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OFFICE OF  
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

WASHINGTON, D. C.

March 10, 1982

Office of

THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Dear Frank:

You may know that a decade or more ago I was involved in Central America as the U.S. Representative when we obtained a cease fire and troop withdrawal in the mini war between El Salvador and Honduras. This was a Rio Treaty case.

I have in recent months had time to research more deeply the actual history of the OAS since the days of Secretary of State George Marshall, who attended the OAS meeting in Bogota in 1948. I hope that you will have the time to at least read the overview which is attached in a first draft paper concerned with dispute settlements.

Several weeks ago, Caroline Casselman, my Deputy, and I attended the briefing on Central America given by Ambassadors Kirkpatrick and Mitterand. Our main concern was the fact that the American public has not been told the full story of Cuban interventionism in the Western Hemisphere going back to 1962. I reminded the audience that as late as 1967, I was attempting to convince the NATO countries in Brussels of the need to cut off government sales and credits to Cuba as a result of the most recent landing of men and arms from Cuba on Venezuelan shores.

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Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS

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With warm regards,

*John W. Ford*

John W. Ford

Special Advisor to the Secretary General

Deputy Secretary of Defense  
Frank C. Carlucci  
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## WORKING FOR THE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

### AN OVERVIEW

Throughout its institutional history the Organization of American States has been involved in almost every facet of our Hemispheric relationships under the broad rubric of keeping vigilance over the maintenance of friendly relations among the member states and assisting them in the peaceful settlement of their disputes. The OAS Permanent or Political Council has been the principal body most consistently involved, aided and abetted by treaty instruments (a charter and a mutual defense treaty).

Beyond the formal language of its resolutions much of the work of the OAS is unknown but even a cursory review of its activities will demonstrate that in situations involving friendly relations and settlement of disputes the OAS has been called upon formally or informally no less than fifty separate times. In the process the OAS has faced many crises and is generally given high marks for its handling of the first armed conflict between two Latin American countries occurring in a generation. Its unanimous vote approving resolutions of the OAS Permanent Council in a situation involving the potential for World War III on the occasion of the presence of Russian missiles in a member state, has also been acknowledged.

It has overcome formidable situations many of which today are forgotten but which constituted in their time serious Hemispheric problems.

It has helped prevent renewed outbreak of war, for example, when faced with a hijacking involving two combatant countries, has used its good offices successfully in situations involving potential conflict between a member state and an extra-continental power, has gone off on missions of peace including situations of riots and resulting bloodshed, has imposed sanctions on a member state on proving intentions of that state toward assassinating the President of another member country, is widely considered responsible for having brought a civil war to a close including the departure of the President of that country, and provided good offices in helping prevent bloodshed when efforts were made to restore a deposed President to office. It is credited with having made a major contribution to preventing a coup by reason of the presence of election observers selected by the Organization but acting in their individual capacities. As an institution it took an early and steadfast stand against violations of the inviolability of diplomatic staffs and premises and played a significant and humanitarian role in bringing to a close the long drawn

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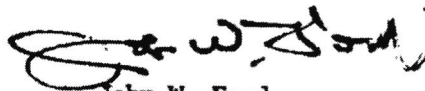
out and trying ordeal for hostages and their families who were the victims of terrorist takeovers, one of a diplomatic mission and the other of an OAS office. As late as 1981 it issued resolutions concerned with the cessation of military operations on the border between two larger member countries. While it has never faced a conflict of major proportions involving larger member states, member country spokesmen have acknowledged the value even in such cases of its mutual defense treaty which provide for return to status quo ante bellum under penalty of being branded an aggressor and the potential of ensuing sanctions.

While not all member countries participated in the solutions of problems which have arisen historically with a common and universal position, and while all the resolutions taken prior to the crises it has faced were not ones of unanimity, over the years the OAS has built up an impressive body of precedents, experiences, and ways of doing business.

Peace-keeping or humanitarian operations in which goals, objectives and even difficulties and dangers helped provide a uniting and inspiring ingredient, have represented the OAS international effort at its best. OAS Ambassadors, Secretariat personnel and officials of member governments operating under OAS mandates have known the dangers of war, of hostile public opinion, and the difficult task of dealing with armed guerrillas holding diplomats or international servants as hostages. At least two OAS military observers have lost their lives while engaged in peacekeeping and or humanitarian mercy missions.

