

## GANDHI ; THE NON VIOLENT REVOLUTIONARY

(Text of Ambassador (Retd) Alan Nazareth's International Day of Non Violence Lecture at the United Nation, New York on October 2<sup>nd</sup> ,2012)

Your Excellency Mr S.M.Krishna Minister of External Affairs of India, Your Excellency Mr Vuk Jeremic, President of the General Assembly, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

I am greatly honoured to have been invited to deliver the 2012 International Day of Non Violence lecture at this august United Nations forum and offer my heartfelt thanks to the Govt. of India for extending this invitation to me.

The institution of the International Day of Non Violence vide UNGA Resolution of 15 June 2007, to reaffirm "the universal relevance of the principle of non-violence" and the desire "to secure a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non-violence" is a significant contribution by the United Nations to the world. It is also the crowning glory of the concept of Ahimsa, which is the Sanskrit word for non violence . First conceived by Indian sages over four thousand years ago and raised to the status of prime virtue by its visionary 6<sup>th</sup> century BC religious reformer Lord Mahavira with his "*Ahimsa paramo dharma*" maxim, this concept thereafter spread to various parts of Asia and the world through Buddhism and subsequently Christianity. Gandhi had declared "*Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man*".

Reviewing historic developments in Asia in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the eminent civilizational historian Will Durant wrote "*China followed Sun Yat Sen, took up the sword and fell into the arms of Japan. India, weaponless, accepted as her leader one of the strangest figures in history, and gave to the world the unprecedented phenomenon of a revolution led by a saint, and waged without a gun.*"

To accurately assess Gandhi's role as a non violent revolutionary one needs to recall the national and international scenario in which he operated. The latter has been well described by Gene Sharpe "*Gandhi was the contemporary of Tsar Nicholas, Lenin and Stalin, Kaiser Wilhelm and Adolph Hitler, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt, of the last Emperor of China, Sun Yat Sen, Chiang Kai Shek and Mao Tse Tung. He bridged the span between the time when wars were fought by armies with rifles to the time when they were fought with atom bombs. Racism ran rampant, women, untouchables and many others were denied dignity and opportunities. These were among the social and political evils for which Gandhi sought solutions*"

In India, nationalists throbbed with strong revolutionary fervour. Their father figure was Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the Bengali novelist, whose popular novel 'Anandamath' had become the handbook of secret societies and its hero Satyanand,

the model for "revolutionaries". Cambridge educated Aurobindo Ghosh, selected for the coveted Indian Civil Service, gave it up to join the radical nationalists and wrote 'Bhabhani Mandir'. It was a stirring call to India's youth to sacrifice themselves, in Goddess Kali's name, for Mother India's dignity and salvation. 'Bartaman Rananiti, ('Modern Art of War') published in 1907 propagated Bakunin's idea that in creating an equitable society destruction was inescapable. Several British officials were assassinated, in India and England, between 1905 - 1915 . Viceroy Lord Hardinge, attacked while on a ceremonial procession in December 1912, narrowly escaped assassination.

At the 1919 Amritsar Congress when Gandhi spoke about Truth and Non-Violence, senior nationalist Bal Gangadhar Tilak brusquely retorted "*My friend, Truth has no place in politics*". Two decades later, another important leader, Subhas Chandra Bose, Congress President in 1938, openly disagreed with Gandhi's non-violent strategy, and secretly left India for Germany and Japan. With the latter's collaboration he set up the 'Indian National Army' with troops captured by the Japanese in South East Asia, and marched in their train towards India. His slogan was "Give me blood and I promise you freedom". As Rajmohan Gandhi has pointed out it was an offer of freedom with "*the gun and the boot as against Gandhi's charka and wooden sandals*". He has also pointed out that the violence of the militants was not the only challenge Gandhi faced. "*The outcastes were nervous about power moving from British to caste Hindu hands. India's princes were suspicious of their subjects and of Congress's intentions. Owners of agricultural lands were suspicious of absentee landlords and tillers, and if they were small cultivators, fearful of losing their holdings to town based creditors. Communities coveting army or police jobs felt threatened by one another. For protection against rivals or adversaries each group, communal, caste or class, inclined towards the Raj, thereby strengthening its hegemony even while disliking its burden and alien nature. Uniting Indians for dislodging the Raj was a large and difficult project*".

Gandhi succeeded in getting the Indian National Congress, and the Indian people, to adopt his non-violent strategy for national liberation only because of his total identification with the poverty stricken Indian people, his high moral stature, innovative communication, management and strategizing skills and the impressive results his non violent struggle produced 1920 onwards.

