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MEASURES TO PREVENT INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM WHICH ENDANGERS OR TAKES INNOCENT HUMAN LIVES OR JEOPARDIZES FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS AND STUDY OF THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF THOSE FORMS OF TERRORISM AND ACTS OF VIOLENCE WHICH LIE IN MISERY, FRUSTRATION, GRIEVANCE AND DESPAIR AND WHICH CAUSE SOME PEOPLE TO SACRIFICE HUMAN LIVES, INCLUDING THEIR OWN, IN AN ATTEMPT TO EFFECT
RADICAL CHANGES:

- (a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL;
- (b) CONVENING, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNITED NATIONS, OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO DEFINE TERRORISM AND TO DIFFERENTIATE IT FROM THE STRUGGLE OF PEOPLES FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION

Letter dated 15 June 1989 from the representatives of Czechoslovakia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to refer to your note of 31 March 1988 in which you sought the views and comments of Member States concerning the implementation of General Assembly resolution 42/159 of 7 December 1987. We wish on behalf of our two Governments to state the following.

They condemn in the strongest terms all forms and manifestations of international terrorism no matter where and by whom they may be perpetrated or what the motives for them may be.

* A/44/50/Rev.1.

They are convinced that one of the ways of preventing terrorist acts is to limit the possibilities for terrorist groups and individual terrorists to obtain instruments for their dangerous activities. These instruments include, inter alia, plastic or sheet explosives which, in view of their specific properties, are difficult to detect and therefore have been widely used by terrorists. The fact that several serious terrorist acts committed recently involved misuse of such explosives, and have brought about loss of human lives and injuries, as well as property damage, adds urgency to the need to address the question of marking plastic or sheet explosives so that they can be more easily detected. Our Governments are gratified to note that the first steps in the direction of technical assessment of the possibilities of marking such explosives for the purposes of detection have already been taken within the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and that promising results have already been achieved.

Our Governments believe that the use of such explosives by terrorists poses a serious threat for civil aviation. There is also a threat to other forms of transport, to government and commercial targets, and to individuals.

Against this background our Governments have held consultations with a view to promoting diplomatic initiatives to improve the detectability of such explosives. One recent product of this was Security Council resolution 635 (1989) adopted on 14 June 1989.

Our Governments believe a convention on the marking of explosives for the purposes of detection would greatly contribute to reducing their use by terrorists. They have proposed that ICAO undertake the necessary preparatory technical and legal work required for such a convention.

Our Governments hope that Member States will use the opportunity provided by the debate on international terrorism at the forthcoming session of the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly to express support for such action, and to contribute to the early achievement of a convention. In the course of that debate there will be opportunity for Member States to consider what role the General Assembly might play in this matter.

We should be grateful if you would arrange to have this letter circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 141 of the preliminary list.

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the Czechoslovak Socialist
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