

The first Ibero-American Summit Meeting: results and perspectives

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In his invitation to the heads of state and government of all the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries of this hemisphere and of Spain and Portugal, Mexico's President Salinas de Gortari suggested that they should get together in Guadalajara on the 18th and 19th of July, 1991, to discuss their respective ideas about regional integration, the challenges they face in the nineties, and the best way of joining forces to increase exchanges and maintain and develop their cultural unity.

The objectives of this meeting, to my way of thinking, were both to encourage Latin American integration and the role of Spain and Portugal as catalysts for greater collaboration between Europe and Latin America, and to take advantage of these two countries as spokesmen for Ibero-America within the European Community.

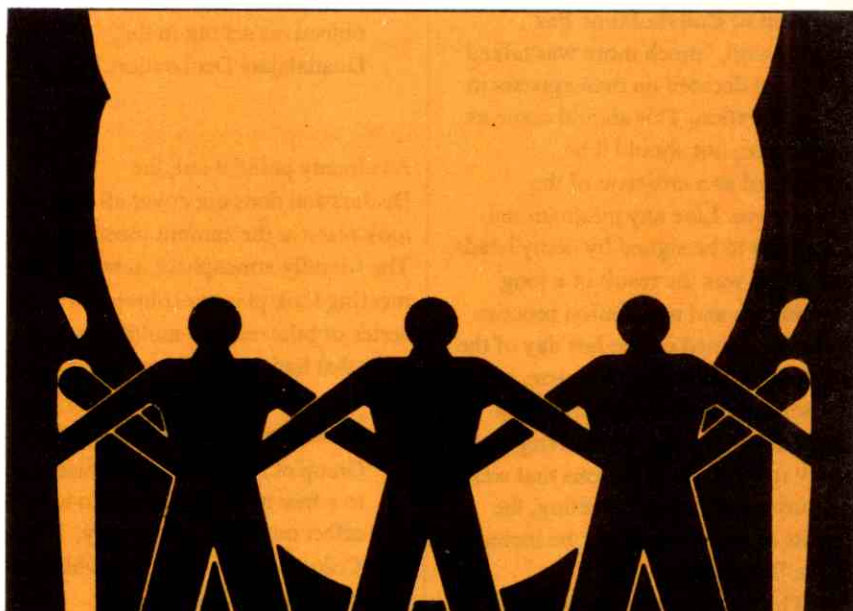
The significance of Latin America

It has often been said that the Latin American countries, taken separately, are in various degrees insignificant, but that once united they might be of great relevance in international relations.

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A couple of examples illustrate this point. Uruguay is about the same size as the state of Washington (68,100 square miles approximately), has two thirds of Washington's

population, and a gross national product that, in 1987, was nearly twice as small. El Salvador is about the size of the state of Massachusetts. It has approximately the same number



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of inhabitants, but its gross national product, in 1987, was nearly 26 times smaller.

However, the 19 Latin American countries, taken together, cover 7,700,000 square miles (more than the U.S.A. and Canada) have 430 million people (33% more than the 12 countries that make up the European Community), and a gross domestic product of a trillion and a half dollars (more than double the total of U.S. exports in 1989). Latin America is a highly attractive market and has enormous potential human and material resources. The saying that "union makes for strength" takes on special significance in this case.

What happened in Guadalajara

The Guadalajara Declaration is the most important document to come out of the meeting, although, as President of Bolivia Jaime Paz Zamora said, "much more was talked about and decided on than appears in the Declaration. This should come as no surprise, nor should it be interpreted as a criticism of the Declaration. Like any international document to be signed by many heads of state, it was the result of a long drawing-up and negotiation process. As it was signed on the last day of the meeting, it could not, of course, cover all the suggestions proposed." Paz Zamora was, no doubt, referring to the many fruitful conversations that went on during the summit meeting, the results of which could not be included in the Declaration.

The Declaration contains 23 sections and 28 concrete commitments agreed on by the 21 governments in areas such as international law, economic and social development, education and culture. I consider the document to be of fundamental importance because:

- a) It constitutes a kind of rule book for greater cooperation between the Ibero-American countries,

with a view to regional integration in the medium and long run, and an effective insertion into the rest of the world.

- b) On the political side, the heads of state and government declared that they will not stand aside from the unilateral designs of a new international order.
- c) The statement declared that they were "committed to the economic and social development of our peoples to free them from poverty before the twenty first century."
- d) The Declaration concludes by concretizing this effort; the summit meeting will now take place annually, in Spain in 1992, in Brazil in 1993, in Colombia in 1994, and in Argentina in 1995. This will make it possible to "exchange information on the progress made toward the objectives set out in the Guadalajara Declaration."

