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Statement by
Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru

I am a newcomer to this Assembly and not accustomed to its ways and conventions. I seek, therefore, the indulgence of the President, and the indulgence of the members of the Assembly for what I have to say.

I have listened attentively and with respect to many of the speeches here, and sometimes I have felt as if I were being buffeted by the icy winds of the cold war. Coming from a warm country, I have shivered occasionally at these cold blasts.

Sitting here in this Assembly chamber, an old memory comes back to me. In the fateful summer of 1938 I was a visitor at a meeting of the League of Nations in Geneva. Hitler was advancing then and holding out threats of war. There was mobilisation in many parts of Europe and the tramp of armoured men was heard, but even so the League of Nations appeared to be unconcerned with the shadow of war and discussed all manner of topics, but not the most vital subject of the day.

War did not start then. It was a year later that it descended upon the world with all its thunder and destructive fury. After many years of carnage that war ended and a new age, the atomic age, was ushered in by the terrible experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Fresh from these horrors the minds of men turned to thoughts of peace and there was a passionate desire to put an end to war itself.

The United Nations took birth on a note of high idealism, embodied in the noble wording of the Charter. There was this aspect of idealism, but there was also a realization of the state of the post-war world as it was then, and so provision was made in the structure of the Organization to balance certain conflicting urges. There were the permanent members of the Security Council and the provision for great-Power unanimity. All this was not very logical, but it represented certain realities of the world as it was. Because of this we accepted it. At that time many large areas in Asia, and even more so in Africa, were not represented in the United Nations, as they were under colonial domination. Since then the colonial part of the world has shrunk greatly and we welcome here many countries from Africa in their new freedom. The United Nations has become progressively more representative, but we must remember that even now it is not fully so.

Colonialism still has its strong footholds in some parts and racialism and racial domination are still prevalent, more especially in Africa.

During these past fifteen years the United Nations has often been criticized for its structure and for some of its activities. These criticisms have often had some justification behind them, but looking at the broad picture I think that we can definitely say that the United Nations has amply justified its existence and repeatedly prevented our recurrent crises from developing into war. It has played a great role, and it is a little difficult now to think of this troubled world without the United Nations. If it has defects, those defects lie in the world situation itself which, inevitably, it mirrors. If there had been no United Nations today, our first task would have been to create something of that kind, I should like, therefore, to pay my tribute to the

work of the United Nations as a whole, even though I might criticize some aspects of it from time to time.

The structure of the United Nations when it started was weighted in favour of Europe and the Americas. It did not seem to us to be fair to the countries of Asia and Africa, but we appreciated the difficulties of the situation and did not press for any changes. With the growth of the United Nations and with more countries coming into it, that structure today is still more unbalanced. Even so, we wish to proceed slowly and with agreement and not to press for any change which would involve an immediate amendment of the Charter and the raising of heated controversies. Unfortunately, we live in a split world which is constantly coming up against the basic assumptions of the United Nations. We have to bear with this and try to move ever more forward to that conception of full co- operation between nations. That co-operation does not and must not mean any domination of one country by another, any coercion or compulsion forcing any country to line up with another country. Each country has something to give and something to take from others. The moment coercion is exercised, that country's freedom is not only impaired but also its growth suffers.

We have to acknowledge that there is great diversity in the world and this variety is good and is to be encouraged, so that each country may grow and its creative impulse may have full play in accordance with its own genius.

Hundreds and thousands of years of past history have conditioned us in our respective countries, and our roots go deep down into the soil. If these roots are pulled out, we wither, but if those roots remain strong and we allow the winds from the four quarters to blow in upon us, then they will yield branch and flower and

fruit.

Many of the speakers from this forum have surveyed the world scene and spoken on a variety of problems. I should like to concentrate on what I consider to be the basic problem of all. If necessity arises we may, with the permission of the President, intervene later with regard to other problems. My own mind is naturally filled with the problems of my own country and our passionate desire to develop and put an end to the poverty and low standards which have been a curse to our hundreds of millions of people. To that end we labour, as indeed other under-developed countries are also doing.

