

MEETING OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS
OF THE
AMERICAN REPUBLICS AT PANAMA

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By

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Bachelor of Arts

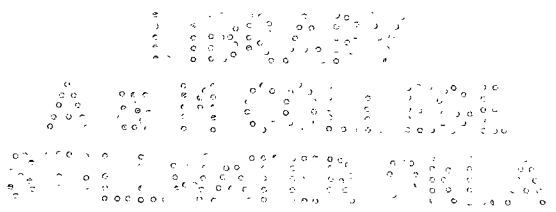
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P R E F A C E

The trend of recent international affairs has created an active interest in inter-American affairs. The extent of cooperation that can be expected in this hemisphere has been the subject of much discussion recently. The writer, as a student of history, was naturally interested in the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics at Panama last September. This meeting, in the opinion of the writer, marks a new era in inter-American relations.

The purpose of the writer in the preparation of this thesis was to show the trend in recent inter-American relations toward a higher degree of cooperation which was manifest in declarations and resolutions, which were unanimously adopted at Panama.

This work covers the procedure for calling the Conference, the purpose, proceedings, and the results of the Conference as viewed by the countries of this hemisphere and the powers at war.

Materials used in the preparation of this thesis were collected from the Libraries of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Stillwater, Oklahoma, and the University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma; the Pan-American Union; and Professor T. H. Reynolds, Head of the History Department of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Stillwater, Oklahoma

H. I. E.

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CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARIES OF THE MEETING

A significant precedent was established at Panama when the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, or their representatives, met on September 23, 1939, to consult in a moment of grave emergency with a view to considering measures which might be adopted by their respective governments, either individually or jointly, to safeguard their legitimate interests and to preserve the peace of the Americas. This meeting was the first and direct result of the agreements undertaken at the Inter-American Conference for Maintenance of Peace which was held at Buenos Aires in 1936, and the Eighth International Conference of American States which was held at Lima in 1938. It was held in accordance with the provisions which stipulated that the consultation among the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the American republics, or their representatives, shall be held when there exists in the belief of the respective governments a menace to the peace of the continent.¹

In order to fully understand the events leading to the calling of the Panama Conference, it is necessary to inspect briefly the preceding conferences that set up the machinery for the Panama Conference.

¹Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1940), Congress and Conference Series 44, 1

Out of the Conference of Montevideo in 1933 came the phrase "continental solidarity" which is of great importance today. It is of Argentine origin and is found in the so-called Saavedra Lamas Pact and was designed to protect this hemisphere against the spread of a general war. That treaty included a clause pledging the American republics, in the event any one of them should be engaged in war, to adopt a common and solidary attitude as neutrals.²

At the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace held at Buenos Aires in 1936, the governments of the American republics had, with wise foresight, approved the Maintenance, Preservation and Reestablishment of Peace, which contains the following provisions:

Article I

In the event that the peace of the American Republics is menaced, and in order to coordinate efforts to prevent war, any of the governments of the American Republics signatory to the Treaty of Paris, 1928, or the Treaty of Non-Aggression and Conciliation of 1933, or to both, whether or not a member of other organizations, shall consult together for the purpose of finding and adopting methods of peaceful cooperation.

Article II

In the event of war, or in a virtual state of war between American States, the Governments of the American Republics represented at this Conference shall undertake without delay the necessary mutual consultations, in order to change views and to seek, within the obligations resulting from the pacts above mentioned and from the standards of an international morality; a method of peaceful collaboration; and, in the event of an international war outside of America which might menace the peace of the American Republics such consultation shall also take place to determine the proper time and manner in which the signatory states, if they so desire, may eventually cooperate in some action tending to preserve the peace of the American continent.³

²Department of State Bulletin, (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1939), I, No. 24, 660.

³Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics, 2.

At the same conference of Buenos Aires there was also approved the Declaration of Principles of Inter-American Solidarity and Cooperation, in which paragraph two reads as follows:

That every act susceptible of disturbing the peace of America affects each and every one of them, and justifies the initiation of the procedure of consultation provided for in the convention for the Maintenance, Preservation and Reestablishment of Peace, signed at the Conference....⁴

In the following two years, an unhappy world watched the steady progress of the drama of disaster. New ambitions were stated; new passions unleashed; new forces were gathered. Doctrines were announced which, if adopted, meant that no small nation anywhere had a right to exist. Some small nations disappeared altogether. Instinctively, the American group of nations tightened their cooperation.⁵

The deeper significance of the Lima Conference is to be found in the agreements reached to keep the American continent free from entanglement in European conflicts and to protect it from aggression by any outside power. In a very real sense this Conference made the Monroe Doctrine a continental doctrine and thus removed the suspicion which has so long been entertained by the nations of Latin America that the United States was bent on using the Doctrine to further selfish national ends.⁶

The procedure of consultation was further improved at the Eighth International Conference of American States, held at Lima in

⁴Report of the Proceedings of the Conference (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1937) Congress and Conference Series 22, 61.

⁵Department of State Bulletin, I, No. 24, 661.

⁶Pan-American Union and Pan-American Conferences, 1890-1940 (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1940), 7.

1938. The Conference provided for consultations of the ministers of foreign affairs, or of their specially authorized representatives, in the following terms:

1. That the procedure of consultation, provided for in the conventions and resolutions adopted by the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace, may also be applied, on the initiative of one or more governments and with the previous agreement of the others, to any economic, cultural or other question which, by reason of its importance, justifies this procedure and in the examination or solution of which the American states may have a common interest.
2. That in those cases where the consultation requires personal contact, it shall take place with the attendance of the ministers of foreign affairs or of their specially authorized representatives.⁷

At the same conference at Lima in 1938, the governments of the American republics approved the Declaration of the Principles of the Solidarity of America, known as the "Declaration of Lima." The third paragraph of this historic declaration contains the following statement:

And in case the peace, security or territorial integrity of any American republic is thus threatened by acts of any nature that may impair them, they proclaim their common concern and their determination to make effective their solidarity, coordinating their respective sovereign wills by means of the procedure of consultation, established by conventions in force and by declarations of the inter-American conferences, using the measures which in each case the circumstances may make advisable.⁸

The first few days of September, 1939, brought to a head the crisis which had been developing in Europe during the preceding months and years. On September 1, German troops invaded Poland. On

⁷Report of the Results of the Conference (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1939), Congress and Conference Series 27, 4.