Other progress made

As already pointed out, the Declaration does not cover all that took place at the summit meeting. The friendly atmosphere in which the meeting took place encouraged a series of bilateral and multilateral talks that had concrete results:

- a) The presidents of Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela (The Group of 3) committed themselves to a free trade agreement to take effect on the 1st of January, 1992.
- b) Colombia and Chile reestablished consular and commercial relations with Cuba, and announced that they were considering renewing diplomatic ties too.
- c) The presidents of Argentina and Brazil committed their governments to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes only and pledged to join the Tlatelolco Treaty which aims to eliminate

nuclear weapons from this continent.

- d) The secretary general of the United Nations made considerable progress toward peace in El Salvador, assembling the leaders of Colombia, Spain, Mexico, and Venezuela as a good-will catalys group and getting the president of El Salvador and the representative of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front to participate in this dialogue.
- e) The presidents of Brazil and Colombia discussed stabilizing the international price for coffee and reviving the International Coffee Organization.

What didn't happen in Guadalajara

Prior to the summit meeting some analysts speculated that it would be dominated by "several kinds of U.S. presence", particularly pressure on President of Cuba Fidel Castro to implement "changes of a democratic nature" in the island. It was even speculated that the White House had asked one of the presidents to hand Castro a letter from President Bush demanding something of this sort. The other U.S. presence that might have dominated the meeting was the discussion of the Initiative for the Americas. What in fact took place was just the opposite. Fidel Castro came out of the meeting more secure than he had been before and the Initiative for the Americas was only briefly considered.

Fidel Castro

It was hardly to be expected that a head of state would ask for changes in the Cuban political system when the Declaration "reaffirmed the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention," and recognized the right of each nation to build its own political system and institutions, in peace, stability, and justice.

An affirmation of the Ibero-American community of nations

The following is a message sent by 1990 Nobel Laureate Octavio Paz to the heads of state taking part in the first Ibero-American Summit Meeting on the announcement of plans to establish the Octavio Paz Ibero-American Library.

It is not easy to describe the emotion I feel when writing these lines. Perhaps it is not necessary to say anything. Perhaps the essential thing is not what I feel -surprise, gratitude- but the meaning of a gesture that far exceeds my most questionable merits.

When President Carlos Salinas de Gortari told me of his intention to put my name on the Ibero-American Library I was enthusiastic; but I knew then and know quite well now that I am no more than an incident in the rich and varied history of our literatures.

We are witnesses to the first meeting of the heads of state of the Ibero-American nations. The mere enunciation of this fact clearly reveals its sense: this meeting would have been impossible only a few years ago, and it is the first of its kind. On the one hand, it is a statement or an affirmation of the community of nations that is Ibero-America. On the other hand it is the beginning of a new stage in our history.

This meeting tells us that we have a common history, and a history on the move.

What is history? Definitions are almost always insufficient. I will only say that history is more than just the chronicle of what has taken place; it is an awareness, a point of intersection between the past and the future. History is not already behind or before us, in the folds of the past or in the mists of the future, but here and now. A here and now open to what has been and what will be.

Gravity of history. Without the weight of the past, the future vanishes into thin air; without the breath of the future, the past becomes stone and crushes us.

For this, the founding of an Ibero-American Library out of the meeting of the heads of state of our nations is an act of historical maturity. It satisfies both our will for the future and our awareness of the past.

A library is, primarily, a collective memory. Not a purely receptive memory, but an active, dynamic one; a creative memory which illuminates the works kept in a library: ideas, hypotheses, delusions, truths.

Every one of us, simultaneously, discovers and invents himself, recognizes and transforms himself, changes and by changing returns to what he really is.

As Machado would say, books are mirrored mazes. They are also transmutation chambers.

In the Ibero-American Library we can see ourselves in our past, meditate about our present, and project our future: convergences of time, space, and civilizations.

A library is a place from which one can see the whole universe. Its walls do not close us in, they are windows for looking out at the world and knowing mankind, and also something else: a library is a community of voices, ideas, passions, images, and visions.

Community means plurality, differences, exchange, conversation -never unison; the most seemingly opposed ways of thinking and the most contradictory opinions living together.

A library is a house of divergences governed by tolerance. As this century comes to a close nations have rediscovered freedom and democracy. This is a phenomenon that encompasses both Latin America and Eastern and Central Europe. Certainly, the collapse of dictatorships and ideologies has in many places resurrected old and long-buried idols, old fanaticism and blind nationalism.

I know of only one remedy against such things. Criticism as an exercise of freedom and democracy are inseparable. Without freedom, democracy becomes tyranny, while democracy humanizes freedom and obliges it to recognize its limits, the freedom of others.

The lessons of our epoch teach us that the foundations of the Ibero-American community cannot be only our past. For our past to awaken, rise and walk again, it needs freedom and democracy. More than principles or projects, these are its true foundation stones. On these we will someday build tall, transparent houses.

Octavio Paz



Pedro Valierna/Cuatroscuro

The first steps on the long road to integration.

