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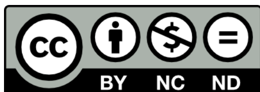

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Persistence and Change in Regional Security Institutions: Does the OAS Still Have a Project?

BRIGITTE WEIFFEN

This article follows the recent trend of bringing the Organization of American States (OAS) back into the debate on regional security, previously dominated by the accomplishments of European institutions and the shortcomings of their Asian and African counterparts. The study of the OAS is advanced here through application of an analytical framework derived from institutionalist theory. A security organization may change its form during its lifetime and pursue different kinds of tasks. The oldest regional security institution, the OAS was designed for collective security. This yielded to collective defence during the Cold War, and to cooperative security in the 1990s. After 11 September it returned to collective defence, but the contradictory reassertion of United States leadership and the emergence of South American regional power made hemispheric cooperation more difficult again. The OAS's main achievement is the extension of essential principles – democracy, human rights, and peaceful conflict resolution – to the entire hemisphere. As a diversified institution addressing a wide variety of security challenges, however, the OAS must find a coherent project alongside more focused sub-regional organizations such as the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

Introduction

Regional security organizations have been part of the institutional framework for the management of international security since the 19th century, but only after World War II did they gain official recognition as part of the international institutional architecture. With the end of the Cold War, the debate on regionalism and regional organizations acquired new relevance. However, while there are a number of established approaches to conceptualize regional security, the development of a framework to analyse the evolution and performance of regional security organizations is a very recent endeavour.

The Organization of American States (OAS) is the world's oldest regional security organization. It dates back to 1890, when the first of nine International Conferences of American States created the International Union of American Republics, which was renamed the Pan American Union in 1910. World War II set the stage for the creation of a regional security framework. At the last International Conference of American States in 1948 in Bogotá, 21 governments signed the Charta of the Organization of American States. Between 1967 and 1984, the nations of the English-speaking Caribbean joined, followed by Canada (in 1990) and Belize and

Guyana (in 1991). The OAS currently encompasses all 35 independent states in the western hemisphere.

This article contributes to the burgeoning literature on comparative regional security studies as well as to a better understanding of security challenges in today's multi-actor and multipolar world. Particularly, it follows the recent trend of bringing the OAS back into a debate on regional security dominated by the accomplishments of European institutions on the one hand and the difficulties and shortcomings of their Asian and African counterparts on the other. The article advances the study of the OAS through the development and application of an analytical framework derived from institutionalist theory. So far, the role of the OAS in the domain of peace and security has been studied in Spanish and Portuguese and, to a lesser extent, English through descriptive narratives and often from the angle of anti-hegemonic approaches. The most recent contributions either present a broad overview of the OAS as a multifunctional organization[1] or focus their attention on the latest phase of institutional evolution.[2]

In contrast, this article explores the security policies of the OAS across different historical phases and traces the changes undergone in terms of the organization's policy programmes, operational activities, and information activities after the end of the Cold War and after 9/11. From an institutionalist perspective, the institutional evolution of international organizations reflects shifts in actors' preferences, because international organizations are created to serve the interests of states, to encourage cooperation among states, and to reduce transaction costs. The foreign policy priorities of the actors and their visions of regional relations are decisive in shaping the mandate and role of a regional organization.

Nonetheless, actors are both inspired and constrained by structural conditions. The transformations in the international environment following the historical watersheds of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the terrorist attacks against the United States were background conditions that prompted the adaption of international organizations to the new world political scenario. A more constant feature influencing the capacity of regional bodies is the issue of hegemony. The predominance of a member state in terms of political, economic, or military capacity is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, there is the danger that a hegemonic power seizes the decision-making apparatus and renders the organization paralysed or abuses it to advance its national interests. On the other hand, the weight of a hegemon can be positively employed to bring about consensus and to provide resolute leadership.[3]

This article will follow the Organization of American States' historical trajectory and will show that the organization's mission changed over time. Beginning with a brief summary of alternative regional security approaches, the first part of the article develops a framework for an assessment of regional security organizations' activities. It draws on the institutionalist debate on the design of international organizations and policymaking within such entities and devises three types of highly institutionalized security institutions as well as a classification of policy output. It is argued that looking at the policy output of an organization and its priorities in security governance helps to determine the type of security organization. An underlying assumption is that a security organization may change its form from one type to

another during its lifetime and might also pursue different tasks at the same time. The second part of the article applies these analytical tools to the OAS. It explores which policy outputs the Organization of American States produced during the Cold War, during the first decade following the end of the Cold War, and after 9/11, and highlights the security functions that prevailed in each of the phases of the organization's evolution. While its initial goals were both mutual defence against attacks from outside the hemisphere and the pacific settlement of disputes between member states – tasks it could fulfil only to a limited extent due to the constraints imposed by the Cold War and US hegemony – it shifted its focus towards cooperative security in the course of its reactivation in the 1990s. After the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, however, the OAS experienced a renewed emphasis on collective defence and hence a partial return to the strategic framework of the Cold War. The article's conclusion will discuss the prospects for its further development.

Regional Security Organizations: A Toolbox for Analysis

The 'wave of regionalism' since the 1990s has inspired a range of approaches conceptualizing regional security. These studies map favourable conditions for the maintenance of regional peace and explore the ties binding together states at a regional level; they discuss pathways to security communities or security order, and power as exercised through regional security complexes. Adler and Barnett revitalized Karl Deutsch's concept of security communities from a constructivist point of view, and identified various levels of intensity of security communities as well as indicators to determine the type of security community.[4] Lake and Morgan presented the concept of regional orders where the decisive aspects binding together a region are so-called security externalities, that is, common security threats and risks a group of states faces.[5] Regional security complex theory, in turn, highlights the importance of geographical proximity.[6] All of these approaches look at a broader concept of regionalism or the dynamics of regional cooperation. On a rather abstract level, they point to patterns of enmity or amity within a region that result from territoriality, common interests, or shared values.

Further analyses examine the emergence and the patterns of regional and subregional organizations or regional approaches to conflict management in comparative perspective, but offer only selective evidence on individual organizations.[7] Additionally, the notions of regional security architecture and regional security governance are used to characterize the security practices of particular world regions.[8] The bulk of the comparative studies on regional security organizations scrutinizes their contribution to global governance and hence focuses on their interaction with the UN when sharing tasks and responsibilities in conflict management.[9] However, for a long time the evolution and performance of regional security organizations as such have hardly been studied.

Only very recently have attempts been made to develop an analytical framework for a systematic comparative assessment of regional organizations with a security mandate. In his book published in 2010, Tavares derives his analytical insights from the literature on the cooperation of regional security organizations with the

UN in the realm of peace and security and compares the organizational capacity and operational experience of 11 regional organizations in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas.[10] The contributions to the volume edited by Kirchner and Domínguez and published in 2011 cover a slightly different sample of organizations from the transatlantic area, the western hemisphere, Asia, and Africa.[11] The editors provide an elaborate framework to assess the rationale, goals, and principles of ten regional security organizations, their institutional provisions, and their performance along four dimensions of security governance: assurance, prevention, protection, and compellence.[12] As the case study chapters show, however, these dimensions are highly heterogeneous and encompass threats of a very different nature, such as traditional threats from outside the region and conflicts between member states, conflicts and political crises within member states, and non-traditional, transnational threats to public and citizen security. A major shortcoming of an analytical tool allowing for such a wide variation of issues is that it complicates the tracing of changes in organizational priorities over time. In fact, the case studies collected by Kirchner and Domínguez concentrate on the current state of the regional organizations.

This article devises more parsimonious analytical categories in order to be able to capture the transformation of mandate, institutional form, and performance of regional security organizations over a long period of time. For that purpose, it draws on the institutionalist debate concerning the form, function, persistence, and change of security institutions.[13] Inspired by reflections on the role of NATO after the end of the Cold War, institutionalist scholars examined the fate of alliances once their precipitating threats disappear. They hypothesized that highly institutionalized entities are more likely to persist than non-institutionalized ones and that more complex institutions that were faced with a variety of tasks from the outset are more likely to adapt to changes in the environment.[14]

An institution's mission might be quite obvious when figuring prominently in its Charter or other key documents. Often, however, international institutions do not live up to their promise or in fact have to cope with problems not yet existent or relevant at the time of the institution's inception. A more detailed scrutiny of an institution's mission and its transformation over time triggered by environmental conditions or historical events and induced by crucial actors is hence useful to capture its evolutionary dynamics. This article proposes to look at international institutions' policy output in order to determine the principal task they fulfilled at a particular moment in time. Hence, I conceptualize policy output as symptom, or manifestation, of an institution's mission.

Varieties of Security Institutions

To classify the changing tasks of regional security organizations, three types of highly institutionalized security coalitions are adapted from a typology introduced by Wallander and Keohane.[15] The three-dimensional typology includes the degree of institutionalization, the situation the state is facing, and participation criteria. With respect to the latter, coalitions can be inclusive, meaning that they involve those states that pose threats or risks, or can deliberately exclude them. Situation refers to the type of security challenge: a coalition is facing a threat if certain actors have the

capabilities to harm the security of others and are perceived as willing to do so by their potential targets. The coalition's norms, rules, and procedures enable the members to identify threats and retaliate effectively against them. In turn, when states are facing risks, no actor has the intention or the capability to harm the security of others, and hence no imminent threat exists. The coalition's norms, rules, and procedures help the members to obtain information and to manage disputes in order to avoid generating security dilemmas.

When concentrating on highly institutionalized security coalitions, three types of institutions can be distinguished:[16] (1) collective defence arrangements, also known as alliances; (2) collective security arrangements; and (3) cooperative security arrangements, also termed security management institutions. Each type is expected to lay emphasis on a different set of tasks.[17]

Collective Defence Arrangements. Collective defence arrangements or alliances are exclusive security institutions designed principally to deal with threats from non-members. Based on a pact of mutual military assistance between the member states, they deter and defend against common external threats and counter external aggression.

Collective Security Arrangements. Collective security arrangements are inclusive security coalitions that maintain order among member states, contain and integrate potential aggressors into the institution's system of norms and rules, and punish non-compliance. The scope of applicable measures ranges from mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes to collective enforcement. A wide variety of economic and diplomatic sanctions as well as armed force may be utilized for enforcement, while the peaceful settlement of disputes comprises both non-binding intervention in the form of preventive diplomacy, good offices, mediation, conciliation, or fact finding, and binding intervention in the form of arbitration or adjudication.[18]

Preventive diplomacy is 'action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur'.[19] In most cases, it consists of diplomatic efforts, sometimes coupled with economic sanctions or arms embargoes, or the threat thereof. By means of the good offices technique, the Secretary General of the United Nations or a regional organization facilitates communication channels for the disputing parties in order to enable them to speak to each other without officially entering into negotiations. An international organization might also form a commission of inquiry that is sent to the countries involved in the dispute to clarify the situation. Mediation is a mode of official negotiation in which a third party helps the conflict parties to arrive at a solution they cannot find by themselves.[20] It may involve persuading the parties to accept mediation in the first place or include multiple mediators over time, for different phases of a conflict and search for settlement.

Adjudication and arbitration involve referring a dispute to an impartial third party tribunal for a binding decision. These methods seek to find a basis for settlement in international law rather than in a political or diplomatic process. However, they can

be used only if states consent to submit a dispute and be bound by the outcome. Arbiters or arbitration panels are usually selected *ad hoc* from a list of potential international arbitrators (lawyers, judges, diplomats, academics, or former government officials). Adjudication, in turn, takes place at an international court, usually the International Court of Justice.

