



# Intervention Without Intervening?

The OAS Defense and Promotion  
of Democracy in the Americas

*Andrew Cooper and Thomas Legler*

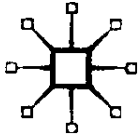


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Andrew F. Cooper  
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## A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

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This book has been a collaborative endeavor between two researchers with very different backgrounds: one a student of International Relations and Comparative Foreign Policy (Andrew Cooper) and the other a student of Latin American Politics and Development (Thomas Legler). Our connection was a shared sense that many of our commonplace understandings concerning how multilateral actors operated to defend and promote democracy required revision. Indeed, when we started this project in 2000, it appeared that we were on the cusp of an exciting advance in this arena from both normative and institutional perspectives. Through a wider conceptual lens, pro-democracy activity envisaged a sea change in breaking free from the constraints of the Cold War era when regime form mattered much less than ideological alignment in inter-state relations and when “defending democracy” was often the pretext for military intervention of a coercive nature. Through a narrower lens, the OAS held the capacity to become an international pioneer in the evolution of a regional democratic solidarity paradigm.

Our conclusions suggest that the advances on the democracy agenda should not be exaggerated. A shift from what we highlight as club to networked multilateralism has been held back by a variety of factors, not the least of which is the hold of national sovereignty or more specifically what we term executive sovereignty. At the same time, however, the impact of an evolving mode of multilateralism both on the ground and in terms of scholarship cannot be ignored. At the heart of our analysis is a focus on two compelling episodes of OAS action to defend democracy precipitated by political crises. The first that unfolded in 2000 in Peru was brought on by Alberto Fujimori’s electoral transgressions and the second, in Venezuela, was catalyzed by the attempt to overthrow Hugo Chávez in April 2002. The lessons learned from the Peruvian experience gave the impetus to the landmark Inter-American Democratic Charter.

Venezuela's crisis in turn presented the first test case of the new charter. In both these instances, the OAS adopted an innovative third-party mediation role that facilitated dialogue among polarized domestic political elites. This approach, which we call "intervention without intervening," forms the overarching theme of the book.

Comparatively we believe the insights gained from the OAS experience stretch far wider than the two case studies on which we concentrate. In the Americas there are a host of other illustrations of fragile democracies where this model could be deployed. Indeed, the OAS finds itself once again promoting intra-elite democratic dialogue, currently in Nicaragua and Ecuador. Beyond the Western Hemisphere, the obvious question that needs to be posed is whether this model can be replicated in some form or other in the repertoire of other multilateral institutions.

Theoretically, the book tackles head-on the challenge of bridging the traditional divide between International Relations and Comparative Politics. Our study of the OAS underlines the need for conceptual tools that allow scholars to take into more nuanced consideration the internationalization and transnationalization of democratization processes in their analysis, that is, the heightened involvement of cross-border networks of state, inter-governmental, and non-state actors in processes of "domestic" political change. In order to try to overcome this problem we offer an "inter-action" approach that bridges the gap in a dynamic, agency-oriented fashion.

We have accumulated an enormous number of debts in the pursuit of this project. Andrew Cooper was facilitated in its early stages of research by the award of a Canada-U.S. Fulbright fellowship, in the Western Hemisphere Program at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC. During that time he enjoyed the intellectual stimulation of Riordan Roett, Charles Doran, Carol Wise, Isabel Studer Noguez, and Chris Sands. At SAIS, he also had the opportunity to use a graduate seminar as a sounding board for the project. On top of the Fulbright fellowship financial support came from a variety of sources that included the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, El Colegio de México, the University of Waterloo, and the project on "Middle States and Regionalism in the Americas" under the direction of Gordon Mace and Louis Bélanger at the Université Laval.

Tom Legler is also indebted to Gordon Mace and Louis Bélanger for their support through the aforementioned project. His research also benefited from a Human Security Fellowship from the Canadian Consortium on Human Security, a fellowship that he held at the Centre for Global

Studies, University of Victoria. He owes special thanks there to Gordon Smith. Mount Allison University provided generous support through a faculty start-up grant, a Bell Grant, as well as a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) internal research grant. He also received a SSHRC Standard Research Grant for a project entitled “Democratization as a Transnational Phenomenon.” Tom Legler gained enormous insights into Peruvian political life as an elections observer for Common Borders in the April 2001 presidential elections and similarly for Venezuela as a Carter Center monitor during the 2003–2004 presidential recall referendum process.

For this book, in addition to processing a huge amount of stimulating written material, we conducted interviews with more than one hundred diplomats, politicians, bureaucrats, civil society leaders, and scholars. We interviewed a number of these individuals more than once. We have intentionally kept the identity of the interviewees anonymous. In our efforts to reconstruct the events surrounding the OAS-facilitated, intra-elite dialogue processes in Peru and Venezuela, our interviewing took us on repeat occasions to Ottawa, Washington, DC, Lima, and Caracas.

In the course of the project, we were helped by the expertise and contacts of a large number of academics and practitioners. Scholars who shared their insights with us included Carmen Rosa Balba, Dexter Boniface, Maxwell Cameron, Ralph Espach, Sharon Lean, Barry Levitt, Raúl Benítez Manaut, Robert Pastor, Wilma Petrash, Pablo Policzer, Jennifer McCoy, Yasmine Shamsie, Peter Smith, Brian Tomlin, Arturo Valenzuela, and Cuadros.

One of the methodological tips we picked up along the way was how useful our Canadian diplomatic representatives can be in facilitating interviews with high ranking officials abroad. We are grateful to the staff of the Canadian Permanent Mission to the OAS in Washington, DC, and the Canadian embassies in Lima and Caracas for helping to set up key interviews for which our own cold call efforts would likely have had little success.

Practitioners (or former practitioners) who were particularly helpful to our research included Lloyd Axworthy, Carlos Carbacho, Francisco Diez, Graeme Clark, Paul Durand, Bruce Friedman, John Graham, Fernando Jaramillo, Sofía Macher, Don Mackay, Peter Quilter, Manuel Rodríguez, Rafael Roncagliolo, Étienne Savoie, Jorge Santistevan, Diego García Sayán, Tom Shannon, Michael Shifter, Eduardo Stein, Jorge Valero, Catherine Vézina, and Renata Wielgosz.

The support of Peter Boehm, Elizabeth Spehar, and Jean-Philippe Thérien is especially appreciated. All of them followed this project from start to finish and provided enormously valuable input along the way.



This book started before Andrew Cooper took on the position of associate director at The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI). However, his hybrid role between the worlds of academia and think tanks served to complement our attempt to straddle the conceptual/practical divide. As per other activities more directly related to the work of CIGI, this project benefited from the enormous enthusiasm of John English, CIGI's executive director, as well as its research and administrative personnel. Kelly Jackson, the project officer at CIGI for the Complex Diplomacy Program, not only helped to edit the manuscript but facilitated a final author's meeting. She also acted as a liaison with the press. Koren Thomson and Emily Shephard at Mount Allison University and Jennifer Jones at CIGI provided additional support in preparing the manuscript.

Both of the authors wish to thank a number of journals for the granting of permission to use material that was originally published in article form. These articles include "The OAS Democratic Solidarity Paradigm: Questions of Collective and National Leadership," by Andrew F. Cooper and Thomas Legler, *Latin American Politics and Society* (formerly *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*), 43, 1 Spring 2001, 103–126; "A Model for the Future? The OAS in Peru," by Andrew F. Cooper and Thomas Legler, *Journal of Democracy*, 12, October 4, 2001, 123–136; and "The Making of the Inter-Democratic Charter: A Case of Complex Multilateralism," by Andrew F. Cooper, *International Studies Perspectives*, 5, February 1, 2004, 92–113.

For turning the project into book form we would like to express appreciation for the efforts of Anthony Wahl, senior editor at Palgrave Macmillan, Heather Van Dusen, associate editor, and the team at Newgen, India.

Moving from the professional to the personal, this book is the culmination of a rewarding collaboration and close friendship between the two authors. Methodologically, joint research trips to the field and tandem interviewing enhanced our research wonderfully. In addition to our complimentary fields of expertise, working together made our interviews more thorough and our post-interview debriefings over coffee or dinner that much more insightful. To the individualistic skeptics of collaborative research in the social sciences and the humanities, we offer our experience as testimony to how it can work.

As in all our endeavors we were supported by our spouses, who even if not specialists in the same field could fully understand why we took this project so seriously! It is to Sarah and Roanne that we dedicate this book.

## CHAPTER ONE

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### *The Multilateral-Democracy Nexus: An Overview*

That there is an expanse of connections between multilateral institutions—and multilateral processes—with the defense and promotion of democracy in different parts of the world is increasingly apparent. A wide range of international organizations, most notably the European Union (EU), the G7/8, the Organization of American States, the Commonwealth, and international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank have attached political conditionalities focused on democratic accountability and good governance to economic assistance. In a similar vein, the United Nations (UN) has been increasingly occupied in projects devoted to the promotion of democracy. A host of civil society groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have dedicated their time and energy to a wide variety of democracy assistance initiatives.

As has been manifested recently in Ukraine, a high degree of involvement by multilateral actors such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe can have a positive influence on the outcome of elections. In the Ukraine, the presence of some 12,500 observers on top of the weight of the foreign observer presence and the international attention obliged national authorities to annul fraudulent presidential elections and hold new ones. In contrast, in places such as Zimbabwe, persistent multilateral efforts led by the Commonwealth have had little success in preventing or helping rectify the erosion of democracy. Because of both its quantitative span and qualitative implications, this nexus between multilateralism and democracy deserves much closer attention than it has received up to now.

In recent decades there has been a flurry of pro-democracy activity through the OAS. In the context of the restoration of representative democracy in the Americas during the late 1970s and the 1980s as well as at the end of the Cold War, the OAS developed a set of principles and diplomatic tools for collectively defending democracy when any of its member states found itself in political crisis. Over the course of the 1990s and the new millennium, the OAS intervened in defense of democracy in Peru, Paraguay, Guatemala, Haiti, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador. Through its Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (now called the Department for the Promotion of Democracy), it also organized 85 electoral observation missions since 1990. Richard Bloomfield has termed these OAS pro-democracy principles, tools, and activities a collective-defense-of-democracy regime. Former Secretary-General César Gaviria called them a democratic solidarity paradigm.<sup>1</sup>

Amidst all of this activity, obtaining a nuanced appreciation of multilateral promotion of democracy is a demanding task. How has the multilateralism–democracy nexus evolved over time? What is the evolving nature and impact of the OAS defense and promotion of democracy? Have OAS efforts ultimately reinforced the status quo or have they helped to strengthen democracy in a sustained fashion? We find that where the OAS has responded to threats to democracy, the institutional and cultural dimensions of multilateralism must be taken seriously as influences on its ability to defend or promote democracy. As we outline in detail below, the OAS has been subject to an ongoing internal tension between an older, club-style of multilateralism and a newer networked form of multilateralism. Practically, the outcome of this struggle within the organization has enormous repercussions in terms of the OAS’s ability to respond in a timely and effective manner to political crises in the region. In our analysis, we reconstruct and assess key moments in the political crises of Peru and Venezuela, in which the nexus between multilateralism and democracy appears crucial. We situate our case studies within the overall evolution of the OAS democratic solidarity paradigm during the past two decades. For as Ellen Lutz and Kathryn Sikkink note, temporal considerations are paramount: “The clearest variation in the amount of international pressure was not between countries or scenarios, but over time.”<sup>2</sup>

In teasing out these complexities, we explore the nexus through three axes. The first axis surveys the pivotal site for democratic transition ranging from an externally dominant domain to an exclusively domestic realm. Although often portrayed in stark either-or terms, the use of this axis allows some detailed exploration of the range of activity in between.

