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CONSEJO PERMANENTE DE LA ORGANIZACION DE LOS ESTADOS AMERICANOS

ACTA DE LA SESION PROTOCOLAR CELEBRADA
EL 14 DE ABRIL DE 1983

En la ciudad de Washington, a las once de la mañana del jueves 14 de abril de 1983, celebró sesión protocolar el Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos para conmemorar el Día de las Américas. Presidió la sesión el Embajador Reginald L. Wood, Representante del Commonwealth de las Bahamas y Presidente del Consejo Permanente. Asistieron los siguientes miembros:

Juan Guillermo Franco Díaz, Embajador Representante de la República Dominicana y Vicepresidente Interino del Consejo Permanente
Rafael de la Colina, Embajador Representante de México
Luis Marchand Stens, Embajador Representante del Perú
Mario López Escobar, Embajador Representante del Paraguay
Alarico Silveira Junior, Embajador Representante del Brasil
Gustavo Santiso Gálvez, Embajador Representante de Guatemala
Francisco Bustillo del Campo, Embajador Representante del Uruguay
Pedro Daza, Embajador Representante de Chile
Raúl A. Quijano, Embajador Representante de la Argentina
J. William Middendorf II, Embajador Representante de los Estados Unidos
Edgard F. Parrales, Embajador Representante de Nicaragua
Francisco Posada de la Peña, Embajador Representante de Colombia
Víctor Giménez Landínez, Embajador Representante de Venezuela
Fernando Salazar Paredes, Embajador Representante de Bolivia
Fritz N. Cinéas, Embajador Representante de Haití
James O'Neil Lewis, Embajador Representante de Trinidad y Tobago
Roberto Leyton, Embajador Representante de Panamá
Mauricio Granillo Barrera, Representante Interino de El Salvador
Mirtha Virginia de Perea, Representante Suplente de Costa Rica
Eduardo Tobar, Representante Suplente del Ecuador
Cherrie J. Orr, Representante Suplente de Jamaica
Michael I. King, Representante Suplente de Barbados
Roberto Ramos Bustos, Representante de Honduras
Marcella H. Mukasa, Representante Suplente del Commonwealth de Dominica
Eugenie L. Eersel, Representante Suplente de Suriname

También estuvo presente el Secretario General de la Organización, señor Alejandro Orfila.

PALABRAS DEL PRESIDENTE DEL CONSEJO PERMANENTE

El señor PRESIDENTE: I call to order this protocolary meeting of the Permanent Council, convoked to commemorate Pan American Day.

It is a happy coincidence for my country that the Commonwealth of The Bahamas holds the chairmanship of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States on Pan American Day 1983. Because it is a very new member of the Organization, this is the first time that my country has had the privilege of occupying this high office. Diplomats more seasoned than I in this inter-American forum may view the ceremonial duty of presiding over the Council on Pan American Day with a certain degree of detachment. For me, however, the symbolism is exciting: Today is a day when we evoke history, and history has not, until now, granted a Bahamian citizen the high honor and exceptional pleasure of performing this very pleasant duty.

When I speak of the history of the Organization--of the inter-American system, to be more precise--I speak in the clear and sincere conviction that with all its ups and downs, it is a history of honorable deeds and actions. The OAS--and before it, the Commercial Bureau of the American Republics, the International Bureau of the American Republics, and the Pan American Union--is approaching its one hundredth anniversary. It is, therefore, with pride that we can say that this is the oldest regional organization and system in the world. Its long survival is due not to inertia, but to the proven usefulness of the system to the governments and peoples of the Americas.

In each epoch, in each of its incarnations, our regional organization has reflected the needs of the countries that brought it into being and that continue to maintain it. Born in 1890 as a belated fulfillment of Bolívar's dream, our organization has managed to evolve to fit the circumstances and requirements of the moment, and has realized that adaptation is the best means of fulfilling the role that the member states have entrusted to it.

It is obvious that for close to a hundred years, the countries of the Hemisphere have understood how important the Organization is to them in achieving their common goals. Thus, at times when problems have been difficult, and requirements varied, our countries have had a sharp awareness of the extent to which the Organization was capable of perfectibility. Evolution and adaptation to new needs have been the response of the OAS to the political, social and economic imperatives of a fast-changing world. When circumstances have demanded, the member states have moved to change the structure of the Organization in order to tailor it to its new responsibilities.

It is difficult for us now to imagine that the Organization was born as the Commercial Bureau of the American Republics. Its functions in today's complex world are so utterly different that its beginnings may appear a little parochial. Let us admit that in comparison with Bolívar's

ambitious dream, its origins were humble and its concerns perhaps pedestrian. However, Bolívar was not building castles in the sky when he conceived the unity of the new republics as essential to their prosperity and survival. The dream persisted, even through times when the pace of fulfillment seemed to be slow.

