald, (Toronto: The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies,

Green believed that Canadian diplomats worked well with their Latin American counterparts and also noticed that these same Latin delegations tended to support Canadian initiatives at the UN.⁸³

At the same time, there was talk of a Central American free trade area and the possibility of a second trade bloc involving all of South America and Mexico. (Out of these discussions emerged the Latin American Free Trade Association, LAFTA.) Ottawa, in light of these developments, was concerned about protecting Canada's existing economic interests and in exploring any potential for new trade opportunities.⁸⁴ The coming to power of Juan Perón in Argentina and Fidel Castro in Cuba--along with the accompanying security implications--also played heavily on the minds of policy-makers in Ottawa. Additionally, many Latin American governments, which were growing increasingly disenchanted with Canada's continued aloofness toward the

1986), p.104.

⁸³ J.C.M. Ogelsby, "Canada and the Pan American Union: Twenty Years On," International Journal, 24:3 (Summer 1969), p.573.

⁸⁴ Richard A. Preston, Canada In World Affairs 1959-1961, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1965), p.177. Two-way trade between Canada and the republics of Latin America was, by the late 1950s, experiencing steady--if unspectacular--growth. In 1959, Canadian exports to the region amounted to some \$172 million. Imports from Latin America, for the same year, stood at roughly \$340 million. See R.M. Will, "Economic Aspects Of Canadian-Latin American Relations," International Journal, XV:IV (Autumn 1960), p.350.

region, pressed the Canadian government to become more involved in the hemisphere.⁸⁵ For these reasons, debate over whether Canada should join the OAS took on added significance.

In fact, there appeared to be a growing consensus in 1960, particularly in government circles, for Canada to seek entry into the hemispheric body.⁸⁶ Appearing before the House of Commons External Affairs Committee, Howard Green--a supporter of Canada's admission--raised the issue of Canadian membership. Although the United Church of Canada was opposed to entry, opposition parties, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), and the National Federation of Canadian University Students (NFCUS) all urged full membership in the OAS.⁸⁷ Prime Minister Diefenbaker himself, while no doubt watching the debate closely, remained strangely silent.⁸⁸

In April of 1960, Diefenbaker paid a visit to Mexico,

⁸⁵ See, J.A Hume, "Canada Invited To Take Part In 'Operation Pan-American,'" The Ottawa Citizen, 19 May 1960 and Michael Johnson, "New Canadian Interest Appreciated by Latins," The Montreal Star, 13 June 1960.

⁸⁶ "Canada Weighing Closer Latin Ties," The New York Times, 20 March 1960.

⁸⁷ Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Excerpt From Statement on International Affairs Passed by the Fourth Constitutional Convention of the Canadian Labour Congress," File 20-4-OAS-4, 8 October 1963, p.1.

⁸⁸ See, H. Basil Robinson, Diefenbaker's World: A Populist In Foreign Affairs, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), pp.200-201.

the first Canadian prime minister to do so.⁸⁹ When questioned by a journalist about the possibility of Canadian membership in the OAS, he responded by suggesting that Canada might be interested in sending an observer to the quinquennial OAS conference in Ecuador, which was scheduled for May of 1961.⁹⁰ Besides Mexico, Canadian officials, led by Howard Green, also visited several Latin American countries in May, including Argentina and Chile. After returning to Ottawa, Green announced the creation of a new Latin American Division within the Department of External Affairs.⁹¹ (Prior to this move, the entirety of Latin American affairs was handled by a single officer in the American Division.)

With momentum for joining the hemispheric body mounting, the debate suddenly shifted ground. Diefenbaker was reported to have said, during a news conference in Jamaica, that Canada was not interested in joining the OAS. While the report on his comments was later dismissed as inaccurate, it did generate some interesting editorial

⁸⁹ This official visit was emblematic of the increasing political and economic importance not only of Mexico, but of the region in general. Editorial, "New Hemisphere Role For Canada," The Toronto Daily Star, 25 April 1960, p.6.

⁹⁰ Written correspondence with John D. Harbron, "Prime Minister's Press Conference, 23 April 1960," and "Mexico May Buy Canadian Steel," The Globe and Mail, 25 April 1960, p.1.

⁹¹ "Latin America Unit To Form Close Ties Is Set Up by Ottawa," The Globe and Mail, 31 May 1960, p.4.

comment.⁹² Three months later, Howard Green asked the public to express their views on the subject of Canadian membership. In response to his appeal, Canadians sent a number of letters to External Affairs. And according to a December 1961 memorandum, the majority of letters, some 205 in total, opposed the idea of joining.⁹³

But perhaps the most telling blow to the OAS question came from the President of the United States. In May of 1961, John F. Kennedy--in a speech before Parliament--encouraged Canada to participate more fully in hemispheric affairs (read joining the OAS).⁹⁴ The Diefenbaker government, clearly taken aback by Kennedy's comments, quickly declined to accept Kennedy's opaquely-delivered invitation.⁹⁵ Four months later, Secretary of State for

⁹² The Toronto Globe and Mail, when hearing of the correction, felt that the Prime Minister's misquoted comments were far more appropriate. "Improving the Truth," The Globe and Mail, 17 January 1961, p.6. Also see, "Ottawa Unconcerned Over PM's 'Statement,'" The Ottawa Journal, 13 January 1961, p.7.

⁹³ Ogelsby, Gringos From The Far North, p.315.

⁹⁴ President Kennedy believed that Canada would be a welcome addition to the inter-American family. According to his address to the House of Commons, he felt that Canadians would bring to the organization valuable diplomatic skills and resources as well as an intelligent and thoughtful viewpoint. Canada, House of Commons, Fourth Session--Twenty Fourth Parliament, Vol.5, Debates, 17 May 1961, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1961), p.4964.

⁹⁵ For Diefenbaker's reaction, see, Robinson, op. cit., pp.206-207. In his memoirs, Diefenbaker makes only a passing reference to Kennedy's pressure tactics. According to a DEA document, Canadian officials were preparing themselves to discuss the question of Cuba, but no specific mention was

External Affairs Howard Green--in responding to a question by Lester Pearson--stated that "one of the least effective ways of persuading Canada to adopt a policy is for the president or the head of state of another country to come here and tell us what we should do, no matter if it is done with the best intentions. Even when it is done in that way it is not the best way to get results."⁹⁶ According to Ogelsby, "the surest way to dampen Canadian enthusiasm for any project involving the United States is to appear eager for Canadian participation."⁹⁷ To be sure, it would have been pure political folly for the government to have been seen as kowtowing to U.S. entreaties.

In any event, the Diefenbaker Cabinet, along with the Canadian public, had little interest in the membership issue.⁹⁸ Economic problems in Brazil, in conjunction with

made of the OAS. National Archives of Canada, "List of topics for discussion between the President and the Prime Minister," 20 April 1960, File 18-1-A-USA, Vol.3492, pp.1-4. See also, Knowlton Nash, Kennedy & Diefenbaker: The Fued That Helped Topple a Government, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1990), pp.114-116.

⁹⁶ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, Fourth Session--Twenty Fourth Parliament, Vol.8, 11 September 1961, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1961), p.8203.

⁹⁷ Ogelsby, "Canada and the Pan American Union," op. cit., p.576.

⁹⁸ Nevertheless, is worth noting that the Diefenbaker government initiated several moves with regard to inter-American affairs. First, Canada became a full member of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History--a specialized agency of the OAS--in 1960. Secondly, Canada opted for membership on the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) in October of 1961.

political unrest in Argentina and Venezuela, did little to spur interest in seeking admission. At the same time, turmoil in many of the Central American countries tended caution against the idea of Canada joining. And the 1962 expulsion of Cuba--largely at the behest of the United States--at the foreign ministers meeting in Uruguay, and the subsequent imposition of sanctions against Havana, only served to illustrate the value of remaining outside the hemispheric body.⁹⁹

Not surprisingly, the Cuban missile crisis in October of 1962 once again sparked debate about Canadian membership in the OAS. Lester B. Pearson, the then leader of the opposition Liberals, inquired about the possibility of

Lastly, the government had established diplomatic relations with all of the countries of Latin America by the end of 1961.

⁹⁹ In the early 1960s, officials in External Affairs were interested in maintaining commercial relations with Cuba, regardless of Castro's ideological predilection. They were also concerned that if Canada opted to join the OAS, it could have negative implications for Canada's Cuba policy. For instance, they were uneasy about the prospect of Canada, once it did become a member, being pressured into signing the Rio Treaty and thus compelled to sever relations with Cuba. In a August 1964 letter from the Canadian Embassy in Mexico, the Ambassador reconfirmed these concerns by noting that "unless we are prepared to subject our Cuban policy to an agonizing reappraisal, it would seem wiser to postpone membership until the problems presented by Cuba are less intractable in nature." Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Possible Entry of Canada into the Organization of American States," 24 August 1964, File 20-4-OAS-4-1, Vol.3, p.4. Also see, Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Canadian Position re OAS Resolutions on Cuba," 29 November 1967, File 20-4-OAS-1, pp.1-3.

Canada participating in OAS deliberations on Cuba without actually becoming a full member.¹⁰⁰ Diefenbaker promptly dismissed Pearson's suggestion as unnecessary and chose to remain largely neutral on the Cuba question.¹⁰¹ In other words, the fallout from the missile crisis had no substantive impact on the Canadian government's coolness on the membership question. If anything, it reinforced Ottawa's predilection for aloofness toward the OAS.¹⁰²

While Canada's steadfast reluctance to join the inter-American community remained unchanged, attitudes in Latin America were beginning to show signs of change. In fact, a certain Latin coolness toward Canada's admission into the OAS appeared to be developing.¹⁰³ Some Latin American governments were disturbed by Ottawa's unwillingness to break diplomatic relations with

¹⁰⁰ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, First Session--Fifth Parliament, Vol.1, 22 October 1961, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1961), pp.806-807.

¹⁰¹ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, First Session--Twenty Fifth Parliament, Vol.1, 22 October 1962, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962), pp.804-806.

¹⁰² Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Political And Military Implications of Membership in the OAS," 27 January 1967, File 20-4-OAS-4, Vol.2, p.9.

¹⁰³ Peyton V. Lyon, Canada in World Affairs 1961-1963, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968), p.527.

revolutionary Cuba.¹⁰⁴ Others were simply frustrated with Canada's desire to establish wholesale diplomatic contacts throughout the region and, at the same time, dither over the issue of joining the OAS. Put simply, Latin American officials had grown tired of waiting around for Canada to undertake a substantive move to indicate its firm commitment to the region.¹⁰⁵

It was in the face of public apathy toward inter-American affairs, and growing Latin American dissatisfaction with Canada, that Lester Pearson took over the reigns of power in Ottawa. Although he had previously supported the idea of Canadian membership in the OAS as opposition leader, he was less sanguine as prime minister.¹⁰⁶ In fact, when he

¹⁰⁴ Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Canada And The OAS," 1 November 1963, File 20-4-OAS-4-1, Vol.1, p.11. Canada, along with Mexico, were the only two nations of the Americas not to sever relations with Castro's Cuba.

¹⁰⁵ Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Possible entry of Canada into the Organization of American States," 21 August 1964, File 20-4-OAS-4-1, p.2. This sense of frustration was detected by a Canadian diplomat in Ecuador when he stated: "Latin Americans have always been puzzled, sometimes hurt, by what seemed to them our reluctance to accept a proffered (sic) invitation to join with the other states in the Western Hemisphere in the only organization formed to deal with its regional problems." Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Canada and the OAS," 4 September 1964, File 20-4-OAS-4-1, Vol.3., p.1.

¹⁰⁶ For his views in favour of membership, see, Canada, House of Commons, Debates, Fourth Session--Twenty Fourth Parliament, Vol.4, 27 April 1961, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1961), p.4086 and Canada, House of Commons, Debates, Fourth Session--Twenty Fourth Parliament, Vol.8, 11 September 1961, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1961), p.8203.

went to Washington in May of 1963, President Kennedy once again mentioned the topic of OAS membership, but Pearson reacted coolly to the idea and the matter was simply left unsettled.¹⁰⁷ And when the topic was broached by Diefenbaker in the House of Commons in May 1963, Pearson's reluctance to embrace the OAS was clearly evident. He responded with the following statement:

The right hon. gentleman asked me this afternoon to declare myself once and for all, finally and irrevocably for or against membership in the organization of American states. The right hon. gentleman having avoided making any such declaration himself for six years has now, with the new freedom given to him by opposition--and I understand and appreciate his position--come out boldly against Canada's entry into the organization of American states. If I understand what he said this afternoon, as far as he and his party are concerned the doubt is resolved. There would be no membership in that organization. We on this side will, in due course, declare the policy of the government in this matter. It has taken hon.

¹⁰⁷ While there is nothing in Pearson's memoirs about any discussions with Kennedy on the OAS, newspaper accounts tended to be less than crystal clear on this matter. According to The Ottawa Journal, the issue of OAS membership--while supposed to be discussed--was conspicuously absent from the official communiqué. Richard Jackson, "Speeding Plans For Warheads Says Pearson," The Ottawa Journal, 13 May 1963, p.1. An article in The New York Times, however, claimed that "Mr. Kennedy did not raise the question; a Canadian source denied emphatically that Mr. Pearson had given any understanding on the subject." Tom Wicker, "Canada Confirms She Will Accept Atom Arms Soon," The New York Times, 12 May 1963, p.1. According to a DEA file, however, Pearson stated that "the Canadian Government would move cautiously to examine the implications of OAS membership, that membership was not a matter of first priority, and that he personally thought that Canada could assist with aid to former British colonies." Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Statements Concerning Canada's Joining The OAS Made At The Hyannisport Meeting," 8 January 1964, File 20-4-OAS-4-1, p.1.

members opposite six years; they
might give us a few more weeks.¹⁰⁸

While this clarification never really materialized, Pearson's Secretary of State for External Affairs, Paul Martin, did announce in early May 1963 that Canada would send observers to an OAS-sponsored conference in Bogotá.¹⁰⁹

While the Martin announcement to send observers to the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour (on the Alliance for Progress)¹¹⁰ was done primarily to placate the Latins, the Pearson government did exhibit an interest in

¹⁰⁸ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, First Session--Twenty Sixth Parliament, Vol.1, 20 May 1963, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1963), p.65.

¹⁰⁹ Canada, Department of External Affairs, Press Release, A.18, 2 May 1963, p.30. Martin was himself on record as supporting Canadian entry. Within cabinet, though, he was rumoured to have had difficulty convincing his colleagues of the merits of doing so. See, for example, Canada, House of Commons, Debates, Fourth Session--Twenty Fourth Parliament, Vol.8, 11 September 1961, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1961), p.8201 and Paul Martin, A Very Public Life, (Ottawa: Deneau Publishers, 1983), p.268.

¹¹⁰ "Canada to Watch Americas Talks," The Globe and Mail, 3 May 1963, p.1.

broadening Canadian-Latin American relations.¹¹¹ For instance, in December of 1964, Ottawa announced that it would make available up to \$10 million to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).¹¹² The IDB, in return, would administer the assistance--for economic, technical, and educational projects in Latin America--on behalf of Canada. It is instructive to note here that this was the first time that a non-member of the OAS entered into such an arrangement.

Nonetheless, when the U.S. invaded the Dominican Republic in May of 1965, landing some 20,000 marines on the beaches in and around Santo Domingo, the chances of Canada opting for membership in the OAS dimmed as well. To be sure, it did nothing to bolster the arguments of those who were in

¹¹¹ From a trade standpoint, Canada's exports to the region jumped from roughly \$175 million in 1959 to approximately \$327 million in 1964. G.V. Doxey, "Canada and the Organization of American States," (paper presented at a conference on the Caribbean and Latin America at the University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica, March 1967), p.27. It is also instructive to note that the Pearson government did give active consideration to the idea of appointing a Canadian Liaison Officer to the OAS--to demonstrate Canada's interest in the OAS and in inter-American affairs in general. Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Appointment of Liaison Officer to the OAS," 17 March 1964, File 20-4-OAS-4, p.1.

¹¹² Canada, Department of External Affairs, "Signature Of Agreement Between Canada And Inter-American Development Bank," Press Release, No.89, 4 December 1964, p.1.

favour of Canada joining.¹¹³ In fact, it gave ammunition to those who were critical of the OAS itself and opposed to Canadian membership. In 1966, the Canadian government informed the White House and Latin American leaders that it had no intention of joining the hemispheric body.¹¹⁴ Even after Trinidad and Tobago joined in March of 1967, the Canadian government was unmoved from its position of non-membership.

Summary

In outlining the evolution of Canada's "on-again, off-again" approach to the PAU and the OAS, particularly in the years 1910-1968, one can make several points. In addition to indicating the major players--such as key political

¹¹³ Although Prime Minister Pearson was reported to have endorsed the idea of Canadian membership in the OAS in late 1965, he soon backed away from this position. Canada, House of Commons, Debates, First Session--Twenty Seventh Parliament, Vol.1, 19 January 1966, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1966), p.15 In response to a question on membership--following the announcement that some Caribbean countries were contemplating joining the OAS--he indicated that "I said I hoped it would be possible for us to act in unison with the other Commonwealth governments in this hemisphere. Trinidad-Tobago having announced their intention of joining... with Barbados following up if it does apply within the next month or two, it looks as though my hope will not be realized." Canada, House of Commons, Debates, First Session--Twenty Seventh Parliament, Vol.12, 20 February 1967, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967), p.13215.

¹¹⁴ C. Knowlton Nash, "Canadian Thumbs Turned Down to U.S. Latin OAS Pleading," Financial Post, 16 April 1966. Nash also noted that Latin American governments, particularly in the wake of the Dominican crisis, were no longer unanimous in their support of Canadian membership.

executives and foreign policy officials--involved in the debate over Canadian membership in the principal inter-American institutions, this chapter serves to highlight some of the factors which explain why Canada chose to remain aloof from these bodies. It also illustrates the fact inter-American issues did not rank as a major priority in the conduct of Canadian foreign policy.

Indeed, inter-American developments have rarely, if ever, been a major foreign policy concern for Canada. When the British Foreign Office was directing Canada's foreign relations, it paid only lip-service to what was happening in Latin America. Even after the passage of the Statute of Westminster in 1931, Canadian foreign policy tended to focus almost exclusively on relations with Britain and the United States. In later years, foreign policy mandarins in Ottawa often refused postings in Latin America, realizing just how low a priority region Latin America was.¹¹⁵ And it was not until 1960 that a Latin American Division was actually established within the Department of External Affairs. While there were periods when Canada's foreign policy accorded more attention to relations with the Americas, that interest was never sustained. By the end of the Pearson government, inter-American affairs--especially

¹¹⁵ See, John F. Hilliker, Canada's Department of External Affairs Volume 1: The Early Years 1909-1946, (London: The Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 1990), p.231.

from a foreign policy standpoint--was simply not a priority.

Canada's decision to remain outside the confines of the PAU and the OAS, while based on a reasoned and thoughtful evaluation, also reflected this lack of foreign policy salience. It also stemmed, in part, from the changing nature of the international system. To be sure, the two World Wars dramatically affected how Canada viewed these two hemispheric bodies. World War II, in particular, seemed to jolt Canada from its complacency--if only temporarily--and underscore the potential benefits of greater inter-American involvement.

However, when the international community, in the postwar period, turned its energies toward constructing a global body, Canada seemed to shy away from involvement in the regionally-oriented PAU. Besides being actively involved in the founding of the UN, while maintaining its Commonwealth linkages, Canadian officials tended to espouse a more North Atlantic vision. Undoubtedly influenced by the onset of the Cold War, Ottawa looked increasingly toward rebuilding ties with Western Europe and creating the NATO alliance.¹¹⁶

When the Cold War infiltrated the hemisphere in 1959, largely in the form of Castro's Cuba, Canada's position

¹¹⁶ The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, with its Cold War underpinnings, also distracted Canadian attention away from inter-American developments.

toward the OAS changed. It did not approve of the OAS's expulsion of Cuba in 1962 or its imposition of punitive sanctions. Nor did the Canadian government support the 1965 U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic.¹¹⁷ In many ways, the Cuban and Dominican crises were potent reminders of why Canada should not join the OAS. In this sense, then, changes in the international environment--whether structural or hegemonic in nature--have tended to persuade governments in Canada not to seek membership in inter-American political institutions.

In addition to developments in the international system, domestic factors played a major role in Canada's opting for non-membership. Without a doubt, Canada's political leadership has, over the years, had a tremendous impact on the membership question. Indeed, when Prime Minister King was supportive in 1941, the Canadian government was prepared, for the first, to accept admission. But when leaders such as Diefenbaker and Pearson expressed certain reservations, the issue tended to remain in a state of dormancy.

Like the political leadership in Canada, the

¹¹⁷ In fact, Pearson refused to endorse or support U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic. In the House of Commons, he stated that "we have not received sufficient evidence from the United States authorities--and we are in touch with them on this matter--to justify any conclusion on our part at this time." Quoted from "Canada Has Wait-and-See Attitude, Pearson Indicates in Commons," The Globe and Mail, 4 May 1965, p.8.

bureaucracy was intimately involved in the membership debate. Even though External Affairs ministers such as Howard Green and Paul Martin supported Canadian entry, officials in DEA were, for the most part, unconvinced of the merits of joining. The one clear instance in 1941 when DEA officials were pushing for membership, the government indicated its intention to join. In the main, though, foreign policy mandarins in Ottawa have steadfastly opposed Canadian admission to the PAU and the OAS.

Domestic sources of opinion also had some impact, in a limited fashion, on the membership question. Public opinion in Canada, generally speaking, has been both uninformed and uninterested in either the PAU or the OAS.¹¹⁸ While not overtly vocal when it comes to either of the organizations, the general public had tended--throughout the period in question--to oppose membership. Business groups and a handful of non-governmental organizations, for their part, seemed to view Canadian membership in a favourable light, but not with a great deal of enthusiasm. Notwithstanding a minority of advocates, the media and "attentive publics" in Canada have tended to oppose Canadian

¹¹⁸ It is possible to argue that if DEA were truly supportive of membership in the OAS, it could have moved to mould this opinion in favour of joining--as did in the cases of Canada's entry to the UN and NATO. It is equally possible that political leaders simply pointed to the lack of public support as an excuse to hide their own personal doubts about the efficacy of Canadian membership in the hemispheric body.

membership in inter-American institutions. In short, there existed no societal constituency in Canada, from 1910-1968, actually pushing for greater Canadian involvement in the PAU or the OAS.

There has, however, existed a constituency outside of the country carefully watching the membership debate in Canada. The United States, for instance, has figured prominently in Canadian thinking toward inter-American institutions. Up until 1945, Washington--fearing British interference in its sphere of influence--was opposed strenuously to Canadian membership in the PAU. In the postwar period, however, the United States, in looking for a reliable ally and another country to share the financial burden, pressed Ottawa to join the OAS. Although prodding from Washington was unsuccessful (and at times counterproductive), it did serve to spark debate on the issue in Canada. By 1967, though, it would be fair to say that U.S. support for Canadian membership was not foremost in the minds of decision-makers in Ottawa.

Latin American governments also comprised a constituency backing Canadian membership in inter-American institutions.¹¹⁹ For many years, they encouraged Ottawa to demonstrate its commitment to the region by joining the PAU

¹¹⁹ While Latin American governments were angered by Canada's unwillingness to sever relations with Cuba and its reluctance to join the OAS as a full member, they were still very supportive of the idea of Canadian membership.

and then the OAS. Latin American officials looked upon Canada as not just another source of development assistance, but as a voice of moderation, a shining example of a model democracy, and a potential bridge-builder between the Latins and the United States.¹²⁰ By the 1960s, though, many countries in the region had grown increasingly frustrated with, and tired of, Canada's prolonged discussion--as opposed to decisive action--on the issue of membership. But as far as Canadian governments were concerned, their decision on membership would be based on its perceived interests and not on the platitudes and entreaties of Latin American officials.

By early 1968, then, the membership issue was, for all intents and purposes, a non-issue in Canada. With no domestic or external forces driving the debate, the status quo became the preferred option. In June 1968, however, this acceptance of the status quo was called into question by the electoral victory of Pierre Elliot Trudeau. Almost immediately, he sought to change the manner in which Canada's foreign policy was conducted, including its relations with the inter-American community. Trudeau's early formulation of a hemispheric policy in general and a new approach toward the OAS in particular is the subject of the next chapter.

¹²⁰ John Sokol, "Latin America Wants Canada In The OAS," The Commentator, 6:5 (May 1962), pp.19-20.

Chapter Six

Canada-OAS Relations: The Trudeau Years

With the arrival in Ottawa of Pierre Trudeau as Canada's fifteenth prime minister, the nature of Canadian-Latin American relations experienced a subtle metamorphosis. No longer would the Canadian government view our hemispheric cousins as an afterthought or, more important, as peripheral to Canada's external relations. Indeed, Latin America would be given a higher priority within government circles and singled out as a region falling within the parameters of Canadian foreign policy. Accordingly, the seemingly dormant issue of OAS membership was once again brought to the forefront of Canada's hemispheric relations.

This chapter examines the dynamics of the membership question during the Trudeau era--because this period represented a new phase in Canada-OAS relations. It is not, however, designed to show that Canada's relations with Latin America were conducted more on a bilateral, as opposed to, a multilateral basis.¹ Nor is it a study of how Canada's relations with Latin America--especially during the Trudeau years--expanded politically and economically as well as in the areas of development assistance and cultural exchanges.

¹ For an illustration of this point, see, D.R. Murray, "The bilateral road: Canada and Latin America in the 1980s," International Journal, 37:1 (Winter 1980-81), pp.108-131.