A second axis traces the mode of intervention utilized by external actors in promoting democracy. Following Tesón,<sup>3</sup> intervention is taken to be an effort to influence other states that can take three forms. *Soft* intervention is captured in diplomatic discussion, examination, and recommendatory action.<sup>4</sup> *Hard* intervention entails the use of coercive diplomatic measures, such as economic sanctions. *Forcible* intervention means the use of force, such as military invasion. The third and final axis widens the parameters of discussion from domain and modes to an assessment of consequences. That is, the multilateralism–democracy nexus can be associated with either longer-term normative and institutional developments or with far more immediate and tangible impacts relating to alterations in the rules of the political game on a country-specific basis.

Reflective of this matrix, we are interested in the entire ambit of democratization as it pertains to the life of multilateral institutions and mechanisms. The book as conceived is an enterprise that by its mix of ambitious conceptualization and case-study details lends itself to comparative examination. Yet, if located in a manner that encourages universal application, our work concentrates on the smaller regional world of the Western Hemisphere and the OAS. This focus reflects our own interests and expertise. But this focused canvass also allows us to address what one recent review of the existing literature has suggested is a huge gap in the study of the relationship between international organizations and democratization, the lack of “cross-national empirical studies” exploring the manner by which this relationship has played out. In contrast to works that focus primarily on secondary sources,<sup>5</sup> our book relies extensively on field research based on numerous interviews with key actors involved in the nexus between multilateralism and democracy. By looking closely at a set of geographically clustered cases—with apparent similarities as well as differences—this task is made more compatible and easier to comprehend.

### **Locating the Pivotal Site of Democratic Transition**

Alternative schools of thought have given very different weight to the externally and domestically directed dimensions of democratization. At one end of the spectrum lies what can be termed the external reengineering scenario in which democracy is imposed from outside without much consideration for the history, the culture, or the intricacies of domestic political processes. The most compelling illustration of this scenario is the case of Japan in the aftermath of World War II. Under the

leadership of General Douglas MacArthur the U.S. occupation forces drew up and implemented a plan to transform the Japanese political system and resocialize its people. The imposition of a new political architecture enshrined in what came to be known as the MacArthur Constitution was explicitly designed as a blueprint to prevent the revival of militarization and to strengthen the fabric of democracy.

At the other end of the spectrum are the cases of democratization considered to be outcomes exclusively confined to the internal attributes and dynamics contained within the domestic political system. The consensus view on these cases has been that democratization was induced not through outside-in forces but via a rearrangement of the institutional architecture triggered and delivered by an autonomous national process. Post-Franco Spain is an oft-cited example as is the transition in South Africa.

Of the two phenomena it has been the internal conceptualization that has been traditionally dominant. The mantra of democratization studies was established in the mid-1980s by Phillip Schmitter who argued that: “[One] of the firmest conclusions that emerged . . . was that transitions from authoritarian rule and immediate prospects for political democracy were largely to be explained in terms of national forces and calculations. External actors tended to play an indirect and usually marginal role.”<sup>6</sup>

On a similar note, in his initial appraisal of the “International Aspects of Democratization,” Laurence Whitehead held to the standard formulation: “In all the peacetime cases considered here internal forces were of primary importance in determining the course and outcome of the transition attempt, and international factors played only a secondary role . . . the international setting provided a mildly supportive (or destructive) background which was often taken for granted and which seldom intruded too conspicuously on an essentially domestic drama.”<sup>7</sup>

Various leading path dependency theorists shared this domestic-centered or “nativist” analytical tendency. The paths they identified were determined exclusively from internal variables. Terry Lynn Karl, for instance, observed that Latin American countries democratized despite an unfavorable external environment, such as decreasing export earnings, debt crises, and a unilateral-oriented U.S. foreign policy.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, the modes of transition to democracy that she identified were the outcome of the interaction of two domestic factors: transition strategies (compromise or force) and relative actor strength (elite ascendant and mass ascendant). In a similar vein, Gerardo Munck and Carol Skalnik Leff juxtaposed two key endogenous variables in identifying various modes of transition: the strategy of the agent of change (confrontation versus accommodation) and the identity of the agent of change (incumbent versus counter-elite).<sup>9</sup>

Through this set of lenses the externally dominant cases were viewed as the exceptions that proved the rule. A case such as Japan only came about through a massive shock to the system. In structural terms large scale warfare was superseded by unconditional surrender, extensive destruction, and long-term occupation. In terms of agency the United States took on a sustained project of political reconstruction. A command and control order was not only deemed to be efficient but legitimate. Although domestic actors could be consulted, it was the outside actors that remained instrumental in setting the timetable and the rules.

Over time, though, the either-or categorization has dissipated. An advance in this regard was found in the work of Karen Remmer, who made one of the first concerted attempts to integrate internal and external factors in the analysis of democratization across Latin America.<sup>10</sup> According to Remmer, how incumbent Latin American elites responded to the external economic shocks of the 1970s had an important bearing on key relationships between governments and business communities, often leading to alienation and eventually authoritarian regime breakdown. Remmer also provided an important distinction between the international political and economic environments. Whereas the international economic environment helped precipitate regime change during the 1970s and 1980s, the international political environment of the Cold War at the time was definitely not conducive to democratization. Only with the decline—and then the end—of superpower rivalry did the international political climate become more favorable for democratic consolidation. Nonetheless, following the logic that international influences were mediated through domestic structures, Remmer's core variables remained domestic: the relationship between the government and the business community and the structure of military rule in each country.

In their own path dependence approach, Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan provided additional improvement in terms of integrating international factors into the study of democratization. They identified three sets of international influences: foreign policies, zeitgeist or spirit of the times, and international diffusion effects. In an analogous fashion to Remmer, they conceived international factors largely as contextual. In other words, in terms of agency versus structure, international influences for them remained clearly more structural in nature. For them there continued to be little or no role for international agents of change. The key agents of transition and consolidation that they identified were exclusively domestic: the leadership of the prior regime and the agents who initiated

and controlled the transition.<sup>11</sup> Ultimately then, their perspective did not represent a significant departure from other path dependence approaches that accorded primacy to domestic causal factors and only an indirect role to international variables.

Yet the proliferation in recent decades of international actors involved in the defense and promotion of democracy has provided a sound reason to conceptualize the international dimensions of democratization, not solely as contextual or structural but also as agency-based. In a sharp break from their earlier assertions about the primacy of domestic causality, the more recent work by both Schmitter and Whitehead provides the most sophisticated attempt yet to incorporate external considerations into the study of democratization.<sup>12</sup> In contrast to the long-standing “nativist” assumption within much of the comparative politics literature, Whitehead alerts us to the fact that some two-thirds of the democracies that existed in 1990 were brought about at least partially by some form of external imposition. Indeed, in very few cases could regime change truly be considered a purely domestic attribute or dynamic. On this important point, Whitehead writes: “it may be artificial to dichotomize the analysis into domestic and international elements. Although there will always be some purely domestic and some exclusively international factors involved, most of the analysis will contain a tangle of both elements. In the contemporary world there is no such thing as democratization in one country, and perhaps there never was.”<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, the need for bridging the historical divide between comparative politics and international relations is accentuated when some empirical snapshots are added to this conceptual overview. For the blending of the international dimension provides a much richer and accurate mix even in a variety of cases that have been taken to be classic examples of “made at home” processes in operation. The presence of a vital connection between external developments and political change in Spain—via pressure from Western Europe (through a combination of European Community, national state, and transnational societal forces)—has been widely commented on.<sup>14</sup>

The need to include external as well as internal factors in democratization analyses intrudes even in other more recent European cases commonly taken to be the most domestic-oriented in nature. To the extent that the German Democratic Republic (GDR) became absorbed into the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), the case of German reunification appears to be the most one-sided illustration of a “made at home” process. Yet, when looked at in a comprehensive manner, this case remains not only “deviant” but highly complex. Not only did an

important contagion effect within Eastern Europe (as a “flow of messages and images” penetrated the GDR from reformist countries in Eastern Europe, most notably Poland to Hungary) influence the German case,<sup>15</sup> but the external projection and impact of the West German/European mass media and various non-governmental actors, together with attitudes of the big powers (not only the West but the Soviet Union/Russia), need to be factored-into any comprehensive account.

A similar complexity shines through a wider cross section of other cases on a global basis. The case of the Philippines is best known for its 1986 demonstration of “people power.” But the role of the downfall of the Marcos regime hinged as much on a decisive (albeit late) shift in its external support as on the massive display of popular resistance. In the analysis of one close observer of the Philippines situation, “. . . important interventions” by the United States and Europe “. . . were effective in encouraging an autocratic leader who had lost legitimacy to leave office and in preventing military coups.”<sup>16</sup>

The external dimension is equally salient in gaining accurate insights into the case of the transition to democracy in South Africa. This argument does not discount the role of the “domestic” negotiations between the Nationalist government and the African National Congress (ANC) in facilitating the transition process. What it points to is the supplementary effect on this “pacted” outcome of the presence of a number of international pressure points including changes in the international financial environment (with the decision of Chase Manhattan and other banks not to roll over loans in 1985) even prior to the introduction of very different ideological/geopolitical conditions associated with the end of the Cold War.<sup>17</sup>

### **Resituating the Pressure Points of Intervention**

It is one thing to take into account external sources as catalysts for democratization. It is another thing to detect how and when these pressure points have been applied. This is especially true along the unilateral/multilateral continuum. As noted above the classic case of democratization pushed forward through an outside in trajectory—Japan after World War II—highlighted the unilateral dimension in which an occupying force dictated the process of transformation in a national political system. Again, as reflected in the Japanese case, it is one actor—the United States—that dominated the process of democratization. Although other external forces were present, most notably other allied



powers such as the United Kingdom or Australia, they played a subsidiary role.

In more recent times much of the orientation for externally projected democratization has tilted toward the multilateral pole of activity. This ascendancy has been associated above all with the release of the disciplines of the Cold War. Until the end of the era of superpower competition, there was little or no room for a wide range of activist democratic promotion activities bursting out from the confines of ideological competition. Support for an expansion of liberal democracy (or for that matter socialist solidarity) might be mooted in declaratory terms but in practice priority was given to geostrategic/economic containment. The test in this regard, as Schmitter well recognized, was the ability of the OAS as well as other national and transnational actors to pursue effectively the principle of collective action to promote and defend democracy in the region of the Americas. As Schmitter notes, “Were it to become effective, the entire international context of democratization would be radically transformed.”<sup>18</sup>

On both sides of the post-1945 bipolar divide, this order allowed little room for extensive multilateral activity promoting democracy. The status quo was managed and heavily policed—with the acquiescence of the other side. With respect to the Eastern bloc it was not until the evolution of the Helsinki network that “democracy” entered into the agenda.<sup>19</sup> And even then realists in the Western camp discounted this process as a distraction or even a counterproductive component in the overall relationship between the superpowers. With respect to the intra-West dimension, a number of very positive initiatives took place to bring peripheral actors in Europe into the fold of the democratic community as illustrated by the case of Portugal as well as Spain. Yet outside the European case the dictum remained quite clear—that it was better to have an authoritarian leader/government in place than risk an erosion in stability.<sup>20</sup> Diplomatic work was directed to propping up “friends” (however unpalatable and tarnished) rather than to voicing concern about the state of affairs in terms of human rights and democracy promotion.

