

The OAS Democratic Solidarity Paradigm: Questions of Collective and National Leadership

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the prospects for an interamerican “paradigm of democratic solidarity.” Although the region has seen genuine progress in the promotion and defense of democracy, a significant deficit in collective and national leadership hinders the consolidation of hemispheric prodemocracy activism. As illustrated by a number of recent cases, including the controversy over Peru’s May 2000 election, these impediments are not only situational but structural. This article concludes with a discussion of ways to move beyond these problems and to buttress the democratic solidarity doctrine.

The connection between democratic values and regional governance institutions has become increasingly accepted. In the Western Hemisphere, this pattern is associated most closely with the revitalization of the Organization of American States (OAS), in tandem with the emergence of what has been termed an interamerican “paradigm of democratic solidarity” (Gaviria 1998a, b, c). In declaratory terms, a growing consensus for OAS members to pursue collective action to promote and defend democracy in the region has been enshrined in a cluster of interamerican legal documents, including the Protocol of Cartagena de Indias (1985), the Santiago Commitment and Resolution 1080 (1991), the Washington Protocol (1992), the Managua Declaration (1993), and the Declarations and Plans of Action of the Miami and Santiago Summits of the Americas (1994, 1998).

In operational terms, unprecedented multilateral efforts have been undertaken within the interamerican system to counter antidemocratic developments in Haiti (1991), Peru (1992, 2000), Guatemala (1993), and Paraguay (1996, 1999). In addition to these crisis-oriented actions, the OAS’s Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD) signals a more embedded institutional concern with the process of democratization. The full significance attached to this activity has become widely recognized only in the context of Peru’s May 2000 presidential election, a second-round runoff that, with the boycott by Alejandro Toledo and the reelection of Alberto Fujimori, was condemned by the OAS’s Electoral

Observation Mission because of its serious irregularities. Before this controversial action, however, the UPD's role had emerged in an incremental and lower-key fashion. With activities dating back over a decade, this body has organized a number of electoral monitoring missions, as well as a variety of assistance and education programs designed to strengthen democracy.

Without question, the momentum toward a growing "right to democracy" (Muñoz 1996, 1998) or a "collective defense of democracy" regime (Bloomfield 1994) was accelerated by the end of the Cold War and the wave of democratic transitions experienced through the Americas at the national level. Yet the OAS's collective efforts toward the building of democratic values continue to face a number of serious constraints. At an instrumental level, the means of translating the interamerican system of democratic solidarity into practice has been a daunting task. The Haitian experience revealed the difficulty of 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 (Valenzuela 1997). The OAS has also been criticized, in a more general context, for what has been called a firefighter approach: focusing on extinguishing threats to democracy among nation-states when they ignite rather than preventing crises before they flare up (Acevedo and Grossman 1996, 148).

At a more conceptual level, the OAS members' commitment to collective initiatives to safeguard democracy underscores the conflicting foreign policy principles found in the region; most notably, the perennial tension between prodemocracy collective interventions and the respect for nonintervention and state sovereignty (Bloomfield 1994). As revealed most recently in the case of Peru's election, a push for more assertive action through the OAS still meets opposition because of some countries' traditional reluctance to allow outside interference in internal politics.

Against this complex background, an important set of questions concerns the nature of leadership in the promotion of democracy within the interamerican system. Converting democratic values into action in the region requires decisive and sustained leadership both at the national and the collective level. All the genuine progress made to date notwithstanding, however, the hemispheric prodemocracy activism is presently hindered by a significant leadership deficit. This article argues that 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 interamerican system's prodemocracy doctrine, therefore, the article examines the impediments that constrain leadership. It 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 doctrine has been shaped by a gradual and piecemeal process spanning 20 years. Although the OAS had made a number of rhetorical gestures to representative democracy since its creation in 1948, the first sign of a substantial commitment to some form of prodemocracy doctrine came in 1979 with the passage of a resolution condemning the human rights record of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua (OAS 1979).

This resolution was a breakthrough in a number of ways. It demonstrated a marked sense of collective will by the OAS membership. With the exception of the opposition expressed by the permanent representatives from Nicaragua and Paraguay, the OAS General Assembly mobilized behind the call for the immediate replacement of the Somoza regime by a freely elected democratic regime. This action was taken, moreover, even though many of the countries that voted in favor of the resolution themselves perpetrated gross human rights violations and forms of dictatorship during that period.

The OAS resolution established some important precedents. Not only did it nudge the organization toward an obligation to advance democracy in the Americas; it sent a clear signal that the body was prepared to denounce antidemocratic governments, at least selectively (Acevedo and Grossman 1996, 137–38; Muñoz 1998, 7–8). Implicitly, the resolution created an important new function for the OAS: a legitimizing (or delegitimizing) mechanism for the region's governments (Tacsán 1997, 495).

