



FOCAL

POLICY PAPER
DOCUMENT DE POLITIQUE
DOCUMENTO DE POLÍTICA

FPP-03-05

Redefining Hemispheric Security After September 11

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy paper examines the elements of continuity and change that the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in the United States had on the process of redefining the inter-American security architecture. The attacks have accelerated a process of re-examination that began to emerge within the inter-American system at the conclusion of what is broadly referred to as the Cold War. This serious and sustained dialogue on hemispheric security and military related issues was driven, in the main, by the Summit of the Americas process and was conducted in a manner that examines both fundamental principles of security as well as institutional responsibilities and their capabilities. In attempting to capture this process, the paper takes a look at the positions of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Mexico and the United States, as the policies of these countries will have an important impact on the special conference on hemispheric security that the Organization of American States will hold in May 2003.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce document examine, en terme de continuité et de changement, les répercussions que les attaques terroristes du 11 septembre ont eues sur le processus de redéfinition de la sécurité interaméricaine. Ces attaques ont accéléré le processus de réexamen qui s'était déclenché au terme de la période communément appelée la Guerre Froide. Le dialogue concernant la sécurité hémisphérique et les enjeux militaires a été mené, en partie, par le processus du Sommet des Amériques et il a été conduit de manière à examiner les principes fondamentaux de la sécurité ainsi que les responsabilités et capacités institutionnelles des pays membres. En tentant de dépeindre ce processus, ce document analyse les positions adoptées par l'Argentine, le Brésil, le Canada, le Mexique et les États-Unis alors que les visées politiques de ces États auront un impact important sur le déroulement de la conférence spéciale sur la sécurité hémisphérique que l'Organisation des États américains tiendra en mai 2003.



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RESUMEN

El presente trabajo aborda tanto los aspectos de continuidad como de cambio que los ataques terroristas del 11 de septiembre de 2001 en Estados Unidos provocaron en el proceso de redefinición del sistema interamericano de seguridad. Los ataques aceleraron un proceso de reevaluación que había empezado a aparecer en el sistema interamericano a finales de la guerra fría. El dialogo serio y sostenido sobre los temas militares y de seguridad hemisférica fue impulsado principalmente en el marco del proceso de cumbres hemisféricas y realizado de forma que se analizaran tanto los principios fundamentales de seguridad como las responsabilidades y capacidades institucionales. Al abordar el tema, el presente trabajo examina las posiciones de Argentina, Brasil, Canadá, México y Estados Unidos por cuanto las políticas de estos países tendrán un impacto importante en la Conferencia Especial sobre Seguridad que auspiciará la Organización de Estados Americanos (OEA) en Mayo de 2003.

BACKGROUND

The opportunity to launch a process of serious examination of the architecture of security within the Western Hemisphere was provided by two critical developments, both of which became more pronounced as the 1980s came to a close and a new decade began. The prime external change to occur was the ending of a period of alternating hot and cold confrontation along the east-west axis, known broadly as the Cold War. Equally important were the political-military dynamics within the Western Hemisphere wherein military and authoritarian regimes gave way to democratic models of political governance. Institutionally, the Organization of American States absorbed the latter development in 1991 with the adoption of the Santiago "Commitment to Democracy and the Renewal of the Inter-American System" and the beginning of discussions in 1994 in Buenos Aires.

The Summit of the Americas in December 1994 gave its blessing and encouragement to the latent process underway, although at first limiting itself to the concept of confidence and security-building measures. Eleven months later, in Santiago, OAS members accepted 11 measures aimed to increase trust and dialogue. Additional practical measures were agreed to at a follow-up meeting in El Salvador in February 1998. Concurrently, other initiatives were launched and began to take hold. In 1991, the OAS established a Special Committee on Hemispheric Security (CHS), which became permanent in 1995.

