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ADDRESS

**of the President of the Republic of Macedonia,
H.E. Mr. Branko Crvenkovski
at the General Debate of the 61th Session of the
UN General Assembly**

New York, 21 September 2006

**Madam President,
Secretary - General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my privilege to address this distinguished forum and share with you the views of the Republic of Macedonia on the issues of primary importance on this year's agenda of the General Assembly and of the international community at large.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Terrorism is not a new world issue, but has unfortunately become our tragic daily reality, thus rapidly gaining new and more devastating dimensions in the increasingly globalized world. We are all affected in one way or another - whether we speak about actual terrorist attacks or threats.

The real question however is - can we, or should we the nations of the world continue to live in that kind of atmosphere, to live in fear, threatened? It would be a failure of humanity, of free spirit and democracy, of prosperity and mankind, and finally, if I may say, a failure of all of us here at the United Nations. Recently we have adopted the UN Comprehensive Counter-Terrorism Strategy. I believe it was high time that we adopted a unified position and Strategy, i.e. that all of us gave a strong international response. Comprehensive international cooperation and coordination against these scourge is equally important to the activities at the national and regional level. We need to have results. Sooner is better.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Outside of this building when the name of United Nations is mentioned, for many peoples, even nations it means hope and help, it means peace, it means cure. It means also freedom, democracy, safety, it

means life. So, the UN should not be shy to respond, to act, to resolve when is asked for it. The UN has to react. Only by resolving problems we make progress. We have to follow and react to the changes and to the new challenges that are incoming.

The United Nations overall reform, including better management, must be an ongoing effort. There are still issues from the Final Document yet to be delivered such as mandate review, Security Council reform - just to name some. Hopefully there will be enough understanding and progress achieved on them too.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last months we got yet another reminder how fragile the world peace actually is. The Middle East again erupted. We have witnessed how difficult is to restore peace, to hold a ceasefire, to send UN Peace keepers there. Macedonia welcomed the unanimous adoption of the Security Council resolution 1701(2006) of August 11. Macedonia supports the efforts of the United Nations and the international community to provide timely humanitarian assistance to the affected and reconstruction of the country. The UN must fight to make a last peaceful solution on Middle East.

From the very beginning the Republic of Macedonia has been a part of the international antiterrorist coalitions in Iraq and Afghanistan, and has recently increased its contingents as part of the international forces. Peace and democracy building in these two countries remain one of the key challenges for the international community and the Iraqis and Afghans themselves. I would like to once again reiterate Macedonia's support to their efforts to rebuild these countries and create better life for their people.

Excellencies,

Last year at the Summit we reaffirmed our commitment to the global partnership for development as set out in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. It is beyond doubt that every country has a principal responsibility for its own development. However, it is more than obvious that national development efforts must be supported by global actions. The contribution of the private sector and civil society may play a critical role in our common endeavor.

In addition to human rights standard setting, the United Nations, since the adoption of the Universal Declaration, have been a guardian of human rights. We trust that the recently established Human Rights Council gives a new impetus in this area. We hope that the weaknesses of the Commission will be overcome but we have to be aware that this requires a strong political commitment on the part of membership. Guided by the wish to contribute to the work of this important body, we have announced our candidature for membership for the 2009-2012 period.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today Macedonia is a stable and functional multiethnic democracy. Over the last years we have launched and carried out a large number of reform projects, which brought us closer to the EU and the NATO Alliance. In December last year Macedonia was granted the candidate status for EU membership. Macedonia rightfully expects that the pace of the needed reforms the country is committed to will lead to opening of the negotiations on joining the European Union. As for NATO, we expect the invitation to join it at the next enlargement Summit.

The Region of South-eastern Europe to which my country belongs experienced significant changes in the recent period and made considerable democratic progress: the start of accession negotiations of

Croatia and Turkey, Macedonia becoming candidate country for membership in the European Union, the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement with Albania, and opening of the negotiations for Stabilization and Association Agreement with Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, the newly independent state. Furthermore, Romania and Bulgaria are expected to become full EU members in few months.

Good-neighborly relations and regional cooperation have been and are among top priorities of Macedonia's foreign policy. We will continue to even more vigorously pursue that kind of policy. There is no alternative to dialogue and all outstanding regional issues should be resolved in that manner. This year the Macedonian delegation will once again introduce a resolution in the First Committee entitled "Maintenance of international security – good- neighborliness, stability and development in South-Eastern Europe" which is traditionally widely supported and cosponsored by member states.

I should like to say a few words about the Kosovo issue and Kosovo's future status. Macedonia fully supports the work of the UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari and his team on the Kosovo status talks. I would like to stress that every effort should be made to achieve a negotiated settlement mutually acceptable to the parties concerned in line with the UNSC Resolution 1244 (1999) and the Contact Group guiding principles. The Republic of Macedonia with its active good-neighborly policy has been a factor that largely contributed, and continues to contribute, to the final and overall stabilization and positive developments in the region.

Yet, there is one important, still pending issue in this context for the Republic of Macedonia. The issue of the technical demarcation of our

northern border on the Kosovo section in line with the Agreement for the delineation of the borderline between the Republic of Macedonia and FRY, signed in Skopje in February 2001, and the recommendations made by United Nations Secretary General Special Representative Kai Eide. We urge this issue to be closed in that respective manner before reaching the final Kosovo's status decision.

In closing, I am confident that our deliberations will contribute to creating a better world for all. Although the debates at times show how different we are, our differences must not be an obstacle to our common vision. The personification of hope of mankind for a better tomorrow remains to rest with the United Nations.

Thank you.