The Protocol of Cartagena de Indias, approved at the 14th Special Session of the OAS on December 2, 1985, in Colombia, raised the organization's obligations to advance democracy to an explicit purpose. This document amended the OAS Charter to add a new provision under Article 2 of chapter 1, "Nature and Purposes." The charter henceforth enshrined the regional obligation to "promote and consolidate representative democracy, with due respect for the principle of nonintervention" (OAS 1986). Subsequent OAS declarations and action plans of the Miami and Santiago Summits of heads of states have reaffirmed and elaborated this duty.

While the Cartagena Protocol elevated the external advancement of representative democracy in terms of the interamerican system's hierarchy of purpose, 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, when dictator Manuel

Noriega moved to annul the country's presidential elections. The OAS Permanent Council passed a resolution defending the Panamanian people's right to elect their leaders in a democratic fashion. However, Resolution 534 (OAS 1989) failed to undertake any actions against Noriega's illegal government. The OAS's inability to move decisively from declaratory to operational practices contributed to the U.S. decision to invade Panama on December 20, 1989, to install the victor in the May election, Guillermo Endara (Acevedo and Grossman 1996, 139–40).

With the Panama debacle imprinted on its collective memory, the OAS moved to correct this problem at the 21st session of the General Assembly, held in Santiago, Chile, in June 1991. In the declaration issued at this meeting, titled 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" (OAS 1991c). 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 or a special session of the General Assembly, all within a ten-day period following the occurrence of such a crisis. It also authorized the ad hoc meeting of foreign ministries or the General Assembly to examine the events and "adopt any decisions deemed appropriate" (OAS 1991b).

With this shift in emphasis, the Santiago Commitment and Resolution 1080 added some crucial elements to the emerging prodemocracy doctrine. First, they contributed a new, automatic procedure to follow for organizing an external response to democratic breakdown. Second, they issued a license to the OAS to undertake a wide range of collective activity so long as such actions were approved by its member states' foreign ministers or the General Assembly. Finally, they established the principle of rapid response.

Subsequently, the OAS has assembled a more comprehensive "tool kit" to further its prodemocracy aims. Denouncing antidemocratic governments has been the 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). With the Protocol of Washington, however, the OAS added the threat of suspension to its action repertoire.¹ Brought forward on December 14, 1992, this amendment to Article 9 of the OAS Charter stated,

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 Gen-

eral 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. (OAS 1992)

The OAS has also implemented, in the UPD, an institutional mechanism to help foster democratic development through the region. Created in June 1990 through General Assembly Resolution 1063 (OAS 1990) and further refined through Permanent Council Resolution 572 (OAS 1991a), 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 (UPD 1999). In practice, accordingly, the UPD's activities encompass an impressive range of functional and geographic responsibilities. These tasks include furthering the peace process in Guatemala, reintegrating combatants in Nicaragua, training and shaping young democratic leaders, and promoting effective local government throughout the region. The UPD's work on external election monitoring has taken on a particular importance. Although widely accepted as giving the OAS seal of approval in terms of credibility for an electoral process, these missions also have become the focal point for a backlash against the institutional intrusiveness of the OAS.

The actions of the recent OAS electoral mission to Peru have showcased this dilemma. Although widely praised by those who supported a more activist role for the OAS, the observer mission, headed by Eduardo Stein, the former foreign minister of Guatemala, also triggered strong criticism by opponents of intervention on the basis that it far exceeded its mandate by moving from technical scrutiny to a legitimization function.

The parameters placed on the overall scope of OAS intervention have been defined through practice. Resolution 1080's 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, and UN-legitimized military force as acceptable measures to dislodge illegal governments. In Guatemala and Paraguay, and most recently in June 2000 with respect to Peru, the OAS secretary general led fact-finding missions that served to demonstrate the organization's solidarity with fragile elected governments and their peoples.

By amending the OAS Charter to allow for the suspension of anti-democratic member governments, the Washington Protocol contributed yet another defining aspect of the emerging democracy doctrine: repre-

sentative democracy as a criterion for participation in the interamerican system.² Applied tactically, this requirement was used as leverage to deny Cuba the right to take part in the Miami and Santiago Summits. The text of the Protocol of Amendments to the Charter of the OAS on these questions is precise (OAS 1992). It defines the signatories as democratically elected heads of state and names representative democracy as the sole legitimate political system in the Americas.

