

Speech by Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru in the United Nations
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Towards A World Community

The United Nations has grown in the eleven years of its existence. This year, particularly, it has assumed an even more important position in world affairs than previously. Of course, even if the United Nations did not do anything wonderful, the mere fact of the United Nations itself has been of great significance to the world.

But recently the United Nations has shown that it can face problems courageously and deal with them with a view to their ultimate solution. Perhaps, of the many things that have happened in recent years, this is the most hopeful. It may be that the United Nations decides something occasionally which is not agreeable to some of us. That is bound to happen. But the point is that it provides a forum like this, representing the world community, which can deal with the problems and, if not solve them all at once, can positively try to solve them and ultimately, I hope, succeed.

In spite of the difficulties and the apparent conflicts, gradually the sense of a world community conferring together through its elected representatives is not only developing but seizing the minds of people all over the world. That is a great event. I hope that, gradually, each representative here, while obviously not forgetting the interests of his country, will begin to think that he is something more than the representative of his country, that he represents, in a small measure perhaps, the world community.

Quite apart from the problems which we have to face, an aspect which worries me often is the manner of facing these problems. It is because of that that I welcome this development of a sense of facing the problems from the larger point of view of the world and of the principles which are laid down in the United Nations Charter which should gradually be translated into effect.

You will forgive me if I refer to something which has very powerfully influenced my own country. I represent a generation in my country which struggled for freedom, and in a particular way, under the guidance of

Mahatma Gandhi. The one major lesson that Gandhiji impressed upon us, in season and out of season, was how to do things, apart from what we did. Objectives and ends we all have, but what is important is how to proceed in attaining an objective so as not to create a fresh problem in the attempt to solve one problem; never to deal even with the enemy in such a way as not to leave a door open for reconciliation, and for friendship.

In this respect, our country and the United Kingdom did set a good example when we came to an agreement resulting in the independence and freedom of India, and resulting, further, in friendship between the two countries. It is rather a unique example that we who, for generations past, had come into conflict with each other, with resultant feelings of ill-will and hostility, nevertheless-having solved the problem of the independence of India-could forget that past of hostility and be friends. Credit for this is due to both the parties, but, to some extent, is certainly due to the manner of approach that we had under the guidance of Gandhiji. There were many occasions in India when there was tremendous anger and bitterness at something that had been done: our people may have been shot down or beaten down in the public streets.

But on no occasion, even when passions were excited, do I remember an Englishman being unable to walk unharmed through even a hostile crowd in India. That is rather remarkable. I do not say that Indians are more peaceful or better than others. They are as feeble specimens of humanity under stress and strain as any, but have had this repeated lesson driven into their heads. Once or twice, when our people misbehaved,

Gandhiji took a step which enraged us younger people at the time. He stopped the whole movement. He said: "You have misbehaved. Stop it". I do feel that there is something in it, whether

dealing with national or international problems. Wars come, and whether wars have been good or bad may be argued. But after the war we often find that the problems that we have to face are more difficult than those before the war. The problems have not been solved, even though victory has come. The question, therefore, is to solve problems and not have perhaps even more difficult problems afterwards.

We cannot afford to take a short-term view. We must look ahead. The only way to look ahead assuredly is for some kind of a world order, One World, to emerge. If that is so, nothing should be done, even in the excitement of the moment, which comes in the way of the evolution of that order. Nothing should be done which increases hostility, hatred and bitterness. There is plenty of hatred and bitterness in the world today.

We all feel it. We cannot become angels, nevertheless our actions in a larger way as individuals and as nations might perhaps be so controlled, without giving up a single principle or opinion that we may hold, as not to make the path of reconciliation difficult.

Recently we have had, apart from the normal major problems of the world, two developments, which have engaged the attention of this august Assembly. Whether it was in Egypt, or in Hungary, both were very important and very unfortunate happenings, yet perhaps, having an element of good in them too, not in the act itself but in the consequences.

Many things have emerged from these which personally I welcome. The one big thing that has emerged is that world opinion represented in the United Nations Assembly, and elsewhere, is today a strong enough factor not to tolerate what it considers wrong. That is a very important factors, which in future will probably deter or make more difficult any such aberrations from the path of rectitude by any nation. Every country, weak or strong, will have to think twice before it does something which enrages world opinion. That itself shows the development of some kind of a conscience for the world.

Wars and other conflicts take place because essentially something happens in the minds of men. In the constitution of UNESCO it is stated that wars begin in the minds of men. Therefore, it becomes important that any decision we may arrive at must not lead to greater bitterness. The attempt should be to solve the problems and not merely to exhibit our anger at something that has happened; although there may be cause for anger and annoyance. We are working for the future. That future can only be of co-operation between countries based on freedom of nations and freedom of individuals.

In regard to the events in Egypt and Hungary which are being dealt with by the Assembly, I can offer no suggestion except what I have said by way of an approach to these problems: that is, the way of tolerance. Tolerance does not mean passivity. It means something active. It does not mean forgetting any principle that we stand for, and is laid down in the Charter. It is of the greatest importance that the United Nations, as all of us, should keep in mind the Charter, which is the basis.

It may be that we cannot give effect to the Charter quickly because the world is imperfect. Nevertheless, we should move in that direction step by step. The first thing to remember and to strive for is to avoid a situation getting worse and finally leading to a major conflict, which means the destruction of all the values one holds.

Because of the development of various new types of weapons, war has really become an impossible proposition for the world or for any sane country. Wars have been terribly bad previously, and we have seen that wars have not solved any question. Negatively, they might have done something; positively, they have not solved anything.

