

**STATEMENT BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER MR. KHURSHID M. KASURI AT THE
MINISTERIAL MEETING ON COMBATING TERRORISM HELD AT THE UN SECURITY
COUNCIL, NEW YORK (20 JANUARY 2003)**

Mr. President:

It is a pleasure for me to participate in this important meeting of the Security Council under the presidency of France. We warmly welcome the initiative of the French Government and Foreign Minister De Villepin to convene this special ministerial meeting. We believe that it is timely and essential for the Security Council to consider the issue of terrorism from a wider perspective in its various manifestations and its multifarious origins and causes.

We welcome the important statements made today by Secretary-General Kofi Annan and by Sir Jeremy Greenstock, Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. Pakistan has a strong interest in the subject, as it has itself been a victim of terrorism for a very long time.

The tragic events of 11 September 2001 mobilized the international community to launch a comprehensive campaign against terrorism. The Security Council has made a significant contribution to this campaign. An international coalition has waged a successful war against the Al Qaeda terrorist organization in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Of course, this process of seeking out, arresting and eliminating the Al Qaeda elements wherever they may be will be a long and painstaking one. Let me assure the Council here that the Government of Pakistan will leave no stone unturned to achieve this objective.

Pakistan is and will remain a key member of the global coalition against international terrorism. As President Musharraf said last year, "the strategic decisions we took after 11 September are consistent with our moral principles and national interests. Our unstinting support has been critical in the battle against terrorism. This support will continue until our shared objectives are fully met and the evil of terrorism is completely eliminated."

Pakistan's actions speak louder than our words. Despite the constant threat on our eastern frontier, 70,000 Pakistani troops continue to conduct extensive operations on our western border with Afghanistan to interdict Al Qaeda infiltration. Our law enforcement agencies are engaged in an extensive operation to hunt down Al Qaeda and other terrorists who may have infiltrated into Pakistan. Pakistan has arrested and deported over 420 suspected members of Al Qaeda, including some of its top leaders, such as Abu Zubaydah and Ramzi bin al-Shibh. Several members of our security forces have made the ultimate sacrifice in this operation. Pakistan has also been the target of Al Qaeda's retaliation and revenge attacks, in which scores of innocent Pakistanis and some foreigners, including 11 French nationals, have lost their lives. But, despite these attacks, Pakistan has remained resolute. We have achieved considerable success in this anti-terrorism campaign, which will be pursued until the terrorists have been eliminated.

In accordance with Security Council resolutions, Pakistan has devised a legal and practical mechanism to effectively halt financial and other support to terrorist organizations and groups. Several sectarian and extremist groups have been banned and their assets frozen. We have signed or ratified 11 out of the 12 United Nations anti-terrorism conventions. We have also signed the Organization of the Islamic Conference Convention on Combating Terrorism.

The horrendous attacks of 11 September have highlighted the vulnerability of the modern, technologically advanced societies, as well as of those that are backward. We share the fear that terrorists may acquire sophisticated technology and weapons of great destructive power. Let me reaffirm that Pakistan's nuclear assets are under strict safeguards and credible custodial controls. With a vigorous security and monitoring system, there has never been any danger of leakage of nuclear or sensitive technologies in Pakistan, yet we must also acknowledge that the

instruments of terror can be multifarious. The focus of the anti-terror campaign must therefore remain on eliminating the terrorist organizations and groups and in halting support for them.

Greater effort is necessary to identify those acts of terrorism which are the consequence of incorrigible fanaticism or criminal intent, and others which arise from a sense of political or economic injustice. In the latter case, attempts to address underlying causes could be the most effective approach to arresting terrorist actions.

At this juncture, however, I would like to point out that some States have unfortunately sought to misuse the campaign against terror to denigrate and suppress the right of peoples to self-determination, such as those in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and in Palestine. Pakistan wishes to reaffirm emphatically that the aspiration of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to self-determination is sanctioned by the resolutions of the Security Council. Their struggle against Indian occupation is a just, legitimate and noble struggle. Equating such a freedom struggle with terrorism is unjust. The Kashmir dispute can and should be resolved through dialogue between Pakistan and India in accordance with the Security Council's resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

The international community cannot ignore the phenomenon of State terrorism as a tool of foreign occupation and defiance of United Nations resolutions.

Terrorism has no creed, culture or religion. Pakistan resolutely rejects attempts to identify our noble religion, Islam, with terrorism. Such attempts must be collectively opposed by the international community lest they sow the seeds of endemic confrontation between cultures and civilizations. There should be no double standards in combating terrorism. We are surprised that acts of terrorism committed by other religious fanatics in non-Muslim societies have not been condemned as vigorously. I refer to the recent killings of Muslims in the State of Gujarat, India, in particular.

As President Musharraf has stated:

“Hate should have no market. It must be stamped out with the same zeal with which the fight against terrorism is being pursued.”

We shall do this vigorously in Pakistan. We seek to build Pakistan, as envisioned by our founding father, the great leader Mohammad Ali Jinnah, as a tolerant, modern and democratic Islamic State. While collectively opposing terrorism, the international community must also endeavour collectively to promote greater cultural and religious harmony all over the world. To this end, Pakistan has proposed the adoption by the General Assembly of a declaration on religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation.

In conclusion, let me state that Pakistan believes that this ministerial meeting is the beginning of a serious dialogue within the Security Council on ways and means to combat terrorism collectively, comprehensively, effectively and — I also hope — equitably. Success in this historic endeavour will strengthen international peace and security and put to rest the prophecies of those who project a coming clash of civilizations.

I thank you, Mr. President.