Furthermore, Castro came to the summit in a highly constructive state of mind: "...the essential thing about this meeting is our decision to join our efforts and will to integrate and unify Latin America, not only economically but also politically. Cuba is willing to belong to such a Latin America, and even to shed its blood for it, in defense of what is now the front line of the independence and sovereignty of our peoples." Castro's way of thinking made itself felt in other ways, like his hearty applause and shouts of encouragement for Guillermo Endara's Panama Canal statements.

It would seem safe to assume that in private conversation Castro gave his Ibero-American counterparts a preview

of some of the pro-democracy trends that came out in the Cuban Communist Party meeting three months later.

It is hard to imagine the Ibero-American statesmen putting Castro on the spot when Cuba has perhaps the best social indicators in Latin America: the highest life expectancy, the lowest infant mortality rate, and the highest rate of school attendance.

Finally, I think that the opinion expressed by Angel García Lascuráin in *El Economista* (July 26, 1991; p. 9) is very relevant: "although Castro's politics might be considered outdated, he does bring into the integration effort a component that

cannot be overlooked -the historical memory."

The Initiative for the Americas

The Initiative for the Americas (IA) was briefly addressed at the summit meeting. Only two heads of state (Carlos Menem of Argentina and Fidel Castro) referred to President Bush's proposal in their official speeches. The loudest proponent was the director of the BID, Enrique Iglesias, who said it was "the way to develop Latin American economies."

There are two possible reasons why the IA received such scant attention: 1) because it would have been inappropriate to discuss an outside proposal at the moment

Ibero-America was drawing up its own strategy, and 2) because although the IA's aims are more or less clear, the mechanisms for achieving them are ill-defined. "There is no established pattern, there is no measure covering all the different approaches to reform. We are prepared to negotiate macro bilateral agreements to open up markets and develop stronger trade ties with any nation in the region. Debt reduction will be carried out on a case by case basis." This appears to have been the Ibero-American party line. The bilateral nature of the Initiative made it very difficult to consider when negotiations with the United States might have very different implications for each of the countries concerned.

A comment on the meeting's organization

King Juan Carlos of Spain was the last to speak at the Guadalajara Summit Meeting. He said that he hoped that at the next one "we will be able to match the example that Mexico has set."

A good deal of the meeting's success was due to the meticulous planning and the creation of an atmosphere conducive to dialogue. President Salinas sent special representatives to invite all the heads of state and government, giving all of them an opportunity to voice their concerns prior to the summit itself and to receive directly from the Mexican government a notion of the meeting's objectives. There were no nasty surprises during the event.

The opening public session made it possible for the heads of state and government to give their view on Ibero-American and other issues they deemed worthy of mention. The four private working sessions made for a less formal atmosphere more conducive to dialogue and personal rapprochement between the

participants, many of whom had not met previously.

Perspectives for Latin American integration

If Latin American integration hasn't been successful up to now, it has not been for lack of trying. There are at present at least 60 regional integration organisms, not including sporting, political or professional associations. There are various reasons for this consistent failure: some have been too ambitious, others have been hindered by excessive red-tape, others have come to grief on isolation and nationalism, others have been weakened by internal ideological conflicts; and others because they ran up against the interests of powers outside the region. César Gaviria, president of Colombia, summed it up as a "lack of political pragmatism and excessive protectionism."

With such a negative track-record, what is there to make one think that our present attempts at Latin American integration might be more promising? I would stress the following:

1. There is a new element of need. Latin America is emerging from the so-called "lost decade". According to the CEPAL, "Real per capita product in late 1989 was not only less than it had been ten years before, but even had fallen back to that of 13 years before, or in some economies even more."
2. Rapid changes in geopolitics and the international economy are other new and powerfully shaping elements. Globalization and the formation of large trade blocs in Europe, North America and the Pacific Rim make it clear that unilateral policies and economic isolation cannot produce growth and development in national economies.

3. The rise of a new generation of leaders in Latin America represents a desire for more pragmatic change. The tone of the political speeches in Guadalajara was very different from what was heard in the seventies and early eighties. Ideology has come to take a secondary role in inter-Latin American relations. This manifested itself in various ways at the summit meeting (for example Castro's gesture when Endara was speaking).
4. Latin American integration has been reoriented toward a gradualistic approach starting at the grass roots level, a more subregional orientation as the first step toward full integration. This has been demonstrated by the progress of the Southern Cone Common Market (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay), of the Andean Pact (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela), the Group of 3 and the Central American Common Market, plus numerous bilateral efforts such as that between Mexico and Chile.
5. "Furthermore," according to Felipe González, prime minister of Spain, "there are three new and important factors: the first is the unquestionable demographic density we enjoy; second is the established drive toward regional integration; and the third is our countries' progressive economic convergence toward modern and viable projects."

Of course the road will be long and hard. We should recall that only now is Europe seeing its efforts at integration materialize, nearly forty years after the European Coal and Steel Pool was set up. But for Latin America there is no time to lose. We have already lost a decade, and history won't wait.