

**February 3, 1972**  
**Telegram from S. Shahabuddin, Charge d’Affaires,  
Caracas**

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**Summary:**

Recommendation that India become a Permanent Observer at the Organization of American States.

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FROM: S. Shahabuddin, Charge d'Affaires, Caracas

TO: Shrimati K. Rukmini Menon, Joint Secretary (AMS), Ministry of External Affairs

...Israel has been subsequently admitted as Permanent Observer. So has been Spain from outside the hemisphere, apart from Guyana and Canada.

3. You may recall that I have been off and on pressing for India's participation as Observer at all inter-American conferences whether within or outside the framework of the OAS or the UN. In fact I attended the Regional O.L.A. Conference of the FAO held in Caracas as a duly accredited Observer. I failed to obtain the necessary authority in time in the case of the Regional Conference of Ministers of Education which was held recently.

4. We are slowly realizing the importance of Latin America, not only as a market for our industrial goods but as an area with much goodwill for us with which we have much in common and with which we can collaborate on the international scene to mutual benefit. The scope of technical cooperation in varied fields is also enormous. And I may add that there is all over Latin America a growing consciousness of India's industrial potential and technological progress, an awareness of our emergence as the leading country in South and South-East Asia. There is also a reciprocal desire for getting closer in the political field and no inhibition in exchange of experience. In fact, we are living today in a psychological moment most propitious for such relations.

5. From our point of view, if we ever nurture ambitions of a world presence - I am not speaking of world power status - we cannot afford to ignore Latin America. And I can think of no better institutional approach than asking for observer status at the OAS and thus qualifying for participation in all OAS activities in the economic and technical fields. This would also help us keep up to date our knowledge of Latin America in various fields of activity.

6. As far as I know UK, France and major Western European countries are already associated as Observers. However, there is a new category of Permanent Observers and our Embassy in Washington could obtain detailed information in this respect.

7. I would strongly recommend that India should also seek to associate itself as a Permanent Observer with the OAS and pending that, seek to attend as Observer on an ad hoc basis every inter-American conference, whether under the OAS or under specialized agencies of the UN dealing with a technical or economic or cultural matter.

8. I would go as far as to recommend also that appropriate non-governmental bodies of national level should be encouraged and even subsidized to send observers to Latin American conferences of Labour leaders, writers, teachers, students, doctors, engineers, scientists, peasants, journalists, social workers, etc., to establish non-governmental links at all levels.

9. I am sending an extra copy should you like to consult the Economic Division.