The positive side consists in working actively for peaceful solutions based on principles and at the same time based on the future co-operation of the world. We have to live at peace with our neighbours. Today, with the various developments, every country is practically the neighbour of the other. Therefore, we

have to work for co- operation among all countries of the world.

Unfortunately, we have had what is called the cold war. The cold war is better than a hot war or a shooting war. But the idea of the cold war is the very negation of what the United Nations stands for. It is a negation of what the constitution of UNESCO says: that wars begin in the minds of men. Cold wars mean nourishing the idea of war in the minds of men. Gandhiji was devoted to non-violence and preached this principle all through his life, and yet he said: "If you have a sword in your mind, it is better to use it than to nurse and nourish it in your mind all the time. Take it out, use it and throw it away, instead of being frustrated in yourselves and always thinking of the sword or the use of the sword and yet superficially trying to avoid it."

I submit to you that this idea of the cold war is essentially and fundamentally wrong. It is immoral. It is opposed to all ideas of peace and co-operation. Therefore, let us be clear in our minds as to what the right way is.

We have, as we know, all kinds of military alliances. I am quite sure that at the moment, as we stand today, all these pacts and military alliances are completely out of place. They are unnecessary even from the point of view of those people who think they benefit from these. I may admit for the sake of argument that they were necessary at an earlier stage when conditions were different, but in the circumstances of today I do submit that these pacts and alliances do not add to the strength of any nation. They only create hostility, leading to a piling up of armaments and making disarmament more and more difficult. If it is our objective that we must have peace, then it follows necessarily that we must not have the cold war. If we must not have the cold war, it follows necessarily that we must not buttress our idea of peace by past military establishments and pacts and alliances. All this seems to me to follow logically.

I have no doubt that all the peoples of the world are passionately desirous of peace. I doubt if there are any people anywhere who desire war. Certainly the common man all over the

world desires peace passionately.

If that is so, why should we not follow the path of peace? Why should we be led away by fears, apprehensions, hatreds and violence?

We have seen and we know that the presence of foreign forces in a country is always an irritant; it is never liked by that country. It is abnormal and undesirable. It does not conduce even to producing that sense of security which it is meant to produce. With the methods of war developing today, any war which takes place is likely to be a world war, with missiles hurled from vast distances. In such a context, even the practice of having places dotted all over with armed forces and bases becomes unnecessary and is merely an invitation to some other party to do likewise, and to enter into competition in evil and wickedness.

How are we to face this problem? I know that we cannot put an end to it by passing a resolution, even in the United Nations General Assembly. However, if we are clear in our aims, we can work surely towards that end. Connected with the cold war is the very important problem of disarmament. We all know how difficult it is. I remember that long ago the League of Nations had a Preparatory Commission for Disarmament. It worked for years and produced dozens of fat volumes of arguments and discussions, which the League of Nations itself later considered. But these came to nothing.

No manner of disarmament can make a weak country strong or a non-industrial country the equal of an industrial country. Nor can it make a country which is not scientifically advanced the equal of a country which is. We can, however, lessen the chances of war and the fear of war through disarmament. Ultimately, the entire question is a question of confidence and of lessening the fear of one another. Disarmament helps that purpose, although it does not equalize conditions. The dangers remain.

What possible steps can we take to create a climate of peace in the world? I feel that we must aim at two or three things.

One is that, according to the Charter, countries should be independent. The countries that are dominated by another country should cease to be so dominated. No country, or at any rate very few countries in the world, can be said to be independent in the sense that they can do anything they like. There are restraining factors, and quite rightly. In the final analysis, the United Nations itself is a restraining factor in regard to countries misbehaving or taking advantage of their so-called independence to interfere with the independence of others. Every country's independence should be limited in this sense. The first thing, however, is to have this process of the independence of countries extended until it covers the whole world.

Secondly, the maintenance of armed forces on foreign soil anywhere in the world is basically wrong, even though such maintenance is with the agreement of the countries concerned. Again, the notion that a country can ensure its security by increasing armaments is being exposed. Such a policy leads only to a race in armaments so that the balance of arms would vary but little. I do not see how we can progress towards peace so long as countries think in terms of speaking to each other from a position of strength. If we could remove these armies and, simultaneously, bring about some measure of disarmament, I believe, the atmosphere in the world would change completely. The natural result would be a much more rapid progress towards peace and the elimination of fear.

We have seen in the last two or three months how the world reacts to what it considers evil-doing. That is one of the healthiest signs apparent. A country which indulges in wrongful actions does so because it believes it can carry some part of world opinion with it. If it cannot, it is difficult for it to proceed. We have seen that even the biggest and the strongest of nations cannot impose their will against world opinion.

Therefore, we have developed a very strong protection against a country which acts wrongly.

I do feel strongly that the events in Egypt and Hungary have

introduced in their own way a certain new phase in historical development. This phase must be dealt with by this august Assembly and by all countries with understanding and sympathy, not with anger or with the desire to humiliate anybody. If our approach leads to something wrong or something that we do not want, then we have erred.

I submit to you that we have come to a stage in world affairs when a choice has to be made. We really cannot go on following the old path which leads to no particular destination except the preservation of force and hatred. To go back to what I ventured to suggest at the beginning, means are as important as ends. If the means are not right, the end is also likely to be not right, however much we may want it to be right.

Therefore, here especially, in this world assembly to which all the nations of the world look, I hope an example will be set to the rest of the world in thinking always about the right means to be adopted in order to solve our problems. The means should always be peaceful, not merely in an external way in the non-use of armaments, but in the approach of the mind. That approach will create a climate of peace which will help greatly in the solution of our problems.