That discussion has taken place elsewhere, and by a number of informed specialists.² Rather, it is intended to outline how exactly the Trudeau government sought to draw closer to hemispheric institutions, particularly the OAS.

In order to accomplish this task in a cogent fashion, a two-fold framework of analysis will be employed. First, the chapter begins by detailing the nature and extent of the Trudeau government's incremental approach toward inter-American institutions. To make this section more manageable, it is divided into three time-frames--1968 to 1972; 1973 to 1977; and 1978 to 1984. Secondly, it discusses the various reasons why the Trudeau government's view of these institutions was less than favourable. It concludes with a number of general observations on the OAS membership issue during the Trudeau era.

1968 to 1972: OAS membership revisited

Trudeau himself, before becoming Prime Minister, seemed genuinely interested in increasing contacts between

² See, for example, John D. Harbron, "Canada and Latin America: ending a historic isolation," International Perspectives, (May-June 1972), pp.25-29; Harbron, "Canada Draws Closer To Latin America: A Cautious Involvement," in Roger W. Fontaine and James D. Theberge, (eds.), Latin America's New Internationalism: The End of Hemispheric Isolation, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1976), pp.109-142; James John Guy, "Canada and Latin America," The World Today, 32:10 (October 1976), pp.376-386, and J.C.M. Ogelsby, "A Trudeau Decade: Canadian-Latin American Relations 1968-1978," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, 21:2 (May 1979), pp.187-208.

Canada and Latin America. In part, this stemmed from his own personal interests: he had travelled throughout the region, was fairly knowledgeable about it, and spoke Spanish fluently. Naturally, his interest eventually precipitated questions about his position on Canadian membership in the OAS. During the Liberal leadership race in April 1968--in the course of one of the policy workshop sessions--he was asked pointedly by a delegate about the membership question. He responded by saying that Canada should indeed enter the OAS at some point in the future. He qualified his answer, however, by stating that Canada should do so only after it had developed a coherent policy toward Latin America and one that enabled Canada, if the need arose, to function independently of the United States.³ This qualified support would continue to be the common denominator of Trudeau's position on this topic for many years to come.

Just prior to his June 25 election victory, Trudeau indicated his desire to examine not just Canada's policy toward Latin America, but "the fundamentals of Canadian foreign policy to see whether there are ways in which we can serve more effectively Canada's current interests, objectives and priorities."⁴ He went on to say that Canada

³ "Justice Minister's wit delights supporters," The Globe and Mail, 5 April 1968, p.8.

⁴ Canada, Department of External Affairs, "Canada and the world," Statements and Speeches, No. 68/17, 29 May 1968, p.3.

has "to explore new avenues of increasing our political and economic relations with Latin America where more than four hundred million people will live by the turn of the century and where we have substantial interests."⁵ Hence, part of the subsequent foreign policy review--which took place from May 1968 to June 1970--would focus on Canada's overall relations, or lack thereof, with Latin America. Undoubtedly, Trudeau felt that increased contacts with the OAS, within the context of a Latin American policy framework, would contribute to advancing Canadian interests.⁶

External Affairs Minister Mitchell Sharp's "voyage of discovery" in the fall of 1968 was meant to signal Canada's interest in strengthening ties with Latin America. It was the largest Canadian mission ever sent to the region and Sharp, along with a handful of cabinet ministers, a number of cultural representatives, and a coterie of government officials, came back from the trip quite impressed with what

⁵ Quoted in Peter C. Dobell, Canada's Search for New Roles: Foreign Policy in the Trudeau Era, (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p.115.

⁶ Influencing Trudeau's thinking on this subject were cabinet colleagues Gérard Pelletier and Mitchell Sharp. As Secretary of State and Secretary of State for External Affairs respectively, they were key supporters of broadening relations with Latin America. See, Bruce Thordarson, Trudeau and Foreign Policy: a study in decision-making, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp.45-47.

they had seen.⁷ According to J.C.M. Ogelsby, they were moved by "the modern and elegant cities like São Paulo, Mexico, and Buenos Aires. They received full coverage in the media of the countries they visited. They had the honour guards, the gala social occasions, and the normal round of discussions with government officials, business leaders, and--for the first time--university and cultural figures."⁸ Interestingly enough, there was little or no discussion of the OAS membership question with Latin American leaders or in the ministerial mission's final report. Their report did, however, serve as a useful primer and valuable source of information for the more comprehensive review of Canada's relations with Latin America.⁹

When Foreign Policy for Canadians was published in the summer of 1970, it generated a sizeable amount of interest within the academic community. Yet the 32-page booklet entitled, Latin America, engendered little more than a yawn

⁷ Curiously, in 1969 the government decided, for budgetary reasons, to close Canadian missions in Uruguay, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic as well as reduce staff at the remaining 12 missions in the region by some 16 personnel. At the same time, it sought to expand contacts with francophone Africa and to establish full diplomatic relations with the Vatican. This tended to indicate that the government's commitment to broadening relations with Latin America was not a top priority. Dobell, op. cit., p.116.

⁸ Ogelsby, Gringos From The Far North, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976), p.32.

⁹ Interview with Mitchell Sharp, former Secretary of State for External Affairs, 12 January 1992.

from interested observers and area specialists. While it was well-written and touched upon most of the high-points of Canadian-Latin American relations, it did not map out any long-term strategy--or set of policy objectives--to guide Canada's policy toward the region. It did, however, confront the perennial issue of Canadian membership in the OAS head-on, and with an unusual degree of clarity.

Although it comprised barely five pages, the section on membership, which was entitled "A Choice For Canada," was instructive. It began by stating the obvious: "The Government has already made known its intention to strengthen relations with Latin America."¹⁰ From there, it went on to list three possible ways in which this strengthening could be achieved. First, the government could simply continue on much like before, "expanding trade and investment and modestly increasing development assistance but letting political, cultural and scientific relations evolve on an ad hoc basis."¹¹ Secondly, it could deliberately set out "to broaden and deepen relations with Latin America not only economically but also politically and in the fields of cultural, educational, technological and scientific exchanges."¹² Within this option, the government,

¹⁰ Government of Canada, Foreign Policy for Canadians, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970), p.20.

¹¹ Ibid., p.20.

¹² Ibid., p.20.

while also seeking to maintain "bilateral relations with individual countries," could also "apply to join the OAS as a full member." The third option, and perhaps the less contentious, was to pursue systematically a policy designed "to strengthen links of all kinds with the countries of Latin America, embarking upon nation-to-nation programmes in the economic, cultural and political spheres, while at the same time drawing closer to the Inter-American System and some of its organizations without actually becoming a member of the OAS."¹³

The final paragraph in the section on OAS membership clearly indicates a preference for the third option.¹⁴ "The Government's purpose," according to the booklet, "is to develop closer relations with Latin America to the mutual advantage of Canada and the Latin American countries."¹⁵ The government concluded, though, that membership in the OAS, at this time, was not an appropriate course of action. Instead, it suggested that "Canada should draw closer to individual Latin American countries and to selected inter-American

¹³ Ibid., p.20.

¹⁴ Drawing closer to the inter-American system did not, however, include joining the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). According to the booklet on Latin America, "membership in the Bank would absorb a relatively high proportion of Canada's total development assistance budget" and, for that reason, "the Government does not contemplate joining the Bank at the present time but will keep this possibility under review." Ibid., p.28.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp.23-24.

institutions, thus preparing for whatever role it may in the future be called upon to play in the western hemisphere."¹⁶

In opting for the "middle course," the Trudeau government felt that this would "permit Canada's relations with the countries of Latin America to develop rapidly and, by improving Canadian knowledge and understanding of those countries and their regional institutions, prepare for a better-informed and more useful Canadian participation as a full member of the OAS."¹⁷ While it did not endorse OAS membership at the present time, it did not rule it out at some future date either. In the interim, the Canadian government would seek "a formal link between Canada and the OAS countries...at a suitable level." When established, Canada's representative to the body "would arrange for Canadian attendance at meetings of inter-American bodies in which Canada has an interest and at which Canadian attendance would be appropriate."¹⁸

In late June 1970, Canada first broached the idea of a "formal link" before the OAS General Assembly. Mitchell Sharp's parliamentary secretary, Jean-Pierre Goyer, proposed the notion of creating the position of permanent observer. He hoped that Canada's overture would be recognized as part

¹⁶ Ibid., p.24.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.32.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.32.

of the government's intention "to move as quickly and as constructively as possible in the direction of full cooperation in the hemisphere."¹⁹ Goyer went on to say that "today's session may fairly be regarded as marking a new departure in relations between Canada and its fellow members in the new world."²⁰

On the membership issue, though, there would be no dramatic shift in policy. Indeed, Goyer made it clear that the government, after careful consideration, felt that "the best present course for Canada is to draw closer to individual Latin American countries and to selected institutions of the OAS and other inter-American institutions."²¹ He also announced that Canada--as part of its policy of drawing closer to "selected institutions of the OAS"--would seek full membership in the Pan American Health Organization, the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences, the Inter-American Indian Institute, the Inter-American Conference on Social Security, and the Inter-American Export Promotion Center.

In the spring of 1971, a Canadian observer delegation attended an OAS General Assembly meeting in San José, Costa

¹⁹ Canada, Department of External Affairs, "Canada And Latin America--A Period of Mutual Discovery," Statements and Speeches, No.70/10, 30 June 1970, p.4.

²⁰ Ibid., p.4.

²¹ Ibid., p.3.

Rica. At this gathering, a resolution was passed creating the status of permanent observer.²² (In July, Canada's application for membership in the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) was approved.) But it was not until early 1972 that Canada formally petitioned the OAS Permanent Council for status as a permanent observer. And on February 2, External Affairs Minister Mitchell Sharp announced that Canada's application for observer status (along with Israel, Spain, and Guyana) had been approved unanimously.²³

With this "window" on the OAS, Canada was expected to gain valuable knowledge and experience concerning the actual functioning of the inter-American system. This move into regionally-based multilateral fora would not, however, be at the expense of Canada's bilateral relations with Latin America. Jean-Luc Pépin, Minister of Industry, Trade, and Commerce, made this clear in an October 1970 speech before a conference on inter-American development and integration. He stated that "the government had decided to move ahead on a sound, practical basis, to learn more about the OAS as we

²² Canada, Department of External Affairs, "Canada Seeks Closer Links With Latin America," Statements and Speeches, No.71/14, 13 April 1971, p.2.

²³ Canada, Department of External Affairs, "Permanent Observer Status To The Organization of American States," Communiqué, No.5, 2 February 1972, p.30. The status of permanent observer represented an innovation in the organizational structure of the OAS. Not only was Canada the first country to apply for such status, but it also made a special plea to the organization for its creation.

participate in more of its activities, and to strengthen our bilateral relationships with individual members of the organization."24 P  pin's address was important because it reinforced the impression that official Ottawa was committed to expanding its hemispheric contacts.

In any event, permanent observer status, which Canada was at the forefront of instituting, represented another half-measure on the part of the Trudeau government.25 In effect, the opting for observer status was a means of avoiding any harmful political ramifications, while still gaining an entry to the OAS. To be sure, it would not have to take sides--either with the United States or against it--on any inter-American issue coming before the Permanent Council. At the same time, it served to placate Latin American governments by signalling Canada's genuine interest in broadening its ties with its hemispheric friends and not merely doing so to enhance its relations with the United States. As a permanent observer, Canada was unable to vote

24 Quoted in International Canada, (October 1970), p.215.

25 The principal function of the mission was to act, largely for political reasons, as a monitoring or listening post. In addition, it was to assist any agencies of the Canadian government in their dealings with the various specialized agencies and organizations of the OAS. According to Kenneth B. Williamson, a former Canadian permanent observer, it also functioned to "offer information and advice, undertake liaison, make arrangements, manifest a Canadian presence and communicate Canadian points of view." Williamson, "Canada And The Inter-American System: A Matter of Choice," (unpublished paper, 1983), p.3.

in the Permanent Council or at the General Assembly. It was, however, permitted to participate in some OAS deliberations, such as the informal Foreign Ministers' meetings and in the sessions of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council and the Inter-American Council for Education, Science, and Culture.

Nevertheless, the Canadian mission to the OAS, according to a DEA statement, was viewed as integral to "strengthening Canada's relations with Latin America and with inter-American institutions."²⁶ The press release went on to note: "It should facilitate the rapid development of Canada's relations with countries of the Americas and serve to improve our knowledge and understanding of the Organization of American States and of Latin American institutions."²⁷ This new status was viewed by the government as basically a means of increasing Canadian political and commercial relations with Latin America, consistent with the lexicon of the "Third Option" to reduce Canada's reliance on the United States.

²⁶ Canada, Department of External Affairs, "Head of Canadian Delegation to the General Assembly of the Organization of American States," Communiqué, No.5, 2 February 1972, p.30.

²⁷ Ibid., p.30.

In its capacity as permanent observer, Canada attended the April 11-20 OAS General Assembly in 1972.²⁸ Paul St. Pierre, parliamentary secretary to Mitchell Sharp, announced Canada's intention--despite what was stated in the booklet on Latin America--to seek full membership in the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).²⁹ He said that Canada was willing to do so because "the Bank is a significant instrument in improving the quality of life in this region in assisting nations to develop their resources, their

²⁸ In late April, Alfred J. Pick was appointed Canada's first permanent observer to the OAS.

²⁹ The government chose to join the IDB, despite earlier reservations, for a variety of reasons. As a full member, Canada would become an eligible source of supply for goods and services financed through loans from the Fund for Special Operations. It also gave Canada access to information that could enable Canadian consulting firms to gain contracts flowing from loan funds. Furthermore, the shift from bilateral to multilateral would have the salutary effect of loosening the "tied-aid" predilection of previous development assistance programmes. In addition, it allowed the government to have more control over the actual projects funded by Canada's contribution. The government also saw IDB membership as a means of informing Canadians about Latin America, particularly in terms of opening up new trade and investment opportunities. Lastly, membership made Canada's contribution less bureaucratically cumbersome, as was the case before joining the IDB. On the decision to join the IDB, see, J.C.M. Ogelsby, "Latin America," International Journal, 33:2 (Spring 1978), p.403; Stephen J. Randall, "Canadian Policy And The Development Of Latin America," in Norman Hillmer and Garth Stevenson, (eds.), A Foremost Nation: Canadian Foreign Policy And A Changing World, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), p.214, and Ogelsby, "A Trudeau Decade," op. cit., pp.192-93.

economies and their societies."³⁰ On 3 May 1972, Canada officially became the twenty-fourth member of the IDB.³¹ According to Sharp, this step represented "a significant milestone in the broadening of Canada's relations with the Americas."³²

Clearly, membership in the IDB was a key move in terms of strengthening Canada's commercial ties with the region. A DEA release observed: "Our closer association through the Bank with the countries of the Hemisphere should serve to increase the knowledge and understanding of the Canadian business community of the needs of the region and their ability to participate in meeting those needs."³³ It also followed the middling course articulated by Foreign Policy

³⁰ Canada, Department of External Affairs, "Notes for Statement by Mr. Paul St. Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs," Statements, 15 April 1972, p.3.

³¹ The move to join the IDB was consistent with the Trudeau government's desire to establish contact with the social and economic--as opposed to the political--institutions of the inter-American system. It also signalled Canada's apparent willingness to confront issues which could bring it into conflict with the United States. Some observers thought that IDB membership was an important step because membership in the Bank is almost the same as that of the OAS. See, James Guy, "The growing relationship of Canada and the Americas," International Perspectives, (July-August 1977), p.4. In any event, joining the IDB would require Canada to commit some \$100 million over three years and place another \$202 million on standby.

³² Canada, Department of External Affairs, "Canadian Membership In The Inter-American Development Bank," Communiqué, No.31, 3 May 1972, p.2.

³³ Ibid., p.2.

for Canadians of drawing closer to the inter-American system.³⁴ Indeed, Senator Paul Martin, speaking before the May meeting of the IDB's Board of Governors, stated the following: "We consider Canada's accession to full membership as the culmination of our search for a more practical and effective form of involvement in the problems of the hemisphere."³⁵

By the end of 1972, the Trudeau government moved, albeit slowly, to strengthen its institutional linkages with the inter-American system. The key initiative was a modest, half-measure of opting for permanent observer status in the OAS. Additional steps such as joining two specialized organizations of the OAS, and seeking full membership in the IDB, belied Canada's cautious approach toward hemispheric institutional involvement. The next five years, particularly with respect to OAS membership, would exhibit few signs of

³⁴ In early October 1972, Canada announced that it would become a member of the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences. Ambassador Pick deposited Canada's instrument of ratification and thereby enabled its membership to take effect one month later. According to a DEA communiqué, "Canadian participation in the work of the Institute marks one further step in the implementation of Canada's policy to develop a more substantive and meaningful relationship with the Inter-American Family of Organizations and with our Hemisphere as a whole." Canada, Department of External Affairs, "Canada Joins Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences," Communiqué, No.72, 4 October 1972, p.30.

³⁵ Canada, Department of External Affairs, "Canada Forges Another Link With Latin America," Statements and Speeches, No.72/9, 10 May 1972, p.4.

any meaningful policy change.

1973 to 1978: Canada remains aloof from the OAS

In early 1973, noises about reforming the OAS were once again being heard in the corridors of the old Pan American Union building. This, of course, did little to embolden officialdom in Ottawa to draw even closer to the inter-American system, since the government clearly believed in preserving the status quo concerning membership in the hemispheric forum. Canada did, however, support those efforts intended to inject a new sense of relevancy into the hemispheric body. Speaking before the OAS General Assembly in April 1973, Pierre de Bané, parliamentary secretary to Mitchell Sharp, expressed the Canadian government's endorsement of the OAS's review of its activities and structures. In his remarks, he mentioned the fact that Canada's future "association with the OAS would depend to some extent on the results of this review and revision of institutional structures and objectives."³⁶

In the end, the review had little or no impact on either the OAS or on Canada's policy toward it. In fact, there were few references to the membership issue--over the course of the next three years--by any member of the

³⁶ Canada, Department of External Affairs, "Notes For The Statement By Mr. Pierre De Bané, Parliamentary Secretary To The Secretary of State For External Affairs, Communiqué, No.43, 9 April 1973, p.2.

government or public official. For the most part, the membership question, while never completely dormant, remained in a virtual holding-pattern. It was really not until Trudeau's high-profile visit to the region in early 1976 that it experienced somewhat of a resurgence.³⁷

Trudeau's official visit to Cuba, Mexico, and Venezuela was, by most accounts, successful.³⁸ Perhaps the most important result of the visit was the reservoir of goodwill it engendered for Canada in the region, in no small measure thanks to the actions of the Prime Minister himself.³⁹ As for the issue of Canadian membership in the OAS, Trudeau discussed the issue with all three Latin American leaders. Not unexpectedly, he maintained that the Canadian government, while aware of the issue, was in no hurry to alter its previous position.

With the OAS reevaluating its role in the hemisphere, Trudeau suggested that now was not the time for Canada to

³⁷ Trudeau's tour was the first major trip to Latin America by a Canadian Prime Minister. Besides seeking to strengthen relations at the political level and to outline Canada's position on various foreign policy issues, Trudeau was also interested in selling Canadian Dash-7 aircraft, CANDU reactors, and railway equipment. Indeed, Mexico, Cuba, and Venezuela--the three countries he visited--purchased roughly half of Canada's total exports to the region (\$1.2 billion in 1975). See George Radwanski, "Trudeau in Latin America set stage for closer relations," International Perspectives, (May/June 1976), pp.6-10.

³⁸ See, for example, James J. Guy, "The growing relationship," op. cit., p.6.

³⁹ See, "The Odd Couple," Time, 9 February 1976, p.47.

contemplate admission. He went on to say at a press conference in Havana that Canada was satisfied being a permanent observer and, "pour le moment, nous n'avons pas l'intention de changer cette position, ni pour le plus, ni pour le moins."⁴⁰ At a later press conference in Caracas, he told Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez--in a more opaque fashion--that his government "had no closed mind on the subject" and "would look at the question again."⁴¹ But he cautioned that to speak of any decision to seek membership in the OAS was "still a bit premature." He did say, however, that Canada would, without providing any specifics, "review the question."

The membership issue resurfaced once again when Trudeau visited Washington in September 1977, where he witnessed the signing of two new Panama Canal treaties. Partaking in the ceremonies, Trudeau suggested, was consistent with Canada's determination to deepen its involvement in hemispheric affairs. As for the OAS, he told President Carter, who raised the issue, that Canada's permanent observer status was as close to the OAS as "we can

⁴⁰ Quoted in International Canada, (January 1976), p.4.

⁴¹ "Canada to reconsider joining the OAS," Cambridge Daily Reporter, 31 January 1976, p.1 and "Trudeau begins final leg of tour," The Chronicle-Herald, 30 January 1976, p.2.

get without being actually in it."⁴² In addition, he indicated that any decision on full membership would have to be put on hold while the OAS continued to reassess itself.⁴³ By the end of 1977, then, the Trudeau government was still intent on remaining aloof from the hemispheric body.

1978 to 1984: the OAS file remains closed

Through 1978, and into 1979, there was virtually no movement on the membership question. It was almost as if the issue had been placed in a political deep freeze for a year or more.⁴⁴ And after Trudeau was returned to power in late 1980, his government continued its cautious approach toward

⁴² Quoted in International Canada, (September 1977), p.200.

⁴³ "Canada won't join alliance but 'we're moving closer,'" The Toronto Star, 10 September 1977.

⁴⁴ There is some evidence, though by no means conclusive, that the short-lived Clark government, if it had survived that infamous vote of non-confidence, may have opted for full membership in the OAS. Evidently, External Affairs Minister Flora MacDonald was favourably disposed toward the hemispheric body. It was thought that she was prepared to bring a positive recommendation on the membership issue before the full cabinet. For Ms. MacDonald, Canada could only press ahead with the issue of human rights, a long-standing hemispheric problem, if it were a member of the OAS and thereby eligible to join the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Confidential interview with a former DEA official, 4 June 1991. It is also true that Ms. MacDonald requested a review of the OAS membership issue, which External Affairs had just begun when the Liberals were returned to power. When Mark MacGuigan took over as SSEA, he did not see any purpose in continuing the review of Canada's policy toward the OAS. Confidential interview with a former senior DEA official, 27 January 1992.

the OAS. It really was not until the summer of 1981, through the sessions of the sub-committee on Canada's relations with Latin America and the Caribbean, that one could discern the government's position on the membership question.⁴⁵

Appearing before the sub-committee, Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mark MacGuigan indicated no desire to change Canada's position vis-à-vis the body.⁴⁶ Assistant Under-Secretary (Bureau of Latin America and Caribbean Affairs) Richard Gorham simply stated that "for the time being it would be preferable to concentrate our efforts on expanding our bilateral relations with the individual countries and maintaining the same level of active interest

⁴⁵ It is important to note that the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence (SCEAND) was examining the totality of Canada's relations with Latin America and the Caribbean and not just the question of OAS membership.

⁴⁶ Just before he left the External Affairs portfolio in September 1982, MacGuigan indicated that it was time for Canada to join the OAS. After discontinuing the review of Canada's policy toward the OAS in the early 1980s, he now believed that non-membership placed certain limitations on Canada's involvement in Latin America. For him, Canadian-Latin American relations had matured to the point where membership in the hemispheric forum was the next logical step. He also pointed out that Canada, as distinct from the United States, would be able to enhance the organization by bringing to it a different set of values. See John Gray, "MacGuigan says it's time to join OAS," The Globe and Mail, 10 September 1982, p.9.

in the OAS that we do have."⁴⁷ In addition to saying that the status quo was not adversely affecting Canada's bilateral relations with various countries in the region, he indicated that any departure on the membership issue "needs a broader consensus in the Canadian public to understand why we are doing it, what are the advantages, what are the disadvantages, what kind of commitments we are getting into, and I do not think that there is that type of feeling in Canada."⁴⁸ The Director of the Latin American Division, Martin Collacott, was also cool to the idea of Canada seeking admission. If Canada were to become a full member, he argued, "I do not think it would have the clear-cut value that it might have had, say, 20 years ago."⁴⁹

Curiously enough, the sub-committee, while criticizing the effectiveness of the OAS in various areas, took a decidedly different view. There were those who believed that Canada, if it were a full-fledged member, could work to strengthen the organization, would be more able to obtain its foreign policy objectives in the areas of technical assistance, trade and investment, and human rights, and

⁴⁷ Canada, House of Commons, Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence, Sub-Committee on Canada's Relations with Latin America and the Caribbean, Minutes of Proceedings, 32nd parliament, 1st session, no.2, 9 June 1981, p.61.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 64-65.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.65.

could help to normalize relations between the United States and Cuba.⁵⁰ Accordingly, they recommended to the government that Canada should seek full membership in the hemispheric body, while refraining from signing the Rio Treaty. For the majority of the sub-committee, it was "time to recognize that Canada is a nation of the Americas" and "accept the opportunities, responsibilities and risks which that entails."⁵¹

Notwithstanding this recommendation,⁵² the Trudeau government showed no signs of altering its long-standing approach toward the OAS. In fact, it seemed to be quite content with simply following the same line as before and indicating its support for maintaining the status quo. In April 1983, a senior official from DEA pointed out that no consensus existed in Canada on the membership issue and that "many people believe that we found exactly the balance that Canadians so dearly love."⁵³ Thus, by the end of the Trudeau

⁵⁰ Canada, House of Commons, Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence, Sub-Committee on Canada's Relations with Latin America and the Caribbean, Final Report to the House of Commons, (Ottawa, 1982), pp.19-21.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.22.

⁵² With one abstention, seven members of the sub-committee voted in favour of the recommendation to seek admission. There were four members who voted against it.

