

Speech

Organization of American States



**LUIGI R. EINAUDI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL OF
THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
AT THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
CONVENED TO MARK HIS INVESTITURE AS ASSISTANT
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF
AMERICAN STATES**

September 6, 2000 - Washington, DC

Mr. Chairman, Ambassador Valter Pecly Moreira, Representative of Brazil, thank you for your generous words.

My wife, Carol; my children, Maria, Elisabeth, Mario, Peter; their spouses; my grandchildren; cousins; other members of our family. I want also to recognize my cousin Lorenzo for coming to join us from Argentina and to acknowledge, through him, the support of his father-my uncle-the engineer Roberto Einaudi, who, at 94, is the patriarch of the Einaudi family and a builder of human bridges between Europe and the Americas.

To my predecessors, Chris Thomas of Trinidad and Tobago, Val McComie of Barbados, and Jorge Luis Zelaya of Guatemala, representatives of countries and subregions, I, as the first United States citizen to occupy this post since the 1960s, will endeavor to advance their interests fully and fairly.

Mr. Secretary General, César Gaviria, distinguished former President of Colombia, a country that has long contributed leadership to the inter-American system, and a leader whose insight and good judgment I have come to admire in my direct workings with you, sir, on conflict resolution and the promotion of democracy.



Ambassadors and representatives of the member states to this Permanent Council of the Organization of American States, it is my duty under the Charter to support your work as the only political body that brings together, on the basis of sovereign equality, the countries of the Western Hemisphere. Representatives of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and other entities of the inter-American system, officers of the OAS Secretariat, and of the Staff Association.

Distinguished guests and visitors, to those of you from the Executive and the Congress of my country, the United States: thank you. Your support for the OAS-the issues you will bring to our attention, the trust you place in us to work for common interests, the payment of dues and arrearages-will set the example for others and will condition almost everything I do.

To those of you from universities, think tanks, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector, a special welcome. You represent the civil society so vital to our democracy. There are too many of you to single you out individually, save for Peter Hakim and others from the Inter-American Dialogue and from the United States Institute of Peace, with whom I have worked closely since leaving government service and whose cooperation I will treasure in this new role.

Finally, to those of you from outside the Western Hemisphere, whether as observer states to the OAS, members of the Washington diplomatic corps, or world citizens with a view-friends all-thank you for sharing this moment. You seek what we seek: to preserve our distinctive identities while striving to meet the demands of the universalism to which our spirits draw us.

In the rest of this ceremony, you will hear from speakers who represent the countries that nominated me and the three regional subgroups that give shape

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to Latin America and the Caribbean. But, first, I would like to recognize Marlene Fernandez, the Ambassador of Bolivia to the White House; sitting next to her Francisco Tudela, the First Vice President of Peru-I do not see them in the Hall because of my eyes, but I know they are here-Viron Peter Vaky, Luis Lauredo, and Roger Noriega, all citizens of the United States. My presence here owes a great deal to many who are not here, including Madeleine Albright and Lloyd Axworthy and the presidents of Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and the United States, who jointly put forward my nomination. But each of you, individually, whom I have named, played a key role at a critical moment. Thank you.

And now a quick reflection of my own. "Are you really sure you want this job and all of the frustrations it will bring you?" This was a question asked of me last spring by a gentleman who was in a position to help determine his country's vote in the election for this position in Canada last June. I did not hesitate then, and though the pace of my first six weeks on the job-supporting the Secretary General in Peru and Haiti and starting to build the team to support this Council in its work-has been breathtaking, I have never hesitated since. And let me give you three reasons why.

First, there is more to the OAS than most people know.

There is the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD), which has undertaken constant and varied work of electoral observation and institutional support.

There is the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), which is even now pioneering the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), which will build the foundations for being able to ensure that we attack production, transit, and consumption of illicit narcotics in a fair and cooperative manner.

There is the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), which held high the torch of freedom during the dark years of dictatorship and which today faces continuing challenges in the struggle for improved democratic and human rights rule.

There is the Inter-American Defense College (IADC), an institution created with the Alliance for Progress; a key forum not only for exchange among military professionals, but increasingly for civil and military dialogue.

The Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) symbolizes the potential for networking on common interests in the Hemisphere.

The new Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (IACD) has my friend Ron Scheman as its first Director General and brings ideas that are essential as we move to modernize from old ways to new.

And just as an example, 10 days from now, I leave for Panama and Nicaragua at the request of the Secretary General to participate in an effort to harmonize legislation to implement the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, which was negotiated here in the OAS. There is a lot of similar follow-up work to do. I have a particular interest in the Convention on controlling small arms.

