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DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

Statement

in response to the Address by Amb. Javier Ruperez, Executive Director of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, delivered by Ambassador Jivan Tabibian at the 529th Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council October 21, 2004

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

My Delegation is very pleased to welcome Ambassador Ruperez, Executive Director of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.

Obviously, the problem of terrorism has now achieved the highest level of recognition in the world and the international community. Institutionally the Executive Directorate is one of the manifestations of the need to create an appropriate structure and hopefully to elaborate appropriate measures.

As you know, like all pandemics, global phenomena that are deeply unsettling and harmful, AIDS, disease, poverty, whatever, the scale of the problems are so enormous that given a very large inventory of available analysis, tools, measures, counter-measures, we still must recognize also that sometimes, the scale of the response, the complexity of the response, the universality of the response and an enormous amount of so called expertise fail to find easy answers.

And what happens in pandemics usually is that everybody tries, among other things, to promote explanations for the phenomena that are extremely self-serving. All we have to do, since I cannot speak directly about this, in order to show you the nature of this phenomenon, is to look at how some people explain in South Africa the propagation of AIDS, or how some people explain poverty and its universality as the after-effects of globalization.

Terrorism as a scourge, as an international phenomenon though not related to health, in terms of safety and security, is no exception and conforms to similar patterns. Obviously quite often we do need all kinds of explanations, all kinds of identifications, all kinds of attempts to put the finger on what really causes the terrorist epidemic. The forces that cause it, obviously, just like in all the other complex challenges and phenomena amplify each other.

We just heard from a certain Delegation a list of things that presumably contribute to terrorism. Of course, they contribute, whether it is international crime, or illegal trafficking of weapons, or supposedly armed groups "seeking separation." May I tell you this: Some of us know enough history to know that these phenomena have been going on for a very long time. Cross-border crime is not a post-9/11 only activity, nor is illegal trafficking of guns and weapons, nor movements political or otherwise that try to challenge certain existing political structures. They have been going on for very long. Therefore, they cannot be conveniently assumed to be the direct or exclusive causes. Perhaps at times and through our own

indifference we all of have contributed to the outbreak because while they have existed all alone, we have not always acted preventively.

One of the things that do not need to complicate the work of institutions such as yours, Mr. Ambassador, is to so conveniently and in a self-righteous manner use this very legitimate, urgent task of combating, or as your title says, countering terrorism for partisan argument. It would indeed be sad if we use spurious explanations as a pre-text to smuggle through and in some ways to promote particular agendas.

Mr. Ambassador, you are fully aware that in legal terms within countries there are certain acts that are so horrendous, so disgusting, so morally, legally, socially damning, that once one accuses somebody of having committed, and I will spare you a list of such accusations, even when legally established institutions and courts exonerate the accused, the bad reputation sticks; reputation can never be “repaired” even in a court of law. No matter that accusations were false, unfair, not substantiated, deceptive.

What can be the effect in the international court of public opinion when there are accusations, unsubstantiated, or unsubstantiable, and there are no similar judicial systems to at least follow needed procedures to exonerate the accused? Often, unfortunately, the accusation sticks, even if unfair and false, and politically motivated.

Our government feels as anxious about its own vulnerability since Armenia is after all in a peculiar area, in a peculiar high risk region. Our information tells us that for a variety of reasons we are among the potential targets. And therefore, my government is very concerned that through rather cynical politization of a real danger, we may miss an opportunity address core issues. It’s amazing how is the “restoration of territorial integrities” immediately identified as a solution, but not the protection of the rights of certain populations identified as a cause that may have contributed to the deep-seated and desperate frustrations.

This is what we would call half-diagnosis. It is like people who believe that certain infections are the result of biological warfare and not the result of their immediate personal behavior and their own misconduct, the willful disregard of certain norms.

With this, Mr. Ambassador, Mr. Chairman, my Delegation wishes that we maintain a certain level of level-headedness and not easily give convenient explanations to this very difficult, complicated problem; inadvertently, and sometimes inadmissibly, and sometimes unjustifiably or deliberately to demonize certain phenomena as easy explanations.

As other colleagues said before us, terrorism is real, the victims are real, the dead people are really dead, and quite often it is indiscriminate and its horror is in the fact that it targets mostly civilians, to traumatize, to scare, to deter, to discourage, and to demoralize; all that is very real. What neither the United Nations, nor the OSCE need is to create a level of obfuscation by unnecessary and cynically unfounded arguments and measures.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador.