



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BULGARIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Sixtieth Session

General Debate

STATEMENT

by

H.E. Mr. Ivailo Kalfin

**Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Bulgaria**

New York, 22 September 2005

Distinguished Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me first to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to this responsible post. Your ample diplomatic experience and commitment to the UN are a guarantee for the success of the leadership you have taken up. I would like to assure you that in your noble efforts you can count on Bulgaria's support. At the same time let me express our appreciation to your predecessor in this post — Mr. Jean Ping, for his invaluable input in the preparatory work for this session.

The new Bulgarian Government follows a policy of consistency and continuity supporting effective multilateralism, as well as the pivotal role of the United Nations as a universal and most representative international organization. Bulgaria is taking part in the current session as a country which has already signed the EU Accession Treaty and has the status of active observer within the bodies and institutions of the European Union. My country has aligned itself with the priorities of the European Union for the Summit, as well as with the positions expressed by the UK Presidency of the EU in this general debate.

The purpose of this debate is to ensure implementation of the commitments undertaken at Summit level. I hope that through a joint effort we will be able to move forward on the UN reform agenda, set out by the Summit after intensive negotiations. Significant progress has been made in key areas providing a good basis for our work in the months ahead. At the same time we regret that some of the bold and ambitious ideas put forward in the report "In Larger Freedom", which Bulgaria welcomed, have not been accepted by all. More effort and perseverance will be needed to implement them. Bulgaria highly appreciates the role of Secretary-General Kofi Annan in this process and looks forward to his further input.

This autumn, along with the 60th anniversary of the United Nations, my country also commemorates 50 years since it joined the UN family. Over this time challenges to humankind have become much more complex and diverse; today's threats combine and overlap in a unique way. Still, as half a century ago, the focus of our attention is on the individual human being as the greatest value, on his/her personal well-being and his/her right to a dignified and meaningful life.

The tragedies caused by devastating natural disasters, such as hurricane Katrina, tsunami in South and Southeastern Asia, destructive floods and fires in other parts of the world, were a timely reminder for us that regardless of the newest technologies available, our civilization is still exposed to such risks. I hereby express our deepest sympathy and solidarity with all who have been affected by these disasters. Last summer my country was also heavily stricken by overwhelming forces of nature. This is when we witnessed the power of international solidarity and appreciated fully the international aid we received, including from the UN and its agencies.

Mr. President,

The recently held Summit has strengthened our confidence that the fight to eradicate poverty, hunger and infectious diseases can be won if maximum effort and resources are mobilized for implementation of the reaffirmed commitments on global partnership between developed and developing countries. What is needed is more and better aid, alleviation of trade restrictions and foreign debt, promotion of economic growth and investments through

national strategies for good governance. Bulgaria subscribes to the decisions taken by the European Union on increased official development assistance.

Having presented its candidature for membership in ECOSOC in 2007-2009, Bulgaria is resolved to actively contribute to the activities of the UN in the social and economic field. We believe our country has the potential to contribute to the reform of this important body.

Mr. President,

The Summit Outcome defines HIV/AIDS as a severe risk for humanity, which demands involvement of the whole international community. Among the most affected by this real scourge of our time are children and young people. The case of the Libyan children, infected with HIV in a Benghazi hospital, is a tragedy which deserves our sympathy and solidarity. Bulgaria welcomes the adoption of appropriate measures to prevent such tragedies from happening in the future and will actively participate in the recently launched EU Plan of Action on overcoming the consequences of AIDS in Libya.

Mr. President,

My country is in favour of reaching a new consensus within the UN on major threats to international peace and security and on collective responses to these threats. We align ourselves with the unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. There is no cause that can justify violence against innocent people. The recurring attacks committed over the past months have shown that the international community is not yet well prepared to prevent terrorism. **Madam**, no doubt, the central role of the United Nations in creating a very much needed global environment of rejection and intolerance towards terrorism is irreplaceable. This is why we will support unconditionally here, at this session, the adoption of a UN counter-terrorism strategy, within which long-term solutions to the political, economic and social issues feeding this phenomenon could be sought. We also appeal that the definition of terrorism be agreed upon expeditiously and the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism be adopted as soon as possible.

Bulgaria was among the first countries who signed at the highest level, on 14 September, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. A universal and unconditional accession of UN member states to the whole package of 13 antiterrorism conventions is imperative. Effective countering of terrorism at an early stage would also include rejection of any ideology that preaches violence and extremism. In this context we actively support all initiatives promoting dialogue, alliance and co-existence, as opposed to ideas conducive to conflict, whether among civilizations, religions, ethnic groups or cultures.

My country is deeply concerned by the fact that commitments related to non-proliferation of WMP and disarmament were not included in the Summit Outcome. We join the appeal of the Secretary-General for continuing the efforts in this area of high priority for our common security.

Reaffirming its strong support for the NPT regime, Bulgaria calls for renewed efforts for progress on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Strengthening the system of the IAEA safeguards as a main instrument for prevention of possible diversion of nuclear material and facilities for non-civilian purposes is of utmost importance. Along with other participating states in the Conference which opened yesterday, we voiced our support for speeding up the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In addition to its participation in relevant agreements and regimes, Bulgaria has joined the Proliferation Security Initiative.

