



INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE AGAINST TERRORISM (CICTE)

FIFTH REGULAR SESSION
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Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

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REMARKS BY THE CICTE CHAIR 2005 - 2006

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- Honourable Acting Prime Minister, Dr. Lenny Saith;
- Your Excellency Dr. Elias Bluth, Under-Secretary for National Defense of Uruguay;
- Your Excellency Ambassador Luigi Einaudi, Acting Secretary General of the Organization of American States;
- Honourable Ministers and Vice-Ministers;
- Your Worship, The Mayor of Port-of-Spain, Mr. Murchison Brown;
- Distinguished Heads of Delegation and Ambassadors;
- Secretary of CICTE, Mr. Steven Monblatt;
- Distinguished Delegates;
- Specially Invited Guests;
- Ladies and Gentlemen:

The People and Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago are deeply honoured to host this Fifth Regular Session of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism.

As we gather today in the name of the peoples of the Americas, it may appear to be a mere coincidence of geography that we are on the island nation that links the chain of the twelve island-states of the inter-American system and the landmass of the Hemisphere. I find it however not a coincidence but rather of unique significance, as our location serves to underscore the unity of purpose, commitment and action of the governments of the Americas in the continuing fight against terrorism.

It is an even greater honour for the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to have been afforded the privilege of chairing CICTE. Consideration of our eventual candidacy for this position began more than a year ago, upon our assumption of the Vice-Chairmanship of CICTE. We are truly grateful to each one of the Member States for your encouragement and unwavering support.

On behalf of my Government, might I also convey our sincere appreciation for the already demonstrated good will, collaboration and efforts of each Member State, and of the OAS Secretariat, to ensure the success of this Fifth Regular Session of CICTE.

We look forward with assurance, to your continued support and understanding during our appointment as Chair, when we must continue to make manifest that in confronting the threat of terrorism we do so with full respect for the human rights and liberties of our citizens and the sovereignty of member states.

On September 21, 2001, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Americas issued the following statement: *“Individually and collectively, we will deny terrorists the capacity to operate in this Hemisphere. This American family stands united.”*

Along with our sister states in the OAS family, Trinidad and Tobago lost citizens and suffered deeply in the unprecedented and devastating tragedy of the brutal terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, in our sister state of the United States of America. Indeed, those attacks brought to our minds afresh, our own frightening experience with similar violent activity here in Trinidad and

Tobago, when our constitutional integrity and cherished democracy were attacked in a failed insurrection attempt in July of 1990. This nation and its citizens are therefore, fully cognisant of and committed to the requirements for combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations wherever it may occur. Indeed, Trinidad and Tobago counts itself as a proud and dependable member of the family of nations that constitutes the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), resolute in its pursuit of secure environments for economic and social development and stability in the Caribbean and throughout this Hemisphere.

While we pursue with our regional and hemispheric partners peaceful progress for the well-being of our people, we recognize that terrorists continue to seek sponsorship and attention in ways that are extreme and difficult to detect, and to disrupt and deny our freedoms, security and welfare.

In the face of such a threat Trinidad and Tobago, while serving as the Chair of CICTE, pledges its fullest commitment to sustaining and advancing the hemispheric fight against terrorism. We are confident that the expert counsel that informs and instructs the work of CICTE will secure the citizens of this hemisphere from the dangers posed by terrorism and ensure to their greater benefit.

Trinidad and Tobago also wishes to commend and congratulate the Government of the Republic of Uruguay on their dedicated chairmanship of CICTE in the past year. We must especially recognize their representative who with wisdom and pragmatism conducted the Fourth Regular Session in Montevideo a year ago, led with deliberation the several sessions in preparation for this regular session, and managed CICTE's work during the past year, His Excellency Dr. Elias Bluth. There can be no doubt that the progress made in 2004 to strengthen the resolve of members states to collectively counter the terrorist threat in the Americas has been directly inspired by the inclusive and conciliatory manner in which Uruguay, through Dr. Bluth, has steered the proceedings of discussion and action on matters pertaining to the mandate of CICTE.

We also welcome the election of Colombia as the Vice-Chair of CICTE and are encouraged by the Government of Colombia's demonstrated and consistent commitment to CICTE.

Trinidad and Tobago has benefited greatly from being able to observe and emulate the approach to consensus-building that is the banner of the Organization of American States and the inter-American system. In the fight against terrorism, the absence of consensus is a luxury that cannot be contemplated. In fulfilling our responsibilities as CICTE Chair and as a member of CICTE, we will continue to uphold and encourage this tried and proven tradition.

Distinguished Delegates, once again, on behalf of my Government, I thank you for the confidence you have bestowed in us by electing Trinidad and Tobago to lead this notable Inter-American Committee for the next year. Please be reassured of our commitment to CICTE and to our joint endeavours to combat and eliminate terrorism. I thank you in advance for your contributions to CICTE and to this session and I look forward to an open dialogue among us all, so that we may together strengthen and develop strategies that guarantee the noble objectives of the Organization and of CICTE.

I thank you.