

CELAC, HISTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN UNITY

K.S. Glyvynska

a 4th year student, History Faculty,

I.I. Mechnikov Odessa National University

Tel. +38063-773-31-47; email: carren@i.ua

This article reveals the Latin American and Caribbean international organization — CELAC. The author considers questions about CELAC's origins, its formation, main purposes, and international value as well as positive and negative aspects of its activity.

Key words: Latin America, Caribbean states, CELAC, OAS, USA, Chavez, Bolivar, international organization, regional policy.

В данной статье речь идет о латиноамериканской и карибской международной организации — СЕЛАК. Автор рассматривает вопросы о происхождении СЕЛАК, его формировании, главных целях, положительных и отрицательных аспектов его деятельности и международном значении СЕЛАК.

Ключевые слова: Латинская Америка, Карибские страны, СЕЛАК, ОАГ, США, Чавес, Боливар, международная организация, региональная политика.

У даній статті мова йде про латиноамериканську та карибську міжнародну організацію — СЕЛАК. Авторка розглядає питання про походження СЕЛАК, його формування, головні цілі, позитивні та негативні аспекти його діяльності і міжнародне значення СЕЛАК.

Ключові слова: Латинська Америка, Карибські країни, СЕЛАК, ОАД, США, Чавес, Болівар, міжнародна організація, регіональна політика.

The CELAC is Latin American regional political organization, which name means 'the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States'. The main purpose of the CELAC is comprehensive integration of the 33 countries of Latin America.

The preconditions to association between Latin American countries arose in colonial times, when the majority of them were only provinces of Spanish colonial empire. Latin American provinces started the revolution in 1810 to get free from the empire which was living with political problems, economical crisis, racism and the relicts of feudalism. And this was Simon Bolivar, the Venezuelan revolutionary leader who first tried to realize the project of association of South America. It was he who inspired people of later times to create CELAC. Bolivar developed a project of confederation, and this League, as he was writing in his article, would be more powerful than even the Holy Alliance. So, such was the principles of this organization:

- independent nations are united and convoke the general congress regularly

- nations are equal
- they help each other in case of internal or external danger
- they won't allow racism and they struggle for social justice
- they make whole another world to recognize them [1: 222-223].

Unfortunately this project was not realized because of Bolivar's death. And the United States which wanted to become a regional leader did not let the new countries to be free. The Monroe doctrine proclaimed 'America for Americans' which meant: 'Whole America for United States'. To strengthen their will the USA created the Panamerican Union, which was transformed into the Organization of American states (OAS) in 1948. This was the organization of US control - not of the equal nations like Simon Bolivar dreamed of

But actually Bolivar's idea was not forgotten. Latin Americans were trying to create their own international organization. The Rio group was founded in 1968 and became the successor of Contrador group (the first American organization without participation of the USA). It was conceived as a constantly operating mechanism of political consultations for coordination of uniform positions of the Latin American countries on the main questions. The specific purpose of the Rio group was to bring peace to Central America after the armed conflicts in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala.

In 2008 during the international crisis Brazil suggested to create a consulting mechanism for Latin American countries on financial and economical questions - the CALC, the Caribbean summit on integration and development. It was founded at a meeting of 33 Latin American countries in the Brazilian town of Costa-do-Sauipe called at the initiative of Brazil. The Salvadorian declaration on integration and development in the face of financial crisis was adopted, cooperation concerning energy, food and climate change was supposed.

On February 23, 2010 in Cancun, Mexico, the 2nd summit of the CALC and in the meantime the 11th summit of the Rio Group was held. The decision to create a new organization which would replace the outdated and Washington-controlled Organization of American States (OAS) was a result of this meeting. The idea was suggested by Hugo Chavez - Venezuelan President who was an admirer of Bolivar and was sure that Latin America must be united - at the beginning of 2010 at a meeting of Foreign Ministers of 32 states in Caracas. The participants of the Mexican summit accepted the action plan 'Montego Bay' which included such points:

- declaration on solidarity with Haiti (victim of an earthquake on January 12, 2010)
- rejection of the Cuban embargo
- need of adoption of the resolution urging Britain to respect the rights of Argentina concerning the Falkland Islands
- solidarity with Ecuador which was put by GAFI (Financial Action Task Force) into the list of the countries with strategic shortcomings of fight against money laundering and terrorism financing (the President Rafael Correa was not agree with such assessment)

- support of the Yasuni-ITT plan, according to which the President of Ecuador Rafael Correa decided not to develop 848 million barrels of oil in Yasuni's National park and it prevented the release of 407 million tons of carbon in the atmosphere (the decision was made in the interests of the Indians living here)
- the special statement for Guatemala (its President Alvaro Colom and his wife were accused of murder)
- the special statement for carbon use on a continental platform
- cooperation in the problem of migration.