More strategically, the OAS's growing consensus on democracy has implied a significant revision of the notion of sovereignty in regard to the interamerican system. In the spirit of the Calvo Doctrine (advanced by the Argentine diplomat and legal scholar Carlos Calvo in 1868) and the Drago Doctrine (articulated by the Argentine foreign minister Luis María Drago in 1902), the OAS continues to heed the traditional principles of equality among states, self-determination, and territorial inviolability.³ Article 19 under chapter 4 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.

Article 20 adds, "No 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."

The spirit of this traditional stance is compromised by many of the elements of the interamerican 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. The notion of sovereignty itself has been fundamentally altered; territorial inviolability, nonintervention, and self-determination are rights reserved only for freely elected governments of the hemisphere (Tacsán 1997, 498. See also Farer 1996a; Tesón 1996; Franck 1992; Muñoz 1998).

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 interamerican system. Even within the relatively narrow confines of representative democracy, based on free and fair elections, there is no consensus as to what is an acceptable model. This lack of consensus is highlighted by the preamble to Resolution 1063, which 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. (OAS 1990)

Across national lines, a tight consensus has not yet developed on the types of measures to be adopted against people and groups who would overthrow democratic governments. The use of military force is an especially contentious issue. Brazil, most notably, abstained from the UN Security Council vote on Resolution 940 (July 31, 1994), which gave the go-ahead for the multinational force to use all necessary means 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 (Gosselin et al. 1995, 810). The Rio Group, the members of which include the majority of Latin American states, is opposed to the use of military force to safeguard democracy (Frohmann 1994).

The paradox of U.S. structural power exacerbates this sense of awkwardness still further. 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 by these alternative means. Historically, the United States has adopted a police role for itself in the hemisphere, based on the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary. The Helms-Burton Act of 1996 and the continuing drug certification program by Congress suggest the ingrained nature of this unilateral impulse.

QUESTIONS OF COLLECTIVE AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

In addition to an incomplete democratic solidarity doctrine, the OAS's collective efforts to promote democracy in the Americas suffer from a number of other deficiencies. As we have seen, interamerican activism is inhibited by an ill-defined division of responsibilities in terms of the pursuit of democracy, by inadequate resources, and by internal constraints on the performance of solidarity partners. Together, these problems showcase 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 in the interamerican 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 in the Americas, there has been an impressive growth of other bodies that can play significant roles in reform and change. 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.

In this diffuse environment, the Rio Group has emerged beside the OAS as a particularly important prodemocracy agent. Established in 1986 from the merger of the Contadora Group (Venezuela, Mexico, Panama, and Colombia) and its support group (Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Uruguay), the Rio Group comprises the majority of Latin American countries. It traces its origin, to a great extent, to the widespread perception that the OAS was a U.S.-dominated body, possessing little autonomy on issues such as the Central American crisis of the 1980s. The defining trait of the Rio Group has remained its presence as a forum for dialogue between Latin American countries without U.S. participation and interference. Much like the OAS, the Rio Group has set democracy as a criterion of membership, with the threat of suspension for any interruption in democratic rule.

In accordance with its antihegemonic origins, the Rio Group opposes the use of military force or unilateral interventions to restore overthrown governments. Its preferred option has been persuasion through political dialogue and negotiation, not coercion (Frohman 1994).

Another indication of the extent of institutional diffusion has been the marked subregionalization of prodemocracy activity. Predating the Santiago Commitment and the Washington Protocol, the Andean Group in May 1991 reached an agreement that its members would suspend diplomatic relations immediately with any government coming to power illegally (Muñoz 1998, 9). In the aftermath of the Paraguayan democratic crisis of April 1996, MERCOSUR members adopted an analogous "democracy clause," 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 (Valenzuela 1997, 1999).

Taking a similar form of collective responsibility, CARICOM played a pivotal role in alleviating postelectoral tension in Guyana in 1998. Significantly, Mexico's recently negotiated free trade agreement with the European Union contained a democracy clause. In a similar vein, there is some discussion that an eventual Free Trade Area of the Americas will also include some provisions with reference to democracy (Wilson-Forsberg and Roy 2000).

The interamerican 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, and the Inter-American Development Bank (Atkins 1995, 197), 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 been taking its cues from these well-publicized meetings of heads of state of the Americas held every three to four years. The relationship between the OAS and the summits thus has become ambiguous. With respect to the summit preparation and implementation processes, 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). The ambiguity of this situation is captured in the area of democracy, where an OAS Working Group on Democracy and Human Rights feeds the preparatory work of the SIRG.

In overall terms, this diffuse condition means that the refinement and operation of the interamerican democratic solidarity doctrine increasingly occurs at multiple levels and in varied forums of the hemisphere. If a democratic division of labor is emerging, its evolution is proving to be ad hoc and awkward. As gatherings of heads of state, the successive meetings of the Summit of the Americas have become the pinnacle of policymaking for issues related to democracy in the region. Because these events occur only periodically, however, and address a wide range of policy priorities, from education and the environment to security and hemispheric free trade, their utility is diluted. Instead of acting as vehicles for long-term reform, the focus of these summits has been restricted to the resolution of immediate issues.

