

**Statement by the Prime Minister of Mauritius, His  
Excellency the Honourable Anerood Jugnauth to the fortieth  
session of the General Assembly -1985**

Mr. President,

It gives me great pleasure to express to you and *my* personal congratulations and happiness, and those of my delegation, on your assumption of this office which represents the culmination of a long and brilliant diplomatic career which began almost at the time when this Organization was born. The considerable personal experience and wisdom which you have gained at the service of the United Nations for almost a quarter of a century, in various distinguished capacities, in particular the presidency of the Security Council, will be of special value during this anniversary session, which will be a time for self-examination, renewal and invigoration.

I would also like to perform another agreeable duty in thanking your predecessor, Mr. Paul John Firmino Lusaka, Permanent Representative of Zambia, for his distinguished, firm and efficient conduct of the deliberations of the General Assembly during its thirty-ninth session. He did honour not only to his country but also to the whole of Africa, and by his display of wisdom and remarkable diplomatic skills has further enhanced Africa's stature in our Organization.

Our appreciation also goes to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his fourth report (A/40/1) on the work of the Organization in which he has once more demonstrated his unceasing and almost obstinate determination to revitalize the United Nations and give it the role that its founding fathers had envisioned. In thanking him, we would like to assure him of our full cooperation in the discharge of his mandate.

To the people of Mexico, we express our deepest sympathy for the recent tragedy which has befallen them.

This year also marks the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. More than 60 per cent of the world population living calm free at least from the nightmare which their parents had to live through. They do not bear any responsibility for the horrors of the war and no burden of- guilt can or should be laid on them. They have, in many instances, shown a commendable desire to correct the injustices of the past and their efforts have contributed in a large measure to heal the deep wounds of the years of unbridled cruelty, violence and carnage.

There are, therefore, powerful arguments for putting the past behind us and forge ahead to meet today's challenges and those which lie ahead in the future. It does not mean, however, that we should either try to wish the past away or attempt to obliterate it. This is neither possible nor desirable.

Besides, as we look at developments since the end of the war we are sadly forced to admit that there are few grounds for satisfaction and that there are many grounds for

apprehension. Over the years, others before me in this forum have been pointing out the dangers of the world divided against itself in which we are forced to live. The dialogue necessary for continued peaceful coexistence, which has become the essential condition for our survival, seems to have been sadly lacking in understanding and generosity, not to say in sincerity. In place of the peaceful competition which we all profess to desire, the end of the war witnessed a scramble to carve up and establish spheres of influence, which has transformed the whole world into a potential battleground.

It has been pointed out that a world in which overt or covert attempts are repeatedly made to destabilize or overthrow lawfully established Governments because their system is not to one's liking cannot for long remain a safe world. The history of such attempts since 1945 in violation of the provisions of the United Nations Charter has been richly documented. On the other hand, it is becoming customary to hear the argument of national security and vital national interests advanced for the practice of shoring up unpopular client regimes, as if the peace and security of any country could ever be served by the use of brutal force against the legitimate aspirations of peoples.

Our predecessors who drafted the Charter of this Organization sought to establish peace on a more legitimate premise: by asking the international community to renounce the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. We are painfully aware of the many violations of this solemn undertaking to which all the Members of this Organization have subscribed. The international community has been forced to watch from the sidelines with growing helplessness as military aggressions and invasions become more and more brazen and as defenseless countries come under hostile foreign occupation. It has been powerless in the face of the shameless and unprovoked use of force to achieve so-called national security objectives. It has remained a passive, if indignant, witness as millions of people have been converted into foreigners in their own lands, denied the basic rights of citizenship, while others were being chased out and forced into permanent exile. The international community has been given the responsibility, but denied the means to act effectively to avert the outbreak of hostilities and to check them after they have started.

It is becoming commonplace to hear the argument that at least relative peace has been preserved for a period of 40 years. The argument, I am afraid, is based on ostrich-like reasoning. It does not take into account the scores of wars fought over the past 40 years and the wars which are still being fought in many parts of the world. The fact that the territories of some countries, former battlefields, have mercifully been spared the horrors of war can hardly justify the assertion that the world has enjoyed 40 years of uninterrupted peace. There are, no doubt, those who believe that wars fought outside their own national territories are somehow not real and therefore are acceptable. There are also those who believe that wars are inevitable but that, like games, they can be controlled or limited. *From* their perspective, it would be desirable and possible to confine any actual fighting to certain areas, to limit its scope. In many regions the rivalry between the super-Powers has created a context in which client armies, nourished on alien ideologies in the absence of other fare, face each other across hostile national boundaries. Less than 50 years ago many allowed themselves to be lulled into a false sense of security by the

promise of peace with honour. It is now clear that the promise in fact meant throwing those perceived as weak to the wolves, in the selfish hope that their appetite would thereby be satiated. The development of the perception that conflicts can be managed or limited to certain areas deemed expendable is an extremely dangerous one.

