



UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Agenda Item 108 - Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism

We meet each year in this forum to discuss the curse of international terrorism. Sadly, each year there are fresh examples to cite, new devastation of lives and property. The fear and trauma in the faces of the Bali bombing victims proves again that a picture is indeed worth a thousand words. This year, our debate on terrorism has heightened purpose because we have been charged by the Heads of State and Government with a twofold task: development of a strategy to promote a comprehensive, coordinated and consistent response to terrorism; and conclusion of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

To fulfill this mandate is both our challenge and our obligation. Addressing the General Assembly last month, President Bush recognized with pride that “we’ve worked together to help break up terrorist networks that cross borders, and rout out radical cells within our own borders. We’ve eliminated terrorist sanctuaries. We’re using our diplomatic and financial tools to cut off their financing and drain them of support. And as we fight, the terrorists must know that the world stands united against them.”

The President has repeatedly stressed that, however localized a specific threat may be, the global nature of the threat we face demands a global strategy and a global response. This strategy must have clear objectives: removing terrorist leadership and eliminating terrorist safe havens – whether ungoverned areas that provide operational enclaves, or the virtual safe haven of cyberspace that facilitates terrorist communications, coordination and recruitment. The Secretary General, speaking in Madrid at the International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism and Security, also identified elements for a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy. These objectives and elements can form the foundation for a prevention strategy that acts against – rather than reacts to – the terrorist threat.

In recent years, the United Nations has accelerated its efforts to cooperate more effectively to thwart terrorist attacks. Security Council Committees not only target the means that permit terrorists to perpetrate their crimes, but also guide willing states needing help in finding ways to prevent terrorist acts by assisting with capacity building. We must weave a seamless global counter-terrorism web. The United States notes with appreciation the Report of the Secretary General, which provides a useful description of the many counter-terrorism activities that have been undertaken by the member states and by the organization. In developing a comprehensive strategy, we must seek better coordination between member states and all areas of the organization that have a counter-

terrorism mandate, including the UN's Specialized Agencies, which can and must play a greater role in advancing the fight against terrorism.

The past year was marked by important progress in the United Nations' counter-terrorism efforts. The Security Council Summit highlighted a critical area of concern – incitement to terrorist acts. The success of the United Nations Treaty event, which attracted over eighty signatories to the recently adopted Nuclear Terrorism Convention, should be a source of particular satisfaction for the Sixth Committee.

Having adopted that Convention, our heads of State and Government have also instructed us clearly in the Outcome Document to complete the Comprehensive Convention. Recent consultations among delegations have paved the way. A consolidated text has been presented. We must not miss the opportunity to conclude the convention that has eluded this Committee despite efforts spanning more than 25 years. Now is the time to send a strong united message against those who commit terrorist acts. We must not fail to meet the challenge given us by our leaders.

The United States will strive mightily toward that end. We are prepared to accept the operative paragraphs set forth in the consolidated text and to discuss the inclusion of a preambular paragraph concerning protection of the principle of self-determination. Disagreement over how to deal with this issue must no longer prevent adoption of the Convention. The attacks on the World Trade Center, the bombings in London and Moscow subways or in Bali restaurants are not aimed at advancing self-determination or national liberation. These criminal acts have been perpetrated not by peoples in pursuit of self-determination but rather by a globalized insurgency that aims at overthrowing the existing international system. Not one government represented in this room is safe from that objective. None of us meets their twisted vision of society. No cause or religion should be held hostage to such anti-social behavior. And we should not and must not perpetuate a linkage that lacks both relevancy and legitimacy. As people seeking self-determination move ever closer to achieving their aspirations, we should not sully those aspirations by making that theme the central issue that dominates the debate about terrorism. We must move forward, leaving behind hoary slogans and stale rhetoric that serve only the cause of the terrorists by dividing the international community.

Mr. Chairman, you are particularly well qualified to guide our efforts on this topic and we look forward to co-operating with you and Ambassador Perrera and the Co-ordinator, Mr. Diaz to bring the Committee's work on this topic to a successful conclusion.