This recipe accenting stability rather than justice was heavily emphasized in the Americas, the U.S.’s own strategic and economic backyard. The Cold War architecture effectively tied this region to the anticommunist coalition under U.S. leadership, but with no claims of equal footing, such as those found in the case of the Western European allies of the United States. Under a military system of “collective security” that was considerably less structured than one managed through NATO, the role

of the Latin American armed forces was subordinated on issues of “hemispheric defense” and directed toward “internal security.”<sup>21</sup>

It has been in the Americas, therefore, that the situating and then resituating of the unilateral/multilateral pressure points have been very dramatic. Throughout the Cold War years it was in its own immediate region or neighborhood that many of the central characteristics of the main strategic doctrine shaping U.S. behavior took shape. As Anthony Payne has depicted this impulse: “What was new and vital about US relations with the Americas in the Cold War years was the way in which the United States perceived its own standing as a hegemonic power and its associated credibility in the eyes of both its enemies and allies in all parts of the world to be dependent in some measure on its capacity to maintain and demonstrate control of its own hemispheric community—its ‘backyard’.”<sup>22</sup>

Unchecked as the dominant power of the region the United States had almost complete leeway to develop its own ideological brand. States—such as Canada—with some tradition of acting as diplomatic moderators of U.S. zealotry—made themselves unavailable. Alternative perspectives—as a response to the imposed disciplines—were forced (or perceived) to become the polar opposite, as exemplified by the extreme form of estrangement and polarization between Cuba and the United States. Indeed, in what proved to be its last gasp, this ideological struggle became increasingly bitter as the conflict between the leftist (pro-Castro and pro-Soviet Union) Sandinista government of Nicaragua and the anti-Sandinista rebel forces known as “Contras” (financed by the U.S. government and operating out of Honduras and Costa Rica) greatly intensified in the mid-1980s. In addition, there remained the lingering conflicts between leftist guerrillas and the governments of El Salvador and Guatemala.

In terms of application there was little or no space for dissent from the approach of the United States. If countries of the Americas moved off the line they were brought back in the fold through coercive means—even if that meant subverting democratic principles. The justification provided for such actions (explicitly stated in the so-called Mann Doctrine formulated in 1964) was the putative rise in the presence and influence of Soviet Union in the region. The best-known early illustration of this coercive approach in action came with the U.S. campaign to replace Guatemala’s leftist President Jacobo Arbenz in 1954. Another later example, of course, came with U.S. efforts to destabilize the democratically elected Salvador Allende government in Chile, leading up to a coup staged by Augusto Pinochet and the Chilean army on September 11, 1973.

Another key feature was that the low priority given to the promotion of democracy in the region was of the consideration given not only to “friends” (with authoritarian governments) but to countries such as Mexico with which the United States was not in agreement. So long as this category of country did not step out of line on core issues they were given freedom to operate as they wanted. Domestically, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Mexican governments could wage their own versions of “dirty wars,” including the Mexico City student massacre in 1968. Internationally, Mexico (along with Canada) could maintain, for example, both diplomatic and economic relations with Cuba despite the U.S. blanket embargo. Party of the Institutional Revolution (PRI) administrations in Mexico not only expressed some solidarity with the Castro regime, but furthermore several Mexican presidents (starting with President Luis Echeverría and continuing with José López Portillo and the three successor presidents), akin to Pierre Trudeau of Canada in 1976, made visits to Cuba during their tenures in office.<sup>23</sup>

What aroused a response on the part of the United States was not the authoritarian nature of the regime or even some notable deviations on foreign policy but rather fear of any fundamental alteration in the political status quo in Mexico. This bottom line was made most explicit in 1988 when the first Bush administration reiterated its support for the ruling PRI against the challenge of the leftist Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD)—notwithstanding abundant evidence that president-elect Carlos Salinas had won (or stolen) the July 1988 election in the context of wholesale electoral irregularities.<sup>24</sup> As Lutz and Sikkink note, the OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) took on its first three Mexican-related cases involving alleged electoral irregularity highlighted by the National Action Party (PAN): “Refuting the Mexican government’s claim that the IACHR was barred by the OAS Charter from addressing electoral issues, the commission recommended that the Mexican government reform its internal electoral law.”<sup>25</sup>

The final—and for the purposes of this book the most intriguing—characteristic of the evolution in external pressure points is the adaptive change in the role of the OAS in response to the changed nexus of multilateralism and democracy. Throughout the Cold War era the image of the OAS was debased in no uncertain terms by those on both sides of the ideological divide. After he found that dealing with the OAS was an awkward experience, when moving to deploy the so-called Inter-American Peace Force (IAPF) with respect to the Dominican Republic crisis in 1965, U.S. President Lyndon Baines Johnson dismissed the

organization as one that: “couldn’t pour piss out of a boot if the instructions were written on the heel.”<sup>26</sup>

As might be expected, Fidel Castro adopted an even more critical outlook toward the organization. Frozen out of the OAS since the early 1960s, Castro referred to the organization as a “putrid, revolting den of corruption,” a “disgusting, discredited cesspool,” a “ministry of colonies of the United States,” to which Cuba would only return if the “imperialists and their puppets were kicked out first.” Relations with other Latin American countries, Cuba’s leader added, could only be restored if OAS sanctions were rejected, if these countries had a revolution, and if they condemned U.S. crimes against Cuba as well.<sup>27</sup>

There is a good deal to back up at least some of these extremely negative reviews, even when the pithy rhetoric is taken away. Buttressing the perspective of President Johnson and other U.S. officials, the OAS could be taken to task for a number of serious ongoing institutional dysfunctions. Even if the OAS had found the will to take some creative actions it had little capability to do so. The skill-set of its personnel was compromised by the use of the OAS as a place to “retire” former high-ranking state officials and by various forms of nepotism and cronyism. Its resources were constrained by tight budget restrictions.

From Castro’s perspective the image of the OAS as being in the pocket of the United States—or at least the shadow instrument of its power—evolved out of a number of instances. In the Cuban case, most directly, the United States sought legitimization of its embargo through the imposition of a collective “quarantine” on Cuba. Subsequent to a vote at the OAS conference at Punta del Este, Uruguay at the end of January 1962, Cuba was expelled from the body. The 1954 Guatemala case points to a similar conclusion, as the OAS became thoroughly implicated in the toppling of President Arbenz. At the Caracas meeting of the OAS in March 1954, featuring a robust speech by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and the positive endorsements by representatives from the Somoza, Trujillo, and Batista dictatorships, the OAS voted 17 to 1 on a U.S.-sponsored resolution to condemn communism in Guatemala (with only Guatemala dissenting and Mexico and Argentina abstaining).

Still, amidst all these charges, some evidence of a more positive picture emerges even in these polarized ideological years. Albeit weak in capacity the OAS in some of these well-rehearsed cases tried to be more assertive in checking U.S. actions than one might have thought. Notwithstanding the vote on communism at the Caracas conference, the OAS failed to endorse multilateral intervention against the Arbenz

government. Furthermore, the OAS proposed a fact-finding mission to evaluate the Guatemala situation on the ground. Unfortunately, for its lingering claims to credibility, however, the implementation of this mission was delayed by various forms of obstruction. First it was held up by the refusal of the Arbenz regime to agree to its mobilization. Then it was stymied by the actions of the U.S. government to prevent it from reaching Guatemala City. By the time it reached its destination, the coup—and all the evidence of American involvement—had disappeared.<sup>28</sup>

The legitimacy function performed by the OAS also worked across a wide spectrum. In its interventions in the Americas the United States preferred to cover its actions with the sanction of the OAS. It is important to note that during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis the United States devoted considerable attention to obtaining OAS approval for a blockade as a means both to legalize and to legitimize U.S. actions. Indeed, one of the fundamental reasons for the United States not intervening with direct military force was its lack of credibility with the OAS. A similar dynamic took hold in the case of the 1965 Dominican Republic intervention, in the aftermath of a military coup. Although a number of important states voted against this intervention (Mexico, Uruguay, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru with Venezuela abstaining), six countries volunteered to participate in the IAPF (Brazil, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Paraguay, and Costa Rica). A Brazilian general was named commander, with his deputy being the commander of U.S. forces in the Dominican Republic. On top of the deployment of this military force, more constructive diplomatic action came through the establishment of an OAS special three-person commission that eventually proved successful in allowing a provisional government to be established.

Leaping forward to the post-Cold War era, the issue is not so much whether the OAS role has been reshaped in terms of the nexus between multilateralism and democratization. There is widespread agreement that as an agent of collective action in the defense and the promotion of democracy the organization has come to matter in an unprecedented manner. The issues that need to be investigated in greater depth are those pertaining to why this transition in performance has taken place together with an assessment of the actual degree of operational change undertaken.

In asking why such a substantive breakthrough has occurred the role of the United States is again crucial. Whatever the global circumstances the United States will never be just another state in the Americas.

Nonetheless, the end of the Cold War—and the absence of a Communist threat, real or imaginary—has altered its main game. Although concerns about terrorism abound both from within and without the Hemisphere, the disciplinary impulse of the United States as the policeman of the region has been fundamentally altered. Even though the United States still perceives Cuba to be a toxic presence in the neighborhood, its level of tolerance in terms of the types of democratically elected governments it deems to be acceptable has been expanded.

This is not to say that all the longstanding gaps and flaws in the U.S. approach to democracy have disappeared. Some critics charge that one form of discipline has been substituted for another. Rather than the geopolitical/strategic order favored by—and imposed by—the United States in the past over leftwing/socialist regimes, the parameters of behavior are now shaped and bounded by the acceleration of an embedded corporate culture imposed by the market and consumerism together with the lending/surveillance mechanisms managed by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs). No less than anywhere else in the world, national control has been further lost in the Americas, with states losing autonomy to the forces of finance operating through the processes of the globalized market economy.

From another perspective, the image of a more benign United States is misleading for other reasons. Despite the popular overtones of the U.S. support for democracy in the region this change in image is more cosmetic than real. If the United States has refrained for the most part from direct intervention, it is just as interested—and as actively involved—in maintaining the rules of the game as it sees fit in the Americas.<sup>29</sup> States and their leaders, such as Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, when they step beyond the limits of what the United States deems acceptable (via their diplomatic connections with Cuba and other pariah states and/or threat to property rights) are brought to task.

Yet, amidst these lingering challenges, until very recently some consensus existed that the relationship between the United States and the Americas has improved considerably in the aftermath of the Cold War. OAS members no longer felt that U.S. intervention was directed toward them. U.S. culture, including respect for its system of government, enjoyed unprecedented popularity and acceptance in the region.<sup>30</sup> Rather than the longstanding problems linked with the United States paying too much scrutiny to the region's affairs, the problem became one of U.S. neglect and disinterest. Starting in the Clinton years and intensified during the administration of George W. Bush, the thrust of

the posture of the United States toward the region became more uneven and ambivalent. On specific questions the United States confirmed its willingness to seek improvements in the inter-American democratic paradigm (as we will see later with respect to both state-specific episodes and the creation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter). At other times, the United States adopted a problematic combination of passive/aggressive tactics, swinging between neglect and bursts of democracy à la carte filtered through the lens of national interest.

This image of greater complexity has been accentuated by the erosion of the image of the United States as a stereotypical unitary actor. With a redefinition of the stakes involved and the absence of a common enemy, one of the side effects of the end of the Cold War has been a fragmentation of bureaucratic interests. Although where one sat or stood administratively had always been of importance, the sense of competition between not only the Pentagon and the State Department but also the intelligence services and drug enforcement officials became far more complicated and intense.

The flip side of this process was the rise of non-state actors to a different plane of involvement and status. To be sure, NGOs have long been on the scene in the various aspects of the politics and policies relating to the Americas. Nevertheless, the trajectory of their activity became transfigured in the post-Cold War years. Some of the NGOs that had focused their efforts on opposing the U.S. state in its involvement within the region—most notably in Central America during the 1980s—began to turn their labor to democracy promotion. This focus allowed them to work with and inter-act in a more cooperative manner with the U.S. government.

If widening the source of U.S. bureaucratic engagement, the end of the Cold War also expanded the range of participation for other actors. In terms of agency, for countries such as Canada, the region of the Americas no longer appeared to be the backyard of the United States and accordingly as an area with few rewards and considerable problems. With the shock of the new world order, the neighborhood appeared in a different light as one full of diplomatic and some economic promise. For others such as Argentina, Brazil and Chile (and later Mexico), at the regional level they could proclaim and make use of their new profile as democratic states. In terms of trajectory, some forms of collective endeavor were encouraged by the United States because as Abraham Lowenthal suggests, “multilateral programs are more likely to be effective over time than bilateral ones.”<sup>31</sup>

**The Uneven Trajectory of the Response by  
the OAS to Structural Change**

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Following the assumptions of the larger body of literature, it might have been expected that the OAS would be ripe for a quick if not instant transformation to make the nexus between multilateralism and democratization the centerpiece of its activities. After all, the regional site appears to be particularly amenable to making this connection. Pridham points to this phenomenon by reference to the creation by the European Community “of an ambience with significant potential for influencing internal change.”<sup>32</sup> So does Whitehead: “the importance of such international dimensions of democratization seems much clearer at [the] regional level than at the world-wide level of analysis.”<sup>33</sup>

A number of factors are understood as contributing to this generalized connection between regional institutions and processes of democratization. Small memberships allow for a very different pattern of inter-action and socialization than do much larger units as in the UN. Learning, leadership, and resources can all be concentrated in an issue-specific fashion.