⁵³ Quoted in Donat Pharand, "Canada and the OAS: the Vacant Chair Revisited," Revue générale de droit, 17:3 (Summer 1986), p.439.

reign in 1984, Canada had little interest in seeking full membership in the OAS, but it did draw closer to the inter-American system as a whole.⁵⁴

Canada and the OAS: explaining the government's aloofness

Clearly, the Trudeau government, for almost 15 years, made a conscious decision not to seek full membership in the OAS. The key issue, though, is not that it was extremely reluctant to join the hemispheric body. Rather, it is why the Liberal government chose not to do so, and the reasons which underpin that choice. This section of the chapter, then, is intended to explain the Trudeau government's decision to remain outside of the formal structures of the OAS.

Before embarking on this undertaking, it is important to recognize the prevailing domestic as well as international climate in the 1970s and early 1980s. By acquiring a sense or feel for the internal and external environments--and the pressures emanating from them--it helps to produce a better understanding of Canada's aloofness from the OAS. Indeed, if one is to exact a clearer picture of the Trudeau government's firm reluctance to join the body, it should be understood in relation to the

⁵⁴ During the early 1980s, the Liberal Cabinet did not appear to have any "appetite" for discussing Canadian membership in the OAS. Interview with former Cabinet Minister Gerald Regan, 21 January 1992.

domestic and international milieu. For it is the dynamics of these environments which inevitably affect agenda-formation and the decision-making process. Obviously, if the government is preoccupied with a host of other pressing internal issues, it will have precious little time to focus on lesser matters--such as the OAS.⁵⁵ At the same time, the nature of the external environment--whether positive or negative--can colour a government's thinking on a particular foreign policy question. Simply put, the climate in the domestic and international arena can have a direct impact upon whether a government chooses, or refuses, to arrive at a certain foreign policy decision.

Domestically, the general climate in Canada--throughout the 1970s and early 1980s--was, in a word, unsettled. Economic issues, in conjunction with constitutional questions, posed major and recurring problems for the government. As such, they engendered considerable media attention and consumed enormous government energies and resources. High inflation, rising unemployment, astronomical interest rates, ballooning government deficits, and a crushing recession were all integral "buzz words" of the

⁵⁵ It goes without saying that the membership question was never a high priority on the Trudeau government's policy agenda. External Affairs Minister Allan MacEachen's comment at a 1984 press conference in Bogotá lends credence to this observation. When questioned by a reporter about the issue of possible Canadian membership in the hemispheric forum, he responded by saying that "I don't have it at the forefront of my agenda." Quoted in Pharand, op. cit., p.439.

period in question. No government, regardless of its political stripe, could afford to give merely lip-service to these matters. Thus, they would have the attention of not only the political leadership in Canada, but also of a number of line departments in the government. Economic questions, then, would figure prominently in the Trudeau government's deliberations and decision-making focus.

Similarly, questions of a constitutional nature topped the Liberal government's issue-agenda during this period. Almost invariably, national unity matters would colour, and often distort, the Canadian political landscape. Whether it was aboriginal issues, wrangling with the provinces over resource ownership and revenue-sharing, or the rise of the Parti Québécois in the mid-1970s, constitutional questions were an inescapable millstone around the government's neck. And like economic matters, they required a large amount of government attention and resources. In fact, many policies--some even of a foreign policy nature (viz. relations with France and francophone African countries)--were framed in such a way so as to strengthen the Canadian federation economically and politically, often at the expense of the provinces. Within this context, it is difficult to conceive of any government concerning itself with external matters, when the forces of internal dissolution appeared to be

generating momentum.⁵⁶

From an international standpoint, the milieu was almost as challenging. The oil crisis of 1973, and to a lesser extent in 1979, served to further complicate economic and constitutional issues in Canada. As a trading nation thrust into an increasingly competitive international economic climate, the government was compelled to find new ways of expanding and promoting trade. As a result, the Trudeau government was committed to diversifying and strengthening its relations--as espoused by the "counterweight" terminology of the so-called "Third Option"--with Western Europe, francophone Africa, and the Pacific Rim.⁵⁷

In addition to a foreign policy agenda already crowded with issues stemming from Canadian linkages with NATO, the UN, and the Commonwealth, was the ever-present Canada-U.S. relationship. Beginning with the Nixon Administration's "surcharge" in the early 1970s and ending with the Reagan Administration's utter contempt for Canada's Foreign Investment Review Agency (FIRA) and the National Energy Program (NEP) in the early 1980s, it was clear that

⁵⁶ This writer is not suggesting here that domestic political issues--in and of themselves--prevented the government from opting for full membership.

⁵⁷ See Mitchell Sharp, "Canada-U.S. Relations: Options for the Future," International Perspectives, (September-October 1972), pp.1-24.

bilateral relations during this period were not always harmonious. Some commentators have even speculated that the Canada-U.S. relationship--especially during the early part of the 1980s--was in the midst of a serious "crisis."⁵⁸ As Canada's principal foreign policy "problem," if you will, it has--over the years--evoked a considerable amount of political energy and diplomatic resources, leaving questions about possible OAS membership marginalized. To be sure, it would not be a gross inaccuracy to state that all the other issues on Canada's foreign policy agenda, including the OAS, are subordinate to, and often overshadowed by, the exigencies of the Canada-U.S. relationship.

The climate throughout most, if not all, of Latin America seemed to be reaching crisis proportions as well. During the 1970s and early 1980s, economic conditions in the region were difficult. Besides long-standing problems such as chronic unemployment and underemployment, negative growth rates, exorbitant inflation rates, and widespread impoverishment, many Latin American economies were highly inefficient--stemming from numerous trade barriers--as well as plagued by heavy public sector involvement. Not surprisingly, many of these economies were, by the early 1980s, teetering on the verge of collapse. Politically

⁵⁸ Stephen Clarkson, Canada and the Reagan Challenge, (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, Publishers, 1982), pp.3-5.

speaking, non-democratic and authoritarian regimes--such as those in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, and Paraguay--seemed to dominate the Latin American political landscape. And during the early 1980s, political strife in Central America, particularly in El Salvador and Sandinista Nicaragua, was becoming increasingly more prevalent.⁵⁹ By late 1983, it was clear that conditions in the region were worsening rather than showing any signs of improvement or recovery. Within this regional context, the Trudeau government was loath to join an organization that was supposed to address these pressing issues and, more important, was clearly unable to do so effectively. Simply put, there was remarkable little for Canada to gain by joining this ponderous and impotent gathering of nations at this time--and hence Ottawa's penchant for downplaying the membership issue.

While the internal and external environments doubtlessly affected the Trudeau government's view of Latin America in general and the OAS in particular, they were certainly not the only forces at play. Needless to say, the political leadership in Canada, along with the bureaucracy, influenced the debate over OAS membership. Domestic sources of opinion, including the public, Parliament, pressure

⁵⁹ The 1982 Falklands/Malvinas War did little to reassure Western governments of the region's interest in stability and prosperity.

groups, business community, and the media, also played a sizeable role. Lastly, actors from outside the country--namely, from Latin America--helped to shape the Trudeau government's decision to maintain its firm preference for permanent observer status.

It is instructive to note that Prime Minister Trudeau went on record, as early as 1964, as supporting Canadian membership in the OAS. An October 1964 Cité Libre editorial, for instance, viewed membership in the body positively "because Canada was an American nation."⁶⁰ But it also cautioned that the country should do so only if Canada were to retain the freedom to formulate its own policies and the willingness to disagree with the other members of the body. What is also likely is that Trudeau was less interested in the political ramifications of the OAS and more partial to the trade side of the Latin American equation.⁶¹ Rather than focus almost exclusively on the OAS as an institution, he tended to view the region in terms of trade promotion and commercial advantage. Although it is difficult to pinpoint

⁶⁰ Editorial, "Le Canada et L'OEA," Cité Libre, XV (October 1964), pp.2-3.

⁶¹ Confidential interview with former DEA official, 19 June 1991. It is true that the percentage of total Canadian exports to Latin America went from 4.5 per cent in 1970 to 5.2 per cent in 1980. See Murray, op. cit., p.117. In dollar terms, Canada's exports to Latin America went from \$540 million in 1970 to \$1.8 billion in 1974. Similarly, imports from the region, over the same period, increased from \$553 million to \$1.2 billion. Guy, "Canada and Latin America," op. cit., p.379.

Trudeau's precise view of the OAS, it is clear that he did not want to proceed too rapidly toward closer association with that body.⁶² What is equally certain is that he was unwilling to champion the membership issue in Cabinet.⁶³

The Trudeau Cabinet, generally speaking, was largely against Canada joining the OAS as a full-fledged member. Influential members such as Gérard Pelletier and Mitchell Sharp, for example, were either lukewarm or opposed to membership.⁶⁴ It was evident that no minister was prepared to push the question of membership within the Cabinet. It was also clear that Allan J. MacEachen, a Cabinet heavyweight throughout the Trudeau years, was strongly

⁶² It is instructive to note that by the early 1980s, Trudeau's interests had moved in other directions. During the 1980-81 period, he was actively championing North-South issues, pushing for meaningful dialogue between developed and developing nations. By 1983, though, Trudeau had ventured into the area of arms control with his quixotic "peace initiative." Clearly, the issue of OAS membership was not at the top of his agenda.

⁶³ Confidential interview with former DEA official, 4 June 1991.

⁶⁴ Interview with Mitchell Sharp, 12 January 1992. Sharp was sceptical about joining the organization for a number of reasons, including the fact that he thought Canada could play a more constructive role in the hemisphere outside of the OAS. He also believed that it was ineffectual, that it could bring Canada into conflict with the United States, that it was composed of a host of authoritarian/dictatorial governments, and that it would not be in the best interests of Canada. Some of these reasons were also shared by former Liberal Trade Minister Gerald Regan, 21 January 1992.

opposed to Canada joining the hemispheric body.⁶⁵ And as long as MacEachen had the ear of the Prime Minister, and remained firmly against membership, the issue was unlikely to go any further.

It was also doubtful that the bureaucracy, mindful of the fact that Cabinet was not on-side, would have pressed for OAS membership.⁶⁶ In any event, the Department of External Affairs (DEA) exhibited--over the years 1968-1983--no sustained interest in the membership question.⁶⁷ If anything, the department was unconvinced of the actual merits of joining the body.⁶⁸ Some returning diplomats from

⁶⁵ Written correspondence with former Canadian permanent observer to the OAS, 8 January 1991.

⁶⁶ External Affairs seemed to be satisfied with Canada opting for observer status and hoped that this step would put the nagging question of membership to rest. This, in turn, would enable Canada to forge ahead with broadening contacts, across a wide range of areas, with Latin America as a whole. See, Victor Huard, "Quiet Diplomacy Or Quiet Acquiescence?: Canadian Policy in Central America Since 1945," Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies, 13:26 (1988), p.111.

⁶⁷ It is also clear that DEA, which suffered under Trudeau's down-grading of the department's significance, was not going to push an issue to which the Prime Minister was not fully committed. Already reeling from an earlier setback in urging the government to maintain Canada's troop strength in Europe, it was not about to expend what goodwill it had left on the membership issue.

⁶⁸ Some officials in DEA were opposed to joining the OAS on the grounds that Canada's bilateral relations with countries in the region might suffer, particularly on the commercial and trade side. The handling of Cuba by the OAS, for instance, did little to convince DEA bureaucrats of the benefits accruing from admission. They also believed that if Canada wanted to have any influence in the region, it would likely stem not from multilateral linkages, but from close,

Latin America did, however, favour Canadian membership in the OAS. But those from the old school preferred to focus Canada's limited foreign policy resources on the UN, NATO, and the Commonwealth.⁶⁹ These same officials were probably not at all impressed with the prospect of having to work alongside their loquacious Latin counterparts.⁷⁰ In short, the bureaucracy was neither fully committed to, nor seriously interested in pushing for, Canadian admission to the OAS.

Similarly, public opinion in Canada was, for the most part, remarkably uninterested in the OAS period. Repeatedly, government officials would, over the years, skirt the membership question by pointing to the fact that no public consensus existed for taking such an initiative. Indeed, in a 1969 survey, which was conducted at a Liberal party annual meeting, only 26 per cent of the delegates supported the

bilateral relations with the major countries in the region. There was a sense that joining the OAS would have the harmful effect of minimizing the importance of cultivating bilateral relations. Confidential interview with former DEA official, 19 June 1991.

⁶⁹ Officials in the Department of Finance, like some mandarins in DEA, were opposed to the idea of admission on financial grounds. They were strongly against Canada taking on any new financial commitments in the foreign policy realm. They were quite satisfied with Canada's membership in a number of other international organizations. Interview with a former DEA official, 14 June 1991.

⁷⁰ This point was made earlier by John W. Holmes, "Our Other Hemisphere: Reflections on the Bahia Conference," International Journal, 27:4 (Autumn 1961-62), p.416.

idea of Canada seeking admission to the OAS.⁷¹ And in a 1977 study for DEA, the report notes the following about Canadian opinion: "Interest in OAS has declined, due to disapproval of OAS decisions regarding Cuba and in view of indications of waning interest in the organization in Latin America."⁷² According to Ogelsby, "it is probably fair to say that most Canadians have a negative 'gut' feeling about the organization."⁷³

Other domestic sources of foreign policy, such as Parliament, pressure groups, the business community, and the media, did not come out strongly in favour of membership either. Throughout the Trudeau era, the Canadian Parliament remained relatively silent on the membership question, with the exception of the 1982 sub-committee report on Canada's relations with Latin America and the Caribbean--which recommended joining the OAS. But even the sub-committee had harsh words for the hemispheric body, and four of its members opposed the recommendation to join. In the main, there was no sizeable group of MPs pushing for admission, no groundswell of support in Parliament, and no sustained interest in the issue by parliamentarians. Pressure groups in Canada, particularly throughout the 1970s, seemed to

71 Thordarson, op. cit., p.43.

72 Quoted in Murray, op. cit., p.111.

73 Ogelsby, "A Trudeau Decade," op. cit., p.191.

express little interest in the membership issue. And by the early 1980s, they were focusing their attention mainly on the conflicts raging in Central America.⁷⁴

In contrast to these groups mentioned above, the business community--or at least the influential Canadian Association for Latin America (CALA)--was initially in favour of Canada joining the organization. By 1979, it was urging the government to take its "full and rightful place in the Americas."⁷⁵ Yet before the parliamentary sub-committee, a CALA spokesperson, E. Hugh Roach, responded to a query on the OAS by saying that he had "never seen much purpose in pushing for the full status because I believe Canada does enjoy the best of both worlds."⁷⁶ The media, like the unenthusiastic business lobby, was generally opposed to the idea of OAS membership. Indeed, editorial comment from Canada's largest newspapers appeared to remain consistently against admission during the Trudeau years. In a December 1982 editorial, The Toronto Star noted: "Since 1972, Canada has been content to be a permanent observer at

⁷⁴ See, James Rochlin, "The Evolution of Canada as an Actor in Inter-American Affairs," Millennium: Journal of International Studies, 19:2 (1990), p.235.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Murray, op. cit., p.112.

⁷⁶ Canada, House of Commons, Sub-Committee on Canada's Relations with Latin America and the Caribbean, op. cit., 15 July 1981, p.23.

the organization. And we should stay that way."⁷⁷ Similarly, a Globe and Mail editorial stated: "There is much to be said for keeping one's options open--a policy best achieved in this case by our remaining interested but unentangled."⁷⁸ While there were undoubtedly some Canadian businesses and newspapers favourably disposed toward membership, there was clearly no solid consensus supporting admission among these groups.

Granted, the extent to which domestic factors influence the making of Canadian foreign policy is debatable.⁷⁹ It is important to remember, however, that if a preponderance of opinion from these varied sources favoured membership, the Liberal government might have instituted such a move. However, since there existed no firm "constituency" in Canada pushing hard for admission, the government could simply adhere to its modest and cautious approach toward the OAS. In a 1977 study prepared for DEA, which seemed to capture the lack of pressure on the government to move on this issue, it suggested that it is

⁷⁷ "A club we need not join," The Toronto Star, 4 December 1982.

⁷⁸ "Perils in membership," The Globe and Mail, 6 December 1982.

⁷⁹ On this point, see, Kim Richard Nossal, "Analyzing the domestic sources of Canadian foreign policy," International Journal, 39:1 (Winter 1983-84), pp.1-22 and his study The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy, (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall Canada, Inc., 1985), pp.33-70.

"unlikely that a decision to enter OAS would excite much interest, pro or con."⁸⁰

Just as there were no internal forces pushing for membership in the OAS, so, too, there was no sustained external pressure. Occasionally, during the Trudeau era, various Latin American officials raised the issue of Canadian membership.⁸¹ But there seemed to be no concerted effort on the part of several major Latin American countries to petition Canada to join.⁸² In the last Trudeau government, there were few signs that the Latins were still interested in Canada as a full-fledged member. The Director of the Latin American Division at DEA, Martin Collacott, stated--in testimony before the sub-committee on Latin America and the Caribbean--that "we have not received any representations from major countries now for some years."⁸³ In the absence of any pressure from the major hemispheric players, the government was unlikely to deviate from

⁸⁰ Quoted in Murray, op. cit., p.111.

⁸¹ For instance, it was raised by the President of Mexico on an official visit to Canada in 1973. In 1976, it was raised by President Pérez of Venezuela during Trudeau's visit to that country.

⁸² It is unlikely during this period that Washington would have applied any firm pressure on Canada to seek admission. With the possible exception of the Carter Administration, U.S. governments from 1968-1983 were not particularly keen on the OAS.

⁸³ Canada, House of Commons, Sub-Committee on Canada's Relations with Latin America and the Caribbean, op. cit., p.65.

Canada's permanent observer status.

Summary

During the Trudeau years, the question of Canadian membership in the OAS was, in the main, a minor foreign policy issue. It certainly was not at the forefront of the Liberal government's agenda or high on DEA's list of priorities. Consequently, it seemed to serve as more of a nagging issue that would have a tendency to rear its head occasionally, only to be dismissed by the unenthusiastic comments of Trudeau or some other senior government official. Indeed, once Ottawa proposed and received observer status in 1972, it was felt in government circles that the issue of full membership would be put to rest temporarily.⁸⁴ From that point onward, there really was no serious discussion of Canada actually opting for admission.⁸⁵

This reluctance on the part of the Trudeau government was partly a function of the prevailing domestic and international environment. First, more pressing domestic political and economic issues--whether on the economy or

⁸⁴ There was also a sense that the move to permanent observer status was undertaken, in part, so that Canada would appear "friendly" in the eyes of Latin Americans. Interview with Mitchell Sharp, 12 January 1992.

⁸⁵ There was a feeling, though, that once Canada opted for observer status, it would eventually have to seek full membership in the OAS. Interview with Mitchell Sharp, 12 January 1992.

constitutional matters--made consideration of the OAS membership issue exceedingly difficult. With both economic and national unity questions at the top of the government's agenda, political will and prime ministerial attention were necessarily diverted from the membership issue. Secondly, in the absence of prime ministerial direction, and sufficient bureaucratic resources, the question was unlikely to infiltrate an already over-burdened decision-making process. Lastly, the general international climate throughout the Trudeau period tended to counsel against drawing too close to Latin America, especially from a multilateral standpoint. In fact, the energy crisis of the 1970s actually encouraged the establishment of stronger Canadian bilateral relations with such countries as Mexico and Venezuela. Put simply, domestic and international pressures, when taken together, seemed to work against the possibility of the Trudeau government opting for membership in the OAS.

When domestic sources of Canadian foreign policy are taken together, a similar conclusion can be made. First, there was no real constituency--within the country or without--pushing for full Canadian membership in the OAS. The move to acquire permanent observer status seemed to satisfy just about everyone, including many of Canada's friends in Latin America. Secondly, in acquiring observer status, the government incurred no negative side-effects or retaliation from countries in the region. In fact, Canada

was able to establish friendly bilateral relations with a number of Latin American countries and show a steady, if unspectacular, growth in terms of trade. Lastly, there was no compelling or convincing set of reasons why Canada should join the OAS, and no sense of how it would benefit upon doing so.

Perhaps the single, most important "brake" on the membership issue was the political leadership in Canada. Neither Trudeau, nor his cabinet, were prepared to move beyond observer status to full membership. Had the Prime Minister been willing to discard Canada's image of a hemispheric dilettante, the country would have entered into a full partnership with the Americas. But as long as he, and the cabinet, remained lukewarm to the idea of admission, it was simply not going to come about.

By the end of the Trudeau reign in 1983, the issue of OAS membership was, for all intents and purposes, a non-issue. With no pressure from Latin American governments forthcoming, and an apathetic Canadian public, the OAS file would once again be collecting dust. And with MacEachen as External Affairs Minister--a long-time opponent of membership--the issue was not only dropped, but indeed was effectively dead. In June 1983, MacEachen made this clear, but in more diplomatic terms, when he stated that "a decision to join the OAS would have to be based on a firm conclusion that it would have decisive advantages for our

political relations with Latin American states and for the promotion of Canadian interests in the region."⁸⁶ His response very much typified the approach espoused throughout the Trudeau years--namely, that the benefits of remaining outside the OAS seemed to outweigh the costs of joining it. Once again, then, after much deliberation, Canada opted to maintain its traditional fence-sitting role in its relationship with the hemispheric body. The reasons underpinning this aloofness toward the OAS, as well as the various actors proffering those reasons, is the focus of the next chapter.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Pharand, op. cit., p.439.

Chapter Seven

OAS Membership: The Actors and The Debates

Deliberations on the issue of membership in the OAS have dominated Canadian-Latin American relations for decades. According to R. Craig Brown, "when Canadians have debated Canada's relations with the Latin American nations they have most often done so within the context of joining the Organization of American States, thereby assuming that that was the only way in which to pursue a more active policy in Latin America."¹ Indeed, successive Canadian governments, as indicated in previous chapters, have grappled with the question of joining the hemispheric body. Until recently, those same governments--almost invariably after some period of discussion and debate--have refrained from opting for full membership.

Notwithstanding the fact that it is difficult to predict or foresee with any certainty the possible implications of OAS membership for Canada, this did not prevent opponents and supporters of membership from expressing their views. To be sure, proponents and opponents of admission--representing various segments of the Canadian political system--have engaged in a series of provocative

¹ R. Craig Brown, Writings on Canadian-American Studies, Volume 2, (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Michigan State University, 1967), p.4.

debates. Each group has, in turn, sought to buttress its position with a bevy of arguments and likely "Canada-in-the-OAS" scenarios. Neither "camp," however, was successful in galvanizing public opinion in favour of, or against, joining.²

The purpose of this chapter, then, is to delineate the actors which have figured prominently in the Canada-OAS membership issue. In addition, it discusses the panoply of arguments both for and against admission--as articulated by these actors. Moreover, it examines the reasons why these actors put forth their respective positions on the membership question. Finally, it concludes with a number of general observations about the debates themselves and the key issues which they brought to the fore.

Canada's political leadership and OAS membership

By the early 1960s, the question of membership in the OAS was catapulted to the top of the Diefenbaker government's issue-agenda. As Ogelsby contends: "1961 was the heyday of Canadian enthusiasm for the OAS."³ Senior government ministers, including the likes of Howard Green,

² An informal CBC radio poll on the issue of membership, taken in late 1961, clearly demonstrated the level of interest in the question in the early 1960s--generating a total of three for and three against. J.C.M. Ogelsby, "Canada and the Pan American Union: Twenty Years On," International Journal, 24:3 (Summer 1969), p.578.

³ Ibid., p.579.

were favourably disposed toward Canadian admission to the hemispheric body. Newspapers in Canada, reporting on Diefenbaker's visit to Jamaica in early 1961, began to expound on the efficacy of joining the forum.⁴ And the debate was fuelled even further by the ill-advised speech to the Canadian Parliament by U.S. President Kennedy in May of that same year. Among other things, He opined: "I believe that all free members of the Organization of American States would be both heartened and strengthened by any increase in your hemispheric role. Your skills, your responses, your judicious perception at the council table--even when it differs from our own views--are all needed throughout the inter-American community."⁵ His comments, however well-intentioned, were not only disparaged by the Diefenbaker government, but were also interpreted as completely ignoring Canadian sensibilities.

Interest in the membership issue was, moreover, sparked by the heightened tension in U.S.-Cuban relations in the 1960s. In early 1962, Castro's Cuba was unceremoniously expelled from the OAS, primarily at the urging of

⁴ Editorialists entered the fray after it was reported, erroneously as it turned out, that Diefenbaker remarked that Canada had no intention of joining the OAS.

⁵ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 17 May 1961, p.4964.

Washington.⁶ At the same time, the hemispheric body employed punitive sanctions against Cuba, including the suspension of all diplomatic and trade relations with the tiny Caribbean country. Clearly, OAS member states--with the conspicuous absence of Mexico--stood firmly against the perceived onset and consolidation of so-called "communist influences" in the region. These actions, it is instructive to note, seemed to leave an indelible mark on Canadians in general and Ottawa decision-makers in particular. They recognized, in a pointed fashion, that Canada would--if it became a full-fledged member--be under tremendous pressure to adopt OAS positions which it might find objectionable.

Similarly, the 1965 crisis in the Dominican Republic created a flurry of Canadian interest in the activities of the OAS. Most of that interest, though, was negative in tone--doing little to improve the organization's poor image in Canada.⁷ For many, it was merely another case of Washington using the hemispheric forum to legitimize what was clearly a unilateral U.S. expedition. For others, it was a sharp reminder that Canada, when it came to the OAS, should proceed prudently and cautiously.

