

Remarks of Ambassador Luigi R. Einaudi  
U.S. Permanent Representative to the OAS  
OAS Permanent Council  
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This week marks six months since the coup d'etat that ousted President Aristide from Haiti. This Organization -- upholding the emergent regional principle that an assault on democracy in one nation in the Americas is an attack on us all -- has steadfastly supported the efforts of Haiti's elected leaders to negotiate a return to constitutional order.

Little more than one month ago, on February 23, these peaceful negotiations led to the signature, here in this building of the Americas, of a formal protocol among Haiti's democratically-elected, legitimate leaders. President of the Republic Jean-Bertrand Aristide, President of the Senate Dejean Belizaire, and President of the Chamber of Deputies, Alexandre Medard, all three elected in the popular elections of December 16, 1990.

The protocol they negotiated and signed in the presence of other legitimately elected Haitian leaders, is designed to lead to Parliamentary ratification of a new government headed by Prime Minister-designate Rene Theodore, thus taking a critical step toward ending the interruption in constitutional practice begun September 30. The protocol also endorses a civilian mission to be subsequently negotiated and known as OEA-DEMOC and requests that the embargo be lifted. Notably, it also calls on all sides to refrain from ambiguous statements and actions open to misinterpretation; now more than ever, this is good counsel.

The United States was among the many countries throughout the Americas and the world that endorsed this agreement among Haitians as a first but crucial step toward a peaceful settlement of the crisis. Yet two recent events have demonstrated that some Haitians remain as opposed as ever to the restoration of constitutional government in their country.

--On March 18, a majority of Haiti's elected parliamentarians meeting as the National Assembly demonstrated on a procedural vote that they would ratify the protocol when it came to a vote. That vote never came because a handful of willful persons associated with the de facto regime blocked its consideration. The meeting broke up without a quorum in the midst of threats against parliamentarians and a walk-out by supporters of the regime.

--On March 27, the Supreme Court of Haiti declared that the protocol violated the constitutional provision for separation of powers and could therefore not be considered by the Parliament. The individual who read this declaration was appointed to the Court by the de facto regime after the coup -- as were seven of his 11 colleagues. Put plainly, the illegal de facto court supported the illegal de facto executive against the country's only legitimate constitutional leadership -- the elected Parliament and president of Haiti.

The efforts of the OAS to work with patriotic Haitians to find a constitutional resolution to this crisis have obviously not yet borne fruit. Even so, the United States government is convinced that the historic opportunity to reverse the coup in Haiti by peaceful means is still within reach. Consider how far we have come. Because of the speed and unanimity of the OAS response, two potentially negative developments did not take place and one constructive process has taken on new strength.

-- First, the coup did not lead to the creation of a military junta, as was originally planned.

-- Second, new elections called for January in an attempt to legitimize the coup had to be cancelled.

-- Finally, on the positive side, the Parliament, created by the 1987 constitution and operating with limited resources and tradition and under constant menacing intimidation, has begun to assume its responsibilities.

The world, the hemispheric community and this Organization must continue to stand with the majority in Haiti who want this crisis resolved without further delay. The longer the current series of maneuvers, threats, bribes and violence continues, the worse the consequences for all Haitians, the harder to organize recovery and economic growth, and the harder to reward the dignity of the people of Haiti, denied by the handful of greedy, irresponsible and violent people who stand between them and the solution negotiated by those they elected in December 1990 to lead Haiti .

Let there be no misunderstandings, here or in Haiti: the United States will continue to work with other OAS member and observer states to support full compliance with the sanctions adopted pursuant to the OAS Resolution 2/91. And, we will encourage our friends in the European Community to look for new ways to support our efforts to isolate the illegal de facto regime in Haiti. It is a fact that the embargo has not been as effective as it could have been had the European Community participated.

To accelerate enforcement of the embargo, the United States is beginning at home. We are working to more strictly enforce our own embargo regulations. For example, as we meet here today, the Department of the Treasury is investigating a case involving the shipment of fuel to Haiti, a shipment in which we have reason to believe citizens of the United States are involved. We are taking appropriate enforcement action, including seizing the vessel in question. To avoid prejudicing our enforcement actions, I cannot provide additional details at this time.

My government also is actively considering additional measures with a very simple objective: to use the sovereign powers of the United States to deny to embargo violators the facilities, benefits, and privileges of transactions with the United States or its citizens. We hope all others, observers as well as members of this organization, will do the same.

While the U.S. executive branch is thus occupied, a bipartisan group of U.S. senators and representatives is at their own initiative drafting legislation that would express strong support for the restoration of democracy in Haiti. This legislation calls on all sectors in Haiti to support the protocol. It calls for greater compliance with the embargo. It calls for new action by my government to restrict visas and freeze assets of coup supporters -- measures already being considered. It explicitly endorses OEA-DEMOC and authorizes long-term U.S. financial support for these efforts. This bipartisan initiative is a sign of the profound commitment in my country to a democratic Haiti.

The message of the United States is clear, and it is uttered with one voice: we will not abandon Haiti to a willful minority that fails to comprehend our resolve and thereby needlessly places itself and its people in peril.

The February 23 accord is and remains the first measured step toward democracy and economic recovery. It is and remains the only way out of the current impasse.

-- We call on all sectors in Haiti to support it.

-- Like others here, we are prepared to work with President Aristide's Prime Minister-designate, Rene Theodore, and with all sectors of Haitian society.

-- Like others here, we are prepared to lift our embargo and ready to help rebuild Haiti's economy once a constitutional government is in place in accordance with the February 23 protocol.

-- We are prepared to join others to support an OAS civilian mission that would -- with full respect for Haiti's constitution and culture -- help Haitians protect human rights, strengthen democratic institutions, and professionalize the military.

But, first, the voice of the Haitian people must be heard. First, Haiti's Parliament must be allowed to work its constitutional will.

We stand with all Haitians who want a peaceful, democratic, and constitutional solution to this crisis.