

"New Hope for Haiti"
Remarks of Ambassador Luigi R. Einaudi
U.S. Permanent Representative to the OAS
OAS Permanent Council
January 13, 1993

Mr. Chairman:

I thank the Secretary General for his report, which gives some of the reasons why we believe there is new hope for progress in Haiti.

Indeed, I wish to convey explicitly from the outset my Government's appreciation for Secretary General Baena Soares' continuing efforts to carry out the mandates created by the OAS Foreign Ministers during their ad hoc meeting last December 13, as well as those that have been in place since October of 1991.

Our Secretary General has in our view borne daunting responsibilities with grace and energy in an environment characterized by rapid change and complexity, one presenting major obstacles as well as opportunities. His performance -- both individually and in coordination with the Foreign Minister of Bolivia -- reaffirms the unique role of regional solidarity organized in support of Haitian democracy through the OAS.

Now a renewed effort to resolve Haiti's crisis has been taking shape for some time. In its current form, however, the new initiative now developing is built on three pillars that have emerged clearly only over the past month. They are:

-- internationally, a new pattern of coordination between the OAS and the UN, in which are combined the special strengths of regional sensitivity and global power;

-- in Haiti, a desire among the most varied of sectors to put an end to this tragic crisis; and finally

-- in the United States, close cooperation in the national interest between incoming and outgoing administrations of different political parties.

The prelude took place in September, when Secretary General Baena Soares hosted a week of negotiations between personal representatives of President Aristide and of Haiti's de facto government. Those private talks led to a breakthrough agreement to station an 18-member civilian presence in Haiti. Now headed by the gifted diplomat from Trinidad and Tobago,

Colin Granderson, that mission has faced both logistical and political difficulties -- yet it has become the inspiration for a process to reassure all parties in Haiti that a peaceful solution is possible and that their intrinsic human rights can be respected.

In October, President Aristide reminded world leaders of the continuing urgency of the crisis and called upon the UN to join the OAS in enforcing measures designed to restore democracy there. His letter stimulated November resolutions in both the OAS and the UN, calling for implementation of economic measures and, I quote the OAS "with special emphasis on the suspension of oil, arms and munitions supplies and on the freezing of assets of the Haitian state."

At the same time, at the request of our Secretary General Baena Soares, Jamaica's former Prime Minister Michael Manley carried out quiet shuttle diplomacy with a view to assessing opportunities for an early solution of the crisis. In early December, Manley met in Atlanta with UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali and former President Carter.

On December 11, UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali nominated former Argentine Foreign Minister Dante Caputo as his Special Representative on Haiti. We in the United States have a high regard for Dante Caputo, and we are impressed that our (OAS) Secretary General has insured greater cooperation with the United Nations and a single voice by naming Mr. Caputo his representative. On December 13, the hemisphere's Foreign Ministers met in Washington in a reconvened OAS Ministerial on Haiti. After a three and one half hour closed door debate, during which Jamaica's current Foreign Minister David Coore made a moving statement of the need for both stronger measures and greater humanitarian assistance, the ministers took several decisions. Of particular significance for future events, they authorized new efforts focussed on a "substantial increase in the OAS civilian presence" and on increasing cooperation with the United Nations, possibly even the Security Council.

On December 19, Special Envoy Caputo traveled to Port au Prince and met with all interested sectors. That week, our Secretary General met with the Secretary General of the United Nations in New York.

On January 6, Secretary of State Eagleburger and Secretary-Designate Warren Christopher discussed the situation in Haiti. On an exceptional basis, the Department of State issued a formal statement that it had been coordinating closely with senior members of the Clinton transition team in a joint effort with UN and OAS representatives to support the initiative being developed by Mr. Caputo.

Mr. Chairman, let me quote directly from this exceptional official U.S. statement:

And, I quote: "the incoming administration and this administration ((that is, the Bush Administration and the Clinton Administration-to-be)) share the goal of helping Haitians to restore democracy in Haiti, safeguarding the human rights of all Haitians on the island, and helping the parties find a lasting solution that will end Haiti's suffering and attain new support for Haiti's economy and people. We urge all sides the statement concluded to be flexible in their positions and to be responsive to the entreaties of the UN and OAS."