The effectiveness of the OAS in dealing with a widened agenda relating to the defense and consolidation of democracy must also be questioned. The most serious challenge to OAS credibility concerns the issue of rapid response to democratic crises. As the first Paraguayan crisis of 1996 revealed, by the time the OAS Permanent Council had convened as per Resolution 1080 and had gathered reliable information about the events on the ground, the crisis had abated (Valenzuela 1997, 54). In both 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.

These episodes point to a scenario based not on institutional primacy but a messy equipoise of purpose. The OAS has the potential to serve a vital function, through the UPD, in preventing coups d'état and formulating projects that promote democratic consolidation. It can also perform a significant coordinating role in times of crisis. Concomitantly,

subregional organizations with common agendas have room to play a pivotal role as the frontline defense against sudden disruptions of democracy in the region.

The deficiencies of the OAS have been compounded by specific problems attached to its institutional culture. The OAS tradition of consensual decisionmaking is particularly salient here. On routine matters involving little or no controversy, the OAS works well. On higher-profile issues involving profound differences of opinion, such as the question of how to resolve the crises in Haiti, Peru, and Guatemala, the process is prone to some considerable stalling, if not immobilization. This deficiency has come to the fore particularly in cases, such as Haiti, in which plans to utilize military force to restore freely elected rulers have been put aside. As shown by the OAS response in the Peru election, this institutional need for consensus can, in some cases, be circumvented only through innovative measures. Seeking a middle ground between taking tough action and doing nothing, the OAS opted instead to send a high-profile democracy mission (including Secretary General César Gaviria and Canadian foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy).

Underscoring all of these organizational defects has been the relative scarcity of resources. The OAS remains in a relatively weak financial position. The projected OAS total budget for fiscal year 2000 is a modest US\$78 million, a figure less than the annual operating budget of a typical midsized U.S. university. OAS operations and programs are further hurt by the unpaid annual contributions of a significant number of its members, owing almost \$107 million in unpaid dues as of mid-February 1999 (OAS 1999a). At the June 2000 OAS General Assembly meeting, it was reported that the United States was \$35.7 million in arrears, Brazil \$23.8 million, and Argentina \$5.3 million (*Financial Times* 2000). Although an important new Democracy Fund targeting endangered democracies was announced at that meeting, no commitment was made to strengthen the UPD budget.

This shortfall has hurt the operations of the UPD, which must fund an ambitious array of hemisphere-wide democracy-enhancing activities, from democratic institution building, election monitoring, and technical assistance to clearing antipersonnel land mines in Central America, on a 1999 annual budget approved by the Permanent Council of just \$3.5 million, supplemented by an anticipated \$10 million to \$15 million in external funding (UPD 1999). Its election observation missions, a cornerstone of its operations, are funded precariously by voluntary contributions instead of a permanent fund (OAS 1999b). In the area of election monitoring, the UPD faces a situation where a monitoring role is required in a growing number of countries.

To widen this commitment-resource gap more acutely, the inter-american democracy mandate always faces the danger of overstretching.

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 Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression add to the organizational burden. The OAS members have also agreed to fund educational programs for democracy in their respective countries.

Weak funding at the interamerican level is matched by poor resource allocation on a national basis. In contrast to the structural power it possesses, the United States has been an erratic contributor to the democratic solidarity agenda. Ignoring the declaratory policy from the Miami Summit, with its stated pledge to "preserve and strengthen the community of democracies in the Americas" (Summit of the Americas 1994), the United States subsequently has 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 (Pastor 1996). This shift largely reflects a dominant situational factor: the relationship of the budgetary process to the Republican-controlled Congress. Yet it also reflects the trend toward linkage in foreign policy issues. U.S. aid is being increasingly tied to specific programs to combat narcotics trafficking.

Nor have other countries in the region filled 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. This capability problem is particularly associated with the hemisphere's intermediary or middle states. Brazil provides one illustration. Propelled by its own internal democratic transition, Brazil increased its activism on the external democracy front, taking, for example, the role of 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 sustain its support of the democracy agenda became increasingly strained. Indeed, Brazil had to reduce its foreign policy budget (and profile) significantly in the shadow of its IMF-sanctioned economic stabilization program.