⁸Ibid., 5.

September 3, the British Government declared that a state of war existed between Great Britain and Germany, and a similar declaration was made shortly thereafter by the French Government. With the commencement of hostilities between the major powers, it was clear that a major conflagration had broken out, a conflagration, the effects of which could not be isolated but would necessarily affect the normal life of nations in all parts of the world. While the twenty-one American republics were far removed from the initial scene of hostilities, it became immediately apparent that their interests were seriously jeopardized by the outbreak of the war. Normal export markets were terminated overnight; normal sources of supply were cut off; normal shipping services were interrupted or curtailed; normal price relationships became distorted; the activity of speculators added to the confusion; and the currencies of many nations were endangered. In addition to these dislocations of an economic nature, each of the twenty-one American republics was immediately confronted with the difficult problems of neutral rights.⁹

Furthermore, the outbreak of belligerent activity on the high seas caused the lives of their citizens engaged in ocean travel to become imperiled.

A number of the American governments had openly expressed the view that the consultative procedure should be invoked without delay, and had agreed that the Republic of Panama might well serve as the meeting place for the prospective consultation.¹⁰ Accordingly, on

⁹Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics, I

¹⁰New York Times, September 3, 1939.

the night of September 5, 1939, the Government of the Republic of Panama joined in extending, on the behalf of those countries, an invitation to the other American republics to participate in a consultative meeting of their respective foreign ministers in the city of Panama. The main purpose of the meeting was to exchange views with reference to the measures to be adopted for the preservation of neutrality rights, and for the avoidance of entanglement in the European conflict.¹¹ On the following day, September 6, the Panamanian Minister of Foreign Affairs issued the following statement:

In view of the recent international events which have stirred the entire world, the Government of Panama has joined, with the greatest of pleasure the joint request, with the Governments of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Colombia, the United States of America, Mexico, and Peru have sent the sister republics of the American Continent for the purpose of placing into operation the procedure of consultation provided for and agreed upon in the pertinent conventions and declarations of Buenos Aires and Lima, and to hold, with that purpose in mind, a conference among the Ministers of Foreign Relations of the twenty-one American Republics in Panama City.

The selection of the Panamanian Capital as the seat of this transcendental conference is a high honor which has been tendered to our Republic by the eight nations which have joined ours in the initiative for the conference, as well as by the twelve remaining republics which shall not delay in joining the cause of the others, and the Government of Panama pledges itself to reply to that signal honor by welcoming its illustrious guests with the fraternal cordiality which has characterized at all times its relations with the countries they represent.

The invitations were sent out last night by cable, and September 21 has been suggested as a possible date for the inauguration of the conference.¹²

Thus, by happy historical coincidence, the meeting was held in that city which Simon Bolívar had once dreamed of as a possible meeting

¹¹Pan-American Union and Pan-American Conferences, 1890-1940, 7.

¹²Department of State Bulletin, I, No. 12, 235.

place for the American cooperative group, and in which he had caused the first Pan-American Congress to be held in 1826.¹³

Inasmuch as the meeting of Panama was not considered to be a conference in the usual sense of the term, but rather a meeting for consultation among the Foreign Ministers of the American republics, or representatives, President Roosevelt appointed the Honorable Sumner Welles, Undersecretary of State, as delegate on the part of the United States in representation of the Honorable Cordell Hull, Secretary of State. Mr. Welles was assisted by several advisers and assistants, the complete delegation being constituted as follows:

Delegate:

The Honorable Sumner Welles, Undersecretary of State.

Advisers:

The Honorable Edwin C. Wilson, Minister to Uruguay.
 Dr. Herbert Feis, Economic Adviser, Department of State.
 Dr. Warren Kelchner, Acting Chief, Division of International Conferences, Department of State.
 Dr. Marjorie M. Whiteman, Assistant to the Legal Adviser, Department of State.

Secretary to the United States Delegate:

Mr. Paul C. Daniels, Second Secretary, American Embassy, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Assistant to the United States Delegate:

Miss Anna L. Clarkson, Assistant to the Undersecretary of State.¹⁴

The delegation sailed from New York on September 15, and arrived in Panama City on September 20.

¹³Ibid., No. 24, 661.

¹⁴Ibid., No. 12, 252.

The program of the Meeting of the Ministers of the American Republics for consultation under the inter-American agreements of Buenos Aires and Lima was approved by the Governing Board of the Pan-American Union at a special session on September 12, 1939. The approved program was as follows:

I

Neutrality

Consideration of the rights and duties of neutrals and belligerents in the present situation with the view to the preservation of the integral sovereignty and the peace of the nations of the Western Hemisphere. Steps to be taken in common or individually.

1. To suppress violations of neutrality and subversive activities by nationals of belligerent countries or others seeking to promote the interests of belligerent powers in the territory and jurisdiction of any or all of the American republics.
2. To enforce the obligations of belligerent public and merchant vessels and aircraft in neutral territorial waters and areas.
3. To safeguard the carrying on of a legitimate international trade, commerce, and communications of American republics on the high seas, on land, and in the air.
4. To discharge neutral obligations toward belligerent nations.

II

Protection of the Peace of the Western Hemisphere

Consideration of measures to preserve the American Continent free from all conflict whether on land, in the air, within territorial waters, or within the area of the primary defense of the Western Hemisphere.

III

Economic Cooperation

Consideration of measures to safeguard in the present situation the economic and financial stability of the American republics. Such measures include:

A. Measures to preserve commercial and financial interests of the American republics.

B. Continuation and expansion of long-term programs for commercial and economic cooperation among the American republics.¹⁵

As may be observed, the program of the consultative Meeting was restricted to matters bearing directly on the immediate emergency created by the outbreak of the war in Europe. Questions not bearing directly on the problems by the war were not considered. Accordingly, the program of the Panama Meeting differed considerably from the program of the regular international conferences of the American States, wherein there have always been included a wide variety of subjects concerning inter-American relations in general.¹⁶

The invitation extended by the Government of Panama on September 5, 1939, was accepted by all of the Governments of the American republics. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Nicaragua attended in person, and the remaining nine statesmen who served as substitutes for their respective Foreign Ministers were of high caliber and had broad experience. The Director of the Pan-American Union also attended, assisted by members of his staff.¹⁷ In view of the relative shortness of the period of notification, many of the delegates and their advisers and assistants availed themselves of air transportation in order to arrive in Panama

¹⁵Report of the Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the American Republics (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1939), Congress and Conference Series 29, 26.

