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**ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL
OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES,
HIS EXCELLENCY JOSÉ MIGUEL INSULZA**

(Delivered at the opening ceremony, held on March 17, 2011)

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Welcome to the headquarters of the Organization of American States, the “House of the Americas.” We thank you for participating in this eleventh regular session of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE).

Your presence today is a reaffirmation of the “RENEWED HEMISPHERIC COMMITMENT TO ENHANCE COOPERATION TO PREVENT, COMBAT, AND ELIMINATE TERRORISM,” which, not coincidentally, is the title of the declaration being considered by this Committee for this eleventh regular session.

Our countries created CICTE with the main objective of promoting cooperation among the member states to prevent, combat, and eliminate terrorism. CICTE’s activities are governed by the principles of the Charter of the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism, as well as full respect for the sovereignty of states, the rule of law, and international law, including international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and international refugee law.

Our member states’ authorities have made clear, in word and deed, that terrorism can only undermine the foundations which this hemispheric Organization defends and promotes as inherent to the attainment of peace and development to which the peoples of the Americas aspire.

Accordingly, our countries have taken the position that terrorist acts of any origin, in addition to being immoral, are the height of injustice, since they cut short the lives of innocent people, destroying families and communities. Therefore, our member states have responded by reaffirming the importance of the rule of law, democratic freedoms, and tolerant pluralism, and by increasing multilateral cooperation to deal with the various manifestations of this threat to the peace and security of our peoples.

Terrorism, which we firmly condemn, whatever its origin, has been no stranger to our region. We need only recall a few events:

On October 6, 1976, a *Cubana de Aviación* commercial aircraft departing from Caracas was brought down over Barbados. Seventy-three persons died--citizens of Latin America and the Caribbean.

On March 17, 1991, a day like today, an attack on the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires left a tragic wake of 29 dead and 242 wounded. We recall those persons with affection on this anniversary of their death; they included not only people connected with the building but elderly residents of a nearby geriatric center, children at a nearby kindergarten, and a worker who was repairing equipment at the Embassy, which was destroyed along with a Catholic church and a school in a building nearby.

But the Argentine Republic was to suffer an even larger attack on July 18, 1994, when a bomb at the Israeli-Argentine Mutual Association (AMIA) killed another 85 human beings and wounded more than 300. Citizens of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Poland, and other countries died in the attack on the AMIA. Today I warmly welcome Mr. Guillermo Borger, President of the AMIA, who is here with us; and, through him, I convey our full solidarity.

On the day after the attack on the AMIA, July 19, 1994, an aircraft exploded in Panamanian airspace, killing the 21 people on board.

And in 2011, we mark the 10th anniversary of the most brutal terrorist attack ever experienced in our Hemisphere: the double assault on the Twin Towers in New York and the Defense headquarters in Washington. September 11, 2011, will be a day of mourning and reflection on which our thoughts and our hearts will be with the 2,977 victims, from over 90 countries, ranging in age from 85 to two, who died on that ill-fated day.

In the context of this solemn remembrance, and despite the anguish recalling these events elicits, I want to invite you to look toward the future with hope. Our Organization has responded to these events firmly and decisively. The First Summit of the Americas, in December 1994, and the "Commitment of Mar del Plata," in 1998, had already laid the foundations for the creation of this Committee. Following the attacks of September 2001, the member states proceeded to create the Secretariat that supports the work of the Committee, and to promote the initiatives and priorities established to address terrorism.

Today, with perspective on the tragic events of 10 years ago, we can feel satisfaction at the fact that further attacks of similar magnitude have not occurred in our Hemisphere. This has been made possible, in part, by the tireless efforts of all its countries to prevent them, not only domestically but, fundamentally, through the vital international cooperation which antiterrorism policies necessarily require.

As aptly stated in resolution 1373 of September 28, 2001, of the United Nations Security Council, and in the 2002 Inter-American Convention against Terrorism, preventing the free movement of terrorists and their means of financing across borders is an essential requirement in fighting terrorism.