In other cases, this commitment-capability gap reflects the traditional limitations of size and strength. Chile's foreign policy quite accurately reflects its modest resources. Despite an activist and prestige-oriented outlook, Argentina's external involvement also has been held back by budgetary limits. With a history of economic instability and inflationary pressures, Argentina remains sensitive to potential resource constraints posed by external vulnerability and its relatively small economy. In 1995-96 it felt the reverberations of the tequila effect, while more recently it has feared the negative economic consequences of Brazil's economic downturn.

It would be misleading to suggest, however, that leadership in interamerican democracy rests exclusively on economic capabilities. In

trying to locate potential sources of initiative and innovation, will is also an important factor. 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, expectations for involvement are higher both on “domestic” issues that have international ramifications and on those “international” issues that spill over into the national arena. This heightened form of internal pressure, nevertheless, also introduces a strong element of constraint on policy innovation and reform.

The ambiguity of the U.S. position on the democracy agenda reflects this combination of systemic and domestic constraints. In the aftermath of the Cold War, the relationship between the United States and the Americas has improved considerably. OAS members no longer fear U.S. intervention, as in earlier eras. U.S. culture, including respect for its system of democracy, enjoys unprecedented popularity and acceptance in the region (Domínguez 1998). From the vantage point of agenda setting, the United States remains favorably situated as a member of the present troika (together with Chile and Canada) in charge of coordinating the activities of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) leading up to the next Summit of the Americas in Quebec City in April 2001.

Despite all these advantages, however, the United States has not seized the opportunity to head the construction of an authentic Latin American democratic community (Pastor 1996). On the contrary, according to Jorge I. Domínguez (1998, 135), Latin America has become “marginalized” in the post-Cold War era. Internationally, the United States has focused its attention elsewhere, on economic crises in Asia and Russia and conflicts in the Middle East and the former Yugoslavia. Domestically, the Clinton administration’s orientation has been inward and parochial, both by design (with the economy and health care reform as priorities) and by default (the Monica Lewinsky affair and the impeachment hearings). If the region has figured significantly in U.S. policy circles, it has been mainly for those problems with potentially serious repercussions for the U.S. economy and society, such as drug trafficking and the Mexican peso crisis. The Clinton administration has clearly lacked a longer-term, forward-looking, post-Cold War vision for the hemisphere agenda (Pastor 1996) in which the consolidation of democratic solidarity would become the present-day equivalent of the Kennedy administration’s Alliance for Progress.

The ambiguity on the U.S. part has opened up greater political space for “intermediate” or “middle” states—Canada, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, and Mexico—to widen their repertoire of democracy-promoting activity (Cooper et al. 1993; Cooper 1997). Given their resource limita-

tions, these states have not moved to share structural power with the United States. Instead, they have based their potential for leadership on nonstructural forms of influence associated with the energetic use of their diplomatic talents. Some fundamental similarities in behavior notwithstanding, the differences in operating procedures found among these countries are striking. The way systemic and domestic factors limit as well as stimulate initiative-taking behavior varies considerably among them.

Canada's diplomatic approach toward the Americas, for example, showcases the importance of entrepreneurial flair and technical competence. Despite its short experience in the OAS, dating back only to 1990, Canadian activism has gained widespread respect in the region. Canada helped revitalize the OAS after its relative decline during the 1980s. Its autonomous stance toward Cuba has mitigated any concern 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 in Central America and Haiti, demining activities, and advocacy of a hemispheric multilateral approach to the problem of the drug trade.⁴ At the Windsor OAS General Assembly meeting in June 2000, Canada was a leader in establishing the new democracy fund and in the search for a solution to the Peruvian election crisis.

In terms of the distribution of labor, Canada is particularly well suited to take the lead in strengthening the interamerican democratic solidarity paradigm. With its permanent representation at the OAS, which enjoys the respect of both the U.S. and Latin American delegations, Canada is well positioned to serve as a bridge or linchpin in the hemisphere. As a latecomer to the OAS, Canada has not figured overtly in the historical debate over the predominance of the two contending visions (U.S.- or Latin American-based) of the future of the hemisphere. The temporal conditions are also right. In terms of deeper engagement, Canada enjoys an excellent window of opportunity in the interamerican system. As the co-coordinator with Brazil of the OAS Working Group on Democracy and Human Rights, the host of the June 2000 OAS General Assembly in Windsor, and the host of Quebec Summit of the Americas in April 2001, Canada will be at the center of the discourse on democracy and human rights in the region.

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 other priorities in Canada's foreign policy. Geographically, the Americas remains but one region competing for attention and resources in the framework of Canada's perceived role as an activist middle power and the realities of its North American location (Cooper

2000). Canada's membership in a wide number of other organizations (NATO, the Commonwealth, the francophone summit, APEC) also detracts from its focus on the Americas.