¹⁶Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics, 4.

¹⁷Ibid., 7.

in time for the Meeting. The majority of the delegates had arrived by September 23, the date of the formal inauguration. This gave them time to participate fully in the deliberations and agreements of the Conference.

The delegates found one case of "penetration" from Europe even before the Conference opened. On their arrival they found a German contingent already entrenched. It was made up of Hans Winter, Panama Charge' d' Affairs, who had hurried back from Berlin; Dr. Otto Reinback, Minister to Central America stationed at Guatemala, Johannes Schmidt, his Counselor, and a corps of assistants; several newspaper correspondents, including Dr. Kurt Sell of the Official German News Bureau, who flew from Washington; and five members of the German Embassy in Washington who also were reported at the Hotel Colombia, although they kept out of the limelight.¹⁸

Other German workers functioned actively as propagandists, however, especially bombarding newspapers, radio stations, legations, and consulates with attacks on Great Britain. Moreover, they asked to be allowed to sit in at the private consultative sessions as observers. Undersecretary of State, Sumner Welles, head of the American delegation, quickly vetoed the request. On September 23, President Demostenes Arosemena of Panama gave the Germans a backhanded rebuff in his speech opening the conference, when he said to the delegates from the Americas:

Humanity knows that you come here neither to destroy
nor to enslave, nor to dismember nations, nor to prepare

¹⁸"The Panama Parley," Newsweek, XIV (October, 1939), 24.

the predominion of the people upon the tragic ruins of a neighbor, nor to subscribe to public pacts to cover the maliciousness of secret treaties, nor to proscribe races, nor to persecute religions.¹⁹

In contrast to the German activity, allied diplomats and correspondents on the scene took pains to keep themselves innocent of any charge of spreading propaganda.²⁰

The desire of most of the Latin-American countries to participate in the Panama Conference is best shown by the letter President Roosevelt received from the President of Colombia:

Bogota, Colombia
September 1, 1939

In view of the extreme gravity of the events which are developing in Europe, I wish to reiterate to you the firm determination of the Government of Colombia, unanimously supported by its people, to proceed in close agreement with the Government of America and on the basis of the principles of solidarity proclaimed at the Pan-American Conferences, in defense of the essential rights which are common to us: the fullness of our independence and sovereignty, the normality of our economic development, the essential features of our democratic Governments, and peace within whose fertile shade the peoples of this hemisphere desire to attain their destinies. It will be for my Government a pleasure and an honor to proceed in constant accord with Your Excellency's Government and to cooperate by whatever means are within its power to render American solidarity effective and to bring about all of the benefits which we have the right to hope from it and to have in these most bitter hours for mankind, the joint action of America exerted in behalf of the ideals which animate it, and in such a way that it may serve to avoid, mitigate, or remedy the threatening catastrophe.

Eduardo Santos²¹

¹⁹Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics, 31.

²⁰"The Panama Parley," loc. cit., 24, 25.

²¹Department of State Bulletin, I, No. 11, 235.

Thus it was in accordance with the principles of the Convention of the Maintenance, Preservation, and Reestablishment of Peace, the Declaration of the Inter-American Solidarity of Buenos Aires, and the Declaration of Lima, that the Ministers of Foreign Relations of the American Republics, or their representatives, met at Panama for the purpose of consultation.

CHAPTER II

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING

The formal inaugural session of the Meeting was held on September 23, 1939, in the Great Hall of the National University. On this occasion the Secretary of Foreign Relations of the Republic of Panama, acting as Provisional Chairman, declared the session opened, and the opening address was delivered by Juan Demonstenes Arosemena, President of the Republic of Panama.²²

Immediately following the address of President Arosemena, General Eduardo Hay, Secretary of Foreign Relations of Mexico, made a brief speech invoking the memory of Simon Bolívar. At the suggestion of the Provisional Chairman, the entire gathering, both the delegates and the invited public, rose to their feet and observed one minute of silence in honor of the memory of the great Liberator. The inaugural session was thereupon declared adjourned.²³

The first public plenary session was held on Monday, September 25. On this occasion, His Excellency Dr. Narciso Garay, Secretary of Foreign Relations of Panama, whose tact, wisdom, and vision contributed materially to the success of the deliberations, was elected Permanent Chairman. The order of the procedure of the various delegates determined by lot was as follows: Mexico, Ecuador, Cuba, Costa Rica, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay, Honduras, Chile, Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina,

²²Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics, 7.

²³Ibid.

Guatemala, Panama, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Brazil, Bolivia, United States of America, Haiti, El Salvador. Addresses were delivered by the delegates of Panama, Costa Rica, Peru, United States of America, Chile, Cuba, Uruguay, El Salvador, and Ecuador.²⁴

A preliminary informal meeting of the delegates was held on the morning of September 23 in order to consider the organization of the Conference. The regulations which were adopted had been formulated with the cooperation of the Honorable L. S. Rowe, Director General of the Pan-American Union. In the drafting of the regulations of the meeting, as well as in the procedure followed during the session, the fact that the meeting was a "consultation" of Ministers of Foreign Affairs rather than a diplomatic conference was strongly emphasized. There were but three public sessions: The opening session, at which Dr. Juan D. Arosemena, the President of Panama, delivered a notable address; the second, at which Dr. Narciso Garay, the Secretary of Foreign Relations of Panama, made an address of welcome and was elected President of the Meeting; and the closing session at which a number of the delegates spoke and the Final Act was signed. The other meetings were of an executive character and were held behind closed doors. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs sat around a large table; this tended to foster an informal exchange of views. The consultative nature of the meeting was also apparent in the conclusion, which took the form of resolutions and declarations rather than treaties and conventions.²⁵

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Pan-American Union Bulletin (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1939), LXXIII, No. 11, 610.