Situated in between mechanisms of peaceful settlement and military enforcement, peacekeeping operations require the consent of the target country. Although peacekeeping as long-term deployment of military and/or civilian personnel is still a domain of the UN, regional organizations have become increasingly active and have carried out observation and monitoring activities, and have sent civilians or even troops to help restore peace and security in areas of recent conflict.

Arms control mechanisms are an additional feature of collective security arrangements. Often enough, the aim of limiting, controlling, and reducing the means for waging war is a major reason for their foundation. International institutions not only produce treaties and conventions but might also establish safeguard systems of inspections and collect information on military expenditures of their member states. Confidence- and security-building measures (CSBM) form part of the arms control framework. They are reciprocated measures that enhance mutual understanding, convey non-hostile intentions, define acceptable norms and behaviour, and hence reduce the potential for military surprise.

Cooperative Security Arrangements. Cooperative security arrangements or security management institutions aim at the promotion of peaceful change based on agreed-upon norms, rules, and procedures. Cooperative security relies on information exchange, transparency, and communication by means of international institutions. This type of cooperation is feasible when there is no manifest threat to address, but states are instead facing risks inside or outside the coalition.

Risks might result from rivalries that are mostly spatial, positional, or ideological in nature. Other contested issues might include the treatment of ethnic minorities or dissidents, or the control over resources.[21] These issues, however, by themselves do not suffice to trigger war. Cooperative security arrangements mitigate these latent tensions by means of CSBM that tend to be of a higher intensity than those employed by collective security organizations. They reduce or, ideally, eliminate the causes of distrust and tensions. Hence, CSBM are the main tool to move from the logic of confrontation to the logic of cooperation.[22] Political instability constitutes a risk as well. Cooperative security organizations might therefore provide instruments that contribute to the solution of political crises and the support of democratic processes. CSBM are also related to democratization, because they are useful devices to manage civil–military relations in countries that, after a period of military rule, are still in the process of consolidating democratic institutions.

The tasks that the different types of institutions fulfil are not mutually exclusive; institutions might combine a variety of functions. Wallander and Keohane call those institutions that combine risk-directed management functions with threat-directed power aggregation functions 'hybrid' institutions.[23] NATO, for example, while primarily designed as an alliance to deter a Soviet attack, also served the purpose of

controlling Germany and hence effectively functioned as a collective security arrangement.

In addition to challenges to international security, all three types of security organizations increasingly have to cope with non-traditional challenges, such as terrorism, organized crime (drug trafficking, illegal arms trade, contraband, human trafficking, and so on), guerrillas and insurgencies, illegal migration, and natural and manmade disasters, whose shared feature is that they are transnational in nature and challenge international and domestic security at the same time.

Policy Output of Security Institutions

Most of the research on policy processes in international organizations looks at economic organizations or exclusively focuses on the UN and European examples such as the OSCE and NATO.[24] However, the analytical categories developed in those studies can be applied to a wider sample of regional security organizations. This analysis focuses on the policy output and differentiates between three types of output: policy programmes, operational activities, and information activities.[25]

Policy Programmes. Policy programmes are sets of norms and rules. The policy programme output of international organizations consists of treaties, declarations, and resolutions – in other words, the legal framework they provide to regulate the interactions among member states and between member states and the international organization itself, or to guide the organization's external behaviour.[26] An important feature of policy programmes in the field of security cooperation is their binding nature. Although the degree of legal obligation does not necessarily correlate with the level of member states' compliance, it is important to consider whether the norms and rules are legally binding obligations or mere declarations and recommendations. International conventions, treaties, and agreements are designed to become legally binding for member states. This requires ratification by the state parties. However, resolutions and declarations of regional organizations' plenary organs usually have recommendatory character. They may be of a highly symbolic value, though.

Operational Activities. Once a policy programme is designed and norms and rules are formulated, the next step is their implementation. That is why a large part of the output takes an operational form. Rittberger and Zangl distinguish five types of operational activities:[27] the specification and concretization of the norms and rules of policy programmes; their active implementation through the international organization itself; monitoring of their implementation by member states; adjudication in cases of disputes about member states' non-compliance; and the imposition of sanctions in case of non-compliance. Operational activities typically comprise the creation of specialized bodies and organizations and the set-up of norm enforcement mechanisms.

Information Activities. The third type of output is information activities, which accompany and have an impact on both programme decisions and operational

activities. International organizations act as agencies for the collection and publication of information relevant to their mission. Some independently generate information and knowledge: they fund research projects, request expertise from scientific institutes, or coordinate research activities in the member states. Additionally, they function as forums for information exchange about the topic the organization is concerned with, and offer members the opportunity to get to know the other states' positions and perceptions.

Persistence or Change? The Organization of American States

Guided by the analytical categories outlined above, this section scrutinizes the changing tasks of the Organization of American States (OAS) and affiliated organizations of the inter-American security system. So far there have been three broad phases in the history of the OAS.[28] The first phase lasted from the late 1940s to the 1980s, corresponding to the Cold War. The prevailing logic of this period reflected the pre-eminence of the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union on a global scale. Second was the post-Cold War era, characterized by the transformation of threats into risks. The third phase has taken shape in response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11. The US unleashed a 'war on terror' that, comparable to the clash between communism and capitalism, came to dominate the global agenda. The following sections will trace how these exogenous changes impacted on the foreign policy preferences of OAS member states and, accordingly, the main tasks of the OAS during each of the three phases.

The OAS during the Cold War

Policy Programmes. The OAS Charter, the Pact of Bogotá, and the Rio Treaty were the original pillars of the hemispheric security system. In its Article 2, the OAS Charter affirms that one of the central purposes of the organization is 'to strengthen the peace and security of the continent', and conflict resolution was among its fundamental goals.[29] Chapter V of the Charter envisions the creation of means for pacific settlement of disputes, and according to Chapter VI, the organization defines itself as a system of collective security. An additional instrument to regulate conflicts between American states was the American Treaty on Pacific Settlement, or Pact of Bogotá, signed in 1948 along with the OAS Charter. It established principles and procedures for dispute settlement including mediation, good offices, investigation, and referral to the International Court of Justice.

