

### 3rd Session

As address to the United Nations General Assembly in Paris,

November 3, 1948

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To the United Nations

I am grateful for the opportunity that has been given to me to address this great Assembly. I feel a little embarrassed and a little overwhelmed by this occasion, because this Assembly represents the world community, and whether we who are present here are big men and women or small, we represent a mighty cause and something of the greatness of that falls upon us too, and makes us, for the moment, greater perhaps than we are.

Therefore, in venturing to address this Assembly, I feel embarrassed. You have been dealing with intricate and difficult problems, and I do not, and I would not, venture on this occasion to say anything about those great problems that confront you. You can carry the burdens and sorrows of the world. But I have often wondered whether, in dealing with those problems, the approach that is normally made to them is the right one. The Charter of the United Nations has laid down in noble language the principles and the purposes of this great organisation. I do not think it would be possible to improve upon that language.

The objectives are clear; our aim is clear; and yet, in looking at that aim, we lose ourselves often, if I may venture to say so, in smaller matters and forget the main objective that we were looking at. Sometimes it seems that the objective itself gets a little clouded.

I come from a country which, after a long struggle, though that struggle was a peaceful struggle, attained her freedom and her independence. In these long years of struggle we were taught by our great leader, never to forget not only the objectives we had, but also the methods whereby we should achieve those objectives.

Always he laid stress on this, that it was not good enough to have a good objective, that it was equally important that the means of attaining those objectives were good; means were always as important as ends.

You will permit me to repeat that here, because I am convinced that, however good the ends, the larger ends of the United Nations, or the lesser objectives which we may from time to time have before us, either as individual nations or as groups of nations, it is important that we should remember that the best of objectives may not be reached if our eyes are bloodshot and our minds clouded with passion.

Therefore, it becomes essential for us, for a while, to think more of how we are doing things than what we are aiming at, even though we should never forget what we are aiming at. It becomes necessary for us always to remember the principles and the purposes for which this great Assembly was formed.

Now, a mere repetition of those principles and purposes would perhaps indicate to us how sometimes, with passion and prejudice, we swerve away from that path. This Assembly took shape after two mighty wars and as a consequence of those wars. What has been the lesson of those wars? Surely the lesson of those wars has been that out of hatred and violence you will not build peace. It is a contradiction in terms. The lesson of history, the long course of history, and more especially the lesson of the last two great wars which have devastated humanity, has been that out of hatred and violence only hatred and violence will come. We have got into a cycle of hatred and violence, and not the most brilliant debate will get you out of it, unless you look some other way and find some other means. It is obvious that if you continue in this cycle and have wars which this Assembly was especially meant to avoid and prevent, the result will not only be tremendous devastation all over the world, but non-achievement by any individual Power or group of its objective.

How, then, are we to proceed? It may be that it is difficult to get this hatred and prejudice and fear out of our minds.

Nevertheless, unless we try to proceed in this way, to cast out this fear, we shall never succeed. Of that I am quite convinced.

You meet here, representatives of all nations of the world, or nearly all. Inevitably, you have behind you and before you the immediate great problems that confront more especially Europe, which has suffered so much.

May I say, as a representative from Asia, that we honour Europe for its culture and for the great advance in human civilisation which it represents? May I say that we are equally interested in the solution of European problems; but may I also say that the world is something bigger than Europe, and you will not solve your problems by thinking that the problems of the world are mainly European problems? There are vast tracts of the world which may not in the past, for a few generations, have taken much part in world affairs. But they are awake; their people are moving and they have no intention whatever of being ignored or of being passed by.

That is a simple fact I think we have to remember, because unless you have the full picture of the world before you, you will not even understand the problem, and if you isolate any single problem in the world from the rest, you do not understand the problem. Today I do venture to submit that Asia counts in world affairs.

Tomorrow it will count much more than today. Asia till recently was largely a prey to imperial domination and colonialism; a great part of it is free today, part of it still remains unfree; and it is an astonishing thing that any country should still venture to hold and to set forth this doctrine of colonialism, whether it is under direct rule or whether it is indirectly maintained in some form or other. After all that has happened, there is going to be no mere objection to that, but active objection, an active struggle against any and every form of Colonialism in any part of the world. That is the first thing to remember.

We in Asia, who have ourselves suffered all these evils of colonialism and of imperial domination, have committed ourselves inevitably to the freedom of every other colonial country. There are neighbouring countries of ours in Asia with whom we are intimately allied. We look at them with sympathy; we look at their struggle with sympathy. Any Power, great or small, which in that way prevents the attainment of the freedom of those peoples does an ill turn to world peace.

Great countries like India who have passed out of that colonial stage do not conceive it possible that other countries should remain under the yoke of colonial rule.

There is another problem which we in Asia regard as a vital problem, and it is a question to which I want to draw attention: that is the question of racial equality, which is something which is laid down in the provisions of the United Nations Charter. It is well to repeat that, because after all this question of racial equality has frequently been spoken about in the Assembly of the United Nations.

I do not think I need dwell on any particular aspect of that question, but I would remind this Assembly of the world-wide aspect of this question. Obviously there are large regions of the world which have suffered from this question of racial inequality. We also feel that there is no part of the world where it can be tolerated in the future, except perhaps because of superior force. If racial inequality is practised, if it is a menace to world peace and if it violates the principles of the United Nations Charter, to tolerate it is obviously to sow the seeds of conflict. The effects of this inequality in the past have made themselves felt in Asia, Africa and other parts of the world much more than in Europe, leading towards a conflict in the future, and it is a problem which, if it is not properly understood, will not be solved.

