

Abertura do International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism and Security

Club de Madrid
The Madrid Agenda

Madrid (Spain), 9th March 2005.

Your Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Asturias,

Your excellency the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Spain,

Your excellency the President of the Comunidad Autónoma of Madrid,

Your excellency the Mayor of Madrid,

Fellow members of the Club of Madrid,

Distinguished authorities and guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my honour and my pleasure to welcome you all, on behalf of the Club of Madrid, to the International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism and Security.

The Club of Madrid gathers former Heads of State and Government, all of them coming from democratic nations. For the Club of Madrid, democracy and international cooperation are the cornerstones of a better world. We are 55 members currently, but this number keeps growing. I am sure one of the attractions of becoming a member of Our Club is to come regularly to the magnificently beautiful city of Madrid, the same Madrid whose brilliance was brutally shadowed a year ago.

Terrorism is primarily an attack on human life. But it is also a threat to freedom, democracy and peace.

Madrid, and New York before it, paid a devastating price in human lives and suffering to make all of us realise the deadly impact of this new global threat.

In both cases, there was no warning before the attacks, neither any demands after them. The terrorists' only purpose was to kill and maim as many people as possible. They wanted to intimidate and coerce, to generate fear and hate.

The indiscriminate use of violence against innocent civilians knows no limits. The strategic nerve centres of our interconnected world are especially vulnerable - from pipelines to communication networks.

The consequences of a chemical and bacteriological terrorist attack are too nightmarish to contemplate.

Terrorism is, in brief, a threat to international peace and security. It is a threat to our democratic societies. It is a threat to our beloved ones. It is a threat to each and every one of us.

We are faced with an extremely complex and evolving phenomenon for which there are no easy solutions.

Military responses are a necessary component of the equation. Let there be no doubt about it. But military action alone will not solve the problem. It may even aggravate it. For terrorist groups are fuelled by a sense of engagement in all-out war. They expect their opponents to react violently. And violence is the only thing that may harden their determination.

Unilateral action by any single nation, however powerful it may be, is also inadequate. Terrorism is no longer confined to the borders of States. It has become a trans-border problem. In addition to being inadequate as a reaction to terror, unilateralism clearly undermines the international system and increases the general feeling of insecurity.

Leniency in the struggle against terrorism can be even more disastrous. It is not an option. Lofty ideals and generous words in praise of understanding and tolerance will not do the deed. There is no room for complacency here. Reason will not prevail by its own merits. We must blend faith in democracy with the resolve to act.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Terrorism breeds on humiliation and resentment. It seeks to foster intolerance. It prospers on the division rather than on the unity of peoples, religions and cultures.

It can only be defeated in a lasting way by a joint, flexible, sustained and comprehensive response by the entire international community.

Our common challenge now is to rebuild a consensus among democratic nations on the need for effective strategies to fight terrorism and safeguard the values and practices of democracy. To be effective and

legitimate, the global response against terrorism must be based on the full respect for human rights and the principles of International Law. The means we choose must reflect the ends we seek.

We must combine strength and resilience - including the consensual decision to use force whenever necessary - with the unwavering commitment to the due process of law, both internationally and in every single nation.

The strengthening of international trust and cooperation among peoples and governments is absolutely imperative for concerted action. Trust is a precondition, for example, for the exchange of information and coordination among the intelligence services that are required to pre-empt terrorist attacks, or to prevent terrorist groups from using instruments such as the internet and the banking system.

Building trust and cooperation is more critical than creating new agencies and institutional mechanisms.

The Madrid Summit is a unique opportunity for all of us to look ahead and forge stronger democratic links between peoples and governments.

Recent developments in Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine represent concrete steps in the arduous process of building democracy, peace and security. Fair elections were held in all those countries, in some of them against all odds. Those efforts must be supported.

Democracy cannot be imposed from above and from the outside. It is essentially a national construction. But these internal processes can and should be supported by the international community, by the United Nations, by individual countries.

Democracy is promoted and defended by people. Citizens are active players, not passive victims.

Let us discuss new forms of alliance and solidarity with leaders of civil society that are at the forefront of the fight for democracy in their countries.

Democracy, however, cannot be strengthened at the national level and weakened at the global level.

How is it possible for any world leader to praise freedom and democracy as the foremost goal to be achieved and, at the same time, pursue policies that undermine the UN, the only mechanism at our disposal for democratic global governance?

Let us, therefore, also discuss concrete ways of strengthening the capacities of international institutions and enhancing their transparency and efficiency.

This Summit that starts today is a milestone. For the first time, political leaders, scholars, experts and civil society activists are called upon to debate and make proposals on how to counter one of the most critical

threats to our societies.

I invite all of you here to meet this challenge and to translate our collective intelligence and commitment into effective measures, into a plan of action. A strong Madrid Agenda, involving the governments and peoples of the world in the fight for peace and democracy, would be the most fitting tribute we could pay to the victims of terrorism in Madrid and in other parts of the world.

Let us react against terror. Let us react by saying yes to life and no to death, like Miguel de Unamuno did during the brutal Civil War in Spain.

Thank you very much.