As a consequence of World War II, the Inter-American Conference on the Problems of War and Peace (1945) called for a collective response to aggression against any American state. In 1947, at a conference in Rio de Janeiro, this idea took shape in the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, or the Rio Treaty, which defines an attack on one state as an attack on all. Since its main task was to deal with military aggression originating from outside the region, it created a regional collective defence arrangement. The Rio Treaty had already been signed before the foundation of the OAS, but was incorporated into the OAS Charter as a security instrument applicable to those OAS member states that ratified it.

Other hemispheric security institutions include the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB). The IADB was founded in 1942 to coordinate the defence of the Americas during World War II and brought together military representatives. In contrast to the Rio Treaty, it did not become part of the OAS structure after 1948. In the decades following World War II, the IADB had hardly any significance, as the member states did not want to equip it with operational capacity and many OAS member states are not even members of the IADB.

During the Cold War, the task of arms control and disarmament was most eminently addressed outside the OAS. The Latin American Nuclear Weapon Free Zone, established by the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco, dates back to the 1962 Cuban missile crisis and the sense of alarm created among states of the region that a superpower nuclear confrontation might occur on their soil.

Operational Activities. Several of the organs devised by the founders of the OAS have the mandate to monitor and assist in dispute settlement. Any party to a dispute may resort to the Permanent Council to obtain its good offices (Article 85, OAS Charter), which can be delegated to the Secretary General. The Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs is designed to consider problems of an urgent nature (Article 61, OAS Charter). This organ does not meet on a regular basis, but can be convoked upon request.

In its early phase the OAS had some success in preventing conflicts from escalating, such as the repeated tensions between Costa Rica and Nicaragua or the territorial dispute between Honduras and Nicaragua. The mediation of the dispute between El Salvador and Honduras in 1969, known as the 'Soccer War', is considered the clearest expression of the organization's conflict resolution capacities.[30] Starting in the 1960s, however, states were increasingly divided on the issue of intervention, and the next two decades (1970–1989) saw the OAS security activities in decline. The organization was unable to respond to several conflicts in the region, such as the Malvinas/Falklands War in 1982 where the US backed the position of its NATO ally Great Britain rather than Argentina's, and internal wars in Central America throughout the 1980s, where an *ad hoc* coalition, the Contadora (later, Rio) Group, had to be formed to support the peace process.

Most importantly, the OAS could do little to restrain US unilateral efforts. Following the Cuban Revolution, Latin America turned into 'both a battleground and a prize in the conflict between communism and capitalism'.[31] The concept of national security was at the top of the US agenda and overshadowed all other foreign policy goals. Repeatedly, the US government backed anti-communist authoritarian regimes in the region and supported the overthrow of democratically elected governments.[32] In some of those cases, the US referred to the principle of non-intervention in order to legitimize their activities, arguing that they were defending the target state's sovereignty against the intrusion of international communism.[33] The strategic framework of the Cold War consisted in the monopoly of the US government to define the external threat. Latin American governments began to perceive the OAS as an institution hijacked by the US to advance its national interests and affirm its hegemonic status. The Rio Treaty suffered the same fate. Its invocation merely consisted in declarations

of solidarity, but never led to common action. Its credibility as a security instrument was undermined by incidents like the United States' active participation in the 1954 overthrow of the Guatemalan government and its 1962 Santo Domingo invasion.

Discussion and Evaluation of Output. According to its founding documents, the OAS aimed at collective security and collective defence. But although its normative foundations enabled the organization to address both threats from outside the hemisphere and disputes between the American states, operational and information activities remained weak. The Cold War was not a uniform phase, though. Initially, the organization's operational activities did mitigate conflicts in the region. But increasingly, US unilateral action in its crusade against communism and its instrumentalization of the OAS paralysed the organization so that it remained largely inactive during the 1970 and 1980s.

The OAS collective defence provisions had emerged in response to the threats posed by World War II. In the context of the Cold War, a revamped version reflecting the United States' mission to contain communism became the dominant doctrine. As such, it led the United States to extend and consolidate their political supremacy throughout the hemisphere. The US emphasis on collective defence hampered the proper functioning of the OAS collective security provisions. For example, the conflict resolution mechanisms outlined by the Pact of Bogotá were never applied.

The OAS in the 1990s

The end of the Cold War signified a change in the international environment that, on its part, reshaped actors' preferences. In Latin America, the demise of communism coincided with a period of democratic transition and consolidation. Recently democratized regimes are particularly likely to join and collaborate in international institutions.[34] In turn, the democratization of their member states transforms pre-existing international organizations. Democracies set up or strengthen 'inter-democratic' organizations, which are more effective in reducing the risks of militarized interstate conflict among their members than other kinds of international organizations.[35] Hence, democratization in the region provided an incentive to transform the OAS.

Additionally, the dynamics of inter-American relations changed. In the post-Cold War period, anti-communism no longer served as the guiding principle, a change that opened up new room for the United States' longstanding rhetorical support for democracy to be put into greater operation.[36] At the same time, a redefinition of the concept of regional security was necessary. Security challenges became more dynamic, resilient, and diverse. On the one hand, traditional security threats were still relevant. Throughout the 20th century, the region experienced a number of militarized inter-state disputes and strategic rivalries, some of which still exist.[37] On the other hand, many of the new challenges to regional security were transnational in nature and arose from problems like organized crime, migration, and environmental degradation. Additionally, in the course of transitions to democracy, the civilian control of the military and the collective defence of democracy were perceived as security challenges.[38]

Policy Programmes. The 1991 meeting of the OAS General Assembly in Santiago, Chile, is considered a turning point in regional relations. In the 'Santiago Commitment to Democracy and the Renewal of the Inter-American System', the member states envisioned an adaptation to the changed political environment after the end of the Cold War. Therefore, reforms of the existing institutions were initiated during the 1990s, and several new legal instruments and implementation mechanisms were created within and outside the framework of the OAS. Overall, in the 1990s the emphasis moved away from collective defence to cooperative security. Confidence- and security-building measures (CSBM) became an increasingly important topic. Since 1992, the annual General Assembly passed resolutions encouraging the member states to carry out CSBM and to share information on the implemented measures.

