ORGANIZATION

OF

AMERICAN STATES

Daniel Corren
Undersecretary-General

Andrea Dorfzaun, *Chair*

The Ivy League
Model United Nations Conference
Ninteenth Annual Session

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Delegates,

It is my sincere pleasure to welcome you to the Crisis Simulations of the 19th annual Ivy League Model United Nations Conference. In an attempt to separate this conference both from previous ILMUNCs and from other conferences held around the country, we have made some significant changes to the available committees which we hope will challenge you and force you to examine some issues that are not necessarily as common in the general course of Model UN conferences. We have selected some superb chairs and crisis directors to run your committees, and we are very excited about the prospect of this being one of the largest and most successful ILMUNCs to date.

That being said let me tell you a bit about myself and my previous experience in Model United Nations. I am currently a sophomore at the University of Pennsylvania majoring in Political Science and minoring in Russian and Psychology. I grew up in Denver, Colorado and began my career in Model UN during my freshman year of high school. Throughout high school, I attended a total of over 20 regional conferences and attended NAIMUN three times. During this time, I gained extensive experience as a chair and as a delegate and helped my school to host two conferences of our own. Since arriving at college, I have participated in several conferences and assisted as crisis staff and assistant Crisis Director at last year's UPMUNC and ILMUNC, respectively.

Our goal for this conference is for you, the delegates, to debate realistic, engaging topics, to meet other people who are interested in the overall state of the world, and to generally have a great time. During conference, it is my primary responsibility to oversee the committees and make sure they are running smoothly and that you are engaged and are enjoying yourselves. If, at any point during conference, you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to seek me out or to ask your advisor to seek me out. I will make myself available and attempt to resolve any concerns as quickly as possible. To that end, I have enclosed my e-mail address, so if you have any pre-conference questions, please feel free to send me an e-mail and I will respond as quickly as possible.

Again, welcome to ILMUNC 2003, I look forward to seeing you at conference.

Sincerely,
Daniel A. Corren
Undersecretary General of Crisis Simulations
crisis@ilmunc.org

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Organization of the American States for ILMUNC 2003! My name is Andrea Dorfzaun, and I will be your chairperson for this year's committee. I am a senior Wharton-ite, and I'm majoring in something or other. I have a lot of MUN experience, including active participation throughout college. One of my main interests in life isinternational affairs, especially those having to do with Ecuador, my home country, and the rest of Latin America.

Your directors and I have worked very hard to make this committee interesting and enjoyable. We have made a great effort in trying to offer you a clear picture of the importance of the problem of rural marginalization, urban violence. Also we have prepared different scenarios that could lead to an important crisis in the region if the OAS does not take prompt action.

The background guides that we have prepared are the result of long hours of research. But you should only use them as guides to your countries research. It order to assure a great debate it is imperative that the whole committee is adequately prepared. Please feel free to contact me if you have any doubts or inquiries about the committee, the conference, or Philadelphia. I look very forward to meet all of you very soon..

Sincerely,

Andrea Dorfzaun
Chair, Organization of American States
adorfzau@sas.upenn.edu

Organization of American States

The Organization of American States (OAS) was established by 20 states in 1948 to "achieve an order of peace and justice, to promote their solidarity, to strengthen their collaboration, and to defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and their dependence." Currently, the organization is comprised of all the 35 states of the Americas, and has granted 37 States Permanent Observer status. In its first decade, the organization has initiated programs that support the development of human resources and the improvement of development policies of the nations in the hemisphere. In 1959, OAS established the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which works to promote respect for the human rights promoted in the Organization of American States' charter. Since the 1980's, the OAS has worked to promote representative democracy, especially through its adoption of the 1080 Resolution "Representative Democracy," which outlines a procedure for defending against any threat to democracy. The procedure was applied on three occasions: Haiti in 1991, Peru in 1992, and Guatemala in 1993.

Other areas the OAS is working on are the environment, trade, and the development and codification of international law. Since its creation, the Organization's charter has undergone significant restructuring. The 1967 revisions included the incorporation of new provisions in major economic and social areas. The 1985 revisions added the principle of respect for non-intervention when promoting or defending democracy. The powers of the Permanent Council and Secretary-General were strengthened, and the revisions also allowed the member states to decide on requests for admission to the OAS. Further Protocols established the eradication of poverty and the promotion of integration among OAS member nations as further goals of Organization. The OAS established the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in 1959. In 1967, the OAS created programs developing educational, scientific, cultural, and technological interests.

The Organization of American States is composed of five separate organs that cover a variety of issues. These issues range from political, economic, legal, and social issues. These are the Permanent Council, the Inter-American Economic and Social Council, the Inter-American Council for Education, Science and Culture, a Juridical Committee, and a Commission on Human Rights. The General Assembly of the OAS meets annually, and the Secretary-General of the OAS along with an assistant are elected for five year terms. Each member gets one vote in each of the various committees.

TOPIC ONE

Street Children in Guatemala

Introduction:

"A world fit for children is one in which all children get the best possible start…"[1] This statement was made by the United Nations Special Session on Children in an outcome document in May 2002. In Latin America, there are millions of children living on the streets, with very little food and shelter. They are malnourished and are often victims of abuse. As of yet, the state governments have been ineffective in dealing with these street urchins, and it is therefore the responsibility international organizations, more specifically that of the Organization of American States (OAS), to protect and defend the rights of these children.