Argentina and Chile have also been active in the international promotion of democracy building (Bloomfield 1994). This effort points to another variation of the inverse relationship between structural power and activism in favor of democracy (Gosselin et al. 1996). In traditional terms, it has been the regional powers, Brazil and Mexico, that have been the most noninterventionist. Conversely, countries with lesser capabilities have demonstrated the greatest sense of will in this area. Its economic constraints notwithstanding, 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 coup in Haiti and promotion of the White Helmets assistance corps (Tulchin 1998).⁵

Chile has also maximized its potential in terms of agenda setting, compensating will (and skill) for lack of resources. This diplomatic ability was evidenced by its success in promoting the passage of the Santiago Commitment and Resolution 1080 during the 1991 OAS General Assembly. In the lead-up to the next summit, Chile's work along these lines has been helped by its status as a member of the SIRG troika. Butressed by its existing links with MERCOSUR and the Andean Group, this role allows Chile to act as an 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. Resource constraints impose serious limitations on Argentina's initiative-oriented diplomacy in the Americas. But so does the legacy of the Menem government's foreign policy strategy. By tilting so severely toward a pro-U.S. alignment and special status as a non-NATO ally, Argentina cut down on its coalition-building capabilities in a region where suspicions of U.S. hegemony still linger. In Chile, the Alywin and Frei governments, while sympathetic to multilateralism and the strengthening of organizations such as the OAS, have adopted a low-key style of diplomacy, largely because of economic constraints (Van Klavern 1998, 149). In addition, however, the influence of a strong anticommunist right also delimits Chile's stance on certain issues, such as Cuban democratization.

Venezuela is another example of a potentially strong prodemocracy activist constrained by domestic political circumstances. Although Venezuela was a prominent promoter of Resolution 1080 and a key proponent of the Betancourt Doctrine, both within the Andean Group and by the interamerican system, during the early 1990s, recent internal developments have cut into this profile of activism. A prolonged economic crisis has caused constant distraction for government officials as well as a severe constraint on funding for diplomatic activism.

Politically, Venezuela's international credibility was hurt by the impeachment in 1993 of one of the region's champions of democratic solidarity, President Carlos Andrés Pérez. Venezuela's credentials as a model of democracy for the region were further damaged by two attempts at a coup d'état. Now that one of the former coup conspirators, President Hugo Chávez, is focusing on dramatic constitutional change at the domestic level, it is unlikely that Venezuela will resume the prodemocracy foreign policy platform of the Pérez government. On the contrary, as demonstrated by Venezuela's defense of a noninterventionist position on the May 2000 Peruvian election, it is far more likely that the Chávez regime will move from support to resistance on the democratic solidarity doctrine. Venezuela's credibility as a champion of democracy has also been hurt by allegations of electoral irregularities and the postponement of its own elections in May 2000.

The inconsistency of leadership performance within as well as between countries, as the Venezuelan case shows, raises the interesting question of the link between individual and national leadership. As suggested in the wider academic literature (Young 1991), individual leaders clearly make a difference in either pushing or holding back the movement toward democratic solidarity in the Americas. There are, however, pitfalls as well as advantages in relying too heavily on this particular expression of leadership as a guide to action. As underscored 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 Fernando Henrique Cardoso's strong personal interest in human rights, democracy, and justice issues, Brazil in some ways has been a key actor in strengthening the region's democratic solidarity doctrine. Brazil took on the role of co-coordinator of the OAS Working Group on Democracy and Human Rights. In a similar, though more geographically restrictive fashion, Foreign Minister Luiz Felipe Lampreia created the recent initiative to hold a Latin American conference on democracy in September 2000 in Brasilia.

The limitations on the extension of this national (and individual)

leadership role, however, remain enormous. The nation's current economic problems are just the tip of the iceberg. Situationally, the country remains preoccupied with the politics of constitutional reform, especially in terms of pension reform and state downsizing (Montero 1999; Reid 1998). 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 (Holston and Caldeira 1998).

On top of all of these problems, Brazil still clings to the notions of sovereignty and nonintervention. The assumption of any sustained leadership on the democracy agenda is held back by Brazil's reluctance to bend these principles. Brazil is wary of elaborating a convention of collective intervention in the region for fear of setting a precedent for other similar action, such as an international convention in defense of the environment that would protect lands within its own borders (Bloomfield 1994). In operational terms, as suggested by its approach to the Peru election case, Brazil remains resistant to a collective action by the OAS to defend democracy. Sensitive to the perception of its immediate neighbors that it might have its own designs on regional hegemony, Brazil has been reluctant to forge an assertive leadership role for itself, preferring to work through diplomacy rather than power leverage. At the same time, Brazilian actions have been increasingly channeled through MERCOSUR, notably its mediation efforts during the Paraguayan crises of 1996 and 1999. For all its ambition to be the leader in South America, moreover, Brazil remains reluctant to get involved in crises beyond its subregion. Unlike the United States, for example, Brazil has adopted a policy of strict noninvolvement in the Colombian conflict.

