

Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations on “threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts”

(4th October, 2002)

Mr. President,

We are delighted to see you assume the Presidency of the Security Council at this critical moment for international peace and security and for the United Nations.

2. The debate convened on the issue of “threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist attacks” is important and timely. The catastrophic terrorist attacks of September 11, last year, mobilized the international community to launch a comprehensive campaign against terrorism.

3. The Security Council has made a significant contribution to this campaign including through the series of resolutions it has adopted – resolutions 1368 calling on all states to work together to bring to justice “the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors” of the atrocities of 9/11; resolution 1373 adopted almost a year ago this week, which aimed at cutting off the supply lines – financial, military, and logistical, etc. – of terrorists; resolution 1377 calling on all states to eliminate the scourge of terrorism; and 1390 targeting Al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

4. On the ground, an international coalition was quickly constituted and has waged a successful war against the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Almost a year later, the Al-Qaeda has been virtually destroyed and the government which harbored and protected these terrorists ejected from power. The Bonn process, supplemented by the Tokyo Conference, has opened the way for the installation of a representative government in Kabul, led by President Hamid Karzai, and for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

5. However, the war against terrorism in Afghanistan is not yet fully won. Coalition forces are still pursuing the remnants of Al-Qaeda in the mountains and valleys of Afghanistan. This final mopping up operation is likely to be painstaking and time consuming. In the meantime, the international community, which has organized itself admirably in Afghanistan under the guidance of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, cannot afford to become complacent. Security continues to be under threat in Afghanistan, from a variety of sources including tribal and regional rivalries and the quest of certain individuals for power and influence. Pakistan continues to believe, and to urge, that the international community should deploy additional forces, especially in the regional centers, as a means of consolidating peace and security in Afghanistan and ensuring that the writ of President. Karzai runs over the entire country. Failure to take timely action for the consolidation of security in Afghanistan could prove to be very costly in the future.

Mr. President,

6. It is equally important to simultaneously commence the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction in Afghanistan under the auspices of President Karzai’s government. Apart from generating economic revival and creating jobs, this will also help to extend the influence and authority of the government in Kabul to all Afghanistan.

Mr. President,

7. Even as the international community acts to consolidate peace and security and revive economic activity in Afghanistan, the need to support Pakistan in its multiple endeavours to combat terrorism should not be overlooked. As President Musharraf stated in the General Assembly: “Pakistan is in the forefront of the fight against terrorism. We have made major

sacrifices in this war. We have interdicted infiltration by Al-Qaeda into Pakistan. We have arrested and deported foreign suspects found on our territory. We are determined not to allow anyone to use our soil for terrorist acts inside or outside Pakistan”.

8. Pakistan continues to conduct extensive operations on its western border involving a sizeable number of its military and para-military forces to interdict Al-Qaeda infiltration, even as coalition forces undertake simultaneous operations on the other side of the Durand Line.

9. With equal vigour, the Pakistan government agencies are engaged in an extensive operation to hunt down Al-Qaeda and other terrorists who may have infiltrated into Pakistan. Some have been discovered in the border regions while others were found hiding in our cities. This intelligence and police operation has proved to be highly successful, resulting in the capture of some of the top leadership of Al-Qaeda. We are confident of further and ultimate success in capturing any remaining Al-Qaeda members on the run.

10. It was to be expected, Mr. President, that the terrorists, when cornered, would seek retaliation and revenge. In the war against terrorism, Pakistan has become not only the frontline fighter but also the frontline target of the terrorists. To draw publicity to their acts of vengeance and violence, the terrorists have focused on attacking foreigners as well as members of Pakistan’s Christian community. We condemn and deplore these attacks and the resulting loss of innocent lives. Yet, the fact that the terrorists are attacking innocents and “soft targets” is an indication that their capacities have been severely eroded. Pakistan is determined to pursue the operation until complete success is achieved to eliminate and eradicate these terrorists.

11. It is unfortunate that in certain recent incidents of terrorism in Pakistan, we have found some grounds to suspect that there are external agencies other than the Al-Qaeda who may have been responsible for these terrorist acts.

12. Just this morning there was a condemnable attack by gunmen against the Girls Islamic School in Lahore and another attack on a Christian Hospital in Bannu, in north-western Pakistan. A young girl was injured in Lahore. Fortunately, there were no injuries in the Bannu attack.

