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Speech by

Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished representatives, I am grateful to you for according me the high honour of addressing this great Assembly. May I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the distinguished office of President of the General Assembly. It is a fitting tribute to Guatemala and to your own personal qualities. I wish you success.

I have just come from an instructive and stimulating visit to a number of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. This enabled me to see the earnest strivings of the peoples of that great continent for social progress and better standards of living.

I should like to pay a special tribute to the Secretary -General. Where others might have been overwhelmed by heart-break, U Thant has persevered, undaunted, in his great work with rare faith, devotion and detachment. It is up to all of us to give him our fullest support.

The United Nations is the trustee of the world's peace and represents the hopes of mankind. Its very existence gives a feeling of assurance that the justice of true causes can be brought fearlessly before the world. This Assembly and the agencies of the United Nations should, in all that they do sustain those hopes and promote the causes of peace.

Seven years ago, India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, addressed this Assembly. He was a believer in seeking areas of agreement and co-operation, and in enlarging them. He advocated before this Assembly a "new approach to co-operation and the

furtherance of the co-operative effort". The Assembly accepted his suggestion of an International Co-operation Year. The United Nations

also launched a development decade to promote greater economic co-operation between the rich and the poor nations. Two major international conferences on trade and development were held.

The interest shown by Member States in these moves aroused great expectations among the developing countries. We did not seek to share the power of the big Powers. We did not ask that they deny any of their own people their needs in order to fulfil ours. We, who have had twenty years or less of freedom to work for our progress, did not expect miracles of sudden transformation. Only too well do we know how long and hard is the path of development. What we do expect is understanding of the intangible yearnings of people who have long been under foreign domination.

Unfortunately, economic co-operation has little progress to show. Nor has there been any notable advance in international co-operation in the political sphere. The reasons for this failure are obvious and many: Economic and military power continue to dominate politics. The carving out of spheres of influence still motivates policies and action. The desire to mould other nations in the image of one's own inspires propaganda, sowing seeds of mistrust. Nations continue to place national ends above the larger purposes of peace and universal security.

In India, we have been powerfully conditioned by Mahatma Gandhi. We believe that the evolution of individuals and societies depends on the extent to which they exercise self-restraint and abjure the use of force. Jawaharlal Nehru, who combined in himself modern political thought and the basic teaching of Mahatma Gandhi, strove to bring about a new system of relations among nations. He was tireless in advocating peaceful coexistence. He believed that in a world rent by conflict, freedom not fear, faith not doubt, confidence not suspicion would lead to friendship amongst nations.

The concept was evoking some response among statesmen and nations, and there was a growing recognition that, howsoever difficult it might seem, peaceful coexistence alone could enable the post-war world to solve its disputes rationally. But this trend has received severe jolts.

Every now and then violence erupts. Sheer power seemingly prevails over principles, seeking obedience and demanding respect instead of commanding it. Indeed, those who have attempted to eschew the use of force have had to pay the price of restraint. And yet, the world is changing. Implicit faith in the efficacy of and unquestioning dependence on military alliances, as well as the rigidities of the bipolar world, are in a state of flux. Every nation, regardless of size, is endeavoring to establish its own identity. This encourages the hope that despite obstacles the United Nations will be able to help all nations to live in peace and independence.

While there is search for a more equitable and humane world order, force continues to be used to attain political ends and to promote national or global interests. It is not my intention to deal with specific issues. Our views have been stated in this Assembly and elsewhere. But there are some which cannot be ignored. The continuance of the tragic conflict in Viet-Nam is source of constant anxiety. We fervently hope that conditions will be created to enable the discussions to become more purposeful. The Viet-Nameese people must be assured of their inherent right to shape their destiny peacefully and without outside interference. We believe that the key to the next step still lies in the total cessation of the bombing of North Viet-Nam. In advocating this we are not actuated by a partisan spirit but by our sincere desire for peace and stability.

Another source of anxiety, the west Asian crisis, also needs to be resolved by political means. There is every opportunity for doing so, if it is recognized that the security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States in this part of the world cannot be based on the redrawing of State frontiers by force or

on the basis of permanent hostility.

Essential for a peaceful settlement is the withdrawal of foreign forces from all Arab territories occupied in June last year. The process of the restoration of peace can begin and Ambassador Jarring's mission be fruitful only with the clear affirmation of this.

Equally explosive is the continued denial of basic human rights on grounds of race. The consciousness of the world community must be aroused not only against South Africa where racial discrimination has been elevated to the level of State policy, but against the emergence of racialism in any form in other areas. We must also firmly resist the last vestiges of colonialism. Our freedom and independence will not be complete so long as the people of South West Africa, Angola, Mozambique and Portuguese Guinea are denied theirs.