By making it permanent, the CHS achieved an institutional stability that obviated the crisis driven, ad hoc approaches of the past and allowed its participants to discuss and design a policy agenda that would take into account the evolving underlying discussions. This followed, in addition to other confidence-building

measures such as various inventories and databases, the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacture and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and other Related Materials. Also by 1995, the Defence Ministerial of the Americas (DMA) process (initiated largely by the United States) was launched bringing together senior civilian and military authorities for discussion of military-security issues. Meeting roughly every two years, the DMA has gradually rolled out an agenda that discusses such issues as terrorism, narco-trafficking, civil-military relations, human rights and others.

The inter-American security infrastructure, however, goes back beyond the evolution of the Summit and its associated processes. The Inter-American Defence Board (IADB), for example, was established in 1942 in response to the threat of the then Axis powers of Germany, Italy and Japan, and served in an advisory capacity to the OAS. The IADB, however, suffered from incomplete membership (the Caribbean was not represented and Canada only joined in December 2002), and the lack of a policy reporting function. It does oversee the Inter-American Defence College, which in its training role has not been immune from past controversies. In recent years, there has been much discussion about the modernization of the IADB, which has resulted in a refocusing of activities within the Board. Of particular note has been the development of a series of initiatives aimed at increasing confidence (transparency measures) and security-building measures. In the case of the latter, for example, the Board has taken initiatives in the field of de-mining which has been a particular concern in parts of Central America. Following September 11, the Board initiated outreach activities wherein some Board members without military representatives in Washington, D.C. were able to accredit civilian members. Thus, countries such as Antigua and Barbuda, Trinidad

and Tobago, Guyana and Costa Rica have become more active participants.

The College is designed to train and prepare military personnel from all countries of the Americas (except Cuba) to assume leadership positions in their national military establishments. In so doing, the College has, historically, been able to identify and support rising military officers by providing them with prestigious training and networking opportunities. Past controversies at the College wherein some questions have been raised regarding the training syllabus on issues of counter-insurgency and interrogation techniques have had the useful effect of reorienting much of the focus. More recently, the College has given more emphasis to issues of civil-military relations and democratic culture. A widened definition of defence and security issues has even seen the College host discussions on how HIV/AIDS and environmental degradation can be seen as new threats to security.

Within the Americas, there are also a number of subregional agreements and arrangements that deal with defence and security related issues.

Canada and the United States, for example, share a long history of active cooperation on both defence and security issues. On the defence side, both are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as well as share responsibilities for continental air defence in the form of NORAD. Both countries benefit as well from long-standing security and intelligence cooperation agreements – including important cooperative arrangements between national law enforcement agencies. National institutions carry out a continuous and deep dialogue, all of which has been intensified and expanded since the September 11 attacks.

The Rio Group comprises most of the countries of Latin America and its formation was motivated, in large measure, by a desire to construct a Latin American solution to the desperate security/civil war situations that wracked most of Central America in the 1980s. Since that time, the Rio Group has expanded its

activities beyond its initial formative issues and is currently better known as a forum for broad policy discussion and coordination on non-security matters.

Within Latin America, two principal mechanisms worth noting are the Central American Democratic Security Treaty and the somewhat less structured arrangements or understanding that pertain to the Mercosur region. In

the Central American case, a fairly well developed set of structures, meetings and permanent agendas are at play. Cooperative border controls, for example, are a direct result of periodic meetings between defence ministers, military officials and military intelligence agencies. The Mercosur arrangement is less structured and takes its cue from the integrationist philosophy that has driven evolving mechanisms of trade.

Subregional arrangements also extend into the Caribbean region where the Eastern Caribbean Regional Security System (RSS) plays a useful role. Directed primarily at coordinating limited national resources, the RSS

provides a forum for concerted action on such issues as national disasters and drug trafficking countermeasures.

HEMISPHERIC DEFENCE AND SECURITY INITIATIVES

In the wake of the terrorist attacks in New York, Pennsylvania and the Pentagon, it became clear that the security scenario of the Western Hemisphere had been altered and that, at minimum, a process of new thinking was necessary.

The 34 member states of the OAS had planned to hold a Special Conference on Security in 2004, but the events of September 11 accelerated planning. Agreement was reached in Barbados at the XXXII General Assembly of the OAS to hold such a conference in May 2003 in Mexico City. As a point of reference, the General Assembly agreed that:

Security threats, concerns and other challenges in the hemispheric context are of [a] diverse nature and multidimensional [in] scope, and that the traditional concepts and approaches must be expanded to encompass new and non-traditional

The Special Conference on Security to be held in May 2003 will analyze the meaning, reach and repercussions of the concepts of international security in the Americas, placing special emphasis in a multi-dimensional conceptualization of security.

threats, which include political, economic, social, health and environmental aspects.

This meeting will analyze the meaning, reach and repercussions of the concepts of international security in the Americas, placing special emphasis in a multi-dimensional conceptualization of security. This hopefully will lead to the development of a common approach that will allow the countries of the Americas to face the diversity of security issues in the Western Hemisphere, including disarmament and arms control. The final objective is to identify forms to strengthen the inter-American security institutions.

IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF SEPTEMBER 11

On September 19, 2001, the OAS agreed unanimously that the attacks against the United States were an attack directed against the whole continent. Shortly thereafter, two consultation meetings among the foreign affairs ministers of the Americas took place. The first of these meetings was held in the framework of the OAS, at the request of Mexico and Paraguay, while the second was at the request of Brazil and Argentina, under the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty).

The difference between both meetings was extremely delicate. The Mexican-Paraguayan proposal allowed a meeting of 34 foreign ministers, while the Argentinean-Brazilian proposal limited the meeting to the 23 foreign ministers of the member states of the Rio Treaty (of which Canada and almost the whole block of Caribbean countries are not members). On September 21, the Permanent Council of the OAS restated the hemisphere's solidarity with the people and government of the U.S., and called to use all the necessary and available means to pursue, capture and punish those responsible for the attacks and to prevent other similar attacks. The resolution adopted by the member states of the Rio Treaty pointed out that the terrorist attacks against the U.S. were attacks against all the states of the Americas. It is worth noting, however, that none of the two resolutions made any reference to direct military support to the U.S.

EXAMINING THE INTER-AMERICAN SECURITY SYSTEM

In the Americas, the terms of the analysis of regional, subregional and even national security began to shift with the end of the Cold War. The dismantling of the Soviet Union and superpower rivalry that characterized a

largely bipolar world (leaving aside the China situation) created a clear void in the conceptualization of security that prevailed along the last fifty years in the Americas. That conceptualization was dominated by a doctrine of national security that in most cases was designed to combat the political philosophy of communism. For much of this period within the Americas, this doctrine gave rise to governments (many headed by military personnel) who pursued tactics of brutal repression aimed at almost any group that did not share the government objectives. National security came to be defined as those measures necessary to protect not the state itself but particular actors within the state such as certain political parties, and quite frequently particular economic actors.

Broadly speaking, the end of the Cold War and the return of democratic or quasi-democratic governments in the Americas allowed national and regional defence and security doctrines to become open to questioning. This is not surprising, given that persons who had personally suffered under the previous doctrine headed more than a few of the newly democratic governments. Confronted with a range of governance challenges, security thinking started to implicate the problems of threats posed not only by military coups but also civilian coups. Security of the state, rather than just a particular government, meant that new doctrines would have to be devised to deal with a wide array of issues, namely: the fight against drug traffic and related criminal activities; the combat of terrorism and armed political groups; the enormous virulence and sophistication with which organized crime had confronted many societies; the traffic in light weapons; the devastating effects of natural disasters; territorial disputes; and the consequent problems of the enormous inequalities and social fractures that the concentration of wealth has generated.

