

Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram,
Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, on
“Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism”
(11 October 2006)

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to congratulate you on assuming the chairmanship of the Sixth Committee. We are confident that under your able leadership the Committee will make significant progress in addressing its important agenda.

2. The threat posed by Terrorism is today both local and global. Due to an accident of history and geography, Pakistan is in the frontline of the global campaign against terrorism. We cooperate daily with friends and allies in the fight against terrorism. We have captured over 700 Al-Qaeda operatives, including most of its top leaders. We have broken the central command and control system of Al-Qaeda. Our cooperation has pre-empted several terrorists' plots, such as the one uncovered recently to blow up airliners flying from London.

3. Pakistan is taking extensive measures to help to restore peace, stability and economic development in neighbouring Afghanistan. We have deployed 80,000 troops along our borders with Afghanistan. We have conducted over 80 operations in our frontier regions to eliminate and arrest Al-Qaeda and Taliban terrorists. Through close cooperation, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the international Community can succeed in arresting and defeating the resurgent Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan.

Mr. Chairman,

4. During the last week of the Sixtieth session, the General Assembly adopted the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy. The strategy is a compromise framework document. It focuses very heavily on the operational aspects of counter-terrorism. Pakistan is committed to intensifying international cooperation in the security, police, intelligence, financial and other aspects of the ongoing campaign to prevent and eliminate terrorism and terrorist groups and networks.

5. In this context, the implementation of the measures outlined in the 13 international Conventions and relevant Security Council resolutions are

essential to success. Pakistan is committed to the implementation of these agreed measures.

6. It is, of course, necessary to ensure the observance of the rule of law and due process in the implementation of these counter-terrorist measures. To this end, I would like to express our support for the reform in the procedures of the Security Council Committees to ensure **due process** and **the right to effective remedy**. These rights are held as higher rules of international law by the international community from which no derogation is accepted. The need for the reform is also underscored by arbitrary application of the sanctions, especially in the first phase of their implementation; lack of legal mechanism for information sharing about the allegations; and the difficult and indirect process of appeal. An early review of the procedure would add to the credibility of international actions against terrorism and terrorist groups.

7. However, the real added value of the UN strategy is that it has broadened the scope of the counter-terrorism campaign to encompass, for the first time, the root causes of terrorism, and the larger endeavour to eliminate extremism and build a more harmonious environment between the major civilizations.

8. The strategy highlights the need to resolve long-standing conflicts and disputes. Foreign occupation and denial of the right to self-determination are often the cause for the resort to terrorism. This is not to justify terrorism but to explain it. The strategy recalls GA resolution 46/51, which inter-alia reaffirmed “the inalienable right of self-determination, the independence of all peoples under colonial and racial regimes and the legitimacy of their struggle”. It also recalled that the 2005 Summit declaration upheld the right of self-determination of peoples which remain under colonial domination and foreign occupation. The strategy affirms the determination of Member States “to do all they could to end foreign occupation.”

9. State Terrorism is another cause of terrorism by individuals and groups, especially when State terrorism is utilized to suppress the right of self-determination or to perpetuate foreign occupation. The strategy we have adopted rightly condemns terrorism committed by “whosoever and wherever”. It also requires States to refrain from “participating” in terrorist activities. This is a major advance in addressing terrorism comprehensively and equitably.

10. The strategy also addresses the unjust defamation of certain religions and communities in the context of the fight against terrorism. The unfair and bigoted portrayal of Islam and Islamic beliefs adds fuel to the fire of extremist and terrorist strategies and exacerbates the divergence in attitudes and perceptions between the Islamic and the Western worlds.

11. An honest dialogue between Islam and the West has become a political imperative. The differences between Islam and the West need to be bridged. The dialogue among civilizations could be pursued through the Panel on the “Alliance of Civilization” and other such initiatives, including President Pervez Musharraf’s initiative on the ‘Enlightened Moderation’.

12. Finally, the strategy also addresses the need to promote economic and social development as the means to arrest and eliminate extremism and terrorism. Socio-economic marginalization is among one of the conditions conducive to spread of terrorism. While there may not be a direct co-relationship between poverty and terrorism, it is obvious that those who live in hunger and hopelessness are more prone to become the foot soldiers of terrorist groups and organizations. The promotion of balanced socio-economic development in the regions, where extremism exists should be a high priority for the international community.

Mr. Chairman,

13. In his statement, while introducing the strategy resolution, the President of the General Assembly made two important observations. One, the strategy resolution **“would constitute the foundation from which the Assembly’s role could be further developed”**; and two, the strategy must remain a **“living document”** and the Assembly should keep in mind that **“some of the measures proposed in the strategy could be achieved immediately, some would require consistent work through coming years and some were yet long term tasks and objectives”**.

14. We believe, the success of the strategy would depend on the steps taken to realize these elements of the strategy. However, the strategy in itself will be of little value unless it is transformed into action by an effective implementation mechanism. We would therefore propose that an Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly may be established to monitor the implementation of the Strategy and to set out with greater precision its mid-term and long-term objectives. We also continue to support an international Conference to promote the further elaboration and explanation of the counter-terrorism Strategy.

15. In this context, it would be appropriate for the Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force to present an annual report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the Strategy. This would enable the General Assembly, when it discusses the Strategy next year, to review its implementation of the Strategy and ensure that it is a “living document”.

Mr. Chairman,

16. On the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism, we support the OIC’s position. During the Ad Hoc Committee meeting in Feb-March 2006, the consensus on the Convention were prevented by the differences on the exception sought in Article 18, Sub-para 2 and 3 i.e. to exclude armed forces from the purview of the convention.

17. In our view, such a blanket exclusion is untenable. It is obviously inconsistent with the agreement at the Summit which condemned terrorism “in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomsoever, whenever, and for whatever purposes ... “. Thus, if terrorist acts outlined in the draft convention are carried out by “armed forces”, for example while suppressing the struggle of a people for self-determination, or during the course of foreign occupation, or in instances of genocide, their actions cannot be ipso facto excluded from the scope of this convention. It is not sufficient to say that their activities are governed by other provisions of international law. So are the activities of irregular groups or guerilla movements. Both are covered by the provisions of the Geneva Conventions and their Protocols.

18. We remain open to discuss any new objective proposal. However, we would also like to reiterate our previous proposal, which consists of two elements; one, to insert in the convention the provisions of para-81 of the Summit’s Outcome Document; and two, to delete sub-paras (2) & (3) of the draft comprehensive convention. If there is insistence on retaining these sub-paras, we shall have to find ways to appropriately qualify and limit the exclusion of armed forces from the scope of the convention e.g. by defining the conditions under which such an exclusion is possible and by affirming that the provisions of the convention do not in any way compromise or constrain the legitimate right of peoples to struggle for their right to self-determination and against foreign occupation.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman