

Distinguished Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

With your permission, I would like to express my gratitude to you for this present opportunity of addressing the audience at the same venue as before. On behalf of Russia's FSB authorities I also would like to thank members of the United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee for the productive dialogue they have been maintaining with the Working Group of the Meeting of Heads of Special Services, Security Agencies and Law-Enforcement Organizations during the last four years, providing for the better coordination of our joint efforts to build-up the international antiterrorist capability.

We highly recognize the practical engagement of the Committee's and its Executive Directorate's leadership in providing comprehensive support to the Meeting, to include the practical participation in its working activities. Likewise, we are very appreciative of the information coverage of the Meeting provided by your esteemed Committee, including regular postings of our working materials on the CTC website.

On a historical note, the format of a multinational meeting with a counterterrorist agenda has been functional for the past seven years. The first Meeting convening top-level security / intelligence officials from 37 national states was held in 2002 in Saint-Petersburg under the auspices of Russia's FSB; just several months prior to that the tragedy of 9/11 occurred, unveiling before the entire global community the horrible and simple truth of how questionable the security in the modern world could be, and that no individual country will ever have a chance of defeating international terrorism without other countries' support.

The VII Meeting held in March 2008 in Khanty-Mansiysk was attended by 76 delegations of security / intelligence and law-enforcement agencies from 54 countries as well as other international partners, specifically the UNSC Counter-Terrorism Committee, SCO Regional Antiterrorist Structure and CIS Antiterrorism Center.

The basic idea of the Meeting was to help creating a mechanism of combining the international security/intelligence and law-enforcement efforts against the newly-emerging threats. As of today, we are certain that our choice of the format of professional interaction was absolutely appropriate in terms of developing common approaches to and adequate measures of responding to terrorist threats.

The overall security situation worldwide has improved as the time elapsed, and the global community has scored some major successes in the field of international counterterrorism. Coordinated activities resulted in the disruption of significant portions of financial and logistical components of international terrorist organizations, severely undermining their popular support. Nevertheless, the threat posed by international terrorist outfits, above all 'Al-Qaida', remains quite serious.

The present scope of international terrorism was clearly indicated by the recent large-scale attack in Mumbai, India; other indicators are the incidents involving the use of suicide operatives as well as terrorism-motivated kidnappings and hostage-takings repeatedly occurring in different parts of the world.

Yet 'Al-Qaida' and other terrorist organizations continue planning terrorist attacks that would result in massive human casualties and broad media and public response. Concurrently, their subversive modus operandi has evolved in line with the new operational environment.

Of principal concern is the security situation in the Afghanistan / Pakistan border area which is still influenced by a heavy presence of Taliban, 'Al-Qaida' and other terrorist elements. Political instability and unsettled disputes around the Gaza Strip and the territories under the Palestinian Administration are seen as additional factors of general public radicalization throughout the world. Apart from that, There remain risks that militants who received training and acquired warfare expertise in Iraq could leave the country and move to western countries, as well as to the regions of escalated conflicts. Additional point of concern is the growing terrorist activity of the 'Al-Qaeda in the Land of the Islamic Maghreb' (AQIM).

The global information environment, particularly the Internet realms, is being steadily turned into a new theater of terrorist operations. International terrorist and extremist organizations have been very proactive and resourceful in their use of the Internet as a means of secure and anonymous operational communications, collecting and analyzing sensitive data, subversive propaganda, spotting potential supporters and financial benefactors, recruiting new activists and exerting psychological impact upon the society.

By now, terrorist manifestations on Russian soil are mainly reduced to the activities of the bandit underground in the North Caucasus. According to the

current intelligence reports, there are several hundred bandit militants still active in the region including around 30 foreign mercenaries of Arab and Central Asian origin.

Security authorities' efforts in the North Caucasus are primarily concentrated on the further improvement of ongoing counterterrorist operations, ensuring public security and providing normal conditions for the sustainable socio-economic and political development of the region.

The currently taken measures to destroy bandit groups and stockpiles of weapons remaining in the North Caucasus create preconditions for limiting the social and material basis of extremist activity. Unable to replace heavy losses of manpower and matériel, extremists have to keep much lower operational profile.

This is the result of Russia's consistent implementation of the UNSC Resolution 1373 along with the efficient functioning of the all-national system of counterterrorist response introduced by Russia's National Antiterrorism Committee.

I would like to focus your attention on Russia's national list of proscribed terrorist and extremist organizations adopted by the special decision of the Russian Federation Supreme Court.

Currently, the list comprises 19 organizations. Since our previous meeting in January 2008 it was extended by another two organizations. On 10 April 2008 the Supreme Court enacted the ruling recognizing the international religious association '*Nurcular*' an extremist organization. The November 2008 inclusion of the '*Al-Qaida in the Land of Islamic Maghreb*' provided Russian competent authorities with sufficient legal grounds for the intelligence / investigative targeting of the said outfit, including by way of conducting joint operations with our international counterparts. Russia, in fact, was the first among European countries to legally recognize the terrorist nature of this organization's activity.

I also would like to make a special emphasis on Russia's practice of conducting antiterrorist exercises which is considered a critical component of the all-national system of terrorism prevention. In addition to that, we consider such exercises as an important modality of international antiterrorist cooperation and an opportunity to practically master specific aspects of joint operations.

In 2008 over 350 tactical exercises were conducted in the Russian Federation in line with 12 different antiterrorist response scenarios.

Since 2004 antiterrorist exercises have been a regular item on the Meetings working agenda. Of special interest was the joint Russian-Chinese exercise conducted within the framework of the 5th Meeting (Khabarovsk, 2007). The exercise was dedicated to practicing methods of operational coordination between Russian and Chinese respective security authorities in the course of hostage-rescue operations.

In 2008 the Working Group of the Meeting took an active part in both preparational and operational aspects of the two multilateral exercises envisaged by the international Strategy for Partnerships between States and Businesses to Counter Terrorism; this Strategy was initiated by the Russian Federation during its G8 Presidency in 2006. The exercises VOLGOGRAD ANTITERROR 2008 and VYSOTSK 2008 were conducted by competent governmental authorities in cooperation with corporate stakeholders, specifically, Russian-based company LUKOIL operating the critical energy facilities that were used as the tactical grounds of the exercises.

The exercises were specific in a sense that in both cases a notional crisis area encompassed high environmental risk facilities. Apart from grave ecological consequences, a terrorist attack on each of these facilities could result in the interruption of critical hydrocarbons' supply.

The VOLGOGRAD ANTITERROR 2008 exercise conducted by the SCO member states was attended by the observers from Iran and Pakistan. The VYSOTSK 2008 exercise involved foreign observers from the G8 member states, Baltic states as well as the UN and OSCE. Apart from perfecting practical interaction between public and private bodies, the exercises allowed to exchange state-of-the-art national experiences of situational response to emerging terrorist threats, planning and preparation of counterterrorist operations, mitigation of the damage caused by terrorist attacks.

The more detailed accounts on both exercises were subsequently presented in the International Counterterrorism Database (ICTDB), which is one of the major projects designed within the framework of the Meeting.

During our last year's briefing a representative of Russia's National Antiterrorism Committee informed the UN CTC on the general concept and objectives of the Database, its architecture, operating procedure and development prospects. I would just remind you, that the ICTDB is a unique information tool designed to improve the level and productivity of the multilateral information sharing among the agencies concerned and stir-up their efforts to form a universal antiterrorist information environment.

The ICTDB is basically comprised of the Unclassified Data Segment, that has been operational since the fall of 2007, and the Classified Data Segment whose routine operation is to be launched later this year. Currently, the ICTDB is being used by the authorized security / intelligence subscribers in 16 countries.

During the 7th Meeting (Khanty-Mansiysk) the transportation security issues were addressed for the first time; we also continued discussing the issues of security / intelligence cooperation in countering the financing of terrorism and extremist activity as well as ensuring antiterrorist security of major public events.

The global information security is listed among the priority items on the Meeting's agenda. The Khanty-Mansiysk Meeting highlighted the necessity of elaborating internationally recognized approaches to strengthening the security of the global informational environment; it was recommended to more actively engage international community, primarily, using the United Nations' platform for that purpose.

The Meeting was also marked by demonstration of hostage-rescue drills performed by the Russia's FSB Special Purpose Center

Our Working Group has already started preparations for the next 8th Meeting that will be held on 23-25 June 2009 in the city of Irkutsk.

This time we are going to introduce certain novelties into the traditional format of the Meeting's work. Follow-up the requests of participants, the VIII Meeting will include, in addition to a usual plenary session, three separate sessions of the dedicated working groups focused on the following counterterrorism-related subject matters that we consider to be most topical today.

As regards the plenary session, we would like to offer participants an opportunity for presenting individual national assessments of current terrorist threats worldwide. In our opinion, such information sharing may help different nations' authorities to find more points of commonality in the process of their further interaction along the antiterrorist track.

Participants of the Meeting will continue to address the issue of ensuring the security of the global informational environment. The plenary agenda will also include the subject of the general public radicalization with the special emphasis being placed on how this phenomenon affects younger generations.

Being aware of the practice of multinational antiterrorist exercises gaining momentum in different countries, we have supplemented the upcoming Meeting's agenda with the subject of improving the antiterrorist preparedness on a national level.

Besides these agenda items we are planning to discuss the results of the working groups on "Countering the terrorist use of the Internet" and "Security / intelligence counteraction against the general public radicalization and terrorist recruitment".

A separate working group will discuss practical aspects of developing and operating International Counterterrorism Database (ICTDB).

Before concluding my report, I again would like to extend gratitude to the UNSC CTC senior executives and other members for their outstanding support of the Meeting, and, on behalf of the Russia's FSB Director Army General (Aleksandr) Bortnikov invite the UNSC CTC Chairman Mr. (Neven) Jurica and the UN CTED Executive Director Mr. (Mike) Smith to take part in the 8th Meeting in the city of Irkutsk.

I appreciate your attention and will be glad to respond to all your questions.