

Statement by Ambassador Shamshad Ahmad, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations at the Public Meeting of the Security Council on the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) on 18 January 2002

Mr. President,

We have come today to this chamber to discuss the subject of terrorism and the response of the world community to counter it. The tragic events of 11th September have no doubt brought the menace of international terrorism to the centre-stage of the global agenda. The steps taken by the Security Council to combat this serious threat to international peace and security, which include the adoption of resolutions 1368, 1373 and 1377, as well as the formation of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), are unprecedented in their approach and global in their scope. These measures are aimed at cutting off financing and other forms of support for international terrorism everywhere.

2. Pakistan rejects and condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Pakistan also believes in implementing all resolutions of the Security Council without selectivity discrimination or even technical differentiation. We are determined to respect international legality and support all that is right and all that is just. We are convinced that terror is a menace that we need to combat at all levels, national, regional and global. We deplore violence of any sorts or scales especially violence engineered by dogma or theology. We have ourselves been victims of violence and terrorism.

3. Following the adoption of Security Council resolution 1368, Pakistan took a principled decision to offer its full and unstinted support for the international fight against terrorism. President Pervez Musharraf, at that time, clearly pronounced our policy on this matter. Our support has gone far beyond simple pronouncements and verbal commitments. It has been translated into resolute and decisive action. These actions include, but are not limited to, the various legal, financial, administrative and enforcement measures listed in our report sent to the Counter-Terrorism Committee on 27th December, 2001, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1373.

4. Indeed, the steps taken by the Government of Pakistan are part of an ongoing process to combat this scourge both internally and externally. The latest of these measures were announced only last Saturday by President Pervez Musharraf in his address to the nation. The President reaffirmed that Pakistan's behaviour would "always be in accordance with international norms." He said, "Pakistan will not allow its territory to be used for any terrorist activity anywhere in the world. Strict action will be taken against any Pakistani individual, group or organization found to be involved in terrorism within or outside the country." Inside Pakistan an environment of "tolerance, maturity, responsibility, patience and understanding" will be promoted and "extremism, militancy, violence and fundamentalism" will be curbed.

5. President Musharraf warned that the government will not allow its writ to be challenged by anyone. In this context, wide-ranging measures, including the reform and regulation of the Madrassa system, police and judiciary, are being carried out. Simultaneously, a crackdown has begun on the groups engaged in fomenting violence and militancy. The Government intends to pursue this campaign to purge our society of obscurantism and violence.

6. You would agree that the measures Pakistan is taking go well beyond the requirements of resolution 1373 and underscore our firm commitment to the fight against terrorism. There is no other country that has put more at stake than Pakistan on this issue and no other country has gone to the extent Pakistan has in the fight against terrorism.

Mr. President,

7. As we fight terrorism, we have to be careful that we are not misled away from the main task at hand. A crisis has been provoked in our region, for the sake of political opportunism by confusing and obfuscating the issue and by fudging the very definition of terrorism. In fact, this crisis, imposed on us and accompanied with blatant threats of use of force, has shifted the focus away from the real fight against terrorism. It is driven only by political ambitions for regional hegemony, not the fight against terrorism. If those who have provoked this confrontation are really sincere to the cause of fighting terrorism, then they should practice what they preach and in doing so end the terrorism which they themselves perpetrate and perpetuate under the guise of democracy and secularism by keeping people under military occupation in violation of UN Security Council's resolutions.

Mr. President,

8. Terrorism, the anathema of this new century, has to be eliminated root and branch, in all its forms and manifestations. And, indeed terrorism has many forms and manifestations, which should also be included within the ambit of the Security Council resolutions and within the purview of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. Those who employ the state apparatus to trample upon the fundamental and inalienable rights of people are also perpetrators of terrorism. If, as according to some, terrorism is defined by the act, not by the description of the perpetrators, then alien occupiers and usurpers, especially those who employ ruthless measures against people under occupation, also fit this definition.

9. Thirteen million people in the Indian-held Kashmir are struggling for their freedom against foreign occupation and alien domination. The people of Kashmir continue to be deprived of their inalienable right to self-determination which is enshrined in the resolutions of this very Security Council, and which have remained unimplemented for over half a century. They have been victims of state terrorism and repression of the most brutal sort. While a just cause cannot be ennobled by the killing of innocent civilians, neither can the civilized community of nations condone the use of force for the repression of the legitimate cause of a people. Eighty thousand Kashmiris have lost their lives in this struggle which has sadly drawn no attention from the international community, and not even a one-line press statement from this august body. How long will the people of Kashmir have to wait before the international community will answer their call? How long will Kashmir remain a nuclear flashpoint, and "the most dangerous place on Earth"? How long will it be before the Security Council can take the same sort of impressive action on Kashmir as it has taken in countering terrorism?

10. Pakistan, for its part, remains ready to resolve the Kashmir dispute through peaceful means in accordance with the principles laid down in the UN Charter. When President Musharraf extended his hand of genuine friendship to Prime Minister Vajpayee at Kathmandu recently, it was no empty gesture. We have, indeed, backed up our words with deeds, our gestures with resolute action.

Mr. President,

11. As we seek to grapple with the worst ever challenge to humanity, our approach should not be cosmetic nor guided by emotion or anger. Surely the perpetrators of terrorism, whosoever they are and wherever they may be, must be brought to justice. But our battle must not remain confined to retaliation and retribution alone. We must tackle the causes that give rise to forces of hatred and violence. Individual acts of madness or behavioral insanity of groups that snuff innocent lives are both crime and disease. Crimes must be punished; the disease treated at its roots.

12. International conventions and Security Council resolutions on terrorism are indeed necessary. We must implement them. Freezing of assets, closing of bank accounts, denying safe haven, and information sharing are important steps in controlling terrorist acts. For a long-term solution,

however, we must unearth the source of the problem and diagnose the disease beneath the skin. Sheer bandages will not heal the wounds that are rooted in the injustice of systems and societies.

13. No matter what actions we might contemplate against terrorism, this faceless enemy, which lurks in the shadows of fear and frustration, breeds on despair and disillusionment and fed by poverty and ignorance will not disappear unless we build global harmony and stability through mutual tolerance and shared prosperity. It will continue to haunt us if the roots of terrorism which lie in the inequality of societies, in the exploitation of downtrodden, in the denial of fundamental rights and in the sense of injustice are not addressed. It would be too simplistic to merely focus on the symptoms or their ugly manifestations. Terrorism has now emerged as a different challenge which has to be dealt with in a resolute and measured manner.

Mr. President,

14. These are unusual times demanding exceptional responses. As we confront the universal evil of terrorism in a determined manner, we cannot be oblivious of the need to address the source of this problem at its roots. The Security Council must rise above power politics and political expediency and respond to international crises and conflicts in an objective manner. It is a time for courageous decisions, for correcting historical wrongs and redressing endemic injustices. Our universal obligation to fight terrorism must not deflect us from the need for a just, lasting and honourable settlement of the Kashmir issue which will restore peace and stability not only to our region, but also to the world at large. It is time for the Security Council to restore its credibility and legitimacy and work as a true instrument of peace and security as mandated by the UN Charter.

I thank you Mr. President

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