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USOAS

"Peru Has Moved Back from the Brink"

DEPARTMENT OF STATE *M 876* *4/30/87* IM/IPS/CR/IR **Statement of Ambassador Luigi R. Einaudi**
 RELEASE DECLASSIFY **U.S. Representative to the Ad Hoc Meeting of Foreign Ministers**
 EXCISE DECLASSIFY **on the Situation in Peru**
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President (Alberto) Fujimori's April 5 suspension of the Congress and the Courts put Peru on an uncertain path -- one that held a grim prospect of tragic consequences. Since then, Peru has moved back from the brink, due, in our view, in no small measure to the actions of this body, as implemented by the Secretary General (Joao Clemente Baena Soares), with the support of the distinguished foreign minister of Uruguay (Hector Gros Espiell, chairman of the Peru MFM).

The United States believes that it is vital that such a pattern of mutually supportive cooperation between this Organization and Peru continue, and we believe that the resolution introduced by Foreign Minister (Guido) Di Tella of Argentina, based on the lengthy drafting debates that took place here last week, meets our basic needs.

Let me attempt to explain why. I will not repeat the maddening succession of fits and starts which made up the complex process from President Fujimori's offer to hold an election for a Constituent Congress to the actual celebration of the election on November 22. Let me note, however, that when in September the Secretary General and the chairman of this meeting were able to accept Peru's invitation to observe, the Secretary General -- thanks to substantial support from my Government, from other members of this Organization, and, I would note, from at least one important observer -- was able to back up the commitment by developing an extraordinary communications, logistical, and security system to support his normal political acumen so as to deal with some of the most difficult circumstances that external elections observers have ever had to face.

Between September and the holding of the elections, not only were more than 200 observers put on the ground, but -- and I think that those of us who were present note with particular gratitude -- they were armed with an independent and autonomous system of communication and a highly developed technology for checking the actual voting and results.

The conclusions that I and others from the United States who had the good fortune to participate in the observation -- and I would note that at least three, of my fellow U.S. observers, five of whom were staff members from the U.S. Congress, are here with us today -- and what we saw matched essentially the report given to us in much greater detail by the Secretary General.

The elections took place freely, fairly, with a good level of popular participation, in spite of major security concerns, though not without irregularities that stem largely from inadequate training from electoral officials.

We felt that the way which our Secretary General managed this most complex situation was exemplary. I congratulate him, as indeed I congratulate the Government and people of Peru for the fairness and good humor with which the elections were carried out that November Sunday.

Now, this said, the election of the Constituent Congress was an important first step. Yet it is only that: an important first step. There is still a great deal to be done. The return of democracy requires a truly representative and independent congress. Two of Peru's traditional political parties did not participate in the Constituent Congress elections, but have joined other parties now in announcing that they will contest municipal elections scheduled to take place in January.

We hope that the international community and the Permanent Council will closely follow both the activities of the Constituent Congress and the conduct of the municipal elections. While mindful of Peruvian sovereignty, and of the prerogatives of our Secretary General as he acts in accordance with the Charter, it is our view that the OAS has a clear, constructive role to play in assisting Peru to strengthen the foundations of democracy. The United States is interested in supporting an OAS role in these areas.

We applaud President Fujimori's recent statements in Ayacucho in support of human rights -- and I note that Ayacucho is the home base of the Sendero insurgency. We hope that the situation with regard to both the defense of human rights and the defeat of terrorism continues to show improvement.

We recognize that it is difficult -- extraordinarily difficult -- to deal with the Shining Path. Nonetheless, we believe that it is incumbent upon the Government of Peru to set an example of fairness and respect in its treatment of all Peruvians, including human rights workers, political critics, and the press.

Peru has taken an important first step, as I have just said, yet as Secretary (Larry S.) Eagleburger said at the Meeting of Foreign Ministers on May 18, "The devil is in the details." These details will be seen in the effective work of an independent congress, the elaboration of a constitutional order under which the rule of law is observed, and separation of powers and the full exercise of political rights are respected.

Peru needs strong, representative institutions to confront the intractable problems that afflict its people. And only a democratic Peru can attract the extraordinary degree of international support that it needs and deserves.

In conclusion, something real has happened in Peru. I think it is incumbent upon us that something real happen here. The resolution that has been presented creates a framework for continued attention and for continued cooperation. We believe that under those circumstances once the Constituent Congress is instituted, the extraordinary Meeting of Foreign Ministers (MFM) can, in fact should, close. If occasions arise that warrant reopening (the MFM), it clearly can and will be reopened. But in the meantime, I think that we should throw our weight behind practical cooperation and hard work to consolidate the gains already made.

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