

Only UN has legitimacy to act on threat to world peace: Annan

AFP, London

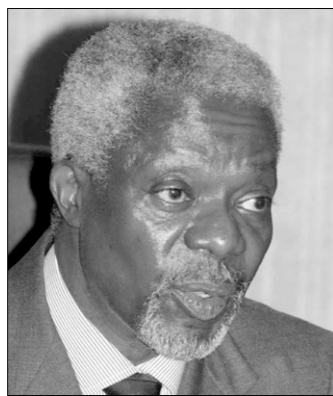
Only the UN Security Council can provide "the unique legitimacy that one needs to be able to act" when "trying to deal with the broader threat to international peace and security", UN Secretary General Kofi Annan told the BBC on Wednesday.

"Obviously even in the UN charter individual governments have the inherent right of self defence when they are attacked," Annan said on the anniversary of the September 11 attacks on the United States.

"But to contain the terrorists I submit that you need that essential international cooperation to make it effective... The threat we are dealing with is much broader. You need the United Nations to be effective."

"When one is trying to deal with the broader threat to international peace and security there is no alternative but to go through the council. It is only the council that can provide the unique legitimacy that one needs to be able to act."

Regarding the threat of unilateral military action by the United States against Iraq, Annan stressed that the



"council should have the political will to tackle the issue".

Any action, he said, should be "multilateral, sanctioned by the Security Council".

US President George W. Bush was Thursday due to state his case for action against Iraq in a speech to the UN General Assembly in New York.

He was expected to urge the United Nations to end Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's "decade of defiance" of UN disarmament rules, warning nuclear arms could soon be within the Iraqi leader's grasp, according to a senior White House official, speaking Tuesday.

Speaking on the same BBC radio programme as Annan, US Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton said the United States was not obliged under international law to seek a fresh UN resolution on Iraq before launching military action.

"Whether the president decides to seek another resolution from the Security Council is a matter of political judgement, but it's certainly not a matter of international legal necessity," Bolton said.

Nepal mulls imposing fresh emergency

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's caretaker prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba was to convene his top advisers Wednesday to consider reimposing emergency rule after massive attacks by Maoist rebels left more than 300 people dead, officials said.

Deuba on Tuesday toured the site of a Maoist raid in southwestern Nepal, in which defence ministry officials said 257 people died. He also headed west to Pokhara, the kingdom's second city, to meet with security officials.

"On his trip he discussed with local authorities ways to control the Maoists. He told them that if necessary they can impose curfews under existing anti-terrorism laws even without the emergency," an official close to Deuba said.

The premier was to convene his cabinet later Wednesday to consider reimposing emergency rule, which would give officials more leeway to impose curfews and to detain and interrogate suspected Maoists.

Raid on German mosque after bomb tip-off

REUTERS, Hamburg

German police said on Wednesday they were searching a mosque in Hamburg, where the main September 11 plotters once lived, after a tip off about a possible bomb on the anniversary of the attacks.

"We have launched a search," Bodo Franz, chief of the Hamburg police's investigative division, told Reuters. "There was a tip that there was a person there prepared to do something."

"It was apparently an Arab person," he said by telephone. "Nothing has been found yet."

The search is the latest in a series of security alerts and arrests in Germany ahead of the anniversary of the attacks on the United States, which were orchestrated by militants led by Mohamed Atta, who for years lived in Hamburg.

The El Nour mosque is situated close to the Al Kods mosque, where Atta and other key figures in the plot met and often prayed.

World commemorates Sept 11



AP, Tokyo

Spotlights evoking the World Trade Centre rose over Paris and Australians united to form a human Stars and Stripes, as dozens of countries began events commemorating the Sept 11 attacks on Wednesday.

As New Zealand became one of the world's first nations to begin commemorating the attacks, Prime Minister Helen Clark planted trees on the grounds of the U.S. Embassy in commemoration.

"This date has been forever etched into our memories," Clark said. "The world will never forget the tragedy which took place. Those attacks were acts of utterly incomprehensible violence which shook us all profoundly."

In Australia, flags flew at half staff and people began laying wreaths at makeshift memorials early Wednesday amid warnings of terrorist threats to Australian targets in East Timor.

In Surfers Paradise, an Australian vacation resort 560 miles north of Sydney, about 3,000 people wearing coloured T-shirts took to the beach to form a human American flag.

Australian officials said the country had closed its embassy in East Timor over what they termed were unconfirmed generic threats to Australian and UN interests.

In France, two powerful beams of light were projected into the sky over Paris Tuesday night to honour the memory of victims of the Sept 11 attacks.

"With this gesture, it will be the whole Parisian community who will pay homage to New Yorkers, and express its solidarity and its attachment to common values," Paris city hall said in a statement.

In Washington, Bush administration officials cited the threats against U.S. embassies in southeast Asia in raising the nation's terror alert to "code orange," its second-highest level.

German authorities raided a trading company Tuesday that a German official said once employed a suspected al-Qaida recruiter accused of drafting members of the terror cell that dispatched the Sept. 11 suicide hijackers, and Turkey was on alert for the possibility that militants linked to al-Qaida might be planning poison gas attacks.