The work of the conference was divided among the following four committees:

- I. Committee on Neutrality
- II. Committee on Protection of the Peace of the Western Hemisphere
- III. Committee on Economic Cooperation
- IV. Committee on Coordination

Representatives of the governments presenting proposals dealing with the respective subjects automatically became members of the respective committees, in addition to those members designated by the President of the Meeting.²⁶ The action taken may be considered most conveniently under the work of these committees.

The Committee on Neutrality, headed by Dr. Luis Lopez de Mesa, Minister of Foreign Relations of Colombia, with Dr. Alberto Ostria Gutierrez of Bolivia, as reporter, considered nineteen projects, and as a result of the study and consideration given the various projects by the committee, eight resolutions and declarations were adopted by the Meeting. One of the most important of these is the General Declaration of Neutrality of the American Republics. The declaration states, as proclaimed in the Declaration of Lima, that the American republics

have achieved a spiritual unity through the similarity of the republican institutions, their unshakable will for peace, their profound sentiment for humanity and tolerance, and through their absolute adherence of the principles of international law, of the equal sovereignty of states and of

²⁶ Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics, 7.

individual liberty without religious or racial prejudices; (that) this acknowledged spiritual unity presupposes common and solidary attitudes with reference to situations of force which, as in the case of the present European war, may threaten the security of the sovereign rights of the American republics; (and that) this attitude assumed by the American republics has served to demonstrate that it is their unanimous intention not to become involved in the European conflict.²⁷

The American republics resolved in the declaration to reaffirm the status of general neutrality, it being left to each republic to regulate "in their individual and sovereign capacities the manner in which they are to give it concrete application."²⁸ The declaration prescribed certain standards of conduct which were in accordance with international law and the domestic legislation of each country, and which the American republics proposed to follow in order to maintain their neutrality and to insure that their rights as neutrals were duly respected. To this end they agreed, among other things, that they would prevent on their respective territories, land, sea, or air, from being used as bases for belligerent operations; and that they would prevent on their respective territories the enlistment of persons to serve in the armed forces of a belligerent, or the fitting out and arming of vessels for belligerents. They further declared that they would not permit the establishment by the belligerents or their agents of radio stations on the territory of the American republics. They declared that they would request all belligerent vessels and aircraft coming into areas under their jurisdiction to respect their neutral status and to observe their laws and regulations and the

²⁷"Consultative Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the American Republics," International Conciliation, No. 356 (January, 1940), 18.

²⁸Ibid., 19.

rules of international law concerning the rights and duties of neutrals and belligerents; and in case any difficulties might arise in the effort to insure respect for their rights, they would, if they so desired, consult among themselves.²⁹

The American republics, in this general declaration of neutrality, agreed that they might, if they so desired, bring together and place in one port, under guard, the merchant vessels which might seek refuge in their waters. They agreed to consider as lawful the transfer of the flag of a merchant vessel to that of any American republic, provided that such transfer was made in absolute good faith without agreement for resale to the vendor, and that the transfer took place in the waters of an American republic.³⁰

They also agreed that the American republics might exclude belligerent submarines from their ports, or regulate their admission. It was understood that their neutrality measures might as far as possible, be uniform.³¹

The closing section provided for the appointment by the Governing Board of the Pan-American Union of a commission of seven experts in international law to study the problems of neutrality "in the light of experience and changing circumstances," and to make recommendations relating to the government of several republics.³²

²⁹Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics, 56.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Department of State Bulletin, I, No. 24, 662.

³²Pan-American Union Bulletin, LXXIII, No. 11, 610.

The Pan-American Union, on November 2, requested the governments of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, Venezuela, and the United States to designate delegates to serve on the Inter-American Neutrality Committee. Rio de Janeiro was designated as the seat of the committee, which will function for the duration of the European war.³³

Professor Charles G. Fenwick of Bryn Mawr College was designated by President Roosevelt on November 23, 1939, as the United States representative on the Permanent Inter-American Neutrality Committee. He is a specialist in international law and Latin-American relations.³⁴

The meeting also reaffirmed the solidarity of the nations of this hemisphere. They declared that it was their endeavor to maintain and strengthen peace and harmony among themselves, and that these principles, far from having a selfish purpose of isolation, were inspired by a deep sense of universal cooperation.³⁵

The Meeting adopted a resolution on the Humanization of War, appealing to the countries at war to arrive at a peaceful settlement of their controversies through pacific means, on the essential basis of justice and law and not on the dictates of force. They appealed to the belligerents to abstain from the use of poisonous gases and other chemical methods of warfare which produce irreparable and permanent injuries; the bombing of open cities, objects, and places without military value, whether from land, sea, or air; the use of inflammable liquids; the poisoning of water and dissemination of bacteria;

³³New York Times, November 2, 1939.

³⁴Ibid., November 23, 1939.

³⁵Pan-American Union Bulletin, LXXIII, No. 11, 611.

and the sinking of merchant vessels without first having placed the passengers, crew, and ship's papers in a place of safety. The hope was expressed in the resolution that the National Red Cross societies of the American republics lend their assistance for the relief of the victims of the present European war and that the governments lend every facility and support to the respective Red Cross societies carrying forward this work.³⁶

Another important subject to which the Meeting gave much attention was contraband of war. A resolution was adopted expressing opposition to including on lists of contraband, foodstuffs and clothing intended for civilian populations, and not destined directly or indirectly for the use of its armed forces, and declaring that the grantings of credit to belligerents for the purchase of such merchandise is also not contrary to neutrality whenever it is permitted by the legislation of neutral countries. It also called upon the Neutrality Committee to include in its study a consideration of the commercial situation of raw materials, mineral, plant, or animal, provided by the American republics.³⁷

The Meeting adopted a resolution pointing out the desirability of coordinating the preventive or repressive action of the police and judicial authorities of the American republics, especially with respect to the rapid and frequent interchange of information, as well as surveillance, apprehension, and custody of suspected individuals. The

³⁶Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics, 57.

³⁷Pan-American Union Bulletin, 611.

