

PERMANENT COUNCIL OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

COMMITTEE ON HEMISPHERIC SECURITY

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SPECIAL MEETING

Combating the proliferation of nuclear, chemical,
and biological weapons, their delivery systems,
and related materials

December 11, 2006
Washington, D.C.

Summary of the meeting held on December 11, 2006

INAUGURAL SESSION

The Chair of the Committee on Hemispheric Security, Ambassador Javier Sancho Bonilla, welcomed the participants and said that the meeting was being held pursuant to resolutions AG/RES. 2246 (XXXVI-O/06) and AG/RES. 2107 (XXXV-O/05), which contain the undertaking to fulfill the shared commitment of member states to make the Americas a region free of biological and chemical weapons.

FIRST PLENARY SESSION

1. Adoption of the calendar

The draft calendar was unanimously adopted.

2. “Significance of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004)”

- *Presentation by Ambassador Peter Burian, Chair, UNSC 1540 Committee*

Ambassador Peter Burian said that the holding of this meeting was highly pertinent and coincided with the efforts of the UNSC 1540 Committee. He drew attention to the seminar on the topic held in Lima, Peru on November 28 and 29, 2006, which clarified the challenges in implementing resolution 1540 in the region and provided an opportunity to share best practices in this area.

With respect to the significance of resolution 1540, Ambassador Burian noted that the Community of Nations is in a race against a series of terrorist threats. The UN Security Council recognized those threats, which is why the adoption of resolution 1540 was appropriate. He further

mentioned that the obligations under resolutions 1540 and 1673 were not at odds with the rights and obligations contained in other disarmament and non-proliferation instruments.

Resolution 1540 is the first international instrument on weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. He also underscored that implementation of resolution 1540 was a duty of the states.

Ambassador Burian also mentioned the importance of national reports, which are a tool for communication between the Committee and the countries and help to identify areas where greater support is required and to funnel assistance to countries.

Furthermore, he drew attention to the role of international and subregional organizations in implementing this resolution. In that connection, he cited as an example the measures adopted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in support of the process of the implementation process for resolution 1540 and suggested that the OAS establish contact with that agency.

Finally, he highlighted the importance of devising national plans for implementation of resolution 1540 and of defining national contact points and sharing best practices in that regard.

Comments of the delegations

The delegations thanked Ambassador Peter Burian for his presentation and underscored their commitment to implementing resolution 1540. They also consulted the ambassador on the possible role that the Committee on Hemispheric Security could play to contribute to the implementation of this resolution.

Ambassador Burian said that the Committee experts concluded that some countries needed additional help to implement resolution 1540 and mentioned the importance of coordination of efforts to avoid needless duplication of information. He added that the Committee prepared a table that highlights gaps in the implementation of resolution 1540 and can be used as a basis for national reports. He also said that there were other mechanisms, such as bilateral consultations with the Committee, and encouraged countries to use this channel of communication. He mentioned that nine countries have yet to submit reports and drew attention to the initiative of Jamaica to organize a subregional forum next year.

3. “The Role of International Organizations and the Importance of Regional Cooperation”

- *Presentation by Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter, Director General, Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)*

The presentation by Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), was distributed as document CP/CSH/INF. 64/06.

Comments of the delegations

The delegation of Costa Rica expressed its support for the UN and OAS resolutions on nuclear weapons and reiterated that the President of Costa Rica pursues humanitarian plans to ensure an Americas region free of these weapons.

The delegation of Canada supports the work of the OPCW and encouraged the three states that have not yet ratified the Convention to do so as soon as possible.

The delegation of Colombia said that as a state party it has taken onboard the commitments contained in the Convention. Colombia has taken advantage of the training courses provided by the OPCW and in April 2005 they held a regional meeting in Cartagena on the issue. As regards assistance, Colombia receives cooperation from the OPCW to assemble national authorities and put in place a national structure to combat attacks.

Ambassador Pfirter mentioned that the OPCW signed an agreement with the Canadian government to provide training to inspectors. On the subject of inspections, he mentioned that the Latin American industry has displayed a cooperative attitude and that these inspections are necessary to contribute to transparency.

4. Overview of the Current Status of Implementation – Leveraging the OAS and Regional Organizations

- *Presentation by Richard Cupitt, UN 1540 Committee*

The presentation of Richard Cupitt of the UN 1540 Committee was distributed as document CP/CSH/INF.67/06

- *Comments by the Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE)*

Dr. Carol Fuller, of the Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE) began her remarks by noting that CICTE is a forum that opposes terrorism, including those aspects connected with resolution 1540 and that it also acts as the coordinating entity in relations with other international organizations and member states.

