

## Haiti's Turning Point Challenges the World

Remarks of Ambassador Luigi R. Einaudi  
U.S. Permanent Representative to the OAS  
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The government of the United States believes that the February 23 agreement between President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the leaders of Haiti's parliament and the February 25 agreement between President Aristide and prime minister-designate Rene Theodore mark a new phase in the multilateral process that began here in this room on September 30, while the coup was still underway.

Enormous credit goes to our Secretary General, Ambassador Joao Clemente Baena Soares; to his representative, Ambassador Augusto Ramirez Ocampo; and to the chairman of the Ad Hoc Meeting of Foreign Ministers, Bolivian Foreign Minister Carlos Iturralde, for their personal contributions in bringing us to this turning point in our common effort to help restore constitutional democracy to Haiti.

The progress we have made thus far is due to our unwavering commitment to a simple but unprecedented goal: the peaceful restoration of constitutional democracy to Haiti and return of Haiti's president Jean-Bertrand Aristide to the legitimate authority conferred upon him by the people and constitution of Haiti. The challenge changes in this new phase, but the commitment must remain the same. We must not waver.

Within 48 hours of the September 30 coup, OAS member state foreign ministers, including U.S. Secretary of State James Baker III, met and unanimously adopted tough measures -- first diplomatic isolation and suspension of aid, then an embargo and an asset freeze -- to press the illegal regime to return to democratic rule. Within a week of the coup, a mission made up of ministers from eight OAS member states flew to Haiti with the Secretary General to press for return to democratic rule.

Since then the OAS has brokered talks among Haitians in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, (November 22-24), Caracas, Venezuela, (January 7-8), and Washington (January 18 and February 21-24) as well as Port au Prince. When Haitian leaders were not meeting under OAS auspices they were consulting among themselves to find ways to advance the negotiations.

There have been delays, misunderstandings and misinformation; there was a crude attempt by a violent fringe to prevent agreement when Rene Theodore was beaten and an aide

shot to death; and there were many apparent lulls, lack of interest and lack of faith by some outside this body.

Yet, it is no accident that the OAS took the lead for the world on Haiti. Resolution 1080, adopted at the 1991 OAS General Assembly in Santiago, put the OAS at the frontier of our search for a better world: one based on democracy not dictatorship; on cooperation not unilateralism. In short, democracy within nations and among nations.

When in Haiti a "sudden (and) irregular interruption of the democratic political institutional process" took place, the OAS, our community of democracies and a regional international organization with a Charter commitment to representative democracy, acted. Now, the United States will join other member states in supporting the February 23 agreement. And, we will join other OAS member states in lifting the embargo when the Aristide-Theodore government takes office, as called for in the terms of the February 23 agreement.

I have just three very general observations to make regarding the agreement.

First, to paraphrase a president of the United States inspired by Haiti's example, this agreement is of, by, and for the Haitian people. Many Haitians deserve credit for reaching this accord, among them: President Aristide, Rene Theodore, Senate president Dejean Belizaire, Chamber of Deputies president Alexandre Medard, Haitian parliamentarian Duly Brutus, Port au Prince Mayor Evans Paul, and Ambassador Jean Casimir.

Second, to read the February 23 agreement's seven pages is to read a document of mutual respect and obligation, which preserves the rights of each of the sectors of the Haitian polity towards the others and which rejects the path of recrimination, retaliation, and repression.

Third and notably, the Haitian constitution serves as a touchstone and frame of reference to the agreement.

The Haitians have begun to do their part. Now it is our turn to act. The support of OAS member governments, the support of the international community beyond the OAS -- including the United Nations and the European Community, is essential.

The need for humanitarian and other assistance to Haiti is acute. The people of Haiti have paid a dreadful price for the coup and its aftermath. The laws of nature have never been suspended by politics: Haitian farmers are now entering planting season. The international community must consider

ways to jumpstart humanitarian assistance -- including seeds for farmers and urgent aid for those most at risk in Haitian society -- to address critical needs now. Timely and abundant assistance from both governments and international organizations is essential.

International lending institutions -- like the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank -- must review again their policies in light of the changing situation.

The most immediate need -- one I trust the Secretary General will begin to negotiate -- is to provide personnel and financial support for a country-wide civilian presence in Haiti (OEA-DEMOC). Fielding OEA-DEMOC is vital to sustain the momentum created by the talks and help create conditions for President Aristide's return to Haiti.

The February 23 agreement opens the door to democracy in Haiti; OEA-DEMOC is the critical next step in the struggle for human rights, military professionalization, and strengthening of democratic institutions. I received word early this morning from Assistant Secretary Bernard Aronson at the Drug Summit in San Antonio that at all 4 of the individual bilateral meetings held yesterday President Bush and his Latin American colleagues pledged to support OEA-DEMOC and to work to create the conditions for the peaceful return of President Aristide to Haiti.

The US Government a week ago contributed \$1 million for OEA-DEMOC. We will be providing a second \$1 million soon. We will be assisting in other ways as well. The Secretary General earlier this year distributed tentative plans for OEA-DEMOC to members and observers. All of us who are familiar with these must not allow rumor, misinformation, and, yes, disinformation undermine this critical effort.

Let me give one example. There was a rumor circulating in Haiti last weekend that each member of OEA-DEMOC in Haiti would be accompanied by two armed security personnel. That is simply not true and makes no sense. My government would not support such a move. Permit me to repeat what I said here January 21.

"...(T)he principles that have galvanized our unprecedented solidarity against the interruption of Haitian democracy must be applied with the most absolute respect for Haiti's culture, people, and welfare. The 'how' of the restoration of constitutional democracy to Haiti is fundamentally a Haitian decision for Haitians to make. Our goal can only be, as the ministerial resolutions make clear, to help create the conditions in which that decision may be made successfully."

We are on the frontiers of international progress. Frontiers are by definition unmapped. But we have an

auspicious precedent. This is the fourth consecutive year that the OAS has maintained an unarmed civilian mission in Nicaragua. Known as CIAV/OEA, that mission has worked for peace and democracy without imposition, without intervention, without force, and at all times in concert with the authorities and constitution of Nicaragua.

The future of democracy in Haiti depends on our being able to adapt this peaceful and civilian instrument -- and the willingness to cooperate that it represents -- to supporting the construction of democracy in the sovereign and independent republic of Haiti.

A first phase is finishing. A new and equally challenging phase is beginning. We must be as firm and united in our practice in the months ahead as we have been in our support for democratic principles in Haiti.