

India's Former Prime Minister Mr.Narashima Rao's Statement- 50th  
Anniversary of the U.N. October 24, 1995

Half a century ago today, world leaders gathered together to create an institution of the peoples of the world to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. That was a momentous event in human history. Today, in commemorating that event, we look back and find that the successes of the United Nations have been many. Critics tend to concentrate upon failures, but on an objective appraisal the United Nations remains humankind's beacon of hope. The combined United Nations family has made commendable efforts for the overall well-being of mankind

If the relevance of the United Nations is to continue, we will now need to address the root causes of what afflicts humankind. Looking into the causes even casually, nuclear weapons still loom large, nowhere near abolition. Poverty and underdevelopment are pervasive in many continents. International terrorism haunts the innocent. Harmony in pluralistic societies, whose number is the largest, is being disrupted by increasing fundamentalist trends based on exclusivism and intolerance, and in many cases hatred.

For several decades the spell of the cold war gripped the global community almost completely. The cold war brought a dual approach to every department of human life - politics, economics, war, peace, societal questions, art literature: everything. The public and the private, the individual and the collective, the orthodox and the liberal, the status quo and the prochange - all these dualities have to be resolved, not in theory, but in reality, to bring happiness to man and also to suit individual conditions. While no system can work without a philosophical underpinning, the present juncture provides new opportunities to address problems without the morbid preoccupations of the earlier confrontation.

The task of statesmanship has always been to sift the permanent from the ephemeral. An emphasis on commonality is therefore of the essence in the world of tomorrow which, paradoxically, tends to shrink in

terms of physical distance, but threatens at any moment to fall apart in many other respects.

There can be no security for anyone in a world bristling with nuclear weapons. Deterrence is a false belief. I would make a fervent appeal to this Assembly to take credible steps for the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons within a stipulated time-frame. India's Action Plan, presented in 1988 in this regard, could serve as an appropriate starting-point. India looks upon it essentially as a proposal inspired by Gandhian principles and is fully committed to it.

The world's great danger today is the spread of terrorism. When sponsored and supported by States, terrorism becomes another means of waging war. The international community must therefore resolve to combat this menace, since it threatens the very basis of peaceful societies.

The realities today are trans-ideological. The crying need of a vast majority of nations is all-round development. This has to be Priority One for a long time. We need a vision of global harmony and cooperation, transcending many atavistic tendencies. Here, the message of Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of peace and non-violence, could lead the world to a safe haven in the coming millennium.

The United Nations today includes a much larger number of independent, sovereign States than when it began. In such a context, the United Nations cannot afford to be seen as either exclusivist or incomplete, either in appearance or in outlook. In particular, an adequate presence of developing countries is needed on the Security Council on the basis of objective criteria: nations of the world must feel that their stakes in global peace and prosperity are factored into United Nations decision-making.

At the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we thus have the task of making the United Nations truly and effectively the global repository of humankind's aspirations. Right-thinking nations and peoples working together have in the past achieved miracles. I am

confident that they can do so again. India will be proud and happy to be part of such an endeavour.

I have deliberately kept bilateral matters out of this short intervention.