Gandhi had innovated his 'Satyagraha' (firmly adhering to Truth) non violent strategy in South Africa and first used it out on September 11, 1906. It was an important innovation since Truth and Non Violence had never before been combined as two sides of the same strategy. Its theoretical essence is that humans, having been created "*in the image of God*" and imbued with the "*Divine Spark*" must be led by Truth and love, not by fear and hate. One has to live, and if necessary to die for

Truth, but never to hurt or hate anyone. For Gandhi "*Satyagraha connotes the living Law of Life. The law will work, just as the law of gravitation will work, whether we accept it or not. And just as a scientist will work wonders out of various applications of the laws of nature, even so a man who applies the law of love with scientific precision can work greater wonders*". The modus operandi of this strategy is a combination of the messages of Lord Krishna and Jesus Christ. The message of the former, explicitly enunciated in the Bhagwat Gita is that when faced with evil and injustice one had no option but to confront it; that of Jesus Christ, implicitly conveyed in his crucifixion, is that through self suffering redemption is achieved and persecutors converted. That Gandhi was deeply touched by the crucifixion is revealed by his words "What would not I have given to be able to bow my head before the living image of Christ crucified. I saw there at once that nations like individuals could only be made through the agony of the cross. Joy comes not out of infliction of pain on others but out of pain voluntarily borne by oneself."

Using his '*Satyagrahd* strategy and inspiring and mobilizing millions of his people Gandhi succeeded in liberating India from colonial oppression in just three decades after his return from South Africa. The highlights of this national struggle were his Champaran, Kheda and Bardoli *Satyagrahas*, the 1919/1920 non cooperation movement and subsequent boycott of British goods, the Salt March and the Quit India movement. Each of these succeeded in weakening Britain's economic and political hold on India and in empowering the Indian people. The mentioned *Satyagrahas* transformed the Congress from the essentially elite, urban debating society it had been until 1915, into a well structured, disciplined and mass based national political party and freedom movement by 1925. Patrick French has written "*Gandhi diverted Congress away from its upper class Brahmin base and from the use of English, a language understood by only a tiny minority of the population....If 1919 was the year of the boycott of British made goods, 1920 marked the moment of quiet revolution. Shops, schools and colleges were boycotted and bonfires were made of imported foreign cloth. Jail going became a symbol of pride rather than of shame. Within a remarkably short time Gandhi had become the undisputed King of Congress, having generated a mass popular following and sidelined traditional politicians.*" Gandhi's Salt March, which Louis Fisher has described as "*insurrection without arms*" and Judith Brown as "*a superbly ingenious choice*" was a strategy and communications masterpiece. Over 1000 newspapers worldwide reported it. The New York Times editorialized that whereas Britain had lost America on tea, it was losing India on salt! TIME magazine put him on the front cover of their January 4, 1931 issue as their '*Man of the Year*'. Soon thereafter he was invited to London for Round Table Talks with the British Government.

When the British granted Independence to India in 1947, they left it as friends, vindicating Gandhi's assertion that "*A non-violent revolution is not a programme for seizure of power. It is a programme for transformation of relationships ending in a peaceful transfer of power.*" Among the first official acts of Independent India was to request the last British Viceroy Lord Mountbatten to be its first Governor General, and join the British Commonwealth as an equal partner. The British historian Arnold Toynbee has lauded Gandhi for being "*as much a benefactor of Britain as of his own country. He made it impossible for us to go on ruling India, but at the same time he made it possible for us to abdicate without rancour and without dishonour.*"

Gandhi's equally great success as a social emancipator is not so well known. His steadfast pursuit of Truth made him perceive quite early the indignity and oppression of the caste system for those below its lowest level, namely the "untouchables". These unfortunate people, who for centuries had to live outside village limits, perform the most despised tasks, he renamed "Harijans" (children of God) and made their emancipation an integral element in the national freedom struggle. Speaking at the Suppressed Classes Conference in Ahmedabad in 1920 he stated "*What crimes for which we condemn the Government as Satanic have not we been guilty of towards our untouchable brethren?... We make them crawl on their bellies; we have made them rub their noses on the ground; with eyes red with rage we push them out of railway compartments.... We have become "pariahs of the Empire" because we have created "pariahs" in our midst. The slave owner is always more hurt than the slaves*". In Young India (May 25th, 1921) he wrote "*Swaraj or independence is meaningless if we continue to keep a fifth of India under perpetual subjection. Inhuman ourselves, we may not plead before the throne for deliverance from the inhumanity of others*". Subsequently he wrote "*If it was proved to me that untouchability is an essential part of Hinduism, I would declare myself an open rebel against it.*"

