

BEYOND THE ABSENCE OF WAR:
PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE AMERICAS OF THE 21ST CENTURY

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ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
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JAMES A. BAKER III INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY
OF RICE UNIVERSITY



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organizing partners

As an integral part of Rice University, one of the nation's most distinguished institutions of higher education, the **James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy** has a strong track record of achievement based on the work of its esteemed fellows and scholars. The researchers examine domestic and foreign policy challenges with the goal of bridging the gap between the theory and practice of public policy. Often in collaboration with experts from academia, government, the media, business, and nongovernmental and private organizations, the Baker Institute provides the results of our research programs and studies to decision makers involved in the formulation and execution of public policy.

Located in Houston, Texas, the nation's fourth-largest city, the energy capital of the world and a dynamic international business and cultural center, the Baker Institute brings a unique perspective to some of the most important public policy challenges of our time. In conjunction with more than 20 programs — including research, lectures, events and special projects — the institute attracts many domestic and foreign leaders who provide views and insights on key issues. The institute's state-of-the-art telecommunications capabilities provide our speakers with a broad and diverse national and global audience.

The Organization of American States (OAS) brings together the countries of the Western Hemisphere to strengthen cooperation and advance common interests. It is the region's premier forum for multilateral dialogue and concerted action. At the core of the OAS mission is an unequivocal commitment to democracy, as expressed in the Inter-American Democratic Charter: "The peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it." Building on this foundation, the OAS works to promote good governance, strengthen human rights, foster peace and security, expand trade and address the complex problems caused by poverty, drugs and corruption.

Through decisions made by its political bodies and programs carried out by its general secretariat, the OAS promotes greater inter-American cooperation and understanding. The OAS member states have intensified their cooperation since the end of the Cold War, taking on new and important challenges. In 1994, the region's 34 democratically elected presidents and prime ministers met in Miami for the first Summit of the Americas, where they established broad political, economic and social development goals. They have continued to meet periodically since then to examine common interests and priorities. Through the ongoing Summits of the Americas process, the region's leaders have entrusted the OAS with a growing number of responsibilities to help advance the countries' shared vision.



agenda

Thursday, October 8

James A. Baker III Hall

Participants will arrive throughout the day

- 4:30 p.m. Bonding exercise
Doré Commons
- 5:30 p.m. Welcoming remarks, program overview and guidelines
- 6:00 p.m. Tour of the Rice University campus
- 7:30 p.m. Dinner

Friday, October 9

James A. Baker III Hall

Breakfast provided at hotel

- 9:00 a.m. Welcome
Edward P. Djerejian
Founding Director, Baker Institute for Public Policy
David Leebron
President, Rice University
Rush Conference Center
- 9:10 a.m. Roundtable 1 – The Role of the International Community:
Supporting and Safeguarding Peace in the Hemisphere
Rush Conference Center
- Moderator:
Raúl J. Lago
Senior Political Adviser, Secretariat of Political Affairs,
Organization of American States

- 10:30 a.m. Coffee break
- 10:45 a.m. Roundtable 1 (continued)
- Noon Roundtable 1 preliminary draft
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch Keynote – Supporting and Safeguarding Peace in the Hemisphere:
The Role of the International Community
Victor Rico
Secretary for Political Affairs, Organization of American States
Doré Commons
- 2:15 p.m. Roundtable 2 – The Government’s Role in Promoting and Preserving Peace
Rush Conference Center
- Moderator:
Mark P. Jones
Professor, Department of Political Science, Rice University
- 3:45 p.m. Coffee break
- 4:00 p.m. Roundtable 2 (continued)
- 5:15 p.m. Roundtable 2 preliminary draft
- 7:30 p.m. Dinner

Saturday, October 10

James A. Baker III Hall

Breakfast provided at hotel

- 9:00 a.m. Roundtable 3 – The Role of Civil Society: Peace as a Common Goal
Rush Conference Center
- Moderator:
Guadalupe Quintanilla
Associate Professor, Department of Modern & Classical Languages,
University of Houston

10:30 a.m. Coffee break

10:45 a.m. Roundtable 3 (continued)