She also mentioned the mandate that CICTE has to organize a three-day seminar with scientists to raise awareness about resolution 1540. Dr. Fuller drew attention to the importance of inter-agency cooperation and the search for resources to provide assistance to member states.

She also mentioned the intention of CICTE to form an alliance with UN-LiREC in order to hold a conference in 2007 to discuss resolution 1540; however, a place and date for the meeting have not yet been set.

She mentioned the activities of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) which has a mandate to create a Permanent International Observatory to provide assistance to states. On this subject, she noted that UNICRI is involved in staging important

gatherings but mentioned that resolution 1540 could be relevant in several related settings. Dr. Fuller informed the meeting that UNICRI and CICTE will hold a seminar on security at these important gatherings.

Dr. Fuller also mentioned a number of CICTE programs on border controls which it is carrying out with CICAD, which is a topic that could be addressed with the UNSC 1540 Committee. Finally, she told those assembled that CICTE is discussing the possibility of organizing a number of simulated terrorist attacks involving biological or chemical weapons.

Comments of the Delegations

The delegations thanked the speakers, mentioned their support for the implementation of resolution 1540, and drew attention to the support of CICTE, CICAD, and CIFTA in this area.

SECOND PLENARY SESSION

5. Current Status of the implementation of UNSC 1540 in the hemisphere

- *Presentation by Thomas Markram - Senior Political Affairs Officer, Weapons of Mass Destruction Branch, Department for Disarmament Affairs – United Nations*

The presentation of Thomas Markram was distributed as document CP/CSH/INF. 68/06.

- *Presentation by Ricardo Morote, Permanent Mission of Peru to the United Nations*

The presentation of Ricardo Morote was distributed as document CP/CSH/INF. 65/06.

- *Presentation by Gabriela Martinic Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations*

Counselor Gabriela Martinic began her presentation with a reference to the clear challenge posed by terrorism as a real threat, which introduced a new dimension to arms control and nonproliferation. This new dimension calls for concrete steps and international cooperation.

Counselor Martinic also underscored the importance of information exchange to be able to understand those threats. In this connection, the Argentine Republic proposed holding the first seminar, carried out in September last year, on resolution 1540. The seminar was held with the help of the United Kingdom, the UN Department of Disarmament Affairs and the UNSC 1540 Committee. This seminar discussed the benefits offered by resolution 1540, such as greater territorial protection and facilitation of trade with other countries. In addition to this seminar, activities have been carried out in Lima, Peru; China; and Ghana.

She also said that resolution 1540 is a national responsibility with a long-term objective and drew attention to the importance of the table as a review and planning tool.

Ms. Martinic mentioned a number of recommendations to contribute to the implementation of resolution 1540:

1. Create a registry of contact points for implementation of the resolution, which should be accompanied by a channel of communication.
2. Hold informal meetings every four months to discuss progress in implementation of resolution 1540 and to look at ways to help countries.
3. Create a working group to establish a timetable for objectives as well as strategies. Some of the objectives of this working group would be:
 - a) To help all the countries in the region to present their national reports.
 - b) To identify the areas where development of human resources is needed (e.g. customs, financial controls).
 - c) To identify international meetings of potential interest and facilitate the flow of information.
 - d) To prepare a list of sensitive materials to be controlled.

Comments of the delegations

The delegations mentioned the importance that the Committee on Hemispheric Security be the coordination forum to support implementation of resolution 1540 and underscored the importance of the issue of universality.

On the subject of resources to implement resolution 1540, Counselor Martinic mentioned that the Committee has a special site where countries to offer and request assistance. The important thing is to identify particular areas and the specific projects for which assistance is sought. She also drew attention to the importance of the work of the Committee on Hemispheric Security in supplementing the efforts of the UNSC 1540 Committee.

6. Functional Perspective on the Biological Weapons Convention and Chemical Weapons Convention

- *Presentation by Bruce Biber, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)*

The presentation of Bruce Biber of the International Committee of the Red Cross was distributed as document CP/CSH/INF. 63/06.

7. Remarks by Member States on UNSC 1540 Reports and on efforts to fulfill their commitment to a region free of biological and chemical weapons

The delegations of Chile, Ecuador, Brazil, Argentina, and Canada presented progress reports on the steps taken by each state to implement and raise awareness about resolution 1540.