A VISION MORE COMPELLING NOW

THE 15TH ANNUAL ATTLEE LECTURE

by

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London
18 February 1997

Just over a year ago we marked the 50th anniversary of the First Session of the United Nations General Assembly convened here in London, in January 1946 at Central Hall, Westminster. London was a fitting place to begin that journey to common security for it was by then the scarred symbol of fortitude in preserving for future generations the promise of freedom - freedom quintessentially from fear, but freedom too from want. It was a promise that had been gravely jeopardised by the (as yet) most globally destructive conflict in all of human history; but it was in the cause of fulfilling that promise of freedom that the leaders of 51 countries convened in London. We do well to remember the sense of urgency that characterised their meeting, the range of their concerns and the depth of their commitment to success for the United Nations Organisation they were inaugurating. No one symbolised those elements more genuinely than the opening speaker - Prime Minister Clement Attlee.

In welcoming world leaders to London, Attlee, as Britain's Prime Minister, presented the challenge before the world in characteristically straightforward terms. He recalled how during the years of war ***private interests and individual national aspirations were sunk in the common endeavour. Now today,*** he asserted, ***when victory has crowned our arms, we have to bring to the task of creating permanent conditions of peace, the same sense of urgency, the same self-sacrifice and the same willingness to subordinate sectional interests to the common good as brought us through the crisis of war. The United Nations Organisation,*** he insisted, ***must become the over-riding factor in foreign policy.***

And he explained his meaning in these terms:

> ***After the first world war there was a tendency to regard the League of Nations as something outside the ordinary range of foreign policy. Governments continued on the old lines, pursuing individual aims and following the path of power politics, not understanding that the world had passed into a new epoch. In just such a spirit in times past in these islands, great nobles and their retainers used to practice private war in disregard of the authority of the central government. The time came when private armies were abolished, when the rule of law was established throughout the length and breadth of this island.***
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> ***What has been done in Britain and in other countries on a small scale has now to be effected throughout the world.***

This was not rhetoric for the inaugural. Attlee was not a speaker given to rhetorical flourishes. That what he said represented his clear vision of the post-war world was pointedly affirmed in his autobiography, *As It Happened*. In the Chapter on Foreign Affairs Attlee recalled the very paragraphs from his welcome address to the General Assembly that I have just highlighted.

The United Nations was at the very centre of Attlee's vision of the post-war era. His well chosen words: ***The United Nations Organisation must become the overriding factor in foreign policy*** captured the essence of the vision. Collective security, multilateralism, the world acting together as a community; in cooperative not adversarial ways, social justice and human rights for all, a world of security and freedom governed by justice and law. That was the vision. It was one he long had.

More than a decade earlier, in the turbulent pre-war years Attlee and others, including Churchill, had been calling for what they described as a universal Commonwealth of Nations. The 'New Commonwealth Society' had been founded in 1932. Lord Tweedsmuir - the novelist John Buchan - was one of its Trustees, Harold Macmillian was a member of the international Executive Committee. Attlee himself was an early member of the 'British Commonwealth' Section, of which Churchill was the President. Altogether, there were seventeen national Sections.

It described itself as an ***International Society to promote International Law and Order through the creation of an Equity Tribunal and an International Police Force.*** It had as its primary aim to reconstitute and revitalise the League of Nations as an international authority ***possessing the power to alter the public law, and to enforce it.***

An International Police Force, enforcing the public law: how clear a vision - 65 years ago . We are still only talking about the need for ***an international rapid deployment force***, a UN Volunteer Force giving the Security Council (a reformed Security Council) the ability to back up preventive diplomacy with a measure of immediate and convincing deployment on the ground. And these early ideas were trans-Atlantic. In 1944 Roosevelt in urging the case for an international organisation with a capacity to enforce peace in the world presented the same vision to the American public in everyday terms:

> ***A policeman would not be a very effective policeman if, when he saw a felon break into a house, he had to go to the town hall and call a meeting to issue a warrant before the felon could be arrested.***

The vision of an effective internationalism was one towards which great leaders reached half a century and more ago; and not only political leaders. In 1934, the Society republished an exchange of open letters between Einstein and Freud called *Why War?* in which these great men argued that the one sure way of ending war was ***the establishment, by common consent, of a central control which shall have the last word in every conflict of interest.***

As late as 1958, in a lecture in memory of Lord David Davies who founded the New Commonwealth Society, Attlee was asserting the choice of internationalism so resonant in his welcoming address in Central Hall twelve years earlier in calling for ***collective security under the United Nations:***

> ***When Sir Robert Peel introduced his Police Force, people in London were horrified; they thought it was a great invasion of the liberty of the subject. Rich people had lots of servants to look after them, but they thought it was a shocking thing to be taxed for a Police Force. I have no doubt that there was the same kind of reaction at the end of the Middle Ages when local forces were substituted by national forces. The local lord or count, used to looking after himself, thought it an appalling invasion of his privileges. If you look at the development of government you will find that the same objection has always been raised whenever an attempt was made to supplant individual effort by the collective activity of a nation, or a state or even a municipality. It was generally only the compulsion of events which produced the desired end.***

And he concluded:

> ***We just cannot afford any longer to indulge in the exercise of unfettered individual sovereignty ... If we do not accept such a submission to a world authority we shall not get peace.***

1934, 1946, 1958 - the vision endured.

The Charter of the United Nations was inspired by this vision of a world from which the scourge of war would be removed by 'collective action'. When it was signed in San Francisco on 24 June 1945 few, very few, of the signatories knew of developments at Los Alamos or of the plans in hand to initiate a new era in the use of weapons of mass-destruction. The first atomic bomb was exploded over Hiroshima on 6 August 1945, just forty-one days after the Charter was signed. By the time the Charter came into force on 24 October 1945 the world it was to serve had changed in fundamental ways. Little wonder that at the first General Assembly in London in January 1946 the UN had at least to promise release from this new threat to human survival.

In reality, for 40 years between the Cold War and the nuclear arms race the UN was effectively hobbled. The quintessential requirement Attlee had identified as he inaugurated the ***General Assembly that for all nations the United Nations Organisation must become the over-riding factor in foreign policy*** was, virtually from the outset, set at nought. A post-war generation all too quickly returned to those old habits which he had so succinctly described as leading to the undoing of the League of Nations: ***Governments*** - after 1945 as after 1920 - ***continued on the old lines, pursuing individual aims and following the path of power politics, not understanding that the world had passed into a new epoch.*** Is it the same in the post Cold War world?

And there was another dimension to that vision beyond security in its sense of 'freedom from war' - the dimension of 'freedom from want'. Attlee was deeply aware of the problems of what were to become the countries of another new Commonwealth of

Nations in whose making he would have a major hand - Attlee placed much emphasis on this dimension in his address to the first General Assembly:

> ***In the purposes of the United Nations,*** **he said,** ***we have linked with the achievement of freedom from fear, the delivery of mankind from the peril of want. To the individual citizen the spectre of economic insecurity is more constant, more imminent than the spectre of war. Every individual can be brought to understand that the things that are discussed in conference here are the concern of all and affect the home life of every man, woman and child. Without social justice and security there is no real foundation for peace ....***
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> ***... let us be clear as to what is our ultimate aim. It is not just the negation of war, but the creation of a world of security and freedom, a world which is governed by justice and the moral law. We desire to assert the pre-eminence of right over might and the general good against selfish and sectional aims.***

If Attlee, as a key member of Britain's wartime coalition government, contributed with his clear-sighted vision to the founding of the United Nations, he had, as Britain's first post-war Prime Minister, a far more crucial role in the establishment of the modern Commonwealth. The decade of the 1940s was the most momentous of this century. Besides the 'great war', the development of the atomic bomb, and the defeat of fascism, it witnessed a series of fundamentally important changes. The United Nations was created to take the place of the League of Nations. The process of dismantling imperialism and liberating colonised peoples was begun. The modern Commonwealth was established. And in this country, within that decade, the first Labour Government with a clear majority was returned to power and was responsible for several of these new departures and others.