Noon Roundtable 3 preliminary draft

12:45 p.m. Lunch
Doré Commons

2:00 p.m. Breakout session: Drafting of the conference report

4:00 p.m. Coffee break

4:15 p.m. Wrap-up discussion
Rush Conference Center

5:00 p.m. Evaluation and feedback

5:30 p.m. Closing remarks

End of program



project participants

Rice University

Erika de la Garza is the program director of the Latin American Initiative at the Baker Institute. She is in charge of the Latin American Initiative's programs, which include the Americas Project, the U.S.-Mexico Border Program and the Vecinos Lecture Series. Her chief areas of interest include U.S.-Latin American relations; emerging leadership; coalition-building between public, private and civil society actors; and trade and business development in Latin America. She conducts research on current events facing the region and organizes lectures and programs to increase awareness about Latin America and to foster a better understanding between the countries of this hemisphere. Prior to joining the institute, she worked for several years encouraging foreign direct investment in Costa Rica, her home country. De la Garza has also taught in the Department of International Studies at the University of St. Thomas. She holds a master's degree in international affairs from Columbia University in New York and a master's degree in diplomacy from the University of Costa Rica.

Edward P. Djerejian is the founding director of the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy. He served both President George H.W. Bush and President William J. Clinton as assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs and Presidents Ronald Reagan and Bush as U.S. ambassador to Syria. He served President Clinton as U.S. ambassador to Israel before completing his foreign service career in 1994. He also served President Reagan as special assistant and deputy press secretary for foreign affairs. Djerejian has been awarded the Presidential Distinguished Service Award, the Department of State's Distinguished Honor Award and numerous other honors, including the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, the Anti-Defamation League's Moral Statesman Award, and the Association of Rice Alumni Gold Medal. He is author of "Danger and Opportunity: An American Ambassador's Journey Through the Middle East" (Simon & Schuster, 2008).

Lisa Guáqueta is the project administrator for the Latin American Initiative at the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy. Prior to joining the Baker Institute, she worked at The New School in New York as the coordinator of the Observatory on Latin America and of the graduate program in the international affairs' International Field Program. Before moving to the United States, she served as the international affairs adviser in the office of the mayor of Bogotá. Guáqueta's areas of research interest include the urban dynamics of Latin America, particularly the role of cities and local governments in international issues. She has also worked as a consultant on urban issues for UN-HABITAT and the United Nations Development Program. She studied economics at Universidad Externado de Colombia and holds a master's degree in international affairs from The New School.

David W. Leebron was appointed the seventh president of Rice University in 2004, where he is also a professor of political science. Leebron grew up in Philadelphia and graduated summa cum laude from Harvard College in 1976. He attended Harvard Law School and, in his second year, was elected president

of the Harvard Law Review. After graduating magna cum laude in 1979, he moved to Los Angeles to clerk for Judge Shirley Hufstedler on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. After Judge Hufstedler was appointed secretary of education, he taught torts as acting assistant professor of law at UCLA School of Law in 1980. In 1981, he joined the New York law firm of Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP and specialized in corporate matters. He became a faculty member of the New York University School of Law in 1983, where he also served as director of the International Legal Studies Program. In 1989, he joined the faculty of Columbia University School of Law, and in 1996 he was appointed dean and named the Lucy G. Moses Professor of Law. Leebron has authored a textbook on international human rights and has also written extensively on international trade and corporate finance.

Organization of American States

Victor Rico, the secretary for political affairs at the Organization of American States, studied economics at the Universidad Católica Boliviana and holds a master's degree in international relations from the Universidad de Belgrano in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He also pursued postgraduate studies on the European monetary system at The London School of Economics. His professional positions include serving as director general for integration, undersecretary for integration, deputy minister of international economic relations, and deputy minister of foreign affairs in his native Bolivia. He was later appointed as consul general-ambassador in Santiago, Chile, where he served until 2005. He served as chief negotiator for his country's free trade agreements with MERCOSUR and Mexico, and as a plenipotentiary representative on the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) Committee of Ministers of Foreign Trade. In that capacity, he chaired the Andean policymaking body; he also served as director general of the Andean Community of Nations in Lima and was responsible for establishing the common market and for international trade negotiations.