The next day, Secretary General Baena added to the new momentum by calling publicly again for an immediate enhancement of the OAS civilian presence in Haiti. The United States agrees, believing that the early augmentation of the international civilian presence on the ground in Haiti can help create a climate of confidence for negotiations to end Haiti's political and economic crisis, and can by its very presence have an immediate positive impact in reducing human rights violations from whatever source.

We agree entirely with Secretary General Baena Soares that the OAS civilian presence should not be seen as a substitute for the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. We regret that the de facto government in Port au Prince declined a request from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to visit Haiti to observe the human rights situation.

I might also add that we too are concerned by the announcement by the de facto government that it intends to hold elections for several Senate seats and other offices on January 18 and 25. The United States believes that free and fair elections can only be held under a legally constituted government in an atmosphere of respect for free expression, freedom of assembly, and open political dialogue. These conditions do not exist in Haiti today; for that reason the State Department yesterday publicly indicated that we do not regard the planned elections as legitimate. My delegation would support a similar statement by the president of this Permanent Council to that effect today.

The fact is that the United States is firmly committed to restoration of democratic, constitutional government in Haiti. We continue to recognize Jean-Bertrand Aristide as the legitimately elected President of that country. And, we urge all parties to dedicate themselves to serious negotiations to end the current crisis by restoring democracy to Haiti.

Haiti needs a democratic solution to end its suffering, to attain new support for its economy and people.

One component of this lasting solution is economic. The U.S. is providing food for some 400 to 500 thousand Haitians every day, and emergency medical care for up to two million Haitian men, women, and children. Our purpose in joining the embargo is to help induce negotiations and restore democracy.

Our purpose is not to deny food to the poor or to deprive the Haitian people generally of basic needs. In fact, today the United States is publishing in the Federal Register regulations, decided upon some time ago, that will allow the export to Haiti of school books, medicine, generators and generator spare parts for humanitarian purposes such as hospitals. Our purpose is to maintain pressure for a negotiated political solution, not to punish the Haitian people. To that end, we continue to ban most trade. To that end, we oppose access by the de facto regime to international financial institutions or to arms. To that end we maintain frozen the assets of the Haitian government in the United States.

We are not and have not been shy about this policy. Maj. Gen. John Sheehan, USMC, is in charge of U.S. Security Assistance Programs in the Caribbean. He regularly consults with the military liaison officers in our embassies there. Last week, we took advantage of his visit to Haiti to reinforce our basic message: that there must be a peaceful solution to Haiti's crisis that recognizes the legitimate authority of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Finally, let me say that any lasting solution must address the tragic conditions of the Haitian "boat people." We are very concerned that migration by boat from Haiti is an extremely dangerous undertaking, which has led to many deaths. As we have said many times, we believe that migration is a regional problem to which the only lasting solution is the restoration of democracy in Haiti itself. We urge all Haitians wishing to seek refugee status to operate through normal legal procedures that are already in place and accessible to them.

Let me conclude by repeating we believe this is a moment of unusual opportunity to make progress on a terrible problem. The opportunity has been created by an unprecedented conjunction of forces and events, inside Haiti and out.

We now have the United Nations undertaking a complementary and reinforcing role in addition to that of the OAS, which has been involved since the beginning of this crisis. It is crucial that the Haitian people take advantage of this

opportunity before new pressures arise and before additional hardships affect them. It is crucial that they seek a fair and lasting democratic solution that bolsters democratic institutions, safeguards the rights of all citizens, and allows economic reconstruction.

We urge all sides to be flexible in their positions and to be responsive to the UN and OAS as this new initiative develops. And we urge all countries -- not only those who have already been generous in their support, but all countries -- to provide the long-term financial and human support needed to ensure that this new initiative prospers and that the plan set forth so well by our Secretary General today can be put into practice.

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