But if there is more than many of us know, the opportunities before this hemisphere are enormous. This is not the Hemisphere I first visited in 1955. Then, we were caught up in the Cold War and saw very little beyond it-at least in the United States. The English-speaking Caribbean was still made up of colonies. Much of Latin America was ruled by regimes that were juridically de facto, socially closed, and economically backward or, at least, unproductive.

Last week, President Cardoso of Brazil convened a South American Summit that was reported on in this Council yesterday, where the central theme was subregional integration built on foundations of "democracy, trade, integration infrastructure, the fight against illicit drugs and related crimes, and the development of information knowledge and technology."

For the United States, I think this is a time that gives the opportunity to recognize and work both within our immediate neighborhood of Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central America, but also beyond, and to work on a basis of increasing mutual respect and obligation and common purpose. For the countries

of Latin America and the Caribbean, I believe that they seek cooperation also as a path to modernization, development, and stability. And for all concerned, I think that this is a time when it should be possible to create a new hemispheric bargain that is centered on democracy and extends to providing the citizen security and opportunity that we all want. And the moment that beckons us now to begin to really move that forward is the Summit of the Americas that Canada will host in Quebec City next April.

And in this scenario, I think we can make a difference. Globalism has made multilateralism a necessity. We all agree with that instinctively when we think of drugs and the problems that we have if we fail to cooperate effectively in any one country or situation. We know that the rules that our trade ministers are negotiating are the rules of multilateralism that apply across countries. Just two weeks ago, the London Economist wrote of the unrecognized and, unfortunately, perhaps often unadmitted costs of conflict among states which, once again, can only really be resolved among states themselves.

And if I may quote our Secretary General, "the key policy priority of the OAS is the strengthening, effective exercise, and consolidation of democracy, which is the cement needed for the construction of a peaceful, stable, and economically developed hemisphere." I think that that puts the challenge of what we must do in a nutshell, for it defines at one swoop the importance of the political quality among us to the other aspects of our lives and cooperation.

But now we come to the nub of the problem. Multilateralism is as difficult as it is important. Why would there be so many hidden conflicts among states if the problems between them were easy to solve? Why do poverty and injustice still mock our aspirations? Why is there so much mistrust among us when the common interests are so many and multiplying?

To put the OAS and the opportunities and challenges before us together will require patience, trust, confidence, and time. There will be steps back as well as steps forward. My mother used to have a phrase, her favorite saying, it's an Italian proverb, "Chi va piano va sano ma va lontano." He who goes slowly goes well, but surely. And 22 years ago, Ambassador Vaky, then the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, named me the Executive Secretary of what was then known as the ARA-NSC-IG, the interdepartmental group for inter-American affairs. That really is the reason that I was named to the Senior Executive Service by President Carter and awarded this little cornerstone gold pin by President Reagan, because, basically, I think and I will try to continue to be a good bureaucrat.

And that is really how and why I'm here today. We have the leadership in our Secretary General, we have the ties to the states of this hemisphere in this Permanent Council, and as Secretary to the Permanent Council, my goal will be to strengthen our institutional capacity so that the OAS can serve effectively as the Secretariat of a functioning hemispheric summit process. To do so will require building an engranaje, a linking of mutual respect and mutual obligation and common action. This is not going to be easy; I know that. My roots tell me Rome was not built in a day, and I think, however, that I can tell you that we have begun and that I have been joined by the makings of an exceptional team. Let me introduce them to you.

On the head table here, at the far right, is Sandra Honoré of Trinidad and Tobago. She is my Chief of Staff. At the rear, I have Paul Spencer of Antigua and Barbuda; next to him Cristina Tomassoni of Argentina, and next to her Chris Hernandez-Roy of Canada and, occasionally, of Spain.

The wider team, of course, you do not see on stage. The Office of the Assistant Secretary General is responsible for the Secretariat of the General Assembly, the Meeting of Consultation, and the Permanent Council; the Secretariat of Conferences and Meetings; the Permanent Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission of Women; the Office of the Inter-American Children's Institute; the Museum of Art of the Americas; the Columbus Memorial Library; and the Offices of the General Secretariat in the member States. To do our work well, I will, of course, rely on other offices of the Secretariat as well and on the guidance of Secretary General Gaviria. I have five years. That's a lot of time, but that can be wasted unless we start now. The Quebec Summit is only seven months away.

I ask all of you not to assume that because I'm getting old and I've done a lot, well and bad, that I know or understand things automatically. I pledge to dialogue with you, but I need you to dialogue with me and tell me what you need, and I will try to bring you together honestly and, if necessarily, stubbornly. Basically, I believe in America, not just the America of the United States, but in the America of all of us, whether north, central, or south; whether born of Europe, of America itself, of Africa or Asia. This is America, and as German Arciniegas said, "América es otra cosa"- "America is something else"-and I will work with you toward that goal.

Thank you very much.

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