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Terrorism and the Summit Partners
Some Thoughts Offered by the United States

Terrorism threatens our societies individually, and it threatens the civilization we share. Terrorism is the preeminent challenge of this era. Future generations will hold us responsible for the outcome.

So terrorism is a battle we must win. And it is a battle we can win. There are specific, concrete steps that each of us need to take. But first and most important, we have to understand that we are in the midst of a contest for the future--and that we must win.

Why should this summit concern itself with terrorism? One reason that is mentioned is the need to do something so that the crazy Americans won't take matters into their own hands again.

Another reason is money. The costs to our countries is in the billions: in lost tourism; in property damage, ransom and extortion payments; in increased security; in declining foreign investment; in higher insurance premiums and other costs.

I will leave it to you to decide whether these are good reasons for getting serious about terrorism. Let me, however, give you the reasons as America sees them.

Our nations--let us not be shy about saying it--represent civilization in the modern era. Ours are not only powerful economies and strong militaries, but creative and humane societies offering the greatest promise for a world in which our children can flourish in safety and be free.

Civilizations achieve greatness by meeting hard challenges. Time and again great civilizations have surmounted test after test only one day to come face to face with the ultimate challenge of barbarism and chaos. And many have failed that test.

Why? Because they failed to recognize or comprehend the extent of the danger. They failed to understand that the very foundations of their civilization were under assault.

Is this what we face today? There are influential people who call it an exaggeration. The Director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London is quoted in an American newsmagazine this week. He says "The idea that Mr. Qaddafi could actually represent any serious challenge to U.S. national security seems to be really rather ridiculous."

The United States believes it is not an exaggeration.

It is not a question only of Qaddafi versus the United States. Terrorism today represents a grave and fundamental

challenge to all of us here, to the security and the future of the Industrial Democracies.

Look at Beirut. Not many years ago it was the financial center of the Middle East. It was a symbol of religious tolerance. Tourists delighted in its carefree gaiety, its culture, sophistication, and grace. Today thugs and murderers comb through the rubble. Chaos reigns. No one who knew Beirut then or sees it now can afford to be confident or relaxed about the challenge of terrorism to civilization.

First, we need to recognize how terrorism is expanding. Second, we need to comprehend what it is doing to us. Third, we need to take specific actions against terrorism, and take them in a coordinated way. Terrorism's greatest asset is our disunity.

The New Dimensions of Terrorism

It is not just that terrorist attacks are increasing in frequency and sophistication. Beyond this reality we are seeing new phenomena. Perhaps for the first time in history wholly disparate groups in various parts of the globe--the IRA, the PLO, the Japanese Red Army, M-19, Sendero Luminoso, drug traffickers, religious extremists, separatist political movements--are in contact, are cooperating and even coordinating. They have only two things in common. One, a readiness to kill innocent civilians. Two, a conviction that their particular special

interest can be served by undermining confidence in our governments and by tearing at the fabric of our shared civilization.

Another new dimension of terrorism is that it is supported by governments of internationally recognized states. Training, finances, transportation, weapons, technology, diplomatic pouches, secure communications, diplomatic immunities. States are giving terrorists the ability to prepare attacks without detection, to conduct them with military-style technique and firepower, and get away quickly and safely.

We of the industrial democratic world for decades have considered ourselves in a competition with our adversaries in the Communist bloc. The reality is that we have won that contest. The economic, social and political systems of Communism and its clients belong to the past. Our way has prevailed and our lead is widening. But today our adversaries have a new opportunity. They benefit from totalitarian order within their sphere and from disorder, fear, conflict and chaos in ours. So today their support for terrorism offers their cause a new lease on life--at a low cost and with a high degree of deniability.

In fact, the virulence of international terrorism today is in large part owing to the collaboration of Communist governments and their client states. Terrorists cannot sustain a concerted campaign of attacks in most of our countries without sanctuary or

inviolable means of passing funds, arms, and intelligence. Thus there has emerged a new axis: of terrorists and national regimes collaborating to sustain a concerted campaign of attacks against the countries that make up modern civilization.

How We Can Win

We can defeat international terrorism--but only if we understand the strategy that terrorism is using against us.

Terrorism Seeks to Divide Us

It is a fact that a nation can be relatively free from terrorism by permitting terrorists to come and go relatively freely. But such tacit deals are a pact with the devil: the threat is not avoided, only postponed. Whether from greed or cowardice, governments that acquiesce in terrorism are in fact supporting it.