Statement of the Problem:

Children require nourishment, shelter, and love in order to survive. The 40 million street children in Latin America lack these three essential elements of survival. These children are often abused at home by their families, and turn to the streets in hope of finding a better life. Over forty percent of these children are homeless, and the other sixty percent work on the streets to support their families: in order to survive, they often steal food and become prostitutes. One would think that the governments of the nations in Latin America where this problem persists would take immediate and direct action in order to protect these street urchins, but they have failed to do so. One of the major reasons for the lack of action is that many of these children are tortured and abused by the very police officers, military officers, and security guards, who are supposed to protect them.

As Latin American nations fail to find a solution to this problem and governements do not provide aid to the children, international organizations will have to become involved to prevent numerous more children from perishing. These children are the future, and they must not only be protected, but also educated. If no solution is immediately found, thousands will continue to be tortured and abused, dying before they have had the opportunity to reach adulthood. In a 1991 study done by *Casa Alianza*, an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to the rehabilitation and defence of street children, each interviewed child had been sexually abused, and ninety-three percent of these children had a sexually transmitted disease[2]. There is no health care available for these children, and their conditions will continue to worsen if the abuse does not end and if they do not receive adequate health care treatment. Inaction in this situation is essentially denying these children's right to live

History:

Few people realize the dire situation of the street children, especially the violence they encounter on a daily basis. For the last fifteen years, street children in Latin America have been tortured and abused, in some cases by police officers, yet this knowledge remains unknown to many individuals worldwide. There are over 40 million street children living in Latin America, either attempting to supplement their families' income or living homeless on the streets trying to survive. They sleep in abandoned buildings, under bridges, in doorways, or in public parks, and they often resort to petty theft and prostitution to survive. Often these children leave their homes because they have suffered from physical, emotional or sexual abuse by their families.

The problem of street urchins in Latin America is particularly prevalent in Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, and Nicaragua. Latin America has been consumed by civil wars that have destroyed economies and entire groups of people. The priority of the governments is therefore not the situation regarding street children, but the turmoil that plagues their nations. Little attention has been paid to the constant police violence and abuse inflicted upon these children, or to their treatment within the justice system through which they regularly pass. Street children throughout the world are subjected to routine harassment and physical abuse by police, government, and private security forces, who are out to cleanse the streets of a perceived social blight. Street children face extortion, theft, severe beatings, mutilation, sexual abuse, and even death.

In Guatemala, NGO *Casa Alianza* has been actively seeking police accountability for the rape, torture and abuse of street children. However, only a handful of prosecutions have resulted from the hundreds of complaints filed. *Casa Alianza* not only attempts to protect the children, but it also aims to raise awareness about the violence and abuse towards street children in Gautemala and the neighboring countries. Unfortunately, once these children begin their lives on the streets, the abuse and violence continues - their struggle for survival persists. Furthermore, there have been reports that children who have subjected themselves to acts of prostitution in order to survive have been jailed for their acts. Thus, instead of being sent to adequate homes for street children, they have been treated like criminals. Children have been senselessly murdered in the middle of the night while sleeping on street corners. All these children want to do is survive, yet they are being robbed of everything, including life itself.

There is no reason why these circumstances should persist. Although the history of street children has been in the media for the last ten to fifteen years, in the last three years the situation has deteriorated at an exponential rate and it deserves the attention of not only the Latin American community but of the international community as well.

Relevant International Action:

On July 27th, 2001, the United Nations Committee on Human Rights made recommendations to the state of Guatemala regarding the situation concerning street children. The committee proposed that the State of Guatemala implement a children's code that would guarantee the rights of all children. The state would also take measures to protect and rehabilitate the street children, while condemning those who were guilty of any related violence. Furthermore in 1999, the same United Nations Committee on Human Rights condemned the street children situation in Mexico and urged own daily survival that they do not want to deal with the responsibilities of raising a child. Compounding this core issue are two additional factors. The first is the frequency with which women are left pregnant without the support of a husband, often forcing them to abandon their offspring The second is the lack of education about birth control, and where there is ample education, a lack of availability. This prevents parents from understanding how they can control and limit the number of children they have until they are prepared for the responsibility of parenting.

Like the parents, the governments in these countries often find themselves overworked and under-funded to make an attempt to address an issue such as this. The main priority of most governments in less developed countries (LDCs) is to attempt to stabilize, reform, and/or bolster their economies and infant industry. Given the generally poor social, economic, and structural circumstances that prevail, few resources are left for addressing such social and cultural problems. The government may be able to acknowledge the existence of a problem, yet there is neither the time and money, nor the energy to create and institute policies that would lead to any truly effective solutions to this problem.

The key to the issue of street children, both specifically within Guatemala and in the rest of Latin America, is getting the international community involved. The United Nations Committee on Human Rights has been an active propagator of various recommendations; however, the harsh realities of the matter require a more localized form of involvement. Namely, the Organization of American States (OAS) is expected to address the problem of street children as part of its current agenda. Unfortunately, the governments of Latin American countries are still dealing with political unrest and economic problems for street children to be a high priority. Consequently, OAS action cannot go very far, but it can certainly develop a system of regional support. Perhaps the most effective intervention will be the creation of a sub-committee, which can monitor the problem and ensure its effective resolution.

Possible solutions:

A sub-committee under the auspices of the Organization of American States would offer several possible ways of approaching the problem.