Meeting called upon the various governments to exchange views, either through the foreign offices or through an inter-American conference, for the formulation of coordinated rules of procedure to facilitate the action of the police and judicial authorities in preventing or repressing unlawful activities which individuals, whether nationals or aliens, may attempt in favor of a foreign belligerent state. It also called upon the various governments to take the necessary steps to obtain ratification of the convention on extradition, signed at the Seventh International Conference of the American States held at Montevideo in 1933. This resolution was called Coordination of Police and Judicial Authorities for the Maintenance of Neutrality.⁵⁸

The Committee on the Protection of Peace of the Western Hemisphere had as its chairman Dr. Justo Prieto, Minister of Foreign Relations of Paraguay, and Dr. Miguel Angel Campa, Secretary of State of Cuba, as reporter. The United States and Cuba each presented a project relative to the general subject.⁵⁹

At the time that the conference was held, belligerent war vessels had appeared in waters close to the shores of the American republics. From the very beginning of hostilities, it became apparent that American lives and commercial intercourse would be seriously endangered if belligerent activities were carried on in the areas of regular inter-American trade routes. The danger of this situation and the

⁵⁸ Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics, 59, 60.

⁵⁹ T. H. Reynolds, As Our Neighbors See Us (Nashville, Tennessee: Collom-Ghertner, 1940), 278.

possible ways and means for circumscribing them, so far as that might be possible, constituted the main problem with which the Committee of Peace was called upon to deal with.⁴⁰

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs, or their representatives, at Panama were convinced that their respective governments were entitled, as a measure of self-protection, to insist that the waters within a reasonable distance from their shores should remain free from the commission of hostile acts or from the undertaking of belligerent activities by nations engaged in a war in which they themselves were not involved. General respect for these principles would mean that the lives and the vital interests of the nationals of the American republics would be to a great extent insured, and that the preservation of peace in the Western Hemisphere would be materially safeguarded.⁴¹ These principles were embodied in the Declaration of Panama, which is by far the major achievement of the Meeting, which reads as follows:

The governments of the American republics meeting at Panama, have solemnly ratified their neutral status in the conflict which is disrupting the peace of Europe, but the present war may lead to unexpected results which may affect the fundamental interests of America and there can be no justification for the interests of the belligerents to prevail over the rights of neutrals causing disturbances and suffering to nations which by their neutrality in the conflict and their distance from the scene of events, should not be burdened with its fatal and painful consequences.

During the World War of 1914-18, the Governments of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru

⁴⁰Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics, 14.

⁴¹Department of State Bulletin, I, No. 16, 256.

advanced, or supported, individual proposals providing in principle a declaration by the American republics that the belligerent nations must refrain from committing hostile acts within a reasonable distance from their shores.

The nature of the present conflagration, in spite of its already lamentable proportions, would not justify any obstruction to inter-American communications which, engendered by important interests, call for adequate protection. This fact requires the demarcation of a zone security including all the normal maritime routes of communication and trade between the countries of America.

To this end it is essential as a measure of necessity to adopt immediately, provisions based on the above-mentioned precedents for the safeguarding of such interests, in order to avoid a repetition of the damages and sufferings sustained by the American nations and their citizens in the war of 1914-18.

There is no doubt that the governments of the American republics must foresee those dangers and as a measure of self-protection insist that the waters to a reasonable distance from their coasts shall remain free from the commission of hostile acts or from the undertaking of belligerent activities by nations engaged in war in which the said governments are not involved.

For these reasons the governments of the American republics

RESOLVE AND HEREBY DECLARE:

1. As a measure of continental self-protection, the American republics, as long as they maintain their neutrality, are as of inherent right entitled to have those waters adjacent to the American Continent, which they regard as a primary concern and direct utility in their relations, free from the commission of any hostile act attempted or made from land, sea, or air.

Such waters shall be defined as follows. All waters comprised within the limits set forth hereafter except the territorial waters of Canada and of the undisputed colonies and possessions of European countries within these limits:

Beginning at the terminus of the United States-Canada boundary in Passamaquoddy Bay, in $44^{\circ}46'36''$ north latitude, and $65^{\circ}54'11''$ west longitude;

Thence due east along the parallel $44^{\circ}46'36''$ at a point 60° west of Greenwich;

Thence due south to a point in 20° north latitude;

Thence by a rhumb line to a point in 5° north latitude,
24° west longitude;

Thence due south to a point in 20° south latitude;

Thence by a rhumb line to a point in 58° south latitude,
57° west longitude;

Thence due west to a point in 80° west longitude;

Thence by a rhumb line to a point on the equator in
97° west longitude;

Thence by a rhumb line to a point in 15° north
latitude, 120° west longitude;

Thence by a rhumb line to a point in 48°29'38" north
latitude, 136° west longitude;

Thence due east to the Pacific terminus of the United
States-Canada boundary in the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

2. The governments of the American republics agree that they will endeavor, through joint representation to such belligerents as may now or in the future be engaged in hostilities, to secure the compliance by them with the provisions of this declaration, without prejudice to the exercise of the individual rights of each state inherent in their sovereignty.

3. The governments of the American republics further declare that whenever they consider it necessary they will consult together to determine upon the measures which they may individually or collectively undertake in order to secure the observance of the provisions of this declaration.

4. The American republics, during the existence of a state of war in which they themselves are not involved, may undertake, whenever they may determine that the need therefor exists, to patrol, either individually or collectively, as may be agreed upon by common consent, and in so far as the means and resources of each may permit, the waters adjacent to their coasts within the area above defined.

(Approved October 3, 1939)⁴²

⁴²Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics, 62-64.