Clement Attlee was a central figure in many of the transformations of that eventful decade, not only within Britain but on the international stage as well. I venture to suggest that the course of world history might have been significantly different if he had not come to power as the Head of Government in this country as the war ended. Decolonisation provided an example.

Pressure for the transfer of power to the people of the Indian sub-continent had, of course, grown by that time - and not just within the sub-continent, for London was getting clear anti-colonial signals from Washington. Earlier British governments had moreover said that India would be given self-government in due course. Nevertheless it is debatable if, in the absence of a leader of Attlee's enlightenment and resolve, there would have been at Westminister a readiness to countenance - much less an eagerness to welcome - India's total and abrupt release from the imperial yoke.

The sub-continent's freedom was enormously important in itself, but even more important for what it presaged. It was a turning point in world history. It marked the beginning of the liquidation not only of the British Empire but of the Dutch, French, and Portuguese empires as well. It decreed the end of all empires and of imperial rule as a system of governance.. It ushered in the process of decolonisation that was to bring about the emancipation of subject peoples all over the globe and the emergence to freedom of over a hundred countries. And India's progress to independence on a basis of negotiated agreement, of cordiality, paved the way for the emergence of a completely new type of international institution - the modern Commonwealth.

Attlee's democratic socialist convictions undoubtedly predisposed him to favour India's freedom and prepared him for the task of presiding over the relinquishing of imperial control over India. In addition, he had had the opportunity of a personal acquaintance with India and Indians. He had the advantage of having been in India and meeting Indian nationalist leaders, in the late 1920s, as a member of this Commission headed by Sir John Simon, which recommended a series of constitutional advances. He has also recorded in his autobiography how before the outbreak of war he and his Labour Party colleague Stafford Cripps had talked with Nehru "on possible lines of dealing with the problem of Indian self-government." and how they had "sketched out the idea of a constituent assembly to be summoned in order that Indians might decide on their future."

Attlee was ideally suited to be the Chairman of the Special Committee on India that the war-time British cabinet set up and this Committee was to endorse the idea for a Constituent Assembly and to secure its acceptance by the full Cabinet, which, of course, was led by Churchill. This was followed by the mission to India led by Cripps. India's progress to independence was to take a somewhat different course from that envisaged in the plan for a Constituent Assembly, but Attlee's role was to become even more crucial when he emerged as the Prime Minister after the general election of 1945.

Attlee was not only the head of the British Government that handed over the government of the sub-continent to its own people. He was also the Prime Minister who presided over the meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers that agreed that henceforth allegiance to the Crown would no longer be regarded as a condition of Commonwealth membership - the British monarch would be recognised simply as 'Head of the Commonwealth'. It was this arrangement, devised to enable India's continuing membership of the association after becoming a republic, that laid the basis for the modern Commonwealth, that indeed ensured that the Commonwealth would survive the end of Empire. Attlee himself has expressed the view in his autobiography that had this arrangement been in place earlier, the Commonwealth would have benefited by having both Burma and Ireland as members - a view to which I have myself publicly subscribed: one of history's many examples of how change too long delayed loses its full potential when it comes.

This year is the 50th anniversary of India's independence, it is a good time to acknowledge Attlee's vision of a world order made politically sustainable and ethically defensible by the liberation of the Indian Sub-continent - and of his enlightened efforts to secure it.

