



National Defense University

Institute for National Strategic Studies

COLLEAGUES FOR THE AMERICAS SEMINAR SERIES
"Hemispheric Security Cooperation: The Canadian Perspective"

MAY 7, 2003

Featured Guest: Ambassador Paul Durand, Permanent Representative of Canada to the OAS

On May 7, INSS hosted the third 2003 "Colleagues for the Americas" seminar. The seminar, titled "Hemispheric Security Cooperation: The Canadian Perspective" focused on Canada's reinvigorated role in the inter- American system. The featured guest was Ambassador Paul Durand, Permanent Representative of Canada to the OAS. The following report summarizes the key points presented by the featured guests.

Canada's role in the Inter-American system is unique and growing in importance. Until a little over 10 years ago, Canada had, essentially, a European outlook; Latin America, although a good trading partner even then, just wasn't on the screen politically and, to some extent, Canada didn't want to get caught up in the series of conflicts that seemed to bedevil US - Latin American relations.

All this began to change in the late eighties, mainly because of changes in the region - restoration of democratic governments; new, open economic models and improved human rights situations. Also, there was a new awareness of the region in Canada based on its involvement in the peace process in Central America, and as other parts of the hemisphere were catching the Canadian headlines. Finally, increasing numbers of Latin Americans were migrating to Canada, creating a domestic constituency for hemispheric issues.

For these, and many other reasons, Canada finally decided to throw its hat in and become a full partner in the Americas. And that decision has changed, in a fundamental way, the country's foreign policy perspective - and even the way Canadians view themselves and their place in the world. Canada's orientation is increasingly to the Americas, a region where it is now seriously engaged, and where its interests are growing—economically, politically—and militarily.

Military cooperation with Canada's partners in the Americas has moved in lockstep with its political and economic engagement. From almost zero in the 1980s, it's now actively involved in most of the major military and activities of the region; a few examples:

- Canada participates in the meetings of the Ministers of the Americas - most recently in Santiago last November - and for every meeting, it provides air transport for partner countries.
- Canada has joined the conferences of commanders of armies, navies and air forces, and now holds the presidency of the Conference of American Armies. It will host the conference itself later this year, a first for Canada.
- Canada participates in the annual naval war games with key regional navies.
- Canada has deployed additional attachés to the region, most recently to Brazil and Colombia.
- In the nineties, Canada stationed UN-sponsored peacekeeping troops and a helicopter squadron in Central America during the peace process, as well as election monitors in post-conflict Nicaragua, civilian police in Guatemala, and human rights monitors in El Salvador.
- In support of the international effort to restore democratic government to Haiti in the 1990s, Canada deployed over 1,000 Canadian forces personnel, 100 civilian police officers, and ships to enforce sanctions.
- Canada offers peacekeeping training programs for candidates from almost every country in the region; It's also

collaborating with peacekeeping institutions in Argentina, Chile and elsewhere.

- Canada deployed the Canadian Forces Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to Honduras in response to Hurricane Mitch in 1999.
- Canada has been heavily involved in de-mining programs throughout the region, especially since the Ottawa convention was signed in 1997. In this, it worked closely with the OAS and the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB).
- Canada has just become a member of the IADB – effective last December. It joined in the spirit of aiding with the reform efforts (not a simple task given IADB functional, organizational and reporting issues that persist –in part due to conservative thinking and protection of the status quo by some OAS officials. Revealing the complexity of the situation, The OAS itself is in need of organizational reform and has hired a consulting firm to assist with this).

In sum, Canada has in just over a decade, moved from a position of virtually “no involvement” to one of full engagement in hemispheric and military activities.

Hemispheric security has been a Canadian priority since it joined the OAS in 1990, along with the promotion of democracy and human rights. One of the interesting developments in recent years is the blending of these issues, which has produced a much broader definition of security, encompassing much more than conventional military concerns. In the Americas, as in the rest of the world, everything has changed. Conventional, cross-border conflicts are now considered only a remote possibility, as are serious military threats from outside the region. But there are other new threats and challenges for which we have to be prepared. Many of these are transnational—narco-trafficking; narco-terrorism; organized crime; displacement of people across borders; environmental disasters, both natural and man-made; pandemics - think of SARS - and even weapons of mass destruction. These require a different response, new actors and different forms of cooperation.

Canada is not advocating a blending of duties or a blurring of lines between military forces and other parts of the security apparatus (police, customs, etc.). There are very good reasons why these different elements have separate mandates, and these distinctions have to be maintained. There will be situations, however - natural disasters are a good example - where the armed forces could and should act in support of civilian actors, whether these be police, health officials or even firefighting personnel.

The emergence of the human security concept has contributed to the broader definition of security. There is a growing recognition that the security of the state and the security of the person are mutually reinforcing. Human security is strengthened where open, tolerant states work to ensure the protection of all people’s rights, safety and lives. At the same time, human security reinforces the state by strengthening its legitimacy and stability. This broadened picture of security was the subject of debate when foreign ministers of the Americas met last June at the OAS General Assembly in Bridgetown, Barbados.