Magdalena Talamás, a native of Uruguay, is the head of the Peace Fund Unit in the Secretariat for Political Affairs of the Organization of American States (OAS). The Peace Fund is an essential tool aimed at strengthening peace and security, preventing conflicts and resolving disputes among member states. The Peace Fund is also used to strengthen the general secretariat's knowledge and expertise in dispute settlement, as well as to support the development of programs aimed at promoting a culture of peace, through the Inter-American Peace Forum. Prior to this position, Talamás was the chief of public relations in the Secretariat for External Relations, where she was responsible for supporting the organization's efforts in promoting greater international awareness and understanding of the work of the OAS. Talamás has received numerous honors throughout her career at the OAS, including commendations for her work on the "Fiftieth Anniversary of the OAS: The Gathering of Brilliant Minds," featuring six Nobel laureates of the Western Hemisphere, and a "Tribute to Gabriel García Márquez." She also created the OAS Children's Corner, a cyberlearning and entertainment center at the OAS for children and students of all ages. In addition, Secretary General César Gaviria bestowed her with the OAS Outstanding Performance Award in 2000. She earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Georgetown University with honors, concentrating in international affairs and public policy.

Conference Moderators

Mark P. Jones, professor in the Department of Political Science at Rice University, holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Michigan and a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Tulane University. Jones' research focuses on the effect of electoral laws and other political institutions on governance, representation and voting. He has received substantial financial support for this research, including two grants from the National Science Foundation. His recent articles have appeared in journals such as the *American Journal of Political Science*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Electoral Studies* and the *Journal of Politics*. Jones regularly advises several U.S. government institutions on economic and political affairs in Argentina and has conducted research on Latin American public policy issues for numerous international organizations, including the Inter-American Development Bank, United Nations Development Programme and World Bank. Jones is currently serving as chair of the Department of Political Science.

Raúl J. Lago is currently the senior political adviser at the Secretariat for Political Affairs of the Organization of American States (OAS). Prior to his current responsibilities, Lago held other key positions at the OAS, including director of Conflict Prevention and Resolution and special representative of the secretary general for the Belize-Guatemala territorial dispute. Born in Uruguay, he is a lawyer from the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, with doctoral studies in law and social sciences. Before joining the OAS, he held many distinguished offices in the Uruguayan government, including chief of staff with ministerial rank to President Jorge Batlle; secretary of the environment, housing, and land use planning; deputy secretary of the interior; senator of the republic; ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Uruguay to Venezuela, Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Grenada; and director general of international economic affairs at the Uruguayan Foreign Ministry. Lago was also a regular columnist for *Diario Acción* of Montevideo and served as director of the weekly magazine *Prédica* of San José de Mayo in Uruguay.

Guadalupe Quintanilla is the president of the Cross-Cultural Communication Center of Houston, and an associate professor in the Modern & Classical Languages Department at the University of Houston, where she has also served in different administrative capacities. Quintanilla is very active in community affairs and serves on numerous boards and commissions at the local, state and national levels. She is also an effective fundraiser for community-based scholarship endeavors. Quintanilla developed the Cross-Cultural Communication program, which has been selected for the past seven years by the Department of Defense and by the Department of Justice as the best of its type in the country. She was invited by representatives from those departments to provide training in cross-cultural communication to 16 law enforcement agencies responsible for security during the Pan American Games. In 1984, Quintanilla became the first Hispanic U.S. representative to the United Nations. She was also the first Hispanic to serve as an international correspondent for the United Nations; as co-chair to the National Institute of Justice; and as co-chair to the National Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.



Argentina

Agustín Romero holds a degree in international affairs from Universidad Católica de Córdoba and a master's degree in international affairs from Facultad Latinoamericana en Ciencias Sociales. He has held leadership roles in the Province of Córdoba, in university student groups, and social, cultural and sports institutions. He attended a course at Hebrew University of Jerusalem on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the situation in the Middle East. He has also studied at the Diplomatic School of Spain and the Austrian Diplomatic School. Currently, he is an adviser at the Commission of International Affairs of the Argentine Congress and a teacher at the University of Buenos Aires in the master's program in international relations. Romero was born in the Province of Córdoba, Argentina.

Bahamas

Elsworth Johnson holds a Bachelor of Laws and a Master of Laws from the University of the West Indies, and a Legal Education Certificate from the Eugene Dupuch Law School. He is currently a tutor at the Eugene Dupuch Law School Legal Aid Clinic and a partner in the law firm of Hanna, Johnson & Co. From 1990 to 2004, he served as constable in the Royal Bahamas police force. Until 2008, he was the president of the Bahamas Human Rights Network. He is also currently a member of the Bahamas National Commission for UNESCO. He has participated in various workshops and conferences, including the American & Caribbean Law Initiative in Ocho Rios, Jamaica (2004); the International Organization for Migration and the Inter-American Commission of Women on "Information Campaigns & Trafficking in Persons" (2004); and the Forty Hour Mediation Training Program of the Dispute Resolution Foundation of Jamaica (2005).