CICTE's border control programs focus on this in particular. Through technical assistance and personnel training in the police, customs, immigration, financial intelligence, and maritime and airport security areas, CICTE approaches border control from a multidimensional perspective. Our secretariat conducts comprehensive instruction and training projects that reinforce national and international cooperation initiatives in the Americas to fight not only terrorism, but every form of international organized crime intended to exploit the advantages of commercial and human exchange in our time. This is the modern concept of security our Organization embraces; we know it will continue to bear fruit.

This concept of multidimensional security was enshrined in the 2003 Declaration on Security in the Americas, in Mexico, which knits together the necessary strategic alliances between the public and private sectors. That, in fact, is the focus of the work which CICTE, led by The Bahamas as Chair, has carried out over the past year. It demonstrates the full harmony between the priorities outlined by the member states and the theoretic and practical structure employed by the Secretariat in

their pursuit.

It is precisely in the area of border controls that these strategic public-private alliances take on obvious meaning. Ports and airports with franchised security, risk analysis, tourism and hotel operators, and international financial institutions are areas in which ongoing dialogue and cooperation are essential. The efforts of the past year have been devoted to this, and future endeavors will focus on such cooperation.

This year, CICTE will focus on strengthening international cooperation to prevent and defeat terrorism. The countries' actions take on greater relevance against this backdrop. The General Secretariat, through the CICTE Secretariat, is developing technical assistance and training tools in keeping with international standards, ensuring that the joint efforts of its member states will multiply their impact.

We mustn't forget the vital work being done to ensure that our associations with international, regional, subregional, and national organizations specializing in preventing and fighting terrorism will yield the greatest benefit to our member states. CICTE now has relationships with prestigious institutions and organizations throughout the world, reinforcing the message of unity that this endeavor requires and guaranteeing the highest quality in the implementation of our projects to make the most efficient use of resources.

I would also like to underscore CICTE's cooperation with various agencies of the United Nations, especially with the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council and its Executive Directorate, with the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the Office on Drugs and Crime, and with the Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute.

Also of note are the relationship which, under the CICTE Maritime Security Program, we have maintained since 2007 with Transport Canada and with the United States Coast Guard, and the ties with our own Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) and Inter-American Committee on Ports. We also have entered into new, promising relationships with the program to fight terrorism funding with the formation of a coordinating board (MECOOR) of the main international providers of technical assistance in the field; with the border control program in support of implementation of Security Council Resolution 1540; with the Group of Experts of the UN Security Council Resolution 1540 Committee; and with the experts of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs.

All this work would be impossible without the support of all our member states and without our principal donors, Canada, Spain, and the United States, to whom I extend our sincere gratitude. I also want to mention the contributions of Argentina, Chile, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turkey, as well as the invaluable commitment of member states that contribute directly to the CICTE Secretariat in the form of human resources, such as The Bahamas, Brazil, the United States, Mexico, and Uruguay. To all of them goes the Organization's recognition of a contribution as important as it is decisive in achieving the objectives outlined by CICTE.

In every action and initiative we undertake, on every path we follow, we must keep sight of the aim of stability which the fight against terrorism is intended to meet. Terrorist acts take away lives, but also the hope of a better future. Key sectors of many of our economies are irreversibly affected by this scourge: transportation services, tourism, financial investments, the energy industry,

and others. By cooperating, we will safeguard lives and build the future of the Americas.

I trust that the eleventh regular session of CICTE will continue, in depth, the work carried out this year, and will give a fresh and deeper meaning to the concept of international cooperation, renewing and strengthening the commitment of the member states to fight all forms of terrorism.

In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to The Bahamas and Grenada, the Chair and Vice Chair of CICTE, for their distinguished leadership throughout the past year, to the member states and permanent observers for their support and active participation in the work of the Committee, and to the CICTE Secretariat for its devoted efforts.