THE FUTURE OF INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONS: A DIALOGUE WITH ALBERT RAMDIN AND THOMAS SHANNON

JUNE 8, 2009

PROGRAM

10:00 AM WELCOME

PRABIR K. BAGCHI, Senior Associate Dean, and Professor of Decision Sciences, The George Washington University School of Business

GENERAL REMARKS

ALBERT R. RAMDIN, Assistant Secretary General, Organization of American States

THOMAS A. SHANNON, JR., Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State

Moderator: INÉS BUSTILLO, Director, Washington Office, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

11:00 AM DIALOGUE WITH THE AUDIENCE

11:30 AM CLOSURE
THE FUTURE OF INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONS

SPEAKERS’ BIOGRAPHIES

INÉS BUSTILLO

Inés Bustillo is the Director of the Washington Office of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). She joined ECLAC in 1989 as Economic Affairs Officer working on a variety of topics including macroeconomic analysis, international trade and finance.

Previously, Ms. Bustillo was Professor of Economics at Universidad Anáhuac in Mexico City and Visiting Faculty at The American University in Washington D.C. Other positions held include consultant to the World Bank, the Center for Latin American and Monetary Studies (CEMLA), and Operadora de Bolsa in Mexico City.

She is the author of several articles and a frequent lecturer at universities, think tanks, and other fora. Ms. Bustillo, a national of Uruguay, earned M.A. and PhD degrees in economics from American University.

ALBERT RAMDIN

Albert R. Ramdin was elected OAS Assistant Secretary General on June 7, 2005, and took office on July 19. The Surinamese diplomat has had a distinguished career in public service at the national and international level, serving before his election to the OAS as Ambassador at Large and Special Adviser to the Government of the Republic of Suriname on Western Hemispheric Affairs.

In Suriname, Ramdin served as Senior Adviser to the Minister of Trade and Industry, where he was intensively involved in restructuring the ministry and implementing an industrial development program. In the mid-1990s, he worked for two years in the private sector before returning to public service when he was appointed Adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Finance.

In 1997, Ramdin became his country’s Permanent Representative to the OAS, and two years later, he was also appointed to serve concurrently as Suriname’s non-resident Ambassador to Costa Rica. As Ambassador to the OAS, Ramdin chaired the Permanent Council (January-March 1998) and the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (1999), and coordinated the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Ambassadors Caucus during Suriname’s chairmanship of the subregional group.

In 1999, he joined the CARICOM Secretariat as Assistant Secretary-General for Foreign and Community Relations, where he was responsible for coordinating CARICOM’s foreign policy and strengthening relations among its member states. He played a leading role in increasing cooperation with the Central American Integration System and the Andean Community. Ramdin coordinated CARICOM’s technical preparations for the Third Summit
of the Americas and was instrumental in ensuring that key issues were included in its Declaration and Plan of Action.

In 2001, Ramdin was named Adviser to the OAS Secretary General, with special attention to the Caribbean. He continued his close engagement with the situation in Haiti, dealt with issues of priority for small states, monitored the hemispheric trade agenda and briefed the General Secretariat on Caribbean concerns.

Born in Suriname on February 27, 1958, Ramdin received his education in Paramaribo and in The Netherlands, at the University of Amsterdam and the Free University, where he studied geography of developing countries with a specialization in social and economic problems of smaller economies in Latin America and the Caribbean. Ramdin is married to Charmaine Baksh, a national of Trinidad and Tobago, and they have two children, Kareana Amy and Anu Xsitaaz.

THOMAS A. SHANNON

Thomas A. Shannon was confirmed as Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs on October 7, 2005.

A career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Mr. Shannon served as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Western Hemisphere Affairs at the National Security Council from 2003 to 2005. From 2002 to 2003, he was Deputy Assistant Secretary of Western Hemisphere Affairs at the Department of State, where he was Director of Andean Affairs from 2001 to 2002. He was U.S. Deputy Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States (OAS) from 2000 to 2001.

He served as Director for Inter-American Affairs at the National Security Council from 1999 to 2000; as Political Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Caracas, Venezuela from 1996 to 1999; and as Regional Labor Attaché at the U.S. Consulate General in Johannesburg, South Africa from 1992 to 1996.

During his career as a Foreign Service Officer, Mr. Shannon also served as Special Assistant to the Ambassador at the U.S. Embassy in Brasilia, Brazil from 1989 to 1992; as Country Officer for Cameroon, Gabon, and Sao Tome and Principe from 1987 to 1989; and as the Consular/Political Rotational Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala City, Guatemala from 1984 to 1986.

Mr. Shannon holds a Doctorate and a Master's degree in politics from Oxford University, and a B.A. in Government and Philosophy from the College of William and Mary.

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