



STATEMENT BY MR. V.K. NAMBIAR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE ON
THE SITUATION BETWEEN IRAQ AND KUWAIT AT THE SECURITY
COUNCIL ON MARCH 11, 2003

Mr. President,

We congratulate you on your assumption to the Presidency of the Council for the month of March and express our appreciation to you for convening this open debate on an issue that has continued to engage the anxious attention of the Council as it has of the entire world community.

My delegation has addressed this issue a fortnight ago in the Council. Therefore, I shall be brief today.

We are grateful to the Heads of the UNMOVIC and IAEA for the briefings given by them on March 7 on the progress of inspections since their last report to the Council. The reports do indicate progress in cooperation extended by Iraq to UNMOVIC and IAEA. We recognise the growing atmosphere of foreboding tension within the Council as it gets to grips with how to proceed with the matter into the immediate future. As the discussions enter a critical phase, it is important to underline that our focus should be on the need to secure the disarmament of Iraq without resorting to armed force as far as possible. That this requires full, active and immediate compliance by Iraq of resolution 1441 and earlier resolutions is obvious. But it also requires a strong unity of purpose on the part of the Security Council so that the credibility of the United Nations is not weakened.

We believe that the universe of discourse should remain the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Council. Iraq must cooperate actively with the inspection process and comply fully with these Resolutions. The international community has, of course, to strike a balance between the objective of achieving Iraq's full compliance with UN resolutions and the means adopted to reach its goal. This balance can best be achieved through a collective decision of the international community through the United Nations. There is need to persevere in this direction by establishing clear thresholds if necessary. If giving some

more time and the laying down of clearer criteria were to help the process of UN-based decision making, these should be given a chance.

Mr. President,

India has consistently advocated a peaceful resolution of the Iraq issue. We are as conscious as any other delegation of the incalculable costs in human and material terms that a war would unleash on the region and beyond. We maintain that force should be resorted to only as the very last, unavoidable option and only as authorised by the Security Council. We have also called for steps to ensure that any measures taken by the Council should not adversely impact on the humanitarian situation which is already extremely difficult. Thirdly, the Council should bear in mind the alleviation of the situation of the Iraqi people. Fourthly, the measures taken by the Security Council should ensure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq.

Mr. President,

As we had stated on October 17 2002, what the Council does at this juncture could well represent a defining moment in the way the relations among States are ordered. We had then called for the active exploration under UN auspices of possible alternatives to avoid recourse to use of force and military action. We had stressed the need to safeguard the interests of the countries of the region as well as those who have vital stakes in the region. These considerations remain as valid today since very little has changed in the situation. If the actions of the Council are to be seen to possess legitimacy, they must issue from a body which is united and acts responsibly towards ensuring compliance by the regime in Iraq, ensures stability in the immediate neighbourhood and safeguards international peace and security in the region as a whole.

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