First and foremost, the committee should issue occasional reports on its progress as well as an executive report to be delivered at OAS meetings. Additionally, cooperation with the UNCHR should be made a top priority of the newly created body. Such internal structure would assign the committee the key role of enhancing relevant communication between the international community and the national governments of the member states.

Second, the committee would also have to act as a link between national governments and NGOs – a link which is currently non-existent and whose lack is the very reason for the persistence of the problem. It is important to realize that neither side can effectively combat the problem alone. On the one hand, NGOs have already developed the strategic solution and some of its mechanisms (for example, shelters in countries such as Guatemala), but lack the resources to make their vision possible. On the other hand, governments are capable of providing basic funding but overall poverty and civil unrest diminish their initiative to do so. It should be the responsibility of the sub-committee to bring balance into the dialogue between GOs and NGOs. Governments should no longer be perceived as an enemy to fight against but rather as an institution to work with for the betterment of the situation.

Indeed, the image of the state has to be modified in that respect. Currently, street children have no incentive to seek assistance from the state because the state is seen to be their biggest enemy. So even if funds are finally allocated to help combat the issue, this would only solve part of the equation. The most effective – and most realistic – approach would be to start attracting street children to public care centers, which most countries have already established.

This line of thought brings us to an important realization; namely, the need for a more structured awareness campaign, which would elevate the problem to a higher level of regional priority.

Therefore, the basic mission of the sub-committee would be to promote the fact that the problem of street children has many social dimensions, including some potentially explosive ones. For instance, research suggests that street children could endanger public health by conveying an AIDS epidemic.[5] Yet street children are completely absent from every regional health care agenda. Given that public healthcare is a national priority, governments could be persuaded to hold the matter in higher regard.

Furthermore, street children are believed to be used as a flexible medium by certain drug-trafficking channels. The Organization of American States certainly includes nations which receive international sponsorship for fight-

ing anti-drug wars. Making street children part of the "war plan" would inevitably lead to an increase the allocated funds.

Overall, if OAS chooses to create a purpose-specific body to combat the problem, it should make sure that the practical functions of this body exceed its normative ones. A crafty strategy could ultimately produce benefits for all parties involved. While it is true that OAS member-states have more pressing infrastructural problems, an incentive to deal with the issue of street children will surely contribute to the resolution of the bigger problems as well. Foreign investment tends to increase in countries, which effectively deal with their humanitarian hardships.

Block Positions:

Discussing the problem of street children would trigger both agreement and disagreement. All member-states would agree on the seriousness of the issue but also assert that its importance diminishes in the face of more pressing infrastructural problems.

The biggest point of disagreement would be the possible strategies for solving the problem. In this respect, block positions will be ultimately determined by the levels to which individual countries are affected by the problem. According to UN data, street children are an issue in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Columbia, and El Salvador. Brazil is believed to be home to most of the half street children in South America, and the situation in Guatemala is arguably the most problematic.[6]

In the case of **Brazil**, the numbers are so high due primarily to its enormous national population. So Brazil would probably argue that the problem at home is not worse than elsewhere.

At first glance, **Guatemala** carries the burden of heavy accusations as to the ways it deals with street children. However, the fact of the matter is that attacks on children have mostly been executed by private security guards, hired by business owners who see the kids as a menace.[7] It was never the intention of the Guatemalan government to violate the rights of street children. Still, it should be held responsible for not preventing these violations.

Mexico and Columbia have both received extensive media coverage on the issue. One reason for that international focus may be their relationships to the United States in terms of welfare programs.

Conclusion:

There are street children in virtually every country of the world. However, when their number grows exponentially to the point of becoming a social problem, national governments have much to worry about. The stakes are too high to remain ignorant of the long-term consequences of the problem – namely, the unforgivable waste of new generations of OAS citizens and their potential to contribute to the pressing development of the region.

Endnotes

[1] United Nations Outcome document of the Special Session on Children - http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/documentation/documents/A-S27-19-Rev1E-annex.pdf

[2] Casa Alianza - http://www.casa-alianza.org/EN/street-children/

[3] Casa Alianza - http://www.casa-alianza.org/EN/lmn/docs/19990805.00310.htm

[4] Article 39, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

[5] Lusk, M. (1989). "Street Children Programs in Latin America," Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, V16 (1) pp. 55-77.

[6] Lusk, M. (1992). "Street Children of Rio de Janeiro," International Social Work, V35 (3) pp. 293-305.

[7] Guatemalan street kids face hardships, death squads. *CNN Online.* http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9802/14/guatemala.street.kids/

The Consequences of Urban Violence in Central and South America

Introduction:

Over the past few decades, the Organization of American States (OAS) has assembled together to promote and work for an environment of peace and unity in the Americas. Many conflicts that have plagued nations in North and South America have stemmed from internal conflicts, societal or class rifts, and general distrust of the government among citizens. At the heart of each of these situations is urban violence, usually occurring in large cities with a diverse population. Fundamentally, it is this violence that causes more complex and serious problems that plagues the political, economic, and in some cases, the cultural dynamics of a given nation. As internal and, subsequently, external conflicts continue to escalate, it becomes more necessary and urgent that members of the OAS convene and make a decision on what should be done about urban violence in order to preserve the overall stability of each nation as well as their surrounding regions.