Instruments designed for the support of democratic processes and the defence of democracy in times of political crisis can also be interpreted as means for conflict prevention and conflict resolution.[39] The Santiago Commitment emphasized the member states' 'inescapable commitment' to the defence of democracy in the region, and the accompanying Resolution 1080 set up procedures of collective action in the case of a 'sudden or irregular interruption of the democratic political institutional process or of the legitimate exercise of power by the democratically elected government' of a member state. The 1992 Protocol of Washington amended the OAS Charter, granting the organization the authority to suspend a member state whose democratically constituted government is overthrown by force.[40]

Concerning the traditional security mission of the inter-American system, the 1990s saw an ongoing debate over whether the Rio Treaty and the Inter-American Defense Board were still needed. Due to its inactivity, observers from many member states considered the Rio Treaty's collective defence provisions obsolete. Yet from the perspective of some other states, among them the US, the Rio Treaty should stay in force.[41] The same schism reigned concerning the IADB. Some countries viewed it as an outdated Cold War exercise in military diplomacy. Others, like Argentina and Canada, proposed to integrate it into the OAS structure and turn it into a tool for security management.[42] Due to these divergent opinions, no reform attempts were made for the time being.

In contrast to the Cold War period, legal instruments for arms control were created inside the OAS framework: the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and other Related Materials (1997) and the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisition (1999).

Operational Activities. The most significant institutional innovation in regional security management was the establishment of the Committee on Hemispheric Security (CHS). It came into existence in 1992 as a special commission to redefine the concept of security, as suggested by the Santiago Commitment, and was turned into a permanent organ in 1995. The agenda of the CHS is determined by the Permanent Council, which instructs the CHS to take action on those General Assembly resolutions that pertain to hemispheric security. In order to enact the General Assembly resolutions on CSBM, a first Meeting of Experts on this topic took place in Buenos

Aires in 1994. Subsequently, the regional conferences on CSBM in Santiago (1995) and San Salvador (1998) issued suggestions on how to undertake concrete steps towards confidence building.[43]

During the 1990s, the OAS turned into an active defender of democracy. Already in 1990, Canada had taken the lead in creating a Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD), which carried out numerous election observation missions.[44] Resolution 1080, which opened the possibility to condemn an unconstitutional interruption of democratic rule, was invoked four times during the 1990s: after the coup in Haiti in 1991, in reaction to President Alberto Fujimori's 'self-coup' (*autogolpe*) in Peru in 1992 and a similar *autogolpe* in Guatemala in 1993, and in Paraguay in 1996 in the middle of a civil–military crisis with the credible threat of a coup.

The OAS also addressed non-traditional security challenges. Drug trafficking is the oldest and most persistent one, as is illustrated by the fact that the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) had already been created in 1986. In the 1990s, new provisions regarding money laundering were issued. Terrorism figured on the hemispheric security agenda after the bomb attacks on the Israeli Embassy and a Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires in 1992 and 1994, respectively. The heads of states held a Special Conference on Terrorism in 1996, and a follow-up meeting created the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE), which was set up in 2001.

Additional steps to deepen cooperation in the western hemisphere were taken outside the OAS framework. The First Summit of the Americas, held in Miami in 1994, was interpreted as a signal of departure from US unilateralism and towards a commitment to democracy in the region.[45] However, security issues were not part of the agenda. This is why a separate Defense Ministerial of the Americas Meeting was convoked in Williamsburg, USA, in 1995. Subsequent meetings took place in Bariloche, Argentina (1996), Cartagena de Indias, Colombia (1998), Manaus, Brazil (2000), Santiago, Chile (2002), Quito, Ecuador (2004), Managua, Nicaragua (2006), Banff, Canada (2008), and in Santa Cruz, Bolivia (2010). The tenth conference is scheduled to take place in Punta del Este, Uruguay, on 8–10 October 2012.

Information Activities. In the course of the OAS's reactivation, a pattern of continuous exchange amongst experts from the national defence and foreign affairs bureaucracies, national representatives at the OAS headquarters, and OAS personnel emerged. Particularly via the CHS, member states share sensitive information on defence spending, weapons acquisition, and on CSBM carried out in the region. While not taking binding decisions, the Defense Ministerial of the Americas is an additional discussion forum in which current issues in hemispheric security and defence policies can be addressed.

Discussion and Evaluation of Output. For the OAS, the end of the Cold War was a watershed. In Latin America, the organization had for a long time been experienced as an instrument employed by the United States to convey their national agenda. The end of the Cold War abolished the strategic framework whose main rationale was the fight against communism. Democratic transitions in most Latin American countries

as well as the worldwide resurgence of regionalism were additional factors that led to a revival of the inter-American security system.[46] However, there is a mixed picture with respect to normative and institutional development during the 1990s. While the majority of innovations took place in the field of cooperative security, reforms in the fields of collective defence and collective security were only partly achieved.

