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REMARKS BY THE 2009 – 2010 CHAIR
OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE AGAINST TERRORISM,
MR. JUAN MIGUEL ALCÁNTARA SORIA,
ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL AND DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
OF THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF MEXICO

(Delivered at the first plenary session, held on March 4, 2009)

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

Your Excellency, Mr. Antero Flores Aráoz, Minister of Defense of Peru, Chair of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism;

Ambassador Neven Jurica, Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the United Nations Security Council;

Dr. Carol Fuller, Secretary of CICTE;

Distinguished Ambassadors and Representatives of the OAS member states and permanent observers;

We are delighted to be with you here today as Mexico assumes the chair of CICTE, at a time when we face great challenges.

We would have very much liked to meet once again in Mexico City, as originally planned. In any case, the important thing is to ratify my country's commitment to all the OAS member states to tackle problems that affect us all. Clearly, this does not lessen our interest in the agreements reached or the plans made during this ninth session.

We will make every effort to contribute to the work of this regular session of CICTE as it pursues agreements that reflect the Hemisphere's interest in countering the various manifestations of organized crime, which have both regional and global consequences.

Given the complexity of international terrorism and the diversity and sophistication of the methods and means used by the organizations involved in this illicit activity, as well as its negative impact on society, we are convinced that the problem must be addressed through concerted efforts so as to forge a common front to prevent, combat, and eradicate terrorism and terrorist financing, thereby eliminating areas of impunity that help terrorist organizations avoid being brought to justice.

In the regional sphere, one of the most important achievements has doubtless been the adoption of the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism of the Organization of American States (OAS). This Convention has made it possible to fight terrorism and its sources of financing through such measures as adaptation of domestic legislation, information exchange on movements of money across borders, increased controls to combat trafficking in arms or related materials, strengthening of mutual legal assistance in criminal matters, and promotion of training and technical cooperation.

If our work is to be successful, we consider it essential for states to participate actively in CICTE programs, in particular in areas relating to border controls on both goods and persons, especially areas related to illicit movements of money and arms, protection of critical infrastructure, port and airport security, technical legislative assistance, and antiterrorist simulation exercises.

Today is both an endpoint and a starting point for us. We thank Peru, through Minister Antero Flores, for his service as Chair of CICTE over the past year. The all too familiar challenges that Mexico faces today force us to reshape and take a new look at our work plan for the period ahead, in which we, with your support, seek to achieve better results in the form of more tangible, verifiable benefits for our countries and measurable progress in fulfilling our mission. For that, we hope to build a consensus regarding a system for measuring results or effectiveness. At the luncheon with the Peruvian Minister and Secretary Fuller, we agreed that this could conceivably be the right time to usher in a new, third phase, of CICTE.

Accordingly, support from the member states is essential as we strive to strengthen CICTE activities and to bolster national capacities, with full respect at all times for the sovereignty of countries, the rule of law, and international law, including international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and international refugee law.

Delegates: We reaffirm our conviction that, unless all of us put our shoulders to the wheel, we will not be able to eradicate terrorism and its causes from the Hemisphere and thus contribute at the same time, in a spirit of solidarity, to the defense of its victims.

We intend to maintain regular contact with the Vice Chair and the Secretariat of CICTE in order to move forward with our work pursuant to the mandate we have received, and of course with all delegations present here today. We take up the challenge issued by the Minister of Peru to hold real and not virtual deliberations, even though they may not necessarily require physical presence.

Mexico has consistently contributed to the efforts of CICTE since its inception, but even more so during the regrettable September 2001 events, when it wisely accepted to coordinate the work that culminated in the adoption of the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism, a regional legal instrument that establishes a comprehensive, updated regulatory framework to prevent and combat terrorism and its financing, under the principle of full respect for the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms.

Now we hope that you are all of one mind regarding the importance of the agreements reached at the Second Conference of States Party to the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (CIFTA).

We are well aware today that arms trafficking and movements of cash derived from drug trafficking help exacerbate the threat of terrorism.

The Inter-American Convention against Terrorism, to which almost a third of the member states are not yet party—and here I take this opportunity to appeal to you most respectfully in this regard—is a regional body of norms equal to the challenges and threats currently posed by international terrorism, since it is a compendium of the mandates from the corresponding United Nations Security Council resolution, the guidelines and recommendations of GAFI, and innovative

cooperation mechanisms for facilitating the procedures for mutual legal assistance and extradition envisaged in the universal conventions against terrorism.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the ambassadors and representatives of the various OAS member countries for the confidence they have placed in our country by selecting it for this high position. In this regard, we reaffirm our commitment to CICTE and our conviction that it is a valuable hemispheric tool for waging an all-out battle against this scourge, in full observance of the universal and regional instruments signed by the states parties. I am convinced that with everyone's help we will be part of the solutions that will mark the beginning of this third generation of CICTE. Thank you very much.