

Remarks by Ambassador Roger Noriega
Permanent Council Meeting
September 6, 2001

- Today the OAS stands on the cusp of history.
- The Permanent Council, by approving the Inter-American Democratic Charter, clears the way for our Foreign Ministers to adopt the Inter-American Democratic Charter when they meet in Lima, Peru, on September 10-11.
- In Lima, our government will fulfill an important Summit mandate and establish the OAS as the premiere regional organization in the effort to promote and defend democracy.
- This Charter evidences the deep political commitment of OAS member states to promote and foster democracy in the hemisphere. It is the fulfillment of an important Summit mandate, and is faithful to the wishes of our heads of state as expressed in the Summit's Political Declaration and the Plan of Action.
- We understand this Charter to be in conformity with the OAS Charter and international law. Within that context, and with the Charter as a guide and instrument, we commit ourselves to continue to promote and defend those individual human rights and fundamental freedoms that are the elements of democracy.
- In this regard, we would note that the United States understands that this Charter does not establish any new rights or obligations under either domestic or international law. The United States also understands that the use of the term "peoples" in the Democratic Charter should not be construed as having any implications as regards the rights that may attach to the term under international law, as has been made clear in previous relevant Summit documents.
- This Charter expresses the profound conviction of all the inhabitants of the Americas that they have a right to democracy and that democracy is the only legitimate form of government in this Hemisphere.
- By strengthening and enhancing the ability of the OAS to promote and defend democracy, we are practicing a new and dynamic form of multilateralism that promotes our highest common values. It [is] a multilateralism that will establish in the Americas a region that trades in freedom and liberty. It is a multilateralism that builds bridges across the diversity that characterizes the Americas, uniting us in our fundamental right to determine our own destinies through our democratic governments and helping to create open societies in which the full potential of all our citizens can be realized.
- The Charter we have before us was the product of the most open and transparent negotiating process in the history of the OAS. It has been the object of extensive consultation within national governments and among civil society. In this regard, the Charter is the result of a consensus that is deep and broad.
- Achieving this consensus required hard work. We would like to recognize the important role of Ambassador de la Calle., chair of the Charter Working Group. His tireless and determined effort to see this process through was crucial to our success. We would also like to acknowledge your important role, Mr. Chairman. Your expert management of the Permanent Council during this important period created the space and environment for our successful negotiations.
- Finally, we would like to acknowledge all of our colleagues around the table. The Working Group's commitment to this Charter, and its willingness to work hard, and to be creative and

flexible, set a tone that contributed greatly to the successful conclusion of our talks. This is a tone that we hope we can consolidate and build upon to strengthen the OAS and our bilateral relations.

- We look forward to seeing you in Lima.