



STATEMENT BY MR. NIRUPAM SEN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, ON THREATS TO INTERNATIONAL PECE AND SECURITY CAUSED BY TERRORISTS ACTS AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON JULY 20, 2005

Mr. President,

We thank you for scheduling this timely meeting on the “threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts”. We also thank the Chairmen of the 1267, 1373 and 1540 Committees for their detailed briefings.

The recent horrific attacks in London and elsewhere in the world have shown the emergence of terrorism with a renewed vigour. The seriousness and consistency of the threat posed by terrorism to civilised society anywhere, irrespective of political affiliation or ideology, has been brought home once again. Most important, for our purposes, it has reinforced the urgent need for a global consensus on dealing with it.

Mr. President,

To us in India, terrorism is not a new phenomenon. We have suffered from this cross-border inspired scourge for nearly twenty-five years. Over 60,000 Indian citizens have lost their lives as a direct result of terrorism. India has consistently maintained that terrorism constitutes one of the most serious threats to peace and security; that it recognises no border or boundary, observes no code of conduct or constraints of religion, nor is it restrained by humanism or the bounds of civility.

Fifteen days ago, on the 5th of July, five heavily armed militants, believed to be affiliated to the Lashkar-e-Toiba, stormed the complex in Ayodhya with the intention of spreading mayhem and terror at a sensitive site. Fortunately, owing to the effective intervention of the security forces deployed at the complex, the militants were neutralised at a relatively low cost. However, the intention of the perpetrators of this act of terrorism, and their external sponsors whose involvement has since been proven, was far more sinister – it was to incite the flames of communal conflagration and violence and damage India’s secular and democratic fabric.

In his address to the US Congress yesterday, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh stated, and I quote, “...open societies like ours are today threatened more than

ever before by the rise of terrorism. ... Terrorism exploits the freedom our open societies provide to destroy our freedoms. We must fight terrorism wherever it exists, because terrorism anywhere threatens democracy everywhere.”

It is important for States to be held accountable for any lack of compliance with their international obligations, in particular those under international legal instruments and under Security Council resolutions, on terrorism. The international community must no longer tolerate resort to double standards, partial cooperation for political ends, tactical ploys, incitement, fundamentalist training and indoctrination, and support or sponsorship of terrorism. If global action against terrorism is to succeed, States which profess cooperation on the war against terrorism while maintaining intact the infrastructure of terrorism should no longer be allowed to get away with impunity.

Mr. President,

The Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), assisted by the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), must continue to play a major role in assisting States with capacity-building and the means of fighting terrorism.

We would like to compliment the 1267 Committee on its work. Unfortunately, we have witnessed in recent months a resurgence of these organisations in Afghanistan, as manifested by the increasing attacks against civilians and security forces along the southern and south-eastern borders of that country. The re-emergence of large well-armed groups of Al-Qaida/Taliban is a matter of concern for the international community. We believe that the two words, “moderate” and “Taliban” are mutually incompatible. Any attempt to reach out to former Taliban elements should exclude individuals or entities in the 1267 Committee’s consolidated list. Any action to the contrary would constitute a clear violation of Chapter-VII resolutions.

The recent listing of the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) by the 1267 Committee in its consolidated list of entities under the Al-Qaida Section has been an important step forward in the fight against terrorism. The LeT enjoys a clearly defined agenda, hierarchy, sources of funding, protection and infrastructure. Its philosophy has been to merge *jihadi* education with modern curricula to train young students not only in religious principles but also to make them adept in science and technology – a philosophy that can be put to devastating effect to serve the needs of terrorism. We would encourage the 1267 Committee to continue to be active in securing listing of more individuals and entities.

India had welcomed the adoption of Resolution 1566 which, in our view, represented a logical extension of the existing multilateral cooperation on counter-terrorism. In our view, the United Nations should not leave unchallenged or unaddressed claims of moral, political and diplomatic support for terrorism. We do hope the Working Group established pursuant to Resolution 1566 would earnestly set out to reach understanding on the ways and means of moving the Council’s counter-terrorism agenda forward.

The work of the 1540 Committee remains critical. Recent revelations of the extensive international network that facilitated the proliferation of nuclear equipment and technology have amply brought home to us all the danger of the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery by terrorists. We urge the 1540 Committee to be more proactive and to move quickly to minimise, through international cooperation and co-option, the possibility of any further proliferation that could pose a threat to international peace and security.

As we have conveyed in our national report to the 1540 Committee, India's track record on nuclear non-proliferation is impeccable. Even though we have witnessed unchecked proliferation in our own neighbourhood, which has affected our security concerns, India has not only adhered to existing regulatory framework governing controls over weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery but proceeded to strengthen these. The Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery System (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act adopted on 6 June, 2005 provides overarching and integrated legislation prohibiting unlawful activities in relation to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

In this context, the Prime Minister of India stated yesterday, and I quote: "India, as a responsible nuclear power, is fully conscious of the immense responsibility that has come with the possession of advanced technology, both civilian and strategic. We have never been, and will never be, a source of proliferation of sensitive technologies" Unquote.

Mr. President,

While the Security Council has been justifiably proactive on the counter-terrorism agenda, we believe it is equally important for the general membership to engage on this critical issue. The Secretary-General has called for a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy to be adopted by Heads of State and Government at the High-Level Plenary meeting in September. The international community must endorse his call. My delegation strongly supports the conclusion of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

There can be no justification for terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Those who resort to terror often clothe it in the garb of real or imaginary grievances. No grievance can justify resort to terror. At the same time, the fight against terror has to be fought within the boundaries laid down by our obligations regarding the rule of law and fundamental freedoms. The Government of India, recognising the need to continue fighting terror without impinging on essential individual freedoms and liberties, repealed the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

It is a curious and striking paradox that both Dr. Huntington and certain terror groups like Al-Qaida regard the problem as a clash of civilisations. Our experience is that this paradigm is profoundly mistaken. India's capacity to deal with the vicissitudes of terrorism can be traced to its ability to accommodate different cultural and civilisational traditions over time. Historically, the *bhakti* and *sufi* movements absorbed the best values of thought and civilisation. These traditions have contributed to the

emergence of a secular democracy that in itself serves as a bulwark against societal tensions. Not a single Indian has been identified or detained for terrorist acts perpetrated by Al-Qaida or the Taliban. As the largest democracy with secularism at its heart and as the second largest Islamic society in the world, we feel we do not need any lesson from either the Western democracies or the self-appointed guardians of Islam. The deliberate weakening of secular democratic forces in many parts of the world over decades left the fundamentalists as the only vehicle of popular dissent. It is only through a strengthening of the former that we can hope to gain the upper hand in the battle against terrorism. At the same time, the brutal anti-humanism, the absence of any realistic programme for social regeneration and, above all, the extreme reactionary vision of terrorists can only strengthen reaction.

Mr. President,

It is our sincere hope that the United Nations would move forward the international agenda on counter-terrorism through the actions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. The intricate linkages and networks that unite terror groups can only be challenged through concerted international cooperation and efforts. The international community can no longer accept double standards or half-way measures on the part of States in the fight against terrorism. The United Nations would have to ensure that all States are committed equally to the fight against terrorism.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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