The Hemispheric problems the OAS will face in the future are seemingly without parallel except to those willing to dig deeply into the rich history of precedents which mark its work. The OAS has served the continent well in dealing with aggression and threats or fears of aggression as well as in providing good offices in calming disputes that might have led to even more serious consequences. The treaties and institutional relationships which are part of its heritage need to be nourished and strengthened and it behooves us to reflect on the consequences of bypassing, ignoring or disregarding these precedents and the treaty instruments.

Effective multilateral action in the future as in the past is primarily the responsibility of the member states in an Organization in which its members are juridically equal and in which there is no veto.



John W. Ford  
(Former Member of the OAS Permanent Council  
and Retired Foreign Service Officer)

FIRST DRAFT  
January 25, 1982

The opinions expressed in this paper reflect the views of the author and not those of the Organization of American States.

WORKING FOR THE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF  
DISPUTES IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

(Background Notes and References)

by

John W. Ford

"The Permanent Council shall keep vigilance over the maintenance of friendly relations among the Member States, and for that purpose shall effectively assist them in the peaceful settlement of their disputes..."

--Charter of the Organization of American States (1)

"The principles of solidarity underlying inter-American cooperation in the political field and in matters of security should necessarily be applied also in the economic and social field. Their non-observance in this regard can disrupt relations among the countries and imperil their peace and security."

--Consensus of Viña Del Mar (1a)

(1) Article 82 of the OAS Charter as amended by the Protocol of Buenos Aires in 1967.

(1a) May 1969 Consensus of Viña del Mar resulting from decisions of OAS Permanent Council.



In the Western Hemisphere the processes of consultation in settlement of disputes have become well established in our traditions and have resulted in the building of a body of important precedents--aided and abetted by an institution (the Organization of American States), a political body (the OAS Permanent Council) and concepts and principles enshrined in treaties (The OAS Charter and the Rio Treaty).

International cooperation has always been both a human dream and a human necessity and this is more true in our time than it has ever been before. My exposure to multilateral diplomacy came quite late in a career devoted almost exclusively to what is traditional diplomacy, that of bilateral or country to country relations. The transition to multilateral diplomacy was not easy for it is a type of diplomacy that is not broadly understood and is frequently suspect.

The events of July 14, 1969 <sup>(2)</sup> perhaps more than any others helped in my own understanding of the role of international organizations and their untapped potential. It was in a violent hail storm, aboard a DC-3 bearing OAS insignia, that I began to document what I consider to be the precedents of working for peace which in so many ways represent the untold story of the OAS: (3)

"This was like so many other flights over this rugged, mountainous, volcanic country-side--on missions that one of my companions, Ambassador Jorge Fernández of Ecuador, liked to call 'the pacification of the spirits.' We could not forget those long nights, working around the clock in the blacked-out capital cities in an attempt to obtain agreement on the cease-fire.

- (2) Outbreak of war between El Salvador and Honduras.
- (3) Notes of writer as Member of Committee of Seven.

Initially it was the difficulty of communicating by radio or telephone, which thwarted our efforts. We watched time tick away and pass the hour agreed upon for a cease-fire. How many young soldiers lost their lives in both countries simply because we could not communicate and had to await another tragic 24 hours before the time of the cease-fire could be once more established? And another kind of war had broken out--a very cold war, of misunderstanding, of hate, of discrimination--all best summed up in the Spanish word odio.

Calming the spirits would be a long, hard battle. For this was basically a civil war, between peoples of the same Catholic faith; of the same language; of people inter-married and destined by God to live geographically as neighbors, regardless of what their present family quarrel might be. But the QAS accomplishments thus far really gave us heart; a cease-fire, a troop withdrawal from occupied territory, an exchange of prisoners, a release of civilians from detention camps and all in an effort to heal the wounds created by this tragic war.

Before takeoff we had learned of the untimely death of one of our helicopter crew in a crash of his ship (and before the war had subsided, yet another officer was to lose his life in the dangerous business of patrolling the frontier). What the QAS did here, will not be soon forgotten in the history of the slow, frustrating process of international organization cooperation and development."