The Declaration of Panama was not in conformity with international law as understood at the time of its announcement. But international law is not static. In the past, belligerent rights have always dominated neutral rights in time of war. The depths of belligerents' illegality reached in the present war prove that the rights of no neutral will receive consideration unless it has the power and will enforce them. A single nation would be ill-advised to make such a sweeping pronouncement. But the Declaration of Panama was made by twenty-one states, almost one-third of all of those in the world. It is by such measures, gradually accepted, that the scope and effectiveness of international law is advanced.⁴³

The Declaration of Panama is in the nature of a corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, a sort of front-line defense to protect it. It is possible that the Declaration of Panama, which is aimed solely at the protection of the Western Hemisphere, may gain strength with the passage of time. The degree to which the Declaration of Panama is accepted will depend upon the power of this country to enforce it.⁴⁴

The Declaration of Panama was received with considerable skepticism in this country. One frequently hears the statement that it would probably be impossible to patrol so vast an area as that provided in the Declaration. That is certainly true. Both sides in the present war have violated it, and instead of penalties, the American Republics have only issued warnings. But it is doubtful whether the conferees at Panama originally intended to apply penalties during this war. It

⁴³Stephen Duggan, "The Western Hemisphere as a Haven of Peace," *Foreign Affairs*, VIII (July, 1940), 625.

⁴⁴*New York Times*, October 5, 1939.

is more likely that their intention was merely to issue warnings in order to keep the record straight until the close of the war, at which time the entire problem could be considered calmly and deliberately in the light of whatever experience had been gained.⁴⁵

The Meeting also adopted a resolution providing for a consultative meeting, in case any geographic region of America subject to the jurisdiction of any non-American state should be obliged to change its sovereignty and there should result therefrom a danger to the security of the American Continent. It was pointed out, however, that the resolution should not apply to a change of status resulting from the settlement of questions now pending between non-American states and states of the continent.⁴⁶

The Meeting recommended to the governments of the American republics that they take necessary measures to eradicate from the Americas the spread of doctrines tending to place in jeopardy the common inter-American democratic ideal. The resolution pointed out that the democratic ideal which prevails in the American hemisphere may be endangered by the action of foreign ideologies inspired by opposite principles and that therefore it is advisable to protect the integrity of this ideal.⁴⁷

The Meeting also approved a resolution affirming the desirability of having a meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Havana on October 1, 1940, for the consultation in case the war continues, or an

⁴⁵Duggan, loc. cit., 626.

⁴⁶Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers to the American Republics, 15.

⁴⁷Ibid., 16.

abnormal post-war situation should exist. This was not in any way to prevent the holding of an earlier meeting if such should be found necessary.⁴⁸

The Committee on Economic Cooperation was headed by His Excellency Carlos Martins, Representative of the Minister of Foreign Relations of Brazil, with Dr. Esteban Jaramillo of Colombia, as reporter. It was the task of this committee to undertake a study of the emergency and long-term problems of a financial and economic character confronting the American republics as a result of the war, with a view to protecting their respective economic and financial structures, safeguarding the stability of their currencies, promoting and expanding their industries and developing their commerce.⁴⁹

The wide range of subjects covered by the projects presented to the committee could not be adequately considered. The Conference therefore adopted a resolution providing for the establishment of an Inter-American Financial and Advisory Committee consisting of twenty-one experts, one from each American government, to consider the problems incident to the economic and financial dislocation brought about by the European war.⁵⁰ This Committee began its work at the Pan-American Union, in Washington on November 15, 1939, and immediately turned its attention to the matter of an inter-American bank. After several months of intensive effort in which the delegates representing the twenty-one American republics, assisted by a group of experts from the

⁴⁸Pan-American Union Bulletin, 612.

⁴⁹Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics, 16, 17.

⁵⁰Department of State Bulletin, II, No. 30, 61.

United States Department of State and Treasury, the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, and the Federal Loan Agency, the Inter-American Committee on February 7 adopted a resolution recommending to the Governments of the American republics the establishment of such a bank, and submitted for their consideration drafts of a convention, charter, and by-laws for its establishment. Comments and suggestions were received from a number of governments and were carefully studied, and on April 16, the Inter-American Committee approved the final texts. The Honorable Sumner Welles, Undersecretary of State, is chairman of the Committee.⁵¹

The establishment of an inter-American bank is a step of major importance in the development of inter-American financial and economic cooperation and the economic implementation of the "Good-Neighbor" policy. It has been apparent for some time that there existed a wide zone of economic and financial activity among the American republics for which the existing machinery of cooperation has been inadequate.⁵²

The Bank, generally speaking, is designed to promote fuller exploitation of the natural resources of the Americas, to intensify economic and financial relations among the American republics, and to mobilize for the solution of economic problems the best thought and experience in the Americas. The purposes of the Bank are enumerated in more detail in section five of the by-laws.⁵³

The Committee on Coordination, which consisted of one delegate representing each of the four official languages of the conference,

⁵¹Pan-American Union Bulletin, LXXIV, No. 5, 447.

⁵²Ibid., 448.

⁵³Ibid., No. 6, 448.

was composed of the following delegates:

His Excellency Julio Tobar Donoso, Minister of Foreign Relations of Ecuador;

The Honorable Sumner Welles, Representative of the Secretary of State of the United States;

His Excellency Léon Laleau, Secretary of Foreign Relations of Haiti;

His Excellency Manuel C. de Goes Monteiro, Brazil.

This committee was responsible for the coordination and style of the various resolutions and declarations adopted.⁵⁴

The Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics was formally adjourned on October 3, 1939, at the conclusion of the closing address given by Dr. Narciso Garay, Secretary of Foreign Relations of Panama.

⁵⁴Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics, 18.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS OF THE MEETING

The results of the Panama Conference were received with varying degrees of interest by the peoples of this hemisphere and the powers at war.

One of the most controversial issues was the Declaration of Panama, which was both criticized and applauded by the American people.

Senator Pepper of Florida urged the safety zone to be protected by inter-American naval force, and if any belligerent should violate the area, their vessels should be interned. He even went so far as to say "that submarine cruisers and other warships that violate this zone should be sunk."⁵⁵

Mr. Alfred M. Landon criticized the Declaration as setting up a "hazy new zone" on the high seas which raises many questions of peril to our neutral position. He stated that the United States did not possess the ability to enforce the Declaration, and it was certain that the duty of enforcement would fall solely upon the navy of the United States. He urged that the foreign policy of the United States should not be built upon sympathy or hate for foreign governments. He was against meddling in domestic affairs of other countries.⁵⁶

Sumner Welles, Undersecretary of State, scored the critics of the Declaration of Panama in an interview at Washington on November 13,

⁵⁵New York Times, October 15, 1939.