Seated here in this tremendous and impressive city of New York, with all the achievements of modern science, technology and human effort, my mind often goes back to our villages in India and my countrymen who live there. We have no desire to imitate or to compete with any other country, but we are firmly resolved to raise the standards of our people and give them the opportunities to lead a good life. Even though this fills our minds, I do not propose to speak to you on this subject here because there is something else that is of even greater importance, that is, peace.

Without peace all our dreams vanish and are reduced to ashes. The Charter of the United Nations declares our determination "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", and "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights... and for these ends to practice tolerance and live together in peace and with one another as good neighbours".

The main purpose of the United Nations is to build up a world

without war, a world based on the co-operation of nations and peoples. It is not merely a world where war is kept in check for a balancing of armed forces. It is much deeper than that. It is a world from which the major causes of war have been removed and social structures built up which further peaceful co-operation within a nation as well as between nations.

In the preamble to the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization it is stated that wars begin in the minds of men. That is essentially true, and ultimately it is necessary to bring about this change in our minds and to remove fears and apprehensions, hatred and suspicions.

Disarmament is a part of this process for it will create an atmosphere helpful to co-operation. But it is only a step towards our objective, a part of the larger effort to rid the world of war and the causes of war. In the present context, however, disarmament becomes of very special importance for us all, overriding all others. But we must always remember that even in pursuing disarmament we have to keep in view our larger purpose.

For many years past there has been talk of disarmament, and some progress has undoubtedly been made in so far as plans and proposals are concerned. But still we find that the armaments race continues, and so also the effort to find ever more powerful engines of destruction. Fear and hatred overshadow the world. If even a small part of this effort was directed to the search for peace, probably the problem of disarmament would have been solved by this time. Apart from the moral imperative of peace, every practical consideration leads us to that conclusion, for as everyone knows, the choice today in this nuclear age is one between utter annihilation and the destruction of civilisation, or of some way to have peaceful coexistence between nations.

There is no middle way.

The world consists of a great variety of nations and peoples differing in their ideas and urges and in their economic development. All of them desire peace and progress for their people, and yet many of them are afraid of each other and therefore cannot concentrate on the quest of peace. We must recognize this variety of opinion and objectives in the world and not seek to coerce or compel others to function according to our own particular way. The moment there is an attempt at coercion, there is fear and conflict and the seeds of war are sown. That is the basic philosophy underlying the attempt to avoid military or other violent methods for the solution of problems. That is the main reason which impels those countries who are called "unaligned" to avoid military pacts.

If war then is an abomination and the ultimate crime which has to be avoided and combated, then we must fashion our minds and policies accordingly and not hesitate because of our fears to take steps forward. There may be risks but the greatest risk is to allow the present dangerous drift to continue. To achieve peace we have to try to develop a climate of peace and tolerance and to avoid speech and action which tend to increase fear and hatred.

It may not be possible to reach full disarmament in one step, though every step should be conditioned to that end. Much has already been done in these discussions of disarmament; but the sands of time run out and we dare not play about with this or delay its consideration. That, indeed, is the main duty of the United Nations today, and if it fails in this, the United Nations fails in its main purpose.

We live in an age of great revolutionary changes brought about by the advance of science and technology. Therein lies hope for the world and also the danger of sudden death. Because of these advantages the time we have for controlling the forces of destruction is strictly limited. If within the next three or four years effective disarmament is not agreed to and implemented, then it may be too late and all the goodwill in the world will not be able to stop the drift to certain disaster. We may not therefore delay or postpone the consideration of this vital problem.

In the context of things today, two great nations, the United States and the Soviet Union, hold the key to war and peace. theirs is a great responsibility. But every country, small or big, is concerned in this matter of peace and war and therefore every country must shoulder this responsibility and work to this end.

It is easy to criticize the action or inaction of any country; but this criticism does not help us much; it only increases tension and fear, and nations take up rigid attitudes from which it is difficult to dislodge them. The issues before the world are too vital to be left to a few countries only or to be affected by personal likes or dislikes. In order to deal with these big issues effectively we have to take big and impersonal views. It is only the United Nations as a whole that can ultimately solve this problem.