Throughout the 1960s, then, these--and undoubtedly other factors--served to foster debate in Canada over the

⁶ Clearly, the October 1962 missile crisis also brought the membership issue to the fore in Canada.

⁷ Ogelsby, op. cit., p.584.

membership issue. Canadians from various segments of the polity entered the fray, cogently expressing their positions on the question. Even actors from outside of the country weighed in with their views on the possibility of Canada filling the so-called "empty chair." Regardless of the group, it was an issue around which political actors felt strongly, whether in favour or against admission. As a result, the two "camps"--in seeking to influence the political leadership in Canada--marshalled and proffered a welter of arguments to bolster their respective positions.

Nonetheless, in the 1960s, as was the case in the 1970s and 1980s, there was a noticeable absence of any public consensus on the membership issue. As John W. Holmes noted: "There is, I would estimate, no popular majority either for joining or not joining."⁸ For the most part, the Canadian public remained largely uninformed and uninterested not only in the membership question, but also in the OAS itself. Still, spirited discussion of the issue took place both within and without government circles in Canada.

⁸ Holmes, "Canada and Pan America," in his The Better Part Of Valour: Essays on Canadian Diplomacy, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1970), p.235. This article was first published in the Journal of Inter-American Studies, (April 1968).

The political leadership in Canada was, for all intents and purposes, opposed to the idea of membership.⁹ John Diefenbaker, not one to espouse a continentalist view, was wary of involving Canada in a region, and a hemispheric organization, that did not figure prominently in Canada's foreign policy interests. And after Kennedy's ill-fated address to the House of Commons, he wrote in his memoirs: "I was not about to have Canada bullied into any course of action."¹⁰ (Even as leader of the official opposition, he expressed concerns about the possibility of Canada, if it opted for membership, being used by the Latin American countries as merely a conduit for their dealings with the United States).¹¹ Donald Fleming, a senior minister in the Diefenbaker cabinet, was more concerned about how OAS membership would affect Canada's development assistance programme. More specifically, he was worried by the possibility of Canadian membership drawing away scarce funds from the Colombo Plan and other Commonwealth-related aid

⁹ As mentioned in a previous chapter, Howard Green, Diefenbaker's Secretary of State for External Affairs, was in favour of membership. He felt that such a step would be important in terms of mustering sufficient UN support (especially those countries from Latin America) for Canadian proposals on arms control and disarmament.

¹⁰ John G. Diefenbaker, One Canada: The Years of Achievement 1957-1962, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976), p.171.

¹¹ Bernard Dufresne, "Links to China, OAS opposed By Diefenbaker," The Globe and Mail, 4 October 1965, p.1.

initiatives.¹²

It is less clear, though, precisely where Lester Pearson stood on the issue of OAS membership. It is probably safe to assume--since he made few references to the topic-- that Pearson was unenthusiastic about the body.¹³ Given his vast experience in matters of Canadian foreign policy, it is likely that he was uncomfortable with the potential negative ramifications that admission would have on Canada-U.S. relations. Stated differently, he may well have feared that Canada's voting in the OAS, particularly if it differed from Washington's view, would spill over and somehow sour or damage bilateral relations, which were considerably more important from Ottawa's vantage point. Conversely, Paul Martin, Pearson's External Affairs Minister, was on record as supporting membership. He believed that joining the hemispheric body was "part of the ultimate destiny of Canada

¹² See, George Bell, "Canada and the OAS; Going around the buoy again?," in Brian Macdonald, (ed.), Canada, The Caribbean, And Central America, (Toronto: The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1986), p.104.

¹³ In his memoirs, Pearson does not make a single reference to Canada and the OAS. By the 1966-67 period, it seemed clear that he was not truly convinced of the merits of joining the hemispheric forum. See, for example, Canada, House of Commons, Debates, Second Session--Twenty Seventh Parliament, Vol.1, 1 June 1967, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967), p.822 and Canada, House of Commons, Debates, Second Session--Twenty Seventh Parliament, Vol.7, 11 March 1968, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1968), p.7469.

as a country of the Western Hemisphere."¹⁴ As a nation of the Americas, to take Martin's point one step further, it was important for Canada to participate actively and responsibly in inter-American affairs.

Pierre Trudeau, in the late 1960s, was also supportive--at least conditionally--of Canadian membership in the OAS. But he was uneasy about the prospect of Canada having to subordinate any semblance of independent-thinking on hemispheric matters to the whims of officialdom in Washington. Gérard Pelletier, a key figure among Trudeau's inner circle, was not in favour of full membership.¹⁵ He tended to think that it would be better for Canada to strengthen its relations with the region bilaterally as opposed to multilaterally.

Throughout the 1960s, then, the weight of "official" opinion seemed to go against full membership. In the main, there were serious concerns about how membership might

¹⁴ According to Alfred Pick, a former senior official in the Latin American division, Martin had inserted this "ultimate destiny" idea into his address--which was essentially written by Pick--on his own. Interview with Alfred Pick, 27 January 1992. For Martin's speech, see, Canada, Department of External Affairs, "Canada and Latin America," Statements and Speeches, No.67/21, 31 May 1967, p.3. More recently, Martin's favourable view of the OAS was reconfirmed in a newspaper interview. Jack Cahill, "Mulroney lauded for joining club of American states," The Toronto Star, 29 October 1989, p.B4.

¹⁵ According to Ogelsby, who had interviewed Pelletier, he was against joining. See his, "A Trudeau Decade," op. cit., p.169.

distort Canada's foreign aid programme, hurt Canada's Commonwealth linkages, and place Canada in the unenviable position of fighting Latin America's battles in Washington. There was also a sense that Canada's contribution to the region would be more effective if it stemmed from the establishment of solid bilateral relations with many of the countries in Latin America. Perhaps more important, there was a realization within the political leadership that membership in the OAS would only further complicate Canada's relations with the United States.

Throughout most of the 1970s, the political leadership in Canada seemed reluctant to embrace the idea of Canada as a full-fledged member of the OAS. Trudeau himself, while initially supportive, always seemed to be looking for reasons not to join. He had concerns about the apparent domination of the organization by the United States, the fact that Cuba was still outside the hemispheric family in 1976, and the unending sense that the OAS was constantly in a state of reviewing and reforming its structures and activities. Others in his Cabinet, such as Mitchell Sharp and Allan MacEachen, were simply unconvinced of the merits of joining the body. MacEachen, in particular, seemed to believe that the costs of membership--especially in terms of Canada-U.S. relations--clearly outweighed the perceived benefits. Sharp, for his part, was uneasy about Cuba's continued expulsion from the body and the organization's

tendency to divide the hemisphere between the United States and Latin America.¹⁶ From his discussions with thoughtful and "sophisticated" Latin Americans, he felt that Canada could play a more constructive role in the region by remaining outside of the OAS.¹⁷

The return to power of Pierre Trudeau in 1980 was not accompanied by any resurgence--at least in governmental circles--of the membership question. With economic and constitutional matters dominating the Liberal government's political agenda, the question of joining the OAS was unlikely to penetrate Trudeau's list of priorities. Furthermore, domestic squabbles with the provinces--in conjunction with problems in the Canada-U.S. relationship (viz. the National Energy Program, acid rain, and the Foreign Investment Review Agency)--effectively placed the issue, particularly from an official standpoint, in a holding pattern. It was really not until the House of Commons sub-committee on Canada's relations with Latin America and the Caribbean began its hearings in the spring of 1981 that the issue resurfaced somewhat.

¹⁶ Interview with Mitchell Sharp, former External Affairs Minister, 12 January 1992, "Canada receives overture from OAS," The Montreal Gazette, 6 February 1969, p.26, and John Harbron, "Growing pressures on Canada to seek hemispheric identity," International Perspectives, (May-June 1974), p.34.

¹⁷ Sharp was also convinced that Latin America held out few opportunities for increasing the level of Canadian exports. Interview with Sharp, 22 January 1992.

After sixteen months of listening to expert testimony, examining briefs from interest groups and associations, and travelling in Latin America, the sub-committee produced a final report in late November 1989. To the surprise of many, the sub-committee--by a narrow margin--came out in favour of Canada seeking admission to the OAS. According to the report, "the Sub-committee recommends that Canada seek full membership in the Organization of American States and sign the Bogotá Charter. We would recommend that Canada not sign the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance until a full review of its security obligations and implications is completed by the government."¹⁸ With this recommendation, once again the debate on the membership issue was renewed, if only briefly.

During most of the 1980s, the political leadership in Ottawa remained sceptical about the merits of joining the OAS. Trudeau was preoccupied with North-South issues and, by 1983, with arms control and disarmament questions.¹⁹ Presumably, the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas conflict and the

¹⁸ Canada, House of Commons, Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence, Canada's Relations with Latin America and the Caribbean, Final report to the House of Commons of the Sub-Committee on Canada's Relations with Latin America and the Caribbean, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1982), p.22.

¹⁹ Interview with former Liberal Cabinet Minister, Gerald Regan, 21 January 1992. For an excellent accounting of Trudeau's quixotic peace initiative, see, C. David Crenna, (ed.), Pierre Elliot Trudeau: Lifting the Shadows of War, (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Ltd., 1987), pp.63-114.

1983 U.S. invasion of Grenada did little to endear Trudeau to the virtues of the hemispheric body. Many of the past arguments against membership began to look increasingly valid--namely, that the OAS was proving itself to be largely ineffectual, that it was desperately in need of reform, and that it was looking more and more like an appendage of the U.S. State Department. Cabinet leaders, such as Allan MacEachen, were still firmly against the idea of OAS membership.²⁰ While travelling in Colombia in 1984, he indicated that it was "not self-evident whether Canada could make a difference in the OAS or whether it would be in the interest of Canada itself."²¹

Throughout most of the remainder of the decade, the issue remained essentially dormant.²² The first term of the Mulroney government, from 1984 to 1988, reflected this dormancy. Clearly, hemispheric affairs--let alone the question of OAS membership--was not a top priority for the

²⁰ In February 1983, MacEachen was quoted as saying: "I need to be convinced that it is a real plus and that we are going to help Canada's interests by joining." "Canada will not join the OAS," The Chronicle-Herald, 23 February 1983, p.2.

²¹ Quoted in Donat Pharand, "Canada and the OAS: the Vacant Chair Revisited," Revue générale de droit, 17:3 (Summer 1986), p.439.

²² It was really not until the early part of the Mulroney government's second term in office that the issue of membership in the OAS received serious consideration at the official level. The nature and extent of this attention is discussed more fully in the next chapter.

Conservative government. Even DEA's 1985 green (or grey) paper, Competitiveness and Security: Directions for Canada's International Relations, devoted only a few scant lines to the OAS. For the most part, it merely repeated oft-heard bromides about the lengthy debate which has revolved around the idea of Canadian membership in this organization. It concluded by asking: "Where do Canadians stand on this issue?"²³ Basically, Prime Minister Mulroney and his government seemed preoccupied--at least from a foreign policy standpoint--with securing closer relations with the United States.²⁴ For this reason, greater hemispheric relations--and the membership issue--was unlikely to figure prominently in the government's external thinking.

OAS membership: A sceptical bureaucracy

Like the political leadership in Canada, the Department of External Affairs (DEA) was generally opposed to Canadian admission from the early 1960s to the late 1980s, and for some of the same reasons.²⁵ Chief among them, during the

²³ Canada, Department of External Affairs, Competitiveness and Security: Directions in Canada's International Relations, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1985), p.42.

²⁴ See, for example, Andrew Cohen, "Canada's Foreign Policy: The Outlook for the Second Mulroney Mandate," Behind the Headlines, 46:4 (Summer 1989), pp.3-5.

²⁵ In an early 1960s survey of Canadian ambassadors in Latin America, 50 per cent of them expressed opposition to the idea of Canada joining the OAS. See, Gerald Clark, Canada: The Uneasy Neighbor, (Toronto: McClelland and

1960s, was the difficulties that membership would likely pose for Canada-U.S. relations. Mandarins in the department did not want to see any goodwill, diplomatic credit, or "privileged" status with the United States jeopardized by the positions Canada adopted in the OAS. For them, there were already enough areas of bilateral contention without needlessly complicating matters with the added dimension of inter-American affairs. It made little sense to DEA bureaucrats to risk sacrificing harmonious relations with its most important neighbour, especially in a forum which is of marginal foreign policy import for Canada.

Those from the "old school" tended to view the OAS in relation to the Commonwealth or to Western Europe. Since Canada was a member of the Commonwealth and NATO, so the argument went, it should focus its foreign policy energies on strengthening ties with these institutional structures. For them, Canadian foreign policy interests were more at stake in Europe than in Latin America. And they felt that membership in the OAS could have the undesired effect of moving Canadian foreign policy in an "isolationist," or at least hemispheric, direction, which was contrary to Canada's long tradition and commitment to the Atlantic community.

It is worth noting here that there was no outright

Stewart Limited, 1965), p.65. Much of the information on External Affairs was gleaned from extant sources, confidential interviews with former DEA officials, and academics with an interest in Latin America.

competition between the Latin Americanists and Europeanists in the department.²⁶ Indeed, those who were espousing closer relations with the inter-American community were not ostracized by other officials or prevented from having their views reach the minister's office. The issue at stake was more a matter of Canadian foreign policy priorities and material interests.²⁷ It was not, then, a case of External Affairs officials not recommending membership in the OAS because the department was heavily oriented toward the European side of Canadian foreign policy. For a variety of economic, political, security, and historical reasons, DEA concentrated its resources more on its European--as opposed to Latin American--contacts and linkages. Simply put, Latin America, unlike Western Europe, was not perceived as being high on Canada's list of foreign policy priorities.²⁸

In any event, officials in DEA were also opposed to admission for a variety of other reasons. Department bureaucrats, for instance, felt that the cost of membership, from annual dues to contributions to any voluntary funds, would be too high. They felt that scarce resources could be used more effectively in other areas of Canada's foreign

²⁶ Interview with a former deputy head of Latin American division, 1969-1971, 29 January 1992.

²⁷ Interview with a former DEA Assistant Under-Secretary of State (Economic), 29 January 1992.

²⁸ Interview with a former director of the Latin American division, 29 January 1992.

relations. In addition, these same officials were concerned about the security implications that would follow from OAS membership. More specifically, they were worried about the obligations and commitments that the Rio Treaty would place on Canada.²⁹

Furthermore, foreign policy officials were unimpressed with the voting structure of the OAS (in comparison with that of the UN), where two-thirds majority vote requires full compliance by all members.³⁰ They believed that Canada could find itself having to fall into line on issues where it differed strongly with other member states. Moreover, it could, particularly in the wake of the Dominican crisis in 1965, end up merely rubber-stamping U.S foreign policy forays in the region. Simply put, it was not in Canada's interests to join an organization in which the voting process was vulnerable to U.S. pressure and where the institution itself appeared to be dominated by Washington.

Bureaucrats in External Affairs, like their political masters, were not favourably disposed toward the idea of

²⁹ In the wake of the Cuban expulsion and subsequent breaking of diplomatic relations, officials in Ottawa were convinced that Canada should avoid this type of situation by remaining outside the OAS. Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Mexico, Cuba, and the OAS," 3 April 1964, File 20-4-OAS-4-1, Vol.2, p.2 and Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Political and Military Implications of Membership in the OAS," op.cit., p.9.

³⁰ Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Implications For Canada Of Joining The OAS," 20 January 1967, File 20-4-OAS-4, Vol.2, pp.1-5.

membership. Many of the arguments against joining that had held sway during the 1960s were still very popular among foreign policy officials in the 1970s. To be sure, there were concerns about how membership would affect Canada-U.S. relations, about the actual functioning of the OAS itself, and the ever-present worry about the financial costs of admission. Even in the security domain, DEA officials were uneasy about the possible implications of having to ratify the Rio Treaty. According to the 1970 foreign policy review, "the potential obligation to apply political and economic sanctions against another country by virtue of an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members is a difficult feature of the OAS from the Canadian point of view."³¹

There were, however, some new variations on this general theme of non-membership. For instance, officials expressed reservations over the impact that admission would have on Canada's aid programme for the region. In the words of the booklet on Latin America, "OAS membership might tend, at least initially, to restrict Canadian freedom of action in development assistance matters...and other OAS development assistance programmes could absorb most available resources for a period of many years."³² There was also a feeling that joining the OAS--and thus opting for the

³¹ Government of Canada, Foreign Policy for Canadians, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970), p.23.

³² Ibid., p.22.

multilateral route--could lead to a deterioration in bilateral relations with the major countries in the region. Put another way, if Canada focused its energies and resources on the OAS, it would almost certainly result in the neglect of the bilateral side of Canadian-Latin American relations. This development, officials felt, would not be conducive to Canada's stated objective of drawing closer to the inter-American system. There was a sense, then, that Canada could best contribute to improving the region's well-being through cosy bilateral, as opposed to multilateral, relations.

During the early part of the 1980s, officials in External Affairs were still basically against membership.³³ Like the political leadership in Canada, they were uneasy about the potential costs--and the paucity of practical benefits--of joining. While many of the arguments articulated in the past still held currency, there were a number of new points brought into the fray. For example, there was a general sense in the department that the very credibility of the hemispheric body was increasingly being

³³ See, John Best, "External Affairs seems to have won anti-OAS battle," The London Free Press, 24 April 1984. Throughout the 1980s, the business community remained largely silent on the issue of OAS membership. In addition, interest groups in Canada--perhaps because of their focus on events unfolding in Central America--expressed little or no comment on the question. The same was also true for Latin American countries, which were likely still frustrated and tired of hearing the same old polite, but unenthusiastic, refrains.

brought into question.³⁴ Foreign policy mandarins saw the irrelevancy of the forum--despite attempts at reform and years of reviewing its activities--as a solid reason against joining. They also believed that OAS member states themselves, by conducting a large part of inter-American business outside of the organization, did not take the institution seriously. So with the reputation of the OAS in serious decline, particularly after the fallout from the Falklands/Malvinas war, officials felt that the timing for membership was clearly inauspicious.

There was also a sense in DEA that the OAS was becoming increasingly marginalized.³⁵ They could not help but wonder why it would be in Canada's interests to join an organization that was, for the most part, virtually invisible or silent on the major issues facing the hemisphere.³⁶ On the question of foreign debt, economic development, and conflicts raging in Central America, the OAS was essentially relegated to the sidelines. In its

³⁴ Ambassador Richard V. Gorham, "Speech to the Organization of American States," Washington D.C., 7 September 1988, p.18.

³⁵ After a 1983 DEA internal review of the membership issue, officials recommended that Canada should not seek admission. There was a belief that the perceived costs of membership, on the whole, outweighed any the potential benefits. Confidential interview with former DEA official, 12 August 1991.

³⁶ Richard Gorham, Department of External Affairs, "Some Preliminary Thoughts About Latin America and the Organization of American States," 11 May 1988, p.8.

place, countries in the region banded together--in one case forming Contadora and its successor, Esquipulas--to confront, and hopefully resolve, many of the difficult issues facing them. To be sure, with the major Latin American countries seemingly abandoning the OAS in favour of regional, and more focused initiatives (largely because of the cumbersome and ponderous nature of the hemispheric body), it made little sense for Canada suddenly to seek admission.

Canada and the OAS: Viewpoints from the sidelines

The print media in Canada, in slight contrast with the bureaucracy, tended to be more divided over the membership issue. Newspapers such as The Edmonton Journal, La Presse, and The Globe and Mail, to name only a few, opposed membership throughout the 1960s.³⁷ In a March 1960 editorial, The Globe and Mail was concerned about the possibility of Canada's international reputation being needlessly tarnished by its involvement in resolving hemispheric disputes. It went on to state: "These conflicts are of little direct concern to Canada and it is hard to see why we should make enemies gratuitously by taking part in

³⁷ Also see, "Canada and OAS," The Vancouver Sun, 24 May 1961, p.4 and "Leave 'Well Enough' Alone," Edmonton Journal, 20 May 1961, p.4.

them."³⁸ Editorial writers were also worried about the negative repercussions that Canada would have to contend with if it sided with the Latins against the United States. According to the editorial, "we would risk a dangerous quarrel with a powerful neighbor over issues remote from our own vital interests."³⁹

In a May 1963 editorial, The Globe and Mail once again expressed its opposition to the notion of OAS membership. This time, it saw admission to the body as nothing more than Canada subordinating itself to Washington's desire to find someone else "to help pay the bills." Furthermore, it contended that Canada could play a more constructive role in resolving the "Cuba question" from outside the hemispheric forum. In the words of the editorial, "it would be the better part of statesmanship to keep ourselves free of disqualifying entanglements in the OAS."⁴⁰

Conversely, The Winnipeg Free Press, The Montreal Star, and The Ottawa Journal, among others, all came out in favour of Canada joining the hemispheric forum. In some respects, an editorial in The Calgary-Albertan reflected the arguments of those editorialists across the country in favour of

³⁸ "Canada in the OAS?," The Globe and Mail, 15 March 1960, p.6.

³⁹ Ibid., p.6.

⁴⁰ "Canada and the OAS," The Globe and Mail, 6 May 1963, p.6.

membership in the OAS. The editorial pointed out that Canada, by staying outside of the framework of the organization--and thus not participating fully in hemispheric affairs--was in effect "shirking" its responsibilities. It went on to state that Canada risked jeopardizing its good reputation in Latin America if it continued "to play such an unconstructive part in the affairs of the region."⁴¹ In short, the editorial seemed to support the notion that admission to the OAS would enable Canada to play a leadership role in inter-American politics.

Newsmagazines in Canada, particularly Maclean's, tended to be cool toward the membership issue.⁴² Ian Sclanders' June 1963 article against Canadian membership contained a number of interesting points. Indeed, he advocated non-membership because of "the utter mess Latin America is in and the selfish refusal of Latin America's ruling classes to lift a hand on behalf of their own countries."⁴³ He went on to support his case by arguing that Canada, as a "have" country, would inevitably find itself having to make loans or other fiscal arrangements available to impoverished Latin

⁴¹ "The Punta Del Este Meeting," The Calgary-Albertan, 14 August 1961.

⁴² Time was more favourably disposed toward Canadian membership in the OAS.

⁴³ Ian Sclanders, "The case against Canadian membership in the OAS," Maclean's Magazine, 15 June 1963, p.4.

American countries. According to Sclanders, "Canada would have difficulty both in resisting appeals for assistance from the Latins and in resisting U.S. hints that Canada's taxpayers should be helping the U.S. help Latin America."⁴⁴ For him, membership would be totally counterproductive, since it would likely lead to a reduction in Canada's prestige and political effectiveness in the region.

Newspaper coverage of the issue, perhaps reflecting the lack of governmental attention accorded the issue in the 1970s, was sparse.⁴⁵ Besides the occasional reference, there was nothing that even approached the editorial comment of the 1960s. Since the Trudeau government was not contemplating any change in Canada's status vis-à-vis the OAS, there was really no need to editorialize. However, the late senator Eugene Forsey, an avid letter-writer, did weigh in with his contribution to the debate. Writing after Trudeau's visit to the region in 1976, he stated that OAS membership "would be the perfect way to lose friends and influence people the wrong way. The Americans would expect

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.4.

⁴⁵ Interest groups also remained largely silent on the question. With little chance of the government changing its course on the OAS, these "sources" of foreign policy-making had no reason to engage in any sustained debate. As for foreign governments, the arguments they used in the 1960s were still offered again in the 1970s--the only possible exception being the valuable contribution that Canada, as a full member, could make to the process of reforming and revitalizing the hemispheric body.

us to back them. The Latin Americans would expect us to line up against the United States. We should end by being thoroughly disliked and distrusted by both sides."⁴⁶

Canadian newspapers in the early 1980s, particularly the major ones, were still opposed to membership.⁴⁷ A December 1982 Globe and Mail editorial, which referred to past arguments against membership such as U.S. dominance of the body and the lingering question of Cuba, suggested that Canada should remain "unentangled" in the OAS. As the editorial writers explained: "Are we really ready to wade into a part of the world that has often proclaimed its presence by denials of human rights, nasty dictatorships, assassinations, torture and disappearances by the thousands?"⁴⁸ Similarly, an editorial in The Toronto Star questioned the efficacy of joining a hemispheric forum that included among its ranks the likes of Chile and El Salvador (countries with atrocious human rights records) as well as a body that chose to side with Argentina--instead of Britain--during the Falklands/Malvinas crisis. It went on to state

⁴⁶ Forsey, letter to The Globe and Mail, 10 February 1976, p.6.

⁴⁷ According to an External Affairs media analysis, 95 per cent of the media coverage was negative toward the 1982 sub-committee recommendation. David R. Murray, "Hard Realities: Canadian-Latin American Relations At the End Of the Trudeau Era," (A lecture given at the National Defence College, Kingston, Ontario, 28 March 1984), p.20.

⁴⁸ Editorial, "Perils in membership," The Globe and Mail, 6 December 1982.

further that "the 28-member Organization of American States has proved ineffective in promoting peace and security in the region" and that "its political bias lies far to the right of the Canadian government's."⁴⁹

The academic community, unlike the media in Canada, was generally divided over the efficacy of Canadian membership in the OAS.⁵⁰ During the 1960s, those in favour of admission proffered a number of arguments and reasons to underscore their case. Similarly, those opposing membership were quick to put forth their rationale for remaining outside the forum.

Those urging membership felt that it was the sine qua non for greater Canadian participation in hemispheric affairs. Put another way, if Canada hoped to play a larger role in the region--as it should--it would have to join the principal political institutional entity in the hemisphere.⁵¹ For them, there was no surer sign of Canada's

⁴⁹ Editorial, "A club we need not join," The Toronto Star, 4 December 1982.

