

Speech

Organization of American States



**LUIGI R. EINAUDI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL OF
THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
UPON CONSIDERATION OF THE DEMOCRACY PILLAR AT
THE XIX MEETING OF THE SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION
REVIEW GROUP
October 2, 2000 - Quebec City, Canada**

M. le Représentant du Premier Ministre
Mess. Les membres de la Troika
Mess. Les Coordinateurs Nationaux,

Ambassadeurs,

Mesdames et Messieurs, amis:

Je ne propose pas de vous présenter des points concrets, mais de faire un commentaire générale à propos de comment penser, ou plutôt, comment concevoir notre coopération en matière de la démocratie.

Nous avons en la démocratie, un idéal commun. Et dans ces dernières années nous avons aussi approximé en plusieurs choses une pratique commune. C'est ce qui a permis les importantes avances dans le droit international des Amériques en ce qui concerne la défense de la démocratie, entre lesquelles je souligne la résolution 1080 de l'OEA et le Compromiso democratico du Mercosur.

Ces idéaux et pratiques nous ont permis, comme nous l'a rappelé M. le Secrétaire Générale, César Gaviria, ce matin, réagir efficacement devant les grandes crises politiques.

En l'an 2000, comme en 1990, les pays représentés ici ont tous le droit d'être considérés démocratiques, un fait qui rend possible notre solidarité. C'est dans un certains sens un parallèle au niveau hémisphérique de l'héritage de Pierre Elliott Trudeau que nous célébrons ici au Canada: La force d'un idéal politique marié à la pratique.

This, it should be remembered, is precisely what we also celebrate in Roosevelt Douglas of Dominica, a Caribbean country that earlier gave us that giant of democracy Dame Eugenia Charles.

Dicho eso, es importante notar que la democracia es algo que cada país tiene que construir de acuerdo con su propia idiosincracia cultural humana e histórica. Además, como lo recordó el Sr. Secretario General, el ideal democrático se refleja en dos aspectos distintos: la organización del Estado - equilibrio de poderes, descentralización - y en el funcionamiento del Estado - la eficacia, por ejemplo, de los sistemas de educación, justicia, y seguridad ciudadana.

La falta de capacidad estatal de proveer los servicios y recursos necesarios para el desarrollo del ciudadano, sea cual sea su raza, genero, edad, o clase social, es inevitablemente considerada una falta de la democracia.

Following the Secretary General's distinction, the OAS may today be said to engage in two distinct types of activities affecting democracy.

One is high-level political dialogue to facilitate and respectfully accompany political efforts of member States to resolve impasses and strengthen democracy. The OAS is currently deeply engaged in such efforts in support of two member States: Haiti and Peru.

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The other is practical support for the actual functioning of the democratic State. Here OAS programs, many of them under the aegis of the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy, include electoral observation and projects to assist the technical development of civil registries, legislatures, the fight against corruption, for the participation of civil society, and to strengthen the administration of justice. On different but equally vital tracks are the work of the Inter-American human rights system, and the Inter-American Commission of Women.

Each of these different activities has different requirements - for confidence levels, for consultations, for human resources, and for physical and material support. I have barely begun my term of Office as Assistant Secretary General, but I have already been caught between two contradictory forces: the enormous need for cooperation on democracy (not to mention its potential), and the lack of the resources with which to plan and follow through effectively.

The answer, I believe, lies in recognizing that support for democracy does not mean that a group of us - luckier perhaps in our histories, economies, or social moments - point our fingers at others who have fallen onto hard times. Rather, it means that we have shared obligations to request and to give assistance to each other to advance the interests of all our citizens.

And that in turn means that, if this is truly a common interest we must not simply leave it to our Finance Ministers to find the means for funding our activities. We must ensure that our mandates - whether for high level political dialogue, or for practical support for the functioning of the democratic State - are supported in ways that reflect our mutual obligations and respective means, so that we may act with the foresight and predictability that democratic solidarity requires.

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