Dua Al-Boyoumi participates in a Night of Remembrance and Reflection during a vigil sponsored by the Council on American-Islamic Relations at the US Capitol reflecting pool on Tuesday in Washington, DC. With fighters in the skies and missiles around the capital, the United States went on high alert as it prepared to mark the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks.

Kashmir minister, three others killed in attack

Rebels open fire on bus stand, 6 troops killed

AFP, Srinagar

A minister in Kashmir's state government was killed Wednesday with three others in an ambush on his motorcade by suspected Islamic rebels, police said.

Parliamentary affairs, or law, minister Mushtaq Ahmad Lone was travelling through the village of Rathnag in the northern Kupwara district to address an election rally when his motorcade went over a landmine, police sources said.

Gunmen then opened fire on the motorcade. An Indian army helicopter rushed to the spot to take him to hospital but the state minister died,

police said. Lone's driver and his bodyguard were also killed in the attack along with one other person who was not immediately identified, police said. Four other people were injured.

The assassination comes five days before the first round of voting for Indian Kashmir's assembly, when five districts including Kupwara will head to the polls.

The village of Rathnag is in Lone's home constituency of Lolab, where he had been running for re-election.

Islamic rebels fighting to end Indian rule in Kashmir have vowed to attack anyone participating in the

polls, while separatists have pledged to stay away from voting.

Meanwhile, suspected Islamic rebels killed six security personnel and a child Wednesday when they opened fire at a bus stand in Indian Kashmir, police said.

Gunmen surrounded the bus stand at the town of Surankote in Poonch district, some 210 km northwest of Kashmir's winter capital Jammu, and fired indiscriminately.

The victims included four soldiers of India's paramilitary Border Security Force, two policemen and a 12-year-old, police said. At least two other people were injured.



PHOTO: AFP

Pakistani paramilitary troopers run as they storm the hideout of the suspected militants during an encounter in the troubled southern city of Karachi on Wednesday. Pakistani police killed two suspected militants and arrested seven others after a fierce firefight in Karachi. The clash erupted as police raided a suspected terrorist hideout in the fashionable Defence Society neighbourhood.

2 militants, girl killed in clash with Pak cops

AFP, Karachi

Pakistani police killed two gunmen and arrested five after a fierce firefight in the port city of Karachi on Wednesday, officials said.

A girl aged four was also killed in the clash, which erupted after police raided a suspected terrorist hideout in the fashionable Defence Society neighbourhood.

A senior government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the men were Islamic militants with links to the al-Qaida terror network which is blamed for the September 11 attacks in the US.

Two militants died in the clash and five were arrested, Sindh province's police chief Kamal Shah told reporters.

The girl also died in the shootout, Shah said, while police evacuated a woman and her infant from the three-storey building.

Police said earlier the woman and baby had been held hostage by the militants.

Murtaza Bhutto proposed WTC attack in 1991: Carlos the Jackal

AFP, Cairo

Pakistani dissident Mir Murtaza Bhutto proposed the idea of using an airplane to hit targets in the United States as early as the spring of 1991, former terrorist Carlos the Jackal said in an interview published Wednesday.

Carlos, whose real name is Ilich Ramirez Sanchez and who is currently serving a life sentence for murder in France, told the Arabic language daily Al-Hayat that Bhutto vetted the idea as a response to US strikes in Iraq, at a meeting of "anti-imperialist organisations" at an undisclosed location.

"The martyr Mir Murtaza Bhutto, secretary general of the Pakistani Zulfikar Organization, raised the idea of hitting the World Trade Centre in New York with an airplane," Carlos said in a written response to questions submitted through his lawyer.

America needs partners to preserve peace: Bush

REUTERS, New York

President Bush on Wednesday tried to assuage global concerns about American unilateralism by saying the United States and its allies would defeat terrorism together.

"America needs partners to preserve the peace, and we will work with every nation that shares this noble goal," he said in an editorial in the New York Times as Americans were commemorating the more than 3,000 people who died a year ago in the Sept. 11 attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania.

The editorial came a day before Bush was expected to try to persuade the United Nations to approve military action against Iraq, which Washington accuses of seeking to develop weapons of mass destruction.

Bush said the country would use its status as the world's superpower to promote international order, but that it would not go it alone.

"We will use our position of

unparalleled strength and influence to build an atmosphere of international order and openness in which progress and liberty can flourish in many nations," said Bush.

The president will spend the day at observances in Washington, New York and Pennsylvania to mark the anniversary of the attacks that Washington has blamed on the Islamic extremist group al-Qaida led by Osama bin Laden.

"With our allies, we must also confront the growing threat of regimes that support terror, seek chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, and build ballistic missiles. On this issue, the consequences of inaction could be catastrophic," he said.

Foreign leaders have urged Bush to seek UN approval before any action against Baghdad and have criticised the United States for what it perceives as arrogance in not consulting with allies.

Bush on Tuesday said he would take a message to the United Nations that the world must work together to deal with Iraq.

Bush is also seeking to persuade the US Congress that Iraq poses a threat to world peace, but many congressional leaders have said that they are not yet convinced.

