



# Speech

Organization of American States



**LUIGI R. EINAUDI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL OF  
THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES  
STATEMENT ON HAITI AT THE MEETING OF THE  
PERMANENT COUNCIL  
December 3, 2003 - Washington, DC**

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Mr. Chairman, by way of additional background for the consideration of this matter, I would like to inform the Council about a recent incident affecting the work of the Special Mission, established by Resolution 806 in January 2002 to work toward the strengthening of democracy in Haiti. I wish also to inform on recent correspondence and statements concerning the situation in Haiti.

At the last session of this Council, I criticized all parties in Haiti: government, opposition, civil society, and ourselves, the international community. The Chairman has just summarized those points. I could have said then but did not, retaining at least some of my diplomatic training, was that all sides reveal an alarming inability to relate ideals to practice, even when it comes to their own behaviour.

Some ten or twelve days ago the Head of the Special Mission agreed to a request for a meeting sought by the President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Haiti. During that meeting, held November 25 with a group of ten visitors at the office of the general secretariat in Haiti, the Chamber of Commerce president informed that the group actually represented the G184, a civil society grouping. He then read a letter from the G184 requesting the Mission to appeal to the Government for the immediate release of two G184 members who had been detained during a previously authorized civil society demonstration on November 14. At the same time, a related demonstration, with full press coverage, commenced outside the office. Subsequently, nine participants in the internal meeting declared that they were placing themselves under the protection of the Special Mission and refused to leave the premises until the Special Mission agreed to take the action they were demanding with the Government of Haiti.

This action by the G184 representatives was unacceptable. The Special Mission said so and refused to act under pressure. And rightly so. The inviolability of the premises of diplomatic missions is one of the oldest principles of international law. In keeping with some of the finest traditions of hemispheric jurisprudence, the rights of Diplomatic Missions are closely linked to principles of freedom, asylum, and nonintervention. The uninvited guests in the Office of the General Secretariat in Haiti were treated with courtesy and provided with immediate needs. No effort was made to dislodge them by force. But the Special Mission also refused to act under pressure in their behalf even though their specific petition was well-grounded. Finally, on November 29, after four days and four nights, the nine persons left the premises of their own volition.

On December 2, Haitian judicial authorities released the two detained persons on a conditional basis.

Prior to that incident and now continuing, a number of items have been circulating with all manner of scurrilous fabricated accounts about the OAS in general, and about the Special Mission, its work and its capacity.

I will give one specific example. Wide distribution has just been given to a statement by the Union Citoyenne des Gonaives asserting that in the report of the Secretary General to the Permanent Council, "les incidents meurtriers et sanglants, qui se sont déroulé aux Gonaives ne sont pas mentionnés."

This is of course total nonsense. The Section on pp 3-4 of the French text of the

Report CP/doc 3798/03 deals precisely with these events. Though the numbers may differ slightly from those advanced by the Union Citoyenne des Gonaives, our summary certainly covers the main issues and the criticism is an obvious fabrication.

Mr. Chairman, the Secretary General's most recent report is of crystalline clarity: the challenges are many and complex. The resources allotted to the Special Mission are few. Under the Mission Head, David Lee and Deputy, Denneth Modeste, the Mission staff has gone way beyond the simple call of duty to carry out the mandates of the OAS member states in Haiti by engaging the Government of Haiti, the opposition and civil society. The Mission cannot and should not be converted into an easy target for any who are dissatisfied with pace or results.

The Mission merits the full support and protection of this Permanent Council. Part of that protection lies in the norms of international law to which I have already alluded. But a more important part, I would submit, lies in ensuring that the Mission's mandates are reasonable and that they are adequately funded. In a scene bedeviled by irresponsible claims, the International Community should not be among the perpetrators.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to bring the following to the attention of the council:

On November 12, 2003, the Episcopal Conference of Haiti, which groups all the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church, issued a statement addressed to the people of Haiti à la veille de 2004 which will be circulated for the information of the Council.

On November 16, 2003, the Convergence Democratique, a grouping of opposition political parties, sent a letter to the Secretary General containing information addressed to the permanent council. You Mr. Chairman, have acknowledged that correspondence and both pieces have been circulated as document CP/Inf. 4905/03.

The Secretary General received a lengthy letter dated November 28 from President Aristide in which the President expressed his hopes regarding the role of the international community, including the Special Mission, in contributing to a resolution of his country's crisis. That letter is being circulated in this room today.

Finally, at 9:30 this morning I received a letter from Antoine Barbier, Executive Secretary of the G 184, in which he lays out the point of view of the G184 on the current situation and expresses their hopes for changes in the mandate of the Special Mission and the approach of the OAS. We will circulate this letter for information once it has been translated.

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