Such were the special purposes of creation of the CELAC:

- creation of a financial and economic space free from crises in the USA and Europe
- political counterbalance to the OAS, i.e. the collective solution of all economic, political, financial, social problems without control from the White house
- commercial integration
- helping each other against coup d'états.

Besides, some participants of the process had also their own purposes: so, Bolivian President Evo Morales hoped to return the access to the ocean which Bolivia had lost in the Pacific war, and Colombian President Juan Santos expected the help of the new organization in a fight against narcotraffic in Colombia. At the summit in Cancun Hugo Chavez said aloud of what all thought silently: 'The CELAC is urged to replace the OAS which now serves for nothing'. 'It is the death sentence for the Monroe doctrine' - declared the Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega. Besides, the president of Ecuador Rafael Correa made emphasis on the fact that the OAS is under control of the White house - in particular, he noted that the residence of the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights (one of the OAS organs) is situated in Washington though the USA aren't the commission member. The speech of Mexican president Felipe Calderon (who was, by the way, one of the initiators of the CELAC creation) was focused on democracy, justice, freedom and human rights. 'We decided to create the CELAC as an own regional mechanism which will unite all the countries of the continent' - he told.

This association was created then when leaders of the Latin American countries finally were disappointed in the OAS which couldn't cope with the crisis which has arisen after the coup-d'état in Honduras.

It was planned to found the CELAC at the special meeting on July 5, 2011 in Caracas, but because of Hugo Chavez' state of health it was postponed to December 2-3, 2011 (I Cumbre de la CELAC). This meeting was held in Caracas, and during it the Caracas declaration (Plan de Accion de Caracas) was adopted. It was also called the Charter of the CELAC because it included the main principles of the new organization. The Charter was written by Hugo Chavez and the President of Chile Sebastian Pinera as they were the representatives of left and right forces in Latin America. The declaration includes such points [2]:

- the strong principles of a currency and tax policy (the task is to avoid influences of financial crises of the USA and Europe)

- economical integration, development of intra regional trade
- involvement of civil society, social organizations and movements, their regional integration
- hunger and poverty destruction
- the common economic space creation, economic integration
- aspiration to a redesign of the international financial institutions on the basis of increase in a vote of developing countries under equality and solidarity postulates, for decision-making process democratization in these institutions
- fight against a problem of greenhouse gases and other problems of environment
- creation of the regulation system for the multiband roads, air transport, seaports, rivers, control of the railway message, exchange of effective methods
- development of methods of management by water resources
- creation of group which will coordinate efforts of the countries on humanitarian assistance
- the help to immigrants with integration into society, simplification of legal, labor, productive and cultural integration according to internal laws of the country
- coordination of actions of the national institutions responsible for development of information and telecommunication technologies

So, what did they actually change? Thanks to actions of the CELAC the quantity of the poor decreased [3]; according to the estimates of the CEPAL (The economic commission of Latin America), in 1990 in the region there were 48% of the people who are living below the poverty line, and at present there are 28% [4]. In the countries of the CELAC there are created the systems of regional informing on epidemiological danger. The governments began to involve various social movements in the regional policy. The intra regional trading is strengthening. And of course now the CELAC is much more influential than the miserable OAS [5]. Such countries as Russia [6] and China [7] have got strong communications with the CELAC, they willingly sign trade contracts and support each other in international organizations - this is not a challenge to US control, but the ending of this control [8].

As well as in any organization, there are some internal contradictions in the CELAC. For example, Honduras is the member of the block, but its president came to the power by coup-d'état. The CELAC declares environment protection while Brazil advances ecologically harmful model of farming. Some countries are connected by trade contracts with the USA, depend on narcotraffic profits, have the corrupted politicians at the top posts.

REFERENCES

1. Bolívar S. Doctrina del libertador / S. Bolívar. – Caracas, 2010. – P. 222 – 223.
2. [Access mode: http://www.sela.org/attach/258/default/Plan_de_Accion_de_Caracas.pdf]

3. [Access mode: <http://www.eclac.cl/prensa/noticias/discursossecretaria/9/49739/2012.11.29-discurso-antonio-prado-ministerial-celac-ue.pdf>].
4. [Access mode: <http://www.bolpress.com/art.php?Cod=2014012503>].
5. [Access mode: <http://www.eclac.cl/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/socinfo/noticias/noticias/8/45268/P45268.xml&xml=/socinfo/tpl/plf.xml&base=/socinfo/tpl/top-bottom.xml>].
6. [Access mode: <http://www.telesurtv.net/articulos/2013/11/28/rusia-ratifica-la-amistad-estrategica-con-la-celac-7322.html>].
7. [Access mode: <http://www.telesurtv.net/articulos/2014/04/04/inician-conversaciones-en-beijing-entre-celac-y-china-9596.html>].
8. [Access mode: <http://www.pravda.ru/world/restofworld/southamerica/29-01-2014/1189741-celac-0/>].

*Рекомендовано до друку к.і.н., доц. А.С. Поспеловим
Стаття надійшла до редакції 20.04.2014*