

# Summit of the Americas agenda being fought out

by Cynthia Rush

President Bill Clinton has invited leaders of 33 Western Hemisphere nations to meet with him in Miami on Dec. 9-11 in a "Summit of the Americas," whose official discussion themes have been publicized as "economic integration, strengthening of democracy, and the promotion of sustainable development." But the actual focus of the administration's agenda being coordinated by the President's special assistant and close friend Thomas "Mac" McLarty, remains to be seen.

There is clearly a fight taking place around this issue. Numerous government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other business and banking groups have positioned themselves in hopes of imposing their policy outlook on the agenda. Exemplary is the active deployment of factions affiliated with the Inter-American Dialogue (IAD) think-tank, whose policy for the hemisphere centers around the concept of "limited sovereignty," the destruction of the institution of the armed forces, and enforcement of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) free-market dictates.

On Oct. 13, Woodrow Wilson Center member Paul Sigmund, a proponent of destroying Ibero-America's armed forces who is also associated with the Rockefeller Foundation and the Council on Foreign Relations, appeared in Lima, Peru to promote the IAD's line. In a seminar on the Miami summit sponsored by the globalist think-tank CEPEI, Sigmund praised the U.S. intervention into Haiti as "a new concept of International Order," and called for the extension of the idea of intervention toward "humanitarian intervention . . . in favor of democracy, and intervention legitimized by the international community."

Sigmund and others of his ilk are aware that the destruction of the military and national sovereignty still faces significant opposition in Ibero-America. On Oct. 21, following a meeting of Central American army leaders in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Honduran Army Gen. Lázaro Avila Soleno warned that "Central America is sovereign . . . and no one, not the international lending agencies, can condition their financial aid nor undermine the sovereignty of our states." General Avila said that the region's armies would not tolerate further reductions in their manpower or budgets, and attacked the IMF by name for pressuring governments to accept its demands.

## Sovereignty the key

In an attempt to get around this opposition, Sigmund and his CEPEI colleague Enrique Obando discussed during the Lima seminar how to nullify the "non-intervention principle" contained in articles 18 and 20 of the Organization of American States (OAS) charter. Sigmund said that the solution lay in expanding the justification for "collective intervention" to "lack of democracy and violations of human rights [as] threats to peace." With the demise of the continent's military regimes, Sigmund added, agreements such as the 1991 Santiago Commitment, which calls for "collective action to defend democracy," became possible. As a positive example of its enforcement, he pointed to the hemispheric condemnation of Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori's 1992 "self-coup," in which he shut down the Congress and assumed emergency powers to fight narco-terrorism.

Paralleling Sigmund's presentation, in mid-October Argentine ambassador to the OAS Hernán Patiño Meyer brought to U.S. ambassador to the OAS Harriet Babbitt a proposal backed by Canada, Chile, Argentina, and the United States, that the Miami summit debate "the new conditions of security in the Americas after the end of the Cold War, and the democratization of the continent." Patiño Meyer, a rabid demilitarizer, presides over the OAS Special Commission on Hemispheric Security. He stresses the need to "reevaluate" the relationship between the OAS and the Inter-American Defense Board, which in reality means discussing how to place the independent board under OAS control, so that it can be deployed in multilateral adventures in Ibero-America.

Nor has Richard Feinberg, the Dialogue's former president who now runs Ibero-America policy from the National Security Council, been idle in organizing the summit agenda. In a major speech on Sept. 20 before the IAD, he repeatedly emphasized that the most crucial aspect of agenda preparation is consultation with "civil society." This phrase is the buzzword for the NGOs which, in the Dialogue's view, are to rule in place of the sovereign state and implement the malthusian financial and environmental dictates of the British-run international oligarchy.

Feinberg would be loath to have the summit take up the proposal made recently by Venezuelan President Rafael Caldera that free market economic policies be debated in Miami. Caldera, who is bucking the IMF's program in his own country, has also put forward some positive initiatives for infrastructural development with neighboring Brazil and implied that such projects could be extended to other nations.

These proposals were worrisome enough to some in the State Department, whose operations often run counter to the White House, that deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Michael Skol was sent to Caracas to "talk to" the Venezuelan President about the summit. As an ambassador to that country during the reign of deposed President Carlos Andrés Pérez, Skol had warmly endorsed the latter's IMF program.