Resistance to the pursuit of an ambitious democracy agenda is even more exaggerated in the case of Mexico. With its strong, ingrained defense for respect of sovereignty and self-determination, Mexico has 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. It is profoundly suspicious of the underlying motives behind collective interventions, attributing them mainly to the residual hegemonic interest of the United States. Mexico is highly skeptical, furthermore, of the potential for democracy to be inculcated or imposed from outside, and is convinced that regime change must be a sovereign act and an outgrowth of domestic social forces. In conceptual terms, Mexico remains a strong proponent of the Estrada Doctrine: respect for political pluralism and the automatic recog-

nition of de facto governments regardless of their regime type or ideological orientation. It continues to be the strongest advocate of a full restoration of Cuba's participation in the interamerican system.

To be sure, 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 and its multiple informal economic, social, and cultural ties (Chabat 1996; López Villicana 1997). During the 1989 Panama crisis, for instance, Mexico refrained from criticizing the U.S. intervention to remove Noriega; indeed, Mexico spoke out against Noriega's illegal assumption of power (López Villicana 1997). In a similarly uncharacteristic manner, Mexico denounced the May 1993 attempted *autogolpe* of President Jorge Serrano in Guatemala (López Villicana 1997). In 1994, the Salinas government permitted the presence of foreign observers at elections for the first time in Mexican history (Chabat 1996, 158). In 1998, Mexico accepted the legal jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

These counterexamples, however, should not be given an exaggerated credence as indicators of a major shift in Mexican foreign policy. Mexico's actions regarding Panama and Guatemala, for instance, must be understood from the perspective of potential spillover effects, such as refugee flows, that would enmesh Mexico, against its will, more deeply in Central American conflicts. Mexico received thousands of Central American refugees during the 1980s. The negotiation of NAFTA during the 1990s, moreover, had the unanticipated consequence of focusing international media attention on Mexico's human rights and democracy shortcomings at a time when the Mexican government was concerned with building a positive environment for international investment (Dresser 1996; Heredia 1994).

The general tenor of these actions by Mexico, therefore, should be viewed as confidence-building measures for the business community rather than as signs of a deeper policy reversal. Mexico's recognition of the acceptance of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights is a favorable development for human rights and democracy in Mexico. But this action does not necessarily commit the country to accept other aspects of the interamerican system's democracy paradigm. As shown by its unwillingness to go along with the high-level mission to Peru after the disputed May election, Mexico remains a formidable opponent of outside interference through the OAS.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

As the Americas move into the new millennium, it appears that a good deal of the momentum built up over the past decade concerning the

democracy agenda has been lost. Democracy remains squarely on the policy map, as witnessed by the profusion of new commitments at the Santiago Summit of the Americas on such issues as education for democracy, a Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, and international exchanges on election campaign financing. Democracy itself, however, faces a considerable risk of being nudged from a central position by 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 deepened by the incomplete nature of the democracy agenda. The pandemonium in Paraguay in March 1999 and again in May 2000, the ongoing travails of Haiti, the replacement of elected president Jamil Mahuad in Ecuador, and the precarious nature of democracy in Peru and Venezuela should send out an alert that the democratic condition remains a fragile and often volatile phenomenon in many parts of the region. Cuba continues to pose a difficult dilemma. A growing number of scholars also highlight the authoritarian, delegative, or hybrid nature of contemporary Latin American representative democracies, not to mention their often worrisome human rights or judicial shortcomings (O'Donnell 1994; Petras and Vieux 1994; Acuña and Smith 1994; Gamarra 1994; Agüero and Stark 1998). In short, there is still much to do to extend the democracy project.

This article has identified two key ingredients in this process. On the one hand, it argues that the democracy solidarity doctrine that emerged in the early 1990s needs to be considerably refined to achieve operational effectiveness. Its collective action repertoire must be defined more explicitly, especially in regard to the use of force to defend democracy. The division of labor on the democracy agenda among the OAS, the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy, the Working Group on Human Rights and Democracy, subregional organizations such as MERCOSUR, CARICOM, the Andean Group, and the Esquipulas Group, and individual countries remains ill defined, with little appreciation of the need for some form of specialization.

From a different angle, the commitment of individual OAS members to democracy can be taken seriously only if they accept human rights instruments, such as the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Even a well-regarded country such as Canada has flaws in coming to terms with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, because of the complications in jurisdiction between the federal and provincial governments. The more generic problem in the region, however, stems not from constitutional capabilities but a basic unwillingness of some governments to relinquish sovereignty. This concern was exemplified by the Fujimori government's refusal to abide by the

court's decision to hold a new trial for four Chilean nationals, alleged members of the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement.

