



INDIA भारत

Statement by

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Permanent Representative

On

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for
international peace and security

United Nations Security Council

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Mr. President

We live in times when the shadow of barbarism is not very far from us. This manifests itself sometimes in acts such as the dastardly attack on the Russian Federation's Ambassador to Turkey that we have seen today. It is also manifest in activities that are undertaken by designated terrorist groups in Afghanistan everyday.

2. Therefore, I thank you for organizing this quarterly debate on the situation in Afghanistan. We also thank the 3 briefers for outlining a diverse array of issues. I take this opportunity to thank Ambassador of New Zealand Gerard Van Boheman for his stewardship of the 1988 Sanctions Committee.

3. India welcomes the key message of SRSG Yamamoto highlighting the positive and supportive role that regional countries and neighbours of Afghanistan need to play. This was never as critical as it is today.

Mr President

4. Every time we discuss the situation in Afghanistan we face the dilemma depicted by the SRSG. While the international community re-commits to standing by the Afghan people, the number of Afghan civilian and security forces casualties keeps rising. While the Taliban sanctions regime remains split for more than five years, the designated terrorist group makes concerted effort to capture and hold territory. Therefore, for numerous Afghan women, men and children there is no respite from the plague of terrorism.

Mr. President

5. We need to ask ourselves whether what we are working on in Afghanistan is the wrong thing to be working on, or whether we are working on it in the wrong way. Since we all agree that supporting the people of Afghanistan is not the wrong thing, then the questions we need to ask ourselves should be related to our ways of going about it. What do we mean when we say we stand with the Afghan people? Are we doing it right? What is it that we are missing out on?

Mr. President

6. It is apparent that our efforts at rebuilding institutions, infrastructure and networks in Afghanistan are being undermined; schools are being destroyed; mosques bombarded and religious gatherings targeted. It is also evident that those who perpetrate these heinous crimes have survived and thrived only with support and sanctuaries on the outside.

7. Experience, as well as academic research, provides ample support for the assertion that conflicts in which foreign assistance is available to shadowy entities that fight legitimate State authorities tend to be more severe and last longer than other types of conflict. Therefore, if we are to bring sustainable peace to Afghanistan, groups and individuals that perpetrate violence against the people and the Government of Afghanistan must be denied safe havens and sanctuaries in Afghanistan's neighbourhood. We need to address, as an imperative, the support that terrorist organizations like the Taliban, Haqqani Network, Daesh, Al-Qaeda and its designated affiliates such as Lashkar-e-Toiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammed which operate entirely outside the fabric of international law draw from their shadowy supporters outside Afghanistan.

Mr. President

8. The outcome of the Heart of Asia Ministerial meeting held earlier this month in the ancient city of Amritsar was a mark of India's and the international community's commitment to Afghanistan. A key focus during India's co-chairmanship of the Heart of Asia process has been to bring to centre-stage the importance of connectivity for Afghanistan. A well-connected Afghanistan will be economically vibrant, prosperous and politically stable. Earlier this year, we achieved a milestone by signing the trilateral transit and transport agreement among India, Iran and Afghanistan for provision of year-round and reliable connectivity to Afghanistan via Chahbahar in Iran. There are many promising projects like the TAPI gas pipeline, TAT railway line and the CASA 1000. To achieve the benefits of these projects it is essential that trade and transit agreements that Afghanistan enters into are fully activated.

9. A well connected Afghanistan will have great potential to engage the energies of its youth and attract its talents back from foreign lands. To deny such an opportunity and connectivity to Afghanistan is to deny Afghanistan all opportunities of prosperity and peace that this entails. The connectivity that terror networks have established needs to be replaced by that of roads, trade networks and ideas for peace and prosperity. We need to remind ourselves of what the great son of Balkh, the poet Rumi, had once said "Every leaf that grows will tell you...What you sow will bear fruit. So if you have any sense my friend, don't plant anything but PEACE."

Mr. President

10. Afghanistan's National Unity Government has India's full support for strengthening its defense capabilities to fight terrorism directed against it. We believe that the path to reconciliation in Afghanistan should be through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process in adherence to the internationally accepted red lines, reflecting the aspirations of the people of Afghanistan. The international community needs also to send the right message. A message that makes it clear that we will neither roll over in the face of terror, nor will we allow the roll back of the achievements of the resolute people and Government of Afghanistan in the last decade and a half.

I thank you Mr President