⁵⁶Ibid., November 2, 1939.

when he said that the provisions of the Declaration of Panama were not original, and did not represent any new or startling theories, that in 1914-15 this very idea, in one form or another, had been advanced by several of the American republics. In answer to the accusation that the United States Navy would have to patrol the safety zone, he said that if the belligerents should refuse to observe the provisions of the Declaration, that a provision was made in the Declaration for the American republics to consult together to determine what steps they might individually or collectively take. Welles said there was no implication in the agreement on the part of any American republic to undertake to exercise force in order to procure observance of its terms.⁵⁷

Mr. Getulio Vargas, President of Brazil, said that by participation in the neutrality conference of the American Republics at Panama City, Brazil had strengthened her ties with the nations of this hemisphere and had taken steps to minimize the effects of the war on her internal affairs. "A true neutrality is marked by unbiased vigilance in a situation which we did not create and in which we do not wish to interfere," he said.⁵⁸ This principle acquired new expressions at the Panama Conference. There the Americas set forth that, by the will of their free peoples, they would maintain a common front against the war, and defend their continental peace and assure the interchange of activities.⁵⁹

⁵⁷Ibid., November 14, 1939.

⁵⁸Ibid., October 22, 1939.

⁵⁹Ibid.

An editorial in a Chilean paper, Mercurio, assailed the agreements reached at Panama, saying they were made too hastily, and were not strictly in accordance with international legislation universally accepted and applied, and that they were essentially one sided in so far as they only revealed the American point of view without the concurrence of the belligerents in agreement, and that they were almost impossible to carry out in actual practice because they entailed the enforcement of principles of weaker nations against powerful European nations. The editorial insisted that the idea of creating a wide zone of safety made violation more probable, and would bring forth immediate complications with any nation violating it.⁶⁰

An editorial in the Argentine Nacion said that the neutrality zone fixed by the Inter-American Conference was easier to establish than to maintain; and that the Declaration presented itself as a complement to the Monroe Doctrine, for in reality it was a step more, because it was a continentalization of a doctrine that was highly unilateral.⁶¹

It was the belief of the Government of Cuba that the American Republics should maintain the Declaration of Panama, strengthening it with the provision to intern belligerent boats which violate the neutrality zone, even though this action might be considered unfriendly by the belligerents.⁶²

⁶⁰ Ibid., December 25, 1939.

⁶¹ Ibid., October 5, 1939.

⁶² Resumé of the Answers of the Governments of the American Republics to the Consultation of the Inter-American Committee of Neutrality (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1940),

Mexico interpreted the Declaration that the safety zone was to begin where the Mexican territorial seas began.⁶³

Resolutions adopted by the American nations at the Panama Conference evoked satisfaction in German political quarters.

Two points which were stressed in particular in German quarters were: the resolution urging the earliest possible end of the European war, and the expressing of objection by the American nations that footstuffs and clothing designed for the civilian populations should be regarded as contraband. The semi-official Politisch Diplomatische Korrespondenz believes that it is the wish of the Conference to further the development of the Monroe Doctrine so that the Western Hemisphere shall leave nothing undone to keep itself removed from the entanglements of the Old World.⁶⁴

The British Government was understood to feel that the British Navy had a right to fight battles anywhere in the international seas, regardless of the Pan-American neutrality safety zone.⁶⁵ For instance, if Britain admitted the claim, or even without formally admitting it, undertook not to commit any hostile or belligerent act in the zone, a German submarine or armed raider might refuge there, and emerge periodically to continue raids on British merchantmen unless the forces of the American powers could guarantee to prevent such action.⁶⁶

The feeling in British circles was that if the aims of the zone could be enforced, it would work to the advantage of the Allies, and

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴New York Times, October 6, 1939.

⁶⁵Ibid., December 21, 1939.

⁶⁶Ibid., October 4, 1939.

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they would favor it. Barring physical evidence of the workability of the plan, however, the inclination was to regard the international seas as a legitimate battlefield. An indication of this view was the British declaration of a blockade that does not release any ocean from British contraband control.⁶⁷

From the point of view of the belligerents themselves, the whole idea of the safety zone boils down, as a practical matter, to the question of possible gains, against losses. In case both sides would strictly observe the Declaration of Panama, the Allies would lose the opportunity to interfere with such German shipping as still exists between American ports, but they would gain the advantage of not having to protect their own shipping against German warships over a considerable area. Germany would lose the right to raid in these waters, but gain the advantage of an unmolested inter-American trade that provides badly needed foreign exchange; she would also avert much of her present risk of embroiling some of the American states in the war, on the side of the Allies.⁶⁸

The recent neutrality policy of the American republics was subjected to a severe, but thus far inconclusive, test when the Declaration of Panama was invoked December 23, 1939, and a note of protest was dispatched to France, Great Britain, and Germany. The chief issue was the Graf Spee episode, but the protest cited in addition the sinking or detention of German merchant vessels by British vessels in American waters. The protest raised the possibility of sanctions

⁶⁷ Ibid., December 21, 1939.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

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against the belligerents infringing the safety zone. Recommendations for such measures had been referred for consideration to the Inter-American Neutrality Committee, which was faced with the difficult task of devising a formula that would maintain the spirit of the Declaration, and at the same time avoid complications with one or more of the belligerents.⁶⁹

On January 14, 1940, the English Government made formal reply to the protest of the American Republics on the violation of the safety zone. The reply contained the following contentions: That the observance of the Declaration of Panama was based upon the consent of the belligerents; and that the American republics would not attempt to enforce observance of this zone by unilateral action. In view of the protest the English Government desired to draw the attention of the American republics to the following considerations: It was apparent that the Declaration involved the abandonment of certain legitimate belligerent rights, and the Declaration was not based on international law; and that its adoption required the assent of the belligerents. If England adopted this proposal she must be assured that the zone would not provide German war and supply ships with a vast sanctuary from which they could carry on action against the Allies; and acceptance would have to be on the basis that it should not constitute a precedent for a far-reaching alteration in the existing laws of maritime neutrality.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Howard J. Trueblood, "Progress of Pan-American Cooperation," Foreign Policy Reports, XV (February, 1940), 301.

