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UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
Fifty-ninth Session

General Debate

**STATEMENT**

by

H.E. Dr. Solomon Passy

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the  
Republic of Bulgaria

*New York, September 23, 2004*

Monsieur le President,

Je voudrais vous présenter les félicitations les plus sincères de la Bulgarie à l'occasion de votre accession à ce poste d'énorme responsabilité. Votre expérience en la diplomatie multilatérale représente une garantie que la cinquante neuvième session de l'Assemblée Générale sera un succès. Je saisis cette occasion pour rendre hommage au travail accompli par votre prédécesseur Monsieur Julian Hunte relatif à la réforme et la revitalisation de cette assemblée.

Mr. President,  
Mr. Secretary-General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

For the Republic of Bulgaria this is the first time that our country is taking part in the current General Assembly session as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and as a state, which has successfully concluded its negotiations on joining the European Union. We are fully aware of the big responsibility, which we bear this year in discharging our mandate as the Chairman-in-office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. All this encourages Bulgaria to double its efforts in support of the United Nations. We shall continue our efforts aimed at strengthening the authority and role of the United Nations. We shall support the constructive proposals for reforms within the United Nations which should enhance its capacity and effectiveness.

Today the United Nations faces new challenges. They require resolute joint action and coordination. The United Nations and its bodies, as well as the specialized institutions within its system will continue to make an important contribution to cope with extreme poverty and hunger, achieve sustainable development, contain and do away with violence and human rights abuses, affirm the rule of law, good governance and democratic values

Mr. President,

International terrorism poses the most serious threat to international peace and security. This demands a coordinated and resolute action by all States and the entire international community. There are no causes that can justify terrorist acts. It is essential that terrorists do not get hold of weapons of mass destruction, nor distract us from our agenda outlined by the Millennium Declaration.

This month the world remembers the victims of the terrorist acts and has marked the anniversary of the tragic events in New York City and Washington D.C. We all watched in horror, anguish and anger the cold-blooded massacre of innocent children and the parents in the school in Beslan. This is terrorism at its ugliest

Bulgaria joins those who are firmly convinced that international terrorism threatens all States. It can be dealt with only through joint efforts. It is for this reason that the people, the Parliament and the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria have categorically backed up our country's active participation in the global coalition against terrorism. We are committed to pursue steadfastly this policy of ours, even though we have incurred damages and human losses.

Within the United Nations system the Security Council and its Counter-Terrorism Committee are vested with the task of ensuring success in the fight against international terrorism. We share the opinion that Security Council resolution 1535 and the creation of the new Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate have improved the coordination in this field. The Al-Qaida and Taliban Committee beefed up in 2004 with the Monitoring Group and Sanctions Enforcement Support Team should also continue its positive influence.

We actively support all efforts under the Security Council resolutions 1373 and 1267 in narrowing down the perimeters of action of terrorist organizations and suppressing their financing. The measures aimed at including other international, regional and sub-regional organizations in the anti-terrorist struggle are of particular importance. Within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Bulgaria has been helping the joint initiatives of the CTC and OSCE and the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention.

Mr. President,

The OSCE has been involved in several countries in South-Eastern Europe for many years now and its commitment to fostering peace and stability in the region through its field missions in Macedonia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, Serbia and Montenegro and Kosovo (Serbia and Montenegro) has proven to be invaluable.

Through activities such as institution and capacity-building, promoting and supporting legislative reform, respect for human rights, and, in co-operation with the UNHCR and other international actors, the repatriation of refugees and internally displaced persons, the OSCE has shown its comparative advantage in the region.

But, while this work is essential, it cannot be done effectively without enhanced efforts by the international community to address the region's lagging infrastructure. Developing infrastructure and political stability have to go together. The people of the region are isolated from each other and from the rest of the region. It can take longer to fly from Sofia to Tirana than to cross the Atlantic. There is a desperate need for highways, railways and infrastructure corridors to bring the people of the region closer together. Bulgaria knows from its own experience how important it is for the people in South-eastern Europe to have the prospect of full integration into mainstream European political and economic structures.

There must be no relaxation in the efforts of the international community to stimulate economic growth in this region and to offer young people, in particular, tangible hope for the future.

Bulgaria has always regarded the stability and security in Southeastern Europe as one of its priorities. Yet, in spite of the positive changes and the acceleration of the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the States in the region, the events in Kosovo of last March revealed serious risks and latent threats. Bulgaria supports the emergence of a democratic, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society in Kosovo. We will continue to cooperate actively with the UN Mission in Kosovo so that this aim is finally attained. Bulgaria is in favour of the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 and its "standards before status" policy. An agreement on these standards, together with the forthcoming negotiating process, will be decisive for Kosovo's future. We welcome the Secretary-General's initiatives, and

particularly the comprehensive review of the political situation in Kosovo, prepared by Ambassador Kai Eide. We shall continue lending our active support to Mr. Soren Jessen-Petersen, the Secretary-General's newly-appointed Special Representative. We hope that the elections next month will turn out to be an important step in the social and political processes and towards reaching a durable solution of the Kosovo problem.

Bulgaria is firmly convinced that the United Nations is called upon to play a key role in the stabilization and restoration of Iraq, in the ongoing political and constitutional process, based on Security Council resolution 1546, and in the preparation for democratic and free elections. We welcome the first steps in Baghdad taken by Mr. Ashraf Qazi, the Secretary-General's Special Representative, as well as the mandate of UNAMI.