In the traditional formal language that characterizes the reports and resolutions of international organizations, it is very difficult for the researcher, the scholar, or the most recently arrived diplomat attempting to gain an appreciation of possible precedents, to comprehend the significance of the work done in implementation of mandates and resolutions. One Foreign Minister at the OAS General Assembly of 1970 in his formal statement declared:

"In the Central American conflict the OAS not only helped in the role of peacemaking but also in the humanitarian tasks of protecting civilians and relieving suffering." (4)

In support of that statement, part of the untold story of the work of the OAS through members of the Permanent Council and the Secretariat is represented in these accounts:

-- OAS Ambassadors, concerned over the impact and potential for reprisals of continuing highly publicized stories of the rape and murder of two young school teachers by the armed forces of one side, directed the OAS Inter-American Human Rights Commission to give priority investigative attention to the allegations. As a result the Ambassadors were able to announce that the two young teachers were alive, unmolested and unharmed, having merely fled to the countryside to be with relatives at the time of the outbreak of war. (5)

-- Concerned with the potential for a renewed outbreak of the war during the course of delicate negotiations to bring about troop withdrawals, OAS Ambassadors effectively prevented a planned warning overflight of military aircraft. (6)

(4) OAS General Assembly records, 1970.

(5) Press records, Committee of Seven, 8-19-69  
in regard to Nery and Ana Leticia Cuestas.

(6) Records of OAS Committee of Seven, COM/ES/070, 9-12-69.

-- As a result of the prompt and effective implementation of instructions of OAS Ambassadors by a member of the Secretariat, a plane hijacked in one country and flown to the other, was promptly returned thus avoiding the real potential for renewed outbreak of war between the two countries. (7)

-- Working with the Red Cross, OAS Ambassadors arranged for the release from a detention facility of the brother of the Archbishop of the capital city of one of the combatant countries and aboard the OAS plane transported him back home-- a gesture of goodwill in the interest of peace.

-- OAS Ambassadors followed a strict policy of neutrality in the course of their arduous negotiations, a policy which at times resulted in angry demonstrations, first against one of the OAS member states, and later against the OAS itself in the form of physical attacks on an OAS office, and threats against OAS Ambassadors and Secretariat personnel in another. In the latter instance, OAS Ambassadors arranged for an orderly temporary evacuation of a majority of the peace mission operating in the country.

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The initial OAS involvement in the first armed conflict between two Latin American countries in a generation, (8) saw the General Secretariat of the OAS, in coordination with members of the OAS Permanent Council deploying more than 100 civilian observers to coordinate relief efforts, assist in the repatriation of some 70,000 citizens caught up in the war, and in general exercising a calming presence during the height of the crisis. Alluding to these efforts on the part of the OAS, one Foreign Minister had the following observation to make:

"These experiences suggest the need for reviewing the OAS capability in emergency situations. In particular, there is a need for rapid and accurate assessment of requirements and for effective coordination of humanitarian assistance. Today an earthquake is involved. Tomorrow it may be a disturbance of another kind giving rise to the need to help. For example, when emergency evacuation of foreign nationals is necessary, perhaps the OAS could take a leadership role as has been done by other organizations elsewhere in the world." (9)

- (7) Committee of Seven commendation of Jorge Vega of the OAS Secretariat.
- (8) Seven Years of Change (1968-1975) by Secretary General Galo Plaza copyright 1975.
- (9) OAS General Assembly 1970.

Peace in Central America between two member states that had gone to war in July 1969 indeed proved to be most elusive, but when the conflict once more flared up in July 1976, the OAS was able to draw upon its wealth of talent and experience and the precedents of the past involvement. Part of the untold story in my view are the following examples of the humanitarian role of the OAS for the further purpose of "calming the spirits" as the late OAS Ambassador Jorge Fernandez was so often to remark:

-- Secretariat authorization for OAS military observers to fly into the demilitarized zone, if no other prompt facilities were available, to bring out a mother dying of hemorrhaging from childbirth.

-- With the full authorization of the Foreign Ministers of the two countries, the diversion of the OAS helicopters patrolling the border in order to go to the assistance of the country besieged by heavy flooding and potential loss of life.

