

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Agshin Mehdiyev
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations at the
Security Council's meeting on "Threats to international peace and security caused by
terrorist acts"**

New York, 9 December 2008

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to commend on behalf of my Government the initiative of the Croatian Presidency in the Security Council to hold these debates, which indeed offers a timely opportunity to engage in open deliberations with a view of strengthening international solidarity and leading role of the United Nations in global counter-terrorism activities.

We pay tribute to all victims of terrorist acts and express our condolences to the people of India and the families of those suffered from the recent terrorist attack on Mumbai. Azerbaijan strongly condemns terrorism as one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and makes sustained efforts to contribute to the international community's efforts aimed at consistent, comprehensive and coordinated responses to prevent and combat terrorism.

In addition to potential threats, which have its source from proximity to the hotbed of conflicts, as well as to the regions harboring major terrorist groups and proliferation problems, Azerbaijan is a direct target of the externally sponsored particular terrorist activity. Since the late 1980s neighbouring Armenia openly encroached upon the territory of Azerbaijan and, along with launching combat operations therein, resorted to deliberate terrorist attacks against my country's citizens and critical infrastructure as a mean of implementation of its annexationist policy. In all, as a result of terrorist acts against Azerbaijan, over 2,000 citizens of Azerbaijan have been killed, the majority of them women, the elderly and children.

Indeed, terrorism is closely related to aggressive separatism. The areas of armed conflict, especially territories under foreign military occupation, often create conditions conducive to exploitation by terrorists. Thus, the continuing occupation of a part of the territory of Azerbaijan by Armenia provides fertile ground for terrorist and related activities.

Against this background, we are seriously concerned *inter alia* by the fact that the conventional arms control mechanism is not effective in these territories. Accumulation of a great number of armaments and ammunitions therein, beyond the international control, poses serious threats to regional peace and security. Our particular concern relates to the possibility of use by terrorist groups of specific weapons, including the individual anti-aircraft missile systems.

These tendencies have immediate impact on the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It is not accidental that Armenia's military expenditures in GDP calculations take one of the highest rate in the world. We regret that the international community, especially those mediating the negotiation process, shows certain indifference to this problem which in fact negatively affects the perspectives of the soonest peaceful resolution of the conflict.

In this regard, we deem it necessary to take more efficient measures aimed at preventing those who are in effective military and political control of occupied territories from acquiring conventional weapons, as well as to disclose their attempts to deny responsibility.

Equally, reinforcement of existing non-proliferation mechanisms acquires additional significance and must be a serious part of the international effort.

Important condition of counter-terrorist activity is that States refrain from organizing, financing, encouraging, providing training for or otherwise directly or indirectly supporting terrorist activities. Furthermore, insofar as international terrorist activity still relies on physical movement to reach another country in order to promote their messages and, in certain instances, to collect material resources, it is important that States take appropriate practical measures to ensure that their respective territories are not used for such or related activities, including in particular when they are obviously aimed at undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States.

Mr. President,

Terrorists must never be allowed to create a pretext for their actions. All terrorist acts constitute serious crimes, they are unjustifiable and unacceptable, and must be unequivocally condemned and prosecuted, especially when such acts indiscriminately target or injure civilians.

The absence of a clear definition of terrorism in international law merely hampers the efforts of the international community in bringing not only individual terrorists and organizations to account, but also States that promote, support or finance terrorist activities. In this regard, Azerbaijan reiterates its determination to make every effort to reach an agreement on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism, which will serve as an effective instrument to counter terrorism.

Mr. President,

The war on terrorism should not be used to target any particular religion or culture. Today, we are living at a time of heightened religious awareness, which in certain instances takes on exaggerated forms and sometimes is maliciously exploited to fuel conflicts on ethnic, religious or cultural grounds. In recent years, unacceptable attacks against Islam in some countries confirm vital necessity of joint efforts and dialogue to counter such defamatory manifestations and misconceptions.

Constructive interaction between different cultures and religions, including in the framework of such initiatives as the "Culture of peace" and the Alliance of Civilizations, should continue playing the special role in contributing to peace and mutual understanding and thus to the efficient implementation of counter-terrorism measures.

I thank you.