Statement of the Issue:

There are three types of urban violence: political violence (whether by or against the state), communal/ethnic violence, and criminal violence.[1] The first two types are typically independent of each other, whereas the third type may be a smaller portion of either of the first two types. In any case, urban violence itself is becoming more of a problem especially in Central and South America, where the lack of funding, military troops, and resources are attributed to the inability to keep such violence to a minimum. In some other cases, urban violence is usually the result of a past unstable government that would sponsor violence itself. For example, in Guatemala, nearly 100,000 civilians, mostly those of the working class, perished in a civil war between the insurgent peasants and the military government that lasted 33 years.[2] Today, while gangs cause most incidents involving urban violence in Guatemala, analysts note that the political killings of the past underlie today's violent culture in the country.[3] Many other poorer countries in the region also encounter similar problems, and they lack the fundamental resources to stop the violence in their state. In addition, citizens who distrust the government have also been the cause of uprisings. For example, in Guatemala, citizens have responded to government actions by stockpiling weapons and ammunition to defend themselves. Recently, the Department for the Control of Arms and Munitions has issued gun licenses to 300,000 Guatemalans to use in self-defense. The

department's director, Col. Alfonso de Leon Tarzo, estimates that another one million citizens own guns illegally.[4] A similar crisis has occurred in Brazil, where violence has taken its toll on the civilian population; a Brazilian health ministry study reports that three Brazilians are murdered each hour. While many of Brazil's political troubles are also caused by lack of financial resources, the main problem that surrounds and fuels urban violence in many of these countries is an extensive network of drug trafficking. Various power struggles between drug traffickers and governments have evolved as dealers offer money for services normally provided by the government.[5] Consequently, drug traffickers are slowly beginning to turn the tables against financially strapped governments in the form of violence against them. As a result of situations such as these, urban violence has been a chief catalyst in the troubled political histories of many poor states in Central and South America.

History of Urban Violence in the Americas:

While most urban violence in the Americas centuries ago involved European settlers and aboriginals fighting against the expansion of the pressing settlers, violence has recently resurfaced because of severe, constrictive measures and reforms adopted by debt-ridden governments sparked a wave of urban protest throughout the Americas. Due to budget shortages (as well as the political opinions of some leaders), many governments in Central and South America cut back on the funding toward various social safety networks such as health care, education services, transportation and other public services. Worst of all, funding for law enforcement agents and the police force has also been slashed, resulting in decreased efficiency in responding to crimes as well as an increase in crime itself. At the same time, resources and funding within a given country or region are not distributed across the area equally; in fact they are distributed according to the political influence of area representatives. In terms of worker salaries, those with white-collar jobs (or a specific high rank within a job) had colossal salaries compared to their blue-collar counterparts. For example, in Brazil, within the military police, salaries at the top ranks can be 20 times that of the lower ranks.[6] Resources used for individualized perks and benefits for top officials are basically resources denied from lower-ranking officials in greater need. Another problem facing the police force in much of South America is the corruption of the police force itself and the way it deals with the public in general. For example, the police force in Rio de Janeiro kills nearly as many citizens per year as all the police forces in the United States combined. Pressured by the radical "war on crime" doctrine imposed in 1994, Rio de Janeiro's police force follow the harsh slogan "shoot first, ask questions later," thus exposing its lethal nature.[7] Such practices have created tension and resentment among workers and citizens

alike and since funding is also not concentrated towards the needs of citizens in general, citizens have taken matters into their own hands and in some cases, resorted to violence. As public services continue to worsen in many of these countries, urban violence continues to escalate under ever diminishing police forces.

In addition to this, the growing periphery neighborhoods on the edge of the cities are conducive to violence. In the 1960's and 1970's, the global economy was growing at a mere 10 percent a year, so many cities usually imported labor from other places. Low-income families were supported at the time with land plots by private landowners who eventually departed in the 1980's. At that time these lands were taken over by people who were evicted from previous homes due to large public service projects, such as water and sewage systems.[8] As these areas became increasingly crowded, competition for the shortage of services and resources in the area triggered conflict and violence among inhabitants. The quality of life in urban areas had been atrocious to begin with and citizens' distress with the lack of improvement has prompted them to turn against each other and the government.

History of International Agreements:

In response to the pangs of urban violence that have plagued the Americas and in turn, affected the international community, the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) both have addressed and targeted this ongoing problem via a series of resolutions created to first decrease the factors resulting in urban violence. The CICAD (Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission) of the OAS specifically addresses the illegal trafficking of firearms, ammunition, and drugs; it calls for a prevention of the demand for and abuse of contraband, cites the need for development studies on the illegal firearms and drugs trades, and mentions the need for educational and rehabilitation programs for drug addicts in the region.[9] To counteract the illegal production of firearms and drugs, the CICAD plans for the eradication of illegal crops by biologically and environmentally sound methods; it also aims to strengthen the ability of law enforcement agencies to trace the origin of funding transfers among major institutions by drug and arms traffickers. The treaty calls for sanctions on any institution, group or individual that uses anything to facilitate unlawful drug trafficking, and requires the surrender of any tools or paraphernalia used to facilitate illegal trafficking.[10] In addition, the CICAD created a national fund against drug trafficking with donations coming from voluntary contributions, government budgetary allocations and assets linked to illegal drug trafficking that have been seized by any competent national authority. In the autumn 2001 session, the CICAD outlined further specifics of their plan to combat the illegal trafficking of arms and drugs. The new

additions call for training of law enforcement agents on identification, tracing and investigation of illegal firearms as well as the establishment of electronic databases to keep records of firearms. The signatories of CICAD also stressed holding a series of educational seminars for the purpose of training officials about an international control system and how they can apply it to the transshipment of illegal drugs and firearms. The countries also desired an improvement in the exchange of information among various law enforcement agencies responsible for the control of drug and armament movement.[11] In the next few years, the OAS hopes to create out with a resolution for an international control system regarding drug and weapon trafficking in order to facilitate the operations of each government in the region and consequently, restore peace to these politically troubled nations.