-- OAS helicopter transport of doctors, sick children, and those engaged in refugee relief despite the hazardous terrain and incidents of personal serious injury resulting from yet another helicopter crash.

-- The Secretariat efforts in drawing up of a procedure and an agreement for mediation leading toward a final peace treaty.

Secretary General Orfila summed up this important precedent in the life of the OAS institution as follows:

"A great peace-keeping or humanitarian operation in which goals, objectives and even difficulties and dangers help provide a uniting and inspiring ingredient, represents international effort at its best. The year 1980 was one in which the patient efforts of member nations and statesmen were successfully concluded with a peace treaty between two member states of the region. The recognition and tribute paid to the two OAS military observers who lost their lives (10) while engaged in peace-keeping operations served to underline the dangers to which those carrying out humanitarian and peace missions are exposed." (11)

(10) Captain Ramiro Gonzalez Mayorga and Specialist 5th Class William Stanley Jones who died on June 30, 1970 and September 2, 1969 respectively.

(11) Annual Report of Secretary General Orfila, 1980.

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In disputes involving the use of the OAS regional machinery it is customary for most references to record the following history: (12)

1. Costa Rica/Nicaragua, 1948. Helped restore peace.
2. Haiti-Dominican Republic, 1949. Helped restore peace.
3. Guatemala, 1954. Action too late.
4. Costa Rica-Nicaragua, 1955. Helped restore peace.
5. Ecuador-Perú, 1955. Helped restore peace.
6. Honduras-Nicaragua, 1957. Helped restore peace.
7. Costa Rica-Nicaragua, 1959. Conflict died down.
8. Panamá-Cuba, 1959. Helped restore calm.
9. Dominican Sanctions, 1960. Increased pressure for overthrow of the Trujillo regime.
10. Bolivia-Chile, 1962. Helped calm parties.
11. Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962. Support for U.S.
12. Haiti-Dominican Republic, 1963. Helped restore calm.
13. Panamá Canal Riots, 1964. Helped provide forum for discussion.
14. Dominican Republic, 1965. Sanctions inter-American peace-keeping efforts.
15. El Salvador-Honduras, 1969. Established truce in 48 hours.
16. Belize, 1972. Refuted charges of British military presence.
17. Costa Rica-Nicaragua, 1978. Led to replacement of Somoza regime.

I submit that very few of us has had the opportunity to examine the full history back of OAS efforts in dispute settlements. For example:

- In January 1971 the Foreign Ministers were convoked to consider (13) the charges of one member state of "coercive measures" by another member in retaliation over seizure of fishing boats in waters claimed by the plaintiff state. The meeting urged the two members countries to avoid aggravation of their differences and to use the negotiations in which they had shown special interest. As one writer noted following the meeting:

"It (the OAS meeting) proves that the inter-American system functions and that its most powerful member did not vacillate one instance in recognizing the equality of its weaker associated partner....the principle is the equality of nations in international law and as members of an international organization." (14)

- (12) J. Dominguez, Ghosts from the Past: War, Territorial and Boundary Disputes in Mainland Central and South America Since 1960.
- (13) Fourteenth Meeting of Consultation, January 1971.
- (14) Diario de Las Americas, 2-18-71, article by Alejandro Carrion of Ecuador.

- The OAS demonstrated in January 1971 that it was not afraid to deal with a delicate issue and one of a divisive nature when it considered the growing incidence of acts of international terrorism, including the kidnapping of foreign diplomats and businessmen. And almost a decade later Secretary General Orfila would record:

"The OAS took an early and steadfast stand against violations of the inviolability of diplomatic staffs and premises and on two occasions during 1980 the Organization was called upon to play a significant and humanitarian role in bringing to a close the long drawn out and trying ordeal for hostages and their families who were the victims of terrorist takeovers, one of a diplomatic mission and the other of an OAS office." (15)

- Some writers acknowledge the contribution made two decades ago to the prevention of another World conflict, in the unanimous vote taken in the OAS Permanent council: (16)

"It was the vote of the Organization of American States that gave a legal basis for the quarantine...it had a major psychological and practical effect on the Russians and changed our position from that of an outlaw acting in violation of international law into a country acting in accordance with twenty allies legally protecting their position: (17)

The OAS charter as amended by the Protocol of Buenos Aires in 1970 provided that the Permanent Council is to "keep vigilance over the maintenance of friendly relations among the Member States" and effectively assist them in the peaceful settlement of their disputes." (18)

- (15) Annual Report of Secretary General Orfila 1980.
- (16) Vol. II, Applications of Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, pag.109, OAS Council Acting Provisionally as Organ of Consultation.
- (17) Memoirs of Robert Kennedy, McCall's Magazine, November 1968.
- (18) Article 82 of the OAS Charter as amended.



