

Preface

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On March 19th of 1938, Mexico raised its voice before the League of Nations in Geneva to protest against the “suppression of Austria as an independent State as a result of a foreign military intervention” and to denounce the “serious attack against the Covenant of the League of Nations”.

The historic protest against the “political death of Austria” was voiced by the Mexican jurist and Permanent Representative to the League of Nations, Isidro Fabela, a week after the entering of German troops into Austrian territory.

In his correspondence with the President of Mexico, Lázaro Cárdenas, Fabela described Austria as a country that, since 1934, had been deprived of its democratic forces and deliberately left exposed to the uncontrollable expansionism of the German Reich. Apart from his diplomatic work, it is worth highlighting the humanistic vocation of Fabela, who expressed his despair about the cruelties he foresaw and what he could discern in Europe for 1939.

Eight decades after these historical events, the Mexican protest, as an act of denunciation, self-definition and identity, and as an action to defend international law, invites us to commemorate the values that Mexico and Austria share. Convictions that characterize us as nations committed to peace and promoters of development and well-being.

The principles that guided the spirit of the Mexican protest have maintained their validity over the past decades. Today, they are embodied in the Magna Carta of the Organization of the United Nations, and we as UN members underline the conviction that the observation of international law, the unlimited resource of peaceful conflict settlement, the strengthening of multilateral organizations and the promotion of international cooperation are indispensable elements for guaranteeing international peace and security.

I thank Professor Paul Oberhammer, Dean of the University of Vienna Law School for having fostered this initiative and Vice Dean Professor Franz-Stefan Meissel for the organization of the symposium in memory of the great diplomat and jurist Isidro Fabela and to open the possibility of hearing Austrian and Mexican experts reflect on the meaning and the magnitude of the position my country took regarding such an important topic of international law.