



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY!

STATEMENT

BY H.E. MR. NICKOLAY E. MLADENOV,

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

AT THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE 65TH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 28TH SEPTEMBER 2010

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Every year we come together in this great chamber of the United Nations, to reaffirm our commitment to multilateralism. Nations big and small, rich and poor, from the four corners of the world gather at the United Nations driven by the conviction that if we work together we will find solutions to the challenges of today and tomorrow. And as these challenges grow and become more interconnected, so grows our conviction that only through cooperation and dialogue can we resolve them.

This is the fundamental belief with which for over 55 years the Bulgarian delegation, like many others, has come to the United Nations.

Like every day, today will be unique. Because our actions on this day will forge our tomorrows. We can spend our time dwelling on the past, or we can invest our time in the future that we will face together.

Today our world faces a complicated web of challenges, but also of opportunities:

- The challenge of addressing global climate change by creating opportunities for sustainable development.
- The challenge of reducing conflicts and the opportunities that come from providing sufficient clean water to millions of people.
- The challenge of developing an ethical market economy and countless opportunities that will emerge from reducing the poverty gap.
- The challenge of reducing ethnic conflicts, terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction; and the opportunities that come from good governance, democracy and freedom.

And perhaps addressing the most paramount challenge of our time – to prove wrong all those who believe that the world is heading for an irresolvable clash of civilizations. Because none of the global challenges that we face today can be understood, tackled or addressed without respect for different opinions, without dialogue between faiths, and without adherence to the global values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Distinguished delegates,

On behalf of the Government of Bulgaria, I congratulate H.E. Mr Deiss on the assumption of the Presidency of this 65th session of the General Assembly and by our full confidence in Mr. Deiss' stewardship of this Assembly's deliberations during the next twelve months. Our appreciation also goes to H.E. Dr. Ali Treki for his able leadership during the previous session and to H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-

moon for his unfailing efforts to strengthen and promote the United Nations Organization.

Let me begin by welcoming the results of the high level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Regardless of the fact that the achievement of the MDGs remains off-track, their attainment is still within our reach. Reaffirming the principle of solidarity between those who have and those who need is of the essence. My country – like most today – faces challenges imposed by the global economic and financial crisis. We have committed to develop our own donor capacity and so we shall. Because Bulgaria – like a number of countries that have joined the European Union since the fall of the Berlin Wall – understands that the solidarity which was extended to us, now needs to be extended by us to those less fortunate. To be effective we shall work in close coordination with our partners, avoid duplication and aim at addressing the root causes – not the symptoms – of today's problems. Otherwise we will not be building a better tomorrow. In this effort the role of the United Nations shall always remain vitally important, particularly in helping mitigate the development impact of the crisis on the least developed and most venerable countries.

As dangerous as the current global crisis is, it also gives us a chance to “green” our economies by putting them on a sustainable and low-carbon path. 2010 has been proclaimed as the International Year of Biodiversity. Economic growth and the preservation of the environment must go hand-in-hand across the globe. Today there can be no excuses, not in developed countries, not in developing countries. Because any excuse that we find today will cost us more tomorrow. That is why Bulgaria believes that the United Nations must be given the tools to adequately respond to the increasing challenges of environmental preservation.

Today, much more than in the past, we see increased demand and pressure on international humanitarian efforts. The devastating earthquake in Haiti last year killed hundreds of thousands, left a staggering 20% of the population homeless and crippled the economy of one of the world's poorest countries. Haiti's call however was heeded throughout the globe. Allow me to praise the work of the United Nations and its agencies in responding quickly, but also pay tribute to all countries, NGOs and individuals who came quickly to its assistance. The Bulgarian government and people were quick to respond by providing financial and in-kind assistance, including educational opportunities to young Haitians whose universities had been destroyed.

This year we have to help in the struggle of 20 million people in Pakistan who've been affected by the terrible floods that have wrecked lives, ruined crops and destroyed economic opportunity. The Secretary General and the UN were swift to react and deserve praise for their efforts. As does the rapid reaction of the European Union, the United States and other partners throughout the world.

Allow me to use this forum to call on all to strengthen their efforts in assisting the people in Pakistan in tackling the humanitarian crisis of the floods. But I also call on governments across the globe to help in removing barriers that can assist the Pakistani economy in its recovery in the medium term. Helping today and creating opportunities tomorrow – that should be our goal in a country that is vital to global stability and security. In this, let me assure you that Bulgaria – small as it is – will also shoulder its share of the needed solidarity. Already the Government and the Bulgarian Red Cross have launched a nation-wide campaign to raise funds and contribute to the rebuilding efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

No matter how successful we are in our development and humanitarian efforts, they cannot fully bear fruit in an insecure and unstable environment. Allow me to briefly look closer to home – the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean.

