

**PERMANENT MISSION OF TURKEY
TO THE OSCE**

ENGLISH only

**Statement by Ambassador Ömür Orhun,
Permanent Representative of Turkey to the OSCE,
at the OSCE Permanent Council
(Vienna, 25 March 2004)**

Mr. Chairman,

As I mentioned in this room before, I am not a representative of Islam, nor can I be. I represent a secular country whose greater part of population confess Islam. My remarks should be considered within this context.

Mr. Chairman,

The Turkish Government and for that matter the Turkish people in general condemned, in no uncertain terms, the atrocious terrorist attacks in Madrid. We express our solidarity with Spain once again.

There is no doubt that terrorism is an affront and threat to democracy, human rights and human dignity, economic and social development and orderly conduct of human relations. As such, it is the duty of all to fight terrorism for whatever reason such acts are perpetrated anywhere and by whomever. There is no excuse for terrorism. This is also a reflection of our own policy.

However, in the post-Madrid stage, I regretfully notice a repeated tendency to equate violence and terrorism with a religion, namely Islam, especially in the mass media. Terms such as "Islamic terrorism" is unfortunately abundant.

The impression one might derive from such remarks, although I am sure those penholders have no such intention, might be that the cause of all violence, the cause of all terror are Muslims in general.

As I said before, this might not be the intention. However, I believe it would be wrong and a disservice to the family of countries we collectively represent if we even inadvertently leave the impression of condemning the totality of adherents of a religion as violent, terrorist or otherwise unfit to our civilized world.

Mr. Chairman,

It is evident that some evil forces are indeed trying to create a climate of clash of cultures or religions. We must not fall into this trap. Fighting and fighting most forcefully with everything and anything associated with terrorism must not turn into a blind Muslim bashing.

Our ultimate aim is and should continue to be to create an international environment of stability, cooperation, tolerance, understanding and respect, especially respect to the 'other'.

If somebody or a group of individuals resort to violence or terrorism, we should condemn them and we should deal with them energetically, not because of their race, color or belief, but because of their deeds.