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Quinta Reunión de Consulta de Ministros de Relaciones Exteriores
Fifth Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs
Cinquième Réunion de Consultation des Ministres des Relations Extérieures
Quinta Reunião de Consulta dos Ministros das Relações Exteriores

Santiago, Chile

Agosto de 1959



ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE CHRISTIAN A. HERTER,
SECRETARY OF THE UNITED STATES, IN
RESPONSE, IN BEHALF OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS,
TO THE ADDRESS OF WELCOME BY HIS EXCELLENCY
THE PRESIDENT OF CHILE

(Delivered at the Inaugural Session
held on August 12, 1959)

Santiago, Chile

UNITED STATES DELEGATION TO THE
FIFTH MEETING OF CONSULTATION OF
MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF AMERICAN STATES
Santiago, August 12, 1959

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OF THE UNITED STATES, IN RESPONSE, IN BEHALF OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS,
TO THE ADDRESS OF WELCOME BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF CHILE
SANTIAGO, CHILE, AUGUST 12, 1959

Your Excellency:

In behalf of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs meeting here in this hospitable Capital, I am honored to be entrusted with our collective expression of gratitude for the welcome extended by you and your Government. Your cordial words of greeting warm our hearts.

No place could be more appropriate for sessions consecrated to preserving the peace and freedom of America. The devotion of the Chilean people to Pan American ideals of peace and cooperation, their dedicated efforts and achievements in economic and social progress, and their firm adherence to democratic principles are widely recognized throughout our American community of nations. As long ago as 1541, when this noble and beautiful city of Santiago was founded by Pedro de Valdivia, that farsighted hero struck a prophetic and truly American note when he declared in a letter to the King that Santiago would grow and flourish provided only nobody should be sent out from Spain or from other areas of the New World to interfere with its affairs.

Against the heroic background of Chilean history loom Chile's cultural achievements. It is no accident that in her universities were trained many political and intellectual leaders from other American countries. The agricultural and technical development here has been accompanied, indeed has been stimulated, by the imaginative energy of a creative people. It is an augury of success that our sessions are being held in such an environment.

I appreciate Your Excellency's expression of Chile's sympathetic interest in the efforts of the great powers to seek a stable world peace through discussion of their differences. As you know, I have just returned from a meeting of this kind in Geneva. In contrast to that gathering, however, I think the issues to be decided at the meeting of Foreign Ministers in this city appear more capable of early solution. Your Excellency brilliantly summarized the issues before us by stating that we should seek "a formula that harmonizes our heartfelt desire never to see human rights violated with our absolute respect for the principle of nonintervention," thus guaranteeing an "international liberty indispensable for living together harmoniously and sanely" in this Hemisphere. As Your Excellency states, this international democratic policy can be fortified by the fullest utilization of our economic capabilities.

At their informal meeting in Washington last year, the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics reaffirmed their recognition that inter-American solidarity is an essential factor in the stability not only of our Hemisphere but of the world. They likewise affirmed the present need for a renewed dedication, by our peoples and our Governments, to the inter-American ideals of independence, political liberty, and economic and cultural progress and for a renewed faith in our capacity to achieve them.

On December 24, 1938, the Eighth International Conference of American States approved the Declaration of Lima. That Declaration begins with the forthright statement "That the peoples of America have achieved spiritual unity through the similarity of their republican institutions, their unshakeable will for peace, their profound sentiment of humanity and tolerance, and through their absolute adherence to the principles of international law, of the equal sovereignty of States, and of individual liberty without religious or racial prejudice." It closes with a provision for Meetings of Consultation of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the American Republics, "when deemed desirable and at the initiative of any one of them."

We may say that the Declaration of Lima comes of age this current year, the twenty-first since its adoption. During these 21 years our 21 Republics have convoked five Meetings of Consultation of their Foreign Ministers for the purpose of maintaining the peace and independence of the Hemisphere and preserving our freedom and progress towards a better life. That has always been the American ideal. Peace is our chosen environment, freedom and progress, our chosen way of life. The American peoples have never believed that one could be valid without the other. Our Republics are founded on the concept of independence with law, freedom with order. Our revolutions were fought, all of them, to attain a freedom, both for states and for individuals, dedicated to the development and the progress which can be achieved only through peace.