By the time the effects of World War II reached the shores of this hemisphere, a rich fund of legal instruments on political interdependence had been written within the Pan American Union as the result of the International Conferences of American States. These instruments showed that the Hemisphere was ready to respond to the imperatives of a time of turmoil through a regional organization capable of change and capable of growing stronger.

After the war--the repercussions of which are still with us today--a new organization was born. Its emergence coincided with the violent uprising that quickly came to be known as the "bogotazo". This was perhaps an omen that the road ahead would not be an easy one. The baptism was a baptism of fire, and the years since have not been quiet ones: The region has seen major upheavals, in which almost invariably the Organization has played a major role in the search for solutions. There have, however, also been times of excruciatingly slow motion, which some have construed as evidence that the Organization has been indecisive. More often than not, though, the OAS has risen to the occasion and, what is equally important, has gone through periods of deep introspection in which it has sought new ways of making the best possible use of its resources.

For years after the signing of the new Charter in Bogotá in 1948, it seemed as though 21 was the magic number of member states, and that the ethnic, territorial, cultural and linguistic composition of the OAS was fixed forever. But then a large group of countries started joining the Organization: Their peoples are of African, Indian and Asian ancestry; their language is mostly English, and nearly all of them are islands. As a result, the English language no longer has only one representative member; the number of people of African descent has increased dramatically, even the geographical landscape of the Organization has changed, and we are all enriched by the cultural variety and different traditions of our newest members.

With the entry of these new member states--and I am sure that there will be more--at a time when political, social and economic difficulties seem to be the rule rather than the exception throughout the world, the OAS is facing its greatest challenge to date.

There are some who suggest that if the Organization is in crisis, it is because the member states do not have the political will or the desire to make it more effective. However, I believe that the continued vitality of the Organization is amply demonstrated by the fact that ten new Caribbean states have wished to join it over the past fifteen years. If the countries of the Caribbean have entered the OAS, it is because they had faith in the principles and ideals for which it stands, and because those principles and ideals are universal and timeless in their validity.

and ability to meet the needs and aspirations of the peoples of the entire Hemisphere. The Organization is here to promote the achievement of those dreams and aspirations, and so long as the desire for peace and harmony among our nations persists, so will the Organization.

Let me close these brief remarks by appealing to all of you here today to take a moment on Pan American Day to reflect and ponder the fate of our organization--and more than our organization, the Secretariat as an institution--the fate of all the peoples of our hemisphere as well. Great challenges are before us all, and we must remember the heavy responsibility we bear for preserving peace, freedom and justice. We must not let this day pass lightly, as just another ceremony. We must make it a day of rededication, of commitment to the cause of internationalism and to the betterment of our peoples. Thank you very much. [Aplausos.]

PALABRAS DEL REPRESENTANTE DE HAITI.

El señor PRESIDENTE: The Chair has now the pleasure to give the floor to the Representative of Haiti.

El señor REPRESENTANTE DE HAITI: Merci, Monsieur le Président. Monsieur le Président du Conseil, Messieurs les Représentants et Observateurs permanents, Monsieur le Secrétaire général, Monsieur le Secrétaire général adjoint, Messieurs les Représentants de la Presse, Mesdames, Messieurs:

J'ai l'honneur de vous donner lecture du message de son excellence le Président de la République d'Haïti à l'occasion des manifestations marquant, sur toute l'étendue du territoire haïtien, la commémoration du jour des Amériques. [Lee:]

Peuples d'Amérique,
Chers Concitoyens,

En ce 14 Avril 1983, la République d'Haïti, qui fut l'un des pionniers les plus actifs du Panaméricanisme et en demeure l'un des artisans les plus déterminés, se réjouit de s'associer une fois de plus, à tous les peuples et gouvernements du continent américain, dans un même esprit de solidarité, en vue de commémorer, de façon éclatante, le Jour des Amériques.

L'événement cette année, prend une dimension exceptionnelle puisqu'en toile de fond des cérémonies célébrées de la Terre de feu à l'Alaska, se détache avec vigueur la figure de proue de Simón Bolívar, dont nous fêtons le bicentenaire de la naissance et dont le nom, indissolublement lié à celui d'Alexandre Pétion, reste un symbole exemplaire de courage au service de la liberté. L'épopée extraordinaire vécue par ces géants de l'histoire, ainsi que la geste fraternelle de Dessalines et de Miranda, doivent servir de modèles impérissables aux générations présentes et continuer à nourrir les réflexions exaltantes de tous les hommes véritablement épris de justice, de paix et de progrès.