And these efforts had a longer reach. As I have already suggested, the understanding Attlee had gained of the circumstances of countries that were to become member of the new Commonwealth - countries from every continent aspiring both to political freedom and economic liberation - greatly influenced his thinking on what the United Nations should set as its goals and be equipped to achieve on behalf of the world community. Attlee's insistence on the need to free people from economic insecurity - ***the delivery of mankind from the peril of want*** to quote the words he used in his address to the first UN General Assembly - reflected, I believe, his concern not just for the underprivileged in Britain and other such industrial countries but for the millions of people in countries like India that had barely begun to climb out of poverty.

Was this maturity of the forties only an illusion? Was Attlee's vision relevant only to his time? It is the burden of this Lecture that it was not, and that not only does its validity linger, but also that it has become more compelling now to fulfill that vision; a vision of a world of security and freedom, a world governed by justice and the moral law, a world in which the general good prevails over selfish and sectional aims - and to achieve all this a world in which the United Nations is the over-riding factor in foreign policy. That was the vision - and must still be.

In recent years it has been my privilege in the Commission on Global Governance to share in a wide-ranging examination of these compulsions. We called the Commission's Report ***Our Global Neighbourhood***. Its title is its message; a message of realism, not piety. Neighbourhoods are not just places with well-trimmed hedges, neighbourhoods are people living together in a great variety of conditions; people who may not even like each other but are still neighbours, people who must live together, like it or not. Essentially, neighbourhoods are congregations of people whose fate depends on each other, people who come to recognise that the neighbourhood cannot be good for any if it is not good for all. It leads in the end to discovery of the riches that lie buried in the neighbourhood's variety - the 'otherness' within it.

It was our conviction within the Commission that the world has become such a global neighbourhood. We have become an interlocked, interactive, interdependent human community. We have ***entered the global phase of human evolution*** to recall those prescient words of Barbara Ward and Rene Dubois way back in 1972.

Is it any wonder that the vision of 1945 that Attlee shared with others, with the founders of the UN, that the United Nations must become the over-riding factor in foreign policy - should have become more compelling now - its attainment more critical to human destiny? The UN Charter represented the response of a generation that had twice witnessed the human catastrophe of war on a global scale: ***the untold sorrow to***

mankind the scourge of war had brought. The Charter of the UN, to which minds sharpened by the fear of human self-destruction had brought great vision, was to become the most important political document of the century.

I want to try to show that it still is, and to illustrate that reality with reference to two areas the Charter had specifically addressed - security and welfare, peace and security.

Fifty years ago, the UN's founders thought much about security, and what was central in their minds, of course, was the security of countries, the security of states - their freedom from aggression, freedom from conflicts between states. What is the reality today? Inter-state conflicts are not extinct, as we were reminded by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. We cannot assume that aggression has gone away for good. But most of the conflicts the world is confronting today, and I suspect will continue to confront for decades to come, are intra-state conflicts. There have been 30 to 40 deadly conflicts going on in various parts of the world at any time in the past few years. The large majority of them have been internal conflicts, wars within countries; but they have been no less savage or lethal for that.

What is Somalia? What is Rwanda? What, above all, is the former Yugoslavia ? But what also is Checnya ? or Chiapas? And how many more of these conflicts within states are in the making ? When we speak of freedom from fear today - as the Atlantic Charter spoke in 1941 - it is the fear of people about the conduct of others within their own countries that is uppermost in our minds. But, whatever the source, it is the same 'untold sorrow' that results for humankind.

As we face the 21st century, 'security' must be allowed the breadth of meaning that today's circumstances demand, and global governance must take account of the full range of insecurities that so grievously afflict human society today as to compel the attention of all. The Charter must allow an international response to such threats - threats not just to the security of states but to the security of people; and, as we shall see, to the security of people in terms not just of their freedom from fear but also their freedom from want.