The changing strategic framework involved a shift from collective to cooperative security. The tasks of dissuasion and deterrence were substituted by an emphasis on the creation of higher levels of mutual trust by CSBM, which guarantee the transparency of military procedures and the availability of information.[47] However, the OAS's most significant institutional innovation was its defence of democracy regime. The fact that member states placed a strong emphasis on the possibility to intervene in protection of representative democracy in times of crisis signals a shift in priorities, putting less emphasis on the traditional principles of non-intervention and state sovereignty.[48]

In contrast, hardly any reforms of the pre-existing normative and institutional framework were accomplished, and as progenies of the Cold War, its components appeared increasingly outdated. As demonstrated by the examples of the old Inter-American Defense Board and the new initiative of the Defense Ministerial of the Americas, consultations on defence policy often were initiated outside the OAS. Some observers interpret this as an expression of Latin American persistent mistrust towards the US after their hijacking of the OAS during the Cold War.[49] Hence, in the 1990s, the future of the OAS as a regional security organization was still undefined, which was mainly attributable to the US role in the hemisphere.[50] Power asymmetry between the United States and the rest of the region remained an outstanding characteristic and met with a lack of coordination of Latin American states *vis-à-vis* the neighbour in the north. The relative irrelevance of Latin America in US global security considerations became increasingly obvious. US regional policy concentrated on economic issues, with market opening and hemispheric integration under the aegis of neoliberalism as the main goals.[51]

The OAS after 9/11

While democratization and economic transformation were the main concerns in the western hemisphere during the 1990s, the inter-American system in the new millennium was shaped by the external shock of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and political changes within the region, conducive to the contradictory trends of a reassertion of US hegemony and the emergence of regional powers. George W. Bush's war against terrorism diverted US security policy priorities to the Middle East and Central Asia so that Latin America almost dropped from sight.[52] The US restricted its engagement in the region to some topics directly affecting its national interests, such as illegal migration, the fight against drug trafficking, and terrorist threats.

At the same time, Latin American states are increasingly reluctant to follow Washington's lead in multilateral forums. Some, like Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador, openly oppose the United States; a few, like Colombia, closely cooperate with the US on a bilateral basis; and others, like Brazil, foster diversified relations in the international arena. Brazil and Venezuela compete for the role of regional

powers, and both of them pursue projects of South American integration as part of their strategy of expanding their political influence. On the Brazilian side, the most important step was the initiation of a Community of South American Nations in 2004, later turned into the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). On the part of Venezuela, President Chavez initiated the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), which started out as an explicitly anti-hegemonic bilateral agreement between Venezuela and Cuba and was later joined by a number of like-minded left-wing governments.

Policy Programmes. In reaction to 9/11, the OAS passed a resolution to strengthen cooperation in the prevention of and the fight against terrorism. In June 2002, the member states signed the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism, which offers a legal framework for cooperation efforts and information exchange. The need to clarify the mandate of the IADB and its relationship to the OAS had repeatedly been articulated in the 1990s. After the 2003 Special Conference on Security, the CHS formed the 'Working Group to Conclude the Analysis of the Juridical and Institutional Link between the OAS and the Inter-American Defense Board'. The new statutes of the IADB were approved in March 2006 and confined the Board to technical advisory services in the area of military and defence, while not performing functions of an operational nature. Typical activities include mine clearing, reporting on CSBM, and the development of educational programmes on regional security.

At the same time, the policy programmes initiated in the 1990s continued in the new millennium. To comply with the call for a thorough review of regional security, the Special Conference on Security was held in Mexico City in 2003. The conference adopted the Declaration on Security in the Americas, which affirms the countries' political will to help preserve peace through close cooperation and presents a multidimensional concept of security, including 'traditional and new threats, concerns, and other challenges to the security of the states of the hemisphere'.[53] Apart from traditional security threats, like territorial and boundary disputes, the Declaration presents an enumeration of new challenges to security, such as terrorism, drug trafficking, arms trade and contraband, migration, and natural disasters. The list also includes aspects of public safety. Genuine socio-economic problems like poverty and diseases are defined as security risks. The novel thing about those non-traditional challenges is that governments increasingly realize their transnational scope and impact as well as the involvement of non-state actors.[54] Critics argue that the inclusion of a broad range of security concerns renders the term diffuse and limitless, and point to the dangers of an amalgamation of military and police tasks.[55] However, its supporters claim that the multidimensional concept exerts an integrative function, as it represents the wide range of security problems relevant for the different sub-regions, and they emphasize the principle of collective security, which guarantees that states assist each other in dealing with the various challenges.[56]

As well as the reconceptualization of hemispheric security, the beginning of the new millennium saw a deepening of the defence of democracy regime. On 11 September 2001, the OAS adopted the Inter-American Democratic Charter.[57] With it, the OAS broadened its conception of what constitutes a democratic crisis to

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include not only irregular interruptions of the democratic political institutional process, but also any 'unconstitutional alteration of the democratic order', a phrase applying specifically to undemocratic actions of democratically elected leaders.

Operational Activities. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks collective defence once again became an issue in the hemisphere. The United States initiated its war on terror, which resembled the strategic framework of the Cold War.[58] Once again, the US determined the enemy and even attempted to redefine pre-existing security challenges, in particular guerrilla warfare and drug trafficking, as part of the new phenomenon.[59] Consequently, several of the traditional instruments that had been used for the last time in the Cold War period were reactivated. In response to the terrorist attacks of September 2001, the US invoked both the Rio Treaty and the Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

At the same time, the Latin American states, for most of whom terrorism was not a major concern, focused on the consolidation of the security management institutions created in the 1990s and emphasized collective security. Following the Declaration on Security, the General Secretariat created the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security as one of its sub-units in 2005. Initially it only functioned as secretariat of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE) and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) and concentrated on public security, but in 2011 a new Department of Defense and Hemispheric Security was set up.

Having fulfilled its original mission to formulate a new concept of security, the Committee on Hemispheric Security persisted as the primary forum for discussion of both traditional and newly emerging security challenges. These are reflected in its annual work plan and calendar of activities.[60] The CHS holds sessions on disarmament and non-proliferation and hosts the meetings of the state parties of the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions. Regular meetings and working groups address public security, transnational organized crime, the problem of criminal gangs, and natural disaster reduction and risk management. Additionally, the CHS follows up on other security-related OAS activities, such as the work of CICTE and CICAD.

