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OBSERVATIONS OF STATES SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH
GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 3034 (XXVII)
A RENSE AU BUREAU E/5107

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GREECE

[Original: French]

[23 July 1973]

Greece is one of the States which have already, on many occasions, expressed their concern about the increase in acts of international terrorism and this new wave of violence and terror currently found in various parts of the world. In this connexion, it would be of value to mention that Greece is a party to the existing international conventions which relate to various aspects of the problem of international terrorism, particularly with regard to aircraft.

Thus, the Tokyo Convention of 14 September 1963, having been ratified by Greece, became national law on 29 August 1971, which makes the implementation of the provisions of this Convention mandatory in Greece. The Hague Convention of 16 December 1970 for the suppression of unlawful seizure of aircraft was likewise ratified by Act No. 1352/1973. In the case of the Montreal Convention for the suppression of unlawful acts against the safety of civil aviation, signed on 23 September 1971, the ratification process has begun and is expected to be completed within a few months.

The Greek delegation therefore enthusiastically supported the inclusion in the agenda of the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly of the item relating to measures to prevent terrorism and other forms of violence, following the initiative taken in that regard by the Secretary-General, since it was firmly convinced that this question should be brought before the United Nations. Our Organization rightly decided to give consideration to the acts of terrorism which have affected several members of the international community, including Greece, in recent years.

The Greek Government nevertheless regrets that the international community has so far failed to condemn the acts in question clearly and unequivocally and has been unable to reach an agreement on effective and appropriate ways to resolve this problem.

The halting of the export of violence to other countries and the prevention of crimes against the safety of innocent persons are tasks germane to the nature and scope of the mission of this Ad Hoc Committee on International Terrorism.

The problem, in our view, has two aspects - one moral and the other practical. These are closely correlated, so that any attempt, even indirect, to justify acts of international terrorism would make it impossible for the international community to take concerted measures to stem the evil at its roots. Moreover, without practical measures to resolve this question, the practical effect of any condemnatory declaration would be minimal.

In our opinion, the United Nations should consider the question of the moral and practical demarcation of an act defined as being "of international terrorism"

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and should reach agreement on a number of specific acts which would be characterized as offences under general law and as crimes to be penalized by concerted measures of the international community.

The concept of "terrorism" may be controversial, particularly since certain acts of violence might be regarded by some as grave and heinous crimes, while others considered them as proof of courage, heroism and even patriotism.

It would therefore be preferable to define the acts of violence and to specify clearly the criminal nature of the acts in question.

Furthermore the Greek delegation believes that the underlying causes of violence, such as misery, frustration, grievance and despair, should be studied along with the sociological and historical problems at the national level, while there should be accelerated action to adopt appropriate measures to combat criminality and to overhaul the legal system for the protection of the community and the State. For similar reasons, we think that this study should not delay or stand in the way of the adoption of practical measures by the international community to prevent such criminal acts.

In conclusion, I wish to point out that the Greek Government regards the inclusion in the resolution on terrorism of the reference to the struggle of peoples for national liberation as unfortunate; in its view, the ideal of self-determination, being of high moral value, is incompatible with the acts referred to in the resolution in question (resolution 3034 (XXVII)).

The most urgent task, at the present stage, is the adoption by mutual agreement of effective measures to prevent the spread of the phenomenon under consideration before it completely undermines the safety of innocent persons, while at the same time damaging relations between human communities and, consequently, between our countries.
