

More fundamentally, the coup in Haiti tests the very principles that underlie democratic governance. History is replete with examples of those who have abused power or taken it unto themselves in the name of the greater good of the population. This offers neither a reason nor a justification for usurping the authority of democratically elected representatives.

The coup also presents a bold challenge to the international community. Will the new international political order, which we are all engaged in building, permit a lapse into arbitrary and coercive rule, the likes of which we are witnessing in Haiti?

Of course, the answer to this question is all too evident. Canada considers it the duty of the international community to exercise the necessary moral force and political will to help restore legitimate government and basic security to the Haitian people. This past June, Canada supported OAS Resolution 1080 which provided for action to be taken by the OAS if democratically elected governments of member states were illegally overthrown. Canada believes that the promotion of democracy, security and human rights requires more than just words. Words cannot turn famine into bounty, discrimination into equality, repression into freedom or brutality into compassion. They mean little if we fail to give ourselves the tools for effective action or if we succumb to the temptation of unilateralism.

Last week Canada expressed its outrage at the overthrow by a military junta of the democratically elected Haitian government of President Jean Bertrand Aristide.

Canada immediately suspended our development assistance program for Haiti and others also acted in quick response. But the individual actions of governments are not likely to restore democracy in Haiti. Canada felt that only multilateral pressure could bring about the restoration of President Aristide to his legal position.

For this reason, I attended an emergency meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the OAS one week ago in Washington. I expressed Canada's desire for the OAS to do more than express outrage. We put forth the tools for the OAS to begin taking real steps to restore constitutional order.

I am encouraged to report that our efforts to achieve concerted action in the OAS met with considerable success. With the adoption of the resolution on support to the democratic Government of Haiti, the OAS has demonstrated a new-found unity and sense of purpose, and has shown that it is capable of taking measures, both punitive and supportive, in the interests of restoring to the Haitian people their legitimate rights.