In this context, many voices throughout the Americas have been demanding the review of the institutions and concepts that form the inter-American security system. A system conceived more than fifty years ago, and that today is defined by a group of institutions, agreements and some subregional arrangements containing security elements. The fundamental agreements of the inter-American security system are the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty), the Charter of the OAS, the Bogotá Pact (pacific resolution of disputes) and the Treaty of Tlatelolco (non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Americas). The institutions and

agreements of the security system are: the OAS (and especially its Committee on Hemispheric Security); the process of creation and strengthening of confidence and security-building measures; the Inter-American Defence Board (IADB) and its Inter-American Defence College; and the process of Meetings of Ministers of Defence and the Conferences of heads of the armed forces' different branches. Finally, the subregional components with security content are: the Rio Group, the Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America, the Regional Security System of the Caribbean, the South American Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Andean Charter for Peace and Security.

HEMISPHERIC SECURITY AFTER SEPTEMBER 11

It is important to highlight that in this paper we are reviewing principally the positions that six countries have towards hemispheric security after September 11, and not the impact that these events have had on bilateral security relationships. Bilateral security relationships will, naturally enough, be an influential element in national thinking vis-à-vis hemispheric security. For example, after September 11, both Canada and Mexico have seen important changes in their security relations with the United States and both have responded to these challenges in a number of ways. All three have, each on a bilateral basis, pursued initiatives to manage their respective land boundaries (i.e., "smart border") in new ways. In the case of Canada, the bilateral security relationship with the United States was a primary element on which a direct combat role was taken up on the ground inside of Afghanistan and in the Persian Gulf in maritime terms.

Significant disagreement, however, has emerged not only multilaterally but also bilaterally within the Americas with respect to how the United States has defined and pursued its security concerns in Iraq. The long-term significance and implications of the events at the United Nations and the subsequent launching of a military offensive against Iraq cannot yet be measured on a bilateral basis much less a hemispheric basis. It is unclear, at least to an outside observer, how the global diplomatic fracture between the United States/United Kingdom and a large proportion of the international

community as well as the current (at the time of writing) military campaign in Iraq will affect the further conceptualization of security in the Americas. Almost anything is possible.

Argentina

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, Argentina has not taken a leading role with respect to the reform of the architecture of inter-American security. Argentina has stated that the distinction between domestic and external security is an important one. The former, in Argentina's view, refers to matters that pertain to law enforcement and are, at least primarily, matters of criminal law. The Argentine conception of external

security or defence relates primarily to matters of national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Argentina also points out that security-related views are conditioned on a subregional basis by differences generated by historical experience, socio-economic development and individual defence capabilities. Nevertheless, Argentina tends to take a fairly broad view of what issues can be considered to be security related in nature; and includes matters related to drug trafficking, organized crime, small arms, illegal migration, poverty, environmental

issues and political corruption. At the same time, Argentina has argued for an approach that does not encumber any new security architecture with issues that it is not equipped to address.

Brazil

The most important change that one can detect in Brazil since September 11 is in its view of the Rio Treaty. Previously, Brazil took the broad view that the Treaty was no longer relevant for a new agenda of hemispheric security, basing its analysis on the historical nature of the doctrine which was designed fundamentally to face external armed aggression, and because it was not representative of the whole inter-American community. Since September 11, Brazil has come to view a new relevancy for the Treaty as a juridical framework to facilitate frank discussions for the definition of common actions and for the expression of solidarity against aggressions, and that as such it should be preserved.

Brazil also believes, however, that it is possible to make adjustments to the Treaty to take into account the security demands of the new times. It has to be remembered that it was Brazil who invoked the Treaty in reaction to the September 11 attacks. Brazil, however, is and will remain wary of attempts to introduce military elements into the inter-American system. And it has, in the past, pointed out that the relationship between the OAS and the IADB does not have to be modified, although Brazil does believe that new responsibilities for the Board should be considered.

One element that draws attention is related to Brazilian intentions to consolidate for itself a role as a regional power and to boost its armament industry. It therefore holds that the military expression of security is still of vital importance. Brazil recognizes that the main problems that face American states do not fundamentally come from external military threats, but mainly from a series of challenges in the context of “new threats.” However, Brazil has traditionally placed importance on the modernization of military, cooperation in defence and in exchanges among the armed forces of the region.

