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**بعثة الجمهورية العربية السورية
الدائمة لدى الأمم المتحدة - نيويورك**



Statement by

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of

The Syrian Arab Republic

At

The General Debate

Of the

67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York

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Please Check Against Delivery

Mr. Vuk Jeremic

President of the 67th Session of the General Assembly,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to congratulate you and your friendly country, the Republic of Serbia, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its current session, and to wish you success in conducting our work in a way that brings back to the President of the General Assembly its important and neutral role in fulfilling his duties away from any political, national or international agendas that violate the rules of international law and contradict efforts to achieve security and stability in the world. We also wish success to the Secretary General of the United Nations in carrying out his duties in enhancing the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our contemporary world faces many events that are affecting its states, and continue to cast their shadow on the international scene. Many countries are facing political, economic and financial crises which exceed the capacity of States to cope with their consequences individually. While the peoples of the world wait to see effective and coordinated international efforts to overcome those crises, the reality indicates, instead, the escalation of hegemony and domination on the fortunes of nations and peoples in a way that contradicts the principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law. Instead of seeking to contribute to the settlement of regional and international disputes by peaceful means, some well-known countries continue to pursue new colonial policies based on political hypocrisy in dealing with those crises. Under the pretext of humanitarian intervention these countries interfere in the domestic affairs of states, and impose unilateral economic sanctions that lack the moral and legal basis. And under the pretext of concepts such as the "Responsibility to Protect", drums of war are beaten, and sedition and unrest are spreading and damaging the structure of national societies. Perhaps, worse of all, is to see that permanent members of the Security Council, who launched wars under the pretext of combating terrorism, now support terrorism in my country without any regard to the United Nations resolutions that established the regulations and mechanisms for concerted international efforts to fight this scourge away from political polarization and double standards.

Mr. President,

For more than one year now, my country has been facing organized terrorism that affected our citizens, our human and scientific resources, national establishments, and also much of Syria's historic and archeological landmarks through terrorist bombings, assassinations and massacres, looting and sabotage activities that horrified citizens in many parts of Syria. The latest example of this terrorist bombing took place recently in Damascus on 26/09/2012. A terrorist group with the name "Jabhat Al-Nosrah", one of the Al Qaeda arms, took the responsibility for this attack. It is no surprise that the Security Council failed to condemn this and other terrorist bombings, because some of its members are supporting such acts. This terrorism which is externally supported is accompanied by unprecedented media provocation based on igniting religious extremism sponsored by well-known states in the region that facilitate the flow of arms, money and fighters through the borders of some neighboring countries. Those states either turn a blind eye to the activities of terrorist groups crossing their borders, or provide active material and logistical support from their territory for armed terrorist groups. These facts make me question whether this international consensus by our states on combating terrorism was serious, or it was just merely ink on paper? In what context can we classify the explicit request of the United States from the armed terrorist groups not to surrender their arms as a response to amnesty decrees and decisions issued by the Syrian leadership? We also wonder to what extent the statements of Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the United States, and France that clearly induce and support terrorism in Syria with money, weapons and foreign fighters, are in line with the international responsibilities of these countries in combating terrorism. One of the ironies that we face is represented by encouraging the extremists in countries within and outside our region to go to the borders of Syria, and enter country, to carry out terrorist acts under the name of "jihad" in collaboration with terrorists from the inside, and this is a fact confirmed by reports of both international and Arab observers. Until today, and as a result of this terrorism, Syria has lost thousands of martyrs from the military and civilians as a price of its quest to defend the integrity of the Syrian state and its citizens in the face of this global terrorist campaign.

