



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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60th Session of the UN General Assembly

Statement by
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NEW YORK
Monday, 19 September 2005

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**60th SESSION OF UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATEMENT
BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC**

Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating you upon your election as President and assure you of my country's unwavering support in your endeavors. Your previous experience at the United Nations ensures that, under your guidance, this Assembly will continue to promote the values and principles of our Organization.

I wish to extend our sincere thanks to the outgoing President, Mr. Ping. His tireless efforts in all fields, particularly in putting together the preparations for the High Level Meeting, have been exemplary.

Greece fully subscribes to the statement delivered earlier by the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union as well as to the EU Priorities presented to the General Assembly.

I would also like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his relentless efforts to promote peace and security and safeguard the moral authority and the pre-eminent role of our United Nations.

Mr. President,

At the beginning of the 21st century, we continue to face many threats and challenges which undermine the very basic values and principles of our societies and test our will and determination to abide by the obligations and restraints inherent in those values and principles. Only through concerted collective action, dialogue and mutual understanding can we confront them and pave the way for a better, brighter future.

Terrorism has emerged as the single most important challenge of our times creating an atmosphere of collective fear, intolerance and a never-ending cycle of violence.

Throughout history, violence has never proven to be an answer to our problems. Peace, stability and security can only be achieved through tolerance, acceptance and the realization that our common interests far outweigh our differences. There is no justification whatsoever for terrorism. It is high time for a collective and urgent effort to put an immediate end to this modern scourge.

Natural disasters, like the tsunami in Asia and the recent hurricane in the southern part of the United States, with so many victims and unimaginable destruction, also demonstrate sufficiently the importance of international cooperation and the urgent need for human solidarity.

Mr. President,

I am fully aware of the importance of economic development for considerable parts of the world. Security and sustainable development go hand in hand. It is a matter of time before extreme poverty, hunger and the catastrophic impact of widespread diseases lead to strife, internal or external. Our collective commitment and effort are necessary to correct the imbalances and disparities in the world. At the forefront is Africa, where the vicious circle of poverty, conflict and HIV/AIDS produce an explosive combination threatening the social fabric -of the local societies with unprecedented dire consequences.

Multilateral cooperation is the only way to a better world. The international multilateral system must be enhanced and strengthened. Greece fully participates in the policies formulated by the European Union and the various international organizations which contribute to the economic development of all areas of the world with the purpose to redress existing imbalances.

We appreciate the value of cultural diversity in a world unfortunately so often divided by discrimination. We believe in dialogue among cultures, among people, among societies. We fully support the peaceful resolution of all our problems on the basis of international law and the United Nations Charter. We are deeply committed to the United Nations and what it represents, to effective multilateralism and the predominance of international law.

Mr. President,

Looking at Greece's immediate neighborhood, the Balkans, we realize that they have not been fully transformed into a region of peace, stability and prosperity yet.

In Kosovo, the traumas created by the repression of the past and the interethnic violence that plagued the region for so long have yet to be cured. There is a need for a settlement that will be in conformity with international legality as expressed by the United Nations and with European standards and values, a settlement which will enhance regional stability.

We remain convinced that European integration is the only way to permanent solutions to existing problems and challenges. At the same time, regional cooperation has to be strengthened so as to effectively address the problems of the

neighborhood. Greece, while holding the Chairmanship in Office of the South East Cooperation Process, is determined to strengthen the institutional aspects of this cooperation scheme and to develop it into the real voice of the region.

I deeply regret that the Cyprus problem remains unresolved. In the thirty one years of military occupation of more than 1/3 of the territory of Cyprus, Greece has strongly supported every attempt and initiative by the United Nations for the achievement of a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.

In light of the outcome of last year's referenda which should be fully respected, any new initiative will have to be carefully prepared so as to ensure real chances for success. On our part, we are ready to work towards building the necessary common ground which will render possible the re-launching of meaningful negotiations.

Our ultimate goal remains an agreed solution between the two parties. We remain steadfastly committed to reaching a just and viable solution for the reunification of the island following negotiations on the basis of the UN Secretary General's plan, the relevant Security Council resolutions and in conformity with the EU principles and acquis. In this endeavor, Greece will spare no efforts.

The climate of our bilateral relations with Turkey over the recent years has been constantly improving. We have made vigorous efforts to put our relations on a new solid track. Significant progress has been achieved in several areas of our bilateral cooperation and Turkey's EU perspective will further widen and deepen the scope of our relations.

The latest developments in the Middle East allow us to maintain a certain level of reserved optimism. The Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank does indeed constitute an important milestone. It should be seized upon as a momentous opportunity to revitalize the Roadmap and to move the process a step closer towards achieving a fair, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

The Roadmap remains the framework for the achievement of just and lasting peace. Both parties should concentrate on fulfilling their respective obligations and commitments and refrain from any and all unilateral actions which threaten to prejudice the outcome of final status negotiations and undermine efforts at building confidence on the ground.

Our shared goal remains the realization of a two-State solution, Israel and a democratic, viable and territorially contiguous State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

With regard to Iraq, Greece underlines the importance of its territorial integrity and unity in the framework of a federal system. We remain particularly concerned, however, about the ongoing violence, a fact which renders more urgent the need to follow the timetable of the political process that will lead the country to normalcy which is of vital importance for peace and stability in the entire region. We fully support Iraq in this difficult mission.

My country has long historic relations with the African continent and its peoples. It is with great concern that we witness a series of conflict situations plaguing Africa for many years. We follow the developments in all cases and we try to bring our positive contribution, be it in the Sudan, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the countries of West Africa, in the settlement of the dispute between Ethiopia — Eritrea and elsewhere. The emerging pivotal role of the African Union in dealing with African crises has our full support and deep appreciation.

Mr. President,

Last Friday, we adopted an historic Declaration which constitutes a new and important step in the direction of enforcing collective security and strengthening the UN capacity to deal with the new challenges and threats our societies are facing today. Our efforts should now focus on the implementation of the commitments made, so that the generations to come live in a better and more secure world.

Thank you Mr. President