



STATEMENT BY MR. A. GOPINATHAN, DEPUTY PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE ON THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN IN  
THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON MAY 23, 2002

Mr. President,

We once again welcome you to the Council and would like to convey our deep appreciation for calling this meeting on an issue which is of particular importance to the international community as well as to my delegation.

Mr. President,

During the open meeting of the Council on the subject on 26 March 2002, my delegation had made a detailed statement. We shall, therefore, focus only on the developments since then.

We welcome the return of former King Zahir Shah to Afghanistan. We believe that his presence will contribute to the ongoing efforts to resolve political differences and promote unity in Afghanistan.

Mr. President,

The presence of the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan continues to be a cause of serious concern to the international community. Time and again, these two entities have shown that they are lying low, biding their time to regroup and strike again in Afghanistan and elsewhere. To counter these forces of malevolence and darkness is a task beyond the present capacity of the Interim Administration. These twin tormentors of Afghanistan need to be decisively neutralised by the international community without delay. There are many reports of the Taliban and the Al Qaeda fighters hiding and regrouping along the eastern border of Afghanistan. This is the time for reality check on those who created, nurtured, promoted and supported the Taliban but now claim to have changed. They should be asked to match their rhetoric with action on the ground or be held accountable for aiding, abetting and supporting international terrorism. The international community has paid a very heavy price for tolerating such uncivilized and illegal behaviour which should no longer be countenanced. It would not be possible to eliminate terrorism conclusively from Afghanistan unless

the question of external support extended to the Al Qaeda and Taliban cadres is firmly addressed and dealt with. The declaration of intent to participate in international struggle against terrorism should not be permitted to be accompanied by subversion in parallel by protecting, sheltering and supporting elements of the terror machine.

We cannot over-emphasise the need for establishment of security structures in Afghanistan which not only result from intra-Afghan processes, but also by the foundations for the establishment of a multi-ethnic Afghan National Army and Police force. India is contributing to the efforts in this regard.

Mr. President,

The process of selecting representatives for the Emergency Loya Jirga has begun and appears to be on course. We applaud and commend the Special Independent Commission which has accomplished so much in so little time with such meagre resources. However, there are twin but interlinked concerns: the first about ensuring that the process is free of intimidation and coercion. And the second is to keep the Taliban and its backers firmly out of the process. Otherwise, there would be questions about the outcome's credibility and acceptance. Security for the Loya Jirga process is, therefore, important and all available resources on the ground should be marshalled for this end.

In another three weeks' time, the Emergency Loya Jirga will have completed its work giving to Afghanistan a Transitional Administration reflective of the wishes of the Afghan people. This will be a significant milestone in the implementation of the Bonn Agreement and a major step towards the ultimate objective of a democratic government in Afghanistan installed through free and fair elections.

Mr. President,

More than two decades of conflict and three years of drought have led to widespread human suffering and massive displacement of the people of Afghanistan. International and bilateral efforts for the reconstruction of Afghanistan must be sustained and widened. Several developing countries have explicitly expressed keen interest in participating in the rebuilding of Afghanistan under the South-South cooperation modality. They have offered development cooperation - both software and hardware - as well as highly skilled human resources to assist in the rebuilding of Afghanistan.

To facilitate a process through which relevant capacities from the developing countries can be easily and cost-effectively made available to Afghanistan's rebuilding efforts, the Government of India and the United Nations Development Programme have organized a two-day conference on "South-South Cooperation for Rebuilding Afghanistan" which began in New Delhi today with the participation of a large number of developing countries, UN funds

and agencies, as well as international financial institutions. In an effort to ensure greater transparency and better overall coordination of the ongoing international effort, developed countries have been invited as observers.

The main objectives of the Conference are:

- (i) to fully appreciate the magnitude of challenges facing Afghanistan and the development assistance required in its economic and social recovery and reconstruction over the medium to long term:
- (ii) to identify specific capacity needs in both software and hardware areas that can be met or supplied by other developing countries and;
- (iii) to recommend mechanisms by which such capacities and supplies in developing countries can be easily and cost-effectively channeled to Afghanistan.

We are confident that the conference will give the required impetus to South-South cooperation for the development of Afghanistan and serve as a model for similar cooperation elsewhere.

Mr. President,

Chairman Karzai and other members of the Interim Administration have demonstrated enormous resolve and determination to put Afghanistan on the road to peace and prosperity. But this long arduous but rewarding journey would become a bit easier, a bit faster, if the international community extends all the assistance that Afghanistan requires in keeping with the priorities and preferences expressed by the Afghan people. We would like to reiterate India's commitment to contribute to Afghanistan's reconstruction and rehabilitation, both in terms of financial commitments and project-based assistance, as prioritised by the Afghan Interim Administration. In this context, India has already announced a commitment of \$100 million and pledged assistance, both humanitarian assistance the requirements of which are more immediate in nature such as a million tons of wheat and much-needed medical aid, and long-term needs of economic reconstruction which encompass several sectors including police training, education, housing, human resource development, industrial development, public transport and information technology. We have decided, in addition, to make available a sum of \$10 million as budget subsidy to the Afghan government. Discussions are at an advanced stage for a gift of three aircraft by India to Ariana Airlines to enable it to build up its fleet.

The next few weeks will provide the Afghan leaders and the international community with another opportunity to demonstrate the commitment of all parties to the faithful implementation of the Bonn agreement through the holding of the

Loya Jirga. We hope everyone assumes his or her responsibility and that this would lead to the peaceful selection of the Transitional Administration.

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