

# THE INNER ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

*A talk delivered by Sri Chinmoy  
at the U.S. State Department Open Forum*



*The U.S. State Department invited Sri Chinmoy to come to Washington on 6 June 1980 to address its "Open Forum," a policy discussion group inaugurated during the Vietnam War to acquaint policymakers with different points of view on critical issues of the day. Sri Chinmoy, who has been conducting meditations at the United Nations for more than a decade, was asked to speak on the inner role of the U.N. His lecture is reprinted here.*

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## THE SECRETARY'S OPEN FORUM

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20520

April 6, 1980



Mr. Sri Chinmoy  
c/o Mr. John Graham  
USUN  
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Chinmoy:

Pursuant to a conversation I had recently with Mr. Graham, we are delighted that you will be able to meet with the Open Forum on Friday, June 6, during your visit to Washington.

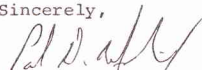
The inner role of the United Nations is clearly a matter to which we devote too little attention.

In order to properly advertise the meeting a week or so in advance, I will also need a few expository sentences, and some basic biographic information on yourself.

I will plan to meet you at the State Department "Diplomatic Entrance" (C Street and 22nd Street Northwest) at 1145. We begin promptly at 1200. At 1300 we will break for lunch with about eight interested Department officers.

We are looking very much forward to meeting with you and hearing and discussing your views.

Sincerely,

  
Paul D. Molineaux  
Chairman

## THE INNER ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

When I speak of the United Nations, my mind, heart and soul immediately compel me to speak of the United States in the same breath. When I speak for the United Nations, my mind, heart and soul are immediately blessed by the prosperous and generous soul of the host state—the Empire State, New York.

The term 'united' has always had a special appeal to all human souls, and this transcendent idea has remained in vogue down the sweep of centuries. There was a time when America was under the repressive yoke of Great Britain. Then America fought dauntlessly and sleeplessly for its rightful independence. At first, the newly liberated Americans and their beautiful, vast land were sadly wanting in oneness. But there came a time when a new dawn of oneness-glory broke upon the glowing and illumining horizon. Americans felt the supreme necessity of a 'united' country, and the thirteen colonies gradually, steadily, unerringly and selflessly became unified. Similarly, although at the present time peace is not reigning supreme in the United Nations, there shall definitely come a time when peace-flood will inundate the 'united' nations around the globe.

Who could have envisaged that the thirteen colonies would one day develop into such a powerful country—fifty states standing indivisible, united by none other than the Hand of the Supreme Being? For the United States, the heart-throbbing and life-illuminating song ‘united’ had its birthless and deathless origin in the hearts of the great Americans whose names are synonymous with the lofty principles of liberty, justice and oneness. The founder of the nation, George Washington; the vision-luminary, Thomas Jefferson; the wisdom-sun, Benjamin Franklin; and the tireless fighter, John Adams: these powerful luminaries, along with others, bravely dreamt of unity for the thirteen colonies.

Again, it was a great son of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, who had the pioneer-vision of the League of Nations—the hallowed source of the United Nations. Some people are of the opinion that the League of Nations totally collapsed and failed, but I cannot see eye to eye with them. The League of Nations did not fail. We must view the League of Nations as the loving mother and the United Nations as her most promising child. When parents leave the earth-planet, their children often manifest more aspiration-light, more vision-power and more manifestation-delight than the parents themselves were able to do. Unmistakably, it is from the dying parents that a bright new light comes to the fore. When the children successfully offer much more than their parents to the world at large, we never think that the parents were hopeless and useless in comparison. On the contrary, we perceive a most significant inner connection, inner link and inner growth between them. We see that

the children are marching and progressing in their parents’ footsteps. Here we can safely say that Woodrow Wilson’s League of Nations actually offered its wisdom-light to its future child, the United Nations.

As I said before, to me, the United States and the United Nations are divinely destined to run abreast. Not in vain is the headquarters of the United Nations in the United States—in New York, the capital of the world. This dynamic and fascinating world capital draws the world’s attention at every moment. Is there any place that can be more appropriate than New York City to house the vision of universal oneness, which is in the process of being realised and manifested in the heart and soul of humanity?

True, at times the United States and the United Nations are not on good terms. But each knows perfectly well that the one adds tremendous value to the other in terms of prestige, recognition, self-awareness and oneness-perfection. Inwardly they know that they truly need and deserve each other. In silence, unreservedly the United States gives the United Nations confidence-light. In silence, unreservedly the United Nations gives the United States oneness-height. Being a seeker, in my silence-heart I feel that the concept of the United Nations has verily come from the United States, unconsciously if not consciously, for the United States had this united feeling two hundred years ago, whereas the United Nations is only thirty-five years old.

