

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR HARDEEP SINGH PURI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE,
ON THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON JUNE 30, 2010

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to thank you for scheduling today's debate on the situation in Afghanistan. We are grateful for the latest report of the Secretary-General and are appreciative of the briefing by the SRSG Staffan de Mistura. We also thank Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan for his statement.

Mr. President,

As we move forward, the international approach towards Afghanistan, including the London Conference has focused on areas of security, reintegration, development, governance, and regional and international cooperation. We support the efforts of the Afghan Government to reintegrate those individuals who are willing to abjure violence, do not have ties with terrorist groups, and are willing to abide by the values of democracy, pluralism and human rights as enshrined in the Afghan Constitution. The process must be inclusive and transparent.

The forthcoming Kabul Conference and the parliamentary elections scheduled in September later this year would be important milestones in consolidating the progress made so far.

Mr. President,

Complimentary to the military effort, a sustainable strategy for stabilization of Afghanistan must focus on development and governance issues. In this context, UNAMA's focus on its priorities, in particular support for elections, regional cooperation and aid coherence would be helpful in achieving greater synergy and coordination of efforts with the Afghan government.

Success of all our endeavours could only be enduring if their ownership vests in the Afghan Government and people. In this context, closely intertwined is the need for

tangible and sustained improvement in the security situation. This is also absolutely critical in expanding the foot-print of the Afghan government and towards creating an enabling environment for lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Mr. President,

As we discuss today, an overall deterioration in the security environment underscores the significant challenges that confront Afghanistan. The UNSG report notes that there has been a 94% increase in incidents involving IEDs during the first four months of 2010, a 45% rise in killings of civilians by insurgents, and an increase in complex suicide attacks. I join others Mr. President, in expressing our condolences to the UN staff member killed yesterday.

Despite reinforced International Security Assistance Force's presence, continuous deterioration in the security situation is a stark reminder that the challenge from a resurgent Taliban and Al Qaeda is real, and it is one that threatens us all. The well-springs that sustain such terror still show no signs of being drained. Civilians, humanitarian personnel, international and UN staff and diplomatic personnel- including our Mission in Kabul have been repeatedly targeted in terrorist attacks.

There is a broad recognition that the increase in terrorist actions in Afghanistan is due to the support and sanctuaries available beyond its borders. Security and stabilization of Afghanistan will remain a distant goal unless we are able to isolate and root out the syndicate of terrorism, which includes elements of Al Qaida, Taliban, LeT and other terrorist and extremist groups operating from within and outside Afghanistan's borders.

We fully support efforts towards expansion of capacities of the Afghan National Police and the Afghan National Army. They should be provided appropriate resources, combat equipment, enablers and training before considering any plans for progressive handover of security responsibilities.

Mr. President,

The security of Afghanistan and what happens there impacts us, as a country in the region, as a close neighbor and a civilizational partner whose ties with the Afghan people stretch into antiquity.

A stable and settled Afghanistan, where the rank and file of the Taliban has given up violence against the government, and the people, cut all links with terrorism, subscribe to the values of the Afghan Constitution and its laws, and where development is the hard rationale, is what we seek and quest for. It is important also that for such a structure to be durable and enduring, Afghanistan's neighbours, and regional partners, will need to be in the picture – both by consultation and by adherence to the principle

of non-interference in the country's affairs, ensuring that it thrives as a trade and transit hub for the region, and by eradicating transnational terrorism.

While moving forward on the sensitive issues on reintegration and reconciliation, we need to guard against impulses to arrive at quick-fix solutions. Against the backdrop of today's worrying security situation, these issues need to be tackled with prudence, the benefit of hindsight, foresight and caution.

Mr. President,

In India's efforts towards stabilization of Afghanistan, the focus has been on developmental and humanitarian work to assist the Afghan people as they build a peaceful, stable, inclusive, democratic and pluralistic nation. We have sought to assist Afghanistan within our means. Our US \$ 1.3 billion assistance programme is aimed at building infrastructure, capacity building in critical areas of governance, health, education, agriculture etc. and generating employment. Last year, over 300,000 Afghans, mainly women and children, were provided free medical treatment at the Indian Medical Missions in Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif. The economy of battle-scarred Nimroz province was transformed with the building of the Zaranj-Delaram highway and the homes of the people of Kabul have been lit after more than a decade by the Pul-e-Khumri transmission line from the Uzbek border.

Mr. President,

The international community as a whole has made a great contribution in assisting Afghanistan to stand on its feet. We welcome these efforts and are fully supportive of them. We support the good work done by UNAMA. For lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan, it is critical that the international community remains engaged in Afghanistan both on the security side as well as on development and capacity building efforts.

Thank you.

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