It is a strange thing that when the world lacks so many things, food and other necessities in many parts for the world and people are dying from hunger, the attention of this Assembly of Nations

is concentrated only on a number of political problems. There are economic problems also. I wonder if it would be possible for this Assembly to take a holiday for a while from some of the acute political problems which face it, and allow men's minds to settle down and look at the vital and urgent economic problems, and look at places in the world where food is lacking.

I feel that today the world is tied up in fears and apprehensions, some of them justified no doubt. But where a person feels fear, bad consequences and evil consequences follow. Fear is not a good companion. It is surprising to see that this sense of fear is pervading great countries-fear, and grave fear of war, and fear of many things. Well, I think that it is admitted, or it will be admitted, that no aggression of any kind can be tolerated, because the very idea of aggression must upset the balance and lead to conflict. Aggression of every type must be resisted.

There are other forms of fear; there is the fear of war. In existing circumstances it is difficult for people to say that they will not defend themselves, because if there is fear of aggression one has to defend oneself against aggression. We have to defend ourselves, but even in defending ourselves, we must not submit ourselves to this Assembly without clean hands. It is easy to condemn people. Let us not do so. Who are there without blame, who cannot themselves be condemned? In a sense, of us all who are gathered here today in this continent of Europe, are there any who have not been guilty in many ways? We are all guilty men and women. While we are seeking points where error occurs, we should not forget that there is not one of us who is exempt from blame.

If we proceed to this problem, and discuss in peace the psychology of fear, if we realize the consequences of what is happening, it is possible that this atmosphere of fear may be dissipated. Why should there be this fear of war? Let us prepare ourselves against any possible aggression, but let no one think that any nation, any community can misbehave. The United Nations is here to prevent any fear or hurt, but at the same time let us banish all thought of an aggressive attitude whether by word or

deed. However, I feel that few of us can altogether avoid this attitude, whether is it in course of discussions before this Assembly or elsewhere.

One tries to make one's points by this sort of language. It is always easy to make one's points in the course of a discussion, but there always rests a bitterness which complicates the problems still further. As I have already said, I ask this Assembly to remember that such great problems cannot be solved if our eyes are bloodshot and our minds are obscured by passion.

I have no doubt that this Assembly is going to solve our problems. I am not afraid of the future. I have no fear in my mind, and I have no fear, even though India, from a military point of view, is of no great consequence. I am not afraid of the bigness of great Powers, and their armies, their fleets and their atom bombs. That is the lesson which my Master taught me. We stood as an unarmed people against a great country and a powerful empire. We were supported and strengthened, because throughout all this period we decided not to submit to evil, and I think that is the lesson which I have before me and which is before us today. I do not know if it is possible to apply this to the problems which face the world today. It is a terrible problem, but I think if we banish this fear, if we have confidence, even though we may take risks of trust rather than risk violent language, violent actions and in the end war, I think those risks are worth taking.

In any event, there are risks-and great risks. If it is a question of taking risk why take risks which inevitably lead to greater conflict? Take the other risks, while always preparing yourself to meet any possible contingency that may arise.

It is perhaps not very proper for me to address this great Assembly in such matters, because I have not been associated with it nor with all these different problems in any intimate degree. However, there would have been no point in my addressing you merely to repeat certain pious phrases. I feel strongly about this matter, and that is why I should like to present the views

and wishes of the Indian people. And the Indian people happen to be three hundred and thirty millions in number; it is well to remember that. We have had a year of freedom and a year of difficulty. We have overcome many of those difficulties and we shall overcome the others. We propose to go ahead at a rapid pace. We propose to build and construct and be a power for peace and for the good of the world. We propose to meet every aggression, from whatever quarter it comes, in every possible way open to us.

However, we do not think that the problems of the world or of India can be solved by thinking in terms of aggression or war or violence. We are frail mortals, and we cannot always live up to the teaching of the great man who led our nation to freedom. But that lesson has sunk deep into our souls and, so long as we remember it, I am sure we shall be on the right path. And, if I may venture to suggest this to the General Assembly, I think that if the essentials of that lesson are kept in mind, perhaps our approach to the problems of today will be different; perhaps the conflicts that always hang over us will appear a little less deep than they are and in fact gradually fade away.

I should like to state to this General Assembly, on behalf of my people and my Government, that we adhere completely and absolutely to the principles and purpose of the United Nations Charter and that we shall try, to the best of our ability, to work for the realization of those principles and purposes.

In conclusion, may I congratulate the General Assembly on the Resolution introduced by the delegation of Mexico which it has just passed? It is certainly a great Resolution. If the General Assembly follows up that Resolution, it will go a long way on the road toward peace and the solution of the problems that are before us. We may not solve those problems. No one can be optimistic enough to think that all problems will fade away simply if we feel good; that is not what I mean to say. The problems are difficult and intricate and they will take a lot of solving. But I do feel that our approach to those problems should not be the approach of anger and passion and fear. Then, perhaps,

the problems will gradually appear in a different light. Perhaps, we shall understand the other side better; perhaps, the fear of one another will grow less in our minds, and then a solution may come. At any rate, even if the solution does not come, this pall of fear that surrounds us will grow less, and that in itself will be a partial solution of the world problem.