It is in response to that undeviating concept--peace with freedom and progress--that we are met in this historical capital of a free, progressive and peace-loving country. The convocation of a Meeting of Consultation of the Foreign Ministers is in itself evidence that a crisis exists. It is at the same time proof of our united belief, supported by our experience, that the crisis can be met and its problems solved if dealt with cooperatively in a spirit of reason and good will.

Let us remember that there have been in all the course of our common history very few armed conflicts across national boundaries in this Hemisphere. No comparable area of the world--so large in extent, so great in population, with so many basic mutual interests affording nevertheless such varied surface points of difference--has ever developed into an international neighborhood like that of the Americas.

The unguarded frontier is a commonplace of national life with most of our peoples. The Christ of the Andes represents not only a lofty international ideal but a customary international relationship; the same ideal and relationship which, farther to the north, Mexico, Canada, and my own country attest by bridges of friendship across the boundary rivers.

Just as there is no comparable area of the world living so harmoniously with its neighbors as the American Republics, there is none other that has so long a record of freedom. Our 21 nations, neighbors by the accident of geography, free and independent by instinct and by choice, have been closely and freely associated, friendly peoples, from their republican beginnings.

Independence has been fortified and augmented by cooperation. Through increased contacts between our peoples in all fields of life, we have developed wider areas of mutual understanding. Cooperation in economic and social fields has been intensified, moving forward, with both national and international efforts, towards the achievement of greater productivity and higher living standards for our peoples. The progress made this past year in this field of inter-American economic cooperation, particularly under the inspiration of Operation Pan America, has been highly significant, and holds out the promise of further gains in the future.

Nor has any other comparable area achieved an international organization like ours--an organization voluntary, continuous and potent. As a matter of historic fact, we all know that the development of the United Nations and other international organizations owed much to the experience of the Organization of the American States. Precisely because of the proved effectiveness of our own inter-American experience, the 21 American Republics became charter members of the United Nations. In that body's Councils, year after year, we have stood together in defense of the free world and in the maintenance of peace and security.

Our inter-American system has worked well. At various times in its history it has faced crises and surmounted them with renewed vitality and increased capacity for constructive achievement. The balance of peace with freedom and progress, that has characterized our system, has constituted an inspiring demonstration to the entire world of how nations large and small may live and work together towards the common goals of humanity.

Our present meeting here in Santiago comes at a time when our inter-American system again faces a critical moment in history. We are called upon, as we have been called upon in the past, to renew and revitalize, in the light of present conditions and forces, the principles that have made our great achievements possible.

Four of these principles which are expressed in the Charter of the Organization of American States are particularly pertinent to the situation facing the Organization today. There is first the principle of nonintervention which has served as a foundation stone for the relations between our countries. Second is the principle of collective security. Together these two principles form the basis for peace and independence on this continent. Third is the principle of the effective exercise of representative democracy and respect for human rights. Fourth is cooperation for economic and social progress. This is of particular pertinence to our time. Together these latter two underlie the achievement of freedom and progress.

Our problem today is to restore the traditional balance between peace on the one hand and freedom and progress on the other by giving a proper emphasis to each of these four outstanding principles. We have recognized these four principles as valid in themselves and have learned that our separate, no less than our mutual well-being, depends in large measure upon them. When any of these principles is threatened the individual independence and the collective peace of the American peoples is threatened as is their capacity to progress toward a better human life. Against such threats the American nations must at all times marshal their collective effort to ensure their continued progress.

We are gathered together here to examine and analyze in a spirit of objectivity and with a common purpose. We will not let ourselves be deluded into mistaking a temporary disorder for a cancer in the heart of peace or for a permanent paralysis of the sinews of freedom. Neither will we permit ourselves to be deceived into dismissing negligently symptoms of a disorder that might adversely affect us all.

The American Hemisphere is a community of freedom under law. And so it must remain for our own generation and for our children's children. This year in my country we are celebrating the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, whose faith in freedom and devotion to peace have caused other American countries to commemorate his anniversary. At the outset of our proceedings at this Meeting, we may well recall his exhortation:

"Our reliance is in the love of liberty which God has planted in us. Our defense is in the spirit which prized liberty as the heritage of all men, in all lands everywhere."