-- No nation should fall into the trap of opposing terrorism only when it affects its own people, while ignoring or condoning or "understanding" terrorism directed at someone else. The major problem confronting our civilization has been our own failure to consider an attack on one as an attack on all.

Terrorism Seeks to Intimidate Our People

Our societies are founded upon the self-reliance and self-confidence of our citizens as individuals, as family members, as a community. But when innocent people are struck by terrorism their wives, husbands, children and relatives urge their government to capitulate, to meet the terrorists' demands in order to save lives. If the government gives in, the terrorist wins. If the government does not, and death results, citizens feel a heightened sense of their own and their government's vulnerability. Either way, confidence in government is undermined.

-- Thus our governments and our citizens must exercise what has been called "civic valor" and stand up to the terrorists no matter how painful the consequences. Terrorism will not cease until its targets demonstrate that they will not be intimidated.

Terrorism Seeks to Undermine Our Policies

Freedom fighters attack the armed forces of an established regime; terrorists deliberately murder and maim the unarmed innocent. Yet again and again we hear it asserted that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." Under the pressure of such arguments of moral relativism, our principles, values and policies lose stature. We hear that terrorism will

continue until the underlying grievances that cause it are redressed. We hear that innocent hostages should be exchanged for jailed terrorists. We hear that those who fight back against terrorists are no better than terrorists. Right and wrong, innocent and wicked, the good and the bad are equated.

-- We must recognize that just people with just grievances do not use terrorism as a weapon. And we need to recognize that it is the terrorist who seeks to block peacefully negotiated solutions to problems. Progress toward peace in the Middle East for example never diminishes terrorism; it stimulates it, for the terrorists do not want to see a solution to the plight of the Palestinians and the right of Israel to live in peace.

Terrorism Seeks to Turn Our Laws and Institutions Into Obstacles to Self-Defense

Terrorists deliberately operate in the areas of ambiguity where issues of due process and the rules of evidence are least clear-cut. And in the aftermath of their attacks, terrorists have come to count on divisive debates among the allies on non-substantive questions such as the proper or improper use of NATO bases.

-- Law, and the institutions of freedom, are the hallmarks of our society. We must never treat them cavalierly, whatever the challenge, or the essence of our civilization would be eroded.

They are, however, living and evolving achievements of our heritage; we must shape them to help us defend that heritage rather than disarm it.

Terrorism Seeks to Render Us Fatalistic and Inactive

We are told that resistance to terrorism will only stimulate more acts of terrorism. Yes it will--because the terrorists will have taken hostages and prepared for months in order to launch such an upsurge in the event of retaliation. But terrorists cannot withstand a sustained and resolute policy of resistance and active pursuit.

We are told that to oppose a Qaddafi is self-defeating, because it will only enhance his stature and widen his support. That has not happened. The reality is that most of those who side with Qaddafi are motivated by fear. The more resolute we are in taking action, the greater the number of nations that will join us. The argument that we repeatedly heard from those who refused to help in our military action against Qaddafi was that it did not go far enough.

And, finally, we are told that to oppose Qaddafi's Libya is fruitless because other nations also support terrorism and that we dare not do to them what we do to Qaddafi. We'll see. Terrorism must be halted. A line must be drawn. We have to start somewhere. If Libya--and others like Nicaragua--are

allowed to consolidate their power they will establish themselves deeper inside the protective circle of the international anti-West, pro-terrorist camp. And then that circle will widen even further.

It is not difficult to stop terrorism. Terrorism's strategy is to launch attack after attack; when such attacks yield only punishment, that strategy fails. And terrorism's policy is to create fear; when fear is replaced with courage, terrorism is finished.

Let me sum up. What is needed?

1. A shared recognition that terrorism is our preeminent challenge at this point in history.
2. A determination not to surrender or concede. Terrorists have to be made to feel that their attacks will fail and that punishment is a certainty.
3. A conviction that we can win--and a refusal to defeat ourselves with endless debates that can only produce inaction.
4. A decision to hold out prominently the possibility of using military force. This is essential to deterrence.

5. Unity. And a willingness to coordinate and cooperate on a wide variety of pressures short of military action. We must create a common doctrine of tactical cooperation. We must cement the common resolve and common assumptions of the industrial democracies.