



INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE AGAINST TERRORISM (CICTE)

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REMARKS BY THE CHAIR FOR 2008 – 2009
OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE AGAINST TERRORISM,
HIS EXCELLENCY, MR. ANTERO FLOREZ ARÁOZ,
MINISTER OF DEFENSE OF PERU

(Spoken at the Inaugural Ceremony held on March 4, 2009)

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Mr. Juan Miguel Alcántara, Vice Chair of CICTE and Assistant Attorney General for Legal and International Affairs of the Office of the Attorney General of the Mexican Republic;

His Excellency, Ambassador Neven Jurica, Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the UN Security Council and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Croatia to the United Nations;

His Excellency, Ambassador Osmar Chohfi, Chair of the OAS Permanent Council and Permanent Representative of Brazil to the OAS;

His Excellency, Ambassador Albert Ramdin, Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States;

His Excellency, Ambassador Gustavo Albin, Chair of the OAS Committee on Hemispheric Security and Permanent Representative of Mexico to the OAS;

His Excellency, Ambassador Alexandre Addor-Neto, OAS Secretary for Multidimensional Security;

Dr. Carol Fuller, Secretary of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism, and

Ladies and gentlemen:

In my capacity as Chair of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism, it is an honor and a privilege for me to inaugurate the Committee's ninth regular session.

The purpose of the Declaration of the Eighth Meeting of Member States on the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism that we adopted on March 7, 2008 in this very room was to reaffirm "the hemispheric commitment to fighting terrorism" and we have not strayed from that path. The democratic states of this region stand firm in our resolve to fight and eradicate terrorism.

Since the Inter-American Specialized Conference on Terrorism, held in Lima in 1996, and again in adopting the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism in Bridgetown, Barbados, on June 3, 2002, all the OAS member states have reaffirmed our steadfast conviction that acts of terrorism, whatever their forms, are to be condemned and have no justification whatsoever.

The Inter-American Democratic Charter also recognizes the commitment of member states to promote and defend representative democracy and that no democratic state can remain indifferent to the clear threat that terrorism poses for democratic institutions and freedoms.

The map showing terrorist attacks in 2008 is devastating. Major terrorist attacks, such as those in Atánquez, Santoña, Damascus, Islamabad, Mumbai, and in other places, have been condemned by humanity.

The cost of terrorism in terms of human lives is incalculable and its effects on poverty eradication are devastating because vast domestic and global resources have been diverted to preventing and eliminating it.

Terrorism is no new phenomenon, but it is posing new threats. As Octavio Paz said, we are living in a world of instant communication. New technology is increasingly complex and in its different forms creates new vulnerabilities and threats of terrorist attacks. We have to attack terrorist cybercrime. We have to establish the use of satellite telephony and information technology as terrorist weapons as a crime and regulate their use.

Terrorist organizations use communication networks with technologically sophisticated protection devices that afford them anonymity and impunity as they engage in disinformation and propaganda campaigns, gather and transfer funds, issue threats and orders, and carry out murderous operations. It is essential to coordinate new regional and international steps to combat the perverse use of new technology already being made by terrorists, and at the same time to honor the right to privacy and fundamental freedoms.

From the day I assumed the position of Chair of CICTE I stressed the need to promote effective actions to combat terrorist funding. We can generate positive synergy by joining forces with competent international bodies. Coordination with the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission is especially important for effectively combating financing and other criminal ties between terrorism, drug trafficking, arms trafficking, money laundering, and other manifestations of transnational organized crime.

It is essential to freeze assets and to deny visas, refuge, or asylum to members of Al Qaeda, the ETA, the MRTA, the Shining Path and all other terrorist organizations, without exceptions, in order to prevent the use or threat of terrorist violence and avoid impunity. We are strengthening judicial cooperation in the Hemisphere, especially as regards extradition.

We are concluding one year of work and immediately beginning a new one, chaired by Mexico. As my one-year term as Chair of CICTE draws to a close, allow me to proclaim, on behalf of Peru, my country's unswerving conviction that the peace-loving peoples of the world will prevail over terror and violence in any of their guises and to reiterate Peru's commitment to combating them tirelessly and in a spirit of solidarity with those who share this commitment.

I would like to thank the member states on the Committee and the Executive Secretariat for their support during my term as Chair and to reaffirm Peru's commitment to fully back the work we are recommencing today under the chairmanship of Mexico to combat terrorism in all its manifestations.

Thank you.