Analysis:

In spite of what the United Nations and the Organization of American States have done so far to prevent the illegal commerce of contraband, their efforts for the most part have been in vain. Political leaders in many of these countries have abused their powers and concentrated the little money they have toward matters of their own interests rather than those of the people. Many times, these leaders will often concentrate the brunt of their money toward top-ranking officials that work closely with them; however, they will neglect the needs of lower-ranking officials as well as those of their citizens in general. By depriving people of basic human needs as well as additional amenities, leaders of these countries are spurring civilian resentment against themselves. For example, Jardim Angela, a small district located in southwest São Paulo, is more appropriate as a water reservation than a residential area. However, since city and state officials neglected and failed to address the creation of a reservation and place restrictions on urban growth, the population of this region grew to over 220,000 by 1996.[12]

Delayed enforcement and restrictions on buildings and jobs, and hence income-earning opportunities, have kept many inhabitants in the region out of jobs and living in poverty. In addition, most people are also kept at home unable to commute to jobs either because situations such as this are widespread or transportation in and around these areas is sparse due to poor infrastructure. Furthermore, civil amenities in these regions are also rare; for example, in the case with Jardim Angela, there is only one supermarket present to serve the entire population.[13] At the same time, recreational and educational amenities are also sparse, thus a large amount of the population in this area is uneducated and/or illiterate. Due to overcrowding in the cities, large areas of slums have developed both in the city and in surrounding areas; this congestion problem has been so widespread that those who live in poverty are constantly on the move, having been

forced out of their previous dwellings. Due to the overcrowding and hence the competition for resources that follows, many inhabitants have felt increasingly insecure where they live.

In a recent survey, many people, especially the younger interviewees, have felt the need to change portions of their lifestyle having witnessed numerous crimes themselves.[14] Actions and conditions such as these made by leaders have caused contempt among inhabitants and, consequently, riots against the government (which many times are situated in urban areas). At the same time, as a result of financial mismanagement, many governments have found themselves cutting back on funding for resources that they need most, such as a stronger police force. For example, in São Paulo, Brazil, on the average, there was one police officer per 250 inhabitants (a low ratio); however in the most crime-stricken areas of the city, there was only one police officer per 1429 citizens (unimaginably low).[15]

In turn, these faults in the criminal justice system of these countries perpetuate people's insecurity, and consequently, increases both the legal and illegal stockpiling of firearms. Even those citizens who have legal possession of weapons and ammunition run the risk of having them stolen by delinquents, terrorists, or drug traffickers for illegal use, mainly due to the inefficiency of the police force. Consequently, in many of the impoverished states in Central and South America, drug and firearms traffickers have taken advantage of citizens distressed and disappointed in the inefficiency and lack of civil support from their governments, law enforcement agencies and public service organizations.

Many times, drug traffickers who have made great profits off their trade use some of the money to sway poor citizens against the inefficient government by offering them services or goods normally provided to them by the government under normal circumstances. In cases with firearms traffickers, they readily provide weapons to citizens who otherwise would not be in possession of a weapon due to their poverty. As a result of the traffickers' bribery and often times their superior equipment and resources, many citizens turn against the financially strapped governments. Simultaneously, while most would think that such a problem would be confined to South America, a growing drug ring is becoming an international concern even in North American countries. Overall, urban violence in Central and South America occurs in a debilitating cycle; the government initiates policies that spur violence, and in response, drug or firearm rings and malicious groups of inhabitants respond violently against the government.

Obstacles to Finding a Solution:

While the OAS also has certainly advanced with the proposals intended to fight urban violence and its causes, the alliance also has a long road ahead. One of the biggest weaknesses of international actions has been the lack of secure funding. The OAS has asked for voluntary donations, but the people that need the money are the same people being asked to provide it. Many of these countries have suffered tremendously from financial mismanagement for decades. At the same time, there is also the issue of national sovereignty; the OAS cannot interfere directly with the actions of each government. The main controversy underlying this problem is that once one country resolves the problems of poverty, governmental financial mismanagement, and poor infrastructure, people may still distrust their government or be reliant on the prosperous drug trade, and will threaten to rebel against their national government. Also, governments need to not only fix policies, but also deal with issues such as overcrowding in cities by arranging the mobilization of its poor to a regulated area with a decent police force and social support systems. However, these considerations are fairly specific to each country, and may not be adequately addressed by a general OAS treaty. Another major problem the OAS has is the simple enforcement of the rules in stopping drug trafficking. Economic sanctions will hurt not only the government, but also the people who live in the penalized country. The correct way to target the illegal drug trade without hurting an already hard-ridden economy is difficult to determine. All of these considerations must be reflected in any OAS resolution.