As elaborated in the next chapter, the OAS moved a long way in terms of embracing democratization at the declaratory level and its mode of operation also morphed considerably in the immediate aftermath of the end of the Cold War. Yet, the response of the OAS cannot be considered to be unidirectional and systematic. While taking some big strides forward there were also signs of inertia and even regression at times.

To understand both the movement to advance the democracy agenda and its limitations, the OAS has to be positioned as an in-between or hybrid institution with respect to the reshaping of multilateralism. In the aftermath of the wave of democratic transitions, the OAS was willing and able to find some space for alternative forms of leadership and agenda-promotion. Motivated by their own domestic experiences of democratization,<sup>34</sup> a number of states were ready to project their newfound democratic principles through their foreign policy and to take on different and more ambitious roles promoting democratization at the regional level. Viewed as a club where membership came with obligations as well as rights—democracy became a valued measure of performance.

Amidst this progress, there were also restrictions on moving too fast and too far. Though eager to bandwagon with the United States and



Canada on democratization, most states in the region also desired to counterbalance U.S. influence. Memories of U.S. unilateral intervention were still too raw. The principle of sovereignty remained ingrained as a defensive mechanism.<sup>35</sup>

The cautious side of the OAS drew it back into compliance with the tenets of old multilateralism as laid out by John Ruggie and James Caporaso. The central concern within these generalized principles of conduct are the relationships of the members of an institution with one another.<sup>36</sup> The focus is therefore tilted toward continuity as opposed to change. As a club full of relatively weak members at least in international terms this response is a logical one, in that it reduces the room and opportunity for interference or meddling by the dominant actor in the region. To reinforce the notion of both organizational equality as well as constraint, the institutional culture—or rules of conduct—that developed in the OAS accorded significant weight to consensual decision-making. No one actor would be able any longer to get its way however large its muscle.

In combination these ingredients of old multilateralism channeled the OAS toward a safety-first, organizational maintenance approach. In style the onus was on diplomatic opaqueness, with great consideration for protocol and doing things by the book. In substance, the stress was on cautious problem solving (or what has become known as fire-fighting) governed by an instinct to contain rather than expand the agenda.<sup>37</sup>

Though in many ways the hold of this form of old multilateralism—or what we refer to as club multilateralism—became entrenched with structural change through the 1990s,<sup>38</sup> vibrant pressures directed at the OAS nudged it to take on many of the trappings of a new kind of multilateralism as well. Part of the supply side for this modification came inevitably from the NGO community. As suggested above, the NGOs discerned the end of the Cold War as a great opportunity to expand their access to the decision-making process. What they discovered, though, was an environment that still remained unreceptive to them. Indeed, in a variety of ways, the transition had been accompanied by a backlash against non-state actors. The OAS argued more convincingly as a club of democracies—than as an institution full of dictatorships and military regimes—that as long as its decisions were made in an inter-governmental forum, it had a solid legitimacy. Under this mantra, the OAS did not consider it necessary to question the more or less closed nature of its decision-making structures, or to think about the inclusion of civil society organizations within its debates.

Interestingly, club multilateralism has been both reinforced and challenged as states in the inter-American system have shifted from

authoritarianism to democracy. On the one hand, the recent regional wave of democratic transitions with its democracy and human rights norm cascade has exposed the inter-American system to pressures for expanding the participation of non-state actors in multilateralism. Even legislative actors, such as the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas, have pushed for greater influence in inter-American affairs. On the other hand, the new democratic footing of states in the Americas with elected leaders has paradoxically reinforced and legitimized the continuity of executive sovereignty, that is, the externally recognized supreme authority of heads of state and government as well as their diplomatic representatives. Perversely, this reinforces the club style of multilateralism that pre-dated the onset of democratization in the Americas.

Paralleling the societal calls from below came additional pressure from above for forms of new, complex<sup>39</sup>—or what we term networked—multilateralism to be incorporated into the workings of the OAS.<sup>40</sup> One source pushing for change came from within the OAS itself. Although the structural weaknesses of the OAS can be elaborated upon at some length, sustained reference to these deficiencies should not block from view the progress made by way of institutional reform. César Gaviria, the secretary-general of the OAS during 1994–2004, must take a good deal of credit for this turnaround. Intellectually, Gaviria took the lead in promoting an inter-American “paradigm of democratic solidarity.”<sup>41</sup> Bureaucratically, Gaviria injected some new blood into the organization. Instead of accepting the notion that the OAS was the preserve of the older generation, Gaviria surrounded himself with a “kindergarten” of talented younger advisors. Operationally, he was willing to bend the restrictions of club multilateralism vis-à-vis the use of his “good offices” to defend and promote democracy through various actions, including issuing frequent press statements on situations of concern in the region, fact-finding missions to trouble spots, and third-party mediation or rather facilitation as the OAS has come to term it.

A more generalized indication of the intent and ability of the OAS to do things differently came in relation to the role of its Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD). Since its creation in 1990, the UPD (now the Department for the Promotion of Democracy) has organized a number of electoral monitoring missions as well as a variety of assistance and education programs designed to strengthen democracy. If for the most part this work has been done in a low-key, technically oriented fashion, it has potential for support in forms of new multilateralism.

Another source of encouragement for new or networked multilateralism came from the dominant actor in the hemisphere. In the post-Cold

War the United States was placed in a situation where it could not simply impose its will on others. It possessed too much baggage from its past unilateralist forays to be an effective catalyst for collective action. What it found necessary, therefore, was to substitute diplomatic skill for muscle. The United States possesses the maximum leverage on a bilateral basis among the countries of the Americas. Together with a wealth of experience and knowledge on democratic institution building, the United States also continues to hold the crucial function of chief financier of democratic development. Therefore, how the United States reacts to each case of democratic advancement and backtracking will be a prime determinant of the future condition of the democratic solidarity agenda.

A third source of commitment to expressions of transformed multilateralism was the presence of other countries constituting a diverse but active pro-democracy lobby within the OAS. Many of these states were too small to possess much diplomatic weight or capacity in their own right. On a selective basis, nonetheless, even these countries could make a contribution as witnessed by the role of President Oscar Arias and Costa Rica in opening the way to democratic elections in Nicaragua in February 1990.<sup>42</sup>

A greater burden fell on states such as Chile, Brazil, and Argentina in one category of states and Canada in another. As emergent democracies the three major southern cone states put a huge emphasis on the international promotion of democracy in the mid-1980s to early 1990s. Argentina, after the election of Raúl Alfonsín in 1983, took the lead in these activities. Joining in this campaign, however, was Chilean President Patricio Aylwin (who came to office in 1990) and to a lesser extent President José Sarney in Brazil. As one commentator observed, these leaders. “shared similar preoccupations and goals [and] agreed to coordinate action on a series of international issues deemed important for domestic processes consolidation.”<sup>43</sup>

Canada in particular had a number of constraints on its role in promoting democracy in the hemisphere of the Americas. Canada was a country that had traditionally kept the Americas off its mental-map and had only joined the OAS in 1990. Yet it also had strengths unavailable to other countries in the region. Canada had an activist diplomatic culture that could cultivate new multilateralism. Its state officials also had a well-deserved reputation for technical acumen and problem-solving ability.

Juxtaposed throughout this book then are these two variants of multilateralism. In form they differ with respect to their contours vis-à-vis democratization. The club style of multilateralism is essentially a

top-down or vertical form that privileges and upholds the prerogatives of national executives and their diplomatic representatives. The dictates of sovereignty are buckled only when a specific problem or crisis demands a consensus among the members that some form of intervention is necessary. New multilateralism is very different in the sense that networks are built not only at the elite level but also in a far more extended and pluralistic fashion, with space for bottom-up as well as top-down engagement.

In terms of scope, club multilateralism is resolutely state-centric. While this narrows the coordination problem, it also creates the perception of a huge democratic deficit. Networked multilateralism encourages a heightened degree of mobilization by diverse actors, both state and non-state. Its challenge is to lessen the two-culture divide, where states and non-state actors run with very different agendas and approaches. NGOs, for example, may embarrass states by naming and shaming. In their concern with getting results, states may see the need to accept solutions that are possible even if they compromise principles.

In terms of intensity, club multilateralism favors the lowest common denominator or, if consensus is lacking, perhaps no action at all. As extant in the traditional diplomacy of the OAS, club multilateralism is slow-paced and extremely measured. Its activism is invariably a function of the established norm whereby the leaders of states targeted for OAS intervention must provide their consent for anything but the hardest forms of intervention. Accordingly, even pariah leaders enjoy membership privileges and are therefore able to hold up efforts to defend democracy collectively.

The appeal of networked multilateralism is in its intensity of activity, with speed as its mantra. The focus is not on what is possible but on what is seen to be right. Rapid (sometimes erratic) moves as well as the search for ad hoc routes to deliver results have become an essential component of its repertoire. A “just in time” quality is taken to be central to the success of any process based on this model.<sup>44</sup> Many civil society actors, such as the Carter Center-led Friends of the Democratic Charter initiative, advocate timely and effective intervention.<sup>45</sup>

### **Between Club and Networked Multilateralism**

Defined as very different forms of social construction, the two faces of multilateralism aim at contrasting outcomes in the democratization process. Old or club multilateralism is for the most part content with

democracy promotion that allows the status quo to be managed more effectively. Its central goal is to get the rules of the democratic game in order or smoothed out. There is very little appetite to get the OAS embedded in the national political process of any particular state. Initiatives are very much at the surface level, with little penetration inside the walls of the domestic system.

New or networked multilateralism is far more ambitious in its desire to effect change and in its prescriptive model. Its primary purpose is to design and implement institutional transformation at both the architectural and normative level. Unlike the pragmatic approach of the old multilateralism, new multilateralism wants to offer some elements of a principled approach. Far from being content to bounce off the outer shell of the sovereignty-protected system, new multilateralism wants to effect change within the corpus of the domestic political system. Although differing in the level of commitment to this approach, all the agents of networked multilateralism become in effect entrepreneurs of “norms in action” through which the pursuit of diplomatic activity goes hand in hand with normative development.<sup>46</sup>

For the advocates of networked multilateralism, the limitations of club multilateralism are situated in its inter-governmentalism, its club-like atmosphere and diplomatic culture, and its problem-solving style. Thoroughly embedded in the tight boundaries of a modernist framework, states are left with some degree of flexibility to look after the democratic agenda within these confines. For the proponents of old multilateralism it is precisely these restrictions that lend legitimacy to this system and allow it to work. The opening up of multilateralism in a post-modernist fashion to allow diversity has the danger of pulling the system in directions that some members may not only be uncomfortable with (especially pertaining to opportunities for undiplomatic behavior) but also find extremely difficult if not impossible to implement.

If socially constructed in very different ways, these two modes of multilateralism reveal signs not only of divergence but also of integration; they do not operate in completely separate worlds. Paralleling each other they inevitably become intertwined. Even state-centric officials seek out the approval of non-state actors and become involved and influenced by the processes of what Anne-Marie Slaughter terms trans-governmentalism.<sup>47</sup> They may also want to accelerate the pace of diplomatic activity. Even oppositional, “outsider” NGOs push for access to privileged, “insider” sites of inter-governmental negotiations.<sup>48</sup> They may as well take on a more technical and accommodative mindset. If still uneven, therefore, the different currents of multilateralism merge at least at the tactical level.