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Having been party or witness to the "corridor" work that has been such an important part of the accomplishments of the OAS Permanent Council and the Secretariat, I should like to note the following:

- The potential for confrontation and blood shed in one member country resulting from the efforts of local students to restore to power their constitutionally elected President following an overthrow of Government; and the appeal made by members of the Council for offers of asylum. (19a)
- The entry of a new member State without breaking consular ties with Cuba. (19b)
- The acceptance of the principle of ideological pluralism, the presence of heads of state and chiefs of government on the occasion of the signing of the Panama Canal Treaties, the role of the OAS in bringing a civil war to an end, and the OAS resolution on the cessation of military operations on the border between two member countries in early 1981. (20)

And it was the OAS Permanent Council "maintaining vigilance over the maintenance of friendly relations" when at the request of the Presidents of two member countries it engaged in lengthy debates over the discriminatory features of trade legislation emanating from one of its members. (21)

The presence of Foreign Ministers at times of OAS meetings such as the Special Session of the OAS General Assembly in 1971 on terrorism provided the opportunity for high level attention to other matters as well, namely the convoking of the Fourteenth Meeting of Consultation of January 1971 on the alleged "coercive measures" of one member state. Not recorded in the files of the OAS is the fact that the presence of Foreign Ministers at the regular OAS General Assembly in April 1971, was a helpful coincidence in disposing of a potential security problem, when one member state informally urged action in the face of the alleged presence on the high seas of an invasion force. (22)

The meetings of the OAS, like those of most international bodies, have not escaped major criticisms, to wit:

- (19a) 1969 overthrow of President Arnulfo Arias who took refuge in the Canal Zone.
- (19b) Entry of Jamaica as a new member state.
- (20) Alejandro Orfila, "Americas Need New Development Policy," Journal of Commerce, December 22, 1981.
- (21) Special Sessions of OAS Permanent Council, January 1975 in regard to the U.S. Trade Act of 1974.
- (22) Memoirs of a member state delegation, OAS General Assembly, April 1971.

"Some have accused the OAS and particularly the meetings of the Assembly as constituting a forum which causes friction and division among member states, while others to the contrary reproach it for convoking routine meetings that lead to nothing and obtain few results. Debate, even polemics, always constitute a better method for the solution of problems than the utilization of force." (23)

"Pan Americanism has not gone beyond the stage of lofty ideas... the OAS cannot be a sanctuary of accommodated principles and even less an instrument for unacceptable acquiescence." (23)

.. "the Inter-American treaties and declarations of the last fifteen years are virtually worthless... (23)

"The three co-equal councils under the revised Charter are a galaxy of self-operating but unconnected entities and unless the OAS does something to draw itself together, it will soon no longer be a meaningful international organism." (23)

But there were other reflections as well on the historical role of the OAS in maintaining peace and harmony:

"It is doubtful that the United Nations could have been used nearly as effectively as was the OAS." (24)

"The hemisphere is to some degree a better place to live in because of what the OAS has done. The system is eminently political and above all else, must concern itself with the pacific solution of disputes." (25)

"The United Nations is no equivalent instrument since Latin America's voice is weakened in the great mass of similar complaints from the rest of the third world." (26)

"It is the small nations of the Hemisphere which particularly need the system as (it is) their only forum for collective action." (26)

(23) OAS General Assembly 1973.

(24) Minerva M. Etzioni, the 'Majority of One', 1970 Sage Publications.

(25) OAS General Assembly 1973.