Unfortunately, notwithstanding the efforts by the United Nations and the Quartet international factors, there is no progress in the Middle East peace process. There were new terrorist acts and the use of force in the past few weeks. Bulgaria is convinced that the best way of achieving more security and stability is to stick to the political process of the Middle East Road Map.

There is an encouraging development in resolving conflicts in certain "hot spots" in the world, such as Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste. At the same time, there are complicated situations in other regions, particularly in Africa. The situation in Darfour is of particularly serious concern. Security Council resolutions 1556 and the newly adopted resolution 1564 must be complied with in order to avoid a repetition of the tragedy in other parts of the African continent, which occurred during the last decade.

As the Chairman-in-office of the OSCE we have been making concerted efforts to spur up and further develop the cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE. We have been encouraged by the Secretary-General's specific initiatives, aimed at improving the synchronization of actions, communication and exchange of information with regional organizations. We give a very high mark to the UN-OSCE cooperation in the Western Balkans, the region of the Caucasus and Central Asia. The contemporary geopolitical realities are obliging not only the cooperation between UN and OSCE, but also co-operation with the EU, NATO, the Council of Europe, CIS and other relevant international agencies. In my view, closer interaction between them is of crucial importance to security, stability, democratic prosperity and tolerance in the world.

The developments in Georgia have been followed with close attention by the Bulgarian OSCE Chairmanship. We have been also actively involved in efforts to avert possible crisis situations in the autonomous region of Ajaria. We note with satisfaction the encouraging changes that have taken place in Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, including the decision of the President of Azerbaijan to release 129 political prisoners announced in March, as well as the decision by the President and the Parliament of Tajikistan to impose a Moratorium on death penalty in June.

The OSCE, through its outreach activities, attaches great importance to assisting the normalization of Afghanistan and its steady progress towards democracy and respect for human rights. The Bulgarian Chairmanship of the OSCE has initiated the monitoring of elections in Afghanistan. The OSCE has identified consolidated interaction with its Organization's Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation as one of its main priorities for 2004. We have been exerting substantial efforts to enrich the co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners and foster relations between the OSCE and the Arab League.

Adapting ourselves to the geopolitical realities, we envisage building a bridge of confidence over the Black Sea — an endeavor which can set the basis for the future security, cooperation and tolerance in Europe, in Asia and in the whole World. We are deeply convinced that the Dialogue across the Black Sea is of special importance not only for the participating nations, but because it can also set a positive example for other parts of the world.

Mr. President,

The respect for, and observance of internationally recognized standards of human rights by Member States is a pre-requisite both for their national security and sustainable development. It is also a pre-requisite for international peace and security. The protection of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms and respect for the generally recognized international standards of human rights is a major priority in the policy of the Bulgarian Government. We are engaged in a continuous process of perfecting the mechanisms for protection of the rights and freedoms of all persons under Bulgaria's jurisdiction, in conformity with the principle of and equality before the law.

Our historical experiences teach us that in the quest for achieving prosperity and security in any society, it is necessary to have not only an adequate legal system and mechanisms for its effective implementation, but also a spirit of tolerance. We must not tolerate only one minority and forget the others. Anti-Semitism, Anti-Islam, anti-Arab, anti-European, anti-Americanism and even anti-globalism ought to be equally and totally rejected. Our civilization should know better!

Bulgaria welcomes the progressive reintegration of Libya to the international community. However, my country believes that a compelling message from the Libyan authorities about their respect for human rights and human values can only be to find a just solution of the very well known case of the five Bulgarian nurses and the Palestinian doctor who have been held behind bars in Tripoli and Benghazi for almost six long years. In this regard, we call upon the United Nations to double its efforts in the fight against the AIDS pandemic in Africa which we believe is the cause, which has led to the tragic developments with the six innocent medical workers.

The Republic of Bulgaria is actively involved in the struggle against HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria and other deadly diseases. We welcome the results of the high-level plenary meeting last week as a continuation of the Twenty-sixth General

Assembly Special Session in 2001. We are fully aware of the importance of implementing the Declaration on HIV/AIDS, and we are encouraged by the good start of the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria. We believe that the current session will throw its support behind this positive process.

Bulgaria regards the issues concerning women, children and persons belonging to vulnerable groups of the population, including the elderly and disabled persons, as an inseparable part of the entire complex of human rights. The Bulgarian Government fully supports the strict implementation of the documents of the World Conference on Racism, the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on children, the World Assembly on ageing, as well as the ongoing efforts of the international community to draft and adopt a Convention on the protection of the rights and dignity of the disabled persons.

Mr. President,

The measures aimed at revitalizing the entire activities of the United Nations are of extraordinary importance for the current session of the General Assembly. The effectiveness in the work of the United Nations bodies, particularly the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, is fundamental for solidifying the all-round role of the world organization. The sooner we do it, the better. All the more so, because next year we will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of the United Nations, and let us hope that we will also be able to congratulate ourselves with the adoption of these badly needed reforms. Taking all this into consideration, and acting on the basis of the political will of all States Members, as declared at the Millennium Summit, we give our support to the common efforts for speeding up the United Nations reform, and for strengthening the ties and coordination among the United Nations basic bodies, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization.

Mr. President,

For the Republic of Bulgaria the United Nations plays a principal and pivotal role in our foreign policy, as stated at the 58th session of the GA by Prime Minister H.E. Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. To this end we shall continue our efforts to promote the role of the United Nations Organization, enhance its efficiency and organizational structure in order to promote peace, development, democracy and the rule of law.

Thank you for your attention.