⁵⁰ This author focuses mainly on the academic community for several reasons. First, it was the principal constituency or policy network examining in detail the membership question. Secondly, officials in DEA would occasionally consult or sound out Latin Americanists in Canada on their views of possible Canadian admission. Lastly, many of the arguments flowing from academia--both pro and con--were indicative of the kinds of positions that characterized the whole OAS membership debate.

⁵¹ John D. Harbron, Canada and the Organization of American States, (Canadian-American Committee, 1963), p.21.

interest and commitment to the region than sitting at the OAS Council table with the other member countries. By participating fully in OAS deliberations, they argued, Canada would be better able to shape and influence developments in the region.

W. Arthur Irwin, a former Canadian diplomat in Latin America, argued that Canada could not avoid or escape these developments, regardless of how isolationist the government professed to be.⁵² For him, it would be both prudent and in Canada's interests to participate fully--with voice and vote--in the hemispheric decision-making process. In the words of Irwin: "I do not share the view that an ostrich policy is the policy best calculated to serve our interest."⁵³

He argues that Canada--whether inside or outside of the OAS--has little choice but to confront the major issues

⁵² He also made the point that Canada is an "American nation" and therefore belongs in the OAS. According to Irwin, Canada has shared with the Americas common cultural and spiritual antecedents as well as "the travail of pioneering a new world, of shaping political, economic and social institutions to a new world environment, and of wresting by one means or another political independence from colonial status." W. Arthur Irwin, "Should Canada Join the Organization of American States?," Queen's Quarterly, LXXII:II (Spring 1965), p.294. A close examination of the Irwin paper is useful because it was widely circulated among Canada's embassies and missions in Latin America for comment. See, for example, Archives, Department of External Affairs, "Canada and the OAS," 4 September 1964, File 20-4-OAS-4-1, Vol.3, pp.1-3.

⁵³ Ibid., p.298.

confronting the hemisphere. It makes better sense, then, for Canada to partake in influencing the collective decision-making process in the hemisphere so as to deal with these issues and to shape the course of events in the region.

"Surely it would be the part of wisdom to seek to influence a developing situation," writes Irwin, "rather than to stand in isolation and await an outcome over which we have no share of control and on which we will have to make a policy decision in any event."⁵⁴

In addition to arguing that Canada's interests are best served through active participation in the OAS's decision-making process, Irwin hinted at the fact that Canada--as a full-fledged member--would benefit from a security-related standpoint.⁵⁵ He went on to note: "We stand to gain enormously from collective measures to maintain political stability in the hemisphere."⁵⁶ By sitting at the Council table, he argued, Canada would be informed of hemispheric security problems and, more important, be able to discuss these matters frankly and openly. While Irwin himself did not make the point, it seems implicit in his thinking that

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.298.

⁵⁵ In particular, he argues that the military/security component of the OAS should not deter Canada from seeking membership. "Membership in the OAS and acceptance of the Rio Pact," according to Irwin, "would not involve commitments in the military field inconsistent with our obligations either to the United Nations or to NATO." Ibid., p.295.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.294.

Canada's security was inextricably linked to the security of the Latin American republics. And if Canada hoped to advance and protect its security interests, it could do so through the activities and structures of the OAS.

Irwin also notes that Canadian membership would enhance both the stature of the OAS and Canada's prestige in Latin America. With a new middle power among its ranks--carrying a reputation unsullied by imperialist intrusions into the region--the organization would undoubtedly be strengthened. According to Irwin, Canada's admission "would confirm its geographical logic and we would bring to it the economic weight and political experience of a country which despite its relatively small population qualifies as one of the most important in the Americas."⁵⁷ As for Canada, its prestige would be augmented through increased dialogue and mutual understanding as well as expanded regional contacts on the political, diplomatic, economic, and cultural levels. Canada's standing in the region could not but help to improve, at least in Irwin's eyes, since its membership in the club would enable it "to deal with other members on a basis not available to outsiders."⁵⁸

Moreover, Irwin challenged the argument that Canadian membership in the OAS would adversely affect Canada-U.S.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.295.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.295.

relations. In fact, he seemed to believe that admission would serve to place Canada's relations with the United States on a better footing. By not joining, he adds, Canada risked the possibility of irritating the White House and thereby souring the tone of Canada-U.S. relations. As he cautioned: "There are already signs that our continued aloofness is being construed in Washington as refusal on our part to accept a share of hemispheric responsibilities appropriate to our position and status in the hemisphere."⁵⁹

As a corollary to this point, Irwin attempted to debunk the so-called "ham-in-the-sandwich" argument. That is, that Canada would inevitably find itself backing the Latin American governments against Washington and thus risk the ire of the White House. But if this were true, he pointed out, "there would be no case for membership in the United Nations or NATO, not to mention numerous other groupings."⁶⁰ He suggested, moreover, that the U.S. government would respect--and indeed insist upon--the independent judgment of a staunch ally. For this reason, he insisted that Canada should not be deterred from acquiring membership out of fear of antagonizing the United States.

In fact, full membership for Irwin would better enable Canada to manage its relations with the United States. As a

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.295.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.301.

multilateral body, it could serve as a useful counterweight or equalizer against the preponderance of U.S. power. By working in concert with other like-minded Latin American nations, Canada could be better situated to shape or modify U.S. behaviour. Strength in numbers, along with skilled Canadian diplomats and the legal requirements of the OAS, could actually increase Canada's negotiating strength and thereby enable it to better protect its interests. According to Irwin, "we should apply such political skills as we may possess to making realistic use of whatever available forces may be utilized to advantage in our continuing struggle for national survival."⁶¹

Irving Brecher and Richard A. Brecher, exponents of membership, echoed some of Irwin's arguments. They argued, for instance, that Canada's obligations under the Rio Treaty would not tie its hands completely. To be sure, if Canada--like Mexico--wanted to skirt the issue of imposing sanctions, it could do so without any serious repercussions.⁶² In addition, they suggested that Canada's traditional linkages with the Commonwealth should not automatically disqualify it from seeking admission to the OAS. They went on to state: "Membership in the Organization

⁶¹ Ibid., p.300.

⁶² Irving Brecher and Richard A. Brecher, "Canada and Latin America: The Case for Canadian Involvement," Queen's Quarterly, 74:1 (Autumn 1967), p.469.

of American States has in no way prevented twenty American republics from being 'members in good standing' of the United Nations. Nor has Trinidad and Tobago been at all disposed to treat its recent entry into the OAS as a negation of membership in the Commonwealth."⁶³

To Irwin's collection of arguments, the two McGill professors added the possibility of Canada contributing in a positive fashion to OAS reform. In the wake of the Cuban and Dominican crises, they admitted that the machinery of the organization was less than ideal. But the most effective way to revitalize and strengthen its structures was for Ottawa to opt for full membership. As they accurately pointed out, "major improvement can come only from within and not from the casual observer with hardly a foot in the door."⁶⁴

In his small booklet, Canada and the Organization of American States, John Harbron outlined both the pros and cons of admission. While he attempted to do so in a balanced fashion, his analysis tended to lean toward support for membership. By joining, he indicated that Canada would benefit from "increased exposure to Latin American culture, to personal contacts with Latin Americans, and to Latin American experience with economic development techniques and

⁶³ Ibid., p.468.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.470.

policies having relevance for Canada."⁶⁵ He also added to the debate the argument that membership would open up new trade opportunities with Latin America. According to Harbron, a Canadian mission at the OAS "might well help to supply Canadian businessmen going to the Latin American market with some useful commercial information, especially since Latin American officials appointed to the OAS are typically drawn into temporary service from the small commercial classes found in most Latin American republics."⁶⁶

Although the arguments in favour of membership were articulated in an intelligent fashion throughout the 1960s, a number of academics espoused the opposite view. David Edward Smith, for example, challenged many of the assumptions and arguments put forth by W. Arthur Irwin. By becoming a full-fledged member, Smith argued, Canada could find itself in a rather awkward position, and needlessly so. He pointed to both the Cuban and Dominican crises as potent reasons why Canada should continue to remain aloof from the hemispheric body. Indeed, if Canada would have been a member at this time, it would have been obliged to consider "the adoption of trade embargoes, the breaking of diplomatic relations and the establishment of an inter-American police

⁶⁵ Harbron, Canada and the Organization of American States, p.22.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.26.

force."⁶⁷

In addition, he directly refuted Irwin's contention that Canada--by joining the OAS--would register an increase in prestige in the region. For Smith, a country does not join an international organization in hopes of accumulating prestige or national respect. Rather, it does so because it has certain interests--security, social, political, and economic--which it intends to protect and advance.⁶⁸ More important, Canada's prestige or reputation in the region could actually dissipate through its membership in the forum. He noted that it would certainly not take long for Canada's goodwill in Latin America to fade if it sided with the U.S. against the Latins on more than one occasion.⁶⁹ Clearly, on the Cuban and Dominican crises, Canada would have been compelled to take a stand in some form or another. As Smith observed: "The result could only have been a reduction in Canadian prestige either in Washington or the capitals of some of the more progressive members of the

⁶⁷ David Edward Smith, "Should Canada Join the Organization of American States?: A Rejoinder to W.Arthur Irwin," Queen's Quarterly, LXXII:I (Spring 1966), p.107.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.108.

⁶⁹ As for relations with the United States, Smith believed that membership would only complicate matters even further. In his words: "United States dominance of NATO has presented problems for Canada which could be expected to increase in an organization as oriented toward Washington as the OAS." Ibid., p.109.

OAS."⁷⁰ So instead of membership actually bolstering or fortifying Canada's reputation or prestige in the region, he argued that it could have the harmful effect of jeopardizing any goodwill or diplomatic credit that Canada had in Latin America.

He also challenged Irwin's point that membership would offer Canada the best means of influencing events in the hemisphere. In contrast, Smith argued that Canada may be more effective in shaping developments in the area from outside the confines of the OAS. Stated differently, that cultivating cosy bilateral relations with countries in Latin America--as opposed to an enhanced multilateral commitment--was a more prudent course for Canada to chart. For him, Canada would still be in a strong position to share its expertise, technology, democratic experience, and development assistance with countries in the region. He summed up his argument by stating the following: "Past neglect of Latin America will not be remedied by joining the OAS; actually, membership may diminish the effectiveness of any new role Canada might want to play in this area."⁷¹

Harbron's reasoning, like that of Irwin's, did not escape Smith's line of argument. For instance, he took issue with the notion that Canada needed to join the OAS in order

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.111.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.102.

to better situate itself for securing increased benefits from the hemisphere. As Smith noted: "There is no evidence that Canada must become a partner in the Inter-American system before she and the Latin American republics may enjoy the benefits of closer relations."⁷² At the same time, he questioned whether enhanced trade and investment opportunities would flow from Canada's membership in the organization. Indeed, he pointed out that "the general assertion that members of the OAS enjoy trade advantages as a result of being members has not been statistically demonstrated."⁷³ He felt that Canada's occupation of the "empty chair" would bring with it few if any benefits of a commercial/trade nature.

R. Craig Brown, like Smith, took aim at those who favoured Canadian membership in the OAS.⁷⁴ First, he questioned the wisdom of joining an organization which essentially served to maintain U.S. hegemony in the region.⁷⁵ Was it really in Canada's best interests, he

⁷² Ibid., p.114.

⁷³ Ibid., p.107.

⁷⁴ John W. Holmes, who seemed to be undecided on the question of membership, did challenge the idea that Canada, a northern expanse, should be considered an "American nation." He quipped that "it is hard to think that anyone seriously believes Canada has more in common with Argentina than with Norway or New Zealand." Holmes, op. cit., p.237.

⁷⁵ He hinted at the fact that there might be certain advantages to Canada from maintaining its steadfast aloofness from the hemispheric forum. He made the point that Canada's Cuba policy was tolerated by the U.S. precisely

wondered, for it to be part of a body that sanctioned U.S. intervention in a member country like the Dominican Republic? Secondly, he was unconvinced that Canada could best confront the myriad problems of the hemisphere--including those of a social, political, economic, and security nature--through admission to the OAS. In fact, he believed that Canadian membership was not, in and of itself, going to reduce the seriousness of the problems or somehow precipitate a number of practical solutions and meaningful responses. Finally, he warned that the OAS "is an American solution to an American problem. It is not a Canadian solution to a Canadian problem."⁷⁶

Historian Kenneth McNaught also situated himself firmly in the camp of those opposing membership. He was concerned about the possibility of membership undermining any hopes of an independent Canadian policy toward the region.⁷⁷ To be sure, he was worried that past instances of independent Canadian thinking--such as pushing for the expulsion of South Africa from the Commonwealth or Canada's refusal to endorse U.S. policy toward Cuba--would inevitably be diminished by admission to the OAS. According to McNaught,

because it was outside the framework of the OAS. Brown, op. cit., p.7.

⁷⁶ Brown, op. cit., p.9.

⁷⁷ McNaught, "Canada's Pan-American Hot Seat," Saturday Night, 76:16 (August 1961), pp.15-17.

"Joining OAS would tend very strongly to blur the Latin American impression of our independence of the United States."⁷⁸ In other words, Canada's bona fide reputation for independent-minded foreign policy actions, which sometimes differ from those of the colossus to the south, could be compromised through accession to membership.

In addition, McNaught cautioned against membership because the United States seemed to be encouraging such a move. He appeared to imply that a less-tainted Canada, if it became a full member, could be under tremendous pressure from the White House to become a mouthpiece for Washington in Latin America. By doing so, Canada would be placed in the unenviable position of working to purify "the picture of the United States in Latin America."⁷⁹ Put simply, McNaught feared the prospect of a Canada in the OAS being relegated to the role of a lackey, merely doing the bidding or "dirty work" for Washington throughout the Americas.

Not surprisingly, the academic community maintained a fairly consistent interest in the issue throughout the 1970s. Those opposed to membership drew upon many of the arguments used in the 1960s to support their case, such as the confusion and disarray that characterized the OAS and the fear of being used (especially in light of Canada's

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.17.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.17.

growing economic dependence on the U.S.) as little more than a stooge of the United States. Similarly, those in favour of membership reiterated a number of reasons that were popular in the 1960s to bolster their position, including potential economic gains and as a clear demonstration of Canada's commitment to Latin America. Both sides, though, were able to revamp--and in some cases add new twists to--their thinking on the subject.

Those in favour of non-membership pointed to the political situation in Latin America--where social injustice continued unabated, where despots still engaged in flagrant violations of basic human rights, and where unsavoury governments preferred corruption and exploitation to fairness and equality. As Dale C. Thompson and Roger F. Swanson explained: "By entering the OAS, [Canada] would also be accepting as associates some of the most flagrant dictatorships in the world."⁸⁰ David R. Murray, in a similar vein, argued that Canada has benefited more from remaining outside the formal structures of the OAS. He indicated that it has "been able to avoid all the cold war pressure imposed on Latin American members of the OAS by the United States to support American actions whether in Guatemala in the 1950s, or against Cuba and Santo Domingo in the 1960s and Chile in

⁸⁰ Thompson and Swanson, Canadian Foreign Policy: Options And Perspectives, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1971), p.101.

the 1970s."⁸¹ In short, those opposing admission were more convinced that Canada could participate effectively in hemispheric affairs without the constraints of membership.

Proponents of membership seemed to believe that the conditions in the 1970s were ripe for membership. With reforms of the OAS Charter coming into force in the early 1970s--particularly in those areas of an economic and social nature--the organization was thought to be better equipped to confront the many challenges of the hemisphere. It was important for Canada to join in order to register its full support for these and future changes. James J. Guy appeared to be suggesting that it was time for Canada to "consolidate" its linkages with Latin America by joining the OAS.⁸²

John Harbron, among others, was under the impression that the Canada-U.S. relationship had matured to the point that it could withstand any tensions arising out of Canada's membership in the OAS. In fact, he went to note: "This view has lost a good deal of its validity, not only because Canadian-American relations have entered rough waters without any intrusion of hemispheric differences but because

⁸¹ Murray, "On Diplomatic Unrelations," in Jorge Nef, (ed.), Canada and the Latin American Challenge, (Guelph: Ontario Co-operative Programme In Latin American Studies, 1978), p.171.

⁸² Guy, "Canada and Latin America," The World Today, 32:10 (October 1976), p.386.

Canada, under the OAS Charter, like other member states, could abstain from decisions on crises in other member states."⁸³ J.C.M. Ogelsby also discounted the argument that Canada's relations with the United States would suffer as a result of OAS membership. On at least two occasions, he argued, Canada took positions in the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) that were completely at variance with those holding sway in the White House. In the case of Chile in 1973, the Canadian representative criticized the idea of using the IDB "as a lever and a whip to punish recipient countries involved in 'bilateral' disputes over expropriation and compensation."⁸⁴ And it is instructive to note that although Canada chose to differ with Washington in this case, there was no signs of any U.S. retaliation or that it strained the Canada-U.S relationship.

As was the case in the 1960s and 1970s, the academic community continued to exhibit an intellectual interest in the question. True to form, it still remained divided on the issue of membership. Not surprisingly, many of the arguments used by opponents and proponents in the 1960s and 1970s were dusted-off and repackaged. And with few academics focusing

⁸³ John D. Harbron, "Canada and Latin America: ending a historic isolation," International Perspectives, (May-June 1972), p.28.

⁸⁴ Quoted in Ogelsby, "Canada and Latin America," in Peyton V. Lyon and Tareq Y. Ismail, (eds.), Canada and the Third World, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976), p.193.

their research efforts on the topic in the 1980s, there was even less in the way of new thinking on the issue.

Donat Pharand, however, took issue with many of the arguments espoused by those who opposed membership. He challenged the notion that opting for full membership would somehow compromise Canada's position as an independent actor in world politics. For him, joining the OAS, and working in concert with other like-minded Latin American countries, would actually enhance Canadian sovereignty and independence. As Pharand explained: "This would inevitably result in Canada developing a leading role, not only in the Organization itself, but in world affairs generally."⁸⁵

At the same time, he dismissed the oft-heard view that Canada's membership in the OAS would inevitably disrupt Canada-U.S. relations. Not only did he argue that the Canada-U.S. relationship was strong enough to withstand differences of opinion on inter-American matters, but he also suggested that Washington would not be interested in using Canada as an "interpreter" or interlocuter for its dealing with Latin America. To buttress his point, he noted that "a review of the similarities and differences in the Canadian and U.S. objectives in the Latin American and Caribbean regions has demonstrated that the similarities were considerable indeed and the differences were basically

⁸⁵ Pharand, op. cit., p.447.

a matter of emphasis and approach."⁸⁶

In addition to discounting the so-called "U.S. problem," he refuted the argument that the OAS is little more than an ineffective "talk shop," hopelessly unable to confront pressing hemispheric problems. He pointed out that "it has to be admitted that criticisms of ineffectiveness focus more on cases where the OAS did not take any action rather than those where it did, even with a certain degree of success."⁸⁷ He rightly noted that the OAS had some early successes in the area of dispute settlement and conflict resolution. Additionally, he argued that the organization possessed the potential to do some excellent work in the areas of development and human rights. Indeed, he referred, with some justification, to the solid work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. In short, he believed that there was nothing drastically wrong with the OAS per se; the difficulties were a function of the membership itself.

One of the reasons that Pharand cited for joining was the fact that, for a number of years, several member states encouraged Canada to do so.⁸⁸ These states, according to

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.444.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.441.

⁸⁸ He also reiterated the argument that joining would be in Canada's economic interest. As he explained: "The OAS could thus provide Canada with a suitable framework for the implementation of its economic policy in the region and the intensification of trade with the member states." Ibid.,

Pharand, firmly believed that Canada's participation would add considerably to the health of the OAS. He referred to the fact that "Canada is considered to be an integral part of the hemisphere, a dependable and stable country, and it is genuinely believed that it would make an appreciable contribution toward the improvement of the functioning of the Organization."⁸⁹ And he warned that Canada's continued aloofness from the body could not only foster frustration and resentment in Latin America, but it could also lead to a sharp drop in Canada's influence in the region.

Robert Jackson, in a similar vein, suggested that "the arguments for joining have become stronger."⁹⁰ Like Pharand, he believed that the "symbolic" benefits of joining would further bolster Canada's already sizeable reservoir of diplomatic goodwill. This, in turn, could be important in terms of cultivating better relations with individual Latin American countries. If nothing else, it would certainly signal the importance that Canada attached to relations with Latin America. He also indicated that the notion of the OAS as a ministry of the U.S. State Department no longer applied to the extent that it once did. "Much of the stigma of U.S.

p.446.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.445.

⁹⁰ Robert Jackson, "Canadian Foreign Policy and the Western Hemisphere," in Viron P. Vaky, (ed.), Governance In The Western Hemisphere, (New York: Praeger, 1983), p.126.

domination that used to color Canada's view of the organization," writes Jackson, "has abated as countries such as Mexico and Venezuela have become stronger."⁹¹ These countries, he stated, were no longer afraid to mount vigorous opposition or to go against proposals which they felt were not in their best interests. In this context, he felt that Canada should not be deterred from membership by old-style thinking.

For their part, those opposed to membership reintroduced many of the arguments used by their colleagues in the 1960s and 1970s.⁹² Reservations about the impact that joining would have on Canada's aid budget, the effectiveness of the hemispheric body, and the possibility of getting caught between the United States and Latin American countries were all put forth. David R. Murray, however, suggested that the most pressing issues in the hemisphere--namely, trade, development, and human rights--tended to lend themselves to bilateral solutions.⁹³ For this reason, it would be better for Canada, he argued, to deal with these issues bilaterally

⁹¹ Ibid., p.126.

⁹² See, for example, Stephen Banker, "The changing OAS," International Perspectives, (May-June 1982), p.23 and Edgar J. Dosman, "Hemispheric Relations in the 1980s: A Perspective from Canada," Journal of Canadian Studies, 19:4 (Winter 1984-85), p.58.

⁹³ David R. Murray, "The bilateral road: Canada and Latin America in the 1980s," International Journal, 37:1 (Winter 1981-82), pp.112-113.

rather than through membership in the OAS.

Edgar J. Dosman, in a similar vein, put forth his case against membership in the OAS.⁹⁴ Like Murray, he felt that Canada could best achieve its objectives in the region, especially those of an economic nature, through strong bilateral ties with countries such as Brazil, Venezuela, and Mexico. He also questioned the wisdom of joining a forum that was likely unreformable and certainly at the margins of inter-American political life. For him, the OAS had proven itself to be singularly ineffective in the area of hemispheric peace and security, as the conflicts in Central America could attest. He suggested that perhaps the UN would be better suited to deal with the hemispheric issues of conflict resolution and development. Lastly, he noted that Canada, instead of allocating funds to the cost of admission, could use those resources more effectively. He suggested that the money would be better spent on "new political offices in the region or improved analytical capabilities in Ottawa."⁹⁵ The bottom line for Dosman was the fact that it was not necessary for Canada to join the OAS in order for it to strengthen its ties with the region.

⁹⁴ See, for example, Edgar Dosman and David Pollock, "Canada, Mexico And The North-South Dialogue: The Need For Audacity," in Omar Martínez Legorreta, (ed.), Relations Between Mexico And Canada, (El Colegio de México, Centro De Estudios Internacionales, 1990), pp.280-81.

⁹⁵ Dosman, op. cit., p.59.

Unlike the academic community, the debate over OAS membership scarcely raised a responsive chord in the chambers of the Canadian Parliament. During the early 1960s, Lester Pearson, then-leader of the Liberal opposition and obviously intent on scoring some political points, urged the ruling Conservatives to seek membership in the hemispheric forum. He felt that admission would enable Canada to play a moderating role in discussions on ridding the hemisphere of the so-called "communist menace."⁹⁶ Paul Martin, opposition foreign affairs critic, felt that membership would better enable Canada to play a leading role in the hemisphere.⁹⁷ For the most part, though, Canadian parliamentarians played only a minor role in the debate over OAS membership.

The Canadian Parliament was generally quiet on the membership issue throughout the 1980s, although some parliamentarians did make their views known. Senator Peter Stollery, in a letter to The Globe and Mail, objected to the argument that Canada should not join the OAS for fear of upsetting the Latins or Washington. According to Stollery, the same argument "could be used to oppose Canada's membership both in the United Nations and NATO. I simply do not understand these obscure and dated arguments against

⁹⁶ Ogelsby, op. cit., p.578.

⁹⁷ See, House of Commons, Debates, Fifth Session--Twenty Fourth Parliament, Vol.2, 17 May 1962, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962), p.1608.

what should be full Canadian participation in the affairs of our hemisphere."⁹⁸

Writing in 1984, Maurice Dupras, a Liberal Member of Parliament and former Chair of the sub-committee on Latin America and the Caribbean, argued that "the potential benefits of full Canadian membership now far outweigh the drawbacks."⁹⁹ He argued that Canada had much to offer the OAS, and not just by adding its voice to hemispheric concerns or engaging in creative diplomacy. For instance, Canada could, by seeking admission, work to strengthen the OAS in the area of human rights. Through its membership on the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Canada "would give the Commission added vitality, would increase its visibility, and would improve its overall effectiveness."¹⁰⁰

He went on to suggest that Canada should discard its aloofness from the OAS and replace it with full membership. It was a mystery to Dupras why Canada should not be involved directly in those issues which affected Canadians. He also pointed to the example of Canada's relations with Cuba as proof that Ottawa had little to risk in opting for

⁹⁸ Peter Stollery, letter to The Globe and Mail, 22 January 1983.

