

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**  
**Office of the Spokesman**

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**REMARKS**

**Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton**  
**Addresses the Organization of American States General Assembly**

**June 7, 2010**  
**National Museum**  
**Lima, Peru**

**SECRETARY CLINTON:** (In progress) and let me express my thanks along with all others to our hosts, President Garcia, Foreign Minister Garcia Belaunde and also to Secretary General Insulza. I think it is fitting that we meet here in Peru, which has provided a strong example in our hemisphere of delivering on the promise of democracy, reducing poverty, creating more chances for more people to live up to their own God-given potential. And so once again, we reaffirm our common values and aspirations that bind us together as a community of nations and peoples.

We are here to discuss peace, security, and cooperation, and I commend our hosts for setting an agenda that does speak to our shared vision. We do share the goals of expanding social inclusion and economic opportunity; of ensuring the safety of our citizens; of securing clean sources of energy and protecting our environment; of building effective institutions of democratic governance and accountability, while preserving and strengthening our heritage of pluralism, tolerance, and diversity. These are tremendous advantages and will become more so as this century progresses.

We are committed to strengthening our hemisphere's mechanisms for collectively resolving disputes and for further fostering the conditions of sustained peace. And thanks to the reduction of interstate tensions in the Americas, we can look for ways to reduce excessive weapons expenditures, free up resources to enhance our economic competitiveness, and expand opportunities.

Each of us has an obligation and responsibility to meet the needs of our citizens, but we also all face transnational challenges that demand international collaboration and partnership.

We believe it is in the national interest of the United States and of every nation represented here to promote pragmatic and productive collaboration among members of the community of the Americas. That is why we welcome multilateral partnerships like UNASUR and CARICOM and SICA and the South American Defense Council's goal of promoting greater confidence among

its members and more effective cooperation to ensure security from organized crime and terrorism.

Multilateral organizations, and indeed partnerships of any kind, are useful when they make a real difference in the lives of our peoples. So our partnerships must be measured by results, the results they produce, not by the roster of members or the ideological alignment or the heated rhetoric. The United States is committed to doing our part as a full and active partner in the Americas and working with any organization committed to advancing the true welfare of people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

And under President Obama's leadership, we have reengaged with robust multilateral diplomacy, and we support the Organization of American States as the foremost multilateral organization of the hemisphere. Why is that? Well, look, we all know that the OAS has not always lived up to its founding ideals. We all know there is serious work to be done to bolster the institution. But the OAS's goals of strengthening democratic institutions, safeguarding human rights, promoting inclusive development, and enhancing multidimensional security are more important than ever. And mechanisms established by the OAS, such as the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption and the Inter-American Human Rights Commission, provide critical tools to help improve governance and respect for human rights.

We believe it is possible to build a stronger, more vibrant, more effective OAS that both serves the interests of member states and has the capacity and will to tackle regional challenges and prevent crises before they arise.

Today I would like to propose three steps to realize this OAS vision. First, we need to refocus the institution on its core mission of advancing strong democratic institutions that foster peace, citizen security, and opportunity for all.

Last year alone, the OAS conducted election observation missions in Bolivia, Mexico, Panama, El Salvador, and Ecuador. This is among the organization's most important contributions. But the OAS suffers from a proliferation of priorities and mandates that dilute its efforts, drain its budget, and diminish its capacity. We should align the OAS budget and staffing in accordance with its core activities, and it is critical that this happen in time for the September budget discussions.

Second, along that same line, we must work together to reform the OAS budget and take responsibility. The current path is fiscally unsustainable and threatens the viability of the organization itself. President Obama has asked the United States Congress for a three percent increase in support for the OAS, but the United States cannot do this alone. And we look to other countries to do what they can do to increase their own support.

Third, in keeping with refocusing on the core mission of the OAS, it is time to move ahead with implementing the Inter-American Democratic Charter. The United States will work with member states to jointly develop a collaborative Plan of Action to guide implementation, and we hope to see this plan adopted in time for the 10th anniversary of the Charter in September 2011. In particular, we should consider more precise guidelines

for what constitutes an unconstitutional alteration and incorporate the Charter's "essential elements" of democracy in the OAS peer review process. The creation of a Special Rapporteur for Democracy would enhance these efforts.

Our ongoing discussions about Honduras makes clear the urgency of this agenda. As we emphasized when the United States, along with the rest of the hemisphere, condemned the coup in Honduras, these interruptions of democracy should be completely relegated to the past – and it is a credit to this organization that they have become all but nonexistent in the Americas.

Now it is time for the hemisphere as a whole to move forward and welcome Honduras back into the Inter-American community. We've worked with many of you to help Honduras find a path back to democratic order. We saw the free and fair election of President Lobo, and we have watched President Lobo fulfill his obligations under the Tegucigalpa-San Jose Accord – including forming a government of national reconciliation and a truth commission. This has demonstrated a strong and consistent commitment to democratic governance and constitutional order.

At the same time, we must find ways to address conditions like those that led to the coup in Honduras before they turn into crises. There can be no higher priority for all of us than strengthening our institutions and mechanisms of cooperation so they effectively preserve the rule of law, basic rights, and the democratic order.

Our hemisphere stands at a crossroads today. A rising generation of young people – born in the Americas, versed in the technologies of the 21st century, and enriched by the diversity of our multicultural societies – stands poised to lead the globe in the years to come, to thrive in vibrant democratic societies and open and interconnected markets. They will build the businesses, discover the innovations, and develop the future that we all deserve. Or we can see a different outcome. We could see another generation frustrated by democratic dreams deferred and economic potential denied. Those young people are waiting because they know that their future depends on the decisions that we all will make.

Democratic, accountable governance and human rights are the birthright of every man, woman, and child in the Americas. And responsible, democratic governance is essential to meeting all of our other challenges – widening the circle of prosperity, promoting greater economic and social inclusion, equality among all, protecting our citizens, securing clean sources of energy, and addressing the impacts of climate change.

The United States believe that the OAS has a vital role to play as a champion of democratic institutions, human rights, and the rule of law. But ultimately, the OAS reflects us. It is a product of the member states, and I believe we must come together this year to ensure that the OAS is prepared and ready to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities of this century. The United States stands ready to work with all of you to achieve this goal.

Thank you, Secretary General.