In 1932 he undertook a "fast unto death" against the British Communal Award which granted a separate electorate for untouchables because he foresaw this would perpetuate untouchability. This fast was also intended to convince high caste Hindus that "untouchability was a sin". When the Poona Pact, (wherein the Harijan leader and eminent lawyer Dr. B.R. Ambedkar agreed that his community would not avail of the separate electorate) was signed, he ended his fast and set up the Harijan Sevak Samaj. Soon thereafter, he launched the 'Harijan' weekly, and devoted the next nine months to an extensive anti-untouchability tour of India.

On the eve of Independence when Nehru was forming his interim cabinet, Gandhi advised him to include Dr B.R. Ambedkar, in it. When Nehru demurred on grounds he was not a Congress Party member and had maligned it, Gandhi firmly reminded him that power was coming "*to India, not to Congress*". Ambedkar thus became Law Minister and Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee. This gave

him ample opportunity to include many safeguards in it for disadvantaged social groups. Most importantly, untouchability in all its forms was proscribed. However, it was the overwhelming majority of the Congress party in the Constituent Assembly and Gandhi's great moral influence over it, that ensured all these constitutional measures were adopted.

Ambedkar's biographer, Dhananjay Keer, has written *"An untouchable who was kicked out from carts and segregated in schools in his boyhood, insulted as a professor and ousted from hostels, hotels, saloons and temples and cursed as a British stooge became now the first Law Minister of a free nation and the chief architect of its constitution. It was a great achievement and a wonder in the history of India"*

Those formerly known as "untouchables" and subsequently as "Harijans" and "dalits", have emerged as an important political group, with a political party of their own since the early 1980s. A brilliant dalit, with a London School of Economics degree, became India's Ambassador to Turkey, China and USA and subsequently Minister for Science and Technology, Vice President of India and President of India (1997-2002). A dalit woman, Ms Mayawati, became Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, India's largest state, during the 1998 - 2003 period in a coalition government. Using her political skills very effectively she build up a strong political base and became Chief Minister of that state again during the June 2007 - April 2012, this time with with an absolute majority of her own multi-caste party. Soon thereafter she publicly declared her ambition to be Prime Minister of India one day !

Traditionally, Indian women were strictly confined to the family and home. Organizations like the National Council for Indian Women, (founded in the early 1900s) did exist but consisted only of aristocratic women like the Maharanis of Baroda and Bhopal who focused mainly on "charities" and maintained close connections with the British. Ordinary Indian women were almost totally absent from the public domain. Quite early in his national struggle Gandhi declared *"Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in the minutest detail in the activities of man.....As long as women do not come to public life and purify it, we are not likely to attain Swaraj. Even if we did, I would have no use for that Swaraj in which women have not made their full contribution"*. He called on Indian women to join the non violent national struggle. They responded to his call. Initially they came as volunteers at Congress sessions but by his 1919/20 non cooperation movement thousands were active participants. At his gentle urging they donated their jewellery, marched in processions, picketed liquor and foreign cloth shops, sold khadi at street corners and provided sanctuary in their homes to *"Satyagrahis"*.

When the 1942 'Quit India' Movement was launched and Gandhi and other leaders were arrested and taken away from the public meeting in Bombay they were addressing, a brave young woman named Aruna Asaf Ali unfurled the Indian flag. Another brave woman Usha Mehta, along with three other women, set up and operated a secret *"Congress Radio from somewhere in India"* Through Gandhi's non-violent national movement, Indian women for the first time combined their roles as wives and mothers with their new roles of *"non-violent warriors"*.

In view of all this, when Independence came women were accorded full legal equality with men. In the first Union Cabinet the health minister was Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, a princess of Kapurthala, who in 1915 had given up royal comforts to become Gandhi's disciple. Mrs Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit was India's first Ambassador to the Soviet Union. In 1953 she was elected President of the UN General Assembly. Within fifteen years thereafter, Indira Gandhi became Prime Minister of India and continued in that high office for 16 years with only an intervening two year break. Since then, numerous Indian women have risen to high positions in politics, diplomacy, business, banking, industry, biotechnology, newsmedia and other professions including aviation. Even more importantly, women's empowerment and self help groups have sprouted in various parts of India including the rural areas.