Human suffering on a large scale - and our awareness of it in the information age - very naturally gives rise to the feeling that the world community should act to bring it to an end. These feelings are rightly articulated as demands for UN action, even if such action would mean external involvement in the domestic affairs of sovereign states. The sovereignty and territorial inviolability of nation states have been bedrock tenets of the world system. States have valued them as fundamental to the protection of their independence and integrity. Small and less powerful states in particular have seen in these principles their main defence against more powerful, predatory countries, and they have looked to the world community to uphold these norms. And so it should.

But the adapting of some old norms is crucial to any truly new world order. In an increasingly interdependent world, old notions of territoriality, independence and non-

intervention have lost some of their meaning already. Nations are having to accept that in certain fields sovereignty has to be exercised collectively. The principle of sovereignty and the norms that derive from it must be adapted in ways that recognise the need to balance the rights of states with the rights of people, and the interests of nations with the interests of the global neighbourhood. But that was precisely Attlee's vision of 1945. Remember his words to the Inaugural Meeting of the General Assembly:

> ***We just cannot afford any longer to indulge in the exercise of unfettered individual sovereignty ... If we do not accept such a submission to a world authority we shall not get peace.***

A consensus now exists in the world, certainly I believe, at the level of the world's people, that when human security within a country is outrageously ravished (as it was in the former Yugoslavia), when people are facing genocide and mass violence (as they did in Rwanda), that a line has been crossed which makes what is going on within that country no longer the concern of its people alone, but the concern of the global neighbourhood. There is legitimacy then in neighbourhood action - intervention as a genuinely collective act by the world community, action undertaken by the United Nations or authorised by it and carried out under its control.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly, however, that in our global neighbourhood it is the primary duty of everyone - states and people alike - to support, not usurp, neighbourhood action - UN action. It is also essential that UN intervention should follow principled criteria; it must be consistent and even-handed. Above all, intervention must not be unduly influenced, much less determined, by the interests or domestic political agendas of powerful nations, within a region or globally. An activist UN will not long survive as a legitimate and effective body if it is used as a cover for the intervention of major powers.

Pax Americana is as unacceptable to most of the world, and perhaps to many Americans, as ever pax Britannica was to America. But in the ***global phase of human evolution*** we have entered, in the era of globalization, it is more simply out of date. We have become a human community, we must live by consensus or die. Only 'pax planeta' will now suffice; only a return to the vision of the primacy of the United Nations in the global order will allow us the chance of a tolerable future. It is truly an even more compelling vision now than in 1945.

Yet, how close we came in 1996 to concluding - as Churchill did at Harvard in 1943 in relation to the League of Nations - that the UN in turn ***was being abandoned as a prelude to being betrayed***? This simply must not happen; but it could, unless we recognise the signs of regression and mobilise global support for the United Nations system - reformed as it must be to ensure a return to the principles and purposes of the Charter and the fulfilment of the early vision of security through collective action. It is, indeed, an even more compelling vision now.

And what about that other dimension to the vision of 1945 that Attlee had spoken to when he said:

> ***In the purposes of the United Nations, we have linked with the achievement of freedom from fear, the delivery of mankind from the peril of want. To the individual citizen the spectre of economic insecurity is more constant, more imminent than the spectre of war.***

The UN's founders had pledged in the Charter:

> ***to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom***

and to that end:

> ***to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples***

We understand better today that what afflicts the hungry, the homeless, the destitute, the unemployed, those who are ill without health care, who are cold without heating, who are old without social support - is lack of security. For them, 'security' is a meal, a roof, a job, medicines, warmth and relief from poverty in general. Their insecurities may be less dramatic than the physical insecurities of war or repression. But they are as real and as pressing - and represent for them the most immediate denial of their rights as human beings.

UNDP statistics demonstrate how widely human security is imperilled today. As many as 1.3 billion people in the developing world live below the poverty line, over a billion have no access to even basic social services: primary health care, basic education, safe water. 800 million do not have enough food, 500 million are chronically malnourished. As many as 1.6 billion people are now worse off than they were 15 years ago. In 19 countries per capita income is lower than it was even as far back as 1960.