Bolivia

Violeta Inés van der Valk is a political scientist. She is currently working for the International Republican Institute (IRI), training women in new political abilities and fundraising strategies. She has also done academic research on the Irish religious conflict, the conflict in Yugoslavia and the importance of World Bank development policies in Bolivia's social conflicts in the period 2000–2005. Before joining IRI, van der Valk worked as an editor on books about the political situation in Bolivia, as well as on intercultural conflicts and social movements for the Political Scientists Association of Bolivia. During this time she represented Bolivia at the International Encounter of Latin America Rural Social Movements in 2008. She is an active member of the Environment Commission of a youth network in La Paz representing her university. Since 2008, van der Valk has been working on the coordination of Multiparty Youth Roundtables and the consolidation of a Multiparty Women's Roundtable, as well as the presentation of a Women's Rights Political Participation law draft to the National Congress.

Brazil

Juliana Márcia Barroso is a sociologist from the University of Brasilia. Since 2001, she has worked in different capacities at the Ministry of Justice, working with the National Secretariat of Public Security; the Department of Politics, Programs and Projects; and the Department of Public Security Action. Since 2008, she has been the Ministry of Justice director of education and professional development of public security. In this capacity, she oversees the National Curriculum for Training in Public Safety, the National Network for Advanced Studies in Public Safety and the dialogue with the MERCOSUR Training Work Groups with a view to establish partnerships for the implementation of common policies related to education in public safety.

Canada

Alexandre Côté has a bachelor's degree in international studies from York University, Toronto, and a master's degree in development policy and administration from the University of Manchester, United Kingdom. He also completed professional training on rights-based development with the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, and on conflict management with the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes. Côté currently serves as deputy director for the Americas in the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. In this capacity, he leads peace and security interventions in Haiti, Colombia and Guatemala. Côté has served with the United Nations in Burkina Faso, Italy, Mauritius, South Africa and Kenya. As an adviser to U.N. resident coordinators and senior government officials, he helped promote peace and governance through the formulation and implementation of pro-poor socioeconomic and environmental policies and programs in several African and Asian countries. He has also advanced negotiations on the international conventions on desertification, climate change and biodiversity; the Hyogo Framework for Action on disaster reduction; and the Ten-year Review of the Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States.

Colombia

Angela Rivas Gamboa holds a Ph.D. in social and cultural anthropology. She heads the Private Sector and Conflict division at Fundación Ideas para la Paz, a Bogotá-based think tank devoted to overcoming armed conflict and building peace in Colombia. Her work builds on an understanding of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as attentive to human rights, conflict prevention/amelioration and peace-building. The Fundación focuses on providing useful knowledge and developing tools to enhance and encourage the adoption of CSR among companies that operate in Colombia; promoting the adoption by the private sector of standards and codes of conduct on human rights and security; and promoting the adoption of methodologies and business practices attentive to human rights, conflict prevention/amelioration and peace-building. She has previously worked for the CSR division of Occidental Petroleum Corporation.

Additionally, she has conducted research on a variety of topics including justice, policymaking on both crime and violence prevention, and urban security.

Costa Rica

Luis Emilio Jiménez is a political scientist and an independent consultant on the design of national and regional policies oriented to reduce the impact of small arms in Central America. He worked for the secretariat general of Latin American Faculty of Social Science, where he coordinated the hemispherical project “Small Arms and Light Weapons: A Threat to Hemispherical Security.” He also has run projects on citizen security issues for the Costa Rican Justice Ministry in cooperation with the U.N. Development Program office in Costa Rica. Those initiatives have involved the participation of local actors, municipal employees and authorities, private sector organizations and the national police office in the design of local proposals to prevent crime and promote healthy cities. He has participated in other studies related to human rights, youth gangs and organized crime in Central America. Jiménez also teaches in the Political Science Department at the University of Costa Rica, focusing on the areas of international affairs, parliamentary processes and Costa Rican political institutions. Currently, Jiménez is interested in developing indicators to measure how citizen security is affected by urban design variables.

