



CZECH REPUBLIC

Statement by

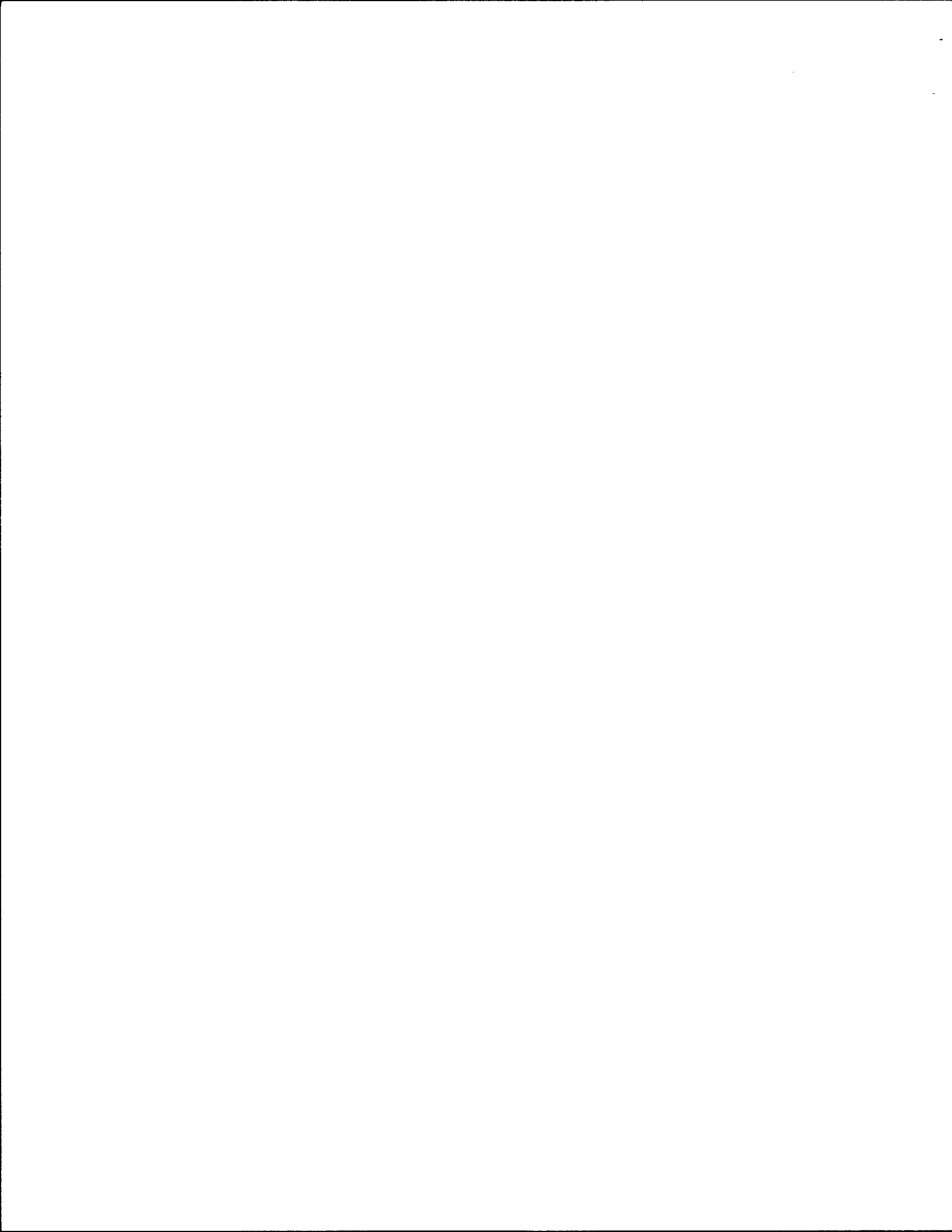
H.E. Mr. Václav KLAUS

President of the Czech Republic

**at the General Debate of the 67th Session
of the General Assembly of the United Nations**

New York, 25 September 2012

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Address at the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly^{*)}

Václav Klaus

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to congratulate you on your election to serve as the highest representative of the 67th session of the United Nations General Assembly. In recent decades your country has gone through a difficult period and I am sure your experience as Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who saw the consequences of one kind of “peacefully” negotiated settlements and of armed international interventions, will be beneficial for this year’s General Assembly and will contribute to making our deliberations less formal and more practical.

The Czech Republic firmly believes that international disputes and conflicts can and should be settled by peaceful and not military means. We have been systematically demonstrating that for a long time. When the division of Czechoslovakia was taking place 20 years ago and the situation was emotionally strained and painful for us, it had never crossed the mind of any of our politicians that the problem should be addressed by other than peaceful means. Difficult negotiations undertaken solely by our domestic representatives resulted in achieving a settlement that political representatives, as well as citizens, in both newly established states today, with the benefit of hindsight, consider to be a positive solution.

Our experience confirms that it is in particular the domestic politicians who should be the driving force of talks rather than international negotiation teams or former political celebrities. The mandate of the negotiating parties has to be rooted in domestic conditions and local traditions as firmly as possible and the external observers must not succumb to the temptation of imposing a settlement that they themselves regard as the right one, but which is not in line with the long-term spontaneous developments in the region. For a number of reasons, those inevitable preconditions are often not met in various attempts at peaceful conflict resolution, and it is therefore no wonder that we often see the results opposite to what the architects of a particular settlement would have wished.

We have to ask ourselves: what is the success of peace talks and international missions? Do the external interventions improve the situation, or do they rather make it worse by hindering spontaneous processes that could re-introduce stability in the region possibly with smaller sacrifices compared to the price paid by the external intervention?

Are, for instance, the developments in Iraq, the still open Cyprus issue or the independence of Kosovo a success of the UN or not?

Let me say a few words about Syria. The Czech Republic, as a country that has its fresh historical experience with the transition to democracy, wishes Syria to be able to take the same path but we don’t see a feasible solution now. Our immediate effort has to focus on helping the people affected by the current tragic situation in the country. The Czech Republic has already sent humanitarian aid to Syria and to Syrians fleeing into neighbouring

^{*)} The United Nations Headquarters, New York, 25 September 2012

countries. We have set up a Medical Evacuation Programme for wounded Syrian refugees. Czech experts took part in the UN observer mission in Syria and our Embassy in Damascus also provides assistance. Two months ago the Czech Republic accepted a US request for representation in diplomatic and consular matters in Syria.

There is no doubt that we have to look at the situation in Syria from a broader and more long-term perspective. We should know what needs to be done tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. I am afraid that this is the most important lesson learnt from the military intervention in Libya, which clearly demonstrated that a stable settlement cannot be sought by military force.

Distinguished Mr. Chairman, allow me to assure you that the Czech Republic will continue to be an active UN member. The Czech Republic observes and applies the principles and standards of international law in its foreign policy and promotes their international application. We will support the UN activities in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. These issues belong among our security policy priorities.

The Czech Republic will continue to take part in the UN peacekeeping operations as well as in humanitarian and development programmes. The Czech Republic also supports the attempts at reforming the United Nations including the Security Council, which started in 2005 aiming to respond to changed international environment and promote a more balanced representation of individual world regions and states.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to wish you every success in your responsible post. Thank you for your attention.