And while the types of threats become more complex and more diffuse, this does not mean that countries should give up their legitimate self-defence capacity. In the Brazilian conception, this includes a significant subregional component in the form of the Mercosur integration scheme. Grounded initially in the objective of trade liberalization and economic integration, Brazil’s vision of Mercosur has, from the start, been broad and deep in nature. To date, Mercosur as a security instrument has focused attention on issues of counter-terrorism (there is a Special Working Group established for this purpose), border management and law enforcement cooperation. Information and intelligence sharing have evolved into an extensive network, at least on the security side. Less well developed are transnational linkages within Mercosur on the military or defence side where formal agreements give way to informal dialogue and communications.

Before September 11, Brazil commentaries tended to highlight issues linked to organized crime and drug

traffic as the main hemispheric security concerns. Since then, however, the Brazilian government has now added corruption, money-laundering, climatic change, natural disasters and the inherent vulnerabilities of the globalization process to the list. One could anticipate that under its new President, Brazil would be more likely than not to prefer a broader conceptualization of the issue. Only on the issue of environmental degradation does Brazil step warily. Brazil remains highly sensitive to any actions or positions that could be seen as accepting of a proposition wherein any environmental

degradation of the Amazon region becomes a matter of concern only to other countries of the Americas.

Canada

Perhaps the most important change that Canada has made in terms of hemispheric security issues after September 11 was its decision to join the Inter-American Defence Board. Before September 11, Canada’s attitude towards the Board was that the institution was not well adapted to the contemporary security situation, that the subordination of the Board to the

CHS was needed, that a rotating military presidency for the Board was fundamental, and that the relationship between the Board and the OAS needed to be institutionalized. Canada also viewed the Board’s historical institutional separation from civilian authorities, particularly in policy matters, as being its greatest weakness. In joining, Canada justified its decision saying that membership will assist Canada to improve its relations with the hemispheric community, and enhance Canada’s contribution to common hemispheric security. A more careful analysis reveals to us that the Canadian authorities calculated the utility of the existing institutions against the investment cost that the creation of new ones would require. The result has been to support the institutional structures that already exist – although they are seen as imperfect.

For Canada, in the current security context there has been an evolution of defence problems to those of a wider security agenda, and this has been translated into a multi-sectoral security agenda. Thus, the Canadian government considers that it is important to incorporate many of the new security issues (especially the concept of “human security”), as well as traditional ones, into any

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new thinking about hemispheric security. While not accepting a direct causal relationship, Canada does believe that radical political movements can be a reaction to conditions of poverty, discrimination, lack of good governance and abuses of human rights among others. In this sense, Canada takes a broader view than, for example the Americans, on the frequently heated topic of root causes. While Canada does not accept the proposition that such factors necessarily drive some forms of violence (especially terrorism) it also tends to view as unnecessarily limiting any approach that dismisses such conditions out of hand.

Canada regards the CHS is the best-qualified institution to discuss hemispheric security issues, and that the OAS should continue being the central coordinator of the process of reviewing the inter-American security architecture. The Committee, in Canada's view, has performed well in the relatively short period of time in which it has been in operation and has been instrumental in pushing forward a series of confidence-building measures as well as having been helpful in the conclusion of the Convention on small arms. Canada also points out the need to incorporate the ministerial meetings of defence into the structure of the CHS, so that this Committee can coordinate and give support to the dialogue among civil and military authorities. Finally, for Canada, a first step in the process of redefining the inter-American security system should be that of creating a charter of security principles, that includes the concerns of all the states and regions of the Americas.

For Canada, the underlying principles of hemispheric security are:

- A multidimensional approach, wherein new and non-traditional security concepts and threats include political, economic, social, health and environmental dimensions as these can endanger individuals and constrain the ability of governments to discharge their responsibilities.
- Respect for democracy and human rights are a critical component as democracy is the only legitimate means by which domestic change can be achieved in a peaceful way. This principle recognizes the supremacy of civilian authority and is grounded in the

rule of law, which applies equally to all individuals and institutions.