Therefore, while all efforts towards disarmament must be welcomed, the United Nations should be closely associated with them. The question of disarmament has been considered at various levels. There is general disarmament and the ending of text

explosions of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons. So far as test explosions are concerned, considerable progress has been made by the Conference1 which has been meeting in Geneva. Indeed, it would appear that an agreement has been reached there on many basic issues and only a little more effort is needed to complete this agreement. I suggest that a final agreement on the subject should be reached as early as possible. That is not, strictly speaking, disarmament, but undoubtedly any such agreement will bring a large measure of relief to the world.

Disarmament must include the prohibition of the manufacture, storage and use of weapons of mass destruction, as well as the progressive limitation of conventional weapons. It is well to remember that there is a great deal of common ground already covered, and the various proposals made by different countries indicate this common ground, but certain important questions have not yet been solved. Behind all this lies the fear of a surprise attack and of any one country becoming stronger than the other in the process of disarmament. It is admitted that disarmament should take place in such stages as to maintain broadly the balance of armed power. It is on this basis only that success can be achieved and this pervading sense of fear countered. ~ Conference on the Discontinuance on Nuclear Weapons. The Conference began its work on 31 October 1958.

There is an argument as to whether disarmament should precede controls or whether controls should precede disarmament. This is a strange argument, because it is perfectly clear that disarmament without controls is not a feasible proposition. It is even more clear that controls without disarmament have no meaning. The whole conception of controls comes in only because of disarmament. It is not proposed, I hope, to have controls of existing armaments and thus in a way to perpetuate those armaments. It must therefore be clearly understood that disarmament and a machinery for control must go together, and

neither of these can be taken up singly. It seems very extraordinary to me that great nations should argue about priorities in this matter and make that a reason for not going ahead. Therefore, both questions should be tackled simultaneously and as parts of a single problem .

Success may not come immediately, but it is, I think, of the greatest importance that there should be no gap, no discontinuity, in our dealing with this problem. Once there is discontinuity, this will lead to a rapid deterioration of the present situation and it will be much more difficult to start afresh.

A proposal [A/C.1/L.251] has been made that this question of disarmament should be referred to a group of experts. One can have no objection to such a reference, but in fact, experts have been considering this matter during the past many years and we have the advantage of their views. In any event, any reference to a committee of experts should not lead to any postponement of the major issue. Any such delay would be disastrous. Possibly while the major issues are being considered by the United Nations commissions or other committees, a reference of any particular special aspect might be made to the experts. What is important is that the United Nations at this present juncture should ensure that there is adequate machinery for promoting disarmament and this machinery should function continuously from now onwards.

The fear of surprise attacks or accidental happenings leading to dangerous consequences is undoubtedly present. That itself is a reflection of the climate of cold war in which unfortunately we are living. The best way to deal with this fear is to reduce this international tension and create an atmosphere which will make it very difficult for any surprise attack to take place. In that atmosphere, even some accidental happening may not lead to a

final crisis.

In addition to this such other steps as may be considered necessary for the prevention of surprise attacks should be taken. Thus, if there is an agreement on the subject of clear tests and the use of vehicles, immediately the danger from surprise attacks will be greatly lessened.

While disarmament is by far the most important and urgent problem before the United Nations and is a subject which brooks no delay, we have to face today a situation in Africa, in the Congo (Leopoldville), which has led the United Nations to assume heavy and novel responsibilities. Everyone present here, I am sure, warmly welcomes the coming of independence to many parts of Africa and to many peoples there who have suffered untold agony for ages past. We can see very well that the United Nations has shown its readiness to help them in various ways.

There are three aspects of these African problems. First, there is the full implementation of the independence and freedom that have been achieved. Secondly, there is the liberation of those countries in Africa which are still under colonial domination. This has become an urgent task. Today, some of these countries are almost cut off from the outside world and even news is not allowed to reach us. From such accounts as we have, the fate of the people there is even worse than we have known in other parts of Africa. Thirdly, there is the question of some countries in Africa which are independent, but where that freedom is confined to a minority and the great majority have no share in it and, indeed, are suppressed politically, socially and racially in defiance of everything that the United Nations and the world community stand for. Racialism and the doctrine of the master race dominating over others can be tolerated no longer and can

only lead to vast racial conflicts.

