



Organization of
American States



INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE AGAINST TERRORISM (CICTE)

FIFTEENTH REGULAR SESSION
March 19, 2015
Washington, D.C.

OEA/Ser.L/X.2.15
CICTE/INF.2/15
20 March 2015
Original: Spanish

**ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL
OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES,
HIS EXCELLENCY JOSÉ MIGUEL INSULZA**

(Given at the Inaugural Ceremony held on March 19, 2015)

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Distinguished Chair of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism, Jennifer May Loten;

Distinguished Vice Chair of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism, Ambassador Elisa Ruiz Diaz Bareiro;

Esteemed Permanent Representatives, Permanent Observers, and Delegates;

Mr. Weixiong Chen, Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee;

Esteemed Secretary for Multidimensional Security, Ambassador Adam Blackwell;

Esteemed Secretary of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism, Neil Klopfenstein:

I bid you all a warm welcome to the headquarters of the Organization of American States and to this fifteenth regular session of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism. Your participation at this annual meeting underscores the unquestionable willingness and commitment of the CICTE member states to combat, prevent, and eliminate terrorism.

This is an undertaking that must be permanent because the threat is permanent and because, in recent years, it has increased. Last month, along with CICTE's Executive Secretary, I was able to attend the summit organized by the White House to analyze ways to counter violent extremism. That event, which was convened by President Barack Obama, dealt with such essential topics as the new emerging threats posed by crossborder terrorist organizations and foreign combatants, such as Boko Haram and ISIL.

Fortunately, extremist violence is less frequent in the Americas than in other parts of the world. Nevertheless, it is important for the OAS and its member states to take advantage

of these shared experiences and to take steps to prevent this scourge from taking root here. As UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said at the recent summit: “Missiles may kill terrorists. But good governance kills terrorism. . . Human rights, accountable institutions, the equitable delivery of services, and political participation – these are among our most powerful weapons.”

As you are aware, this is the last meeting of the CICTE at which I will be speaking to you as Secretary General of the OAS. Over the past ten years, I have seen how the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism has expanded its activities and strengthened its structure. For that reason I would like to use this occasion to congratulate you on the work carried out and, through you, to recognize the work and efforts of those who, from different positions within the CICTE, have contributed to its development.

Over the past ten years the Americas have seen ups and downs, but I believe the balance has been positive for most of the region’s countries. The Latin American region substantially increased its participation in the global economy and, for the first time in its history, enjoyed a virtuous combination of growth and economic stability, reduced poverty, and an improvement – albeit a marginal one – in its income distribution.

The new century also brought with it a consolidation of democracy. Democratic elections were held everywhere and at all levels. During my time at the OAS, we have observed more than a hundred elections, which were free, competitive, with ballots cast in secrecy, for the most part not challenged, and many of which culminated with transfers of power between opposing political forces.

We can therefore claim that today, the Americas are prospering in democracy. However, we also face new challenges that could affect that situation in the future. And among those challenges to democracy, a sadly prominent position is occupied by threats to security.

Our region, we must admit, is one of those most severely affected in that regard. It contains vast sectors that are enormously vulnerable, where insecurity arises from their lack of capacity for confronting burgeoning crime rates, transnational organized crime, pandemics, and terrorism. All that creates a new security situation for the Hemisphere: we now face problems and challenges that are multidimensional in nature. They make up a set of old and new threats that know no borders and that we must tackle and defeat in order to attain the human security that will allow women and men to attain their full development.

The Organization of American States understands that this requires a collective and coordinated effort to make resolved progress in overcoming those threats. For that reason it has made efforts to create preventive initiatives and instruments for the Hemisphere as a whole, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable countries. Particularly noteworthy among those efforts is the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE), whose fifteenth regular session we are enormously pleased to be opening today.

CICTE is an agency of the OAS through which its member states promote and pursue hemispheric cooperation to prevent, combat, and eliminate terrorism in a framework of respect for international law and national sovereignty. Its existence arose from the firm conviction, shared without exception by all the Organization's members, that there can be no justification for terrorism, in any of its forms and manifestations and regardless of its origin or motivation. That it undermines the full enjoyment and exercise of human rights and poses a grave threat to peace, to the democratic values enshrined in the OAS Charter and the Inter-American Democratic Charter and, most clearly, to the stability and prosperity of the region's countries. If, as we all hope, this meeting endorses the final draft on protecting critical infrastructure from emerging threats that the member states have prepared, we will be adopting an important tool for tackling the scourge of insecurity in the Americas.