The risk that one of the so-called regional or local conflicts might erupt into a general and total war haunts the world today as never before since 1945. In many regions situations of conflict have become the norm, peace the exception. The areas of peace continue to shrink those of war to expand. The reaction in most cases, despite the obvious dangers involved, has been strangely muted and totally inadequate, when not amounting to indifference.

A million dead are the price of six years of war between Iran and Iraq, a war which continues with no end in sight. The consequences in terms of human and material losses are appalling. The dangers to the international community are well known. It is also sadly significant that the flow of weapons to both countries has continued uninterrupted throughout and that the number of suppliers has increased fourfold over the period. To the representative of a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, it is particularly disturbing that two developing countries should be at war with each other. There is a tragic irony in the situation, compounded by the fact that many of the weapons used by the belligerents are identical, manufactured in the same countries and provided by the same suppliers on the sidelines, to whom the war is nothing more than a god-sent occasion for business as usual. It is an additional ground for concern that both super-Powers are now observing a watchful neutrality, and many other States believe they have a right to feel vitally concerned in the area. If past experience is anything to go by, the involvement and the rivalry that is sure to follow will be far from constructive for either of the belligerents, or for the world community.

It is claimed that the conflict between Iraq and Iran, like many others today equally fraught with potentially global consequences, has roots deep in the past. It is true that the past cannot be ignored. It is, however, equally true that it is easy to rationalize current crimes and aberrations in terms of what we have inherited. In other times that we like to pretend were more barbarous than ours, countless numbers of people have been put to death on political, religious or ideological grounds. It is certain, though, that the majority of them were the victims of intolerance, the most corrosive of all feelings throughout the ages.

The same spirit is at work today in the eruption of ethnic and communal violence, of fanaticism, in the erection of racism in a system of organized repression, and in the bitter conflict of rival ideologies. It has within the last 15 years led to the occupation, then dismemberment, of the independent State of Cyprus. In Afghanistan it has pitted brother against brother in a bloody struggle fanned from outside. And in Kampuchea it threatens the total annihilation of a once proud civilization. Dialogue without outside pressure and intervention can be positive and should be encouraged, like the direct contact between North and South Korea which should continue. We call upon both North and South Korea to continue peaceful negotiations towards reunification.

Deep-rooted prejudices, the will for total power and the confrontation of ideologies acting singly or as a combination of factors hinder the prospects of a negotiated settlement for each of these countries. In none, however, can a militarily imposed outcome provide the foundation for a lasting peace. We will take the risk of flying against the kind of conventional wisdom that declares war to be an extension of diplomacy, and suggest that the use of force is in most cases nothing more than part of the problem and not a means to a solution. We reiterate our conviction that a viable and durable peace in each of these situations must be a negotiated one, acceptable in the first place to the people most deeply concerned and affected.

In the light of the declarations of all involved that their aim is peace and stability, it would seem that the objectives should be readily attainable. It is, however, with deep misgivings that we are forced to recognize the wide gap between professed objectives and the realities of the brutal policies pursued. It is well known that long-established perceptions and policies deriving therefrom, however dangerous they might be to the world, do not and sadly cannot be expected to change overnight. It cannot be too strongly stressed, however, that what is needed in these circumstances is nothing less than a change of heart leading to the recognition that relative security for all is preferable to the chaos which hegemonic ambitions are certain to produce.

The will for hegemony in the 1930s expressed in the demand for living space inexorably culminated in war. It is known that those who were then actively preparing for war claimed to be acting on so-called principles which they described as sacred. It is a matter of deep concern that, in some quarters, arguments which are dangerously close to those then advanced are now invoked to justify what threatens to develop into yet another State-organized genocide to disgrace our century.

The brutal repression of the peoples of southern Africa has been regularly and unanimously condemned by the international community. Yet outside this Assembly powerful voices have not been lacking to be raised in defence, if not of apartheid precisely, at least of the regime that perpetuates the policy. It is perhaps indicative of the times in which we live that people have been found who believe that South Africa is a democracy, a bastion of civilization defending the values of the free world. Others have been proclaiming that change is just around the corner and that what we need is patience, more patience and still more patience.

