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Introduction

Paul R. Hathaway

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INTRO DUCTION

The Armour J. Blackburn University Center was the setting last March 20 for a key symposium on U.S.-Latin American Relations in the Eighties.

A mixture of hope and guarded optimism prevailed as the participants focused on issues of inter-regional development and cooperation. And, the inherent imbalance in the alliance between developed and undeveloped nations, did not pass unnoticed by some of the participants and members of the audience.

Overall, those who participated in what the organizers of the event billed as a very necessary forum for the exchange of ideas on issues of mutual interest, had kind words for each other.

There was a lengthy discussion presented by Alejandro Orfila, secretary general of the Organization of American States, OAS — co-sponsor of the symposium with President James E. Cheek of Howard University. He touched on some of the crucial issues facing the Western Hemisphere during this decade and what should be done collectively to help alleviate them.

There was a brief but concise reaction to Orfila's presentation by the Jamaican ambassador to the United States, Alfred A. Rattray.

Excerpts from Orfila's and Rattray's views appear in the following pages.

Others on the panel who contributed to the discussion were: Ransford Palmer, professor of economics, Howard University; Barry A. Sklar, specialist in Latin American and Caribbean Affairs, Congressional Research Service; Raul Quijano, ambassador from Argentina; and Frederick S. Vaznaugh, economic advisor, U.S. Mission, Organization of American States.

The Organization of American States is one of the oldest international bodies, dating back to its founding in Washington, D.C. in 1890. Initially, it was called the International Union of American Republics but was given its current designation following the adoption of its basic charter in Bogota, Columbia, in 1948.

Currently, its membership stands at 28 and includes such giants as Brazil, in South America, with well over 100 million population, and the small Caribbean nation of Dominica. Population: 80,000.

The member states, except for Cuba, which has been excluded as an active partner since 1962, ostensibly partake in enhancing the stated goals of the organization: To strengthen the peace and security of the continent; to prevent possible causes of difficulties and to insure the peaceful settlement of disputes that may arise among the member states; to provide for common action on the part of the member states in the event of aggression; to seek the solution of political, juridical, and economic problems that may arise among them; and to promote, by cooperative action, their economic, social, and cultural development. □

THE EDITOR