⁷⁰ Department of State Bulletin, II, No. 35, 200.

The English believed that unless these points were adequately safeguarded, the zone proposal might lead to the accumulation of the belligerent ships in the zone. This in turn would bring the risk of war nearer the American States, and lead to friction between the Allies pursuing their legitimate belligerent activities, and the American republics endeavoring to make this new policy prevail.⁷¹

The English believe that the use of sanctions would increase the risk of friction.

The English contended that the disadvantage of the zone proposal could not be eliminated, and cited the operations in the zone of the warship Admiral Graf Spee and the supply ship Tacoma to support their contention. With regard to this incident they believed that the activities of their ships did not imperil, but rather contributed to the safety of the American Continent. They rejected the claim that their activities had in any way exposed them to justifiable reproach, because the zone proposal had not been made effective by belligerent assent.

The reply is closed with the following statement:

Until His Majesty's Government is able to feel assured that the scheme will operate satisfactorily, they must, anxious as they are for the fulfillment of American hopes, necessarily reserve their full belligerent rights in order to fight the menace presented by German action and policy and to defend that conception of law and that way of life, which they believe to be as dear to the peoples and Governments of America as they are to the peoples and Governments of the British Commonwealth of nations.⁷²

⁷¹Ibid., 200, 201.

⁷²Ibid., 201, 202.

The French in their reply to the protest of the American republics, interpreted the steps taken on December 23 and the proceeding communication of the Declaration of Panama as implying that in the minds of those Governments the constitution of such a zone involved a renunciation by the belligerents of the exercises over wide areas well established by international custom, could result only from agreement among all states interested.⁷³

The French demanded satisfactory assurance that the German Government would no longer send war or supply ships into that zone, if they were to accept the neutrality zone.⁷⁴ They demanded that effective measures be adopted to hold German ships which had taken refuge in American ports.⁷⁵

The French Government contended that to refuse refuge, transit, or refueling to their warships would contrast badly with the line of conduct adopted by the Government of Uruguay with regard to the Graf Spee.⁷⁶

The German Government in their reply to the protest stated that they welcomed the intention of the American republics as expressed in the Declaration to maintain strict neutrality during the present conflict. They agreed that the Declaration was a change in the existing international laws. However, only rules of laws now in effect could be effective against German naval vessels which have been in the proposed zone.⁷⁷

⁷³Ibid., 202.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid., 203.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid., 204.

Germany demanded that the British and French possessions pledge themselves, under guaranty of the American States, not to be made starting points or military bases. They objected to portions of Canada being surrounded by the zone. The reply of Germany is closed with the following statement:

The German Government would be ready to enter into a further exchange of ideas with American republics regarding putting into effect the Declaration of Panama. The German Government feels sure of the success of the continuation of the plan of the security zone only when the French and British position as has been made known is fundamentally revised.⁷⁸

At the time of this writing, none of the belligerents has recognized the validity of the safety zone.

In any estimate of the results of the Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, it is important to consider the intangible aspects as well as the tangible results, and it is especially significant when viewed in the light of circumstances which existed in other parts of the world. While conflict was being carried on by several of the most important nations, and while tension and anxiety existed among the peoples of other nations lest they might also be drawn into the war or lest their independence and sovereignty might be jeopardized, representatives of the twenty-one American neighbors assembled on equal terms to consider peaceful measures which they might individually or collectively take in order to safeguard their neutrality, in order to preserve, so far as possible, their economic and commercial interest from dislocation as a result of the war abroad, and in order

⁷⁸Ibid., 205.

to keep war away from this continent.⁷⁹

To appreciate the full significance of the Conference, it is necessary to keep in mind the atmosphere of friendship and goodwill and the spirit of cooperation which were its outstanding characteristics. It was inevitable that differences of opinion as to the measures that should be adopted would manifest themselves in the course of the discussions, but these differences arose not from any selfish advantages of any group of states, but rather from honest differences of viewpoint as to the measures that would best contribute to the welfare of the Americas.⁸⁰ The agreements, however, were all unanimously approved.⁸¹

⁷⁹Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics, 18.

⁸⁰Pan-American Union Bulletin, LXXIII, No. 11, 610.

⁸¹Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics, 19.

C O N C L U S I O N

The Meeting was a practical demonstration of inter-American solidarity, and it established a precedent in inter-American relations. It was entirely fitting that this precedent of consultation by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs should have taken place in the Republic of Panama. It constituted a realization of the vision of an ideal, a realization of the vision that Bolívar possessed more than a century ago. This consultation was a practical example of what can be accomplished by peaceful collaboration for the promotion of good international relations and for the safeguarding of their respective interests. It served to insure the establishment of a peaceful form of practical cooperation and interdependence between equal and sovereign states on a scale which the world has rarely witnessed and which at this time is more than ever imperative.⁸²

The Meeting was a demonstration of the overwhelming will of the peoples of the Western Hemisphere for a peace based on a renunciation of the force, on justice, and on equality. It may well be that the action taken at Panama may prove instrumental in protecting those standards of civilization which the American peoples have inherited.⁸³

Those attending the conference were fully aware that at this Meeting the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, all of the complex problems involved in the neutral status of the American Republics could not be solved. Furthermore, it was evident that as the European war

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

proceeded, new problems would arise which would call for further consultation. This situation was recognized in a resolution providing for a further meeting of the Foreign Ministers at Havana.⁸⁴

Because of the collapse of the French Republic and the overrunning of Holland by the Germans, the twenty-one American republics deemed it necessary to consult regarding the colonial possessions of those countries. Therefore, the meeting was held in Havana July 20, 1940, earlier than had first been proposed.

The Havana meeting can be considered a continuation of the consultation inaugurated at Panama. It reaffirmed the Declaration of Panama, provided for economic cooperation, and adopted the resolution known as the Act of Havana.⁸⁵

Even without that perspective which usually is so necessary to determine the importance of particular events, there is no doubt that the developments of recent years are of outstanding significance in the history of the inter-American relations in general. There has never been a time when Pan-American movement has proceeded at such a rapid pace.

⁸⁴Pan-American Union Bulletin, LXXIII, No. 11, 612.

⁸⁵Oklahoma City Times, July 29, 1940.

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