Recent events in Czechoslovakia have cast yet another shadow on the fragile structure for a new world order. The principles of non-interference by one State in the internal affairs of another, of scrupulous respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States are essential to the principle of peaceful coexistence. It is of the utmost importance that normal conditions should be restored without delay in Czechoslovakia.

If the use of force in international affairs is not renounced, and the rights of nations and the equality of races are not respected, how can tensions be reduced or the dangers of conflicts avoided? The world is caught in a vicious circle, because of which any viable international machinery to regulate relations between States is being progressively undermined and faces the danger of eventual collapse.

Nuclear weapons today represent the ultimate in force. Thus any attempt to eliminate force as the determining factor in international relations must begin with practical steps towards disarmament. But the nuclear menace has become an accepted fact

of life and the world has developed a certain insensitivity to the nature of this threat. Despite every solemn resolution adopted by the Assembly, States continue to enlarge their capacity for nuclear war. The arms race and the search for more sophisticated weapons have rendered meaningless the concept of balance of power. Yet, every advance in military technology is accompanied by an effort to maintain a balance of terror. This encourages local wars and undermines the established political authority in States which are struggling to protect their freedom.

It is by restricting, reducing and eventually eliminating the growing nuclear menace that firm foundations of peace can be laid. The limited achievement of the parties test-ban Treaty has been offset by the refusal of States to halt the testing of nuclear weapons. The problems of insecurity cannot be solved by imposing arbitrary restrictions on those who do not possess nuclear weapons, without any corresponding steps to deal with the basic problem of limiting stockpiles in the hands of a few Powers. How can the urge to acquire nuclear status be controlled so long as this imbalance persists? Unless the Powers which possess these weapons are prepared to exercise some self-restraint, collective efforts to rid the world of the nuclear menace cannot bear fruit.

We yearn for peace, not merely because it is good in itself, but because, without peace, there can be no improvement in the lives of the vast majority of the world's peoples. Development must receive the first priority and must be based on self-reliance. Our peoples expect their governments to build, in a generation, the apparatus of production and distribution which took the present advanced nations many centuries to install. Progress in technology and the acceleration of the processes of history will certainly help the developing nations to telescope the stages of their economic growth. But this acceleration works even more dramatically in favour of the affluent. The chasm between the rich and the poor nations, which is already a source of tension and bitterness in the world, is not decreasing but growing. This

situation is fraught with danger for the future well-being of our world. It is natural that we in the developing countries should be more aware of the peril than those who live in the affluent countries. The peril is on our doorstep, but it is not too far from theirs.

The world has changed, the membership of the United Nations has changed, but attitudes of mind have not. The representatives who are gathered here come from countries with distinct personalities. They have had great civilisations in the past—some known and some yet to be discovered. In the old colonial days, history, geography, culture and civilisation were all viewed from a particular perspective. Even today to be civilized is held to be synonymous with being westernized. Advanced countries devote large resources to formulating and spreading ideas and doctrines and they tend to impose on the developing nations their own norms and methods. The pattern of the classical acquisitive society with its deliberate multiplication of wants not only is unsuited to conditions in our countries but is positively harmful.

Developing nations have their, special problems, and there is much scope for co-operation amongst themselves. Some problems are common, but the conditions in each country differ, and the same remedy cannot be prescribed for all. Those who seek to advise us seldom realize that we need new and different answers to our problems. We need solutions which are suited to our conditions, not imitative theories or techniques grafted from outside. We must make our own analysis of developments and how to deal with them. International forums such as this Assembly and the specialized agencies of the United Nations give us the opportunity to place our views before the world. But of what avail is this if we cannot forge the solidarity which would command attention?

Our problems are such as did not confront the advanced nations when they were at a similar stage of economic development. Freedom awakens hope. It generates consciousness of economic, social and political rights. As literacy spreads, as modern communications and close contacts grow with affluent countries,

new expectations and tensions are created.

In India, our effort has been to build democracy and to develop a technologically mature society. Each in itself is a formidable endeavour in a country of our size. Demands grow much faster than the means to fulfill them, but changes do not come about easily. Every step forward meets with impediments created by the forces of the status quo. Every step forward, even though intended to end inequality, leads to a phase where inequality becomes more obvious or new equalities come into existence. Let me give an example. We have introduced universal primary education and expanded higher education. We have done so because education is the key to the ending of existing disparities; because it is the greatest influence for modernisation and because it gives full scope to the flowering of the human personality. However, certain groups and regions which are already comparatively better off are able to take greater advantage of the new facilities: for example, the urban areas more than the rural, the rich farmers more than the poor peasants.