In 2003 another Meeting of Experts on CSBM took place in Miami. Building on the previous Declarations of Santiago and San Salvador, the Consensus of Miami contains an 'Illustrative List of CSBM' which attempts a systematic classification of CSBM into diplomatic and political measures, educational and cultural measures, and military measures. The experts also recommended using the CHS as a forum for the topic of CSBM. Accordingly, the CHS started to convene as the Forum on Confidence- and Security-Building in April 2005; subsequent Forum meetings were held in November 2006, March 2008, and November 2010.

In the area of the defence of democracy, new mechanisms were created and applied for the first time. Under the umbrella of the Department of Sustainable Democracy and Special Missions, which addresses both inter-state territorial controversies and internal, political–institutional conflicts, the OAS initiated a Special Program for the Promotion of Dialogue and Conflict Resolution. This programme coordinated a number of special missions, for example to Bolivia, where it came

into play during the electoral process after President Carlos Mesa had resigned in the context of political and social upheaval in 2005, Ecuador where it assisted with the re-establishment of the Supreme Court of Justice, Haiti where it provided technical assistance for the 2006 elections and Nicaragua where it facilitated dialogue after intra-governmental conflict. The Inter-American Democratic Charter was invoked for the first time in 2002. Pursuant to Article 20 of the IADC, the OAS condemned the coup against Hugo Chavez in Venezuela and sent a high-level mission to the country to support dialogue between the adversary political forces. The Charter was also activated following the ouster of President Manuel Zelaya of Honduras in 2009 – the first time that, in accordance with the defence of democracy regime, a member state was suspended.

From the start of the new millennium, the OAS once again became more active in the field of collective security and created instruments for conflict resolution. The Peace Fund was established in 2000 to address territorial disputes. From 1999 to 2003 it brokered agreements in the border disputes between Belize and Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, and El Salvador and Honduras. After the 2005 restructuring of the General Secretariat, the Peace Fund is now administered by the Department of Sustainable Democracy and Special Missions, which is part of the Secretariat for Political Affairs. The first OAS peacekeeping mission, consisting of a staff of more than 100 civilian experts, was established in 2004 to support the peace process in Colombia.[61] In 2008, a good offices mission was set up after the incursion of Colombian military forces and police personnel into the territory of Ecuador. The two most recent Meetings of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs also addressed disputes between member states: the Colombian–Ecuadorian border crisis (March 2008), and the situation in the border area between Costa Rica and Nicaragua (December 2010).

Information Activities. The ever-expanding information activities of the OAS in the field of security mainly relate to security management and arms control and are coordinated by the CHS. As of 2009, most member states complied with their obligation to provide a report on their acquisitions of conventional weapons under the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisition. The CHS is in charge of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of all types of CSBM, publishes a Roster of Experts in CSBM, and considers new variants, for example CSBM between internal security forces in order to cope with transnational security challenges. Additionally, the new IADB statutes mandate the Board to offer consultative services on CSBM of a military nature and to keep an inventory of CSBM.[62] A remarkable feature of the OAS's information activities is its transparency *vis-à-vis* NGOs and the general public.[63] Thanks to its comprehensive website, the texts of treaties and declarations and detailed information on operational activities, such as the agenda of the CHS, and even on sensitive topics like reporting on defence expenditures, are easily accessible.

Discussion and Evaluation of Output. After 9/11, the gap between US interests in security policy and the concerns of the rest of the region widened.[64] From the

perspective of the United States, collective defence once again became the top priority. In terms of US Latin American policy, there is a continuity of logic between Cold War approaches and the current situation. Instead of anti-communism, the war on terror became the most important foreign policy goal, and the US tried to seize the decision-making apparatus of the OAS to promote their national agenda and urge other states to partake in its mission.[65]

Simultaneously, the OAS continued its trajectory towards security management. By means of its Declaration on Security, the organization identified new security challenges in the region. At the same time, it addressed traditional security threats in the framework of its CHS and even accomplished the transformation of an outdated collective defence arrangement (the IADB) into a security management forum. In comparison to the operational activities of the 1990s, significant progress occurred in the field of conflict resolution mechanisms, with the Latin American states in the driving seat. By creating the Peace Fund and establishing the administrative structure of the Department of Sustainable Democracy and Special Missions, the OAS accomplished a more autonomous stance in collective security. Moreover, the OAS expanded its information activities and established itself as a venue used by policy-makers for discussion and direct information exchange.

Some caveats are in order, however, when assessing the recent performance of the OAS. The contradictory US policy towards Latin America has led to mounting disappointment of Latin American states with hemisphere-wide institutions and to the emergence of new sub-regional organizations, which have recently been more successful in conflict management than the OAS. During its 2008 summit, the Rio Group settled the dispute caused by the border skirmish between Ecuador and Colombia, while UNASUR played a key role as a mediator in the 2008 secession crisis in Bolivia and the diplomatic crisis between Colombia and Venezuela in mid 2010. In direct competition with the CHS, UNASUR established the South American Defence Council as a cooperative security arrangement designed to enhance multilateral military cooperation, promote CSBM, and foster collaboration of defence industries.

Conclusion: Does the OAS Still Have a project?

When looking at the policy output during the three different phases examined in this article, the contrasts are striking. During the Cold War, the OAS basically maintained the normative framework that had been set up in the aftermath of World War II. In turn, in the comparatively short time period after the end of the Cold War, numerous new policy programme initiatives were adopted. Much more often than before, they were followed by appropriate operational activities. Additionally, policy programmes and operational activities were complemented by an increasing amount of information activities. In particular, the communications revolution with the spread of the worldwide web contributed to an intensification of information exchange.