At the core of the thematic structure of this book is the notion that by looking more closely at the in-between or hybrid status of the OAS's club/networked multilateralism showcased through the democratization agenda, an essential element of transition in the Americas can be captured. This hybrid form combines elements of verticality and top-down diplomacy connected with old multilateralism and the horizontalness and informal bottom-up associational activity key to the ascendancy of new multilateralism. At the same time the contours between what is considered inside and outside of the domestic sphere become blurred. These conceptual operational boundaries are no longer fixed entities but are rather fluid and shifting.

Coming to terms with complex or hybrid multilateralism with respect to democratization in the Americas is an exciting project. However, it remains a multidimensional, overlapping, and contradictory one as well. The key element to applying the requisite roadmap—what we term intervention without intervening—is to engage and explain more thoroughly the “interactive processes” laid out by John Ikenberry and Michael Doyle.<sup>49</sup> This approach allows different literatures to speak to each other and practices to mix them however messily. The central question is no longer whether the international or the domestic is superior or subordinate in the democratization process but why and how these dimensions work in tandem or struggle at odds with each other on the ground.

Returning to our starting point, we appreciate that our approach is far more intricate than the standard more parsimonious interpretations of the democratization dynamic such as the one provided by Whitehead and Schmitter. Still, though their abovementioned international dimensions of democratization are heuristically neat, it must be mentioned that Whitehead and Schmitter do not provide us with a method for systematically ascertaining the relative significance of domestic and international causal factors or the way in which their combinations affect political outcomes. Their analysis permits us to categorize international factors, a staple of the comparative politics tradition, but its explanatory value is limited because of a lack of underpinning methodology. From their international dimensions we now have a better understanding of where to look but not how to look.

The challenge is not only to underline the importance of international factors but also to analyze the manner by which they intertwine with domestic factors to influence the course of political change, whether by reinforcing or altering the status quo. To appreciate fully the international/transnational character of political change,<sup>50</sup> we must put agency front

and center.<sup>51</sup> In order to do so methodologically, we need to identify the main domestic, international, and transnational actors involved as well as undertake a meticulous deconstruction (or reconstruction) of how their actions are interlinked. This is what we call an “inter-action” approach.<sup>52</sup> In any process of democratization, actions occur at both the domestic and international levels across a wide continuum, some isolated and some intertwined. Interaction analysis permits us to determine the sequence of events: action, reaction, counteraction, coordinated and combined action, or coincidence. Utilizing this approach, therefore, we can ascertain whether international actors and actions have a direct or indirect role and whether their influence is ad hoc/episodic or sustained. An inter-action approach also helps explain the outcomes of political change, whether building added momentum toward a democratic solidarity paradigm or persistent resistance to these trends. Thus it is to this fundamental tension—at the core of our undertaking to trace the contours of the nexus between multilateralism and democracy—that we must turn to and explore in more depth.

## CHAPTER TWO

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### *The OAS Democratic Solidarity Paradigm: Agency Innovation and Structural Constraints*

The OAS has been torn between an urge to innovate and to maintain the status quo in terms of democratization. Momentum in building a “right to democracy”<sup>1</sup> or a “collective defense of democracy” paradigm<sup>2</sup> was accelerated by the end of the Cold War and the wave of democratic transitions experienced throughout the Americas on a national basis. Yet the collective efforts of the OAS toward the building of democratic values continued to face a number of serious constraints. At an instrumental level, the means of translating the inter-American system of democratic solidarity into practice has been a daunting task. Club multilateralism proved effective in smoothing some crises, most notably that of Guatemala in 1993. In other cases the limitations of this paradigm were strongly evident. The Haitian experience revealed the difficulty in enforcing economic sanctions. In the case of Paraguay’s crisis of 1996, the OAS response time was questioned and attention was drawn to its inadequate preventative and monitoring abilities.<sup>3</sup> The OAS has been criticized as well, in a more general context, for what has been called a “firefighter approach”<sup>4</sup>: focusing on extinguishing threats to democracy among nation states when they ignite rather than preventing crises before they flare up. At a more conceptual level, the OAS members’ degree of commitment to collective initiatives to safeguard democracy underscores the conflicting foreign policy principles found in the region, most notably the perennial tension between support for pro-democracy collective interventions and the respect for non-intervention and state sovereignty.<sup>5</sup>



Against this dualistic background, featuring both a push to and a counter-pull against democratization, an important set of questions concerning the nature of leadership in the promotion of democracy within the inter-American system must be teased out in greater detail. Converting democratic values into action in the region requires decisive and sustained leadership at both the national and the collective level. Notwithstanding all the genuine progress made during the 1990s, hemispheric pro-democracy activism remains hindered by a significant leadership deficit. As argued in this chapter the source of this deficit derives from a number of factors: an imperfect and incomplete democratic solidarity doctrine, an ad hoc and ill-defined division of labor, scarce financial resources, and debilitating internal problems among potential regional leaders. After tracing the development and parameters of the inter-American system's pro-democracy doctrine, the impediments that constrain leadership are examined in some detail. The chapter concludes with a discussion of ways to move beyond these problems in order to buttress the promotion and defense of democracy in the Americas.

### **Toward a Democratic Solidarity Doctrine**

The emergence of a democratic solidarity paradigm has been shaped by a gradual and uneven evolution. The original charter of the OAS had made "the effective exercise of representative democracy"<sup>6</sup> one of the guiding principles of hemispheric cooperation. However, from 1948 through to the late 1970s, this commitment was declaratory not operational. What progress took place came in a case-specific fashion. The first sign of a substantial move to some form of pro-democracy doctrine came in 1979 with the passage of a resolution condemning the human rights record of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua.<sup>7</sup> This resolution was a breakthrough in a number of ways. First of all, the resolution demonstrated a marked sense of collective commitment on the part of the OAS membership to become involved in the promotion of democracy on a state-specific basis. With the exception of the opposition expressed by the permanent representatives from Nicaragua and Paraguay, the OAS General Assembly rallied around the call for the immediate replacement of the Somoza regime by a freely elected democratic regime. Moreover, this action was taken even though many of the countries that voted in favor of the resolution were themselves guilty of gross human rights violations and dictatorships during that period. Secondly, the resolution

adopted by the OAS established some important precedents. Not only did the resolution nudge the OAS toward setting an obligation to advance democracy in the Americas, it also sent a clear signal that the organization was prepared to denounce anti-democratic governments on at least a selective basis.<sup>8</sup> Implicitly, the resolution created an important new function for the OAS: a legitimizing (or de-legitimizing) mechanism for the region's governments.<sup>9</sup>

The Protocol of Cartagena de Indias, approved at the 14th Special Session of the OAS on December 5, 1985 in Colombia, raised the organization's obligations to advance democracy to an explicit purpose. This document amended the OAS Charter in order to add a new provision under Article 2 of Chapter I, "Nature and Purposes." The OAS Charter henceforth enshrined the regional obligation to "promote and consolidate representative democracy, with due respect for the principle of non-intervention."<sup>10</sup> Subsequent OAS declarations and action plans of the Miami and Santiago summits of head-of-states have reaffirmed and elaborated upon this duty.

While the Cartagena protocol elevated the external advancement of representative democracy in terms of the hierarchy of purpose of the inter-American system, it did not specify what types of action would be taken in pursuit of this goal. This disconnect between goals and means became obvious during the Panama crisis of 1989, a situation precipitated by the move on the part of Manuel Noriega to annul the elections held in that country. The OAS passed a resolution defending the Panamanian people's right to elect their leaders in a democratic fashion<sup>11</sup> and mounted a ministerial effort to mediate through a delegation headed by the foreign minister of Colombia. But it failed to undertake any effective action against Noriega's illegal government. The inability of the OAS to move from declaratory to operational practices contributed to the decision of the United States to launch an invasion of Panama on December 20, 1989 in order to install the victor in the May election, Guillermo Endara.<sup>12</sup>

With the Panama debacle imprinted on its collective memory, the OAS moved to correct this problem at the twenty-first session of the General Assembly held in Santiago, Chile in June 1991. In the declaration issued at this meeting, entitled the "Santiago Commitment to Democracy and the Renewal of the Inter-American System," the signatories pledged to adopt "efficacious, timely, and expeditious procedures to ensure the promotion and defense of representative democracy . . ."<sup>13</sup> The accompanying resolution, "Representative Democracy (1080)," went even further in this direction. In the event of any interruption of

democratic government in the region, it instructed the secretary-general to convene immediately a meeting of the Permanent Council and to hold an ad hoc meeting of the ministers of foreign affairs and/or a special session of the General Assembly, all within the ten-day period following the occurrence of this type of crisis. It also authorized the ad hoc meeting of foreign ministers and/or the General Assembly to examine the events and “adopt any decisions deemed appropriate.”<sup>14</sup>

With this shift in emphasis, the Santiago Commitment and Resolution 1080 added some crucial elements to the emerging pro-democracy doctrine. First of all, they contributed a new, automatic procedure to follow for organizing an external response to democratic breakdown. Secondly, these documents issued a license to the OAS to undertake a wide range of collective activity so long as these actions were approved by the foreign ministers of its member states and/or the General Assembly. Thirdly it underscored the principle of rapid response.

Subsequently, the OAS has assembled a more comprehensive tool kit to further its pro-democracy aims. Denouncing anti-democratic governments has been a traditional measure utilized by the organization, as witnessed by resolutions passed in the context of the interruption of democratic rule in Nicaragua (1979), Panama (1989), Haiti (1991), Peru (1992), and Guatemala (1993). This approach fit well with the diplomatic culture of the inter-American system, in that the practice of denying recognition to governments that come to power by force had been the motivation of the so-called Betancourt Doctrine (named after the former president of Venezuela). During the 1960s, Venezuela invoked the doctrine on numerous occasions, severing diplomatic ties with Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, and Peru.<sup>15</sup>

With the Protocol of Washington the OAS added the threat of suspension of membership to its repertoire of punitive actions. Brought forward on December 14, 1992, this amendment to Article 9 of the OAS Charter stated that

. . . [a] member of the Organization whose democratically constituted government has been overthrown by force may be suspended from the exercise of the right to participate in the sessions of the General Assembly, the Meeting of Consultation, the Councils of the Organization and the Specialized Conferences as well as in the commissions, working groups and any other bodies established . . .<sup>16</sup>

The OAS also created an institutional mechanism—the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD)—to help foster democratic

development through the region. Brought to life in June 1990 through General Assembly Resolution 1063<sup>17</sup> and further refined through Permanent Council Resolution 572,<sup>18</sup> the UPD's mandate includes democratic institution-building; information generation, dissemination, and exchange on democracy; promoting democratic dialogue among experts and institutions in the hemisphere; and electoral observation and technical assistance.<sup>19</sup> Recently renamed the Department for the Promotion of Democracy (DPD), its activities encompass an impressive range of functional/geographic responsibilities. These tasks include furthering the peace process in Guatemala, reintegrating combatants in Nicaragua, the training and shaping of young democratic leaders, and the promotion of effective local government throughout the region. The DPD's work on external election monitoring has taken on a particular importance. Although widely accepted as giving the seal of approval of the OAS in terms of electoral process credibility, these missions have also become the focal point for backlashes against the perceived institutional intrusiveness of the OAS.

The parameters placed on the overall scope of OAS intervention have been defined through practice. In Resolution 1080, the provision to "adopt any decisions deemed appropriate" in the event of the overthrow of a democratic government has been interpreted and shaped via actions taken in the Haitian, Peruvian, Guatemalan, and Paraguayan crises. For example, the response to the Haitian case established a precedent for the use of economic sanctions, cooperation with the United Nations (UN), and UN-legitimized military force as acceptable measures to dislodge illegal governments.

