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**REPORT OF THE CHAIR, 2007-2008,
OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE AGAINST TERRORISM,
AMBASSADOR ARISTIDES ROYO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PANAMA
TO THE OAS**

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When the Government of Panama assumed the Chair of CICTE, in February of last year, we affirmed that “the safe, protected, and efficient operation of global trade and transportation infrastructure, installations, and institutions contributes to prosperity, competitiveness, and development of both Panama and the international community.” Aware of the globalization of world trade and the need to strengthen international cooperation in protecting it, we proposed the topic of protecting critical infrastructure in the Hemisphere for the seventh regular meeting of CICTE; this was then ratified in the Declaration of Panama, on March 2, 2007. At that time, the member states of CICTE declared “that terrorism is a threat to critical infrastructure and their commitment to take all necessary actions, in accordance with their domestic law and relevant international agreements, to prevent, mitigate and deter potential terrorist threats to critical infrastructure, through the development and implementation of national measures and the strengthening of regional and international cooperation.”

Today I am pleased to report that, with CICTE’s activities of the past year and the support of our Secretariat, we have made substantial progress toward implementing the commitments we undertook in that Declaration. As Chair of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism, I am especially gratified to share with you some reflections on these achievements of the past year.

Firstly, it is important to emphasize the instances of horizontal cooperation that took place, and continue to do so, under the Declaration of Panama. We stressed in the Declaration “the need to promote the voluntary sharing of experience, information and best practices among Member States.” Allow me to mention three different examples of technical assistance related to protecting critical infrastructure, which have been developed in the past year. The first involves my own country. One of the four initiatives we proposed for CICTE was an International Conference on Secure Trade and Transportation, which Panama is organizing for September of this year.

The aim of this Conference is to bring together officials and government and private-sector experts from the region to evaluate the level of security of trade and transportation, to analyze and forecast the challenges arising from maritime piracy, transnational organized crime, and terrorism; to share information, experience, and knowledge; and to provide a forum for discussion between the public and private sectors and for sharing ideas on the transfer and acquisition of technological innovations in products, equipment, and logistical support geared toward securing critical infrastructure, trade, and global transportation.

In that connection, I want to extend our appreciation to the Office of Policy of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for the support and technical assistance it is providing in the organization of this event, and to the Government of Brazil, with whose representatives we will meet to discuss its potential contribution to the conference.

Naturally we are open to cooperation from any other OAS member state in promoting the success of this meeting.

We hope this Conference will be an important chapter not only in the critical infrastructure protection plan but also in CICTE's port security plan.

Last year, in this CICTE forum, Assistant Secretary for Infrastructure Protection Robert B. Stephan of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security offered technical assistance in this area to all member states. This led to the establishment of cooperation mechanisms with Trinidad and Tobago and Paraguay. We hope these examples will be followed and multiplied in the future.

Secondly, when, on February 28, 2007, Panama assumed the Chair of CICTE, it affirmed its commitment to continue strengthening the initiatives already approved by the Committee, to promote programs that put them into practice, and, in compliance with the Declaration of Panama, to focus on the protection of critical infrastructure. I am pleased to say that we have significantly broadened the activities of the Secretariat related to this program. The detailed report of the Secretariat of CICTE is proof of that.

Thirdly, in the Declaration of Panama we recognized "the need to encourage Member States to develop close ties to the private sector and civil society in their respective countries, as appropriate, in order to develop capacity-building prevention and protection programs on threats to critical infrastructure." Therefore I am pleased that, for the first time, the Committee's annual meeting is attended by a representative of the private sector, who will speak on his corporation's efforts in the area of trade and maritime transport security. As Chair, I have seen with great interest that a number of the Secretariat's activities involve the general populace and the private sector. Yesterday, during the meeting of experts to evaluate the pilot project on the security of tourist and recreational facilities, we heard that the training is geared not only toward government staff but also toward security staff of hotels, athletic and sporting complexes, and private security companies in the tourism sector.

The cyber-security program, for its part, has enlisted more than 20 private-sector entities, including academic institutions and nongovernmental organizations.