Overall, the OAS exhibits elements of collective security, collective defence, and cooperative security arrangements. But the focus of its mission shifted over time, and this shift was linked to the special features of the respective phases and the resulting

policy preferences of key actors. The Cold War period was characterized by recurrent divergence of US and Latin American foreign policy orientations and security concerns. The hegemonial power emphasized collective defence against the external threat of communism. The doctrine of anti-communism formed the legitimatory basis for US interventions in the region. US unilateralism contradicted and hampered a collective security approach: The OAS could not address US interventions adequately, and due to fear of hegemonic interference, the mitigation of intra-regional conflict was often undertaken by ad hoc coalitions.

The 1990s were a period of multilateralism and convergence of Latin American and US foreign policy preferences. The states unanimously pushed for the renewal of the inter-American system, a revision of the concept of security towards a more coperative version, and a commitment to the defence of democracy in the region. Hemispheric security was more than ever before shaped by the interests of the Latin American countries. After the demise of communism an alliance against external threats was no longer needed. Comparable to the Cold War era, however, collective security tasks were usually not addressed by the OAS, but by sub-regional coalitions or, in more serious cases such as the 1991 coup in Haiti and the civil wars in El Salvador and Guatemala, by the UN. The OAS focused on the consolidation and defence of democracy as well as on confidence building between former rivals. Hence, a cooperative security approach, which is restricted to defining, discussing, and monitoring security risks in the region, prevailed during the 1990s.

The new millennium is once again characterized by a growing rift between US and Latin American foreign policy orientations and security concerns. In the inter-American system, we can observe a somewhat odd coexistence of a re-emergence of Cold War dynamics and the continuity of the policy programmes established in the 1990s. With its war on terror, the United States shifted its attention back towards collective defence in the aftermath of 9/11. In turn, for the majority of Latin American countries, international terrorism does not pose an imminent threat. However, in compliance with the collective defence paradigm, most states chose to cooperate with the US to a certain extent. At the same time, the Latin American countries maintain their focus on security management and collective security, as evidenced by the discussions on the new multidimensional security concept, new initiatives in CSBM, the creation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and conflict resolution mechanisms such as the Peace Fund, and the multiplication of information activities.

The US–Latin American divergence of foreign policy orientations increasingly plagues collaboration in the western hemisphere. This is evidenced by the decay of the Summit of the Americas, which at its inception in 1994 symbolized the shift to multilateralism in the western hemisphere. The 2009 summit was considered a disappointing event, and at the 6th Summit of the Americas in Cartagena, Colombia, 14–15 April 2012, no final declaration was adopted, evidencing the lack of consensus. While most Latin American countries sympathized with future Cuban participation in the Summit, the United States and Canada were alone in opposing this proposal, and they also refused to endorse Argentina's claim to the British-held Falkland/Malvinas Islands. Another contested issue was drug trafficking. Some Latin American

leaders pushed for a limited legalization of the narcotics trade in order to contain drug-related crime and violence, but the US and Canada, in spite of admitting failures in the war on drugs, refused to accept any legalization. What is more, a prostitution scandal involving President Obama's Secret Service cast a big shadow over the Summit. The image of US government officials taking advantage of the situation of Colombian women with few opportunities evoked devastating images of US imperialism and exploitation of its southern neighbours.

Moreover, the position of the OAS as the most institutionalized security organization in the region is challenged by sub-regional initiatives. After the establishment of the South American Defence Council, UNASUR has emerged as the main contender. Other sub-regional organizations, such as Mercosur and the Andean Community, also have a security dimension. Whether institutional proliferation and overlapping are dangerous or beneficial for regional security governance is an issue of heated debate. Tavares considers institutional overlapping to be a nuisance leading to unaccountability, resource ineffectiveness, and political competition.[66] Other authors view the coexistence of various institutions more favourably and point to the potential benefits of a division of labour.[67] A division of labour could work along geographical lines or by discerning different types of security challenges. Many problems do not necessarily have to be discussed on a hemispheric level, but it might make sense to have sub-regional or bilateral institutions addressing some of the heterogeneous security concerns in the region.

The OAS's main achievement was the extension of its essential principles, in particular democracy, human rights, and peaceful conflict resolution, to the entire hemisphere, and in the future it could concentrate on upholding and defending these principles. Its tasks would then include confidence building, institution building, and the promotion and defence of the democratic paradigm. In political day-to-day business, the OAS functions as a discussion forum, establishes transgovernmental networks, enables frequent contacts between officials in security and defence policy, and thereby creates awareness of other countries' and sub-regions' security concerns. This is a profile very much in line with the concept of cooperative security. Additionally, the OAS should also be in charge of threats affecting the whole hemisphere. Thus, it will remain relevant for arms control as well as for the fight against transnational threats such as organized crime and terrorism, and may also play a role in resolving border disputes. Sub-regional organizations are likely to play a greater role in the realm of security as well, both in the field of collective and cooperative security. In some cases, the resolution of border disputes and tensions between states might work better in a sub-regional environment. The same holds true for the resolution of domestic political crises. In several instances, such as the internal crisis in Bolivia in 2008, the need for a forum that excludes the United States has been identified. However, an explicit division of labour between the OAS and UNASUR in these spheres has not been established yet, and the potential development of a 'multilevel security architecture' in the Americas will be an interesting subject for further investigation.

The surprising persistence of an organization repeatedly reputed to be dead confirms the basic institutionalist assumption that more complex institutions equipped

with a variety of tasks are more likely to adapt to changes in the environment. Ultimately, however, the fate of the OAS depends on the actors' interest in sustaining it. Its unique feature is that it facilitates the cultivation of a network of contacts across the whole western hemisphere. In order to be able to foster collective action in the region, the United States need the OAS, given that there is no alternative institutional framework. For Latin American governments, in spite of the mistrust and suspicion directed against the hegemonic power, the OAS offers multiple opportunities to exchange opinions with the US government and relay their views and concerns to their northern neighbour. Hence, the fact that it is the only forum to include all sovereign American states might be the decisive advantage of the OAS that warrants its survival alongside thriving sub-regional alternatives.

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