⁹⁹ Maurice Dupras, "Canada and the OAS," International Perspectives, (January-February 1984), p.16.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.17.

admission. As he observed:

If the open and cordial relationship Canada enjoys with the United States has been able to withstand such a profound irritant as trade and diplomacy with Cuba, then relations between Ottawa and Washington are unlikely to be seriously affected as a result of differing points of view over issues raised within the context of the OAS.¹⁰¹

Like the Canadian Parliament, the business lobby in Canada, was not particularly interested--during much of the 1960s and 1970s--in seeking out commercial opportunities in Latin America. Whether for reasons of a cultural, political, or geographical nature, it was unenthusiastic about the potential for expanding trade and investment links with the region. While there are few if any references to what precisely the business community's position was on admission to the OAS, it would be fair to say that it was largely indifferent throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Generally speaking, it was cautious about the idea of Canada joining the OAS--feeling somewhat sceptical about deriving any possible trade advantages.¹⁰² (This scepticism may, in part, be a function of the region's minor trade importance to Canada and the business community's preference to focus its

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p.17.

¹⁰² See, for example, a letter to the Canadian-American Committee from Donald Gordon, Chairman of Canadian National Railways. 21 September 1961, pp.1-2. It is also important to remember that by 1978, Latin America represented just five per cent of Canada's overall global trade. David R. Murray, "The Present and Future Significance of Latin America for Canada," unpublished paper, 13 December 1979, p.8.

attention and resources on the United States.)

In general, the business community in Canada--which was represented primarily by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Association for Latin America (CALA)--played a peripheral role. Although CALA was on record as supporting admission in the early part of the 1980s, it was not prepared to lobby the government in a vigorous fashion. By the mid to late 1980s, however, the business community rarely if ever raised the issue with the government of the day.¹⁰³ Interestingly, there is some evidence that a number of Canadian multinationals--with operations in Latin America--were less than enthusiastic about OAS membership. They were concerned mainly with the possibility that the OAS might alter the Charter language on "collective economic security" so as to encourage wide-scale nationalization as a means of redistributing wealth among the poor.¹⁰⁴ Some businesses were also concerned that Canadian involvement in inter-American affairs might lead to officialdom in Ottawa scrutinizing the actions and operations of Canadian

¹⁰³ Confidential interview with a former senior DEA official, 20 August 1991.

¹⁰⁴ On this point, see Robin W. Winks, "Canada and the Three Americas: Her Hemispheric Role," in Lansing Lamont and J. Duncan Edmonds, (eds.), Friends So Different, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1989), p.259. Interestingly enough, the Canadian Labour Congress, though a minor player, was in favour of membership. As one of its statements noted: "We cannot afford at this delicate stage in international relations to remain outside the community of nations in the Americas." Quoted in McNaught, op. cit., p.15.

businesses in the region.¹⁰⁵

Turning to outside forces, Kenneth McNaught--earlier in this chapter--touched upon the role of foreign entities in the membership debate throughout the 1960s. The United States, he argued, wanted Canada to join and thus be in a position to carry Washington's message to Latin America. Of course, the United States--since about the mid-1940s--has viewed positively the prospect of having Canada, a wealthy middle power and staunch ally, on its side of the OAS Council table. Other Latin American countries expressed a similar desire, albeit for different reasons. Many of them tended to think that Canada's membership would bring "a new element of understanding" and a healing brand of pragmatism and political maturity.¹⁰⁶ According to John Sokol, "they are not principally after our dollars."¹⁰⁷ Instead, they saw great opportunities for Canada to share with the Hispanic world its industrial development experiences, technical assistance, advanced technologies, and agricultural expertise. In short, they wanted Canada in the OAS for all the reasons for which Canadians are noted--namely, fairness and compassion, pragmatism and moderation, and economic

¹⁰⁵ Written correspondence from Jack Ogelsby, 17 August 1991.

¹⁰⁶ See, John Sokol, "Latin America Wants Canada In The OAS," The Commentator, 6:5 (May 1962), p.19.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.20.

progress and technological development.

Summary

For most of the period in question, the debate over the membership issue was waged largely--though not exclusively--in academic circles. At various points in time, the question of joining the OAS received serious consideration at the political level in Canada. From a bureaucratic standpoint, the question was monitored on a regular basis and reviewed, on occasion, in an indepth fashion. Almost invariably, the response from the bureaucracy and the Cabinet was the same--namely, the time for joining the OAS had not yet arrived. While the book on the OAS was not completely closed, it was placed on the shelf. Or, as one interested observer has noted: The issue of Canadian membership in the OAS--especially during the early 1980s--was placed in "semi-permanent sleep."¹⁰⁸

Still, by examining the various arguments and reasons proffered by both proponents and opponents of OAS membership, one gets a good sense of the complexity of the issue. Clearly, it is not a question which lends itself to simple analysis and clear-cut answers. As the discussion in the preceding pages illustrates, there are many actors,

¹⁰⁸ This reference to "semi-permanent sleep" was borrowed from written correspondence from David R. Murray, 14 June 1990.

forces, and opinions in play. Perhaps the multiplicity of variables goes some way toward explaining why Canadian governments have, over the years, appeared so undecided or uncertain about the issue.

What is certain, though, is the consistency in terms of actors participating in the membership debates. Generally speaking, the political leadership, the bureaucracy, Parliament, the academic community, the media, and foreign governments--in some form or another--shaped the debate throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. What is equally noticeable over the course of these years is the extent to which the political leadership (including the cabinet) and the foreign policy-making bureaucracy in Canada were key players in the debate. To be sure, if both the political leadership and the bureaucracy had been strongly in favour of admission, the debate would have ended in the early 1960s. As it was, the two groups, for a variety of reasons, were unconvinced of the merits of joining the hemispheric body. The resulting lack of political will made it highly unlikely that any affirmative decision on the membership issue would be forthcoming.

Just as the main players have remained relatively consistent over the years, so, too, have the principal reasons for and against joining the OAS. Those espousing membership tended to buttress their position by arguing the following: that admission was part of Canada's

responsibilities as a hemispheric actor, that it would strengthen Canada's ties and influence in Latin America, that it should have a seat at the table in order to participate fully in the issues confronting the hemisphere, and that it would enable Canada to advance and protect its inter-American interests. Conversely, those favouring non-membership always seemed to come back to the same arguments--namely, that it would have a negative impact on Canada-U.S. relations, that the OAS was constantly in a state of disarray and paralysis, and that Canada could solidify its relations, and better obtain its objectives, through stronger bilateral, as opposed to multilateral, contacts. Throughout these years, each camp would regurgitate, with minor adjustments, these same themes and arguments to underscore their respective positions.

But it is not simply the staying power of these arguments throughout the decades that is striking. What is just as interesting is the fact that while the domestic and international environments changed considerably, analysis and debate on the membership issue remained largely the same. The result was a noticeable tendency on the part of both proponents and opponents to bolster, or to justify, their arguments by drawing upon the changing nature of these environments. For instance, proponents of admission would point to the growing strength of the Latin American republics or the maturity of Canada itself and the

resiliency of the Canada-U.S. relationship to counter the other side's arguments. Similarly, opponents of joining would almost invariably note disparagingly the crises in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, or Chile to underpin their arguments against membership. In other words, both sides--rather than adjusting their thinking and arguments to reflect the changes in the domestic and external environments--simply incorporated them into their pre-conceived positions. As a result, much of the analysis was characterized less by critical and evolving thinking and more by complacency and sterility.

In any event, neither the reasons for, nor those against, membership were particularly convincing. It is difficult to understand why Canada should refrain from joining the principal hemispheric institution for financial reasons, reservations about reforming the body, or out of fear of antagonizing officialdom in Washington. At the same time, it seems somewhat strange to seek membership in the OAS on the basis of Canada being "a nation of the Americas," that joining is a prerequisite to stronger relations with Latin America, or because it would better enable Canada to deal with the multitude of serious problems facing the hemisphere. Clearly, many of the arguments articulated by both sides in the debate were weak, unsubstantiated, and--in many cases--not sufficiently thought out.

In some ways, then, the debate throughout the 1960s,

1970s, and 1980s has missed the mark. Both sides failed to develop their arguments from a single, key question-- specifically, what are Canada's principal policy objectives in the hemisphere? Only after this question has been answered and clarified should a debate over the actually means for achieving those aims have taken place. In other words, the debate should not have revolved around the reasons for or against membership in the OAS. Rather, it should have focused on the most appropriate and effective means of enabling Canada to advance its interests and to secure its hemispheric policy objectives. Simply put, the issue should not have been about joining or not joining per se, but whether Canada could best achieve its policy goals in Latin America from within, or without, the OAS.

Chapter Eight

Canada Joins the OAS: Anatomy of a Decision

Although past government statements on OAS membership were often preceded by a period of public discussion and input, this was not to hold true in the final months of 1989. Unlike previous Canadian governments, which would periodically express their views on the membership question, there was no sense of precisely where the Conservative government of Brian Mulroney stood on the issue. Hence, when word that his government was on the verge of opting for full membership in the hemispheric forum reached the public domain in late August 1989, it came as a startling development to many.¹

The Prime Minister's admittedly opaque reference to OAS membership amounted to a "bolt out of the blue," leaving seasoned pundits and area specialists in a state of disbelief.² Furthermore, there was virtually no evidence of

¹ Since government documentation on this decision is unavailable for public perusal, this chapter relies extensively on confidential interviews and written correspondence with key policy-makers in the Department of External Affairs.

² See, Brian J.R. Stevenson, "Canada and the OAS: A New Era Emerges?" (A CAPA Working Paper, 1991), p.3 and Bob Hepburn, "Americas club may be going bust just as Canada prepares to join," The Toronto Star, 15 October 1989.

any serious debate on the question in the months leading up to the announcement--contrasting sharply with past occasions of informed debate and analysis--within Parliament, the academic community, the media, and the public in general. Lastly, word that Canada was contemplating joining the organization was broached in Kennebunkport, Maine, where the Prime Minister was vacationing with George Bush. This fact alone served to create the public perception that the Prime Minister was merely kowtowing to the wishes of the U.S. President.³

Once the initial period of wonderment subsided, a token debate ensued in the Canadian print media. Not surprisingly, the focal point of the debate echoed past treatment of the issue--namely, a detailing of the pros and cons of membership.⁴ This time, though, there was some discussion or "mystery" about where the actual idea to join the organization was contrived. One political commentator suggested that the initiative was first hatched in the Prime

³ Apparently, officials in External Affairs were angered over the fact that Prime Minister Mulroney informed the press of his discussions with Bush on the possibility of Canadian membership in the OAS. Confidential interview with a former senior DEA official, 12 August 1991.

⁴ See, for example, Stephen J. Randall, "Think twice before joining the OAS," The Globe and Mail, 26 October 1989, p.A7; Jeffrey Simpson, "The folly of joining the OAS," The Globe and Mail, 4 October 1989, p.A6; Allan Gotlieb, "Arguments against joining the OAS form a tired old refrain," The Globe and Mail, 23 October 1989, p.A6, and Donat Pharand, "Greater world role awaits Canada in the Americas," The Globe and Mail, 3 October 1989, p.A8.

Minister's Office (PMO).⁵ Others have argued that it could have been little more than an arbitrary decision on the part of the Prime Minister himself, who was apparently quite impressed with the ornate splendour of the OAS building in Washington.⁶ All this has led Brian J.R. Stevenson to contend that the notion of Canada joining the OAS, at least on the surface, "occurred with little reason or necessity."⁷

Given this mystery of sorts, this chapter sheds some much-needed light on the dynamics surrounding Canada's decision to join the OAS.⁸ In other words, it is intended to outline the various reasons or factors which account for why the federal government opted for full membership. In order to do so in a cogent and structured fashion, this writer employs the explanatory framework developed by Charles F. Hermann--which is geared specifically toward understanding and explaining foreign policy decisions.⁹ After an

⁵ Jeffrey Simpson, op. cit.

⁶ Confidential interview with a DEA official in Washington, 5 March 1991.

⁷ Stevenson, "Entering the Inter-American System: Canada and the OAS in the 1990s," (unpublished paper, March 1991), p.ii.

⁸ The decision to seek full membership in the hemispheric body was made by the full Cabinet on 4 October 1989. Written correspondence with a former senior DEA official, 14 July 1991.

⁹ Hermann, who has written extensively on comparative foreign policy, delineates his framework in "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy," International Studies Quarterly, 34:2 (1990), pp.3-21.

examination of the sources or determinants of the policy decision, it concludes with some general observations about the decision-making process itself.

Hermann's explanatory framework

Charles F. Hermann bases his framework of analysis on one overriding premise--namely, that the processes of government play a central role in changing a state's foreign policy. Stated differently, when a state alters its foreign policy direction, it does so in response to the exigencies of a decision-making process. This process, in turn, can either impede or facilitate a change in foreign policy direction. In order to bring about a redirection in foreign policy, Hermann argues that "agents must act on the governmental decision process."¹⁰ His conception of a decision-making process falls somewhere in between the "sources" or "agents" of change and the actual nature of the foreign policy change itself.

On the subject of what precisely constitutes a "change" in foreign policy, Hermann offers an admittedly simplistic definition.¹¹ A change in foreign policy, writes Hermann,

¹⁰ Hermann, op. cit., p.13.

¹¹ While Hermann does concern himself with what he refers to as a "fundamental" foreign policy change, his framework can be applied effectively to the OAS membership decision. This writer is not, however, suggesting that the Mulroney government's decision to join the OAS represents a fundamental redirection in Canadian foreign policy. Nevertheless, the decision to seek full membership does fit

"occurs when the existing government elects to move in a different policy direction."¹² In a similar vein, he notes that change results when the political leadership of a state chooses to alter the course of its foreign policy. This change, whether of a minor or major nature, takes the form of at least "four graduated levels."

Hermann's first level of policy change comes under the heading of "adjustment changes."¹³ These types of changes "occur in the level of effort (greater or lesser) and/or in the scope of recipients (such as refinement in the class of targets)."¹⁴ Nothing changes, though, in terms of the original purpose of the policy, the tactics employed, and the initial reasons underpinning the policy itself. He refers to his second level of change, in contrast with the first, as "program changes." Changes of this nature, according to Hermann, "are made in the methods or means by which the goal or problem is addressed."¹⁵ He goes on to note that program changes involve alterations in terms of techniques or methods of diplomacy. Consequently, he would expect "to find changes in the configuration of instruments,

within the definitional parameters delineated by Hermann.

¹² Hermann, op. cit., p.5.

¹³ This first level of policy change does not fall within Hermann's definition of major foreign policy change.

¹⁴ Hermann, op. cit., p.5.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.5.

in the level of commitment, and probably in the degree of expressed affect."¹⁶

He categorizes his third level of policy change as "problem/goal changes." Policy changes of this type involve the replacement or forfeiting of the initial or original problem or goal. "In this foreign policy change," writes Hermann, "the purposes themselves are replaced."¹⁷ As for his fourth level of policy change, he calls it "international orientation changes." For him, this is the most dramatic form of foreign policy change, involving "the redirection of the actor's entire orientation toward world affairs."¹⁸ Put another way, this type of change represents a major shift in a state's role and station in the international system. Accompanying this shift would, of course, be a number of changes to a wide range of policies, including those of a foreign policy nature.¹⁹

Hermann moves from his classification of various levels of change into a delineation of "sources" or "agents" of foreign policy change. In many ways, his list of change-agents draws upon the major strains or approaches to the study of foreign policy. He breaks them down into four

16 Ibid., p.6.

17 Ibid., p.5.

18 Ibid., p.5.

19 Ibid., p.6.

specific sources of change: leader-driven, bureaucratic advocacy, domestic restructuring, and external shocks. For the most part, all of these agents of change are bounded by a key assumption--specifically, that each source, in order to foster change in the foreign policy realm, must act upon the governmental decision-making process.²⁰

Leader-driven change, for its part, revolves around the actions and mindsets of key political leaders. According to Hermann, "change results from the determined efforts of an authoritative policy-maker, frequently the head of government, who imposes his own vision of the basic redirection necessary in foreign policy."²¹ For a government to change course, then, the leader must possess considerable power, energy, and conviction.²² As for his bureaucratic advocacy, it concentrates mainly on how administrative entities in government can effectively work to induce change. In other words, changes of a foreign policy nature occur when "a group within the government becomes an advocate of redirection."²³ Although the precise nature of this group is of minor importance, it is crucial that it

²⁰ Ibid., p.13.

²¹ Ibid., p.11.

²² Presumably, a government leader who is perceived as weak and indecisive would have great difficulty, and face far more obstacles, in his/her quest to effect a change in foreign policy.

²³ Hermann, op. cit., p.11.

have "some means for regular interaction" and "be sufficiently well placed to have some access to top officials."²⁴

The last two sources of foreign policy change are clearly broader in scope. Domestic restructuring, for instance, "refers to the politically relevant segment of society whose support a regime needs to govern and the possibility that this segment of society can become an agent of change."²⁵ While the dynamics of restructuring will not be uniform, there is one common thread: "foreign policy redirection occurs when elites with power to legitimate the government either change their views or themselves alter in composition."²⁶ From an international or global standpoint, Hermann emphasizes that external shocks should not be confused with modest events which have only a marginal impact on decision-making. Rather, they are "sources of foreign policy change that result from dramatic international events."²⁷ Their high visibility and immediate impact, in turn, quickly set into motion a reevaluation and redirection in foreign policy.

²⁴ Ibid., pp.11-12.

²⁵ Ibid., p.12.

²⁶ Ibid., p.12.

²⁷ Ibid., p.12.

It is instructive to note, however, that Hermann's various sources of foreign policy change are not all necessarily active at the same time. Stated differently, there may only be two sources of change in play at a given time, and they are likely to interact with each other. As he explains: "They may work in tandem, or one (such as an external shock) may activate another (a leader-driven initiative) which in turn creates the redirection of foreign policy."²⁸ Simply put, there could be--depending upon the circumstances--various combinations of the four change-agents acting on the decision-making process.

Explaining Canada's policy change vis-à-vis the OAS

Although the Mulroney government's decision to join the OAS did not signify a "fundamental" shift in foreign policy, it did represent a notable departure from past Canadian governments.²⁹ As the Prime Minister himself said at the San Jose hemispheric summit in October 1989: "Canada's presence here today signals a new departure in our relations with

²⁸ Ibid., p.12.

²⁹ It is interesting to note that there is just a single reference to the OAS in the Conservative government's 1985 foreign policy review. Furthermore, there is no mention of the organization in the Department of External Affairs' report, Canada's International Relations: Response of the Government of Canada to the Report of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1986).

Latin America."³⁰ Indeed, successive Canadian governments have for decades been reluctant to join the organization as a full member. Even the Trudeau government's cautious move in 1972 to institutionalize permanent observer status was basically a variation on Canada's traditional penchant for remaining aloof from the body.

Acknowledging this departure from past Canadian governments, however, does little to reveal why the Mulroney government opted for membership in late 1989.³¹ By employing Hermann's framework of analysis, though, the purported mystery surrounding the actual decision to join can be unravelled. With the help of his various sources of foreign policy change, the decision itself can be better understood and explained.³²

The decision to seek admission to the OAS fits nicely into Hermann's conception of a major change in foreign policy. It seems to meet the criteria of his second level of change, which he refers to as "program changes." For instance, joining the hemispheric forum clearly represented a new or different "means" for dealing with inter-American

³⁰ Notes for an address by The Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, 27 October 1989, p.5.

³¹ Canada did not officially become a member of the OAS until 8 January 1990, when Ambassador Jean-Paul Hubert formally signed the Charter.

³² The only source of change that is not employed in this case study is domestic restructuring.

affairs. At the same time, it signified a new instrument of statecraft, through which Canada's relations with the Commonwealth Caribbean and Latin America could be enhanced. Moreover, it entails changes in "what" will be done and "how" relations with the hemisphere are conducted, while leaving the principal goals of the Canadian government--such as regional stability and prosperity--largely intact.

The political leadership

Hermann's framework, which was useful in terms of delineating the nature of the change, can also be utilized to explain why the change occurred. Prime Minister Mulroney, and his then Secretary of State for External Affairs (SSEA) Joe Clark, played a crucial role in the decision to seek full membership. According to Clark, after the return to power of the Conservatives in 1988 "the Prime Minister and I began to consider areas in which it would be sensible for Canada to take new initiatives."³³ Evidently, one of those areas was Latin America, which Canadian governments have

³³ Testimony of The Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada, House of Commons, Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, 34th Parliament, 2nd session, No.25, 8 November 1989, p.13.

traditionally viewed as a low priority region.³⁴ Both men, then, appeared to be willing to consider new departures in Canadian foreign policy, including the broadening of linkages with the wider hemisphere.

Obviously, the Prime Minister was a central figure in the decision to seek admission. According to Stevenson, "it appeared as though the decision to join came from the clear blue sky and was perhaps simply an arbitrary decision made by the Prime Minister himself."³⁵ To be sure, Prime Minister Mulroney plays a leading role in setting the major themes and direction of Canadian foreign policy.³⁶ For instance, during the Persian Gulf crisis, he preferred to make key foreign policy decisions largely by himself, with the help of a handful of key ministers and advisers.³⁷ It is inconceivable, then, that Mulroney--always anxious to appear decisive--would not have played a pivotal part in the

³⁴ It is conceivable that both Clark and Mulroney saw Latin America as an area in which the Conservative government--particularly if it undertook such an initiative as joining the OAS--could clearly differentiate itself from the foreign policy of previous Liberal governments.

³⁵ Stevenson, *Canada and the OAS*, op. cit., p.3.

³⁶ Recently, he was the driving force behind Canada's sudden granting of diplomatic recognition to the three Baltic republics. See, Ross Howard and Graham Fraser, "Ottawa extends recognition to Baltics," The Globe and Mail, 27 August 1991, p.A6.

³⁷ See, Hugh Winsor, "Mulroney calls shots on gulf policy," The Globe and Mail, 18 January 1991, p.A1.

decision to join the OAS.³⁸

The accession to membership can also be viewed in conjunction with the Prime Minister's penchant for establishing close relations with the United States. Put another way, the decision to seek admission could be seen as more of an outgrowth of Mulroney's desire to cultivate closer bilateral relations with the behemoth to the south. Or, more specifically, this could be seen as a natural progression or product of his continentalist vision, consistent with his government's negotiation of the 1988 Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA).³⁹ In this context, the decision to join can be viewed more in terms of Canada-U.S. relations than Canadian-Latin American relations.

³⁸ It is possible to view the policy change on the membership issue from a "symbolic politics" standpoint. Put another way, the decision to seek admission to the OAS carried with it symbolic import--such as distinguishing the Mulroney government from previous Liberal administrations. It is also likely that the Prime Minister wanted to be part of the club which included among its ranks the major countries of the inter-American community. In addition, the decision signalled Canada's willingness to take Latin America more seriously. In this context, Canada's relations with the Americas had matured to the point where full membership in the OAS became symbolically significant. The author would like to thank Dr. Edgar J. Dosman for suggesting this explanatory approach.

³⁹ It is possible that the Prime Minister's thinking was influenced by the prospect of increased economic benefits for Canada. In May of 1989, a group of Brazilian businessmen urged him to get more involved in Latin America, especially with such major players as Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela. Apparently, they suggested that there would be potential economic dividends for Canada if it opted for full membership in the OAS. Confidential interview with a former DEA official, 12 August 1991.

In any event, the Prime Minister's remarks to the San José summit helped to shed some light on why he felt "the time has come for Canada to occupy the vacant chair at the OAS that has been reserved for us all these years."⁴⁰ There seemed to be a realization on the part of the Prime Minister that Trudeau's "concentrated bilateralism" of the early 1980s was no longer satisfactory and that Canada had interests in the hemisphere that needed to be protected and promoted.⁴¹ The onset of a superpower entente and growing "interdependence," he argued, had left Canada with little choice but to confront the major issues--which impact directly upon Canadian interests--facing the hemisphere. As he indicated: "Interdependence is making us all partners in each other's burdens, participants in each other's prosperity, and architects of each other's dreams."⁴² Stated differently, Canada can no longer avoid the "tentacle-like" implications of such major hemispheric issues as environmental destruction, drug-trafficking, foreign debt,

⁴⁰ Notes for an address, op. cit., p.5.

⁴¹ Some have speculated that the Prime Minister would not have accepted the invitation to participate in the hemispheric summit unless he had something substantial to say about Canada's place in the inter-American community. In this way, the summit served to prod the government toward opting for full membership. Written correspondence from a former Canadian permanent observer to the OAS, 8 January 1991 and J.C.M. Ogelsby, "Membership a waste of time, money unless Canada takes initiatives," The London Free Press, 12 January 1990, p.A11.

⁴² Notes for an address, op. cit., p.4.

and migration. For the Prime Minister, the best means of dealing with these serious problems--which would inevitably require concerted hemispheric co-operation--was through the existing structures and activities of the OAS. In his words: "It can unify us in the pursuit of solutions to these problems that we have in common."⁴³

Then External Affairs Minister Joe Clark, like the Prime Minister, was keen on seeing a greater role for Canada in Latin America.⁴⁴ He was, according to some DEA officials, receptive to Latin American points of view as well as cognizant of Canadian interests in the region.⁴⁵ He was in agreement with those who argued that those interests have to take into account the fact that the world is becoming increasingly "regional" in nature. More specifically, that it is being divided into three major blocs: Europe, the Pacific, and the Americas.⁴⁶ And if Canada did not want to be left on the sidelines as a passive spectator simply

⁴³ Ibid., p.4.

⁴⁴ Simon Fisher, "Canada seeks larger Latin American role, Clark says," The Globe and Mail, 22 June 1989, p.B8.