A key message of the latest Human Development Report is that the gap between rich and poor in the world is widening every day. UNDP's head, Gus Speth, has warned bluntly that if present trends continue, disparities between industrial and developing countries ***will move from inequitable to inhuman***. And Richard Jolly, who was the Report's principal author, has called for a new vision of global solidarity to match the push for globalization. Without such solidarity, he fears that ***globalization will become a monster of gargantuan excesses and grotesque inequalities***.

There is something shameful, even obscene, about the fact that, in the end-years of this century of dazzling progress and soaring affluence, some of it in the developing world, one in five of the world's people should be condemned to live in those abject conditions that the World Bank categorises as ***absolute poverty***. It is a cruel paradox that the

number of people in poverty should be rising in a world that globalization has transformed, that ***freedom from want*** should remain unrealised for millions in a world in which the free market has so pervasively triumphed.

Fifty years after Bretton Woods, Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco, the international community has no satisfactory forum to address such fundamental global economic issues and to consider the linkages between economic, social, ecological, and security issues in the widest sense. The boundaries between issues of trade, competition policy, environment, macroeconomic policy, and social policy are increasingly blurred. Neat functional segregation of problems no longer works, and traditional institutional arrangements no longer suffice. Global interdependence is growing, driven by powerful technological and economic forces. But political structures that can articulate a sense of common interest - and mediate differences - have not kept pace.

There is a gap in our structure of global economic governance - what Peter Sutherland, the first head of the World Trade Organization, identified as ***a structural deficit in the world economy, in terms both of the making of policies and of their execution***. He called for ***revised structures for co-ordination on international economic issues at the highest political level***.

Since then, the New York Times has given support to the proposal by the Commission on Global Governance for an Economic Security Council, and Commission members like Barber Conable, a former President of the World Bank, and Jacques Delors, who has seen the inadequacies of the Group of Seven from within, have spoken out in support of the idea. But my point is not to press this particular proposal; it is to urge change in our arrangements for global economic governance in an appropriate form - which means a negotiated and agreed form. Only through such change can there be a chance of fulfilling the vision of 1945 of securing through the United Nations system ***the economic and social advancement of all people***. The European Union is addressing this need for change. I hope its proposals receive prompt and adequate attention.

The UN Charter bears the stamp of its time, and a half-century later it needs adjustment - in these and in other respects, like the basic reform of the Security Council, the strengthening of the General Assembly and bringing the UN agencies under a more coherent and integrated system. Reform of the UN, as the new Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has already rightly stressed, ***is a process, not an event***. He has breathed fresh life into that process and has identified clearly its several components. He has set about the part that falls to him - the managerial part which he can put in place as the Organisation's Chief Administration Officer. And, through Maurice Strong, he looks for coordination of the other elements of reform - those structural changes that can only be effected with the agreement of member states on whom, therefore, falls the main burden of negotiating and agreeing the essentials of UN reform. The hereditary custodians of the veto have a special responsibility here - to be enlightened and creative in bringing about real reform; but no member state is exempt, all are involved.

There are some who will say they are pressing for reform but really mean something quite different: downsizing, miniaturising, even emasculating the organisation. Were they to get their way, they would hail the result as welcome change; and then reject reform that truly strengthens the UN as 'spoiling' the status quo. Genuine reform of the UN is an urgent need but it is a process that must integrate many elements, accommodate many interests and effect the convergence of many ideas. It will necessarily involve adjustments to the Charter itself; but all these apart, a primary need is for the world community to make greater, more imaginative, more creative use of the Charter which, I repeat, remains the single most important document of the century. We must carry forward into the new millennium the best of the Charter's principles and purposes, its spirit of multilateralism and the vision that inspired it, giving the UN the capacity to realise its vision and achieve its purposes. The world needs to commit itself to a reformed, strengthened UN before that millennium arrives.

