

**74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
General Debate**

**INDIA
Right of Reply**

27 September 2019

Threat of unleashing nuclear devastation qualifies as brinksmanship, not statesmanship

Mr. President,

I take the floor to exercise India's right of reply to the statement made by the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

2. Every word spoken from the podium of this august Assembly, it is believed, carries the weight of history. Unfortunately, what we heard today from Prime Minister Imran Khan of Pakistan was a callous portrayal of the world in binary terms. Us vs Them; Rich vs Poor; North vs South; Developed Vs Developing; Muslims vs Others. A script that fosters divisiveness at the United Nations. Attempts to sharpen differences and stir up hatred, are simply put - "hate speech".

3. Rarely has the General Assembly witnessed such misuse, rather abuse, of an opportunity to reflect. Words matter in diplomacy. Invocation of phrases such as "pogrom", "bloodbath", "racial superiority", "pick up the gun" and "fight to the end" reflect a medieval mindset and not a 21st century vision.

4. Prime Minister Khan's threat of unleashing nuclear devastation qualifies as brinksmanship, not statesmanship.

5. Even coming from the leader of a country that has monopolized the entire value chain of the industry of terrorism, Prime Minister Khan's justification of terrorism was brazen and incendiary.

6. For someone who was once a cricketer and believed in the gentleman's game, today's speech bordered on crudeness of the variety that is reminiscent of the guns of Darra Adam Khel.

7. Now that Prime Minister Imran Khan has invited UN Observers to Pakistan to verify that there are no militant organisations in Pakistan, the world will hold him to that promise.

8. Here are a few questions that Pakistan can respond to as a precursor to the proposed verification.

- Can Pakistan confirm the fact that it is home to 130 UN designated terrorists and 25 terrorist entities listed by the UN, as of today?

- Will Pakistan acknowledge that it is the only Government in the world that provides pension to an individual listed by the UN in the Al Qaeda and Da'esh Sanctions list!
- Can Pakistan explain why here in New York, its premier bank, the Habib Bank had to shut shop after it was fined millions of dollars over terror financing?
- Will Pakistan deny that the Financial Action Task Force has put the country on notice for its violations of more than 20 of the 27 key parameters?
- And would Prime Minister Khan deny to the city of New York that he was an open defender of Osama bin Laden?

Mr. President,

9. Having mainstreamed terrorism and hate speech, Pakistan is trying to play its wild card as the newfound champion of human rights.

10. This a country that has shrunk the size of its minority community from 23% in 1947 to 3% today and has subjected Christians, Sikhs, Ahmadiyahs, Hindus, Shias, Pashtuns, Sindhis and Balochis to draconian blasphemy laws, systemic persecution, blatant abuse and forced conversions.

11. Their newfound fascination for preaching human rights is akin to trophy hunting of the endangered mountain goat - markhor.

12. Pogroms, Prime Minister Imran Khan Niazi, are not a phenomenon of today's vibrant democracies. We would request you to refresh your rather sketchy understanding of history. Do not forget the gruesome genocide perpetrated by Pakistan against its own people in 1971 and the role played by Lt. Gen A A K Niazi. A sordid fact that the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh reminded this Assembly about earlier this afternoon.

Mr. President,

13. Pakistan's virulent reaction to the removal of an outdated and temporary provision that was hindering development and integration of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir stems from the fact that those who thrive on conflict never welcome the ray of peace.

14. While Pakistan has ventured to upstream terrorism and downstream hate speech there, India is going ahead with mainstreaming development in Jammu and Kashmir.

15. The mainstreaming of Jammu & Kashmir, as well as Ladakh, in India's thriving and vibrant democracy with a millennia-old heritage of diversity, pluralism and tolerance is well and truly underway. Irreversibly so.

16. Citizens of India do not need anyone else to speak on their behalf, least of all those who have built an industry of terrorism from the ideology of hate.

I thank you, Mr. President.