

Ninth Regular Session of CICTE Focuses on Border Controls

The Ninth Regular Session of CICTE was held on March 4, 5 and 6 at the OAS Main Building in Washington D.C. This event brought together the CICTE National Points of Contact, representatives of the Member States and Permanent Observers to the Organization, and representatives of some international organizations to discuss "Strengthening Border Controls and International Cooperation in the Fight against Terrorism."

The Inaugural Ceremony was opened by the Minister of Defense of Peru, Ántero Flores-Araoz, who chaired the CICTE Secretariat from 2008 - 2009. In his opening speech, the Minister reaffirmed the commitment by the democratic States of the region to combat and eradicate terrorism and mentioned that this old scourge presents new threats today. Furthermore, he highlighted the necessity of exchanging intelligence information among countries in order to effectively confront terrorism.

Ambassador Neven Jurica, the Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council of the UN and Permanent Representative of Croatia to that Organization, spoke about the benefits of the coordinated work that has been done between the UN and international organizations, and underlined some examples of success within the framework of cooperation with CICTE. He also emphasized that "in the counter-terrorism field, CICTE has for years been considered a model for regional integration."

The Assistant Secretary General of the OAS, Ambassador Albert Ramdin, said that the topic of security, which includes terrorism, has been a priority for the OAS. He pointed out the necessity of expanding traditional concepts of security to include new and non-traditional threats, such as economic, political, health, and environmental aspects. He also acknowledged the determination of the Member States in eradicating terrorism despite the ever-increasing challenges they face.

On March 4, the Government of Mexico was elected Chair of CICTE for 2009-2010, represented by Juan Miguel Alcántara, Deputy Attorney General of Legal and International Affairs of Mexico. The Government of The Bahamas was elected Vice-Chair. The new Chair affirmed that, during his term, the Committee will seek to strengthen its work in diverse areas, such as standardization of national legislation and the exchange of information about the movement of money across borders. Furthermore, CICTE will promote the design and coordination of strategies of cooperation to combat cyber crime and the reinforcement of the mechanisms that Member States can use to prevent document fraud.

The CICTE IX Agenda included three substantive topics for discussion which began with keynote presentations. Under "Measures to combat illicit arms trafficking in the context of the fight against terrorism," Mr. Avigai Vargas Tirado, General Information Coordinator against Terrorism of the National Center for Planning, Analysis, and Information for the Fight against Crime of the Attorney General's Office of Mexico, underlined the growing nexus between terrorism and different types of illicit activities—including arms trafficking—and proposed a series of measures that can be undertaken on the national and international level to counteract this tendency.

During the session on "Transfer of Money or Assets Across Borders through Informal

Systems or Networks Aimed at Financing Terrorism,” the National Coordinator for Mexico for the Financial Action Group of South America (FAFT/GAFISUD), Mr. José Alberto Balbuena Balbuena, spoke about the Financial Action Task Force (FAFT), the structure of GADISUD, and the principal challenges its members face, as well as the adoption of 40 recommendations on money laundering and 9 special recommendations.

At the third session on “Measures to Improve Port and Airport Security and Controls,” the Director of the Department of Security Inspections of Israel’s Ben Gurion International Airport, Mr. Zohan Gefen, highlighted the unique experiences of the Israeli Airport Authority (IAA) with respect to airport security measures and controls and stressed three key elements of security: Method, Human Resources, and Technology.

After the presentations, the Member States made a series of interventions, which highlighted the topics such as the importance of exchanging information and experience and the continuation and increase of cooperation in the area; new developments at the national level on the subject of the fight against terrorism financing with emphasis on national priorities on the subject; the implementation of the FAFT recommendations; and the numerous efforts at cooperation at the regional and international level to counteract the financing of terrorism. They also cited the different threats and risks that face the States, as well as their national efforts to comply with international standards for port and airport security.

At the close of CICTE IX, the Member states approved the “Declaration on Strengthening Border Controls and International Cooperation in the Fight against Terrorism.”