

President,

Over the past year, we have seen the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe taking great risks to try to break free of the grip of totalitarianism and dictatorship.

We have also seen courageous men and women from many countries fight against a dictator who invaded the sovereign country of Kuwait.

International and multilateral organizations have played a key role in promoting the protection of human rights, the respect for law and the promotion of democracy during this tumultuous period.

I am deeply disappointed that circumstances should now require the Assembly to meet on the evolving tragedy in Haiti. I am here to express the increasing anxiety and outrage of the Government of Canada at the turn of events in that country.

Mr. President, on September 25, Haiti's legitimately elected President, Jean Bertrand Aristide, spoke in this Chamber of his pride and his country's new democracy. Shortly thereafter, that same day, I myself spoke in this Assembly stressing the need for nations to recognize the interdependence of nations and the need for collective security. Canada continues to uphold and promote those principles whether it be in Europe, Asia or Latin America.

In June, many of us attended the annual meeting of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Santiago. For the first time in the history of the OAS, all member states represented there had been democratically elected. While the world watched the fall of the Iron Curtain and the move to democracy brought about because of the resolve of the European people, Latin America was just as boldly moving away from dictatorship.

It is my strong belief that neither the Haitian people nor the international community are prepared to tolerate a reversion to the arbitrary and coercive rule of earlier times.

Canada is proud to have joined the OAS, the only organization that is devoted to hemispheric issues. In our first year, we put forth a resolution which created the unit for democracy, the purpose of which is to promote all aspects of democratic development in the hemisphere.

In Haiti itself, the recent elections were welcomed by observers of the United Nations and the Organization of American States as free and fair. The Government of Canada placed its faith in the electoral process, and made a substantial contribution in money, observers and expertise to ensure its success. For the first time in their tumultuous history, the people of Haiti exercised full sovereignty over their political destiny. When viewed from this perspective, the coup in Haiti stands out as an anachronistic event, and a perfectly cynical exercise.