At the present moment of evolution, the United States says to the United Nations, “If you take my help, you have to use it in my own way.”

The United Nations says to the United States, "I am ready to take your help and I shall remain most grateful to you. But if I use your help in your own way, then I will be totally lost in the comity of nations. Whatever you can afford to give me, please give me unconditionally."

The United States immediately responds, "Oh no, I do not want to give you my help unconditionally. I have a right to know whether or not my momentous and generous offering is being utilised properly. As it is my bounden duty to help your supreme cause, O United Nations, I feel that it is also your bounden duty to accept my wisdom-sun on rare occasions."

The United Nations says, "Sorry to stand firm in my belief, O United States. One day you will be blessed with the real joy of unconditional self-giving, which is always without a second."

The inner role of the United Nations amuses the intelligentsia, inspires the world-peace lovers and nourishes the world-oneness servers. God has showered His choicest Blessings upon the inner role of the United Nations. When we contemplate on the idea of 'role', we immediately think of either responsibility or challenge. But when it is a matter of inner role, there is no such thing as responsibility or challenge; there is only one self-giving Divinity which is breathlessly growing into a self-becoming reality.

The United Nations is often misunderstood. Perhaps its fate will always remain the same. But is there anybody who is not misunderstood, including poor God? Misunderstanding is the order of the day. But that does not and cannot prevent the

United Nations from making its soulful self-offering in the creation of a Oneness-Home for all.

The United Nations has been marching resolutely and triumphantly towards its inner goal. Indeed, the remarkable leadership of its four Secretaries-General has made its outer success and inner progress not only convincing but also fulfilling. Our present Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim, throws considerable light on the inner role of the world organisation: ". . . we are not faced with many separate problems, but with different aspects of a single over-all problem: the survival and prosperity of all men and women, and their harmonious development, physical as well as spiritual, in peace with each other and with nature. This is the solution we must seek. It is within our power to find it."

Secretary-General Waldheim's predecessor, the Supreme Pilot of the United Nations—U Thant—valued unreservedly the inner or spiritual obligations of the United Nations. Him to quote: "I have certain priorities in regard to virtues and human values . . . I would attach greater importance to moral qualities or moral virtues over intellectual qualities or intellectual virtues—moral qualities, like love, compassion, understanding, tolerance, the philosophy of live and let live, the ability to understand the other man's point of view, which is the key to all great religions . . . And above all, I would attach the greatest importance to spiritual values, spiritual qualities."

Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld offered the hallowed message-light that each individual has a responsibility to his own inner role. According to him, each individual must strive inwardly as well as outwardly to achieve abiding peace: "Our work for

peace must begin within the private world of each one of us. To build for man a world without fear, we must be without fear. To build a world of justice, we must be just. And how can we fight for liberty if we are not free in our own minds?"

Illuminating leaders from all over the world who are serving the United Nations remind us of the undeniable fact that the earth cannot exist without the world body—the United Nations—in spite of its apparent failings and problems. Secretary-General Trygve Lie's precious message ran: "The one common undertaking and universal instrument of the great majority of the human race is the United Nations. A patient, constructive, long-term use of its potentialities can bring a real and secure peace to the world."

The outer role of the United Nations is greatness remarkable. The inner role of the United Nations is goodness admirable. The supreme role of the United Nations is fulness adorable.

Greatness our mind desperately needs. Goodness our heart sleeplessly needs. Fulness our life breathlessly needs.

Greatness surprises the curious world. Goodness inspires the aspiring world. Fulness fulfils the serving world.

Greatness is blessed with an outer challenge. Goodness is blessed with an inner promise. Fulness is blessed with an integral perfection. Challenge awakens, promise expedites and perfection immortalises our varied capacities.

Greatness is sound-amplification. Goodness is silence-enlightenment. Fulness is God-Satisfaction.

The pillars of the United States, its Presidents, call upon us to dedicate ourselves to the most signi-

ficant cause that the United Nations embodies. Needless to say, the world organisation is God's gracious experiment and precious experience. Such being the case, we must feel an inner obligation to participate in this aspect of God's cosmic Drama. The late President John F. Kennedy spoke not only to his fellow Americans but to all his fellow beings when he proclaimed: "My fellow inhabitants of this planet, let us take our stand here in this assembly of nations. And let us see if we, in our own time, can move the world towards a just and lasting peace."