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"The OAS Charter is a fine flexible document more modern than the UN Charter--new laws are not necessary if only there is compliance with those already in existence." (26)

"Without the Rio Treaty, Latin America would become an armed camp like the Middle East." (26)

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The OAS has gone through a number of crises in its history with a majority of observers considering that the #1 crisis of its life was that of 1965 in the Dominican Republic and the divided decision of 1962 to exclude a member state from participation in the Organization. Others cited include the sanctions imposed on a member state by reason of proved intentions toward assassinating the President of another member country. The OAS has overcome formidable situations, including that in 1964 where bloodshed and riots resulted in the death of 25 persons, and in 1962 on the discovery of Soviet missiles in a member state. There were many other situations which today are forgotten and which constituted in their time serious hemispheric problems. Not all members of the OAS participated in the solution of those problems with a common and universal position and neither were all of the resolutions taken prior to those crises ones of unanimity. (27)

Having served seven and one half years in the OAS Permanent Council and having been for the past fourteen years a participant in or witness to its debates and decisions, I do not believe the full story has yet been told of the OAS role in maintaining peace and harmony in the Western Hemisphere, and of the major achievements of the Permanent Council in implementation of the OAS Charter to "keep vigilance over the maintenance of friendly relations among the Member States" and "effectively assist them in the peaceful settlement of their disputes." (Article 82).

As my good friend and colleague the late Ambassador Jorge Fernández of Ecuador so often reminded me "calming the spirits" would be a long, frustrating and almost impossible task. The hemispheric problems the OAS faces in the future are seemingly without precedent--except to those willing to dig deeply into the rich history of precedents.

In my judgement the institutions of the Inter-American System have served this continent well in dealing with aggression and threats or fears of aggression as well as in providing good offices in calming disputes that might have led to even more serious consequences. It behooves us to preserve our treaties and institutional relationships and to reflect from time to time on the consequences of bypassing, or ignoring what has become an unusual body of experiences and precedents to the benefit of the Hemisphere.

(26) Notes from the OAS General Assembly of 1973 and resulting informal commentary.

(27) Informativo, Ary Moleon, 1969.

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There have been many doubters who wonder whether or not the OAS, faced with a war between large member states, rather than what has been the general trend to date of conflicts involving relatively smaller states, would be able to play an effective role. In late 1978 war was very definitely close at hand between two larger member countries. While the matter was brought to the OAS, necessity for action was avoided by reason of a Vatican offer of mediation and good offices. On this occasion the Foreign Minister of one of the largest member countries acknowledged the value of the Rio Treaty under which the combatant countries would be required to return to status quo ante bellum under penalty of being branded the aggressor and subjected to sanctions. (28)

The OAS through constant informal negotiation and "corridor diplomacy" has helped keep many regional problems from spilling over onto the world agenda of the United Nations. The multiple character of its Charter is fixed to serve both as a juridical-political instrument and as a forum for policy on cooperation for development.

In probably one of the most dramatic and historical resolutions of its entire history, the OAS in 1979 was widely considered as responsible for bringing to a close a civil war in one of its member countries and the departure of its President. (29)

A balkanization of the Hemisphere, a Hemisphere fragmented, at war with itself, will be of unusual detriment to development and human rights. The interdependence of OAS functions is readily evident. Exclusive attention to the political responsibilities to the exclusion of the economic development responsibilities will in turn eventually weaken the Organization's ability to act in the political sphere. (30)

We cannot give up on institutions while they are developing their potential. That is the case with the OAS and so far we have not heard of a better idea for a hemispheric forum. The OAS can naturally be improved. One must not forget that international organizations are what the members want them to be. (31)

The OAS is the appropriate, perhaps the only forum, where the most powerful state in the world and the rest of the American States freely meet in order to discuss, determine, smooth out and if possible obliterate the differences that at times separate us. Without the resilience and the long standing precedents and practices of the OAS, confrontations might be more protracted and bitter. (32)

- (28) Potential war Between Argentina and Chile 1978 and Statements of Brazil's Foreign Minister.
- (29) Press interview with the late ex-President Somoza in Paraguay, circa April 1980.
- (30) Secretary General Orfila, March 22, 1978.
- (31) Luis Herrera Campins, President-elect of Venezuela, January 23, 1979 Informative.
- (32) Ambassador Don Rafael de la Colina of Mexico, long time member of OAS Permanent Council, May 10th, 1979 at luncheon with Dr. Brzezinski.

