

# U.N. Press Release SG/SM/8378, GA/10045\*

## When Force is Considered, there is no Substitute for Legitimacy Provided By United Nations, Secretary-general says in General Assembly Address

Following is the text, as delivered, of the address by Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the General Assembly today:

We cannot begin today without reflecting on yesterday's anniversary – and on the criminal challenge so brutally thrown in our faces on 11 September 2001. The terrorist attacks of that day were not an isolated event. They were an extreme example of a global scourge, which requires a broad, sustained and global response. Broad, because terrorism can be defeated only if all nations unite against it. Sustained, because the battle against terrorism will not be won easily, or overnight. It requires patience and persistence. And global, because terrorism is a widespread and complex phenomenon, with many deep roots and exacerbating factors.

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\* Versão on line.

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2002/SGSM8378.doc.htm>

Acedido em 18-09-2002

Mr. President, I believe that such a response can only succeed if we make full use of multilateral institutions. I stand before you today as a multilateralist – by precedent, by principle, by Charter and by duty.

I also believe that every government that is committed to the rule of law at home, must be committed also to the rule of law abroad. And all States have a clear interest, as well as clear responsibility, to uphold international law and maintain international order. Our founding fathers, the statesmen of 1945, had learnt that lesson from the bitter experience of two world wars and a great depression. They recognized that international security is not a zero-sum game. Peace, security and freedom are not finite commodities – like land, oil or gold – which one State can acquire at another's expense. On the contrary, the more peace, security and freedom any one State has, the more its neighbours are likely to have. And they recognized that, by agreeing to exercise sovereignty together, they could gain a hold over problems that would defeat any one of them acting separately.

If those lessons were clear in 1945, should they not be much more so today, in the age of globalization?

On almost no item on our agenda does anyone seriously contend that each nation can fend for itself. Even the most powerful countries know that they need to work with others, in multilateral institutions, to achieve their aims. Only by multilateral action can we ensure that open markets offer benefits and opportunities to all. Only by multilateral action can we give people in the least developed countries the chance to escape the ugly misery of poverty, ignorance and disease. Only by multilateral action can we protect ourselves from acid rain, or global warming; from the spread of HIV/AIDS, the illicit trade in drugs, or the odious traffic in human beings.

That applies even more to the prevention of terrorism. Individual States may defend themselves, by striking back at terrorist groups and at the countries that harbour or support them. But only concerted vigilance and cooperation among all States, with constant, systematic exchange of information, offers any real hope of denying the terrorists their opportunities.

On all these matters, for any one State – large or small – choosing to follow or reject the multilateral path must not be a simple matter of political convenience. It has consequences far beyond the immediate context. When countries work together in multilateral institutions – developing, respecting, and when necessary enforcing international law – they also develop mutual trust, and more effective cooperation on other issues. The more a country makes use of multilateral institutions – thereby respecting shared values, and accepting the

obligations and restraints inherent in those values – the more others will trust and respect it, and the stronger its chance to exercise true leadership.

And among multilateral institutions, this universal Organization has a special place. Any State, if attacked, retains the inherent right of self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter. But beyond that, when States decide to use force to deal with broader threats to international peace and security, there is no substitute for the unique legitimacy provided by the United Nations. Member States attach importance, great importance in fact, to such legitimacy and to the international rule of law. They have shown – notably in the action to liberate Kuwait, 12 years ago – that they are willing to take actions under the authority of the Security Council, which they would not be willing to take without it. The existence of an effective international security system depends on the Council's authority – and therefore on the Council having the political will to act, even in the most difficult cases, when agreement seems elusive at the outset. The primary criterion for putting an issue on the Council's agenda should not be the receptiveness of the parties, but the existence of a grave threat to world peace.

Let me now turn to four current threats to world peace, where true leadership and effective action are badly needed.

First, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Recently, many of us have been struggling to reconcile Israel's legitimate security concerns with Palestinian humanitarian needs. But these limited objectives cannot be achieved in isolation from the wider political context. We must return to the search for a just and comprehensive solution, which alone can bring security and prosperity to both peoples, and indeed to the whole region. The ultimate shape of a Middle East peace settlement is well known. It was defined long ago in Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and its Israeli-Palestinian components were spelt out even more clearly in Resolution 1397: land for peace; end to terror and to occupation; two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders. Both parties accept this vision. But we can reach it only if we move rapidly and in parallel on all fronts. The so-called "sequential" approach has failed. As we agreed at the Quartet meeting in Washington last May, an international peace conference is needed without delay, to set out a roadmap of parallel steps: steps to strengthen Israel's security, steps to strengthen Palestinian economic and political institutions, and steps to settle the details of the final peace agreement. Meanwhile, humanitarian steps to relieve Palestinian suffering must be intensified. The need is urgent.

Second, the leadership of Iraq continues to defy mandatory resolutions adopted by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter. I have engaged Iraq in an in-depth

discussion on a range of issues, including the need for arms inspectors to return, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. Efforts to obtain Iraq's compliance with the Council's resolutions must continue. I appeal to all those who have influence with Iraq's leaders to impress on them the vital importance of accepting the weapons inspections. This is the indispensable first step towards assuring the world that all Iraq's weapons of mass destruction have indeed been eliminated, and – let me stress – towards the suspension and eventual ending of the sanctions that are causing so many hardships for the Iraqi people. I urge Iraq to comply with its obligations – for the sake of its own people, and for the sake of world order. If Iraq's defiance continues, the Security Council must face its responsibilities.

Third, permit me to press all of you, as leaders of the international community, to maintain your commitment to Afghanistan. I know I speak for all in welcoming President Karzai to this Assembly, and congratulating him on his escape from last week's vicious assassination attempt – a graphic reminder of how hard it is to uproot the remnants of terrorism in any country where it has taken root. It was the international community's shameful neglect of Afghanistan in the 1990s that allowed the country to slide into chaos, providing a fertile breeding ground for Al Qaeda. Today, Afghanistan urgently needs help in two areas. The Government must be helped to extend its authority throughout the country. Without this, all else may fail. And donors must follow through on their commitments to help with rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. Otherwise the Afghan people will lose hope – and desperation, we know, breeds violence.

And finally, in South Asia the world has recently come closer than for many years past to a direct conflict between two countries with nuclear capability. The situation may now have calmed a little, but it remains perilous. The underlying cause must be addressed. If a fresh crisis erupts, the international community might have a role to play; though I gladly acknowledge – and indeed, strongly welcome – the efforts made by well-placed Member States to help the two leaders find a solution.

Excellencies, let me conclude by reminding you of your pledge two years ago, at the Millennium Summit, “to make the United Nations a more effective instrument” in the service of the peoples of the world.

Today I ask all of you to honour that pledge.

Let us all recognize, from now on – in each capital, in every nation, large and small – that the global interest is our national interest.