"We must deny terrorists and their allies the destructive means to match their hatred," Bush said in the editorial.

He also warned again, as he has in the past, that the U.S. war on terrorism, whose opening salvo was against the Taliban and al-Qaida in Afghanistan, may last a long time.

"The defence of peace is a difficult struggle of uncertain duration," he said.

"America, along with our allies, is relentlessly pursuing terrorist networks in every part of the world to disrupt their planning, training and financing," he said.

The United States went onto its second highest state of alert on Tuesday, responding to intelligence data that new attacks were possible, particularly in the Middle East and South Asia.

Arafat sets date for polls Israeli forces raid Gaza

AFP, Ramallah

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on Wednesday set January 20 as the date for new polls, thereby making his cabinet a caretaker government and automatically dodging a possible no confidence vote in the new line-up, a senior official said.

"Arafat is to issue a decree on the election date, meaning automatically that the cabinet is a caretaker government which does not need a confidence vote," said Rawfi Fatukh, secretary general of the Palestinian parliament.

He said the date set for the presidential and parliamentary polls was January 20.

The move will mean Arafat can sidestep a potentially embarrassing confidence vote on his new cabinet, whose line-up has dissatisfied members of his own Fatah movement.

Fatukh said the vote could still be held but the results would not affect the cabinet, which Arafat reshuffled in May as part of a promised reform programme, under growing pressure from home and abroad.

The decision was later formally announced to the assembled deputies by parliamentary speaker Ahmed Qorei.

"Palestinians will vote for their next president and members of parliament on January 20," he said, setting a nine-day period starting from December 14 for candidates to register.

"The current government is therefore transitional," he told the West Bank deputies, whose Gaza colleagues participated by video link-up, having stayed away in protest at Israel's ban on some of them attending.

Israel forbade 14 deputies from attending, accusing them of "terrorist" connections, although Palestinian officials said one of them was dead and another no longer a parliamentarian.

Reuters adds: Israeli tanks rolled into a Palestinian-controlled area of the northern Gaza Strip early on Wednesday, triggering sporadic gunbattles before withdrawing several hours later, witnesses said.

The army said it arrested four men during the raid in the village of Beit Hanoun, north of Gaza City, and arrested six people in other parts of Gaza during the night.

A Reuters correspondent in Beit Hanoun said about 25 tanks and bulldozers rumbled into the village under cover of darkness, drawing fire from Palestinian gunmen.

Survivors blast official response to train crash

AFP, Rafiqanj

Survivors of the derailment of a high-speed train in eastern India were counting their blessings Wednesday but lashed out at officials for a haphazard response to the crash that killed at least 80 people.

Railways officials said 67 bodies were pulled out of the wreckage of the Rajdhani Express, India's most elite train, which was travelling from Calcutta to New Delhi. Another 13 people died in area hospitals, which survivors blasted for shoddy care.

Railway Minister Nitish Kumar suspected sabotage in the derailment, saying fish plates supporting the lines had been removed.

Some officials blamed Maoist guerrillas active near the scene of the disaster in Bihar, one of India's poorest and most caste-polarized states.

Saibal Das said he was thrown out of his seat as the train crashed late Monday. There was a large bang as the carriages plunged into darkness.

"It was God's will that somebody's mobile phone hit my chest," said Das, who works for the newsmagazine India Today. "I grabbed onto it to inform my rela-

tives I was safe."

Hundreds of passengers on the train, which was carrying 535 people, were taken to hospitals around the remote site, but complained the government response was slow and inadequate.

At the Rafiqanj Primary Health Centre, about one and a half kilometers (one mile) from the disaster, injured passengers waited for treatment for hours.

Sanjay Sorit of Calcutta remembered heavy rain falling when the train derailed. One of the carriages had fallen into the Dhabri river, swollen by months of torrential rains.

"We all waited in utter fear and helplessness for official relief to arrive," he said. "That finally came at around 3:00 am, five hours later." Sorit is most thankful not to government agencies but to residents living around the crash site.

"The villagers rushed in for help in the hundreds. Even the non-governmental organisations were fast enough to come and pull out the survivors from the debris, but the rail and police teams came five hours later.

"Is this the disaster management structure of the government?"

Turmoil on the markets
Dow Jones index chart showing a sharp decline from Sept 01 to Sept 02.

September 11, 2001
3,052 dead
President Bush promises to find and punish the perpetrators

September 13
Osama bin Laden denounced as suspect n°1

September 14
The inquiry
The FBI mobilises 7,000 people

October 7
Strikes against Afghanistan

13 November
Fall of Kabul

December 11
Zacarias Moussawi arrested in flight school, first and only person charged by the US

December
Taliban regime falls

December 22
Richard Reid allegedly tries to detonate explosives in his shoe on a Paris-Miami flight (trial planned Nov 4 2002)

January 2002
600 prisoners
Suspected Taliban or al-Qaida members transferred to the US base at Guantanamo

January 29
"Axis of evil"
President Bush denounces Iran, Iraq and North Korea and sends troops to Georgia and the Philippines

August
Bush accuses Iraq of "hostile acts" against US interests