- In the context of human security, the individual is placed at the centre of security policy that helps to confer to the state the legitimacy and stability that is necessary for government to operate in an effective manner.
- Security policy must be built on the peaceful resolution of disputes that incorporate such instruments as preventative diplomacy, dialogue and negotiated settlements.

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- Regional diversity must be recognized as different member states will bring to the table differing perspectives not only on the complexion of security issues but also on their relative priority.
- Security is enhanced through the tools of transparency and confidence-building measures. The provision of information regarding defence policies and expenditures, based on agreed methodologies, contributes the building of mutual confidence.

• Collective security recognizes that threats directed at a particular state can and do have implications for others. As a long-standing member of several military alliances, Canada's formulation of collective security also recognizes that collective deliberation and possibly action carries with it a level of legitimacy that cannot be conferred by a strictly unilateral approach.

- International peace and security has implications for regional security matters. Actions on the global level implicate regional security status and regions have responsibilities to contribute to a stable global security situation.

Mexico

Clearly there are two issues in which Mexico has had to adjust its approach to security policy in light of the events of September 11. The first one has to do with the Rio Treaty, and the second one with the Special Conference on Security. Prior to September 11, Mexico began to publicly articulate its view that both the Treaty and the Board were no longer representative or

responsive to the security challenges of the hemisphere. Mexico's analysis that the institutions were outdated, that their basic conceptualization was grounded in a global situation that no longer existed was difficult to fault on empirical grounds. Mexico's temporary misfortune was that it announced its intention of withdrawing from the Rio Treaty only days before the attacks on the United States. The victim of bad timing, Mexico for a time postponed any further action or decision, and concentrated on limiting any damage that its announcement had caused. A year later, however, in September 2002, Mexico carried through with its original intentions and again announced its abandonment of the Rio Treaty.

As for the Special Conference on Security, before September 11 the Mexican government was strongly opposed to the priority that other countries assigned to the issue and favoured instead a slower and more contemplative approach. Mexico preferred to focus energy and resources on other issues and did not consider that the security agenda was sufficiently mature to justify a high level meeting. The events of September 11, however, propelled Mexico to seek to host the meeting in Mexico City. Mexico has named this conference as the Second Conference of Chapultepec, alluding to the meeting that took place in 1945 in the same city. The 1945 meeting prepared the road for the meetings of Rio de Janeiro in 1947 and Bogotá in 1948 that created the formal instruments of the inter-American security system.

The United States

Perhaps the main issue to be highlighted regarding the position of the United States after September 11 is that both the theory and practice of security is an evolving project whose ultimate destination, if there is one, is extremely difficult to predict. Post September 11, there can be no doubt that security, largely defined in the new conception of "homeland security", has become the standard against which almost all other public policy is subordinated. First, as a people and as a government, the United States has not seen itself as being under direct attack or threat of attack as it currently does in many generations. Leaving aside domestically generated

security threats, such as the Oklahoma bombing (which, of course, security officials cannot leave aside) much of the United States' foreign policy is now directed to ensuring that security issues are as well managed as possible. At the moment, this goal has manifested itself in a number of ways.

First and foremost, the very definition of security has been compacted and compressed. In the post World War II period, the United States exerted effort and considerable resources to ensuring that its own security was enhanced by defining the concept in ways that encouraged and directly supported broad economic

growth and development prospects around the world, by theories and practice of containment and ultimately by recognition that security had a critical component of mutuality to it. Often called "collective security", the United States pursued policies in which the security of the individual state was tied, often irrevocably, to the security of a larger community. Embodied in this principle was a primary reliance on long-standing, mutually supportive alliances that rested on permanent or semi-permanent institutional foundations. The NATO alliance, the UN system and others were reinforced by

broad, and largely cohesive, coalitions of like-minded countries. These coalitions were in turn defined as sharing a long-term view of global and regional security challenges and were, by their members, expected to transcend any set of individual circumstances, political conditions and, perhaps most importantly, the terms of office of any individual national leader.

