

Statement

Secretary of
State for
External Affairs



Déclaration

Secrétaire
d'État aux
Affaires
extérieures

92/15

AS DELIVERED

NOTES FOR A STATEMENT

BY THE

HONOURABLE BARBARA McDOUGALL,

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,

AT ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

HEADQUARTERS

ON THE CRISIS IN PERU

WASHINGTON, D.C.
April 13, 1992

External Affairs and
International Trade Canada

Affaires extérieures et
Commerce extérieur Canada

Canada

It is with sadness and frustration that we meet here again because of interruption of the democratic process in a member country. This time it is Peru that requires a strong united stand in support of democracy in our hemisphere.

Like others, I was deeply disturbed to receive the news of President Fujimori's dissolution of the Peruvian Congress and Judiciary. Many have claimed that it was justified. But let's face this issue squarely. Regardless of any rationalization, his conduct was unconstitutional, illegal and unacceptable. If that is not clearly recognized, then no effective action is possible.

At the same time, we all recognize that the obstacles facing Peru are daunting. It must deal with decades of economic mismanagement, a large and ruthless band of terrorists, drug trafficking, and corruption on an unprecedented scale. No one of us is insensitive to these problems, nor do we underestimate the difficulties in dealing with them. But no circumstances can justify the dismissal of democratic institutions. For Peru, as for our own countries, the democratic way is the only way.

This is not democratic sentimentalism; experience has proved that lasting reform is impossible without the full voice and participation of the people. We also know from experience that every leader who overthrows democracy does so on the basis of an important "temporary" need.

In determining our response, we must remember that the credibility of the Organization of American States (OAS) as an organization -- but also each of us as an individual democracy -- is again at risk. Whether we like it or not, comparisons will be drawn with Haiti and our response to that situation. The circumstances may not be the same, but the principles are inviolate.

In our deliberations today we will have to consider all the measures at our disposal, including sanctions. We cannot turn away from fundamental principles, nor should we look only to punitive actions. Peru is in crisis and its people need our help and our support. And we must keep in mind our overall objective -- the restoration of democratic institutions, civil and political liberties and respect for human rights.

Canada endorses the proposal that a group of OAS foreign ministers as well as the Secretary-General travel to Peru to convey the condemnation of the international community.

They must tell the President that the course he has embarked is unacceptable, and that urgent and specific steps must be taken to restore constitutional democracy. Canada believes that these steps must include the following:

1. recognition by President Fujimori that full democracy must be restored without delay;
2. the process leading to the restoration of full democracy must include all the Peruvian political parties dedicated to democratic government, and specific steps must be identified and adhered to;
3. the development of a clear plan of action to be monitored by OAS representatives to ensure transparency and progress;
4. we are pleased that human rights were quickly reinstated, but representatives of the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights must monitor the human rights situation until democracy is fully restored;
5. Canada expects that our ministerial delegation will report the results of its efforts to our foreign ministers' meeting already scheduled for May 17.

In the event that President Fujimori is unwilling to co-operate or that the results of discussions are not satisfactory, Canada will press foreign ministers to develop a program of sanctions that will demonstrate that this organization is prepared to stand up for democracy as stated in Resolution 1080.

In the meantime, Canada will review its own aid projects to ascertain whether action is justified.

Canada joined this organization because we wanted to become a full partner with the new democratic Latin America. We have been encouraged that the OAS has taken several steps to strengthen democracy in individual countries and within the region.

We are preoccupied that democracy has been reversed -- first in Haiti and now in Peru -- and we worry about rumblings in one or two other democratic countries in our hemisphere. I tell you frankly that the Canadian people will not be interested in partnerships with dictators, nor with an organization that does not stand up in support of democracy.

I hope that there are no remaining illusions that democracy can be taken for granted; history and recent experience have shown that its institutions and its process must be nurtured constantly. This organization has been given a clear mandate to do exactly that.

I appeal to all representatives here, and to the Secretary-General, before another democracy is disgraced, to take concerted action to fulfil that mandate. We do not want to meet again under these circumstances, after the fall of another democracy. Which one of us will it be?

Thank you.