President Carter has also powerfully encouraged his country to remain part and parcel of the United Nations. He tells us the true truth that real leadership and continuous service to mankind are inseparable: "There is no possible means of isolating ourselves from the rest of the world, so we must provide leadership. But this leadership need not depend on our inherent military force, or economic power, or political persuasion. It should derive from the fact that we try to be right and honest and truthful and decent."

The favourite son of New York, Senator Daniel Moynihan, former United States Ambassador to the United Nations, expresses his country's sincere awareness of the sublime necessity of the United Nations: "While there have been some calls to boycott the General Assembly, or not to vote in it, there have been but few calls for withdrawal from the United Nations. It is almost as if American opinion now acknowledged that there was no escaping involvement in the emergent world society."

The United States' Special Ambassador to the United Nations Law of the Sea Conference, Elliot

Richardson—a heart of peace and a life of light—encourages, strengthens and spreads a global viewpoint: “. . . the interdependence of the world is an increasingly visible fact, and I believe that out of that fact is bound to emerge in due course a compelling—and comparably inspiring—concept of the opportunities for global cooperation.”

A staunch supporter of the United Nations, indeed, the donor of the land upon which the U.N. stands, Nelson Rockefeller vividly draws the parallel between the roots of the United States and the roots of the United Nations: “The federal idea, which our Founding Fathers applied in their historic act of political creation in the eighteenth century, can be applied in this twentieth century in the larger context of the world of free nations—if we will but match our forefathers in courage and vision. The first historic instance secured freedom and order to this new nation. The second can decisively serve to guard freedom and to promote order in a free world.”

As the Declaration of Independence of the United States is an unparelled discovery, even so is the Charter of the United Nations. The U.S. Declaration of Independence and the U.N. Charter are humanity's two aspiration-dedication-realities. The beacon-light of the Declaration of Independence shows countless human souls the way to their destined goal: “. . . We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among

Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed . . .”

The United Nations Charter bravely and heroically proclaims these rights for all of humanity, and speaks 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, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom . . .”

Concern for and satisfaction in the towering achievements of the United Nations may be a confidence-trip into the unknown, but never into the unknowable. The greatest messenger of the Catholic world, Pope Paul VI, during his visit to the United Nations in 1964, eloquently expressed the inner role of the United Nations: “The Church considers the United Nations to be the fruit of a civilisation to which the Catholic religion . . . gave the vital principles. It considers it an instrument of brotherhood between nations which the Holy See has always desired and promoted . . . The convergence of so many peoples, of so many races, so many States, in a single organisation intended to avert the evils of war and to favour the good things of peace, is a fact which the Holy See considers as corresponding to its concept of humanity and included within the area of its spiritual mission to the world.”

When Pope John Paul II visited the United Nations in October 1979 and spoke to the General Assembly, Secretary-General Waldheim introduced

him thus: “. . . your presence among us on this historic occasion is particularly encouraging since it dramatically reaffirms the great spiritual values which you represent and which inspire the Charter.”

Pope John Paul II indeed reaffirmed the value of the inner United Nations and the spiritual dimension of world politics when he told the General Assembly: “An analysis of the history of mankind, especially at its present stage, shows how important is the duty of revealing more fully the range of the goods that are linked with the spiritual dimension of human existence. It shows how important this task is for building peace and how serious is any threat to human rights.”

The composer of the immortal “Hymn to the United Nations,” the late Maestro Don Pablo Casals, reminds us that individuals and their countries undeniably need the United Nations. He gives an inspired call for us to selflessly play our parts in the inner and outer roles of the United Nations: “Those who believe in the dignity of man should act at this time to bring about a deeper understanding among people and a sincere rapprochement between conflicting forces. The United Nations today represents the most important hope for peace. Let us give it all power to act for our benefit. And let us fervently pray that the near future will disperse the clouds that darken our days now.”

The outer role of the United Nations is a colossal hope. The inner role of the United Nations is a generous assurance. The supreme role of the United Nations is a prosperous satisfaction.

Hope is a growing plant. Assurance is a blossoming tree. Satisfaction is a delicious fruit.

At the present stage, the United Nations is a growing plant which is only thirty-five years old. Is it not absurd for us to expect the United Nations to solve the overwhelming problems of centuries? Let the child-plant grow and glow, smile and cry. Then there shall come a time when this tiny plant will grow into a huge tree, with countless leaves, sleepless flowers and spotless fruits—sheltering, inspiring and nourishing all those who desperately need its protection-shelter, rejuvenation-inspiration and satisfaction-nourishment.