The European Union was created to make war impossible in a continent that has seen at least a century of conflicts. In Europe, however, we have unfinished business. Europe shall not be whole and complete until our neighbours in the Balkans are not part of our Union. It falls on us – those who joined the EU late, not by their own choice, but because of the ideological divisions of the Cold War – to say it loud and clear: to make war impossible in the Balkans we must see all countries that have emerged from former Yugoslavia be part of the European Union. This is our historic mission. It is our destiny.

Bulgaria, which has struggled with its own transition and accession to the EU, knows the benefits and the challenges best. This is why today I am proud to stand here and commend the United Nations for unanimously approving the joint EU-Serbia resolution on the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Declaration of Independence by Kosovo. Bulgaria supported it wholeheartedly because we firmly believe that dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina is key both to the stability of the region but also to their European perspective. It will be a difficult process, charged with emotion and scarred by history. But it will be a process that today can lay the foundations of a better tomorrow for all. This is a process that the Bulgarian government is not just willing, but eager to support, and will lend all assistance necessary to the efforts of the EU High Representative on Foreign Policy that she needs to succeed.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina the international community faces many challenges. But the struggle between the fears of yesterday and the opportunities of tomorrow can be resolved today by the people of Bosnia themselves. Bulgaria will more than actively than ever contribute to reconciliation. Because we believe that our role in South East Europe and beyond is to bring people together, not divide them; to seek solutions, not watch from the sidelines.

We must constantly reaffirm our European commitment to bring in our neighbours in the Western Balkans into Europe, when they meet the criteria for membership. Our neighbours also must reaffirm their own commitment to undertaking often very difficult reforms, and to strengthening regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations.

Mr President,

There are cynics who say that the world cannot live together, that for peace to exist we must build walls of separation between peoples, religions and ethnic communities; that civilizations must clash. I come from a country that is in a turbulent part of the world, yet has managed to prove that people of different religions – Christians, Muslims and Jews; of different ethnicities – Bulgarians, Turks and Armenians can live together. Bulgaria has seen stellar moments in its history, for example when civil society rose during the Second World War and refused to allow its Jewish population to be sent to concentration camps; or when it integrated its Turkish population after the end of communism. But it has also seen its dark moments – when it failed to save the Jewish populations of the occupied Northern Greece and Vardar Macedonia; or when the Communist regime expelled a large part of our Muslim citizens to Turkey. Our history has taught us to be able to make the difference between good

and bad. Our history proves that the cynics were wrong, that people can live together in peace.

That is why Bulgaria cannot remain uninterested in the Middle East. We believe that just as the Jewish people have a homeland in the State of Israel, so the Palestinian people have the right to an independent state of Palestine that lives in peace with its neighbours. During the last months we have all witnessed the efforts of the US administration to restart the direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. Many of us have made passionate speeches of the need and urgency of peace. Today the Palestinian and Israeli leaders face the historic challenge of looking to tomorrow and not being tied down by yesterday. The Middle East cannot afford a failed peace process. The world cannot afford a process that does not have the end goal in sight.

Today we must all recognize that hard decisions are in the making and lend our full support to President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu to be able to walk the hard road to peace. Obstacles should be overcome and preconditions should be removed.

If the leaders of Palestine believe that settlement policy is an obstacle to peace, the leaders of Israel must refrain from such activities. To give peace a chance.

If the leaders of Israel believe that no preconditions to a final settlement should be put in place, then the Palestinian leaders must refrain from such actions. To give peace a chance.

The choice today is not between peace negotiations and economic development, because peace and prosperity go hand in hand. No one should feel singled out or left behind. Because the enemies of peace are many – those who feel that walls are safer than bridges; those who feel that religions cannot coexist. Because you can kill a man's life, but you cannot kill their faith or dignity.

This is why I call on all of the United Nations of the world to stand firmly behind the efforts of the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to achieve peace. In doing this we must recognize the legitimate concerns of both sides – Israel's security and the viability of a Palestinian state.

In this effort we must not forget the 1.5 million people who live in Gaza – Palestinians who have the right to a better life. Just like the children of Sderot have the right to go to school without the threat of rockets. We have an obligation to help open up access to Gaza without compromising the security of Israel. History has proven that isolation and deprivation breed radicalism and it is in the interest of peace that more opportunities be created.

It is not enough to have a vision, it is a must that we all work to support such a vision. This is why Bulgaria will stand in support of all efforts to achieve reconciliation and to advance negotiations.

Mr. President,

Today the world faces other grave security challenges that will shape our tomorrow.

We must reconfirm our commitment to halting the spread of nuclear weapons. This mission is above politics and diplomacy, above national ambitions and personal egos. It is our universal obligation and a joint commitment which we undertook 40 years ago.

Bulgaria believes that every nation must put a strengthened Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) at the centre of its national diplomacy. The uncovering of clandestine nuclear networks has brought the spectre of non-state actors equipped with weapons of mass destruction closer. We must not allow this to continue.

All nations must recognize that the nuclear non-proliferation regime is undermined if violators are allowed to act with impunity. We consider all States Parties, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), to be bound by their NPT obligations.