⁴⁵ Clark's contact with other foreign ministers from Latin America, particularly those of the Rio Group, helped to shape his favourable view of the region. He had also visited a number of Central American countries--including Sandinista Nicaragua--in the fall of 1987. At the same time, Latin American officials were privately urging him to bring Canada into the OAS family as a full member. Confidential interview with a former DEA official, 12 August 1991.

⁴⁶ Hugh Winsor, "Joe where?," The Globe and Mail, 17 November 1990, p.D1.

watching the process of global restructuring unfold, it would have to move toward strengthening its ties with the hemisphere.

One way of solidifying and consolidating these linkages was for Canada to join the OAS. This move was not only in line with Clark's desire for closer relations with Latin American countries, but it was also consistent with his vision of a "new internationalism" or "constructive internationalism" for Canada.⁴⁷ That internationalism, at least in Clark's eyes, should echo past experiences of middle powermanship--namely, seeking Canadian involvement in multilateral institutions.⁴⁸ Emulating past exponents of liberal internationalism, he subscribed to the view that Canada is "a country whose skills and independence have

⁴⁷ This "new" internationalism appears to refer to an increased desire on the part of Canada to work more actively through multilateral organizations (i.e. UN, Commonwealth, NATO, G-7, GATT, CSCE, and La francophonie) to deal with such issues as apartheid, trade liberalization, Third World poverty, and arms control and disarmament. Perhaps it was a realization that the issues cluttering the world agenda are now increasingly "international" in scope. See, John Kirton, "Canada's New Internationalism," Current History, 87:527 (March 1988), pp.101-104 and p.134; Andrew Cohen, "Canada's Foreign Policy: The Outlook for the Second Mulroney Mandate," Behind the Headlines, 46:1 (Summer 1989), pp.1-3, and Tom Keating, "In Search of a Foreign Policy," in J. Richards, R. Cairns, and L. Pratt, (eds.), Social Democracy Without Illusions, (McClelland and Stewart, 1991), pp.158-160.

⁴⁸ The Right Honourable Joe Clark, "Canada's New Internationalism," in John W. Holmes and John Kirton, (eds.), Canada and the New Internationalism, (Toronto: Canadian Institute for International Affairs, 1988), pp.3-11.

helped breathe life into multilateral organizations."⁴⁹ Clearly, Clark believed that Canada--as a full-fledged member of the OAS--could make a positive contribution to the forum, employing its diplomatic expertise and its unique brand of pragmatism in hopes of minimizing confrontation within the forum.

Through this judicious use of its diplomatic skills, Clark also believed that Canadian officials could work to revitalize and strengthen the body. Clark was likely of the mind that these officials would be better situated to influence the OAS reform process from the inside rather than from a semi-detached position. While he admitted in his Calgary speech that the OAS could not by itself solve all the problems of the hemisphere, he pointed out that it can be transformed into a forum where meaningful political dialogue can take place.⁵⁰ And as he indicated in his testimony before the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade (SCEAIT): "We are there because we can probably help the organization work more effectively and contribute to the general achievement of goals in the

⁴⁹ Notes for a speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, The Right Honourable Joe Clark, to the University of Calgary on Canadian policy towards Latin America, 1 February 1990, p.3.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp.6-7.

region."⁵¹

Clark's testimony before SCEAIT was instructive because it provided some insight into his thinking on the membership decision. He believed that joining the OAS was an effective means of symbolizing Canada's commitment to expand its ties with the region--especially from an economic standpoint. As he stated before the committee: "The long-term potential for trade with Latin America is tremendous."⁵² He obviously felt that membership would better position Canada to take advantage of future trade and investment opportunities in the region. This point was further reinforced when he later noted: "We think the fact of joining the OAS creates a sense of being part of the family in Latin America. We think it can lead to more constructive, durable trade links."⁵³

This rhetoric about Canada needing to feel a part of the hemispheric community also helps to explain why Clark felt that the time was ripe for joining.⁵⁴ These rhetorical flights reached a crescendo when Clark, speaking before the

⁵¹ Testimony of The Right Honourable Joe Clark, op. cit., p.18.

⁵² Ibid., p.8.

⁵³ Ibid., p.28.

⁵⁴ Evidently, Clark was not deterred by the prospect of Canada having to disagree publicly with the United States. In an exchange with NDP member Bill Blaikie he stated: "If from time to time the United States does something in the OAS that we think is flagrantly outrageous, we will say so, as we have done in the past." Ibid., p.19.

Permanent Council of the OAS, opined: "For too long, Canadians have seen this hemisphere as our house; it is now time to make it our home."⁵⁵ Notwithstanding these platitudes, Clark believed that the time had come for Canada, as a nation of the Americas, to assume its obligations and responsibilities.⁵⁶ In other words, he felt that Canada was duty-bound to confront--in partnership with other countries of the Americas--the myriad problems facing the hemisphere.

Many of these problems--such as debt, drugs, the environment, and development--have implications for Canada. Full membership in the OAS, according to Clark, would give Canada a seat at the table to engage with both voice and vote on those issues which impact upon Canadian interests. As Clark explained: "We have a responsibility to be at the table when issues of importance to us are discussed, and we have an obligation to speak out when our interests are threatened or our values are under attack."⁵⁷ Through admission into the OAS, then, he felt that Canada would be better able to not only protect its interests, but also to

⁵⁵ Notes for remarks by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, The Right Honourable Joe Clark, at the meeting of the Council of the Organization of American States, Washington, D.C., 13 November 1989, p.1.

⁵⁶ Testimony of The Right Honourable Joe Clark, op. cit., p.7.

⁵⁷ Testimony of The Right Honourable Joe Clark, op. cit., p.10.

shape the formulation and implementation of various responses to major hemispheric issues.

The foreign policy bureaucracy

The foreign policy bureaucracy, like the political leadership in Canada, was also a major force behind the government's decision to seek membership. In line with Hermann's framework, it played the role of "advocate." Senior officials from the Latin America and Caribbean bureau and the South America Relations desk, in particular, were involved heavily in influencing the government's thinking toward the OAS.⁵⁸ After an internal review of Canada's policy toward Latin America in 1989, these same officials recommended to the government that it should seek full membership in the hemispheric forum.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ There was some consultation with business groups, academics, and non-governmental organizations at a colloquium held at Carleton University in early May 1989.

⁵⁹ It is instructive to note that the foreign policy bureaucracy put forth a variety of recommendations, including increased diplomatic representation in the region and additional trade missions and exchanges, as part of an overall strategy for strengthening Canada's ties with Latin America. For many years, the Latin Americanists in DEA were professionally demoralized and disillusioned with the lack of official government interest in the region. It is possible that joining the OAS was not only a way of grabbing the attention of the minister, but also an institutional means of getting the government to pay more attention to the region. They hoped that Latin America would become a sort of "fourth pillar" of Canadian foreign policy, after the United States, Europe, and Asia-Pacific. Confidential interview with a former DEA official, 12 August 1991.

The significance of this recommendation should not be overlooked or underestimated. Although the bureaucracy believed that the costs of membership outweighed the benefits in 1983, there was a complete reversal in 1989.⁶⁰ There was a sense among a small clutch of officials, who were for many years opposed to the idea of membership, that it was time for Canada to accept a larger role within the inter-American community. According to one senior official, they came to the conclusion that "Canada is a nation of the Americas not only geographically but politically, economically and culturally."⁶¹ And if one is to accept this premise, they felt, then it was only logical that Canada should join the OAS.⁶²

Full membership in the hemispheric forum was also consistent with the view, espoused by senior foreign policy bureaucrats, that the dynamics of inter-American affairs had changed considerably. For example, they believed that the role or influence of the United States in the hemisphere, particularly in hegemonic terms, had noticeably declined. In

⁶⁰ After reviewing Canada's policy toward Latin America in 1982-83, the department advised then-Secretary of State for External Affairs Allan MacEachen not to seek full membership in the OAS.

⁶¹ Ambassador Richard V. Gorham, "Canada's New Policy Initiatives in Latin America," (Remarks to the Canada-Brazil Chamber of Commerce, Montreal, 16 April 1990), p.7.

⁶² Confidential interview with a former senior DEA official, 20 August 1991.

fact, they felt that Washington, after the Falklands/Malvinas debacle, the U.S. invasion of Grenada, and its support for the contra rebels in Nicaragua,⁶³ had become increasingly isolated from the inter-American community. As one senior official remarked: "The United States no longer plays such a dominant role in the OAS or in the hemisphere."⁶⁴

In addition to this realization, these same officials acknowledged that Latin American political and economic life had taken on a new look.⁶⁵ They were especially cognizant of

⁶³ Officials also informed their political masters of the fact that Canada, despite its support for the Sandinista government and the Central American peace process in general, suffered absolutely no serious repercussions from the United States.

⁶⁴ Ambassador Richard V. Gorham, "The Organization of American States (OAS): What Is It and Why Did Canada Join?," (Notes for remarks from a luncheon meeting of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, Halifax, N.S., 16 May 1990), p.17.

⁶⁵ By 1988, Canada had become increasingly involved in both the Contadora/Esquipulas peace process, culminating in the sending of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) personnel to participate in the UN/OAS peacekeeping force (ONUCA). It is worth noting that the conflicts in Central America did serve to sensitize Canadian officials to the region. In fact, it actually fostered the first cadre of interdepartmental officials (from DEA, DND, and CIDA) versed in Latin American affairs. While this growing involvement and awareness was not a central reason underpinning the government's decision to join the OAS, it did create a positive atmosphere for such an eventuality. Confidential interview with a former senior DEA official in the Latin America and Caribbean bureau, 27 January 1992. For a discussion of Canada's participation in the Contadora peace process 1983-1986, see John Graham, "Shaping Stability in Central America," in John Holmes and John Kirton, (eds.), Canada and the New Internationalism, pp.35-40.

the growing role that Latin America was certain to play in international affairs (e.g. global trade talks, environmental concerns, and economic development questions). At the same time, they noticed that a number of Latin American countries were exhibiting clear signs of support for regional co-operation and consultation, particularly on issues such as debt, drug-trafficking, trade, and the environment.⁶⁶ These countries, led mainly by the Rio Group, also began to look more toward the OAS as the appropriate institutional framework within which to confront pressing hemispheric issues and to pursue their objectives. As a result, Latin American countries--especially after the ratification of the Protocol of Cartagena--began to take the organization more seriously.⁶⁷ All these factors, when taken together, led foreign policy officials to conclude that the timing was propitious for Canadian membership.

In addition to these hemispheric considerations, DEA officials were convinced of the practical merits of seeking

⁶⁶ By the mid-1980s, a number of alternative approaches were created to deal with the region's myriad difficulties--including the Contadora/Esquipulas Group, the Cartagena Group, and the Rio Group.

⁶⁷ Canadian officials were well aware that under the Cartagena reforms to the OAS, both Guyana and Belize would have been eligible for full membership in December 1990. (The two countries subsequently became official members in January 1991). If they were to opt for full membership at that time, Canada would have been the only country of the Americas not a full-fledged member of the body. This situation, and the potential embarrassment for Ottawa, was not lost on the minds of foreign policy mandarins.

membership. They believed that joining the OAS would enhance Canada's relations with the Caribbean micro-states, which had advocated Canadian admission for a number of years. Not only would it send a positive indication of Canada's commitment to this area, but it would also open up new opportunities for Canadian-Caribbean interaction, co-operation, and understanding. Similarly, they felt that it would serve as dramatic demonstration, particularly to Canada's Latin friends, of Canada's heightened awareness and interest in the region. Put another way, they were sure that membership would send out a strong signal that Canada's interests extended far beyond the U.S.-Mexican border.⁶⁸

Furthermore, foreign policy mandarins recognized the importance of the OAS to the functioning of the inter-American system. A large part of this recognition was based on the fact that the major issues facing the region tended to transcend national borders and thus would invariably demand international or multi-nation co-operation.⁶⁹ And since the OAS was the principal political institution in the

⁶⁸ There was a sense that if Canada refrained from joining altogether, it would seriously call into question the credibility of Ottawa's stated intention of strengthening its relations with the region. Confidential interview with a former DEA official, 20 August 1991.

⁶⁹ There was also a firm belief that the failure of U.S. policy in Central America and the use of military force in general, along with a hemispheric issue-agenda requiring multi-nation attention and collaboration, had seriously called into question the efficacy of unilateralism.

hemisphere--which brings together all (with the exception of Cuba) the members of the Americas to deal with these "international" questions--they felt that it was in Canada's interests to seek membership. There was also a belief that membership would enable Canada to play a larger role on those issues (e.g. the environment, human rights, debt, and emigration) ⁷⁰ where its interests were at stake. In other words, having a seat at the OAS Council table would increase Ottawa's ability to shape those issues impacting directly upon Canada.⁷¹

Similarly, key foreign policy-makers believed that OAS membership would create a "window of opportunity" for Canada.⁷² Or, more specifically, an opening through which Canada could secure increased economic and political benefits. They tended to work under the assumption that

⁷⁰ Recently, the implications of large-scale migratory flows of economic refugees were explained in pointed fashion by Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari. See, Madelaine Drohan and Peter Cook, "Trade or face immigrant flood, Salinas warns," The Globe and Mail, 5 April 1991, p.B1.

⁷¹ For instance, officials felt that membership would give Canada a greater say on how the debt problem would be approached, especially on the form which the various proposals for tackling it would take. They were well aware of the fact that Canadian chartered banks have outstanding loans to a number of Latin American and Caribbean countries totalling more than \$27 billion. This figure was taken from Claude Isbister, "Third World Debt: IMF and the World Bank," Behind the Headlines, (March 1987), p.10.

⁷² Confidential interview with a former senior DEA official, 20 August 1991.

admission to the "club" was linked directly to improved trade relations between Canada and various Latin American countries.⁷³ In the words of one senior official: "For one thing, never again will Canadian businessmen be faced with the embarrassing question of why does Canada not become a member of the OAS."⁷⁴ Removing this stigma, then, was seen as a means of creating a better atmosphere or climate within which trade promotion and investment opportunities would be enhanced.

From a purely political standpoint, department officials were even more enthusiastic about OAS membership.⁷⁵ They were totally convinced that admission would enhance Canada's "influence" in Latin America. Stated differently, membership would place Canada in a better position to galvanize Latin American support in various

⁷³ Officials were aware that Latin America held out the possibility of representing a sizeable market for Canadian goods and services. To be sure, it is projected that by the year 2000, there will be some 600 million people in the region. Already, two-way trade in 1988, which amounted to more than \$6.7 billion, was equivalent to that of Canada's trade with China and a host of South East Asian countries combined. Gorham, "Canada's New Policy Initiatives," op. cit., p.18.

⁷⁴ Gorham, "Canada's New Policy Initiatives," op. cit., p.17.

⁷⁵ Latin American specialists within DEA downplayed somewhat the trade side of the OAS membership equation. In part, this was done to allay the fears of other officials within the department, who were concerned about the possibility of resources being shifted to Latin America at the expense of Europe and Asia-Pacific. Confidential interview with a former DEA official, 20 August 1991.

multilateral fora--including the OAS, the UN, and the GATT--for Canadian positions on the environment, arms control and disarmament, and global trade talks. Additionally, there was a sense that admission would provide Canada with an opportunity to mould the policies of Latin American governments and thus enable it to influence events in the region. In short, officials believed that as a member state--brandishing its G-7 status and its distinction of being the second largest contributor to the organization--Canada would carry more weight in the region and thus be better able to promote respect for human rights, democratic principles, and economic development.

On these issues, and a variety of others, there was a general feeling among foreign policy mandarins that Canada could, as a full-fledged member, make a solid contribution to the OAS.⁷⁶ For instance, by adding Canada's name to the list of member states, they felt that it would immediately raise the prestige and profile of the forum. In addition, Canada had cordial and solid relations with all the members of the organization. This, in turn, could be utilized to reduce the level of polarization between the English- and Spanish-speaking members of the body--a key point given

⁷⁶ They also knew that this contribution could be made without having to sign the Rio Treaty and thus observe the attendant military/security obligations. For all intents and purposes, the security pact, especially after the Falklands/Malvinas conflict, had fallen into disrepute.

Canada's close ties with the English-speaking Caribbean countries. More important, it was thought that Canada, if it planned to influence the reform process at all, should seek membership as soon as possible. Within the institution, they believed that Canada would have a greater opportunity to shape it into an effective hemispheric forum.⁷⁷

Major developments in the region

Further reinforcing the mindset of DEA officials was the series of developments which had recently taken place in the region. Clearly, the onset of these "external shocks," in the parlance of Hermann, played an important part in influencing both the bureaucracy and the political leadership in Canada. To be sure, the fact that Latin America was experiencing a major metamorphosis or transition period--particularly in the areas of democratization and "marketization"--weighed heavily on the minds of those involved in the decision-making process. As Joe Clark commented: "Democracy is sweeping Latin America. Dictatorships are now very much the exception."⁷⁸ In addition, many countries in the region were (and still are) introducing economic reform programmes and opening up their

⁷⁷ Confidential interview with a former senior DEA official, 20 August 1991.

⁷⁸ The Right Honourable Joe Clark, Notes for a speech on Canadian policy towards Latin America, op. cit., p.2.

economies to outside competition.

These key developments, as mentioned, were largely in the political and economic realm. Politically speaking, a large number of countries, including Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Chile, had already begun to institute sweeping democratic reforms. What were once implacable authoritarian or dictatorial regimes were, by the late 1980s, becoming fledgling democracies. While regular elections and political mobilization have not completely erased repression and human rights abuses, the fragile flower of democracy appeared to be taking root.⁷⁹

From an economic standpoint, the changes taking place in the region were equally dramatic. Many Latin American countries were moving away from import-substitution strategies to export-oriented economic policies. Countries such as Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina had implemented major economic adjustment programmes, including the encouragement of foreign investment, cutting tariffs, deregulating services, and wholesale privatization.⁸⁰ Chile, Venezuela,

⁷⁹ For a fuller discussion of these developments, see, José Alvaro Moisés, "Democracy Threatened: The Latin American Paradox," Alternatives, 16:2 (Spring 1991), pp.141-160 and Peter H. Smith, "Crisis And Democracy In Latin America," World Politics, 43:4 (July 1991), pp.608-634.

⁸⁰ See, for example, James Brooke, "Collor plan now turning to privatization, payroll cuts," The Globe and Mail, 21 May 1990, p.B6; Madelaine Drohan, "Reforms take toll on Mexico," The Globe and Mail, 21 November 1990, p.B1, and Paul Knox, "Argentina binds the hand that feeds the economy," The Globe and Mail, 28 May 1991, p.B5.

Uruguay, and Peru, to name only a few, were also quick to introduce market reforms, the elimination of subsidies, and public sector pruning.⁸¹ In short, countries in the region were exhibiting a willingness to enter the world economy and compete for export markets, investment dollars, and new technologies.

These dramatic steps were not only welcomed by the Canadian government, but they also helped to set the stage for Canada's admission to the OAS. Foreign policy officials, and later key decision-makers in the Mulroney government, saw these striking changes or "shocks" as particularly significant. They held out the possibility, if they were to become firmly entrenched, of creating new situations and new opportunities for Canada. Put another way, Canada would be better able to deal with--morally, economically, and politically--the wide array of Latin American countries espousing representative democracy, liberalized economies, and open societies. Changes of this nature, it was felt, could also breathe new life into multilateralism in general and the OAS in particular. And it was felt that through membership in this forum, Canada could work to nurture and

⁸¹ See, Nicole Bonnet, "Bearing the brunt of Fujishock," The Globe and Mail, 6 December 1990, p.B8 and Andrew Hurst, "Latin America's economy looks brighter," The Globe and Mail, 1 December 1990, p.B4.

encourage these positive developments.⁸² The bottom line, then, is that these conditions were simply not in play when previous Canadian governments were examining the membership issue.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was not to justify or commend the Mulroney government on its decision to join the OAS. Instead, it sought to outline the various reasons why the Conservative government did join in late 1989. In other words, it was intended to shed some much-needed light on a policy change that was considered an enigma by many. While it does go some way toward solving the mystery, a number of questions still remain unanswered. For instance, the exact role of the Prime Minister himself, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the Bush White House, and other Latin American leaders was difficult to discern with any certainty. Those questions, however, will have to be answered by those who follow.

In any event, the decision to join the OAS did not represent a fundamental or radical shift in Canadian foreign policy. One should not lose sight of the fact that successive Canadian governments, albeit in an incremental fashion, were moving closer to full membership. It would be

⁸² Confidential interview with a former DEA official, 20 August 1991.

more accurate to say that it marked a departure or change from the manner in which past Canadian governments conducted their relations with Latin America and the Caribbean. While it did amount to more than merely a change of emphasis, it did not signify a dramatic reorientation of Canada's overall policy approach toward the hemisphere. Indeed, Canada's policy objectives toward the hemisphere remained largely intact, while the "means" of helping to attain them was demonstrably altered. In some ways, the change in policy was consistent with the long-tradition of Canadian foreign policy behaviour--namely, promoting hemispheric stability and security, joining international organizations and working with other like-minded nations to advance Canadian interests, and seeking counterweights to a decidedly asymmetric Canada-U.S. relationship.

Nonetheless, the change in government policy did reveal a number of interesting points about the nature of foreign policy-making in Canada. For instance, the decision to join the OAS was influenced by the changing dynamics of the external environment.⁸³ Dramatic changes taking place in Latin America--from the establishment of popularly-elected civilian governments to the introduction of across-the-board market reforms--served to create a more positive image in

⁸³ It is instructive to note that the prevailing international climate in past years often worked against the possibility of OAS membership.

the minds of officials and decision-makers in Ottawa. Consequently, the OAS itself was viewed as a more workable and relevant body as well as one in which these regional developments could be furthered and consolidated. Although these changes did not singularly convince the government to join the organization, they did help to create a favourable climate for such a decision.

On a broader scale, this auspicious climate toward the OAS was also shaped by the changing nature of international politics itself. To be sure, the onset of the post-Cold War period has brought with it a conspicuous change in the international issue-agenda. The traditional "high politics" of war and security issues have been joined by the "low politics" of environmental degradation, narcotics, human rights, and debt. Governments can no longer hope to solve these intractable problems unilaterally and thus are turning increasingly toward multi-nation consultation and co-operation. With multilateralism experiencing somewhat of a resurgence, officialdom in Ottawa viewed the OAS in a more favourable light.

The foreign policy bureaucracy, in particular, was a leading proponent of this view and of the decision to seek membership. Indeed, the very idea of joining was initiated, analyzed, and pushed by the department's Latin American specialists. And it was these same officials who formulated the documents--solely for cabinet perusal--which outlined

the reasons and advantages of Canadian membership.⁸⁴ In short, DEA officials were active supporters, advocates, and players in the decision to join.

It is unlikely, though, that bureaucrats in External Affairs would have recommended membership without some knowledge that the Prime Minister and then SSEA Joe Clark were both supportive of this policy change. Put another way, if the Prime Minister or Clark had harboured serious reservations about such a move, it is unlikely that the government would have adopted the recommendation. It was important, then, that a favourable attitude and a genuine interest in joining the OAS existed at the highest levels of the Canadian government. Hence the making of this foreign policy change was less the result of "bureaucratic politics," domestic political pressures, or foreign prodding, and more the product of top-level governmental commitment and a favourable external climate.

Perhaps the most important feature of the membership decision was the fact that it was the culmination of a decision-making process. To be sure, DEA officials had been reviewing and reevaluating the possibility of Canada joining the OAS months before the topic was broached by Prime Minister Mulroney in Kennebunkport. There were also lengthy

⁸⁴ It is worth mentioning here that the Conservative government did not attempt to "educate" the public--through leaks, consultations with outside groups, and parliamentary hearings--before announcing its intentions to join the OAS.

discussions with other federal departments, and both the Prime Minister and Joe Clark discussed the issue on more than one occasion. Moreover, there were top level consultations with other hemispheric leaders and Latin American officials. Simply put, the decision to join the OAS was not a bolt out of the blue, but rather the result of a lengthy process of examination, consultation, and, lastly, implementation.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

Although the decision by the Mulroney government to join the OAS brought Canada's hemispheric relations more into focus, it was in some ways more of an ending than a beginning. Indeed, a host of Canadian governments--reaching back as far as the government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier--have had a flirting association with the inter-American system. Many of them expressed an interest in developing contacts with the region and in exploiting any available trade and investment opportunities. And while there was a willingness on the part of some of these governments to join a select group of hemispheric bodies, there was also a firm reluctance to seek membership in the major institutional entities of the inter-American community--namely, the Pan American Union (PAU) and the OAS.

Canada's penchant for remaining aloof--or preferring the role of a dilettante--from these organizations was based on a number of real concerns and serious reservations. Initially, it was the active opposition of the United States and Ottawa's essentially British-directed foreign policy which effectively precluded Canada from seeking full

membership.¹ In later years, Canadian governments, from Mackenzie King onward, questioned the wisdom of joining such a hemispheric forum. Almost invariably, concerns about U.S. dominance of the body, along with a noticeable lack of appreciation for things Latin American, and a preference for a more Atlantic- and Commonwealth-oriented foreign policy, led decision-makers in Ottawa to shy away from the hemisphere in general and its institutional off-shoots in particular. By the 1960s and early 1970s, fears of jeopardizing the overall Canada-U.S. relationship, a general disillusionment with the OAS itself (particularly in the wake of the 1962 expulsion of Cuba and the 1965 U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic, when it was clear that Washington sought to use the organization as an instrument in the conduct of its foreign policy), and the actual dollar cost of membership tended to convince officialdom in Ottawa of the merits of remaining outside the hemispheric forum. Similarly, the mid-1970s and the 1980s echoed many of the reservations that held currency during the 1960s and the early 1970s, with a general feeling that the perceived costs of full membership outweighed any possible benefits.