The affluence of the industrialised nations itself attracts and exerts a certain pull on the more fortunate sections in the developing countries, further sharpening the difference between aspirations and their fulfilment. This in turn leads to the alienation of the elite from the rest of society, because they are attracted by the glamour of catching up with their opposites in the advanced countries, while their own society cries out for bread.

We are not unaware of the important developments taking shape within the affluent countries themselves, where increasing numbers have begun to question the purpose of their lives. Poverty and want must be eradicated for they degrade the human personality. On the other hand, the affluent society, as it has emerged, seems to have become entangled in its instruments. Dazzled by its own glitter, it has lost sight of the goals it set out to achieve. It is natural, therefore, that societies which have stressed the importance of material possessions should anxiously seek a balance between spiritual and material values.

This is still an intellectual groping which lacks articulation, but one can sense it in the restlessness of younger people and students, in the various forms of protest against traditional or established authority. There is a desire to assert individuality in technological societies which are becoming more uniform and more impersonal. Abundance without commitment to ideals will sow the seeds of discontent and invite its own disruption. Prosperity must be integrated with a higher purpose, and it should be the endeavour of all nations-it certainly is ours in India-to achieve harmony between progress and the timeless values of the spirit. We are human and do not always succeed; but, as Mahatma Gandhi said, "Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment".

The individual is no longer content to entrust to others the shaping of his destiny; he wants to be the master of his fate. So also with nations, which, while co-operating with others, wish to develop and progress according to their own genius and tradition. The question is vital for developing nations, which still have time to chart their course. The methods they use, the directions they take, will determine their goals.

We welcome any genuine form of international co-operation for the development of under-developed areas. At its best, foreign aid represents such an endeavour.

But can it not also be legitimately described as a form of enlightened self-interest on the part of aid-giving countries, especially when it is tied with the purchase of equipment and of know-how from donor countries? In India, aid accounts for only a fifth of our total investment in development. Economic progress is not possible without investment. Not all the investment for Europe's progress came from the sweated labour of European workers and farmers. It came also from the people of Asia, Africa and South America who were denied a fair return for their work and their produce. Empires have ended, but the colonial pattern of economy remains with us in one form or another. As exporters of primary agricultural produce and minerals, we know to our cost how the terms of trade have steadily gone against us. Aid is only partial recompense for what the superior economic power of the

advanced countries denies us through trade. Trade has the further advantage of placing greater responsibility on the developing nations, leading them towards self-reliance. I urge the nations assembled here to give their fullest support to the work initiated by the two United Nations Conferences on Trade and Development and to persuade the strong to dismantle the economic walls which they have built to defend themselves from the weak. In so doing they will be fortifying the defences of peace before it is too late.

These are the factors which cause tensions and bitterness, which divide society and lead it away from co-operation and the paths of peace. Fear grips large parts of the world. Sages in my land exhorted us to be free from that which made us afraid anticipating by thirty centuries those famous words of our own times, that there is nothing to fear but fear itself. No people were so cowed down as my countrymen before Mahatma Gandhi came on the scene. India was able to wrest freedom because he taught us to overcome fear and hatred and to be absorbed in a cause which was greater than ourselves.

We in India are attuned to the idea that the paths to truth are many and various. An attempt to remake the world in any one image will not be countenanced by the majority of mankind. Our age has been called the space age, but I would call it the age of the people. Revolutionaries, liberators and political leaders have always talked of the people, but for the first time now, "we the people" does not mean a few representing the many, but the masses themselves, each one of whom is seeking to assert his rights and to voice his demands.

Through the ages, man has struggled against vastly superior forces. The one constant has been his indomitable spirit. He has pitted his puny frame against nature. He has fought against tremendous odds for freedom, for his beliefs, for an idea or an ideal. Endowed with such a spirit, will man abdicate in favour of the machine or bow to the dominance of tyranny in new garbs? Men have been tortured, men have been killed, but the idea has

prevailed.

Two years hence, in 1970, the United Nations will complete twenty-five years. Can we make it a year of peace? A starting point of a united endeavour to give mankind the blessings of a durable peace? To this end let us devote ourselves.

One of our ancient prayers says:

"Common be your prayer;

"Common be your end;

"Common be your purpose;

"Common be your deliberation;

"Common be your desires;

"Unified be your hearts;

"Unified be your intentions;

"Perfect be the union among you."