Ecuador

Juan Sebastián Roldán is a sociologist with a master’s degree in political studies from Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas in Madrid, Spain, and a master’s degree in political science from Universidad de Salamanca. He is the former general undersecretary of the Ministry of Government of Ecuador. He also served as the interinstitutional undersecretary in the Policy Coordinating Ministry. He was a political director at Universidad San Francisco, and is a member of the National Council of the Ruptura de los 25 political movement.

El Salvador

Montserrat Arévalo holds a psychology degree from the Universidad de El Salvador. Her work focuses on community-based psychology with a social focus. Her first professional experience was working with former guerrilla and armed forces members, supporting the process of reinsertion into civilian life and offering rehabilitation to those involved in the armed conflict. Later, in the framework of feminism, she began working in self-help processes with women survivors of political violence, recognizing the importance of the state’s role in national reconciliation processes, as well as the need to face the damage caused by human rights violations. Arévalo founded Asociación Mujeres Transformando, where she currently works as the general coordinator, promoting actions to strengthen women facing violence, and encouraging democratic values, peace and justice.

Mexico

Alberto Capella Ibarra holds a bachelor's degree in law from Universidad Autónoma de Baja California. He is currently the secretary of public safety for the city of Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. He also serves as the executive secretary of the Association of Businessmen in Baja California. In the past, he served as the president of the Constitutional Lawyer Board of Baja California. He has also been the counselor for the Committee of Citizen Collaboration of the Mexican attorney general's office and the president of the Citizen Council of Public Safety of Baja California. He has also worked with the Citizen Council for the Transparency and Fight Against Corruption, has been an editorial consultant for the *Reforma* and *Frontera* newspapers and a member of the International City/County Management Association. He has been interviewed by 60 Minutes Australia, NBC News, ABC News, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, Telemundo Los Angeles, Rolling Stone magazine and 10 News San Diego. He has also participated in the U.S. State Department's "Transparency and Anti-Corruption in the U.S." International Visitor Leadership Program.

Nicaragua

Felix Maradiaga holds a bachelor's degree in political science and international relations from the University of Mobile, Ala., and a master's degree with honors in public administration from Harvard University. After serving as the youngest-ever secretary general of the Ministry of Defense, Maradiaga has dedicated himself to strengthening peace, democracy and the rule of law in Nicaragua. Maradiaga helped co-found Nicaragua's Ministry of Defense in 1997. During his 10-year tenure in civil service (1997–2007), he also led the country's Office for Combatant Reintegration and presided over several interagency initiatives on disarmament and arms control. In 2007, he co-founded and is currently the director of the Instituto de Liderazgo de la Sociedad Civil (ILSC), a nonprofit center affiliated with the Movement for Nicaragua. ILSC focuses on leadership development based on a model of "nonviolent social change." As a result of his efforts, Maradiaga was awarded the International Youth Peace Prize in 2000. He was also named a United Nations Disarmament Fellow (2003), a Mason Fellow at the Harvard School of Government (2006) and a Yale World Fellow at Yale University (2008).

Peru

Miguel Lévano is a sociologist from Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, with a master's degree in social policy from the same university. He additionally pursued postgraduate training at Universidad Internacional de Andalucía. He currently works in the Adjunct Office for Conflict Prevention and Social Governance at the Office of the Ombudsman of Peru. Lévano has experience in research, planning and education on issues related to strengthening democracy, citizen participation, social conflicts, human rights and citizen security. He is also a lecturer at various academic and professional institutions, including the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver,

Canada; the Environmental Mining Council of British Columbia; the University of Victoria, Canada; the Association of Sociologists of Peru; and the Metallurgical Engineering Chapter of Peru's College of Engineering. In addition, he was the coordinator of a course on the Management of Electoral Processes, a coordinated endeavor between the National Electoral Office and the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos.

St. Kitts and Nevis

Vaughan Henderson holds a Bachelor of Laws degree (LLB) from the University of the West Indies. He currently works as an inspector with the traffic department at the St. Johnston police station in Basseterre, St. Kitts. He has attended several specialized training courses, including an advanced management course at the International Law Enforcement Academy in Roswell, N.M. (June 2009); a United Nations Development Program workshop on promoting a common approach to crime prevention, human security and integrity (March 2009); crisis management training organized by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Organization of American States (January 2008); and a course on Partnership in Combating Transnational Crime, Latin America and Caribbean Chapter Retrainer, FBI National Academy Associates (June 2007). Henderson joined the police force in 1993, was promoted to sergeant in 2005 and named an inspector the following year.