In another difficult period people tried to come to terms with the excesses of a brutal regime based on racism or subsequently claimed that they had been tightened into silence. Either way their silence, and therefore tacit complicity then, will forever remain as a stain against our humanity. It was with the objective of preventing the kind of racism that made the holocaust of the war Possible that it was found necessary, in the words of the Charter; "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small". The regime in South Africa has deliberately established itself on a denial of the principles of the Charter, thus choosing to place itself beyond the pale of civilization. To underline its choice it has arrogated to itself the right to encourage and assist

destabilization in the surrounding territories. To emphasize its contempt for accepted norms of international behaviour, it has engaged in a lengthy series of military incursions, raids and aggressions against its neighbours. It continues its illegal occupation of Namibia in defiance of the stated will of the international community and has effectively sabotaged patient efforts at negotiations by linking the question to completely extraneous issues.

We must reluctantly confess to a mounting sense of despair when confronted with the attempts at sophistry to excuse and rationalize a situation that is not merely unreasonable, but clearly illegal, inequitable and immoral. Because time is fast running out we appeal to the friends of the peoples of South Africa, to the friends of all the peoples of South Africa, to assist in averting the chaos in active gestation there. We believe that it is within their power to do so. South Africa with its 30 million people needs neither the inequities of apartheid nor the terroristic suppression of its neighbours to emerge as a prosperous country with a respected place in the comity of nations.

It is our considered view that the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners will go a long way towards decreasing tension in South Africa and paving the way towards progress in a process of peaceful change. Mauritius, if called upon, will very gladly assist in the search for a peaceful solution and will offer its good offices. Further, Mauritius is ready and willing, if called upon, to be the venue for talks and positive discussions between the South African authorities and the genuine representatives of the majority of the South African population.

The enormous price in blood paid by our ancestors throughout history should at least teach us that progress towards peace and understanding has never been obtained by attempts to impose by force our own often narrow perceptions of truth on others. In today's politically and militarily polarized world, delusions about so-called chosen peoples or manifest destinies and the policies they generate can lead to consequences too frightening to contemplate. For the same reason it would be equally dangerous to attempt to impose our own exclusive security concerns on others. It is worse still when national security becomes the pretext for wars of aggression, illegal occupations, expropriations and annexations of territories, the denial of fundamental and basic rights to peoples and the dismemberment of entire nations.

We are confronted in the Middle East and increasingly in Central America with a choice that on the face of it seems simple: either to become partners in peace and to start by developing the will thereto now, or to continue to live with the same dreary uncertainties that have plagued us for too long. The peoples in the Middle East would have every reason to feel that their situation has become still worse than it was when this Organization was first seized of the question.

Tragically for the people concerned, the situation in Central America seems to be developing in the same direction of a protracted confrontation, with accelerated militarization, increasing armed attacks, hostile trading of allegations, escalating rhetoric and involvement of a growing number of foreign

"advisers", ominously in the context of the rivalry between the super-Powers. The peace process initiated by the Contadora Group which has received unanimous approval seems to have been completely relegated to the background. Similarly, the conditions for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East have been repeatedly stated in and endorsed by this Assembly. ?

The crucial question is whether it will be possible to summon the imagination and the generosity to recognize that persistence in preconceived ideas and fixed certainties, far from being indicative of strength, is an admission of fear and weakness. Twice in global wars in this century we have witnessed the degradation of the human spirit which war brings with it. Successive generations have - if I may be allowed to put it in this way - fathomed the abyss of their collective soul to find the sombre demons lurking there. But it has rightly been said that the power to choose between good and evil is within us all, and we have also been a witness to the nobility of that same human spirit in its often demonstrated capacity to transcend current differences to visualize a better future for the world.

It is certainly not an accident that the people most revered by posterity are those who, instead of the arrogance of power, chose the humility of compassion in their search for solutions **to** the problems which confronted them. To them it was a self-evident truth, which it seems necessary to restate, that those whom we consider our enemies are not necessarily the demons we sometimes choose to paint them} but, like us, simply men, women and children - similar to us no doubt in their weaknesses but also in their aspirations, dreams and ideals, both for themselves and their children. The interdependence of humanity and the brotherhood of mankind are often proclaimed but, **to** our great misfortune, rarely lived up to. Today, however, we are in such a situation that we cannot afford to fail in our realization of this essential truth.

It has been said that people who do not understand the past are condemned to relive it. The parallels between the current world situation and that preceding the outbreak of the Second World War are too striking to be overlooked. It is not within anyone's power to undo the past, but we do have the power to use its lessons as guidelines to establish a course for an acceptable future for our children. In the process of doing so we have to face and answer the question whether we can find in ourselves the resources to overcome and reverse the obstacles to peace, or whether, lemminglike, we are condemned to the same catastrophic path down the precipice followed in the past. The dangers in the trend today are readily identifiable, but as in the past, like people caught in some terrible recurrent nightmare, we seem deprived of our faculty to act to avert them.