

**Mr President, Mr Secretary General,
Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,**

A decade ago I was elected the Head of Government of my country. It was the year 1994, a time of hope for the world and for the Organization of the United Nations. The collapse of the communist system and the iron curtain, the appearance of new democracies in the world, combined with a positive economic outlook let us imagine a better future for mankind in the twenty-first century.

Ten years later, we are living with considerable concern in a world which is becoming more and more violent, where terrorist attacks are met by a military response and these military responses seem to generate new terrorist attacks. It would seem that we are caught up in a terrible settling of scores, in a spiral of hate, fanaticism and senseless bloodshed. On a daily basis the media displays images of innocent people and soldiers losing their lives in these conflicts. The stakes continue to rise yet the cause of world peace seems increasingly vulnerable. The almost instantaneous arrival in every home of images of the most dramatic happenings in any place is even becoming banal.

The states of mind which this privilege of being able to come so many times to this Assembly in the name of my country has produced have gone from the initial curiosity, the wish to know and learn, to a much more skeptical phase, via periods of large question marks placed on the role which we are all playing in this ball game.

We want to be positive, optimistic and not to betray the heritage of peace, concord and open welcome which are the essence of the life of the Andorrans, both women and men. But it must be admitted that it is becoming more and more difficult to believe in it. To think that those principles which inspired, for instance, the foundation of the United States of America can still prevail.

Because now the notion of preemptive war has shaken us all. The principle of "attack before you are attacked" is no new invention. But it seemed that it was a tribal memory or a type of behavior more proper to other times which were none too remote in the history of Europe itself.

The big questions are: What justifies a preemptive attack? Which country or countries pose a sufficient threat to allow taking such a risk? Why attack one country and not another, perhaps equally dangerous one? Are the sufferings of some people more meaningful than the sufferings of others and consequently more deserving of action? Should the conventions of international law be cast aside by members of the United Nations as well as by lawless terrorists?

What I would like to do today is to reflect on the things which *we* can learn from the past and which can guide us toward a more promising and safer future.

For the countries with a deep respect and admiration for the history of freedom of the United States - and Andorra counts itself among these countries - it is a source of

consternation to note that the doctrine of preemptive attack has generated a level of distrust among governments and peoples. After the worldwide outpouring of sympathy which followed the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, this altered perception is profoundly troubling.

Neither can anyone claim that sympathy is enough. Worldwide sympathy was the reaction to the attacks on New York and Washington; we, the people of Andorra, were very directly affected by the attacks in Madrid six months ago. Very recently Russia has been added to the list of disasters. But sympathy alone cannot break the cycle of fear and violence.

We need to address the causes of terrorism, to comprehend the forces that give it power, in order to respond, together, within the rule of law. Tomorrow, my country will deposit the instruments of ratification of four conventions against terrorism and the rest are scheduled to be ratified in the coming year.

We cannot allow terrorism to unbind the rule of law, since this would mean undoing the tissue of civilized behavior that serves as a safety net within modern culture. Instead of isolating one nation from another, instead of signifying moralizing and self-serving political posturing, instead of giving in to fear, we must recognize that our common vulnerability goes hand in hand with a humanity which we also share.

To allow each member of the international community to realize that what

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I believe that the energy which feeds the cycle of violence is the result of the creation of abstractions under which we hide - abstractions of nation, religion or race. We hide our vulnerability behind a kind of rigid certainties or moral righteousness. Ignorance and unwillingness to recognize differences give rise to xenophobia and racism.

It is not much use to wonder now if the results would have been different and the dangers facing us today might have been less severe if different policies had been applied after the criminal and unforgivable attacks of 9/11, if the peace process in Israel and Palestine had been more successful or if we in the United Nations had been able of

Mr Secretary General, I would like to congratulate you most sincerely for the courage of your words. I have heard many impressive speeches in this chamber over the last ten years! Yours yesterday was the best, by far, of all of them.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Although Andorra joined the United Nations just ten years ago, our country is not a new one. Quite the contrary. The Principality of Andorra is one of the oldest and most peaceful nations in the world. Our frontiers have not changed for centuries and we have practiced parliamentary democracy for over half of that time. In fact, we have had uninterrupted peace since 1278.

In the thirteenth century, during the violent period of the Cathar heresies which agitated our part of the world, two powerful lords - the count of Foix in the north and the bishop of Urgell in the south - managed to overcome religious and political differences to negotiate an agreement which made the Andorran state a possibility. Through the 1993 Constitution we today keep their successors, the president of the French Republic and the present bishop of Urgell, as our heads of state in a personal, joint and indivisible manner. The continued existence of Andorra over the centuries has indeed been the result of a skillful and constant will to negotiate between the people and the powerful neighbors.

The democratic process which began with the setting up of the Council of the Land in 1419 was essential for our survival as a free community. Although conflicts have also threatened Andorra during its history, mutual understanding has protected us more than the high peaks of the mountains which surround us, more than the rigorous winters which isolated us from the outside world for weeks and weeks. When I read Andorran documents of past centuries I recognize how deeply the ideas of independence and respect for others have guaranteed our well-being and our security.

After the bloody course of European history during the last millennia, we hold this as a remarkable accomplishment. We have never had an army nor have we produced one single offensive weapon of any type. Our only weapon has been the wisdom and prudence of our forebears who had the good sense to keep out of all neighboring conflicts. Good sense which has been inherited by the new generations of young Andorrans, both women and men, who are very well prepared for the world of today, open to all knowledge of the new technologies, full of legitimate pride in being members of a small state in which they have every chance of being the main agents in their future but at the same time perplexed by the growth of all the new religious fanaticisms and exclusiveness and by the return of old ones which we had considered forgotten.

At this dawn of new times, we must pass on to them the trust which we have placed in the United Nations' Organization and in the supremacy of law over force. This our fathers taught us and this our children must learn if they are to be worthy members of mankind.

Thank you.