Country Positions:

Most countries in Central and South America, and many organizations in the international community, have struggled to address the problem of urban violence. These countries also are attempting to stop illegal drug trafficking, stockpiling of arms, and other problems that fuel or are fueled by the violence. In North America, Canada and the United States are becoming increasingly concerned about the side effects of urban violence, namely the evolving drug rings in Central America that spread through Mexico. Many times, drug trafficking reaches the southern border of the U.S., and border patrols constantly find it difficult to catch smugglers from these rings. However, most countries cannot help stop this drug trade that results from urban violence because they are financially strapped due to mismanagement, corrupt policies, and inadequate funding. In Central America, governments are not as corrupt, making the road to peace much easier and more feasible. In South America, even countries such as Ecuador, Peru, and Chile, which do not suffer dramatically from urban violence, are beginning to indirectly suffer from the drug rings due to illegal trade and poor refugees that enter the country. As the general scenario worsens in the most afflicted countries, namely Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, and many parts of Argentina, many people attempt to flee to countries where violence is not as prevalent. Sadly, in the most affected countries, the efforts of

citizens to protect themselves from a culture of violence are thwarted by corrupt government leaders and poor living conditions. Thus any treatment of the problem needs to address country policy at all the levels of the conflict—from the root countries where violence begins, to the middlemen who receive refugees and indirectly suffer from the violence, to the countries where the drugs are shipped and sold.

Conclusion:

Urban violence in Central and South America may not seem pressing, but is truly the underlying cause of many other problems in the area—such as underdevelopment, drug rings, civil unrest, and poverty. Instead of a quick-fix answer that may cause more problems in the future, a long-term solution that addresses the complexities of violence amidst the drug and firearms needs to be created to help restore peace. While working towards a solution, it is crucial that the OAS respect national sovereignty so that it will be easier for each state (and in the end, the OAS itself) to comply with enforced regulations. By targeting the agents of the problem, namely some of the government leaders, the drug rings and citizens who mistrust the government and illegal stockpile weapons, the OAS can help to dramatically reduce the number of cases of urban violence. Consequently, lowered rates of urban violence will not only help the states of Central and South America, but also the international community in the long run.

Endnotes

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The Feasibility of the FTAA

Introduction:

The Organization of American States (OAS) is an international body comprised of 35 member states of the American continents. It is comprised of a General Assembly as well as several Inter-American committees on Human Rights, Judicial Affairs and Drug Abuse, among others. It meets at the present session to discuss a major issue in South America – the conflict between the existences of two large free trade areas – the FTAA and Mercosur.

Statement of the Issue:

The Free Trade Association of the Americas is an international organization with members from various countries in the American continent. The Association's main goal is to promote free trade amongst the participating countries. The process involves eliminating government-erected trade barriers such as tariffs and subsidies, freeing the movement of international capital, and facilitating the movement of labor across borders.

The USA, after having benefited from the results of NAFTA, now wants to promote the FTAA and encourage free trade across the Americas. This move will help US corporations to outsource for factors of production and obtain new markets of consumers for their products. However, other countries, particularly the smaller nations with mainly agricultural export goods, are highly opposed to a complete liberation of trade and elimination of barriers. They fear the erosion of their consumer markets and exploitation of their cheap labor and raw materials, resulting in negative development and lower living standards for the people.

Mercado del Cono Sur (Mercosur), or the Market of the Southern Cone, is a similar free trade area, but on a smaller scale. The area includes Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Because the countries are adjacent to one another and share several similar characteristics in terms of trade, culture and history, Mercosur has been a success. Several countries are skeptical about the magnitude of the FTAA and prefer such regional trade areas instead.

Therefore the issue at hand is whether to support the existence of Mercosur and continue the formation of similar small trade areas, or whether to support the formation of the FTAA and the expansion of free trade all over the Americas.

History of the FTAA:

The Heads of State of 34 countries agreed upon the construction of the Free Trade Area of the Americas in December 1994, in Miami, Florida. The basic goals of the organization would be to progressively eliminate barriers to trade and capital movements amongst the participating nations, by the year 2005. The entire decision and plan can be found in the Miami Summit's Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action (attached below).

After four ministerial meetings, (Denver, USA – 06/95; Cartagena, Colombia – 03/96; Belo Horizonte, Brazil – 05/97; San José, Costa Rica – 03/98) the official FTAA negotiations were laid out in April 1998. This took place in Santiago, Chile at the Second Summit of the Americas. The draft text of the FTAA Agreement was finally made publicly accessible in its four official languages on July 3, 2001. This move was made to increase transparency of the process of formation.

The official deadlines for the conclusion and implementation of the FTAA Agreement were set at January 2005 and December 2005, respectively. Negotiations were set to be completed in three phases from April to October 2002. These negotiations follow several guiding principles. The principle statements can be summarized as the following:
-Decisions will be taken by consensus;
-Negotiations will be conducted in a transparent manner;
-The FTAA will be consistent with WTO rules and disciplines, and should improve upon these rules and disciplines wherever possible and appropriate;
-The FTAA will be a single undertaking ("nothing is agreed until all is agreed");
-The FTAA can coexist with bilateral and sub-regional agreements and countries may negotiate and accept the obligations of the FTAA individually or as members of a sub-regional integration group; and
-Special attention will be given to the needs of the smaller economies.[1]

