



New Prospects for Pan Americanism

An Intimate Message from Washington

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WASHINGTON

Two inter-American conferences are being held within the next six months that open a new era in Pan Americanism. The first is the Rio de Janeiro conference meeting August 15 in Brazil's fabulous capital. The second is the Bogotá conference scheduled for Jan. 17, officially known as the Ninth International Conference of American States.

The importance of both of these gatherings stems directly from the 1945 Mexico City conference and its impressive list of resolutions. Number 8 on that list is the famous Act of Chapultepec in which the American republics agreed to a wartime mutual defense pact. Number 9 outlined a reorganization of the Pan American system designed to strengthen and update it.

The coming Rio conference stems directly from Resolution 8, for the American States at Rio are to translate into permanent terms the temporary defense pact they agreed to at Mexico City. That constitutes the complete agenda of that parley.

The Bogotá conference likewise takes its major assignment from Mexico City, and is to be primarily engaged in reorganizing the inter-American system.

These two conferences indicate a significant break with the past in inter-American relations. Roughly, Pan Americanism can be broken up into three periods. The first runs from 1826 when the first Congress of American States met in Panama under the aegis of Simon Bolivar to 1890 when the Pan American Union was created in Washington at the first conference of American States.

The second runs from 1890 to the present, during which by conferences, treaties, declarations, resolutions, the American republics established the foundation of hemispheric unity. The third opens with these coming two conferences, though its roots reach back to Mexico City, at which the system is to be reorganized and measures agreed to, including the use of armed force, aimed at insuring the peace of America.

The importance of Rio is that there the American republics are expected to put teeth into their mutual defense plans—something

they have never before agreed to in peacetime. Actually, what they will be doing is making permanent the temporary wartime Chapultepec agreement.

The importance of Bogotá is that there the inter-American system will be reorganized, consolidated, and strengthened. If the Mexico City recommendations in Resolution 9 are made permanent, then:

These regular international conferences of American States will be held every four instead of every five years.

Annual gatherings of the Foreign Ministers will be held instead of the irregular, infrequent such meetings now called.

The American republics will appoint special ambassadors to the Pan American Union instead of assigning the chiefs of their diplomatic missions in Washington that job, as is now customary. A few have such special ambassadors, including the United States, which just this month named William Dawson to that post.

The governing board of the Pan American Union which has heretofore been specifically forbidden from considering "political" matters will be assigned political functions, though within certain limitations.

An inter-American economic and social council will be created to replace the old inter-American financial and economic advisory committee.

The United States Secretary of State is no longer to be automatically chairman of the governing board of the Pan American Union. In fact, the American Secretary is no longer to be the United States representative. In the future, it is expected, the chairman will be elected freely every year.

Within six or eight months, then, the inter-American system should be well on its way in a new era in Pan Americanism. Rio will have provided the pact to protect and defend it. Bogotá will have rebuilt and strengthened it. That is why not a few authoritative sources in the capital are disposed to consider these two inter-American gatherings, taken together, as representing the most important event in Pan Americanism since that system was organized.