

Luigi Einaudi

U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States



Einaudi outlines the rebirth of Western Hemispheric unity

By William Holder, Cornell Chronicle

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Luigi R. Einaudi, U.S. ambassador to the Organization of American States, says that the idea of the Western Hemisphere as a political and economic entity is being reborn.

Speaking Tuesday as the Henry E. and Nancy Horton Bartels World Affairs Lecturer, Einaudi (son of Goldwin Smith Professor Emeritus Mario Einaudi) said this rebirth is rooted in the spread of democratic government throughout the hemisphere.

"The idea is alive again, and we have reduced tensions within the Western Hemisphere," he told an audience in Schwartz Auditorium of Rockefeller Hall. "We have a very substantial common ground that was really unthinkable a generation ago."

"It is just possible that if the progress we have made is accompanied by an increase in mutual trust, cooperation and solidarity, then we might be able to think, for example, of transforming the OAS into an association of free democratic nations," he added.

Shift in thinking

Einaudi dates the shift in geopolitical thinking to Nov. 9, 1989, the day the Berlin Wall fell and, coincidentally, the day he was sworn in as U.S. ambassador to the OAS. The concept of the Western Hemisphere as a unique entity had been long-standing, reaching from the earliest exploration through the letters of Thomas Jefferson and the acceptance by President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the principle of non-intervention. But the idea withered with the East-West focus of the Cold War and suffered from the proliferation of military regimes in Latin America.

Today the regimes are mostly gone and the OAS has adopted a provision that calls for the suspension of any state in which a democratically constituted government is overthrown by force.

The resolve of member states to stand by democratic principles is being tested by the military regime in Haiti, Einaudi pointed out. Nearly every country in the hemisphere has accepted the OAS-recognized severance of political and diplomatic ties as well as the imposition of an embargo on the military junta. Worldwide, only the Vatican has recognized Haiti's military regime since its takeover on Nov. 30.

"We weren't ready for this," he said. "Our intelligence was reassuring us, while all this was starting, that nothing was happening, or at least that it could be controlled."

Injection of energy

Einaudi has observed "a definite injection of energy" into the Haitian problem with the arrival of the Clinton administration, and he predicted that Haitian military leaders who think the United States will simply tire of the problem are wrong.

"We may be on the verge of reversing a coup d'etat peacefully," he said. "It will require enormous resources, and they can't be just U.S. resources. A lot of people see this as just a U.S. problem. Those who argue that way are innocent of the Western Hemisphere idea.

"When we talk about a democratic hemisphere, our aspiration has to be more than fingernail strong," he stressed.

Haiti is not the only trouble spot. In 1989 the president of Venezuela spoke as the Bartels Lecturer here and argued "that his country's political problems had been overcome. Since then, according to Einaudi, the president has barely survived two attempted coups. Peru is in the grip of devastating problems, and hemispheric unity in the Caribbean Basin is strained by severe economic problems.

There is no consensus on the use of force, nor is there any framework for understanding regionalism in the context of globalism and the United Nations, he said.