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Concerning elections in member states, President Herrera Campins of Venezuela has noted that the best contribution the OAS can give to decrease the strained relations in Central America and the Caribbean and to stop any intervention there is by supporting the electoral processes that are being implemented in several countries, noting that in one of the countries there is need for guarantees through international supervision which the OAS could provide if the member states agree. (33)

A major newspaper last year credited the OAS with having made a major contribution toward preventing a coup in one of the OAS member states when the military threatened to overturn democratic elections, (34) and as one member state observed this electoral crisis illustrated the alternating utility and effectiveness of the Inter-American System. (35) Over the years there have been numerous requests of the OAS to send election observers and these have been authorized with the restriction that they serve in their personal capacities.

Reflecting upon the year just past, one writer concluded that "the OAS began the year 1981 helping to prevent a war....and ended the year with the same type of effort....with a categorical expression of rejection of violence and a strong backing of the electoral processes in (one member country)...and the OAS chalked up a new success in the one field in which no one disputes its merit, that of the preservation of peace in the continent." (36)

As the new year 1982 begins the first reported development which has reference to the OAS and the treaty instruments of the Inter-American System concerns the formation of a Central American Democratic Community, the resolution forming same stating that should situations develop in which members of the community might be the victim of some sort of aggression or some form of international pressure:

-- "solidarity will be in line with the principles and norms of the Inter-American System." (37)

Elsewhere in the resolution the Central American Democratic Community recorded:

"To reiterate their individual right to resort to collective security measures within the framework of treaties in force." (37)

(33) President Herrera Campins, Washington Post 11-20-81 and before OAS Permanent Council 11-19-81.

(34) New York Times, 7/8/81, on 1978 elections in Dominican Republic

(35) Analysis of OAS members states July 78.

(36) AFP 12-17-81

(37) PA 192040 1715 GMT 1/19/82.

In attempting to predict the future of the Inter-American System one cannot help but recall the warning of a Latin American statesman many years ago:

"Whenever there is a question of effective action, this is primarily the responsibility of the member states; and so long as they fail to realize this responsibility and obligation, or shirk assuming them and translating thought into action, the United Nations will remain a mythical entity in which only those of us who work here believe." (36)

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(36) President of the UN General Assembly, Emilio Arenales (1968).



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OFFICE OF  
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

WASHINGTON, D. C.

March 10, 1982

Office of  
THE SECRETARY GENERAL

JOHN H. STANFORD  
COLONEL, USA  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Dear Frank:

You may know that a decade or more ago I was involved in Central America as the U.S. Representative when we obtained a cease fire and troop withdrawal in the mini war between El Salvador and Honduras. This was a Rio Treaty case.

I have in recent months had time to research more deeply the actual history of the OAS since the days of Secretary of State George Marshall, who attended the OAS meeting in Bogota in 1948. I hope that you will have the time to at least read the overview which is attached in a first draft paper concerned with dispute settlements.

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With warm regards,



John W. Ford  
Special Advisor to the Secretary General

Deputy Secretary of Defense  
Frank C. Carlucci  
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OFFICE OF  
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

WASHINGTON, D. C.

March 10, 1982

Office of  
THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Dear Frank:

You may know that a decade or more ago I was involved in Central America as the U.S. Representative when we obtained a cease fire and troop withdrawal in the mini war between El Salvador and Honduras. This was a Río Treaty case.

I have in recent months had time to research more deeply the actual history of the OAS since the days of Secretary of State George Marshall, who attended the OAS meeting in Bogota in 1948. I hope that you will have the time to at least read the overview which is attached in a first draft paper concerned with dispute settlements.

Several weeks ago, Caroline Casselman, my Deputy, and I attended the briefing on Central America given by Ambassadors Kirkpatrick and Mitterand. Our main concern was the fact that the American public has not been told the full story of Cuban interventionism in the Western Hemisphere going back to 1962. I reminded the audience that as late as 1967, I was attempting to convince the NATO countries in Brussels of the need to cut off government sales and credits to Cuba as a result of the most recent landing of men and arms from Cuba on Venezuelan shores.

With warm regards,



John W. Ford  
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