

Speech

Organization of American States



**LUIGI R. EINAUDI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL OF
THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE MEETING OF
EXPERTS ON CONFIDENCE- AND SECURITY-BUILDING
MEASURES
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I would like to begin by welcoming you in the name of Secretary General César Gaviria, and thanking the US Government, through Ambassador Peter de Shazo and Assistant Secretary of State Lincoln Bloomfield, for making this meeting possible.

It is in fact particularly fitting that this meeting of experts should be held in the United States, here in Miami, the birthplace of the Summit of the Americas Process. Fitting also because this meeting of experts is the result of a mandate of another Summit, the Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City. Our heads of state and government called for an experts meeting to follow-up the previous conferences on Confidence and Security-Building Measures which had been held in Santiago and San Salvador. Their mandate to us is to evaluate implementation and consider next steps as a prelude the Special Conference on Security to be held May 6-8 in Mexico City.

Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs) have long been part of the international disarmament agenda and conventional arms control negotiations in Europe. They have traditionally been defined as provisions for the exchange and verification of information regarding military activities. Sometimes they have also included mechanisms promoting co-operation among participating States in regard to military matters.

Over the past decade, these concepts have influenced the emerging discourse on security in the Western Hemisphere.

Beginning in Buenos Aires in 1994, then in Santiago de Chile in 1996 and San Salvador in 1998, member States have built up an impressive list of measures that could be applied bilaterally and multilaterally. However, as the countries of this hemisphere have continued to discuss CSBMs, the nature of the measures has moved far beyond traditional military concepts, and now includes political, diplomatic, educational, cultural and other non-traditional concepts - mirroring the evolving debate on the nature of Security on our Hemisphere and more generally on the impact of globalization. We must recognize subregional needs, and respond to them without losing a common perspective of what is appropriate for other institutions.

A sign of this evolution was the Second High Level Meeting on the Special Security Concerns of Small Island States, held in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, January 8-10. Delegations there discussed a series of CSBMs designed specifically to enhance the security of small island states, including ones affecting health, environment, customs, and quite importantly, trafficking in illicit drugs and small arms. On January 24, in San Salvador, we heard from Assistant Secretary Bloomfield about the risks of cyber-terrorism and its grave potential for economic disruption.

The General Secretariat, for its part, has been supporting the Committee on Hemispheric Security by maintaining a roster of experts on CSBMs in the member states and by preparing a yearly inventory of confidence- and security-building measures based on submissions from the members.

The inventory has proven to be a useful tool for centralizing relevant and up-to-date information. However a more standardized system would facilitate not only

the transmission of information by member states but also the use of such information. A new system is being developed, through generous support provided by the US Government; the Secretariat will brief you on the status of the system later today.

The experience of the Secretariat goes beyond developing concepts, documents, and information-sharing tools. Concrete measures in effect on the ground have been developed at the request of member states, most notably in Central America.

The morning after this conference concludes, for instance, I will be hosting Delegations from Belize and Guatemala at OAS Headquarters. Building on an earlier CSBM document, their objective is to develop a framework to manage any problems that might arise while they work to find a peaceful solution to their centuries-old territorial differendum. Many of the measures under discussion could almost be taken textually from the illustrative list of CSBMs to be discussed at this Experts Meeting.

The Secretariat also brokered a series of confidence-building agreements between Honduras and Nicaragua in 1999, 2000 and in 2001 in an effort to lower tensions over maritime delimitation. These included such measures as limiting the presence of military and police assets along their border areas; establishing coordinated or combined military patrols; establishing specific channels of communication to manage incidents. They also provided a mechanism for verifying compliance with the agreed CSBMs, a mechanism which included the use of experts from Argentina and Brazil and was supported by both member and observer states.

Progress in the hemisphere's common effort to overcome historic differences and build a solidarity that goes beyond words depends heavily on our ability to transform words, first into law and then into practise. The member states have used the OAS to develop the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of, and Trafficking in, Small Arms, Ammunition, Explosives and Related Materials (CIFTA) and the Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism, two instruments of immediate operational importance in what is today perhaps the greatest threat faced by the people of the hemisphere.

Of note as a pure confidence-building initiative is the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisition. This agreement, approved by the General Assembly on June 7, 1999, is intended to contribute more fully to transparency in the acquisition of conventional weapons by exchanging information regarding imports and exports of major weapons systems such as battle tanks, armored combat vehicles, large caliber artillery, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships and some missiles and missile launchers. 20 member states have signed the Convention, and seven have ratified it. It entered into force just over two months ago, in late November.

I urge delegations from those states that have not yet signed or ratified the three conventions I have just mentioned -- to stop the illegal traffic in arms, to share information to stop terrorism, and to ensure greater openness in conventional weapons -- to make every effort to ensure their governments do so. And I urge all present to work to harmonize local and national legislations with this growing body of regional jurisprudence for peace and cooperation.

As you engage in deliberations over the next two days, I encourage you to think about how to develop second generation CSBMs, compulsory measures that, like these conventions, would help make our Hemisphere even more secure.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Throughout human history, gestures that prove peaceful intentions, dispel distrust and build confidence have been critical to the growth of civilization. Today, discussions on Confidence and Security Building Measures are taking place across the globe, in the Americas, Africa, Europe, East Asia and the Pacific, and the Middle East. Some of these regions are at peace; others have deep histories of conflict, mistrust and imminent prospects of war.

All of these regions, through meetings of experts such as this one, and through the statesmanship and vision of their leaders, are exploring ways to create

greater security through the development and adoption of confidence and security-building measures. Let us hope that, by continuing to develop this hemisphere's record of peaceful evolution we may contribute to the general peace we all desire.

Your governments are in the midst of a reevaluation of the entire regional security system of the Western Hemisphere. The Special Conference on Security, to be held in May in Mexico, provides a major opportunity to advance multilateral cooperation to address old and new threats and security concerns.

Your work here will deepen this region's experience with CSBMs and provide ideas for new measures to confront the many challenges we face. It will thus be an essential ingredient for our broader tasks ahead.

I wish you every success.

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