Leaving the NPT cannot be without consequences.

Justified concerns about the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran remain. We call on Iran to deploy the necessary confidence building measures to provide for a greater transparency of its nuclear activities. Bulgaria believes that it is important to find a diplomatic solution. The recent attempt by Turkey and Brazil illustrate that there is will in the international community for dialogue. Therefore a swift return to the negotiation table and full compliance with UN Security Council Resolutions, as well as IAEA standards and safeguards is a must.

International terrorism is one of the most serious contemporary threats to global peace and security. It cannot be vindicated by any political, philosophic, ideological, racial or ethnic considerations, or by any other ideology. The end-goal of terrorism is to hinder our efforts to guarantee human rights, basic freedoms and democracy. Within the framework of the European Union, Bulgaria has fully endorsed the implementation of the United Nations Global Strategy to Counter Terrorism. I appeals for a prompt finalization of the negotiations to reach a Comprehensive Convention to Counter Terrorism.

An old nefarious practice on the High Seas – piracy – has been resurrected and added to the already long list of today's security risks. Bulgaria is being directly affected by the escalating activity and audacity of the pirates in the Gulf of Aden and off the Coast of Somalia. This fight against piracy leaves much to be desired:

We need a firm international legal framework for the trial, detention and imprisonment of persons suspected of having committed acts of piracy.

We need coordinated actions in the High Seas to protect our shipping.

Perhaps most of all we need to address the root causes of piracy – poverty, isolation and lack of opportunity.

Excellencies,

In Afghanistan we face a threat that demands a continued military and civilian commitment of the international community that hinges on two important factors.

The ability of the Afghan Government to pave the way for reconciliation, tackle corruption and deliver services to its people; and

The renewed commitment of the international community and the regional neighbours to strengthen the Afghan National Army and Police, while maintaining the pressure on radicals and insurgents and limiting their scope of action.

In these tasks the coordinated efforts of all, but foremost the UN, NATO and the European Union, are vital. I would like to strongly support the work that UNAMA and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General Steffan de Mistura are doing. Their efforts should be appreciated and fully supported by the international community. I want to also pay tribute to the brave men and women of all ISAF contributing nations, including the 600 odd Bulgarian troops who risk their lives to bring security to the people of Afghanistan.

Bulgaria's commitment to the future of Afghanistan is unfaltering. Because we understand that it is our joint obligation to bring security to this tortured country whose people deserve to be able to enjoy the freedoms and opportunities that many of us have. Bulgaria has increased its input to ISAF, including through more training units that will work to build the capacity of the Afghan Security Forces. We contribute to the reinforced the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan, which, jointly with NATO's Training Mission plays an important role. We support the Afghan Governmental Program for Peace and Reintegration in which the key role should be played by the Afghan State.

Our commitment to Afghanistan is because we firmly believe that if we succeed today we will live safer tomorrow.

Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A comprehensive security system can rest only on a robust partnership between UN and regional organizations. This is why Bulgaria believes that the partnership between the European Union with the United Nations is a strategic one. As the EU High Representative for Foreign Policy Catherine Ashton put it, "our commitment to the multilateral system of global governance through the UN and other bodies is clear; and we work with conviction and clarity on the major challenges that face us, be they climate change, poverty, conflict or terrorism". The transformation of the EU into a legal subject of international relations after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon has to be also adequately reflected in a resolution of the General Assembly regarding the representation of the EU at the United Nations.

In closing let me briefly touch on the reform of the UN. Bulgaria is convinced that if we are to effectively tackle the challenges of tomorrow, we must continuously adapt and improve the UN system. Therefore it is imperative that we continue the course of reforms, initiated by the 2005 World Summit.

We believe that the reform of the Security Council is part of the comprehensive agenda for change of the United Nations. Bulgaria declares itself in favour of an enlargement of the Security Council capable of generating a largest possible consensus. In this context Bulgaria has endorsed the enlargement of the Security Council in its two categories, i.e. permanent and non-permanent members. As member of the Eastern European Regional Group, Bulgaria shall continue to uphold its position as to the need of allotting at least one additional non-permanent seat for a State representing the Group, especially given the fact that in recent years its membership has doubled.

Mr President,

I started by reiterating our firm commitment to multilateralism. The agenda of the United Nations is

broad and diverse and I have attempted, on behalf of the Government of Bulgaria, to briefly touch just some of the issues that ought to be discussed in the forum.

Our commitment to multilateralism can only be equaled by our unfaltering belief that dialogue and diplomacy can achieve more than confrontation and war. More than half a century ago the United Nations came together and enshrined these principles as the cornerstones of international law. Since then, with various degrees of success, we have attempted to live by them. It is time for us to realize that the global challenges of tomorrow can only be tackled by collective action today. Impossible is nothing, but only if we work together, discuss, disagree and agree but share a goal – a peaceful and prosperous world that is safe for all.

Thank you.