

УКРАЇНА



UKRAINE

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ADDRESS

by H.E. Mr. Borys TARASYUK,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine

at the general debate of the sixty-first session
of the General Assembly of the United Nations

25 September 2006

**Madam President,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, with your election to this high post and to assure you of the full support of Ukraine throughout your mandate. I would also like to express our deep appreciation to your predecessor and my good friend H.E. Mr. Jan Eliasson for his outstanding contribution to the progress in implementation of the decisions of the 2005 World Summit.

I would like to pay special tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, who is about to relinquish his important and noble mission. I praise Mr. Annan for his valuable personal contribution to and devoted efforts on all aspects of the UN activities and wish him the best in his further endeavours.

We are convinced that the next Secretary-General can and must be a person truly deserving this post and who will honorably discharge this responsible duty. I would like to once again emphasize the justified position of the Eastern European states regarding the priority right for a representative of this region to be appointed to the UN top post. Eastern Europe remains the only region which has never had its representative serving as the Secretary-General. In this respect, we welcome the nomination of the candidature of Dr. Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, President of the Republic of Latvia.

Madam President,

Our achievements in implementing last year's Summit decisions are really impressive. The Human Rights Council, of which Ukraine is an active member, has started its work. The Peacebuilding Commission, the Central Emergency Response Fund and the UN Democracy Fund are all functioning and making an important contribution in overcoming disasters and injustice. All of these are notable milestones in the process of reforming the United Nations.

Still, we are far from ensuring adjustment of our Organization to today's realities, let alone preparing it for addressing tomorrow's threats and challenges. Reform of the UN Security Council, strengthening of ECOSOC and promotion of the 2005 World Summit agenda for development, improvement in the UN Secretariat management are yet to be tackled.

It is well-known that without modernization of the Security Council – an indispensable pillar of the system of collective security – United Nations reform would be incomplete. From standpoint of States of the Eastern European Group, this thesis could be paraphrased as follows: no enlargement of the Security Council would be complete without ensuring an enhanced representation of the Eastern Europe. And the rationale for this is doubling of the Group's membership since 1991, with, most recently, the Republic of Montenegro joining the United Nations as its 192nd Member. Taking this opportunity I would like to welcome the friendly Republic of Montenegro to the UN family.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We need to unite our efforts so that the United Nations – that is, all of us together – can adequately respond to the whole spectrum of existing and future challenges in the areas of security, development and human rights.

Recent commemoration of the 5th anniversary of the heinous terrorist attack in this city as well as growing number of terrorist acts in many parts of the world should leave no doubt that terrorism continues to remain one of the most dangerous threats of the present time.

Ukraine welcomes the recent adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and is ready to make its important contribution to its effective realization. This important step has become another strong signal that terrorism will not be tolerated. The Strategy has also testified to the readiness of the international community to strengthen coordination and increase

effectiveness of measures to combat this hideous phenomenon within the framework of a concrete action plan. On its part, Ukraine has recently ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Prevention of Terrorism.

We call upon the Member States to make additional efforts during the current session of the General Assembly to elaborate and to adopt the comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

Ukraine is deeply concerned with the situation in the Middle East. Recent events in Lebanon and continuing Israeli-Palestinian crisis have shown the need for more decisive international efforts aimed at returning peace and stability to this region. Violence and hatred cannot become alternative to restoring dialogue and negotiations in order to achieve comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict on all of its tracks.

Therefore Ukraine welcomes the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1701 on Lebanon. Support of the resolution by all parties in the region gives hope for achieving progress in its full implementation. As a longstanding contributor to the UN peacekeeping efforts, including in the Middle East, Ukraine made its concrete proposals on contributing to the enhanced UNIFIL.

Inability to agree on set of commitments in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation has become one of the major setbacks of the 2005 World Summit. More than a decade ago Ukraine has made historical contribution in this area when it unilaterally renounced the third largest nuclear weapons arsenal in the world. Therefore we call on Member States to strive for achieving progress in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation in the UN and other fora for the sake of future generations.

Lately the international community has been concerned with the nuclear programme of Iran. Ukraine supports the efforts of those countries who aim for Teheran's return to close and full cooperation with the IAEA. Appropriate level of cooperation and transparency from Iran on this issue would help to lift concerns of the international community. Ukraine stands for the right of all nations to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. However, while realizing this right it is necessary to fully adhere to commitments in the field of non-proliferation.

One of the most important tests for the ability of the United Nations to deal effectively with interethnic conflicts will be the issue of the future status of Kosovo. Taking into account the fragile situation in and around Kosovo, the political process of determining its future status should be handled with the maximum level of responsibility of all parties involved. Any imposed decision leading to unilateral change of borders of the internationally recognized democratic state will inevitably destabilize the situation in the Balkan region and set dangerous precedents in Europe and entire world.

Unfortunately we are already witnessing the unfolding of this undesirable scenario with precarious attempts to use Kosovo settlement as a precedent for claiming independence by some self-proclaimed regimes on the post-Soviet space. I mean so called referenda on independence recently held in Transnistria, Moldova, and scheduled for the near future in South Ossetia, Georgia. Ukraine together with all international community does not recognize these referenda and considers them illegitimate and having no legal consequences.

Thus, Ukraine consistently supports the need for negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina aimed at finding mutually acceptable solution based on Security Council decisions, including resolution 1244. It is extremely important to ensure that the eventual decision of the UN Security Council on the final status of Kosovo would not impose the solution but be taken only upon the clearly expressed consent of both parties concerned.