In the 1993 Guatemala crisis the OAS secretary-general led fact-finding missions that served the purpose of demonstrating the organization's solidarity with an elected but fragile government. At the same time, though, these activities highlighted the features not of networked but of old club multilateralism. The Guatemala crisis was triggered by the attempt by President Jorge Serrano to mount an *autogolpe* or self-coup as an excuse to suspend basic rights, shut down Congress and the courts, and detain members of the opposition. These actions received almost universal condemnation in the Americas. However, it did not trigger any punishment by the OAS. What kudos the OAS received during the crisis was for what it did not do as opposed to an activist approach. After João Clemente Baena Soares, the OAS secretary-general, arrived on his fact-finding mission, he was presented with an easy way out of the crisis through the restoration of the status quo that had prevailed prior to the *autogolpe*. To his credit, Soares refused to make

a deal on these lines. After laying down these parameters of club behavior the OAS secretary-general left it to the domestic political process to work out the details of who was in and who was out of the government. As two academics have described the situation: “By the time Baena Soares returned to Guatemala after briefing the OAS Foreign Ministers . . . Serrano was in exile and Vice President Gustavo Espina had been forced to resign because of his initial support for Serrano’s *autogolpe*. Soon afterward [with a new untarnished President in place] Baena Soares congratulated the winner and returned to Washington.”<sup>20</sup>

By amending the OAS Charter to allow for the suspension of anti-democratic governments, the Protocol of Washington contributed yet another defining aspect of the emerging democracy doctrine: representative democracy as a criterion for participation in the inter-American system. The text of the declarations on these questions is precise. The signatories are defined as democratically elected heads of state, and representative democracy named as the sole legitimate political system within the Americas.

The original precedent for representative democracy as a criterion for participation in the inter-American system had in fact been established with the expulsion of Cuba from OAS participation in 1962. However, the impact of this resolution was distorted on at least two counts. First of all, the decision to expel Cuba was adopted more for Cold War hemispheric security concerns than out of any genuine commitment to representative democracy. Second, the precedent was not upheld during the wave of authoritarian regimes that plagued Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed the cynical expression “democracy for dictators” gained wide currency during these years as there was deemed to be a double standard between the coercive tactics applied to Cuba and the hands-off approach adopted toward right-wing/military regimes.

Although Cuba has continued to be treated as an exceptional case right up to the present, the growing consensus on democracy in the OAS has implied a significant revision of the notion of sovereignty vis-à-vis the inter-American system. In the spirit of the Calvo (1868) and Drago (1902) doctrines,<sup>21</sup> the OAS continues to pay heed to the traditional principles of equality among states, self-determination, and territorial inviolability. Article 19, under Chapter IV of the OAS Charter, “Fundamental Rights and Duties of States,” states these guidelines clearly: “No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State. The foregoing principle prohibits not only armed force but also any other form of interference or attempted threat against

the personality of the State or against its political, economic, and cultural elements.”<sup>22</sup> Article 20 adds that. “[n]o State may use or encourage the use of coercive measures of an economic or political character in order to force the sovereign will of another State.”<sup>23</sup>

The spirit of this traditional stance is challenged by many of the elements of the inter-American system’s emerging democratic solidarity doctrine: the promotion and consolidation of representative democracy as a defining purpose of the OAS, the principle of collective intervention for democracy, a rapid response mechanism in the event of democratic breakdowns, and a collective action repertoire to deal with errant members. The notion of sovereignty itself has been fundamentally altered: territorial inviolability, non-intervention, and self-determination are rights reserved only for freely elected governments of the hemisphere.<sup>24</sup>

In practical terms, a great deal of unevenness can be found in the extension and application of the democratic solidarity doctrine. While the doctrine has been put into action in Haiti, Peru, Guatemala, and Paraguay, it is nonetheless deeply constrained. For example, there is no universally accepted definition of democracy in the inter-American system. Even after the 2001 Inter-American Democratic Charter established an ample list of essential elements and conditions for democracy in Articles 3–6, there is no consensus on a single, acceptable model. This lack of consensus is highlighted by the preamble to Resolution 1063 that created the UPD:

. . . in the context of representative democracy, there is no political system or electoral method that is equally appropriate for all nations and their peoples and the efforts of the international community to shore up effectiveness of the principle of holding genuine and episodic elections should not cast any doubt on the sovereign right of each State to elect and develop their political, social, and cultural systems freely, whether or not they are to the liking of other states . . .<sup>25</sup>

Across national lines, there has not yet developed a tight consensus on the types of measures to be adopted against those who would overthrow democratic governments. The use of military force is especially contentious. Brazil, most notably, abstained from the UN Security Council vote on Resolution 940 that gave the go-ahead for the U.S.-military intervention in Haiti. Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Mexico, all refused to participate in the multinational force assembled for the purpose of restoring deposed President Aristide to power in Haiti in 1994.<sup>26</sup>

The Rio Group, whose members include the majority of Latin American states, is opposed to the use of military force to safeguard democracy.<sup>27</sup>

The paradox of U.S. structural power further exacerbates this sense of awkwardness. The success of the democratic solidarity doctrine rests on the willingness of the United States to be channeled into multilateral or plurilateral actions determined by the OAS. Yet, there are few signs that the United States has been reined in on a continuous or effective basis through these alternative means. Historically, the United States has adopted a policeman role for itself in the hemisphere on the basis of the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary, which reversed Roosevelt's 1934 promise that the United States would not interfere in the domestic affairs of Latin America. This coercive role did not preclude some gaps in this mandate. A movement away from this approach was evident in both President John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress and President Jimmy Carter's embrace of "ideological pluralism" in the Americas (an opening that was crucial to the 1979 OAS actions against the Somoza regime in Nicaragua). Yet after these brief spells of permissiveness the unilateral impulse on the part of the United States took hold again. Kennedy's initiatives were closed by President Johnson's return to the doctrine of support for authoritarian pro-U.S. governments. Carter's flexible approach gave way to President Ronald Reagan's hard-line.

### **Questions of Collective and National Leadership**

In addition to an incomplete and disputed democratic solidarity paradigm, the external promotion of democracy in the Americas suffers from a number of other deficiencies. As rehearsed above, inter-American activism is inhibited by an ill-defined division of responsibilities in terms of the pursuit of democracy, inadequate resources, and internal constraints on the performance of solidarity partners. Combined together, these problems highlight the need to pay more attention to the question of leadership. Despite progress on the conversion of the democracy agenda from declaratory to operational expression, and the presence of a number of potential candidates, a fully effective mode of leadership on this issue in the inter-American system has not been forthcoming.

Central to this dilemma is the overlapping institutional architecture found in the regional system. While the plan of action of the Miami Summit of the Americas established the OAS as the main organization for the defense and consolidation of democracy within the Americas,

other sources of initiatives also have emerged. Indeed, there has been an impressive growth of other bodies that can play significant roles in the process of reform and change. In addition to the OAS, democracy is also promoted by the Rio Group, the Esquipulas Group, the Andean Group, the Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM), the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), and the OAS/ Summit Working Group on Democracy and Human Rights. The recent creation of the South American Community of Nations and the Ibero-American Summits and Secretariat adds additional complexity to regional pro-democracy multilateralism.

In this diffuse environment, the Rio Group has emerged alongside the OAS as a particularly important pro-democracy agent. Established in 1986 from the merging of the Contadora Group (Venezuela, Mexico, Panama, and Colombia) and its support group (Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Uruguay), the membership of the Rio Group contains the majority of Latin American countries. Much of the catalyst for its origin stemmed from the widespread perception that the OAS was a U.S.-dominated body, possessing little in the way of autonomous capacity on issues such as the Central American crisis during the 1980s. The defining trait of the Rio Group has remained its presence as a forum for dialogue among Latin American countries without U.S. participation and interference. In a manner similar to the OAS's, the Rio Group has set democracy as a criterion of participation, with members facing suspension for any interruption in democratic rule—as seen in the cases of Panama in 1989 and Peru in 1992. In accordance with its anti-hegemonic origins, the Rio Group opposes the use of military force to restore overthrown governments and/or unilateral interventions. Its preferred option—as alluded to in the cases of both Nicaragua and Paraguay—has been persuasion, through political dialogue and negotiation, not coercion.<sup>28</sup>

Another indication of the extent of institutional diffusion in the inter-American system has been the marked sub-regionalization of pro-democracy activity in the hemisphere. Pre-dating the Santiago Commitment and the Washington Protocol, the Andean Group in May 1991 reached agreement that its members would suspend diplomatic relations in immediate fashion with any government coming to power illegally.<sup>29</sup> In the aftermath of the Paraguayan democratic crisis of April 1996, MERCOSUR members adopted an analogous “democracy clause” called the Ushuaia Protocol. More concretely, MERCOSUR members (with Brazil in the lead) were instrumental in helping to bring about a quick resolution to Paraguay's political crisis in 1996 and March 1999.<sup>30</sup> Taking on a similar form of collective responsibility,



CARICOM played a pivotal role in alleviating post-electoral tension in Guyana in 1998.

The inter-American system itself has been extended in recent years. To the three main pillars of this system in the postwar period: the OAS, the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty), and the Inter-American Development Bank,<sup>31</sup> there has been added a fourth: the summit process begun in Miami in 1994. While in principle free to develop its own agenda, in practice the OAS has increasingly begun to take its cues from these well-publicized meetings of heads of state of the Americas held every 3–4 years. The relationship between the OAS and the summits, therefore, has become an ambiguous one. With respect to the preparation and implementation processes of the summit, the OAS serves as an informal secretariat. But in its capacity as a regional organization the OAS coexists with a separate summit-oriented ministerial level organism—the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG).

In overall terms, this diffuse condition means that the refinement and operation of the inter-American democratic solidarity doctrine increasingly occurs at multiple levels and in varied forums of the hemisphere. If a democratic division of labor is emerging, it is evolving in an ad hoc and awkward fashion. As heads-of-state meetings, the summits of the Americas have moved to the pinnacle of policymaking for issues related to democracy in the region. However, because these events occur only periodically and address a wide range of policy priorities, extending from education and the environment, to security and hemispheric free trade, their utility is diluted. Moreover, the Summits have generated literally hundreds of new mandates for which the OAS and the Inter-American System continue to have inadequate numbers of personnel and financial resources.

The effectiveness of the OAS to deal with a widened agenda relating to the defense and consolidation of democracy must also be questioned. The most serious challenge to the OAS's credibility concerns the issue of rapid response to democratic crises. The OAS has the potential to play a vital function through its newly formed Secretariat for Political Affairs in terms of the prevention of coups d'état and the mobilization of projects designed to promote democratic consolidation. It can also perform a significant coordinating role in times of crisis. As the first Paraguayan crisis of 1996 revealed, though, the OAS has sometimes been left on the sidelines in times of crisis. By the time the OAS Permanent Council had convened as per Resolution 1080 and gathered reliable information about the events on the ground, the Paraguayan crisis had abated.<sup>32</sup> Both in 1996 and 1999, it was Paraguay's MERCOSUR partners together

with the United States that filled the gap, providing the more immediate diplomatic response that proved vital in resolving these Paraguayan crises.