The events of September 11 set in motion the elements that have fundamentally changed this approach to security in the United States. On definitions, the United States now argues for "focused" and "meaningful" definitions upon which policies and programs can be built. As a subset to this, the United States now favours an approach where the institutions of security, including international institutions and instruments, are not diverted from what the U.S. views as their primary mission. In this conception, security instruments – including those that are strictly political in character – should not be weighed down with issues of development, health, environment or other social concerns.

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Security also requires early warning mechanisms whereby potential threats can be identified, evaluated and, if necessary, acted upon. The United States will thus be supportive of instruments and capabilities wherein international or regional institutions can play a positive role in conflict prevention and resolution. What is unclear, in the Americas and on the global stage, is exactly what this would mean in terms of mandates and capabilities for states and institutions not directly affiliated with the United States. For example, within the Americas, it is clearly in the interests of the United States that some sort of settlement to the ongoing conflict in countries such as Colombia be achieved. It is unclear, however, whether the United States sees any direct role or capability being assumed by any actor other than the Colombian state (subject to U.S. direct support including tactical and operational direction) or itself.

In the context of the Americas, the United States accepts the proposition that subregional approaches can and do play a useful role, especially in those areas (geographic or issue orientated) where the United States itself may not wish to get involved too directly. Subregional security mechanisms also have the added advantage – it can easily be argued – of holding primary mandates and responsibility vis-à-vis regional security mechanisms. A sort of bottom-up approach in which the primary actors are drawn from subregional entities (such as one finds in the Caribbean or Central America) and where hemispheric-based entities are relegated to the side lines, or are assigned a supporting role. Naturally, what is not lost on the United States is that it is frequently better able to influence and direct subregional actors than hemispheric ones.

That being said, the United States' strategy also envisages a role for regional instruments, particularly those with a direct security mandate. For example, the United States would favour closer linkages between such institutions as the Inter American Defence Board and the Inter-American Defence College on the one hand, and the hemispheric political body (the OAS), on the other hand. By bringing such institutions closer together, the United States feels that it would more effectively bring security-related issues into the every-day discussions within the OAS than is the case at the moment. While the OAS has concerned itself in the past with issues that can clearly be said to have a security component (Haiti, Peru under Fujimori, the current situation in Venezuela

and some lingering border disputes as that between Belize and Guatemala), it has been the political component that has driven those engagements. In the United States conception, it should now be the security component that should rise in the hierarchy of OAS concerns. Bringing the Board and the College closer to the main institution, the OAS would achieve that end. Such a strategy, one might expect, would result in additional pressure on the OAS itself to transfer to these institutions additional resources and possibly responsibilities. In a context in which OAS budgets have been stagnant, at least for the last decade if not longer, such reprioritization would mean that resources would have to be reallocated from existing programs.

The Road to Mexico City, 2003

As the 34 members of the OAS continue to prepare for the Mexico City meeting, one can detect areas in which a fairly broad and firm consensus has evolved. At the same time, there are clear differences of opinion and approach in other areas, and what remains to be seen is whether the countries will be successful in achieving consensus or will have to resort to papering over the areas of disagreement.

Agreements:

1. The need to renovate the current inter-American security system is accepted by all of the countries. A system whose foundation was poured in the desperate days of the Second World War – when Axis forces had the upper hand – is clearly out of date in the context of the twenty-first century.
2. The process of review, conceptualization and redesign needs to be grounded in the search for a broad consensus of the member states and should produce an architecture that is inclusive of all actors. Mechanisms, such as the Rio Treaty, with less than universal membership are necessarily limited in both their scope and legitimacy.
3. The possibility of inter-state armed conflict in the Americas is low. While some boundary disputes remain – and they need to be addressed and resolved – there is a high level of inter-state trust in the Americas.
4. There are new dimensions of security that are important for the peace and stability of the Western Hemisphere and these dimensions need to be addressed in some fashion. The threats that

challenge some of the national governments in the Americas are not always identical as the threats that challenge others. For some states, the primary threat is external in nature while for others it may be internal and highly non-traditional in terms of historical security considerations.

