

[Extract]

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[...]

The situation in Afghanistan

Mr. Ambassador Ricardo Alberto Arias

Permanent Representative of Panama to the United Nations

Mr. Arias (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Koenigs, for his briefing on the situation in Afghanistan, and congratulate him on his excellent work at the head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). UNAMA plays an invaluable role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, and we hope that it will continue to extend its assistance to all Afghan territory so as to bring peace dividends to a people that has known very little peace in recent decades.

We note with concern that acts of violence carried out by insurgents and terrorists have increased since 2006 and are clearly linked to criminal activities, institutional corruption and illegal drug trafficking. The Government of Afghanistan, with the ongoing and tireless support of the international community, must exercise firm political resolve to prevent further backsliding in terms of security. In that respect, we commend and support the Secretary-General's recommendation that Afghanistan and its neighbour Pakistan implement a joint strategy on cross-border peace and security.

Since our debate earlier this year, the security situation in the region has improved. It may be necessary, inter alia, to consider altering the strategy by which the international community is carrying out its mission. For example, in fighting insurgents and terrorists, the international forces execute a great many aerial attacks that have claimed high numbers of innocent civilian victims. It would be appropriate to find alternatives to that and any other policy that undermines the support and good will of the Afghan people for the presence of the international community.

We agree with the opinion expressed in the Secretary-General's report that re-establishing lasting security is a prerequisite of development and requires a multidimensional strategy coordinating military, police, political, and economic and social development activities. UNAMA and the International Security Assistance Force, as well as the coalition forces in Operation Enduring Freedom, in close coordination with the Government of Afghanistan and the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, are key components of that strategy.