As representative of Ukraine, presiding in the "Organization for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM", I would like to thank those countries which supported the inclusion into the agenda of the 61st session of the General Assembly of the new item "Protracted conflicts in the GUAM

area and their implications for international peace, security and development". It is an important step that will help to draw the attention to the need for more active and effective steps of the international community in order to achieve progress in settlement of conflicts on the territory of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova.

We, in particular, call for realization of the initiative by the President of Ukraine Mr. Victor Yushchenko on Transnistria "To settlement through democracy", a Plan of peace settlement of the conflict in South Ossetia offered by the President of Georgia, and also implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council and decisions of OSCE on the conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh and Abkhazia.

These conflicts are among the main obstacles for the full-scale democratic transformations in the region, which is among the core elements of the regional policy of Ukraine.

Having gained the new level of integration during the Kyiv Summit last May, GUAM Member States set as their main purposes strengthening of values of democracy, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, deepening of the European integration, achievement of sustainable development and increase of the well-being for their peoples.

Black Sea Economic Cooperation is another promising model of multilateral political and economic initiative. In 14 years of its dynamic existence, the Organization has proved its value as a framework of regional cooperation. Considering that the issues of energy security are among most important for Europe today, Black Sea – Caspian Region takes on special significance for providing secure, stable mining and transportation of energy resources. Ukraine is ready to take active part in promotion of energy projects in the BSEC framework. We are also convinced that the BSEC should render effective support to the efforts of the world community directed at combating terrorism, resolving the so-called "frozen conflicts" in the region and combating trans-border crime. It is necessary to coordinate the BSEC activity with corresponding programs supported by the UN, OSCE, EU and NATO.

The Forum of Community of Democratic Choice, held in Kyiv in December 2005, is yet another example of cooperation for strengthening European democratic values in Eastern Europe. The CDC united the states of Baltic-Black-Caspian Seas' area and the Balkans in their aspirations for higher democratic standards, required for successful movement towards the full-scaled European integration.

GUAM, BSEC and the CDC are valuable contributions to the creation in Eastern Europe of a homogenous with the EU area of democracy, stability and prosperity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Strengthening of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are imperatives of internal and external policy of Ukraine. That is why we are proud to have been elected to the Human Rights Council. As a member of this body Ukraine is ready to work with other states in order to bring real change in promotion of human rights worldwide.

The international community is responsible for protection of people under the threat of genocide or other violations of fundamental human rights. In two years we will mark the 60th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. One and a half decade before its adoption and yet before the tragedy of Holocaust Ukrainian people had become victims of genocide.

Deliberately organized by the communist totalitarian regime with the purpose of destruction of the vital core of freedom-loving Ukrainian people – its peasantry, the artificial Holodomor in Ukraine of 1932-33 led to the death of seven to ten million of innocent men, women and children which constituted up to 25% of the then Ukraine's population.

Having committed this inhuman crime, the communist regime tried to conceal its scale and tragic consequences from the world community. And they succeeded for a long time. After regaining the independence of Ukraine many new appalling and horrifying facts have been revealed. Parliaments of a number of countries took decisions recognizing Holodomor of 1932-1933 as an act of genocide.

Ukraine calls upon the United Nations as the collective voice of the international community to contribute to the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Convention by recognizing Holodomor as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people. Such a step would contribute towards making genocide and mass abuse of human rights impossible in the future.

With the same aim a number of events will take place in Kyiv tomorrow to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the Babyn Yar tragedy. Mass executions by the Nazis there became among the first sad pages of evolving tragedy of Holocaust. In the memory of the Ukrainian people it also the death of tens of thousands of Soviet prisoners of war of different nationalities. This event is designed to become yet another important reminder of the lessons of history and the need to prevent any manifestations of anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is needless to say that our primary attention should be devoted to implementing the Millennium Development Goals as well as new commitments in the global development agenda taken at the 2005 World Summit. There certainly is some mixed progress in this area, but the commitments and promises taken are yet to be translated into action having a direct impact on the lives of peoples in need.

The response to global threats should be effective and timely. It took international community nearly 20 years since the first registered cases of AIDS to recognize that this disease could threaten the very existence of humanity. Special session of the UN General Assembly, initiated by Ukraine together with other states in 2001, has become a turning point in combating HIV/AIDS. I want to confirm once again Ukraine's commitments to the implementation of the Declaration of the United Nations against HIV/AIDS and to express hope for continuing close cooperation in this field with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the World Bank and the other UN specialized agencies.

Lately we have witnessed the emergence of new disease that can potentially pose no less than HIV challenge to humanity. Avian influenza threatens the entire world, it knows no borders. And it is our common responsibility to ensure that all countries are prepared and protected against this threat. Combating the spread of the avian influenza and preparation to possible pandemic of human influenza demand the concerted action at national, regional and global levels. Should we repeat the mistakes of the past or learn the lessons and meet the challenge prepared? We believe that the General Assembly should consider this problem and provide the answer.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For over sixty years after its creation the United Nations has grown both in numbers – from 51 states up to 192 – and in quality. Our Organization has gained invaluable experience in changing the world so that every person could enjoy more security, justice and dignity. However, much is yet to be achieved. I believe that it is in our power and interests to do all we can so that we would be united not only by common past but common future as well.

Thank you.