And there is another acknowledgement we need to make. The emergence of a global civil society, with many movements reinforcing the sense of human solidarity, is one of the most positive features of our time, reflecting a large increase in the capacity and will of people to take control of their own lives and to improve them. States and governments remain primary actors in global governance; but they do not bear the whole burden. The United Nations must play a vital role; but it cannot do all the work. This is a matter of fundamental importance for were we to travel in the direction of a centralised system we may find that we are moving to an even less democratic world than we now have, one more accommodating to power, more hegemonic, more disparate and, above all, more reinforcing of the roles of states and governments - less people friendly. The challenge is to strike the balance in such a manner that the management of the affairs of the global community is responsive to the needs of global pluralism, is conformable to human values and makes the interests of all people in a sustainable future the touchstone of global economic, social and political organisation.

This is why the Commission on Global Governance has called for a Forum of Civil Society and for a Right of Petition to be part of the empowerment of people within the UN system. Change in the United Nations must embrace new initiatives such as these, and it must provide for enlarged representativeness, as in the case of the Security Council. It must involve new facilities for global cooperation, such as an Economic Security Council and a rapid deployment force for emergencies. It should involve new roles; we have proposed that the Trusteeship Council, which has no more trust territories to advance to independence, should be trustees for the environment. But change must also encompass some cutting back. The UN must be ready to shut down operations that have served their time and purpose and scale down or change the priorities of others as changed circumstances require. UNCTAD has just demonstrated how strengthening the latter process can be.

There is a quota of service that has to be rendered to the cause of change by those who serve the UN, the UN bureaucracy itself. They must, in the higher interests of the UN, facilitate efforts at rationalisation within the organisation. If, out of a desire to

protect turf or even out of inertia, they become defenders of the bureaucratic status quo, they will only make the UN more vulnerable to the onslaughts of those intent on destroying it. But let us remember that the UN is not a thing apart. It is made and maintained by its members. Its systems, its policies, its practices are those that member-states have ordained. Its decisions are decisions taken or declined by its members. Some aspects of management are in the Secretary-General's keeping; but, save for that, the UN is its members. When they disown it, they repudiate themselves.

It follows that when governments or people speak of reform of the United Nations, they address a process of change that has to begin in national behaviour, not on the banks of the East River in New York. National behaviour is a product of national decision-making and national policies: it is here that strengthening of the UN must begin. Necessary reforms of UN structures must be pursued, and they will require the support of member states; but many of the failings of the UN have not been structural, they have been collective failings of its members. Reform will be an illusion unless this central deficiency is acknowledged and rectified, rectified by returning to the vision of 1945 and the promise of the Charter - the vision and the promise that Atlee so clearly and directly identified in what were virtually the first words spoken in the General Assembly: making the UN **the overriding factor in foreign policy.**

That means that at the centre of international affairs, within national decision-making everywhere, there must be enshrined the ethic of internationalism, the core value of multilateralism, the habit of acting together, with general agreement, guided by common principles. We must relegate to the worst times of this century the excesses of nationalism, of unilateral action, of the politics of power. The bedrock of every country's international relations must be the mission of using the United Nations system as the machinery for working and acting together. The automatic, unarguable, essential response in times of crisis between nations, and now between humanity and the Planet, must be the one President Eisenhower transmitted to Anthony Eden and Guy Mollet at the time of the Suez Crisis. **'Bring it to the UN'**. This was being true to the vision of 1945. It is a vision more compelling now.

There is a great and noble task to be undertaken of strengthening the United Nations - of fulfilling the larger vision that inspired the founders at San Francisco, of preparing the UN through renewal and reform for the next 50 years. Our global neighbourhood needs the UN as never before; but we need the UN not as it was before, serving the world of its first 50 years, but as it must be hereafter serving the new world of its next 50 years. For the sake of those who will inherit that world we must ensure that the UN is both reformed and sustained to meet that need.

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