This declaration invites us to step up all our activities intended to improve the security and protection of particularly vulnerable targets, such as critical infrastructure and public places. It offers a call that should guide our decisions, given that we are aware that

critical infrastructure – taken as meaning any facility that, if put out of service or destroyed, would have a negative impact on the population, public health, security, economic activities, the environment, or democratic governance – offers a target that is particularly vulnerable to any act of terrorism or vandalism.

In particular, we must promote international, regional, and subregional cooperation to confront terrorist threats to critical infrastructure that could compromise the production of raw materials, international trade, and supply chains. At the same time, our states must agree, within the framework of their domestic legal systems and the applicable international commitments, to take every step necessary to prevent, mitigate, and dissuade potential terrorist threats to critical infrastructure, by developing and implementing national actions and strengthening regional and international cooperation.

In all those areas, the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism has maintained an active and effective presence. Over recent years, we have brought about a significant expansion of the CICTE's activities in the areas of capacity-building and technical advisory services. We have substantially increased our program volume while at the same time moving into new areas of our work plan. We have worked closely with our partners, seeking to improve the quality of each training program and modifying the courses' contents and the experts who teach them.

In 2006, the CICTE Secretariat's work plan only included recommendations from the Committee to support the member states in their efforts in the fields of border controls, cybersecurity, cooperation mechanisms, and measures to prevent and combat the funding of terrorism. Today, the work plan that is to be adopted during this meeting, and which will be implemented thanks to the contributions of our member states, has 16 programs distributed among five areas of work.

In connection with the main topic that has brought us together for this meeting – the protection of critical infrastructure – I would like to make special reference to some particular programs underway within CICTE.

In recent years, the OAS Cybersecurity Program has identified a large increase in the number of cyberattacks on critical infrastructure. Critical infrastructures – such as the financial, transportation, energy, manufacturing, water, and waste sectors – work with industrial control systems that are, in turn, connected to the internet. Although, on the one hand, having systems that are connected to the internet assists the more effective and efficient provision of services, on the other hand, it leaves those systems more vulnerable to cyberthreats. We have recently seen several governments of the Americas fall victim to cyberattacks, intended to steal information, compromise the provision of services, and, chiefly, affect those governments' credibility in the eyes of their citizens. Our Cybersecurity Program has undertaken several measures to improve the member countries' technical capacities for industrial protection and to encourage exchanges of experiences and good practices.

Another working area in which we have made progress is the tourism sector, which is one of the pillars of development in many OAS member states. For the vast majority of Caribbean countries in particular, the tourism industry is the leading source of national progress and employment. Tourism security is the area that best demonstrates the relationship between a country's economic development and its security. CICTE's Tourism Security Program offers security training and workshops for participants from both the public and private sectors, in consideration of each country's realities and specific needs. It also promotes public-private partnerships in accordance with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy of 2006.

Finally, in the context of protecting our states' critical infrastructure, I would like to draw attention to CICTE's invaluable work through its programs for strengthening the security of the global supply chain. 2014 saw the launch of the Global Supply Chain Security

Program, through which the Secretariat assists the member states in designing, developing, and implementing Authorized Economic Operator programs. These programs allow border control agencies to partner with the private sector to safeguard international trade against criminal threats and trafficking. CICTE offered technical assistance to seven member states that are currently developing or implementing OAS programs, by means of eleven technical assistance missions.

Distinguished delegates:

This is a good time to reaffirm that the governments and peoples of the Americas will continue to combat terrorism ceaselessly and relentlessly. I take my leave of this Committee with pride in the work it has carried out and in the concrete results it has achieved. They are too numerous to list them all on this occasion. Suffice it to say that they have all contributed to strengthening the well-being and security of our peoples.

In concluding this address, I would like once again to thank the CICTE Secretariat for its commitment and work throughout my time in office. Special recognition is also due to the Governments of Brazil and Mexico for the valuable contributions they made this year to CICTE and to the OAS, by providing professional personnel to work on this important task. This is also a good moment to make a very special call for other member states to strengthen the CICTE Secretariat, so it can continue and expand its already successful performance.

Thank you very much.