

STATEMENT BY MR. NIRUPAM SEN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, ON THREATS
TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY CAUSED BY TERRORIST ACTS AT
SECURITY COUNCIL ON MARCH 19, 2008

Mr. President,

At the outset, I thank you for scheduling this open debate on an issue that has unfortunately become a defining element of our world. Terrorism has grown steadily through the twentieth century to become one of the leading strategic, political and developmental challenges of the twenty-first century.

Mr. President,

India's advocacy of international cooperation in order to fight the threat of terrorism predates most measures taken by the Security Council or the General Assembly; indeed, it predates serious consideration of the issue of terrorism within the UN. This is because India has been, and unfortunately remains a victim of international terrorism. In less than 25 years, over 60,000 have been killed in various parts of India as a direct result of terrorism, quite apart from the concomitant impact upon our economy. India therefore has an overriding interest in greater and more meaningful international cooperation to counter terrorism. It also underscores the rationale behind our conviction that no political cause, no argument, no belief can or should be used to justify acts of terrorism. That Mahatma Gandhi preferred to call off his mass movement and postpone the independence of India rather than compromise with violence at Chauri Chaura gives us the right to say this. We continue to call upon the world to act as one in denying terrorists, their ideologues and financiers access to arms, funds, means of transportation of their deadly goods, as well as safe havens.

However, as an unfortunate but inevitable result of our tragic history of dealing with terrorism, India has accumulated the expertise and experience for doing so. Our own efforts utilize all available tools within the arsenal of a democratic nation, governed by the rule of law. They run the gamut of efforts from surveillance methods governed by law, monitoring of financial flows and effective legislation regarding dual use items, to old fashioned police investigation work. Yet we recognize that no matter how comprehensive the effort, there is always the chance

of one catastrophic failure. It is in recognition of this that we seek a comprehensive international effort to counter terrorism.

In that context, despite counter-terrorism being taken up more seriously by the UN in general and the Security Council in particular, there is limited evidence of a genuinely common effort to create a more unified international response to terrorism. We have argued for over a decade, and we continue to believe that agreement on a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) should have been a first step in any consolidated counter-terrorism efforts within the United Nations. Such a Convention would provide the legal framework for an effective counter-terrorism strategy. We remain convinced that a CCIT must be agreed upon if we are to have a strong interlocking network of member states, international organizations and specialized agencies functioning together in unison to counter terrorism. We do not need a philosophical definition of terrorism. Paragraph 1 of draft article 2 enunciates clearly the criminal law definition of terrorist acts. Current proposals address effectively the question of offences governed by International Humanitarian Law and those governed by the Convention. What is now needed, therefore, is the political will to conclude the Convention. The Security Council's efforts can be enduring on the basis of such a law made by the General Assembly.

Over and above our commitment to the early conclusion of a Comprehensive Convention, which we initiated in the 51st UN General Assembly, we see merit in a pragmatic approach to the various counter-terrorism mechanisms and elements that already exist. We have adopted such an approach in working with and supporting efforts of the Counter Terrorism Committee, the 1267 Committee and the 1540 Committee (we articulated our views at that time on Resolution 1540), as well as their expert panels. Not the least of these measures was welcoming a joint visit of experts coordinated by the CTED, which included experts from the Monitoring Team of the 1267 Committee and UNODC, to India in November 2006 and sharing our mutual experiences. Our approach is guided by the conviction that the sum of our collective efforts can indeed be greater than the total of each individual nation's part in the battle against terrorism.

Therefore, Mr. President, I should like to state for the record the following:

- India welcomes the revised Organizational Plan of the CTED, as contained in document S/2008/80. We hope that it will bring about greater flexibility of approach and effectiveness of operation.
- We also look forward to greater efforts to bring together inter-related aspects of the operational mechanisms of the 1267 Committee, the 1540 Committee and the CTC, and dovetailing these with the Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force. India hopes that all these efforts within the UN body will be integrated more closely with the core tasks being taken forward by specialized bodies such as UNODC, Interpol, ICAO, the World Maritime Authority etc.
- Therefore, India strongly affirms the importance of a collective effort to focus upon technical assistance in the larger struggle against terrorism; in helping

states implement the mandate of the CTC as well as other related instruments.

- India is willing to provide all assistance in the larger effort to counter the threat of terrorism. Our commitment to do so is already on record, in India's Fifth Report submitted to the CTC in March 2007; and we are willing to share information with other relevant UN mechanisms that work on these fields. We are willing to render such assistance bilaterally or multilaterally, especially in the instance of countries that are themselves not directly threatened by terrorism, but whose participation is vital to the success of the larger international effort.
- We would however urge that there be greater efforts to follow up on information obtained from member states as part of the effort against terrorism. Pooling our collective knowledge and expertise is desirable, but can only succeed when there is adequate evidence that it is both welcome and necessary.

Mr President,

The political and socio-economic programme of fundamentalists is always deeply reactionary and exploitative. History teaches that to prevent fundamentalist terrorist forces from occupying space for dissent, democratic and secular forces must be strengthened, not weakened. The larger effort to foster international cooperation requires greater cooperation between the members of the Security Council and the larger UN membership. We hope that today's exercise is the first of more efforts to build closer cooperation within the international system.

In conclusion, let me also thank Executive Director Mike Smith, both for his presentation today, and for the impressive vigour and commitment he has brought to his post. We wish him every success in making the CTED a responsive and flexible tool in the larger fight against terror.

[In Russian]: Mr. President, as countries that have long experience in dealing with the threat of terrorism, international cooperation remains essential.

I thank you Mr. President.

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