Recent developments in Africa have indicated the great danger of delay. It is not possible any longer to maintain colonial domination in any of these countries, and I think it is the duty and the basic responsibility of the United Nations to expedite this freedom. There is a tremendous ferment all over the continent of Africa, and this has to be recognized and appreciated and met with foresight and wisdom.

The question of Republic of the Congo has come before us especially and cast on the United Nations difficult responsibilities. The first thing that strikes one is the utter failure of the colonial system which left the Congo in its present state. Long years of colonial rule resulted in extracting vast wealth from that country for the enrichment of the colonial Power, while the people of the country remained utterly poor and backward.

What is the role of the United Nations in the Congo? The situation there is a complicated and frequently changed one, and frequently changing one, and it is not always easy to know what is happening. Disruptive forces have been let loose and have been encouraged by people who do not wish well to this newly independent state. Some footholds of the old colonialism are still engaged in working to this end. It appears that many thousands of Belgians, including military men, are still in the Congo, more especially in Katanga Province. Because of past colonial history, this is particularly unfortunate and is likely to be considered a continuation of occupation, by whatever name it may be called. Also, it is an encouragement to the disruption of the State. We must realize that it is essential to maintain the integrity of the Congo for, if there is disintegration of the State, this is bound to lead to internal civil war on a large

scale. There will be no peace in the Congo except on the basis of the integrity of the State. Foreign countries must particularly avoid any interference in these internal affairs or encouragement to one faction against another.

The role of the United Nations is a mediatory one: to reconcile and to help in the proper functioning of the Central government. Help in the development of the Congo is again a tremendous and long-term problem. Ultimately it is the people of the Congo who will have to produce their own leadership, whether it is good or bad. Leadership cannot be imposed, and any attempt to do so will lead to conflict. The United Nations obviously cannot act all the time as policeman, nor should any outside Power intervene. There is at present an elected Parliament in the Congo, though it does not appear to be functioning. I think that it should be the function of the United Nations to help this Parliament to meet and function so that, out of its deliberations, the problems of the Congo may be dealt with by the people themselves. Decisions must be those of the Parliament as representing the people of the Congo, and not of others. The functioning of Parliament may itself lead to the ironing out of internal differences. I hope that it will be possible soon for the Congo to take its place in the Assembly of the United Nations.

The Security Council has repeatedly laid stress on Belgian military personnel's leaving the Congo. These decisions have apparently not been given full effect. This is highly undesirable. It seems to me of great importance, in view both of past history and present conditions, that every type of Belgian military or semi-military personnel should leave the Congo. The General Assembly might well consider sending a delegation to the Congo to find out what foreign troops or other personnel, apart from those sent on behalf of the United Nations, are still there and how far they are interfering in local affairs.

Recently an emergency special session of the General assembly considered the situation in the Congo and made certain suggestions. I think that the resolution [1474 (ES-IV)] adopted by the emergency special session has rightly indicated the broad lines of approach, and the basic principles laid down in it should be implemented.

The Congo situation has emphasized the increasing responsibilities of the United Nations. Not only have military forces been sent there, but the problem of the development of a huge country has become partly the responsibility of the United Nations. These responsibilities cannot be shirked, and it may have to be considered how best to shoulder these responsibilities.

Two aspects have to be borne in mind. The broad policies in these grave matters must be laid down by the General Assembly or by the Security Council. In so far as executive action is concerned, it would not be desirable for the executive to be weakened when frequent and rapid decisions have to be made. That would mean an abdication of the responsibilities undertaken by the United Nations. If the executive itself is split up and pulls in different directions, it will not be able to function adequately or with speed. For that reason, the executive should be given authority to act within the terms of the directions issued. At the same time the executive has to keep in view all the time the impact of various forces in the world, for we must realize that unfortunately we live in a world where there are many pulls in different directions. The Secretary-General might well consider what organisational steps should be taken to deal adequately with this novel situation. It has been suggested that some structural changes should take place in the United Nations. Probably some changes would be desirable, as I have indicated above, and

because of the emergence of many independent countries is Asia and Africa. But any attempt at bringing about these structural changes by an amendment of the Charter at the present juncture is likely to raise many controversial questions and thus add greatly to the difficulties we face.