These impressive gains in the status and empowerment of India's Dalits and women are a direct outcome of Gandhi's non-violent national movement. In the US and most European countries, Afro-Americans and women secured the right to vote only after many years of arduous struggle in after the second decade of the 20th century.

Before Independence, India was primarily a land of a small number of powerful, elegant colonial administrators, wealthy and flamboyant Indian rulers, and innumerable poverty stricken, under nourished peasants. The princes competed with each other in lavish entertainment of British officials, which actively encouraged this. Patrick French has described the former groups thus. *"King George V's coronation in 1911 was a spectacular propaganda coup, with myriad Indian princes and imperial prime ministers filling Westminster Abbey for the seven hour ceremony..... This was the age of high imperialism when brute force was to an extent forsaken in favour of pomp as a means of asserting authority. A giant Durbar was subsequently held in Delhi which was attended by all the Indian princes"*.

Gita Mehta has highlighted the profligate life styles of the Indian princes by describing a princely dog marriage. *"The marriage of the two dogs Roshanara, veiled and covered in gems, to Bobby in red silk pyjamas (to make sure he does not violate the bride before the wedding!) was conducted with all the ceremony that would have accompanied the marriage of a royal princess. A court minister solemnly read out a list of the wealth Roshanara was bringing to the marriage including a golden*

*palanquin....At the end of the ceremony, the visiting rulers circled the dogs with gold coins and their aides placed gifts in a large basket. The strains of Mendelsohn's Wedding March were faintly audible...An enormous rectangular table for two hundred guests dominated the banquet hall for the nuptial dinner. In the center of the rectangle dancing girls sang and danced for the dogs"*

Gandhi's first confrontation with all this pomp and profligacy came in 1916 at Benares Hindu University inauguration at which Viceroy Lord Hardinge and many Indian princes were present; He spoke out boldly thus : *"His Highness the Maharaja of Benares spoke about the poverty of India. Other speakers too laid great stress upon it. But what did we witness in this great pandal. An exhibition of jewellery which made a splendid feast for the eyes of even the greatest jeweller from Paris. I compare these richly bedecked noblemen with the millions of the poor and say to them, there is no salvation for India unless you strip yourselves of this jewellery and hold it in trust for your countrymen in India".*

A March 29, 1939 news report in International Herald Tribune about the marriage of the Maharaja of Indore to Marguerite Lawler, an American woman, indicated his annual income as US\$ 70 million but his tiny state had only 1.5 million people.

Until the late 1930s, as advised by Gandhi the Congress party maintained a discreet non intervention in the affairs of the Princely states. Some rulers like the Maharajas of Baroda and Mysore were stirred by Gandhi's message and supported him. Most others foresaw that his movement would terminate their feudal regimes and opposed it but soon discovered to their chagrin that the widespread freedom upsurge in British India had aroused most of their subjects. They therefore had little option but to support it and Vallabhai Patel, Home Minister in the Interim Government firmly ensured this. By August 15, 1947 all princely states within the territory of India (excluding Hyderabad) or having a common frontier with it (excluding Kashmir) formally acceded to it. The distinct possibility of India's balkanization was thus averted. With the accession of these princely states, India acquired approximately 500,000 square miles of territory and 87 million new citizens. This partly compensated for the 364,737 square miles and 82 million which it lost through partition.

The bloodless ending of feudal and flamboyant life styles and the smooth integration of nearly all of the numerous princely states into the Indian Union, is another significant outcome of Gandhi's people oriented, non-violent national struggle. It contrasts sharply with the considerable bloodshed in the American, French, Italian, German, Russian Chinese and Ethiopian Revolutions and Civil Wars before independence and national unification were achieved, and feudalism and slavery ended.

With this broad spectrum non violent approach Gandhi contributed enormously to transforming India from an oppressed, poverty, caste and feudalism ridden society into a true peoples democracy based on universal adult franchise and in which the prime focus would be on the poor and disadvantaged. The policy guideline he gave to India's new rulers was *"Whenever you are in doubt, try the following expedient. Recall the face of the poorest and the most helpless man whom you have seen and ask yourself whether the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he be able to gain anything by it? Will it restore to him control over his own life and destiny? In other words will it lead to self rule for the hungry and spiritually starved millions of our countrymen?"*

Prof Alan Brinkley has written :*"Most revolutions create enormous aspirations and never really fulfill them; some betray them utterly. The American Revolution quickly drew boundaries around notions of freedom that were its inspiration, excluding African Americans, Native Americans, and to a considerable degree women. The French Revolution produced a frenzy of murderous rage, followed by nearly another century of monarchies. The Russian and Chinese Revolutions created tyranny, oppression and stagnations. Gandhi has been so mythologized since his assassination in 1948, the real man has almost disappeared. But he deserves his position as a resonant symbol of one of the most important phenomena of modern history: the simultaneous assault on colonialism and the oppression of individuals, which has transformed much of the 20th century world"*.

