

Remarks of Ambassador Luigi Einaudi
to say farewell to
Ambassador Antonio de Icaza
OAS Permanent Council, February 14, 1991

When Antonio de Icaza arrived, there were truly the shoes of a giant to be filled -- those of that wonderful, remarkable diplomat (I even dare say old fox), don Rafael de la Colina, who was a friend and mentor to many of us here.

Over the past 5 years,

-- We have seen the outstanding leadership Ambassador de Icaza has repeatedly displayed in the OAS, including on an issue of particular importance to my country, the war against narcotics, where he chaired our working groups and played the key role in organizing the highly successful conference of Attorneys General in Ixtapa last year.

-- We have appreciated the tenacity and forthrightness which he has always displayed when defending and advancing his country's interests in our organization.

-- We have witnessed the long hours of labor he put in at countless meetings over the past five years, meetings which have borne fruit in terms of new strengths and new directions for the OAS. Ambassador de Icaza may well have set a record for the number of meetings in which he personally has taken Mexico's chair. (I am told that not even the cracking, explosive collapse of the chair in which he was seated disturbed his aplomb during one memorable committee meeting.)

Antonio de Icaza's consummate professionalism, his eloquence, his depth of knowledge, his probing questions and thoughtful observations, and -- always when we needed it desperately (and we needed it often) -- his marvelous sense of humor and ability to see the occasional absurdity of the situation in which we find ourselves: all these are traits we will long remember with affection.

The result, of course, is that the shoes of the giant are still here -- only now the shoes are those of Antonio de Icaza.