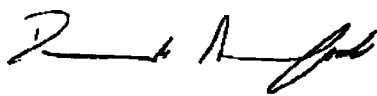


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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

From: The Secretary of Defense   
Date: November 19, 2002  
Subject: Visit to Chile—Defense Ministerial of the Americas

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I have just attended the 5<sup>th</sup> Defense Ministerial of the Americas, involving all the countries of the hemisphere except Cuba. I held bilateral meetings with Chile, Argentina, Colombia and Brazil.

- **DEFENSE MINISTERIAL OF THE AMERICAS.** In many ways, the issues being debated in this hemisphere are similar to those being discussed at NATO this week—how to take institutions built during the Cold War, adapt them, and make them relevant to 21<sup>st</sup> century threats and challenges.

Some countries, like Mexico, argue that institutions of the Inter-American System that arose during the Cold War have outlived their usefulness. Mexico has withdrawn from the Rio Treaty, and wants countries of the region to focus more on bilateral cooperation and “soft” security issues. This is clearly a minority view.

I made the case that the need for our nations to work together has not diminished; it has grown. Instead of dismantling old institutions, we need to adapt them and forge new areas of concrete cooperation.

In that spirit, we offered two initiatives for discussion, which were well received:

- First, an initiative to facilitate naval cooperation among the nations of the hemisphere, to help guard the Caribbean and East Pacific against arms trafficking and other threats;
- Second, an initiative to strengthen peacekeeping cooperation by taking specialized capabilities of individual nations, and integrating them to create regional capabilities.

We also discussed the problem of “ungoverned areas,” where terrorists, hostage takers, and drug- and arms-traffickers operate—and need for democratic nations to exercise “effective sovereignty” in their territories.

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- **CHILE**. Our host, Chile, was extremely supportive of our initiatives. Their views parallel ours in terms of preserving and adapting Inter-American institutions. I met with President Lagos and Defense Minister Michelle Bachelet, and was once slated to be Socialist President Salvador Allende's ambassador to the Soviet Union, before Allende was overthrown in the 1973 coup. Like Prime Minister Blair, he seems to be a man of the left who is trying to govern as a centrist. He is friendly and supportive—a good sign since Chile will rotate onto the UN Security Council in January.
- **ARGENTINA**. Argentina is the only country designated as a "Major Non-NATO Ally" in the hemisphere. They have an impressive number of peacekeeping deployments around the globe, and also offered forces for Afghanistan, including peacekeepers and a field hospital. The financial crisis there is a limiting factor in their ability to do more, but they are right-thinking and extremely supportive.
- **COLOMBIA**. I had a good meeting with the Colombian Minister of Defense. She said that it means a lot to the Colombian people that they have such a firm ally in the U.S., and in you personally. President Uribe has taken a courageous and bold approach to Colombia's predicament. The time to help him is now, early in his Administration, while he has momentum. If we wait, and he gets bogged down, the effort will be much more difficult. Congress has given us expanded authority to help—by permitting counter-drug funds to be used for counter-terrorism—but only for a year.
- **BRAZIL**. The outgoing Brazilian Defense Minister said that the leftist President-elect "Lula" seemed to have undergone a "process of maturing." It remains to be seen whether, like Chilean President Lagos, he will govern to the center, or whether he will follow the Castro/Chavez model.

When I was SecDef in 1975, only 14 nations in the Western hemisphere could be considered democracies. Today, with the exception of Cuba, almost the entire hemisphere has embraced representative government.

The democratic transformation of the Americas has opened up avenues for expanded cooperation, and there seems to be growing consensus on the need to adapt Inter-American institutions to deal with the new transnational threats.

Respectfully,

Cc: The Vice President  
The Secretary of State  
The National Security Advisor