The port security program is conducting workshops on best practices with a special focus on strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors, particularly in free trade zones.

Finally, I want to report on the progress we've made on other initiatives proposed on February 28, 2007.

The strategic partnership among the Secretariats of CICTE, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), and the Inter-American Committee on Ports (CIP), with Transport Canada, and with the U.S. Coast Guard and Department of State has expanded the activities and multiplied the efforts of participants. Brazil will have the honor of hosting the first workshop on best practices in port security, next May, for the Andean countries, and I am pleased that Panama can serve as host, in July, of a similar workshop.

The first Port Security Crisis Management Exercise took place in Argentina in September 2007, with observers from Uruguay and Mexico. It was followed by a second Exercise, in Colombia, in February, with instructors from Argentina and Uruguay. The Secretariat now is planning a third Exercise, in Peru, in April, with instructors from Colombia, and later a fourth one, in Trinidad and Tobago.

This demonstrates, in practice, the concept of horizontal cooperation, as well as a policy of “training the trainers” to achieve a multiplier effect, with broad benefits to the OAS member states.

On the other hand, given the Secretariat’s new intensive approach and the practical coordination to enlist relevant civil society and private-sector stakeholders to report and raise awareness on the protection of critical infrastructures of their own and other member states of the Hemisphere, the Forum between CICTE and Inter-American Civil Society has been postponed.

As for the potential coordination forums—such as between CICTE, CCT, APEC, and other intergovernmental organizations from outside the region—to make optimal use of resources and response capacity, different meetings have been held in the UN framework, with international, regional, and subregional organizations, to promote the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. This contact has been broadened through strategic partnerships formed by the Secretariat with organizations such as the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the ICAO, INTERPOL, and APEC; we are honored to have high representatives of these bodies at this eighth regular session of CICTE.

As for the Training Program for Judges and Prosecutors on enforcement of international conventions for combating terrorism and transnational organized crime ratified by OAS member states, the Secretariat has continued to develop its strategic alliance with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, holding five special training courses, in Chile, Colombia, Panama, Peru, and the Dominican Republic, as well as workshops on the financing of terrorism in Colombia and Peru, organized jointly with CICAD.

Ladies and gentlemen, at the conclusion of our term as Chair, we feel we have all done significant collective work in the 2007-2008 term.

Panama firmly hopes that CICTE will continue to develop as a forum for multilateral cooperation, plural understandings, and open and strategic partnership among the members of the inter-American and global community, to achieve the aims the Committee has established and will propose in the future.

We recognize that the community of nations of the inter-American system supports and shares the vision of CICTE as a highly valuable tool for properly dealing with new, asymmetric threats that may affect our national security and that of our partners in the global community. Leaving the office of chair does not mean that Panama leaves behind its responsibilities and commitments to all the member states of this august Committee.

The presence here today of the Minister of National Security of Trinidad and Tobago, former Chair of CICTE, and of my former colleague at the OAS, the Minister of Defense of Peru, attests to our unity and perennial commitment to multilateral cooperation in fighting the scourge of terrorism.

My profound gratitude goes to all those who, with their support, work, and dedication, from various quarters, have made possible the success of CICTE and of this Chair: the permanent representatives of the member states of the OAS—in particular the Permanent Representative of Peru to the OAS, Ambassador Antero Flores Aráoz, who worked with me as Vice Chair; the permanent observers; the Secretary General of the Organization, José Miguel Insulza; the Secretary for Multidimensional Security, Ambassador Alexandre Addor-Neto; the Secretary of CICTE, Dr. Carol

Fuller; the Subsecretary and Program Coordinator of CICTE, Pablo Martínez; the Committee's Meeting Manager, Ms. Gillian Bristol; and all the other staff of the Committee Secretariat.

I also want to thank the representatives of international organizations and of the private corporation who are here with us, in particular those who, in their presentations, will share their experience and knowledge during this event.

Finally, my immense gratitude to all for having honored us with your confidence during our term as Chair. I leave office secure in the knowledge that the Committee, under the leadership of a sister nation, is in the best of hands.

Thank you very much.