



THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES OF AMERICAN STATES

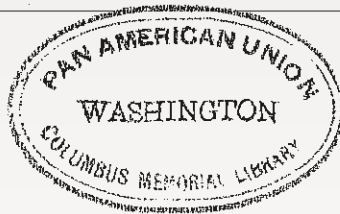
1889-1928

A Collection of the Conventions, Recommendations, Resolutions, Reports, and Motions adopted by the First Six International Conferences of the American States, and Documents relating to the Organization of the Conferences

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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ANNEX

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE CONGRESS OF PANAMA

JUNE 22–JULY 15, 1826

CIRCULAR INVITATION ADDRESSED BY SIMÓN BOLÍVAR TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF COLOMBIA, MEXICO, CENTRAL AMERICA, THE UNITED PROVINCES OF BUENOS AIRES, CHILE, AND BRAZIL¹

LIMA, December 7, 1824.

GREAT AND GOOD FRIEND: After fifteen years of sacrifices devoted to the liberty of America to secure a system of guaranties that in peace and war shall be the shield of our new destiny, it is time the interests and relations uniting the American Republics, formerly Spanish colonies, should have a fundamental basis that shall perpetuate, if possible, those Governments.

To initiate that system, and concentrate the power of this great political body, implies the exercise of a sublime authority, capable of directing the policy of our Governments, whose influence should maintain uniformity of principles, and whose name alone should put an end to our quarrels.

Such a respectable authority can exist only in an assembly of plenipotentiaries, appointed by each of our Republics, and called together under the auspices of the victory obtained by our arms over the Spanish power.

Profoundly imbued with these ideas, I invited, in 1822, as President of the Republic of Colombia, the Governments of Mexico, Peru, Chili, and Buenos Ayres to form a confederation, and hold on the Isthmus of Panama, or some other point agreeable to the majority, a congress of plenipotentiaries from each State "that should act as a council in great conflicts, to be appealed to in case of common danger, and be a faithful interpreter of public treaties, when difficulties should arise, and conciliate, in short, all our differences."

On the 6th of June of said year, the Government of Peru concluded a treaty of alliance and confederation with the Colombian plenipotentiary. By said treaty both parties bound themselves to interpose their good offices with the Governments of America lately Spanish, so that, all entering into the same agreement, the general congress of the confederates could be held. A similar treaty with Mexico was concluded on the 3d of October, 1823, by the Colombian envoy to that country; and there are strong reasons for hoping that other Governments will also adopt a policy dictated by their higher interests.

Longer to defer the general Congress of the Plenipotentiaries of the Republics that in fact are already allied awaiting the accession of the others, would be to deprive ourselves of the advantages which that assembly will produce from its very incipency.

These advantages are largely increased, if we but contemplate the spectacle that the political world, and particularly that of the European continent, presents to us.

¹ International American Conference. *Reports of Committees and Discussions Thereon*, vol. iv (Historical Appendix), p. 159.

The Governments of Colombia, Central America, Peru, and Mexico were represented at the congress. "Brazil and the United Provinces of the River Plata did not send plenipotentiaries to Panama; but their respective Governments substantially indorsed the Liberator's idea." *Id.*, pp. 165, 173.



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A reunion of the plenipotentiaries of Mexico, Colombia, and Peru would be indefinitely delayed, if it should not be brought on by one of the same contracting parties, unless the time and place for the carrying out of this great object be determined by another and a special convention.

Considering the difficulties and delays presented by the distance separating us, together with other grave motives the general interest suggests, determines me to take this step with a view of bringing about an immediate meeting of our plenipotentiaries, while the rest of the Governments may conclude the preliminaries already gone through by us concerning the appointment and commissioning of their representatives.

With respect to the time of the opening of the Congress, I make bold to think that no obstacle can oppose its verification within six months from this date; and I shall also go so far as to flatter myself that the ardent desire animating all Americans to exalt the power of the world of Columbus will diminish the obstacles and delays that the ministerial preparations demand, and the distance separating the capitals of each state and the central point of the meeting. It seems that if the world should have to choose its capital, the Isthmus of Panama would be selected for this grand destiny, located as it is in the center of the globe, having on one side Asia, and on the other Africa and Europe. The Isthmus of Panama has been tendered for this purpose in existing treaties by the Colombian Government. The Isthmus is equally distant from the extremities of the continent, and on this account ought to be the provisional seat for the first meeting of the confederates.

Yielding myself to these considerations, I am seriously inclined to send to Panama the delegates from this Republic immediately upon having the honor of receiving the desired reply to this circular. Nothing, certainly, can so realize the ardent desire of my heart as the agreement I hope for on the part of the confederated Governments to accomplish this august act of America.

Should your Excellency not adhere to this I foresee great delays and injuries, at a time, too, when the movement of the world hurries everything on, and may accelerate to our harm.

The first conferences between the plenipotentiaries once held, the seat of the Congress, as well as its powers, can be solemnly determined by the majority, and then everything will have been realized.

The day our plenipotentiaries make the exchanges of their powers will stamp in the diplomatic history of the world an immortal epoch.

When, after a hundred centuries, posterity shall search for the origin of our public law, and shall remember the compacts that solidified its destiny, they will finger with respect the protocols of the Isthmus. In them they will find the plan of the first alliances that shall sketch the mark of our relations with the universe. What, then, shall be the Isthmus of Corinth compared with that of Panama?

God preserve Your Excellency,

Your great and good friend,