The ‘Bridgetown Declaration’ that resulted from that meeting focused on the multidimensional nature of security threats, and the need for new and varied responses. It represented a surprising degree of consensus on a new approach in what is a very traditional area. It has become an important document—a basic reference point—in the lead-up to the Special Conference on Security in Mexico. Hemispheric leaders at the Santiago Summit mandated the Special Security Conference in 1998, reiterated at the Quebec City Summit in 2001 - so it has solid credentials. This will be the most important opportunity we’ve had in decades - perhaps 50 years - to overhaul and modernize the region’s security architecture. The OAS’s Committee on Hemispheric Security is handling the substance - that is, the views and inputs from the 34 member countries of the OAS. Mexico’s ambassador to the OAS, Miguel Ruiz-Cabañas, ably chairs that Committee. The Special Security Conference will be held in Mexico City in the fall, back to back with a Special Summit of the Americas. Leaders have just decided to meet to address the urgent issues that have arisen in the hemisphere since the last Summit in Canada, two years ago.

Re-designing the security machinery of the Americas is a very daunting task given the necessary inter-Agency coordination and limited funds - but we have a number of strengths to build on:

• First, ours is one of the most peaceful regions in the world—that may come as a surprise to some people, but we only have to look at the wars of the 20th century to realize how conflicted are other parts of the world; and as far as I can see, that trend continues in the 21st century.

• Second, we already have a strong conceptual foundation for cooperative and collective security efforts. This foundation is based on the UN and OAS Charters, the Rio Treaty, the Summit Plans of Action and OAS General Assembly declarations, to

give some examples.

- Third, our region leads the world in establishing norms for the foundations of security; norms such as:
- The promotion of democratic freedoms, as we do through the Inter-American Democratic Charter;
- We've developed an ambitious agenda of Confidence and Security Building Measures, developed through OAS-sponsored meetings in Buenos Aires, Santiago, San Salvador and, most recently, Miami.
- We promote transparency in conventional weapons transfers, through the Inter-American Transparency Convention;
- We've adopted advanced notions of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament through the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Ottawa Convention on landmines, and;
- We've developed effective tools for fighting terrorism, through the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism, and against drug trafficking and related activities through CICAD - the Inter-American Anti-Drug Commission.

These are landmark achievements; together they comprise a political and security framework that is unsurpassed in any other region, with the possible exception of Europe.

But there's a lot to do to bring it all together. As it stands today, our Inter-American security system has plenty of ingredients, but it lacks coherence. There is little connection between the Summit process, the OAS Committee on Hemispheric Security, the Defense Ministerial meetings, the various military conferences, and the Inter-American Defense Board. The Rio Treaty stands alone and incomplete, with only 23 signatories of the 34 OAS members. We can no longer afford the luxury of this incoherence; it stifles the system and discourages progress.

What do we expect to gain from the Conference? We would like a clear expression of political will on the part of states to cooperate on the threats to hemispheric security. We would like to get agreement on a set of modern security principles, which provide an updated vision of our common values and goals. The multidimensional nature of security threats - and the need to develop multidimensional responses to address them - has to be recognized, to take us beyond conventional threats and conventional thinking. We should also emerge with a clear mandate to revitalize and rationalize the security system and its various component parts, so that it reflects today's environment. And we have to bring coherence to the hemispheric architecture. If we can accomplish this overall re-vamping of the system, the Conference will be a success.

In addition to these overall goals, there are a couple of specific outcomes that a number of countries would like to see; one is a significant hemispheric commitment to peacekeeping, organized under the auspices of the United Nations. The second outcome that a number of us - especially Canada - would like to see is a re-structured, modernized Inter-American Defense Board.

The need for effective security speaks for itself—but it's also part of a larger picture—that of hemispheric integration - that historic enterprise that has, thus far, eluded the Americas. Today, though, we're dealing with a new dynamic and a new opportunity. Through the Summits of the Americas process, our leaders now meet at regular intervals. Gradually, leaders are knitting together the ingredients of a hemispheric vision. And it's more than talk—these meetings produce detailed action plans that are being implemented on a continuous basis, in every country in the region. Linked to the Summits are the negotiations for a Free Trade Area of the Americas - the FTAA - offering the promise of economic stability and increased prosperity. Democratic government, the rule of law and an effective security regime complete the picture—a picture that - if realized - will allow the Americas to emerge, for the first time, as a unified, powerful presence on the world stage.

[1] This is an abridged version of Ambassador Durand's remarks prepared by the INSS staff.

The INSS Colleagues for the Americas Seminar Series is a program of monthly meetings that commenced in 1994 to further research on hemispheric security and defense issues and to contribute to the professional education of United States and foreign practitioners.

The opinions, conclusions and recommendations expressed or implied within this report are those of the contributor and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any other agency of the Federal Government.

The July meeting of the INSS Colleagues for the America Seminar Series will feature Mr. Dan Fisk, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Central American Affairs. For more information, please contact Minas Khodagolian, NDU-INSS, (202) 685-3849, email: khodagolian@ndu.edu.

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