Trinidad and Tobago

Malisa Neptune holds a bachelor's degree in sociology/psychology and a master's degree in criminology and criminal justice from the University of the West Indies (UWI). Neptune has gained most of her crime-related professional experience working at the Ministry of National Security in her native Trinidad. Her career path began at UWI, where, while pursuing her undergraduate degree, she was appointed president of the Psychology Association and worked as a peer counselor. The coursework and extracurricular activities she undertook during her university years ignited her interest in criminology and criminal justice, a field that was at the time burgeoning due to Trinidad's proliferating crime rate. After obtaining her degree, she secured a research assistant position in the island's Ministry of Health. Later, she enrolled in UWI's master's program in criminology and criminal justice. Neptune transferred to the Ministry of National Security, which is the government body mandated to ensure public safety and security. She continues to work as a research officer in the Ministry of National Security, and has had the opportunity to represent the ministry on numerous occasions. Recently, Neptune was involved in a ministry collaboration with the organization Citizen Security Programme, which aims to reduce crime and violence by providing special attention to at-risk youth in Trinidad and Tobago.

United States

Julia Roig holds a juris doctorate from The George Washington University. She is the executive director of Partners for Democratic Change, an international nongovernmental organization based in Washington, D.C. The group uses a global network of centers and practitioners to promote change and conflict management skills and processes, facilitate the resolution of disputes, and empower ordinary people to participate in decision-making at local and national levels. Roig has overseen the expansion of the Partners network in Latin America to include Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Peru. She is directing a broad regional program, working with leaders in more than 10 countries in Latin America to support the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Roig joined Partners after significant field experience in the Balkans and Latin America, managing various “Rule of Law” and conflict resolution development programs. She lived and worked in Colombia for five years and consulted throughout Central and South America on a wide range of international donor projects. An experienced mediator, facilitator, systems designer and trainer, Roig has specialized expertise in international project evaluation and program assessments. She currently serves on the editorial board of *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, and has written extensively on international conflict resolution and mediation program management.



The Americas Project 2009

2009 – Beyond the Absence of War: Peace and Stability in the Americas of the 21st Century

Challenges to peace come in many forms. While armed conflicts are rare between the countries of the Americas, there are ongoing internal conflicts that continuously challenge security and peace in the region. Kidnappings and violent death rates in the hemisphere are appalling compared to those in other parts of the world.

Furthermore, a less visible, yet critically important, threat to peace in the region is the impoverished condition of 200 million people, the malnourishment of 52 million people, inadequate sewage disposal for 100 million, and the lack of access to potable water for 50 million — many of whom have become even more vulnerable as a result of the global financial crisis. These millions of people not only have to worry about fulfilling their basic needs, but also live in fear of organized crime, terrorism, gangs and human trafficking. This scenario takes a toll on physical and emotional well-being and seriously undermines development in the region.

This year's Americas Project will focus on peace and stability in the Americas by examining some of the new menaces to hemispheric security that threaten peaceful coexistence among and within countries. The discussion will help assess current policies adopted by national governments and international organizations, as well as help identify actions that civil society, national governments and international organizations can take to overcome the new multidimensional security challenges.

Previous Americas Projects

2008 – Urban Migration in the Americas: Planning for the Future

Latin American cities, like many throughout the world, are faced with steady population growth. According to a United Nations Population Fund estimate, 74 percent of the Latin American and Caribbean populations lived in urban areas in 2005. People continue to migrate to the urban centers in search of employment, education and a higher standard of living. Urbanization usually goes hand in hand with social and economic development, but rapid urban growth strains the capacity of local and national governments to provide basic services. The influx of migrant populations has also raised issues of cultural identity and community integration. The 2008 Americas Project (AP) examined urban migration and challenges such as affordable housing, public education and public policies. The group's findings were published in the Baker Institute conference report "Urban Migration in the Americas."

2007 – Building Opportunities and Managing Challenges in the Americas

The last two decades have marked a historical movement toward democracy throughout Latin America. The task that lies before the region today is to consolidate and deepen the central elements of democratic governance while addressing growing economic disparities and social fragmentation. The 2007 Americas

Project colloquium addressed the constructive role of civil society in fostering democratic practices, with discussions on topics such as leadership and social entrepreneurship in the Americas.

To commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Americas Project, we organized the first reunion of AP fellows, drawing some 50 fellows from 17 different countries to the Baker Institute. It was a unique occasion for these leaders to meet and network, and to review their countries' progress and challenges during the last decade.

2006 – Freedom of Expression in the 21st Century in the Americas

During the past two decades, Latin America has experienced a profound political transformation. Democracy has prevailed in 34 countries in the region, widening the stage for civil society to actively participate in the political process. The media has played a decisive role in the region's development through its investigation, reporting on and denouncing nondemocratic practices. The process of democratization is faced with obstacles such as censorship, limited independence, lack of financing and problems with access to information. The aim of the seventh Americas Project colloquium was to shed more light on the importance of freedom of expression in consolidating democracy in the Americas.

2004 – Civil Society in the Americas: The Missing Link Between the Private and Public Sectors

Development requires the participation and collaboration of all sectors of society: civil society, the private sector and government. The sixth Americas Project colloquium explored the key role played by tri-sector collaboration in contributing to the hemisphere's development. The fellows, who came from diverse professional backgrounds, worked together and represented a mix of views from the three sectors. They enriched their opinions by sharing success stories of tri-sector collaboration in their respective countries, as well as by discussing challenges and ways to overcome obstacles.

2003 – Democracy in the Hemisphere: Challenges and Opportunities

Latin America has embarked upon a truly historical movement toward democracy in the last two decades. The Americas Project 2003 fellows discussed the challenge these young democracies face in their path toward consolidation, paying particular attention to improving performance and openness in the judiciary, increasing accountability in government budgets, attacking corruption and encouraging a constructive role for a civil society in fostering democratic practices. The fellows' conclusions are published in Baker Institute Policy Report 25. Keynote speakers and panelists included Luigi Einaudi, U.S. ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS) and assistant secretary general of the OAS; Linn Hammergren, public sector specialist in the World Bank's Latin America Regional Department; Rudolf Hommes, private adviser to President Alvaro Uribe of Colombia; Jorge Santistevan, former human rights ombudsman of Peru; Andreas Schedler, professor of political science at the Center for Economic Research and Teaching; and Kurt Weyland, associate professor of government at The University of Texas at Austin.

2002 – The Political Consequences of Economic Turmoil in Latin America

In October 2002, 16 fellows met at the Baker Institute for an intense three-day conference. They analyzed the political, economic and social implications of the changes that the region has faced in the last few years as a consequence of many political and economic crises. Drawing on the experiences of their individual countries, the fellows identified common obstacles to the consolidation of democracy, sustained economic growth and social equity. Their findings can be found in Baker Institute Policy Report 22. Keynote speakers for this event were Ambassador Roger Noriega, U.S. permanent representative to the Organization of American States, and Enrique Peñalosa, former mayor of Bogotá, Colombia.

2000 – Boom to Whom? The Effects of Foreign Trade and Investment Liberalization on Poverty and Income Distribution in the Americas

In the fall of 2000, 20 young experts from North, Central and South America convened at the Baker Institute for four days to discuss a central issue of social justice in modern society. They listened, debated and argued over the hemispheric situation of the deepening of income inequality and poverty during a time of economic liberalization that has produced aggregate wealth gains and increased national incomes. Baker Institute Policy Report 16 presents the consensus of the participants on how governments, private-sector organizations and nongovernmental organizations might help improve this situation. Keynote speakers for this event were Domingo Cavallo, national congressman and former minister of economy of Argentina, and Orlando Sanchez, Houston City Council member.

1998 – The Future of Hemispheric Relations through the Prism of Mexico

In 1998, 16 fellows came from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela. They offered recommendations on democracy, economic liberalization, poverty and income inequality, which were published in Baker Institute Study No. 9. Keynote speakers for this event were José Angel Gurría Treviño, secretary of Finance, Mexico; Thomas “Mack” McLarty, special envoy to the Americas, United States; and Jorge Castañeda, author and political analyst, Mexico.

1997 – Free Trade and Reforms in the Hemisphere

Our first class of Americas Project fellows joined us from the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay for four spirited days of discussion. Their main findings are available in Baker Institute Study No. 5. Keynote speakers for the first conference were César Gaviria, secretary general of the Organization of American States; Carlos Fuentes, noted author and ambassador; and Henry Cisneros, president and chief operating officer, Univision Communications, Inc., former secretary of housing and urban development, and former mayor of San Antonio, Texas.