On the other hand, this article has noted the constraints imposed on the collective defense and consolidation of democracy through the absence of a strong, coherent form of leadership in the hemisphere. Prodemocracy activism from the countries of the region is hindered not only by the lack of an extant division of labor but by a scarcity of resources and an imposing set of systemic and domestic constraints. Surmounting these problems will not be easy. Foremost among them is the continuing lack of agreement about what the concept of democracy constitutes in the region of the Americas.

One persistent fundamental criticism of the OAS is that its institutional approach, linking democracy with the formal process of representation, 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 as applied to regime transition (the legitimacy of the transfer of power from the ousted president, Jamil Mahuad, to Vice President Gustavo Noboa), as opposed to a response targeting the underlying concerns that had provoked the crisis among the large indigenous population. To its credit, the UPD has tried to address some aspects of this larger problem by moving to a more encompassing approach toward citizenship. The idea 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 in Resolution 1080.

Another positive route will entail taking the onus away from applications of national leadership to stronger expressions of collective leadership via formal and informal coalition building. Consistent with this approach, some interesting innovations in concerted action have developed. In taking on the responsibilities as co-coordinators of the OAS/Summit Working Group on Democracy and Human Rights, for example, Brazil and Canada point the way to joint activity on an ad hoc, issue-specific basis. The establishment of the troika of the Summit Implementation Review Group with Chile, the United States, and Canada also illustrates the innovative use of specialized, time-restricted coalitions.

To compensate further for the lack of initiative from individual countries, these coalition-building exercises must go hand in hand with a form of niche selection. Chile, with its various organizational ties, has a logical bridging role to play between North American and Latin American countries. As the host of the June 2000 General Assembly and the April 2001 Summit of the Americas, Canada has the opportunity to take on a similar role in shaping the interamerican agenda. On the controversial issue of the Peru election, for example, Canada put together a

winning coalition in support of the high-level OAS mission, with backing from key countries such as Chile, Argentina, and Costa Rica.

Concentrating on this form of national leadership, however, should not be overdone. On specific issues, this mode of diplomacy often delivers only muted (or second-best) solutions in crisis situations. While its value was indisputable, the OAS mission to Peru was necessary only because the OAS itself failed to influence the electoral process through ultimatums. Nor does the utilization of this high-level mission substitute in force for the application of Resolution 1080—a measure that opens the way to collective sanctions.

In more general terms, this sort of activity by middle and smaller countries does not diminish the vital role of structural leadership by the larger powers. The United States possesses the most leverage on a bilateral basis with all the countries of the Americas. The United States also continues to exercise the crucial function of chief financier of democratic development, along with a wealth of experience and knowledge on democratic institution building. How the United States reacts to cases of backtracking, therefore, will be a prime determinant of the future condition of the democratic solidarity agenda.

Even influential resisters, obstinate in their rejection of collective actions in favor of democracy, can play a part, albeit indirectly, via cooperation in the areas of education reform, economic and social development, disarmament, and de-mining, and combating the drug trade. The future promotion of democracy in the hemisphere will, therefore, become more wrapped up in the fabric of a pluralism of leadership. If the agenda is not to be immobilized and the successes of the past decade reversed, a combination of efforts based on task specialization and a mix of collective and selective national leadership are required.

NOTES

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1. The foreign policy practice of denying recognition of governments that come to power by force has traditionally been known as the Betancourt Doctrine, after the former president of Venezuela. During the 1960s, Venezuela invoked this doctrine on numerous occasions, severing diplomatic ties with Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, and Peru (Ebel et al. 1991, 121).

2. The original precedent for representative democracy as a criterion for participation in the interamerican system was actually established with the expulsion of Cuba from OAS participation in 1962. The impact of this resolu-

tion, however, was distorted on at least two counts. The decision to expel Cuba was adopted more for Cold War hemispheric security concerns than any genuine commitment to representative democracy. The precedent was not upheld, furthermore, during the wave of authoritarian regimes that plagued Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s.

3. Forged in the context of recurring or threatened interventions by European states to protect their overseas residents or collect debts owed them, the Calvo and Drago Doctrines stressed absolute sovereignty and territorial inviolability as fundamental rights of states. See Atkins 1995, 210.

4. On Canada's foreign policy with respect to the interamerican system, see McKenna 1995, 1998.

5. The White Helmets (*Cascos Blancos*) volunteer corps for Humanitarian Assistance was founded by President Menem in 1993, and approved by the UN General Assembly in 1994. Its activities included clearing land mines in Angola.

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