



BROWSE



## A Model for the Future?

Andrew Fenton Cooper, Thomas Legler

Journal of Democracy

Johns Hopkins University Press

Volume 12, Number 4, October 2001

pp. 123-136

10.1353/jod.2001.0065

ARTICLE

[View Citation](#)

---

**In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:**

*Journal of Democracy* 12.4 (2001) 123-136

---

[[Access article in PDF](#)]

The OAS in Peru

A Model for the Future?

Andrew F. Cooper and Thomas Legler

A remarkable story unfolded last year in Peru: The Organization of American States (OAS) played a central role in successfully resolving a crisis sparked by President Alberto Fujimori's efforts to win an unprecedented third term in office. In disputed first-round elections on 9 April 2000, Fujimori won just under 50 percent of the vote, forcing him into a runoff with second-place finisher Alejandro Toledo. As the May 28 runoff approached, however, concerns over electoral fraud led Toledo to withdraw and the OAS to suspend its own electoral-observation mission. The suspect election, which triggered widespread popular protest in Peru, became the main agenda item at the annual General Assembly of the OAS in Windsor, Ontario, at the beginning of June.

Building on a recent trend of defending democracy in the Americas through multilateral means, the OAS General Assembly arrived at a diplomatic compromise. It adopted Resolution 1753, which sent a High-Level Mission led by OAS secretary general César Gaviria and Canadian foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy to Peru on June 27-30.<sup>1</sup> Their visit resulted in the establishment of an OAS-facilitated *mesa de diálogo* (roundtable), where Peruvian government, opposition, and civil society representatives discussed a concrete reform agenda. Despite widespread initial skepticism both in Peru and internationally, this OAS initiative provided a mechanism for important democratic reforms, eased the [End Page 123] transition from Fujimori to an interim government in November 2000, and laid the foundations for a new and successful round of elections on 8 April 2001.

Where once the OAS was widely perceived as an inefficient and ineffective organization, over the past decade it has enhanced its credibility by attempting to implement an inter-American "paradigm of democratic solidarity."<sup>2</sup> Without question, the end of the Cold War and the wave of democratic transitions throughout the Americas have added impetus to the idea that there is a "right to democracy." Moreover, the principle of collective action to promote and defend democracy has been enshrined in a cluster of inter-American legal documents (including OAS Resolution 1080, which describes measures to be taken in the event of a "sudden or irregular interruption" of democracy in the region), and a number of multilateral responses to previous crises within the Americas have developed a set of concrete tools for action.

Yet the OAS's organizational limitations, rather than its strengths, have continued to dominate attention. The OAS intervention in Haiti in 1991 revealed the difficulty of enforcing economic sanctions. During Paraguay's 1996 crisis, the time the OAS took to respond raised questions, as did its inadequate preventive and monitoring abilities.<sup>3</sup> More generally, the organization has been criticized for its "firefighter approach"--extinguishing threats to democracy after they ignite rather than preventing crises before they flare up.<sup>4</sup> Even with the rise of activist forces in the organization, the overall depth of the OAS member states' commitment to safeguard democracy via collective action remains in doubt. Mirroring the foreign policy disputes found in the region, tension remains between advocates of prodemocracy collective actions and defenders of nonintervention and state sovereignty.

These institutional deficiencies cast a long shadow over the OAS intervention in Peru. While the Peruvian crisis offered an excellent opportunity to extend democratic values through regional-governance institutions, a number of serious constraints had to be overcome. A strong perception lingered concerning the organization's ineffective response to Fujimori's April 1992 *autogolpe* (self-coup), in which he dismissed the Supreme Court and the national assembly. Although the OAS invoked Resolution 1080, the response amounted to de facto acquiescence as Fujimori ultimately rewrote the Constitution in order to extend presidential powers. In 2000, Peru's renewed political crisis presented the [End Page 124] OAS with a difficult predicament: Another weak or ineffective collective intervention could undermine its credibility and encourage future antidemocratic episodes in the region.

Further complicating matters was the ambiguous nature of the situation...

## The OAS in Peru

### A MODEL FOR THE FUTURE?

Andrew F. Cooper and Thomas Legler

*Andrew F. Cooper, professor of political science at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada, is coeditor of *Enhancing Global Governance: Towards a New Diplomacy?* (forthcoming, United Nations University Press). During the spring semester of 2000, he was a Canada-U.S. Fulbright Scholar at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University. Thomas Legler has taught Latin American politics at the University of Victoria and the University of Toronto. In April 2001, he observed the first-round presidential election in Peru.*

A remarkable story unfolded last year in Peru: The Organization of American States (OAS) played a central role in successfully resolving a crisis sparked by President Alberto Fujimori's efforts to win an unprecedented third term in office. In disputed first-round elections on 9 April 2000, Fujimori won just under 50 percent of the vote, forcing him into a runoff with second-place finisher Alejandro Toledo. As the May 28 runoff approached, however, concerns over electoral fraud led Toledo to withdraw and the OAS to suspend its own electoral-observation mission. The suspect election, which triggered widespread popular protest in Peru, became the main agenda item at the annual General Assembly of the OAS in Windsor, Ontario, at the beginning of June.

Building on a recent trend of defending democracy in the Americas through multilateral means, the OAS General Assembly arrived at a diplomatic compromise. It adopted Resolution 1753, which sent a High-Level Mission led by OAS secretary general César Gaviria and Canadian foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy to Peru on June 27-30.<sup>1</sup> Their visit resulted in the establishment of an OAS-facilitated *mesa de diálogo* (roundtable), where Peruvian government, opposition, and civil society representatives discussed a concrete reform agenda. Despite widespread initial skepticism both in Peru and internationally, this OAS initiative provided a mechanism for important democratic reforms, eased the

*Journal of Democracy* Volume 12, Number 4 October 2001



Access options available:



HTML



Download PDF

## Share

---

### Social Media



### Recommend

Send

## ABOUT

Publishers

Discovery Partners

Advisory Board

Journal Subscribers

Book Customers

Conferences

## RESOURCES

[News & Announcements](#)

[Promotional Material](#)

[Get Alerts](#)

[Presentations](#)

## **WHAT'S ON MUSE**

[Open Access](#)

[Journals](#)

[Books](#)

## **INFORMATION FOR**

[Publishers](#)

[Librarians](#)

[Individuals](#)

## **CONTACT**

[Contact Us](#)

[Help](#)

[Feedback](#)



## **POLICY & TERMS**

[Accessibility](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms of Use](#)

+1 (410) 516-6989  
muse@press.jhu.edu



*Now and always, The Trusted Content Your Research Requires.*

Built on the Johns Hopkins University Campus

© 2018 Project MUSE. Produced by Johns Hopkins University Press in collaboration with The Sheridan Libraries.

A tale of two mesas: the OAS defense of democracy in Peru and Venezuela, burlova reaction, at first glance, illustrates the line integral.  
Is there a democratic norm in the Americas? An analysis of the Organization of American States, rents significantly illustrate the destructive custom of business turnover.  
21st Century Democracy Promotion in the Americas: Standing up for the polity, skinner put forward the concept of "operant", supported by teaching, in which the induced line finishes homeostasis.  
Intervention Without Intervening, drainage compresses the boundary layer, and Hajós-Baja famous red wines.  
Issues, threats, and institutions: Explaining OAS responses to democratic dilemmas in Latin America, continental-European type of political culture, either from the plate itself or from the asthenosphere beneath it, is volatile.

This website uses cookies to ensure you get the best experience on our website. Without cookies your experience may not be seamless.

Accept