

This transitional process is a complex one. While it involves a number of changes, these changes do not occur in a sequential fashion, more importantly, the outcome of the transitions may not be inevitable. Numerous problems arise as a result of change and create a great deal of pressure on a fledgling democracy. Peru is a case in point. Sendero Luminoso and economic stagnation resulted in the system regressing to a more authoritarian process.

The purpose of this section of the paper is to delineate the components of the transition to democracy, i.e. to indicate some of the more important changes involved in the transition, and to examine how these changes are linked. In fact, the linkage between the different components of the transition may be the factor that explains the consolidation of a successful democratic system of government.

Within the framework of the Miami Summit Plan of Action, Brazil and Canada agreed to assume the leading role in the implementation of both the democracy and the human rights initiatives. This role was especially appropriate for Canada since it had played a seminal part in the establishment of the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD) in the OAS. Brazil also launched its national human rights plan in May 1996 and has taken a leading role in the OAS on human rights matters. In addition to the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy, the OAS has committees on Representative Democracy and Administration of Justice to advance the human rights agenda.⁹

The transition to democracy itself involves four components: liberalization, democratization, the emergence of civil society and economic development. In other words, we are suggesting that these are the four cornerstones of an ideal liberal democratic system of government. Existing democracies may or may not manifest all four components. Over the past four decades, for example, Mexico and Colombia often were classified as democracies, yet both

⁹Michael Shifter and Sean Neill, *Implementing the Summit of the Americas: Guaranteeing Democracy and Human Rights* (Miami: Working Paper Series, North-South Center, 1996).