

The OAS must be made a more effective forum for useful political dialogue. There is no magic solution here. The United Nations, which is currently undergoing a renaissance, has become more effective not because of any revision to its Charter or its procedures. It is simply being treated more seriously by its members - most notably the Soviet Union. We must explore all means available to have the OAS treated more seriously by its members.

The polarization within the OAS has also produced an extraordinary sensitivity to challenges to sovereignty in the region. That sensitivity has inhibited the use of the OAS for a political dialogue. Yet it must become a place of real dialogue, where disagreements might be resolved.

One step that might help would be to give the Secretary General the resources required to monitor and analyze developing situations on an ongoing basis, studies which could then trigger discussion within the OAS or further action by the Secretary General. I have in mind here the sort of Political Secretariat which has proven enormously useful to the Secretary General of the United Nations.

A second possibility is to encourage the Secretary General to act upon the new authority granted to him in 1988 to bring to the attention of OAS members issues which he believes might threaten the security of the region.

A third area for movement is the political profile of the OAS. I believe the OAS would be treated more seriously by its members if, as with other similar bodies, meetings were held at the Heads of Government level on a regular basis. It would be useful if, at an initial Heads of Government meeting, leaders could outline their specific views on how the OAS could be made more politically vital.

Finally, as the states of Latin America themselves become democratic, I believe we should expand the links between parliamentarians of the region, so that they can share perspectives and discuss issues of common concern.

There are also areas of functional co-operation which might be pursued by the OAS. Successful day-to-day programs are not the stuff of headlines; they do however constitute practical progress. A variety of possibilities should be explored, including:

- A Permanent OAS "Unit for Democratic Institutions", whose expertise could be called upon to co-operate in establishing and developing democratic institutions and in monitoring elections.
- A separate or affiliated unit which would conduct impartial investigations of irregularities in election or judicial processes if called upon by member states.