5. The need to increase multilateral and bilateral security cooperation in order to address transnational threats in a more effective way.
6. Subregional security mechanisms and arrangements have an important role in the hemisphere. Subregional instruments are not only important tools of integration, but can be critical in terms of pooling scarce resources in the face of common challenges.
7. The need to consolidate and defend the processes of democratization and economic integration.
8. The need to reform the Rio Treaty and the Inter-American Defence Board, especially with regards to its limited membership and its relationship with the OAS.
9. The process of redefining the concept of hemispheric security and the institutions of inter-American security require a permanent dialogue.

CHALLENGES TO CONSENSUS

The definition of new security dimensions is still largely an open question. While there is an emerging consensus that hemispheric security is not limited to military matters or traditional security agendas, this perspective is not shared by all member states. The United States, in particular, takes a more limited view in which security issues should not be constrained by the addition of unrelated issues. The United States is not entirely alone in its view and as noted elsewhere, security is a concept that is subject to unprecedented scrutiny and examination within the “homeland” at the moment. Where the United States comes out on this point eventually is hard to say and it would not be too surprising if the Mexico City meeting failed to articulate a clear and strong consensus on this point. Mexico City may, rather, signal nothing more than a waypoint on the evolving conception and definition of hemispheric security. At this point in time, a strong commonly held view of

the future role of existing defence and security mechanisms continues to elude the 34 member states. The discussions have been launched and the process of examining entities such as the Inter-American Defence Board and of the Rio Treaty are well underway. It is certainly a difficult challenge to build a consensus about instruments and institutions when a strongly held common view of what constitutes security remains absent. For the moment, member countries have put aside the fundamental issues and have turned their attention to working out the reporting relationships between such entities as the IADB and the Committee on Hemispheric Security of the OAS.

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FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The preparation of the Special Conference on Security will be a delicate and complicated task. The definition of a common conceptual focus over inter-American security presents serious difficulties, especially in the post September 11 period. That situation has been even more complicated by the evident fracture that has occurred at the United Nations in the context of addressing the need to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. The Iraqi situation, in particular, is too recent and its global and regional implications reach into too many issues to fully understand how the events will shape future approaches.

It is a positive point, however, that the 34 member states agree on the need to reform and update the conceptualization of the inter-American security situation. Flowing from this is an acknowledged need to address the instruments and institutions although their shape and direction are not as clearly evident. For many countries in the hemisphere, there is a pressing need and desire to fundamentally reshape the constituent parts that give definition to a security doctrine. For them, such a doctrine needs to take into account a range of non-traditional issues that, for the present purposes, are being defined as having a security dimension. These governments struggle with issues of poverty, social inequities, transnational crime and even natural disasters, and these and other issues are their clearest security challenges. For others, the most appropriate hemispheric wide security doctrine should be grounded in traditional definitions. Countries like the United States

have difficulty conceptualizing how the instruments of security can, or should, be applied to economic, social and environmental issues.

To conclude, the events of September 11 generated elements of change and continuity in the process of re-conceptualizing security in the Americas. The issue is on the agenda of the member states and there is an important and valuable process of examination and discussion of the inter-American security architecture, including especially its underlying concepts and institutions. This political commitment has been translated into the decision to move forward the Special

Conference on Security. At the same time, it is not clear that September 11 generated many fundamental changes in conceptualization predominant in many governments on the broad issue of hemispheric security.

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April 2003

ISBN: 1-896301-90-8

Publications Mail Agreement: 40012931

The Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) is an independent, non-governmental organization that fosters informed and timely debate and dialogue on issues of importance to decision-makers and opinion leaders in Canada and throughout the western hemisphere. Established in 1990, FOCAL's mission is to develop a greater understanding of important hemispheric issues and help to build a stronger community of the Americas.

The preparation and printing of this paper has been made possible thanks to support from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

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