The deficiencies of the OAS have been compounded by specific problems attached to its institutional culture. The OAS tradition of consensual decision-making within a club-like atmosphere is particularly salient here. On routine matters, involving little or no controversy, the OAS works well. On higher-profile issues where there are profound differences of opinion, as on the question of how to resolve a crisis, the process is prone to some considerable stalling if not immobilization. This deficiency came to the fore most notably in the case of Haiti in 1994. Subsequent to the overthrow of President Aristide in September 1991, Secretary-General Baena Soares immediately invoked Resolution 1080 and a meeting of the Permanent Council of the OAS was held. Yet, if there was a consensus that the coup d'état should be condemned, a sharp split formed over the issue of coercive intervention. Accepted on principle was a menu of sanctions that included the freezing of assets in international banks; the suspension of credit, international assistance, and commercial flights; and an imposition of trade embargo, with exceptions being made on humanitarian grounds. But in terms of an intervention force, the OAS was able to send only a small grouping (18 members) of a civilian mission known as OAS-DEMOC. The mission established itself in Haiti in September of 1992. However, its functions were quickly subordinated to the role of the UN as requested by Secretary General Soares. Eventually, after other means failed, in July 1994 the UN Security Council passed a resolution allowing the de facto regime to be removed by "all means necessary," a step that led inevitably to the U.S. military intervention in September 1994.<sup>33</sup>

Underscoring all of these organizational defects has been the relative scarcity of resources. The OAS remains in a relatively weak financial position. Frozen in the mid-1990s, the OAS total budget remained until 2006 a modest \$78 million, a figure less than the annual operating budget of a typical mid-sized U.S. university. Its operations and programming are further hurt by the fact that a significant number of its members continue to be in arrears on their annual contributions, owing almost \$107 million in unpaid dues as of mid-February 1999. During the June 2000 OAS General Assembly, held in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, it was reported that the United States owed \$35.7m, while Brazil was \$23.8m in arrears and Argentina \$5.3m.<sup>34</sup> Although an important announcement was made at the Windsor meeting for the establishment of a new Democracy Fund target endangered democracies, no commitment was made to strengthen the budget of the UPD.<sup>35</sup>

The operations of the UPD/DPD have been negatively affected by this shortfall. It must fund an ambitious array of hemisphere-wide, democracy-enhancing activities, from democratic institution-building, elections monitoring, and technical assistance to demining in Central America.<sup>36</sup> Its election observation missions, a cornerstone of its operations, are funded precariously by voluntary contributions at the national level instead of a permanent fund within the OAS.<sup>37</sup>

To make this commitment–resource gap more acute, the inter-American democracy mandate contains the danger of overstretch. In the areas of democracy, justice, and human rights, the Santiago Summit identified a number of new initiatives. The creation of a hemispheric center for justice studies and the position of a Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression add to the organizational burden placed on the OAS. The membership has also agreed to fund educational programs for democracy in their respective countries. In the area of election monitoring, the OAS is faced with a situation where a monitoring role is required in a growing number of countries. The OAS has organized more than 90 electoral missions throughout the region.<sup>38</sup>

Weak funding at the inter-American level is matched by poor resource allocations on a national basis. At odds with the structural power it possesses, the United States has been erratic in its performance as a contributor to the democratic solidarity agenda. Flying in the face of the declaratory policy from the 1994 Miami Summit, with its stated pledge to “preserve and strengthen the community of democracies in the Americas,”<sup>39</sup> the United States subsequently cut back aid to the Americas. From 1992 to 1995, U.S. Official Development Assistance to Latin America shrank to almost half its former level. In large part this shift reflects a dominant situational factor: the relationship of the budgetary process to the Republican-controlled Congress. However, this condition also reflects the trend toward linking foreign policy issues with U.S. aid, which is being increasingly tied to specific programs to combat narcotics trafficking. Annual funding for the promotion of democracy hovers around US\$16 million.<sup>40</sup> Such resources appear to be particularly derisory when compared to other high-profile items, above all the budget of US\$1.3 billion that the United States allocates for the Plan Colombia, the initiative that fights drug trafficking in that single country.

Nor has it been easy for most other countries in the region to fill the void left by the lack of top-down leadership. In some cases, an inability to raise the level of financial commitment goes hand in hand with the intrusion of internal economic crises and/or competing priorities. This capability problem is particularly associated with the intermediate or

middle states in the region. Brazil provides one illustration of this trend. Propelled by its own internal democratic transition, Brazil raised its level of activism on the external democracy front. Brazil, for example, took on the role as coordinator (with Canada) of the OAS Working Group on Democracy and Human Rights. In the aftermath of the financial crisis of January 1999, however, Brazil's ability to stay the course in privileging the democracy agenda became increasingly contested.

In other cases, this commitment–capability gap reflects the traditional limitations of size and strength. These sorts of conditions curb the activities particularly of Chile and Argentina, arguably the two countries that possess the greatest incentives for taking part in democracy promotion programs as they have had their own experiences of transition from repressive to democratic regimes. Up to the 1990s, Chile's foreign policy reflected its modest resources, although this constraint was lifted as the economy flourished. Despite an activist and prestige-oriented psychology, Argentina's level of external involvement has been held back by budgetary limits as well. Hit hard by the economic/debt crisis since December 2001, Argentina remains sensitive to potential resource constraints posed by external vulnerability and the relatively small size and fragile condition of its economy.

It would be misleading to suggest that the expression of leadership for inter-American democracy rests exclusively on capabilities. When trying to locate potential sources of initiative and innovation, the question of will must also be taken into account. The sources of leadership, from this perspective, are both systemic and domestic. While systemic strain may prompt policy initiatives, these responses are shaped and conditioned by domestic factors. With issues such as democracy in ascendancy, there are higher expectations for involvement in both “domestic” issues having international ramifications and those “international” issues that spill over into the national area. Nonetheless, this heightened form of internal pressure also introduces a strong element of constraint on policy innovation and reform.

The ambiguity of the U.S. position to the democracy agenda reflects this combination of systemic and domestic constraints. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the relationship between the United States and the Americas improved considerably immediately after the end of the Cold War. Still, despite this opportunity, the United States has not seized the opportunity to head up the construction of an authentic Latin American democratic community.<sup>41</sup> On the contrary, according to Jorge Domínguez, Latin America has become “marginalized” in the post–Cold War era.<sup>42</sup> Internationally, the United States has focused its

attention elsewhere, through economic crises in Asia and Russia, to the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, through to September 11, Afghanistan, and the Iraq War. To the extent that the region has figured significantly in U.S. policy circles, it is mainly to react to problems within the Americas such as drug-trafficking, with potentially serious repercussions for the U.S. economy and society. Both the Clinton and the George W. Bush administrations have clearly lacked a longer-term, forward-looking, post-Cold War vision for the hemisphere,<sup>43</sup> in which the consolidation of democratic solidarity would become the present day equivalent to the Kennedy administration's Alliance for Progress.

The ambiguity on the part of the United States has opened up greater opportunities for intermediate—or middle—states to use their enhanced space of maneuver in the post-Cold War era to widen their repertoire of activity.<sup>44</sup> Given their resource limitations, these states have not moved to share structural power with the United States. Instead, the potential for leadership for this cluster of countries has been based on nonstructural forms of influence associated with the energetic use of their diplomatic talents. Notwithstanding some fundamental similarities in the pattern of behavior, the differences in operating procedures found among this category of countries are striking. The way in which systemic and domestic factors limit—as well as stimulate—initiative-taking behavior varies considerably among them.

The importance of entrepreneurial flair and technical competence is found in the case of Canada's diplomatic approach toward the Americas. Despite the short trajectory of its experience in the OAS, dating back only to 1990, Canadian activism has gained some widespread respect through Latin America and the Caribbean. By adding a new voice and set of diplomatic competencies, Canada helped revitalize the OAS after its relative decline during the 1980s.<sup>45</sup> Its autonomous stance toward Cuba has mitigated any concern in Latin America that Canada would be a passive follower of the United States. Canada's role in fostering favorable conditions for the development of representative democracy in the region has focused on the creation and funding of the UPD, participation in peacekeeping activities in Central America and Haiti, demining activities, and advocacy for a hemispheric multilateral approach to the problem of the drug trade.<sup>46</sup>

In terms of the distribution of labor, Canada has been particularly well suited to take the lead in strengthening the inter-American democratic solidarity paradigm. With its permanent representation at the OAS enjoying the respect of both the Latin American and U.S. delegations, Canada is well positioned to serve as a bridge or linchpin within the

hemisphere. As a latecomer to the OAS, Canada has not figured prominently in the historical debate over the predominance of the two contending visions (one a U.S.-based vision, the other a Latin American-based) about the future of the hemisphere. As is apparent in the cases at the core of this book, Canada has also the ability to devote diplomatic skills and energy at both the ministerial/political and bureaucratic levels on an issue-specific basis.

This positive assessment of Canada's diplomacy should not be taken to suggest the absence of any serious constraints on this approach. Canada's interest in promoting democracy in the hemisphere is diluted by competing priorities in Canada's foreign policy. Geographically, the Americas continue to be but one region among several that are competing for attention and resources within the framework of Canada's perceived role as an activist, middle power and the realities of its North American location. Canada's membership in a wide number of other organizations (NATO, the Commonwealth, the francophone summit, APEC) also detracts from Canada's focus on the Americas. The maintenance of this international activism has been further put into question also—by the tendency post-September 11—by an inward focus on the main game of Canada's foreign policy, that is, the United States in general and the Canada-U.S. border more specifically.<sup>47</sup>

Argentina and Chile—notwithstanding their capability limitations noted above—have both also continued to be active in the international promotion of democracy-building.<sup>48</sup> This effort points to another variation of the inverse relationship between structural power and activism in favor of democracy.<sup>49</sup> That is to say, in traditional terms, it has been the regional powers of Brazil and Mexico that have been the most non-interventionist. Conversely, countries with lesser capabilities have demonstrated the greatest sense of will in this area. Notwithstanding its economic constraints, Argentina has demonstrated a strong commitment to an external as well as an internal democracy agenda. At one level Argentina has played a significant role in the formulation of the Cartagena and Washington Protocols. At another level Argentina has made an impressive contribution to peacekeeping, peace-building, and humanitarian assistance, including active participation in the OAS and UN initiatives to restore President Aristide after the 1991 coup in Haiti and the promotion of the “White Helmets” assistance corps.<sup>50</sup>

Chile has also maximized its potential in terms of agenda setting, compensating will (and skill) for resources. This diplomatic ability was evidenced by its success in promoting the passage of the Santiago Commitment and Resolution 1080 during the OAS General Assembly

held in Chile in 1991. In the lead-up to the 1998 summit of the Americas, Chile's work along these lines was helped by its status as a member of the SIRG troika. Buttressed by its existing links with MERCOSUR and the Andean Group, this role allowed Chile to play a valuable function as a mediator or interlocutor between North America and its Latin American neighbors.

To suggest that Argentina and Chile have become catalysts and facilitators on an issue-specific basis is not to deny the constraints preventing them from fulfilling these roles. The difference between these countries and other larger powers is that these constraints appear to be as much situational as structural. The limitations imposed on Argentina's initiative-oriented diplomacy in the Americas by resource constraints are serious. But so are the impediments placed on these activities by the legacy of the Menem government's foreign policy strategy. By tilting so severely toward a pro-U.S. alignment and demanding that it be elevated to a special status as a non-NATO ally, Argentina reduced its coalition-building capabilities within a region in which suspicions of U.S. hegemony still linger. Indeed the magnitude of the backlash against these overtures is evident in some of the initiatives of the Kirchner government, most notably the call for the replacement of the Washington consensus with a Buenos Aires consensus, and Argentina's participation in the G20+ of trading states in the context of the Doha Round within the WTO.

While sympathetic to multilateralism and the strengthening of organizations such as the OAS, the Alywin and Frei—as well as the Lagos—governments in Chile have adopted a low-key style of diplomacy.<sup>51</sup> As suggested above, the constraints on a more robust style are largely economic in nature. It also must be mentioned that the influence of a strong anticommunist right wing faction in the country—even in the post-Pinochet era—has also delimited Chile's stance on some selective issues, such as Cuban democratization.

Venezuela extends the complexity of this discussion in a different direction, as it provides the most vivid case of a traditionally strong pro-democracy country in the region constrained by the weight of domestic political circumstances. Venezuela was a prominent promoter of Resolution 1080 and under the leadership of President Rómulo Betancourt, a key proponent of the adoption of the so-called Betancourt Doctrine within the Andean Group and by the inter-American system during the early 1990s. Recent internal developments, however, have cut into its activist profile. A prolonged economic crisis during the 1980s and 1990s was a source of constant distraction for government officials

that also severely constrained funding of diplomatic activism. Politically, Venezuela's international credibility has fluctuated with the style and fortunes of its leaders. President Carlos Andrés Pérez emerged as one of the region's champions of democratic solidarity, as witnessed by his declaratory response to the Haiti coup: if successful, this action would "not only break the constitutional order, but might foster the illusion in other countries that it is possible to step back in history."<sup>52</sup> Disappointingly, though, this era ended when Pérez's own personal credibility was punctured in 1993 by his impeachment for corrupt practices.