Mr. President,

13. The Government of Pakistan is also seeking to “clear the pond” in which extremists and terrorists could survive. The Security Council is aware through the detailed reports submitted by Pakistan to the CTC and under resolution 1373 of the extensive legislative, administrative and operational measures which the Pakistani government has adopted to arrest and eradicate all domestic manifestations of terrorism and extremism in Pakistan.

14. Our campaign against terrorism and extremism is part of the endeavour of President Musharraf’s government to realize the vision of our founder, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, for the emergence of Pakistan as a modern, tolerant, democratic Islamic State. President Musharraf’s government has launched the country towards this vision, introducing comprehensive socio-economic reforms and restructuring our polity, inter alia, through grassroots democracy, the empowerment of women, an ambitious programme of human resources development.

15. As we move to the stage of completing the process of democratic revival with the holding of National and Provincial Assembly elections in Pakistan on 10 October – six days away -- it is our hope and expectation that our friends in the international community will continue their support for Pakistan’s comprehensive endeavour for rapid socio-economic development and to realize thereby, our peoples’ aspirations for peace, security and prosperity.

Mr. President,

16. It must be in the knowledge of the Council that Pakistan's ability to support the international struggle against terrorism – and our aspirations for peace and prosperity -- could be significantly eroded by the military threat against Pakistan from our eastern neighbour. Misusing the rationale of the anti-terrorist campaign, this neighbour has deployed one million troops on Pakistan's border and along the Line of Control in Kashmir. It has repeatedly threatened to use force against Pakistan. It refuses mutual de-escalation of forces; it refuses bilateral dialogue; it refuses third party mediation; it refuses the Secretary-General's good offices; and it refuses to end its military repression of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and justifies this by denigrating the noble Kashmiri freedom struggle as "criss border terrorists". The Kashmiris are struggling to exercise their right to self -determination as promised to them by this Security Council in a number of its resolutions. These Security Council resolutions must also be faithfully implemented.

Mr. President,

17. If the war against terrorism is to be brought to a successful conclusion, it is vital to ensure that it is in no way misappropriated by interested parties who want to suppress the fundamental right of peoples under colonial and alien occupation or domination to struggle for their right to self-determination and freedom. As the President of Pakistan stated in the General Assembly on 12 September "Acts of terrorism by individuals or groups cannot be the justification to outlaw the just struggle of a people for self-determination and liberation from colonial or foreign occupation. Nor can it justify state terrorism."

Mr. President,

18. There is another, less recognized threat to the successful conclusion of the anti-terrorist campaign – the danger of unwillingly provoking a clash of religions and cultures. Obviously, some quarters have a vested interest in utilizing the war against terrorism as a vehicle to spread hatred against Islam and Muslims. Some of these people live close to us. But, let us remember: Terrorism has a history; but it has no religion or creed. President Musharraf, in his address to the General Assembly said: "In our global world, religious and cultural diversity should be a vehicle for complementary creativity and dynamism, not the rationale for a new ideological or political confrontation". The veil of mutual suspicion and ignorance between the West and Islam which has become so visible over the last year can only be lifted through an open and sustained dialogue. The President of Pakistan has proposed that, as a first step, the General Assembly should adopt a Declaration on Religious and Cultural Understanding, Harmony and Cooperation.

19. The attempt to equate Islam and Muslims with terrorism is exacerbating discrimination against Muslim minorities and peoples in various parts of the world. Unless this trend is reversed, it could result in another age old manifestation of terrorism -- organized pogroms against minorities and suppressed peoples, such as the one the world witnessed against the Muslims of Gujarat earlier this year.

Mr. President,

20. Even as we take practical and legal measures to combat the phenomenon of terrorism, the international community must initiate comprehensive and effective steps to address the root causes of terrorism. Terrorism often arises from political and economic injustice; from foreign occupation and repression of peoples; from festering disputes and conflicts among nations; and from economic deprivation and poverty which provides a fertile field in which fanaticism flourishes. The efforts of the Security Council to eliminate terrorist threats must, therefore, embrace the endeavour to address these root causes of terrorism in particular through the promotion of just and peaceful solutions to conflicts and disputes and the promotion of prosperity for all peoples.

I thank you, Mr. President.