



**STATEMENT BY MR. A. GOPINATHAN, DEPUTY PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE ON THREATS OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND
SECURITY CAUSED BY TERRORIST ACTS AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL
ON OCTOBER 16, 2003**

Mr. President,

We thank you for scheduling this public meeting of the Security Council on an issue of considerable importance and great concern to all members of the United Nations. We also congratulate Ambassador Arrias of Spain and his team for their capable stewardship of the Counter-Terrorism Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1373.

Mr. President,

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon and, contrary to some popular misperceptions, the fight against terrorism was not born out of 9/11. India has been at the forefront of the fight against terrorism for almost two decades. During this period, over 60,000 Indians, mainly women and children, have lost their lives to terrorism. Most recently, in a major incident, 52 innocent bystanders were killed in the twin terrorist attacks in the city of Mumbai.

The scourge and reach of terrorism has indeed extended across the world. Globalisation cannot today be seen merely in the context of the success of free enterprise or the pervasiveness of television and other mass media. The very means that have facilitated the success of the global marketplace - improved communications, access to media, better transport links and faster and easier means of international travel - have contributed to the development of a global network of terrorism - a network that feeds on the common message of hatred and seeks to attain the common objective of carnage and indiscriminate destruction; to demoralise and thereby dominate civilised societies, particularly those based on pluralistic democracies.

Unfortunately, some States regard terrorism as a low-cost means of inflicting damage to the social, political and economic well-being of their supposed detractors, by pursuing a form of low- intensity warfare without its attendant risks. Despite the claim that they are part of the global alliance against terror, they stand implicated by their past records and present inability to come clean.

Mr. President,

Contradictions persist but cannot persevere. In a recent newspaper article, a senior envoy of a permanent member of the Security Council has reportedly accused a Government, also a member of this Council and which professes to be a valued partner in the war against terrorism, of allowing renegade Taliban forces a safe haven from which to "regroup, recruit, cross into Afghanistan and cause mayhem" - a fact that Afghan leaders have sought consistently to underscore at the highest levels.

The Secretary General, in his report on "Measures to eliminate international terrorism" (Document A/58/116), mentions, and I quote, "it has to be assumed that the grenades used in this terrorist attack (on the Indian Parliament in New Delhi on 13 December 2001) were produced in Pakistan". We in India did not require this corroboration of a fact that we had already deduced on the basis of solid and incontrovertible evidence gathered from the terrorists and their accomplices themselves. But the fact that the Secretary General of the United Nations has brought this to light in a report that considers measures to eliminate international terrorism is in itself a telling story, as also indicative of the double standards that we sometimes seem to operate under.

An article published in yesterday's New York Times refers to the US Treasury Department designating a charity, Al-Akhtar Trust International, as a financial sponsor of terrorism. This group is accused of financing Al Qaeda militants in Afghanistan, terrorist acts in Iraq, and of possible linkages to the murder of Wall Street reporter Daniel Pearl. Anyone looking for more material available in the free press on the existence of an epicentre of terrorism has only to read celebrated French author and philosopher Bernard Henri Levy's recently released book, "Who killed Daniel Pearl?"

Mr. President,

The Counter-Terrorism Committee, for all its good work, will need to go beyond the stage of inexhaustible reporting to a more serious examination of the actual actions taken by States in their international counter-terrorism effort. The Committee would have to take advantage of the momentum achieved since its establishment to go beyond assisting in the creation of legal and financial mechanisms to holding countries accountable for their genuine commitment to and actions in the fight against terrorism from territories under their control.

India was among the first countries to ratify all 12 Conventions on international terrorism. It has initiated the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, currently under consideration in the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly, and supports the adoption of the draft International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Cognisant of the possible threat to civilised and orderly societies by terrorists and non-State actors equipped with weapons of mass destruction, India piloted a resolution entitled "Linkages between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction," which was adopted by the General Assembly by consensus last year.

A number of countries have responded quickly to the international call for the tightening of domestic legislative and financial frameworks designed to counter terrorist activities. Unfortunately, there is an increasing feeling among Member States that the more effective the response to the requirements and questions of the CTC, the more voluminous and intrusive the reporting process becomes. In our view, it is important to

avoid conveying the impression, however erroneous, of an expanding bureaucracy represented by the CTC secretariat, indulging in an exercise of self-preservation and self-perpetuation.

Mr. President,

While we acknowledge fully that the development of effective legislative and financial mechanisms is the first step in enabling States to come to grips with the fight against terrorism, we are convinced that a system of endless reporting, without any effort to keep sight of the larger objective realities, can only disillusion States and ultimately impact adversely on the efforts of the Security Council to mobilise an effective international counter-terrorism effort.

It is critical that a system of effective interface between Council Members and the larger membership on the manner in which the CTC should operate is arranged on a periodic and institutional basis. Feedback from such exchanges needs to be monitored and absorbed by the CTC. What are required are clear and objective guidelines to govern the system of reporting that States are subject to. Most important, transparency and openness in the process will foster a greater willingness among respondents, i.e. the Member States, to cooperate.

The undue emphasis on cooperation with other international and regional organisations in the Committee's work would also require to be considered carefully. States are accountable for their actions but several partner organisations of the CTC that have been placed on an equal pedestal as Member States of this Organisation do not bear the same responsibility or accountability. Often, they even lack the mandate or competence to deal with the work of the CTC.

In our view, the primary point of contact for the CTC should be the Member States under whose mandate the Committee operates. Discussions with regional and international organisations should be secondary to discussions with States. All interfaces with partner organisations must be undertaken with the full knowledge and consent of the States involved in the organisation concerned. Also, regional imbalances in the number of partner organisations that the CTC works with would have to be taken into account.

Finally, issues such as the credibility and sources of information, the independence of experts working in the CTC are important, particularly if the views of States are not always taken into account.

Mr. President,

We have provided these illustrations in order to convey a candid feedback of the impressions and opinions of the larger membership. The ultimate aim is to enable the Council and the Chair of the CTC to take such opinions on board in the implementation of the Committee's mandate.

The fight against terrorism is among the most important issues currently on the agenda of this Organisation. It is being pursued simultaneously in most, if not all, of the UN's major organs, including the Security Council. My Government has been, and will continue to be, engaged fully in the fight against international terrorism. I would like to

take this opportunity to once again express our deep appreciation to the Chair of the CTC for his efforts in leading this important Committee of the Security Council and to assure him of our fullest cooperation in the fulfillment of his noble mission.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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