Mr. President,

The Syrian government has the initiative to call for dialogue at the beginning of the events that took place, without that call finding any positive response from most opposition parties. Also, My Government responded positively throughout the crisis for each sincere initiative that aims to help finding a peaceful solution based on national dialogue among Syrians, and rejects external manipulation, and emphasizes preserving the blood of the Syrians and the unity of Syria and its future. Based on this principled position, and despite the conviction of the Syrian leadership that there are no sincere intentions from some regional and international parties that push for the escalation of

the Syrian crisis, and fueling its fire and prolonging it through thwarting all attempts for dialogue, and insisting on creating a state of instability to ensure the need for foreign interference, despite all that, Syria cooperated with the Arab Observers Mission, and the subsequent international initiatives linked to the work of the UN Special Envoy Kofi Annan. Syria, out of this principle, received the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS), and provided it with all the facilities that enabled it to deploy in an unprecedented record time. The Syrian leadership, also, announced its full commitment to the implementation of the Six Point Plan presented by Mr. Annan, and started the practical implementation of its provisions. It, also, welcomed the Geneva Communiqué that stressed the need for the implementation of these provisions, but the behavior of the armed groups that sought to exploit the Syrian government's commitment to the plan and the Geneva Communiqué to achieve gains on the ground and expand the area of their presence, in addition to the statements issued by some Western and Arab countries; all this clarified who are the actors and states working to thwart all these initiatives.

Syria has welcomed the appointment of Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to succeed Mr. Annan, and stressed its willingness to fully cooperate with him on the principles agreed upon by the international community, particularly the Six-Point Plan. I would like to tell you that the success of any international effort requires, in addition to the commitment of the Syrian government, committing the states supporting armed groups in my country, particularly Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Libya and others, to stop arming, funding, training and harboring armed terrorist groups, and instead to encourage dialogue and renounce violence.

Mr. President,

For more than one year now, Syria has been saying that what my country is witnessing is a two-sided problem: the first side is linked to the need for political, economic and social reforms demanded by the public; the second is the exploitation of those needs and demands for objectives that are completely different from the demands of the Syrian people and their interests, and make these peaceful demands as a ladder for armed groups working to sow sedition and undermine security in my country. I referred to this in my speech from this podium last year. I come back today to tell you that the state in Syria made serious and important reform steps that culminated in a new constitution that embraces political pluralism, and was adopted by referendum; consequently parliamentary elections, which were open to multiple political parties, took place and. Now I tell you that Syria is continuing to work with the patriotic components in the opposition to build a new and pluralistic Syria that responds to the aspirations of its people, and is determined at the same time to carry her duties in protecting her people from jihadist and takfiri terrorism, through which armed terrorist groups are

working to spread chaos and create sedition among Syrians and threaten their peaceful coexistence.

Mr. President,

We heard calls from this podium, and on other platforms, some calls from those who are ignorant of the facts or maybe ignoring them, or also from those who are shareholders in exacerbating them, that invites the President of the Syrian Arab Republic to step down. This is a blatant interference in the domestic affairs of Syria, and the unity of its people and its sovereignty.

The Syrian people is the only party authorized to choose its own future and the shape of its own state that accommodates all groups and spectrum of the Syrian people, including those who were deceived and chose the wrong way. The Syrian people is the one to choose its leadership through the ballot box which represents the most important way of democracy and expression. If some countries that interfere in the internal affairs of Syria are proud of their democracy and freedom of decision of their people, then, it is better for those countries to support us in our democratic course, and leave the Syrian people to choose its leadership through elections whose form is defined by the new constitution and relevant laws; and then the ballot box will have the final say.

I say to those countries enough illusions, and I invite the national opposition to work together to stop the shedding of Syrian blood, and to sit at the dialogue table and participate in the making of the present and the future of Syria.

We do not bet on any party or factor apart from the Syrian people which is determined, in all its components, to reject all forms of foreign interference in its domestic affairs, and to defeat the advocates of the project of sectarianism, extremism and terrorism, because the bond is very strong in my country between state policies and the aspirations of the people.

Mr. President,

Despite all that I said about what my country is experiencing, we still believe in political solution as an essential way to exit out of the crisis, and I call from this platform for;

First: all parties and political groups, inside and outside Syria, to a constructive dialogue under the umbrella of the homeland; and the doors of Syria, as is her heart, are open to anyone who wants construction and dialogue. To achieve this, I call all countries represented in the General Assembly to exert pressure to end the violence in my country through ending of arming, financing, harboring and training of terrorist groups.

Second: the results of this national dialogue, after agreement by all parties, will be the map and the future way of the country in establishing a more pluralistic and democratic Syria.

Mr. President,

These events in Syria have led to growing humanitarian needs in several key sectors in areas affected by the terrorism of Takfiri groups, which led to the worsening of the living conditions of the Syrian citizens there. While my Government is working hard to meet the basic needs of citizens who have been forced by the violence of the armed groups to flee their homes, some have sought to fabricate a refugee crisis through inciting armed groups to intimidate Syrian civilians in border areas and forcing them to flee to neighboring countries. There, they are either accommodated in military training camps, or in what resembles places of detention, amid arid or rugged regions, and exploit their plight to get aid spent mostly on goals that have no relevance to humanitarian objectives. I appeal from this podium to those Syrian citizens to return to their towns and villages where the state will guarantee their safe return and their precious lives away from inhuman conditions they suffer in these camps.

At this point let me ask a legitimate question about the credibility of those who claim to care for providing humanitarian assistance as a response to the needs of the Syrians, and the consistency of those claims with the policy of tightening economic sanctions that badly affect the living conditions of Syrian citizens. How can imposing sanctions on the banking, health and transport sectors be consistent with caring for the best interest of the Syrians? I also wonder if the legitimate public demands of our citizens, to which the Syrian leadership responded transparently and sincerely, can justify their use as an excuse to continue providing all forms of military, financial and media support to those killing innocent people in Syria, including journalists, doctors, university professors and even religious dignitaries? Or is this the practical interpretation of the concept of "creative chaos" which only contributes to strengthen Western hegemony on Mediterranean countries, and serve the expansionist interests of Israel?

Mr. President,

what is happening in my country must not make us lose our basic compass which is Palestine and the Golan Heights, therefore the Syrian Arab Republic confirms its adherence to her natural right to restore the full occupied Syrian Golan up to the line of June 6th, 1967, and its refusal of all the measures taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to change the natural, geographical and demographic aspects in clear violation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, particularly its resolution No. 497 of 1981. Syria renews its support for the legitimacy of recognition by international community of a free and independent Palestinian State on the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967.

The failure of efforts to achieve just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of international terms of reference adopted by the international community as a basis for peace between Palestinians and Israelis is due, as everyone knows, to the unilateral positions and actions of Israel, particularly Israel's insistence on continuing its settlement policy and evasion of requirements of peace.

Mr. President,

My country renews the call for the international community to work to free the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction, and we remind in this context of the initiative presented by Syria during its membership of the Security Council by the end of 2003, and call upon the Council to adopt it. Syria stresses that evacuating the region of all weapons of mass destruction is unachievable without forcing Israel, the only nuclear power in the region, to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and to put its nuclear facilities under the inspection of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). At the same time we emphasize on what is stipulated in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of the right of all States to acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Mr. President,

The insistence of the United States and countries of the European Union and others to adopt unilateral economic measures contradicts the regulations of international law and the principles of free trade, and raises questions about the legality and morality of such practices. Based on this, we call for the lifting of the embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States for decades. We also renew our call for the lifting and stopping of all unilateral coercive measures imposed on the peoples of other countries, such as Venezuela, Belarus, Iran, Syria and the DPRK.

Mr. President,

Our aspiration to achieve a positive reform of the international organization stems from our desire to find a world based on justice, security and prosperity for all the peoples of the world, away from the colonial tendencies of some countries that seek to exploit the United Nations to achieve their own interests at the expense of other countries.

We are all hope that the United Nations can take the people of the world to a better future that fulfills their aspirations in life, coexistence, development and food sufficiency away from all forms of tension, confrontation and wars, pursuant to what is established by the United Nations Charter principles and purposes seeking to preserve the sovereignty of States and equality among them in rights and duties.

Thank you, Mr. President.