Mr. President,

Bulgaria unconditionally supported the proposal for a UN Peacebuilding Commission at its very outset. The establishment of this new body is one of the key decisions taken by the Summit. Launching the work of the Commission in a short term will expand substantially the capacity of the UN for long-term conflict resolution and peace building. In our view, input by neighboring countries and relevant regional organizations in each specific situation would be of particular value for the activities of the Commission.

As a country in Southeastern Europe, Bulgaria has consistently worked over the past decade for overcoming the conflict potential in the Western Balkans and promoting a climate of good neighbourhood, cooperation and development. We are confident that long-term stabilization and prosperity of the region are inalienably linked to its European perspective. As military risks have diminished, new tasks and forms of cooperation now prevail for the countries in the region, aimed at building democratic institutions and civil societies, strengthening the rule of law, effectively combating organized crime and corruption. Similar forms of cooperation are a priority for Bulgaria in its relations with countries of the Black Sea and Caspian region and Central Asia.

The international community is now approaching crucial decisions with regard to the future of Kosovo. The situation there is an example of a painful and continued process of post-conflict settlement under the leading role of the United Nations, acting together with its partner organizations – the EU, NATO and the OSCE. Reaching a solution for the future of Kosovo will undoubtedly require readiness for compromise and bold, non-standard decisions by all parties involved. We believe that the search for a solution should correspond to European norms and values; guarantee the rights of all the citizens in the region, irrespective of their ethnic origin, religious and language identity; ensure respect for the territorial integrity of the neighbouring countries and contribute to regional security and stability. For us the future of Kosovo lies within united Europe, and can be realized solely through implementation of the standards established by the Security Council.

As a country located in an adjacent region, Bulgaria is interested in a just and lasting solution of the Middle East conflict on the basis of the Roadmap for Peace. We appreciate Israel's withdrawal from Gaza and some settlements on the West Bank as an important step towards resolution of the conflict, based on the co-existence of two independent states – Israel and Palestine. We hope that, despite the complex challenges, the Palestinian Authority will continue its efforts to lay firm foundations of a democratic state governed by the rule of law.

Bulgaria supports the efforts of the Government and the people of Iraq, in the difficult process towards peace, security and economic reconstruction. There is no other way to achieve this goal but in the framework of the constitutional process, established by Resolution 1546 of the UN Security Council. We believe that the adoption of the new constitution will help to overcome existing divisions and will become a turning point in creating the new Iraq as a united, democratic and constitutional state. Bulgaria will continue to assist the Iraqi people in their quest to build themselves their democratic future.

We welcome the positive trends in strengthening state institutions in Afghanistan, once more reaffirmed at the parliamentary elections a few days ago. Bulgaria will continue to contribute to the efforts of the international community for stabilization of Afghanistan. We provide assistance in the building-up of the Afghan National Army. This year we have doubled our participation in the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, acting under a UN mandate. Bulgaria is preparing to assume the role of a

leading country in providing security for the international airport in Kabul in the second half of 2006.

We share the need for a special focus of the international community on Africa. Settlement of local conflicts, along with dealing with poverty and hunger, opening the way to sustainable development, are all priorities for the United Nations. We support the enhanced role of the African Union, aimed at peaceful resolution of existing conflicts.

Mr. President,

Bulgaria regards the protection and promotion of human rights as a major priority of the UN, along with issues of security and development, and welcomes the Summit decision on establishing a Human Rights Council. In our understanding this Council should be a standing body, elected by the General Assembly by a qualified two-thirds majority. It should have higher status and authority than the current Commission on Human Rights, while building on its present functions and achievements. It should provide for a comprehensive review of the situation of human rights in all countries and a capacity for action in cases of serious and massive violations. Bulgaria also supports the enhanced role and functions of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. We welcome the establishment of the UN Democracy Fund, which should be available to countries in need of relevant assistance. Our country is now considering options for contributing to the Fund.

Speaking of effective protection of human rights all over the world, I cannot but mention a case of high sensitivity for the Bulgarian people. I am referring to the fate of five Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor who have been sentenced to death by the Libyan Court in Benghazi. Their innocence has been categorically confirmed by the most renowned world experts on HIV/AIDS. Bulgaria insists on a just solution by the Supreme Court of Libya at the upcoming session on 15 November this year.

We commend as one of the most important achievements of the recent Summit, the adoption of the principle "responsibility to protect", which provides for the possibility of collective action of the international community against acts of genocide and other crimes against humanity in cases, when national authorities are unable or denying to give protection to their citizens.

Last but not least, we have participated constructively in the debates on the UN institutional reform, maintaining the view that the proposed changes should be of a comprehensive and balanced nature. The reform must include finding the most appropriate structural decisions within the Secretariat, efficient management and optimal use of human and financial resources. In this context we support further efforts for revitalizing the work of the General Assembly.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am confident that we are on the threshold of perhaps the most important and bold changes in the history of the United Nations so far. With the collective will of all member-states these reforms may become reality in the coming months. This is the only way to uphold the credibility of the UN as a universal organization and sustain its viability in an environment of globalized challenges.

Thank you for your attention.