It should be possible for us, even within the terms of the Charter, to adapt the United Nations machinery to meet situations as they arise, in view more especially of the increasing responsibilities of the United Nations.

If, so I earnestly hope, disarmament makes progress, then another domain of vast responsibility will come to the United Nations. It will have to be carefully considered how this responsibility is to be discharged. Possibly several special commissions, working together under the umbrella of the United nations, might be charged with this task.

I have referred to the situation in Africa and to the Congo, as it is an immediate issue for us, but I should like to make it clear that neither this immediate issue nor any other should be allowed to delay the consideration of what I consider the most vital issue facing us in the world, that is, the disarmament issue.

I do not propose to deal with many other matters here but, in view of the controversy that is at present going on in the General Assembly, I should like to refer briefly to the question of the proper representation of China in the United Nations. For a number of years India has brought this issue before the United Nations because we have felt that it was not only improper for this great and powerful country to remain unrepresented but that

this had an urgent bearing on all world problems, and especially those of disarmament.

We hold that all countries must be represented in the United Nations. We have welcomed during this session many new countries. It appears most extraordinary that my argument should be advanced to keep out China and to give the seat meant for China to those who certainly do not and cannot represent China.

It is well known that we in India have had and are having, a controversy with the Government of the People's Republic of China about our frontiers. In spite of that controversy, we continue to feel that proper representation of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations is essential, and the longer we delay it the more harm we cause to the United Nations and to the consideration of the major problems we have before us. This is not a question of liking or disliking, but of doing the right and proper thing.

In this connexion, I should like to mention another country, Mongolia. When we are, rightly, admitting so many countries to the United Nations, why should Mongolia be left out? What wrong has it done, what violation of the Charter? Here is a quiet and peaceful people working hard for its progress, and it seems to me utterly wrong from any point of principle to exclude it from this great Organization.

India has a special sentiment in regard to Mongolia, because our relations go back into the distant past of more than 1,500 years. Even now there are many evidences of those old contacts and friendly relations between these two countries. I would earnestly recommend that Mongolia be accepted in this world assembly of

nations.

There is one other matter to which I should like to refer, and that is Algeria. It has been a pain and a torment to many of us in Asia, as in Africa and possibly elsewhere, to witness this continuing tragedy of a brave people fighting for its freedom. Many arguments have been advanced and many difficulties pointed out, but the basic fact is that the people have struggled continuously for many years at tremendous sacrifice and against hea22vy odds to attain independence. Once or twice it appeared that the struggle might and satisfactorily in freedom by the exercise of self-determination, but the moment slipped by and the tragedy continued. I am convinced that every country in Asia and Africa and, I believe, many countries in other continents also, are deeply concerned over this matter and hope earnestly that this terrible war will end, bringing freedom in its train for the Algerian people. This is an urgent problem to which the United Nations must address itself in order to bring about an early solution.

Two or three days ago (880th meeting) I presented, on behalf of Ghana, the United Arab Republic, Indonesia, Yugoslavia and India, a draft resolution [A/4522] to the General Assembly. That draft resolution is a simple one and requires little argument to support it. It does not seek to prejudge any issue. It does not seek to bring pressure to bear on any country or individual. There is no cynicism in it. The main purpose of that draft resolution is to avoid a deadlock in the international situation. Every representative present here knows how unsatisfactory that situation is today and how gradually every door and window for the discussion of vital issues is being closed and bolted.

As the draft resolution says, we are deeply concerned with the recent deterioration in international relations, which threatens

the world with grave consequences. There can be no doubt that people everywhere in the world look to the Assembly to take some step to help to ease the situation and lessen world tension. If the assembly is unable to take that step, there will be utter disappointment everywhere, and not only will the deadlock continue but there will be a drift in a direction from which it will become increasingly difficult to turn back.

