are presumably "en route" to achieving representative (i.e. liberal) democracies. A proposal of this sort needs to begin with an affirmation that democracy takes different shapes in different settings, and that any mechanisms of collective delegee must be sensitive to these differences. The OAS Charter remains more ambivalent on this point, allowing states to organize their political system according to the form they prefer and without external intervention. However, the OAS Charter also makes a commitment to representative democracy the unifying feature of all OAS member states.

The problem is more than semantic. When the members of the OAS act collectively in the defence of democracy, do they deliberately seek to uphold unpopular and dysfunctional constitutions? Do they wish to impose rigid notions of constitutionalism and the rule of law on societies in which there is a persistent gap between the *de jure* (i.e. nations legal institutions) and the *de facto* (how people actually behave)? Do they wish to thwart the will of the public? Or do they seek to protect citizens of emerging democracies from the sorts of arbitrary and abusive uses of state power that follow with relentless inevitability from the centralization of executive power, the resurgence of the military, the politicization of judiciaries, and the subordination of legislatures?

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Take the example of judicial reform. Judicial institutions are notoriously poor at reforming themselves. From time to time presidents may need to prod reluctant judges to accept necessary changes, yet in some instances reforms aimed at correcting widely-recognized deficiencies in the administration of justice have been combined with other measures that have undermined the independence of the judiciary. A more decided commitment to judicial independence on the part of international financial institutions would help considerably. The World Bank gives lip service to the importance of judicial independence while directing most of its resources into reforms of an essentially administrative character.

Judicial reforms should focus on the issue of indigenous peoples, and their access to justice. A revitalized Inter-American Indian Institute (an agency of the OAS) could play a positive role in this respect. The Inter-American Court on Human Rights is widely regarded as a properly functioning multilateral institution, and unilateral withdrawal, such as Peru's decision to leave the Court (after it was told that its domestic courts failed to meet the minimal standards of due process), as well as Trinidad and Tobago's withdrawal in 1999, should not be tolerated by the other OAS member states.

Other key OAS bodies such as the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD) could play a more constructive role than they do at the moment. The UPD was established at Canada's initiative in June 1990 by the General Assembly of the OAS and reports to the Office of the Secretary General of the Organization. Besides the electoral observation missions that constitute its primary mandate, the UPD has assumed a number of other functions which aim to strengthen the foundations of political institutions and promote democratic values in the region. These include the development and administration of special programs to assist member states in the aftermath of a conflict, consolidation of legislative bodies and electoral institutions in the region, strengthening of local government and the coordination and supervision of the Assistance Program for Demining in Central America. The UPD has been successful in many areas but is not immune to criticism. Many experts feel that the UPD carries too many mandates with too limited human and financial resources. As a result the UPD's impact remains largely diluted in various programmes which cannot meet the most pressing needs of OAS member states. The question remains one of establishing the right priorities. For example, the mine clearance program conducted by the Unit in Central America is an area that undeniably requires urgent action, but whose relevance to the priorities of the regions' democratic can be questioned.

Electoral Autocracies

Dilemma: Recent developments in the Andean countries demonstrate that electoral democracies can coexist with a wide range of undemocratic practices by autocratic presidents. More importantly, many voters support presidents like Chavez and Fujimori because they are disenchanted with existing democratic arrangements and hope that more "real" democracies can be created by undemocratic means. The promotion of democracy has to mean much more than the encouragement of free and fair elections.

Options: The international community has recognized the need to go beyond supporting elections in efforts to encourage and support democratization. The Second Summit of the Americas, held in Santiago de Chile in 1998, spelled out a broader agenda that