On Multilateralism, Sovereignty and the Western Hemisphere: Concepts in Jeo pardy¹

By Luigi R.Einaudi²

Twenty three years ago this month, when I spoke to the Permanent Council for the first time as the Permanent Representative of the United States, the Ambassador of Brazil commented that only time would tell whether I had spoken as Ambassador Einaudi or as Professor Einaudi. I believe time showed I spoke then for the United States. Later, when I served as Assistant Secretary General and then Acting Secretary General, I did my best to represent all OAS member states. Today, I speak for myself and no one else.

The Organization of American States is a multilateral organization of the sovereign nation states of the Western Hemisphere. This apparently simple definition combines three concepts, all of them now unfortunately in jeopardy

First, Multilateralism

Multilateralism is more than the temporary agreement of two or more countries on a specific problem; it is cooperation based on "generalized principles of conduct

The OAS Charter is based on the sovereign equality of states. Every state has one vote. Unlike the United Nations, democracy among nations at the OAS is not conditioned by a Security Council or members with vetoes. Respect for the principle of non-intervention means that individual states are essentially free to determine their participation in any particular activity.

In recent years, however, it has become increasingly clear that many of the problems of this globalizing age requ2on72M >>BDC e

process in a member state. The UN Charter does not contain the word "democracy."

Second, the OAS is the only forum that brings the United States and Canada together with the rest of the hemisphere.

- The entrance of Canada and the independent Commonwealth Caribbean between 1967 and 1991 was a welcome step toward full regional participation.
- The United States and Canada together contribute more than two thirds of the regular quota funds of the OAS. These payments are essential to the functioning of the Secretariat and its programs.

Asymmetries like these differences in funding breed illusions and distrust. These obstacles can be reduced by respect for different views and fair administration of available resources. But symbolism also matters. Cuba's sovereignty and OAS commitments to human rights and democracy will have to be satisfied before the government of Cuba returns to the OAS. But the continued absence of Cuba weakens the OAS' claim to represent the entire hemisphere and gives credence to those who say the OAS is the U.S. Ministry of Colonies. Not entirely by coincidence, the new Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) includes Cuba and excludes the United States and Canada.

Multidimensional Security

 The Mexico City Declaration recognized of course that "each state has the sovereign right" to determine its own

assistance to local judicial institutions. CICIG depends on the UN, but mainly because the UN has the funds; if requested and funded, the OAS could respectfully and effectively extend this support through SICA to other countries of Central America.

By way of conclusion

The