The leaders agreed that the FTAA negotiating process be clear and take into account the differences in the levels of development and size, geographic and economic, of the American countries, in order to facilitate full participation by all countries. They emphasized the importance of the provision of technical assistance to smaller economies to facilitate their participation in the FTAA. The Structure of the FTAA involves an agreement to rotate the positions of office such as Chairman, Chairs and Vice-Chairs of negotiating sub-groups, amongst participating countries. There are nine such negotiating groups, established for:

1. Market access: to gradually eliminate trade barriers between countries (Chair: Argentina; Vice-Chair: Colombia)
2. Government procurement: to expand access to the

government procurement markets of the FTAA countries (Chair: Costa Rica; Vice-Chair: Colombia)

3. Investment: to promote investment within a stable and predictable environment protecting the investor and investment funds (Chair: Mexico; Vice-Chair: Bolivia)

4. Services: to progressively liberalize trade in services (Chair: CARICOM; Vice-Chair: Venezuela)

5. Dispute settlement: to facilitate fair, transparent and effective mechanisms for the settlement of disputes including the use of arbitration to solve controversies (Chair: Paraguay; Vice-Chair: Chile)

6. Agriculture: to work towards the free flow of agricultural products traded between countries without barriers (Chair: Guatemala; Vice-Chair: Uruguay)

7. Intellectual property rights: to ensure adequate and effective protection of property rights, and reduce distortions in trade (Chair: USA; Vice-Chair: Dominican Republic)

8. Subsidies, antidumping and countervailing duties: to improve procedures regarding the operation and application of trade remedy laws (Chair: Peru; Vice-Chair: CARICOM)

9. Competition policy: to prevent anti-competitive business policies from undermining the benefits of the FTAA liberalization process (Chair: Colombia; Vice-Chair: Peru)

History of Mercosur:

In the mid 1980's, rival neighboring countries Argentina and Brazil decided to deepen their relationship by signing bilateral protocols, ruling diverse issues between the countries, in the period of 1984-1989. Raúl Alfonsín, Argentinean president, and José Sarney, the Brazilian president, headed the agreement. In August 1990, the presidents of Paraguay, Andrés Rodríguez, and Uruguay, Luis Alberto Lacalle supported the treaty. They signed their names and thus the four countries were incorporated in the agreement together. The treaty with the decision of "building a common market" was the Treaty of Asunción in Paraguay on March 26, 1991. The treaty ended the preceding negotiations and put into force the Southern Cone Common Market, or Mercado del Cono Sur. It involved "the free circulation of goods, services and production factors among the countries" and "an external common tariff and a commercial common policy regarding other states or group of states."[2] Mercosur members also signed agreements of cooperation with other trade areas such as the European Union (EU). Recently, Mercosur has expanded to include Chile and Bolivia as well.

Relevant International Issues:

Because of the similarity in language and culture amongst the Mercosur countries, as well as the economic difficulties they have had to sustain together, Mercosur has been growing toward a stable, supportive group of nations. Before Argentina's financial crisis in 2001, the country had been facing negative trade balances and declining terms of trade. Simultaneously, the United States had started to experience a slump in the economy, which affected the Mercosur states. Throughout this period, however, the commercial element of Mercosur helped Argentina significantly. The country was able to maintain a good trade balance with respect to Mercosur members, and the trade region supported Argentina through the crisis. Mercosur member leaders made requests to international organizations such as the IMF to support Argentina. The eventual devaluation has also helped Argentina look forward to a recovery and macroeconomic stability.

On the other hand, some leaders believe that the region is not similar or unified as it needs to be. For example, a pertinent issue that has existed ever since the inception of Mercosur, but that has become more relevant lately, is that of monetary union. After Argentina's financial crisis last year, the Argentinean dollar is now valued at approximately a third of the US dollar, and concerns have been voiced on this matter. More and more people have concurred that a unified Mercosur currency, echoing the formation of the Euro, would provide more stability and security to the region. However, the Uruguayan president Jorge Batlle, has declared that it is "absolutely impossible" to form a unified currency for the South American member countries of Mercosur. Batlle explained that to achieve a common currency, the member states needed to agree on various issues and share similar outlooks, as do the countries of Europe. However, in his opinion, South American countries do not share macroeconomic policies and goals that all the member states would be able to maintain or fulfill.

Analysis:

Problems with the FTAA

Major concerns have emerged among protest groups and public opinion about the necessity of the FTAA. Several groups believe that the FTAA would deepen the severe negative effects of NAFTA that have been experienced in Canada, Mexico and the U.S. over the past seven years, as well as expand this kind of damage to the other 31 countries involved. The argument is that the FTAA would intensify NAFTA's "race to the bottom" exploiting more workers, underpaying labor to compete with more desperate workers who accept lower wages, and large-scale companies seeking tariff-free access back into U.S. markets.

The most prominent and widely accepted amongst several arguments against the FTAA include that its regulations allow corporations to override democratically adopted environmental or labor protection laws, increasing corporate power exponentially while endangering tens of thousands of lives, especially affecting the female sex

and minority races. Other arguments say that the trade area threatens to reduce human lives to being treated like commodities by turning over the control of public utilities such as electricity and water, as well as schools, to large profit-seeking corporations.

A major criticism of the FTAA is its having been negotiated in secret. According to critics, the FTAA, initiated in 1994 by the 34 countries of North and South America (excluding Cuba), involved its members suspiciously keeping the text of the treaty secret from the public and their elected representatives. The FTAA negotiations and draft agreement apparently took place behind closed doors, evading the scrutiny of the very same elected officials and country citizens whom the agreement affects. While members of Congress and the American public do not have access to the FTAA draft agreement, apparently over 500 corporate representatives have been granted access through the USTR trade advisory committee system. The secret and suspicious nature of these negotiations seems to imply that the FTAA is targeted toward the benefit of large corporations, not the average person who might actually be harmed by it.