Debating these very costs and benefits was an issue which engaged interested Canadians inside and outside of

¹ This writer has found no evidence that would suggest that the U.S. government played any direct role in pressing the Mulroney government to join the OAS.

government. Obviously, the political leadership in Canada, along with the Department of External Affairs (DEA), discussed and deliberated upon the merits of OAS membership.² Of course, the academic community--led by a small number of Latin Americanists--entered the fray with a bevy of arguments for and against membership. So, too, did the media, Parliament, and interest groups in Canada--but to a much lesser degree--proffer their views on the advantages and disadvantages of joining. Regrettably, the Canadian public, for the most part, remained both uninformed and uninterested in the membership question and the OAS in general.

Notwithstanding an apathetic public, the Mulroney government reversed Canada's long-standing aversion to membership in the organization. But with the requisite key political support at the top, and a supportive bureaucracy, the government moved quickly to alter almost 90 years of hitherto non-membership. For a variety of reasons, then, the Conservative government felt that the time was ripe for occupying Canada's "empty chair" at the Council table. Recognizing Latin America's growing role in international affairs, the changing economic and political climate in the region (especially economic liberalization and

² In some ways, the decision to join the OAS was consistent with past Canadian foreign policy-making behaviour--particularly in terms of the evolutionary nature of the policy change.

democratization), the potential for a hemispheric trading bloc, and a determination to consolidate Canada's expanding linkages with the region all worked to paint a favourable picture of full membership in the forum. In a word, the perceived benefits of admission were interpreted at that time as outweighing any possible costs to Canada.

While the decision to seek admission did not represent a fundamental change in Canadian foreign policy, it did reveal a number of points about how the Mulroney government viewed Canadian-Latin American relations.³ First, the decision showed a commitment on the part of Ottawa to play a greater role in hemispheric affairs. Secondly, it signalled the government's recognition of the growing importance of Latin America to Canada.⁴ Thirdly, it represented an attempt

³ Future analysts might wish to apply other approaches to the OAS membership decision. It is not my intention here, however, to engage in a debate about the merits of the interest-based or realist approach versus a political economy or marxist interpretation. Various aspects of Graham Allison's explanatory models tended to be more appropriate in the case of the OAS decision. For those of a more neo-marxist persuasion, there was little active evidence of any societal influences or non-governmental activity. Still, this case study is rich for the application of other explanatory approaches.

⁴ Part of this growing significance of Latin America to Canada was the result of new realities in the area of trade relations. The region was becoming a sizeable market for Canadian exports (particularly manufactured goods)-- amounting to almost \$3 billion in 1989. James J. Guy, "Canada Joins The OAS: A New Dynamic In The Inter-American System," Inter-American Review Of Bibliography, 39:4 (1989), p.508. The burgeoning economic importance of Latin America was also derived from the possible formation of a hemispheric-wide free trade area in the 1990s--possibly in response to the "Single Europe" of 1992-93. Still, the business lobby in

on the part of decision-makers to focus more political and bureaucratic attention on the region. Finally, it illustrated the willingness of officials in Ottawa to risk--at least on some occasions--complicating Canada-U.S. relations for the sake of Canadian-Latin American relations.

Many observers have cautioned against full membership precisely out of fear that it would disrupt Canada's relations with the United States. But now that Canada has joined the hemispheric forum, the debate on the OAS should shift in another direction. Instead of examining the pros and cons of admission, it would be more instructive to focus on possible roles/missions that Canada can perform within the body. In other words, there is a need to outline what Canada can do as a full member of the organization and what kinds of constraints will be acting upon it.

Canada is well-suited to play a host of roles within the OAS, including those of a socio-economic and politico-security nature. But Canada should concentrate its energies and resources on fine-tuning only a few selected roles or missions. Indeed, it would be far better for Ottawa--as the "new kid" on the OAS "block"--to focus its attention on mastering a couple of roles rather than to spread itself too thinly by trying to be "everything to everybody." In this

Canada put no overt pressure on the government to join the OAS. Confidential interview with a former senior DEA official, 20 August 1991. In short, it did not appear to be a major issue of importance for Canadian business leaders.

context, it seems practical for Canada to content itself with the following roles: 1) image-shaper or OAS champion, 2) issue-energizer or active player, 3) bridge-builder or intermediary, and 4) catalyst for change.⁵

The OAS is, in many respects, like an interest group without a public relations strategy, or not unlike a consumer product devoid of an advertising campaign. It remains basically complacent, largely accepting the conventional arguments that the hemispheric body is nothing but a "talk shop" or a moribund institution, which has rarely managed to resolve any serious hemispheric problems. Clearly, it is badly in need of a spokesperson or, better yet, a champion willing to confront all the negative commentary about the organization. Canada, as a recent convert that is not plagued with any historical baggage--and is also one of the remarkably few countries to have paid its dues on time--is understandably well-positioned to play the role of OAS image-shaper or champion.

The very fact that the OAS suffers from image difficulties is reason enough for Canada not to remain reticent. Obviously, Ottawa decided to join the body because

⁵ While the Conservative government's recent "Foreign Policy Themes and Priorities: 1991-92 Update" mentions the OAS twice, it does not formulate any possible roles for Canada to execute within the hemispheric body. Canada, Department of External Affairs and International Trade Canada, "Foreign Policy Themes and Priorities: 1991-92 Update," Policy Planning Staff, December 1991.

it saw some merit or benefit in doing so. Canadian officials and diplomats in Washington, then, should be prepared not only to defend the position publicly, but also to advance the virtues of the institution itself and thus convince others precisely of that fact. And this support must come in the form of public endorsement and political commitment from the highest levels of the Canadian government if it is to carry any weight within the Inter-American community.⁶

As part of a campaign to promote and advance the positive contribution of the OAS, Canadian officials could take on a higher profile and indeed engage in debunking the many unfavourable observations about the body. In an effort to improve the public perception of the organization, they could speak out publicly, and frequently if need be, about the efficacy and desirability of the OAS. Notwithstanding myths to the contrary, it is instructive to note that the early history of the institution was replete with examples of OAS success stories (particularly in resolving disputes in Central America). More recently, the body has been effective in the demobilization of the contra rebels in Nicaragua and Honduras, in peacekeeping in Central America,

⁶ It is important that this support go beyond mere rhetorical platitudes or "photo-ops" for the Prime Minister of the day. A constructive, and indeed necessary, first step would be for the Canadian government to increase its representation at the OAS--which currently consists of just four members--so as to demonstrate that it takes the body seriously.

and in election-monitoring in Nicaragua and Haiti. There is no reason why Canadian representatives in Washington could not take on the task of promoting these noteworthy successes.

At the centre of these image-improving efforts would be, of necessity, Canada's Ambassador to the OAS. He or she would be a key figure in advancing the positive contribution of the institution, largely through speaking engagements, public debates, conferences, and media events. The Ambassador's knowledge of OAS matters would leave him/her well-placed to confront the organization's critics and detractors. Like Canada's former UN Ambassador Stephen Lewis--who challenged the world body's many U.S. critics and, in doing so, improved the profile of the UN--the Canadian Ambassador could engage in a similar campaign. If Canada is serious about helping in the process of revitalizing the OAS, it could do a lot worse than imitating the Lewis initiative.

By employing a carefully orchestrated strategy of public diplomacy, Canadian actions could have a positive impact. First, it could have the salutary effect of raising the profile as well as the virtues of the OAS. Secondly, it could help to create a more favourable public perception of the body not only in the United States, but also throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. While this may not translate into a greater commitment on the part of member

governments, it could convince political leaders to at least rethink or reevaluate their respective positions toward the hemispheric body. To be sure, perhaps an important by-product of Canada's efforts at championing the OAS would be to rekindle interest in debating its proper role in hemispheric affairs.

Part of the role of the OAS as an international organization is to address the hemisphere's myriad problems. Unfortunately, many of the region's pressing difficulties--ranging from widespread economic decline to the violation of basic human rights--have traditionally not received sufficient attention from member governments. Other issues such as the drug trade and conflict resolution have simply been glossed over or pushed to the political backburner. Canada could be instrumental in bringing these issues to the fore, by injecting some political energy into how the OAS actually confronts key hemispheric questions.⁷

Canadian officials and diplomats could push to have major issues such as democratic pluralism, foreign debt, the narcotics trade, and the environment moved to the top of the hemispheric political agenda. And, once issues of this nature are brought before the Permanent Council or other organs of the institution, these same officials could ensure that pressing hemispheric concerns are discussed and debated

⁷ Canada was elected to the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) in June of 1990.

in a serious fashion. Indeed, it is incumbent upon Canadian representatives at the OAS to stress the significance of these questions for hemispheric stability and survival. They should be prepared, moreover, not only to strive to keep these issues alive, but also to work conscientiously toward generating a consensus on practical and meaningful solutions to them.

On an issue such as the region's external debt, now amounting to more than \$400 billion, more money is pouring out of Latin America in interest payments and capital flight than is coming in as development assistance. With a clear stake in this debilitating situation, Canada could play a leading role in "prioritizing" it. In addition to working within the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Canadian officials could bring the debt issue before the Permanent Council. To be sure, it is not simply an issue for the major Western industrialized nations of the world to deliberate upon. What better place for serious discussions on Latin American debt than within the corridors and chambers of the OAS? Once there, Canada could sound the clarion call for new and creative responses--as opposed to the increasingly outmoded "case-by-case approach"--to the debt problem.⁸

⁸ See, Roy Culpeper, "Forgiving our debts isn't enough," The Globe and Mail, 14 December 1990, p.A21. Culpeper suggests that Ottawa could put additional pressure on Canadian commercial banks to forgive more Latin American debt.

Similarly, on the question of environmental protection, Canada could elevate this critical issue onto the issue-agenda of the OAS. Armed with a certain degree of environmental credibility--with its own Green Plan--Canada could energize this important question. Within the councils and committees of the body, Canadian representatives could push something along the lines of a hemispheric environmental charter, complete with standards and timetables in such areas as contamination of water resources, the use of PCBs (polychlorinated byphenyls), and industrial pollution. On such a sensitive issue as the Amazon rain forest, they could also bring to bear considerable Canadian experience in forest management, new agricultural techniques, and fish farming, as possible ways of preserving the forest.

Executing a catalytic role would also have a positive, and indeed much-needed, impact on the OAS itself. Obviously, it would make the institution more responsive and sensitive to the key hemispheric concerns of the day. It also places pressure on the body to come up with innovative and comprehensive solutions to these problems. The resultant stronger voice and role in hemispheric questions would undoubtedly increase the legitimacy of the OAS.

To further bolster its voice in hemispheric affairs, the organization is in desperate need of a bridge-builder or a member that can mediate between the various blocs within

the organization. There is a noticeable absence, for instance, of any kind of intermediary, to help bridge the sometimes wide gap between various members of the body, within the OAS. Stated differently, the institution lacks a trusted member who can work within the organization to help ease differences of opinion, to soothe disgruntled egos, to reconcile disparate views, and to generate workable compromises. With an "honest-broker" reputation, international respectability, and a foreign service traditionally skilled in diplomatic subtleties, Canada seems tailor-made to perform such a role.⁹

On the issue of easing tensions between various segments of the hemispheric body, Canadian diplomats could indeed make a useful contribution. For instance, between the English-speaking Caribbean members and Latin American representatives--whose relations deteriorated conspicuously in the wake of the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas war--Canada could help reduce this polarization by working with key delegations from both sides. As a leading Commonwealth

⁹ With a peacekeeping record unparalleled by any other nation--participating in every UN peacekeeping force since 1949--Canada could obviously perform this type of role within the OAS framework. How precisely Canada could contribute in a security-related fashion, primarily in a peacekeeping or verification role in Latin America, is spelled out cogently by H.P. Klepak. See his, Security Considerations and Verification of a Central American Arms Control Regime, (Ottawa: External Affairs and International Trade Canada, June 1990, Arms Control Verification Occasional Papers No.5), pp.45-46 and p.50.

member, with a long history of involvement in the area and also as a major aid donor, Canada could be a voice of moderation and exercise a certain amount of influence. At the same time, Canada could, as a potential leader of the OAS Commonwealth contingent, work to strengthen relations between this group and Washington.¹⁰ In its capacity as an intermediary, it could bring to the attention of the United States Commonwealth Caribbean concerns about technology transfer, foreign investment, trade and tariff concessions, and increased development assistance.

This role of mediator could also be carried over to relations between Latin America and the United States. While it is possible that Washington may wish to avail itself of Canada's intermediary skills, it is also likely that Canada will be working to influence the U.S. government. But if the Canadian government wants to become a force within the OAS, it will doubtlessly have to use its competence in bridge-building to find some middle ground between Washington's view and Latin America's position on various issues. In addition to closing the U.S.-Latin American divide, it could

¹⁰ It is instructive to note that with the recent admission of both Guyana and Belize, the total number of English-speaking Caribbean nations has increased to thirteen. Commonwealth countries, then, represent more than one-third of the OAS's total membership. As a significant aid donor to countries in the Commonwealth Caribbean--and in light of its historical, cultural, commercial, and immigration relations--Canada is admirably suited to act as an intermediary with these nations.

also have a constructive moderating influence on Washington. More specifically, when it works in concert with other like-minded countries within the OAS--such as Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, and Argentina--Canada could be able to constrain or limit U.S. actions or perhaps even influence the policy-making process in Washington.

One area in particular where Canada might be able to influence U.S. thinking is on the question of Cuba.¹¹ Canada could actively seek to reduce the level of hostility between Castro's Cuba and Washington as well as to promote vigorously a normalization of U.S.-Cuban relations. Relations between Canada and Cuba, at the political and economic level, have been friendly for many years, and such an initiative would likely be welcomed by Havana.¹² And with Ottawa and the Washington showing signs of forging that elusive "special relationship," Canada could help in easing U.S. reservations. Simply put, Canada could be instrumental in bringing Cuba back into the OAS fold--a logical development, it would seem.

Working toward such an outcome could prove particularly

¹¹ See, Peter McKenna, "Canada should be seeking a non-American OAS role," The Chronicle-Herald, 2 November 1990, p.A7.

¹² Along with Mexico, Canada was the only member of the inter-American community not to sever relations with Havana in 1962. Recently, trade between the two countries, despite Cuba's acute economic difficulties, has increased by some 34 per cent during the first half of 1990. Granma Resumen Semanal, 18 November 1990, p.8.

rewarding for Canada. The adoption of a proactive and "independent" position vis-à-vis Cuba would quickly deflate the argument that the role of Canada within the OAS is simply that of a lackey of the United States. It could also pay commercial dividends, since Canadian efforts at furthering U.S.-Cuban relations would be looked upon favourably by a majority of Latin American countries. This, in turn, could engender a propitious climate in the region receptive to Canadian trade and investment overtures.

Just as the problem of Cuba has remained prominent in hemispheric discourse, so, too, has the issue of OAS reform. Since the mid-1960s, there has been a growing disillusionment and dissatisfaction with the body especially in Latin America. More recently, this dwindling support, particularly with the onset of a noticeable trend toward pan-Hispanism, (as seen in the Rio Group, the Contadora peace process, and the Cartagena Group), has shown further signs of erosion.¹³ There is a widely-held view among many Latin American political elites that the OAS is both politically irrelevant, and unable to confront such pressing issues as debt, drugs, conflict-resolution, and the environment. The organization's recent failure to deal effectively with military strongman Manuel Noriega in Panama, and the subsequent U.S. invasion, dealt another

¹³ On this point, see, Carlos Andrés Pérez, "OAS Opportunities," Foreign Policy, 80 (Fall 1990), p.54.

severe blow to the institution's already-poor standing.

Not surprisingly, there have been attempts over the years to reform the body, particularly with regard toward the OAS Charter. In 1967, and again in 1985, serious endeavours were made to alter or strengthen the Charter so as to make it more responsive to socio-economic development and co-operation. There were also efforts to inject the institution with more responsibility, especially from a political standpoint. In line with these efforts, and providing that the political will and proper resources existed, Canada could play a constructive role as a catalyst to facilitate additional OAS reforms.

Canada has, by its initial actions, shown a willingness to take up the challenge of being a catalyst for reform. Besides contributing to an OAS working group on reform, Ottawa has put forth several recommendations. In addition to calling for regular meetings at the Heads of Government level, it has advanced proposals calling for the creation of an Office for Political Affairs and a Unit for the Promotion of Democracy within the General Secretariat of the body.¹⁴ Furthermore, it has advocated a much-needed strengthening of the role of the OAS Secretary General, including a call for

¹⁴ The proposal for the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy was approved at the June 1990 General Assembly in Asunción and subsequently established by executive order of the Secretary General in October 1990. See, Canada, Department of External Affairs, Canada's First Year In The Organization Of American States, (January 1991), p.5.

more resources and authority to examine issues and to bring them before the Permanent Council for a full hearing and debate.

Canada could also press for a host of other possible changes. For instance, it could seek to reform or qualify the Charter's non-intervention clauses, perhaps outlining conditions under which OAS intervention would be deemed acceptable. It could make another intellectual contribution, especially given its long tradition as a peacemaker, to reforming the out-dated Pact of Bogotá. Canadian officials could easily undertake an in-depth review of the pact--which outlines various methods of settling inter-American disputes in a peaceful fashion--in hopes of finding ways to make it more flexible and responsive. Moreover, they could suggest specific meetings to be held at the ministerial level to address important hemispheric concerns. For example, finance ministers from OAS countries could meet to develop a framework for tackling the debt problem, while foreign ministers could convene to deal with issues such as regional conflicts, human rights, and democratization.

Reforms of this nature would undoubtedly have a healthy and positive impact on the OAS. It would become more responsive institutionally and thereby regain some of its lost credibility and prestige. Clearly, a strengthened OAS would be better equipped to deal more swiftly and forcefully with pressing hemispheric issues. And, if it were taken more

seriously by its members, the institution would no longer be politically marginalized. It could, in short, become a truly effective hemispheric forum wherein real discussion and meaningful debate could take place.

Canada's limitations or constraints

Each of the roles delineated above faces certain limitations or constraints which will invariably affect how Canada fulfills these specified roles. Clearly, Canada's ranking as a middle power within the international hierarchy of nations does not accord it substantial "power" capabilities. With its small to middling power resources, Canada's influence within OAS councils is likely to be modest. As former External Affairs Minister Joe Clark conceded, "you apply your influence in five or six places at different times and expect failure in most of them."¹⁵ Of course, it will be unable to persuade or pressure OAS members to subscribe automatically to its vision of a revitalized hemispheric body. Limited political clout will also make it difficult for Canadian officials to shape the organization's agenda as well as to influence decisions taken by member governments.

Another constraining factor on Canada is likely to be the lack of political will forthcoming from Ottawa. With

¹⁵ Quoted in Charlotte Montgomery, op. cit., p.A7.

national unity, recessionary and unemployment pressures, and a ballooning federal deficit all consuming the political leadership in Ottawa, the OAS is unlikely to receive the necessary attention from the highest levels of the Canadian government. Put another way, federal politicians--already under siege--would be loath to concentrate their energies on the country's international commitments when the domestic scene in Canada is in the throes of a deeply-rooted crisis. This lack of political commitment, in turn, cannot help but constrain Canadian behaviour within the OAS. Indeed, it makes it more difficult for Canadian diplomats to exercise an influential voice when their OAS counterparts are unconvinced of Canada's full support of the organization.

Placing further limits on Canada is the dwindling supply of bureaucratic and diplomatic support staff. Under tight budgetary constraints, the Department of External Affairs (DEA) recently cut 250 positions, including some responsible for South America.¹⁶ When this reality is combined with the fact that the Canadian mission to the OAS is composed of only a small staff, it makes it far more difficult to perform any role competently.¹⁷ The danger here

¹⁶ Ross Howard, "External Affairs Department cut 250 jobs," The Globe and Mail, 29 June 1990, p.A4.

¹⁷ Canada's mission in Washington is led by Ambassador Jean-Paul Hubert and staffed by two counsellors. By way of comparison, the Chilean mission at the OAS is comprised of more than twelve members. Interview with Heraldo Muñoz, Chile's Ambassador to the OAS, 4 March 1991, Washington.

is that Canada's voice--unless buttressed by thoughtful, sensitive, and pragmatic arguments--is likely to fall on deaf ears.

For example, if Canada is going to press to have environmental protection placed at or near the top of the OAS political agenda, it requires a solid understanding of the complexities of the Amazon rain forest issue. It will not be enough simply to state publicly Canada's firm commitment to preserving the rain forest. To be taken seriously, then, Canadian officials will need to be thoroughly briefed on the cultural, social, and economic realities of deforestation in Brazil. In order to do this, though, Canada will need officials and diplomats in Washington, and in the field, who can accumulate information and understand the full gravity of the situation.

Perhaps the biggest limitation acting upon Canada, however, is derived from its close relationship with its huge neighbour to the south. Obviously, the dictates of Canada-U.S. relations will have a major constraining effect on Canadian behaviour within the hemispheric body. The very magnitude of Canada's relations with the United States--politically, militarily, economically, culturally, and diplomatically--almost ensures a stolid Canadian pause before embarking on any bold OAS initiatives. If, for instance, a hemispheric issue arises where U.S. interests are clearly at stake, Canada would be extremely reluctant to

adopt a position totally at variance with the view emanating from Washington.

The complexity and intertwining of the Canada-U.S. relationship, along with the importance attached to that relationship by Ottawa, will undoubtedly place some limitations on Canadian officials. For example, policy-makers in Ottawa may be hesitant to pursue the reinstatement of Cuba into the OAS family for fear of enraging officialdom in Washington. Or, these same officials could find themselves in the unenviable position of having to support U.S. heavy-handedness in Latin America (as happened with Panama in 1989) so as not to jeopardize other outstanding issues or irritants on the Canada-U.S. political agenda. In short, government officials are unlikely to sacrifice the overall Canada-U.S. relationship at the OAS altar.¹⁸

Despite these limitations, though, events in the international environment would seem to suggest that the stock of the OAS may soon register an upswing. With Cuba expressing an interest in seeking a rapprochement with the organization, fledgling democracies in Latin America taking hold, discussions of a hemispheric trade bloc, the onset of relative peace in Central America (with the exception of continuing, though seemingly abating, civil strife in El

¹⁸ This reality will almost certainly pose some difficulties for Canadian officials seeking to fashion a truly independent posture within the hemispheric body.

Salvador), and the further "internationalization" of issues (viz. debt, drugs, migration, and the environment), more nations could become "bullish" on the institution. Secondly, a noticeable reduction in superpower tensions, rivalry, and animosity leaves the organization unencumbered by the vagaries of U.S.-Soviet relations and therefore more inclined to play a larger role in hemispheric affairs. Thirdly, the apparent leadership vacuum in the OAS--typified by a disenchanted U.S. government that already owes more than \$50 million in back dues--could have the salutary effect of providing the body with more flexibility and a renewed sense of vigour. In this context, it is perhaps an opportune time for Canada to play a constructive role in the body.

There is little question that Canada is well-positioned to perform the roles of OAS champion, issue-energizer, bridge-builder, and an agent for change. In order to do so effectively, though, Canada will have to be better equipped bureaucratically and diplomatically. External Affairs may have to upgrade its Latin America and Caribbean bureau--preferably with an infusion of new resources, better training, and additional staff personnel with knowledge of the region--if it hopes to arrive at intelligent and thoughtful policy positions. In addition, diplomatic representation in the region will have to be strengthened--with seasoned Spanish-speaking diplomats--so as to ensure an

unbiased and informed flow of information on things Latin American. Measures such as these would not only assist Canadian officials in the execution of the roles indicated above, but they would also lend credibility to Canada's newly-minted "political strategy" for Latin America.

The actual execution of these roles, of course, will still not be a particularly easy task. Officialdom in Ottawa will have to be cognizant of the fact that Canadian diplomacy is almost invariably conducted within certain limitations or constraints. It would be ill-advised, then, for Canadian officials to criticize repeatedly U.S. policies in Latin America or to espouse publicly positions that continuously differ from those of Washington. This is not to suggest that Canada should refrain from formulating an independent policy toward the region. Rather, it should do so on the basis of recognizing the significance of U.S. concerns, consulting with other like-minded countries in the region, and relying on information from Canadian diplomats in the field. While it is important to have Canada's Latin American friends not view it as merely a supplicant or adjunct of the United States, Canadian officials will have to pick and choose the issues on which to take an independent stand adroitly and judiciously.

Similarly, Canada should not expect huge returns on its investment or results disproportionate to its capabilities and influence. It could, however, bring whatever influence

It has to bear on those issues where it has a major concern or where its interests are at stake. Indeed, it would be futile and counterproductive for Canada to take a major stand on an issue that has little or no impact on Canadian interests. In fact, its voice in the Permanent Council or its efforts at bridge-building--if they were perceived by other OAS members as inspired by the U.S. government--would be largely ineffective. The best way to avoid this type of a situation, and at the same time contribute to the OAS in a meaningful fashion, would be to have Canadian officials come before the organization with well-documented, factual, and technically-sound proposals and arguments.

Still, officials in Ottawa--since only recently shedding their Garbo-like aloofness toward the OAS--should not delude themselves with grand expectations of transforming the institution overnight. It is crucially important for Canadian diplomats to recognize the fact that revitalizing the hemispheric body is going to be time-consuming, frustrating, and--on occasion--rewarding. But they should be wary of looking for the decisive victory in the war on reforming the institution and settle instead for winning the smaller battles. In the coming years, their successes or failures will need to be examined to determine a "cost-benefit" analysis of OAS membership. In the meantime, the "empty chair" is no longer empty, but the dust could easily resettle if the occupant simply remains idle.

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