The Assembly cannot allow itself, to be paralysed in a matter of such vital importance. The responsibility for this deadlock has to be shared by all of us, but in the circumstances as they exist in the world today a great deal depends upon the two mighty nations, the United States and the Soviet Union, and if even a small step could be taken by them the world would heave a sigh of relief. We do not expect that by the renewal of contacts between these two great countries some solution is likely to emerge. We do not underrate the difficulties of realizing all this, and after giving a great deal of thought to these matters we decided to share our apprehension with the Assembly and to suggest this step which undoubtedly will help to ease tension.

The draft resolution has not been placed before this Assembly to add to the controversies already existing, nor to embarrass anyone, but solely with the desire, anxiously felt, that something must be done. We cannot meet here in this Assembly and sit helplessly by, watching the world drift in a direction which can only end in catastrophe.

Last night I received a letter [A/4529] from the President of the United States in which he was good enough to deal with this draft resolution. I presume that the other sponsors of this draft resolution have also received a similar reply. This reply has appeared in the Press. I am grateful to the President for writing to me in reply immediately after receiving our communication.

Although this reply does not indicate that any contacts such as we have recommended are likely to take place in the near future, I should like to point out to this Assembly that the President has not wholly rejected the idea.

The door is still open for consideration, and the President of the United States has expressed his deep anxiety to help in the lessening of international tensions. The President has pointed out that:

"...the chief problems in the world today are not due to differences between the Soviet Union and the United States alone, and therefore are not possible of solution on a bilateral basis. "

The questions which are disrupting the world at the present time are of immediate and vital concern to other nations as well." [A/4529].

May I respectfully express my complete agreement with what the President has said? We are convinced that these great questions cannot be dealt with on a bilateral basis, or even by a group of countries. They are of intimate and vital concern to the entire world and to all those who have gathered here at this General Assembly session from the four corners of the earth. It was because of this feeling that some of us ventured to put this draft resolution before the General Assembly. If the matter were of concern only to two countries, then perhaps no necessity would have arisen for us to raise it here. Nor did we think that a mere renewal of contacts would lead to some magical solution. Such a solution will come only after long and arduous labour in which many countries participate. But we did think that, in this

present situation of dangerous drift, even a small approach on behalf of the two great representatives of two great countries would make a difference and might mark a turn of the tide.

Oppressed by the growing anger and bitterness in international relations, we wanted to find some way out, so that further consideration might be given to these problems.

We have suggested no remedy, no particular solution, in our draft resolution. But we did feel, and we still feel, that the General Assembly should consider this problem and try its utmost to find a way to remove the new barriers that have arisen.

As the President of the United States has rightly stated, the importance of these matters is such as to go beyond personal or official relations between any two individuals. We are dealing with the future of humanity, and no effort which might improve the present situation should be left undone. it was with that intention that we put forward the draft resolution, as a part of the efforts that should be made to open the door for future consultations, not only between the two eminent individuals who are mentioned in the draft resolution, but by the world community.

I earnestly appeal to the General Assembly to adopt the draft resolution unanimously at an early date, and I trust that it will do so. In this world, enveloped and bedeviled by the cold war and all its progeny, with problems awaiting urgent solution, I have ventured to add my voice in appeal. I do believe that the vast majority of people in every country want us to labour for peace and to succeed. Whether we are large or small, we have to face large issues, issues vital to the future of humanity. Everything

else is of lesser importance than this major question. I am absolutely convinced that we shall never solve this question by war or by the mental approach which envisages war and prepares for it. I am equally convinced that if we aim at the right ends right means must be employed. Good will not emerge out of evil methods. That was a lessen which our great leader, Gandhi, taught us-and, though we in India have failed in many ways in following his advice, something of his message still clings to our minds and hearts.

In ages long past, a great son of India, the Buddha, said that the only real victory is one in which all are equally victorious and there is defeat for no one. In the world today, that is the only practical victory. Any other way will lead to disaster. It is therefore this real victory of peace, in which all are winners, that I should like the Assembly to keep before it and to endeavour to achieve.