Another major issue concerns the agriculturally dependent countries of South America. Their exports are mainly primary products such as food and meat products. They also produce manufactured goods, which include clothing, shoes, and metal processing. Primary and manufactured products have low margins and earn low revenues. Also, because many South American countries produce similar products, they are in competition for price and hence constantly undercut one another, resulting in even lower revenues. As a result, they cut costs by reducing labor standards and compromising on safety and health standards at the production front.

The USA, on the other hand, focuses mainly on consumer goods, technological equipment, and services. They produce computers, processed food, machinery and equipment, and their services include hotels, airlines and education. All the above goods have comparatively high margins, are income-dependent and generate high revenues.

The combination of these two situations results in the USA importing cheap agricultural and manufactured products from less developed South American countries, while they export high priced consumer goods. This would eventually lead to a wider and wider disparity between the economies on both sides, making the USA richer and poor countries poorer. Whereas trade barriers such as tariffs or import quotas might have reduced this problem, the FTAA would only increase it. By eliminating trade barriers between the American countries, the FTAA would encourage ruthless trade policies and income disparity. It would also lead to lower standards of living, labor conditions, and further environmental damage. Here again, the FTAA contains standards for labor and environmental protection. Poor countries are thereby obliged to maintain US-equivalent labor and environmental standards, while simultaneously growing progressively poorer and hence

incapable to sustain these standards. Another example of enforced standards is biotechnology and genetically modified (GM) foods, which the USA is trying to make obligatory for the FTAA member states, and in which unregulated U.S.-based corporations have taken a lead. Being forced to buy expensive patented seeds every season, rather than saving and planting their own, will force traditional subsistence farmers in the developing world to depend on transnational corporations. Laws on intellectual property rights and patents allow pharmaceutical corporations to keep drug prices high and block production of generic versions of life-saving drugs, to maintain their patent on the product. These rules also allow companies to "bioprospect" and lock down patents for traditional medicines that are considered "traditional knowledge," effectively robbing indigenous people of their cultural heritage. Elements of the agreement involving the privatization of public institutions such as hospitals, education and prisons have also caused much worry.

For all these reasons and more, the prospect of the FTAA has caused a lot of worry and opposition amongst several American countries. There are protest groups and demonstrations against the organization that is thought to be the "next NAFTA," with detrimental effects several times worse than its predecessor, for several economies.

However, the FTAA does not only cater to the USA against every other member country, and certainly has certain benefits for the poorer states. By licensing doctors to practice in any member country, it opens up opportunities to medical students in small South American countries to set up practice in the USA or Canada, where their diplomas would otherwise not have been recognized. It also opens up doors for students of poor countries to travel and study abroad, traders to start foreign branches of their business, and technological transfers to become quicker and easier.

Therefore the issue remains debatable between whether the FTAA will benefit the American continents by opening up trade barriers and facilitating communication, or whether it will debilitate weaker countries and serve only richer and more powerful member states.

Possible solutions:

Since the problem concerns the FTAA, a comparatively beneficial solution has been the formation of smaller trade blocs such as Mercosur. Such trade areas would include countries with similar geographic location, and invariably similar interests and problems. For example, the support shown by Mercosur member states for Argentina during its crisis would hardly be replicated on a larger scale in the FTAA. Working with a closer group of countries would avoid huge problematic issues such as those faced by the FTAA. At the same time, it would facilitate free trade, thereby including the benefits of commerce.

Ideas to stop the FTAA have been emerging in various parts of the American continents. Because corporate globalization has negative consequences on nearly every sector of society, it paradoxically offers the possibility of uniting broad sectors into a mass movement capable of stopping the FTAA. Past international movements against globalization show the possibilities of focusing on development and human need and protesting globalization, and more work can build on these examples. When people reclaim control over their daily lives through community and mass action, they can influence the FTAA and change policies to be beneficial to themselves.

Bloc Positions:

USA

The United States of America has been promoting the FTAA and encouraging its support. The organization will form the product of several months of work on treaties and agreements between more than 30 states in the Americas, led by the USA. The formation of the bloc implies several benefits for the American people, whether or not at the expense of other countries. President Bush has been supporting the FTAA and encouraging all other American countries to do the same.

Argentina

A country in the process of recovering from "the greatest cessation of sovereign debt payments that can be remembered," Argentina does not see the FTAA as an immediate problem in comparison. It considers the FTAA an idea primarily by the USA, and there are several protest groups in the country against the idea.

Mercosur member states

These countries are debating between whether to continue maintaining the success and growth of Mercosur, or to attempt greater, more widespread success with the FTAA.

Conclusion:

The situation is more complex than it seems because of the various details of the FTAA and each country's issues with them. The USA has been promoting the organization because it sees a chance for greater free trade. However, critics skeptically note that the reason the USA wants to FTAA to take effect is to obtain the chance to exploit smaller, poorer developing countries through non-restricted trade. Protest groups opposing the organization have come up with several solutions. The most prominent and plausible one is to maintain smaller regional areas such as Mercosur whereby the benefits of free trade can be combined with the security of a smaller trade bloc.

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