



Speech

Organization of American States



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THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
JOINT UNITED NATIONS COUNTER TERRORISM
COMMITTEE (CTC) / INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE
AGAINST TERRORISM (CICTE) MEETING
October 6, 2003 - Washington, DC**

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Her Excellency, María Eugenia Brizuela de Avila, Foreign Minister of El Salvador;

Ambassador Inocencio Arias, Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations, and Chair of the Counter Terrorism Committee.

Representatives of international and regional organizations, Ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen:

Seven months ago, in March of 2003, representatives of 65 international organizations met in New York to share experiences and information and to increase cooperation between the UN's Counter Terrorism Committee and other international, regional, and sub regional organizations in the fight against terrorism. One outcome of that meeting was the adoption by the CTC of a program designed to ensure continuity and follow-up.

This gathering, is the first meeting of that follow-up process. Our goal is to consider how we, the representatives of key regional bodies, together with our colleagues in the specialized international organizations, can most effectively work together to develop and implement a world-wide strategy against terrorism.

Regional organizations can play an essential roles as both catalysts and intermediaries. They can translate the expertise embodied in the international organizations, and the common objectives and general strategies laid out by the CTC, to the specific conditions of individual states. We need to find ways to communicate and encourage communication, to help our member states evaluate their practices and bring them up to the highest standards possible, to train, to finance, and to conduct a coordinated, world-wide counter-terrorism program.

Prior to September 11, 2001, if you had tried to telephone CICTE, there would have been no one to answer the phone... there would have been no phone. Today, CICTE is a functioning reality with:

- active programs in 11 states;
- Observer Status in the OECD's Financial Action Task Force;
- Working relationships and information exchanges with many of the organizations represented here today;
- An active web page and data base, and
- An encrypted communications network linking national points of contact in our member states

Today, CICTE is a functioning reality.

OAS member states negotiated, signed, and brought into force, the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism. It is the product of our collective determination not to allow terrorists and their supporters to threaten our societies or our democracies. The strong sense of community energized by September 11 enabled this Convention, to be negotiated in less than nine months, signed by 30 of 34 member states on the its first day of existence now signed by 33 of 34) and in precisely one year received the requisite number of ratifications to enter into force.

I am proud that the OAS was not only the first regional organization to condemn the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, but the first to give comprehensive juridical effect to our anti-terrorist cooperation. From human rights to border transit, this means the regional framework is complete. The glass is there, it is time to fill it.

We have thus done much in the past two years to strengthen this hemisphere's capacity to counter terrorist threats. Steven Monblatt leads the Secretariat's team, and knows everything we are doing. We look forward to sharing our experiences, and to work with you to find innovative ways to interlink our efforts and deepen our cooperation to identify, counter and eliminate the threat of terror wherever it may exist.

Thank you.

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