Venezuela's credentials as a model of democracy for the region were further damaged by two very different attempted coups d'état. With one of the former coup conspirators, Hugo Chávez, having legitimately won the election based on a transformative domestic agenda, it is unlikely that Venezuela will resume the pro-democracy foreign policy platform of the former Pérez government. On the contrary, as demonstrated by a number of illustrations central to this book, the Chávez regime moved from support to resistance on the democratic solidarity doctrine. Rejecting dogmatically the claims of "representative democracy," Chávez has personally championed an alternative notion of "participatory democracy" in his Bolivarian Revolution as well as respect for countries' sovereign rights.

As witnessed by the Venezuelan case, the inconsistency of leadership performance within as well as between countries highlights the linkage between individual and national leadership. As in the development of other institutional regimes,<sup>53</sup> individual leaders clearly make a difference in either pushing or holding back the movement toward an agenda of democratic solidarity in the Americas. Yet, there are pitfalls as well as advantages in relying too heavily on this particular expression of leadership as a guide to action. As witnessed by the Venezuelan case, individual leadership can take on an ephemeral character. As quickly as the style of leadership expressed by individual politicians becomes associated with an institutional culture, personalities change and the form of national leadership is substantially altered.

Brazil features a mix of leadership potential and constraints. Facilitated by President Cardoso's strong personal interest taken in human rights, democracy, and justice issues, Brazil in some ways has been able to build on its potential to be a key actor in the strengthening of the region's democratic solidarity doctrine. Brazil's willingness to take on the role of co-coordinator of the OAS Working Group on Democracy and Human Rights is indicative of this trend. In a more geographically restrictive fashion, so was the initiative by the Brazilian foreign minister Luiz Felipe Lampreia to hold a Latin American conference on democracy in



September 2000 in Brasilia. However, the limitations placed on the extension of this national (and individual) leadership role remain enormous. Furthermore, the current economic problems reveal just the tip of this condition. In the late 1990s, the country was preoccupied with the politics of constitutional reform, especially in terms of pension reform and state downsizing.<sup>54</sup> Brazil's tilt toward activism in the region also exposes the contradictions between external and domestic behavior. Brazil's ability to be a role model in the Americas is truncated by a mixed record on the domestic front in terms of democracy and justice. While democratization has occurred at the formal level of Brazil's political institutions, at the societal level, human rights abuses, judicial corruption and inequality, and violence are endemic.<sup>55</sup>

These contradictions have not gone away with the election of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. Given his status as long-time opposition leader, the election of Lula was a positive expression of democracy in the largest country in South America. Moreover, his democratic credibility appeared to be of the highest order, a rank that was confirmed by his policy push on Brazil's social agenda. Yet, as reflected most dramatically by recent corruption allegations as well as the initiatives taken by his government on press censorship, there have arisen as well some notes of concern.

On top of all of these problems, Brazil remains resistant to any alterations to the established notions of sovereignty and non-intervention. The assumption of any sustained leadership within the hemisphere on the democracy agenda is constrained by Brazil's reluctance to bend these principles. In declaratory terms, Brazil is wary of the elaboration of a convention of collective intervention in the region for fear of setting a precedent for action in other arenas: such as an international convention in defense of the environment within its own borders.<sup>56</sup> In operational terms, Brazil has traditionally been a strong resister of collective action by the OAS to defend democracy. Sensitive to the perception of its immediate neighbors about a hegemonic design, Brazil has been reluctant to forge an assertive leadership role for itself, preferring to work in pursuit of diplomacy—not power leverage. At the same time, much of the focus of Brazilian actions has become increasingly channeled through the conduit of MERCOSUR. That this process of subregionalization extends to the democracy agenda was evident during the Paraguayan crises of 1996 and 1999 in Brazil's mediation effort; a diplomatic effort in which Brazil consulted closely with its MERCOSUR partners.

Resistance to the pursuit of an ambitious democracy agenda has been even more exaggerated in the case of Mexico. With its strong ingrained defense of the principles of sovereignty and self-determination, Mexico has possessed far less immediate potential for leadership by way of a contribution toward the collective promotion of democracy. Mexico was the only country to oppose the Washington Protocol and remains a vociferous critic of collective action to restore democracy. Through the long period of PRI domination, Mexico was profoundly suspicious of the underlying motives behind collective interventions, attributing them mainly to the residual hegemonic interest of the United States. Furthermore, Mexico is highly skeptical of the potential of democracy being inculcated or imposed from outside and is convinced that regime change must be a sovereign act stemming from an outgrowth of domestic social forces. In conceptual terms, Mexico has been a strong proponent of the Estrada Doctrine: respect for political pluralism and the automatic recognition of *de facto* governments regardless of their regime type or ideological orientation.

Having said that, there is some indication that Mexico has been softening its resistance as a consequence of its growing interdependence and rapprochement with the United States through its partnership in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and its multiple informal economic, social, and cultural ties.<sup>57</sup> During the Panama crisis in 1989, for instance, Mexico refrained from criticizing the U.S. intervention to remove Noriega. Indeed, Mexico spoke out against Noriega's illegal assumption of power.<sup>58</sup> In a similar uncharacteristic manner, Mexico denounced the *autogolpe* in Guatemala in 1993.<sup>59</sup> In 1994, the Salinas government, for the first time in Mexican history, permitted the presence of foreign election observers.<sup>60</sup> In 1998, Mexico accepted the legal jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. In April 2002, President Vicente Fox was one of the first and most vocal leaders to condemn the coup against Hugo Chávez in Venezuela.

These counterexamples, however, should not be given exaggerated credence as indicators of a major shift in Mexican foreign policy prior to the victory of President Fox in 2000. Mexico's actions *vis-à-vis* Panama and Guatemala, for instance, must be understood from the perspective of potential spillover effects that would drag Mexico against its will more deeply into Central American conflicts. Mexico had been the recipient, for example, of thousands of Central American refugees during the 1980s. Moreover, the negotiation of NAFTA during the 1990s had the unanticipated consequence of international media attention getting

focussed on Mexico's human rights and democracy shortcomings at a time when the Mexican government was concerned with international investor confidence.<sup>61</sup>

It needs to be added here as well that the U.S. response to the 1994 election did not signal a complete shift in approach to democracy. Even when the United States moved indirectly to support Mexican democracy, these actions were motivated by a desire for order not democracy. As described by M. Delal Baer, the United States "stepped in to stabilize what it perceived to be dangerous post-electoral scenarios by supporting election observations via the channeling of financial resources and moral support through the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). . . . Official support for NGO activism was a thinly veiled substitute for direct U.S. government involvement."<sup>62</sup>

The tenor of these longer-term actions by Mexico, therefore, should be viewed as confidence-building measures alongside a commitment to democracy and human rights. As for the specific case of Mexico's recognition of the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, this is a favorable development for human rights and democracy in Mexico. But this action did not necessarily commit the country to accept other aspects of the inter-American system's democracy paradigm. Mexico remains a formidable opponent of outside interference through the OAS.

From this account the Fox/Castañeda agenda cannot be considered entirely a decisive break from the past. Structural forces felt from the early 1990s were building momentum long before the July 2, 2000 election. This was evident in various events, including the landmark decision—after a clean mid-term election in 1997—taken by the government of Ernesto Zedillo to accept the Democratic Clause in the context of their negotiations with the European Union. What the Fox/Castañeda coalition did immediately after the election was to provide a powerful sense of personal agency to the democratic component of this "new" foreign policy. From the time it came into office, the Fox/Castañeda coalition reconfigured its relationship with institutions devoted to the promotion of democracy as well as human rights and to ensure that rules of the game are locked in with respect to domestic politics. As the Mexican secretary of foreign affairs stated at the beginning of 2002: "This commitment implies, of course, that we open ourselves to external scrutiny. In contrast to the past, today we are convinced that . . . opening ourselves to the rest of the world will contribute decisively to strengthening democratic change in Mexico, making it irreversible."<sup>63</sup>

### Overcoming Structural Constraints

As the Americas adjusted to the post–Cold War era, it appeared that a good deal of momentum was building up on the democracy agenda. Democracy remains squarely on the policy map, as witnessed by the profusion of new commitments at the Santiago Summit of the Americas on education for democracy, a Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, and international exchanges on election campaign financing. However, this issue had not yet assumed a central position on the political/policy agenda as it had to deal with a host of competing demands and priorities: education, negotiations for the free trade area of the Americas, corruption, drug-trafficking, and the environment. This challenge to the ongoing prioritization of the external promotion of democracy is made more serious by the incomplete nature of the democracy agenda. The pandemonium in Paraguay in March 1999, and again in May 2000, the ongoing travails in Haiti, the aborted coup attempt in Ecuador in January 2000, and the precarious nature of the democratic condition in the two central cases for this book—Peru and Venezuela—sent out an alert that the democratic condition remains a fragile and often volatile phenomenon in many parts of the region. A growing number of scholars highlight also the authoritarian, delegative, or hybrid nature of contemporary Latin American representative democracies, not to mention their often worrisome human rights or judicial shortcomings.<sup>64</sup> In short, the tests before the democracy project remain formidable.<sup>65</sup>

This chapter identifies two key ingredients in this process. On the one hand, it argues that the democracy solidarity paradigm that emerged during the early 1990s still needed to be considerably refined in order to achieve operational effectiveness. Its collective action repertoire must be defined more explicitly, especially in regard to the use of force to defend democracy. On the other hand, it highlights the strong constraints imposed on the collective defense and consolidation of democracy. In part the presence of these constraints is a reflection of the absence of a strong, coherent form of leadership in the hemisphere. Pro-democracy activism from the countries of the region is hindered not only by the lack of an extant division of labor but also by a scarcity of resources and an imposing set of systemic and domestic constraints. Surmounting these problems will not be easy.

One sign of these problems, as mentioned above, is the continued lack of agreement on what the concept of democracy constitutes in the region of the Americas. One fundamental criticism of the OAS that

remains is that the linkage of democracy with the formal process of representation in its institutional approach subordinates justice to the preservation of the status quo. Indeed, it may be argued that the January 2000 crisis in Ecuador provides some support for this critique, in that the OAS response concentrated on the formal procedure applied to regime transition (the legitimacy of the transfer of power from President Jamil Mahuad to Vice President Gustavo Noboa) as opposed to a response targeting the underlying concerns that provoked the crisis among the large indigenous population. To its credit, the UPD and now the broader Secretariat for Political Affairs at the OAS have tried to address some aspects of this larger problem by moving to a more all-encompassing approach toward citizenship. The idea here is to promote effective political cultural change, beyond a narrow interpretation of democracy through elections. Substantive questions remain, however, about what sort of constitutional order is envisioned.

Another indication that remains is the constraint of sovereignty. Tom Farer<sup>66</sup> and Fernando Tesón<sup>67</sup> have spoken of the “shrinking of sovereignty’s prerogatives.” Indeed the title of Farer’s edited volume on the topic is *Beyond Sovereignty*. Yet in the Americas sensitivity to external intrusions on sovereignty remains intense. Paradoxically, pro-democracy activity in the region might have the perverse effect of solidifying the sovereign authority of certain governments to undermine democracy in their own bounded spheres of authority. Sovereignty practices related to intervention have certainly changed, but they have still not coalesced into a clear new meaning for sovereignty in the Americas. The reluctance to use armed force and the difficulty in addressing non-coup scenarios of authoritarian regression by incumbent elected leaders suggest that sovereignty is very much alive in the region. If these barriers to sovereignty are to be overcome the cutting edge for change must begin with specific cases. Moreover, there is a great deal of need for subtlety and flexibility and a curtailment of the traditional methods of unilateral intervention and the use of hard power. The signposts for the nexus between multilateralism and democratization in the Americas highlight instead a preference for soft, persuasive forms of intervention.<sup>68</sup> This repertoire, as developed by the OAS and a combination of state/societal actors in the 2000 Peru case, is evocative of how far this form of networked multilateralism could be stretched.