Though fully engaged in India's freedom struggle, Gandhi never lost sight of the world and its travails about which he kept himself fully informed. Having studied in England he was well acquainted with its politics, laws & culture. He had many friends there particularly among vegetarians, Theosophists and Liberals. In South Africa, where he spent 22 years and experienced virulent British & Boer racism. two Jews and a British clergyman were among his closest friends. It was through the former and Tolstoy's book *'The Kingdom of God is within you'* that he first became aware of the acute feudal oppression in Russia and could compare it to the situation in India. In 1905, he wrote in *'Indian Opinion'*: *"The power of the Viceroy is in no way less than that of the Tsar. The difference is that the British are more efficient and less crude in their brutal oppression. As a result the Russians, in desperation, become anarchists and terrorists."*

About the 1917 Russian Revolution he declared in a speech at Madras *"I am yet ignorant of what exactly Bolshevism is. I do not know whether it is for the good of Russia in the long run. But I know that in so far as it is based on violence and denial of God, it repels me"*.

About the 1920 Treaty of Sevres he wrote (in a letter dated May 25, 1920 to C.F. Andrews) *"The position created by the Peace Treaty is simply intolerable. The*



*Arabians have lost what independence they had under the Sultan because they were more than a match for him."* A few days later, in Young India (June 30, 1920 ) he referred to "British interest in the oil of Mosul ".

About Spain and China he wrote *"The fate of Republican Spain is hanging in the balance. So is that of China. If in the end they lose, it will not be because their cause is not just"*

After the 1938 Munich agreement, in which England and France conceded German take over of Czechoslovakia, he declared with prophetic foresight *"England and France quailed before the combined violence of Germany and Italy The agreement that has been signed is a peace that is no peace. The war is only postponed"*

He lauded the heroic Polish resistance to Nazi invasion thus *"The Poles knew they would be crushed to atoms and yet they resisted the German hordes. That is why I call it almost non-violence"*.

About Hitler's persecution of the Jews and the proposal to create a homeland for them in Palestine he wrote : *"My sympathies are all with the Jews. The German persecution of them seems to have no parallel in history. The tyrants of old never went so mad as Hitler seems to have done. If there ever could be a justifiable war in the name of and for humanity, war against Germany to prevent the wanton persecution of a whole race would be completely justified. ....My sympathy for the Jews does not blind me to the requirements to Justice. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. ....The nobler course would be to insist on a just treatment of the Jews wherever they were born and bred. The Jews born and bred in France are French precisely in the same sense as the Christians born in France are French. Every country is their home, including Palestine, not by aggression but by loving service"*

Gandhi's world view was as humane as it was broad spectrum. He wrote *"I live for India's freedom and would die for it. But my patriotism is not exclusive. It is calculated to benefit all in the true sense of the word. Through the deliverance of India, I seek to deliver the so called weaker races of the world... For me, patriotism is the same as humanity. It is not exclusive. I am patriotic because I am human and humane. I will not hurt England or Germany to serve India"*.

The first of the "weaker races" he inspired to undertake non violent struggle to ameliorate their condition were the African Americans. Martin Luther King was won over to Gandhian non-violence in 1956, after hearing Howard University President Dr Mordecai Johnson speak about it. He visited India in 1959 to learn from Gandhi's disciples how nonviolent resistance was planned and implemented. On return to the US he wrote *"I left India more convinced than ever before that non-violent resistance is the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom."* It was in the Montgomery bus boycott of 1961 that King first tried out 'Satyagraha'

in his struggle for racial equality. Using it consistently thereafter he brought about more beneficial change for American blacks in eight years of non-violent struggle, than had come to them in the hundred years after the Civil War. The transformation which non-violent struggle brought about in his fellow blacks King described thus. *"When legal contests were the sole form of activity, the ordinary negro was involved as a passive spectator. His interest was stirred, but his energies were unemployed. Mass marches transformed the common man into the star performer he became. The Negro was no longer a subject of change; he was the active organ of change. The dignity his job denied him, he obtained in political and social action".* For King *"Mahatma Gandhi was the first person in human history to lift the ethic of love of Jesus Christ, above mere interaction between individuals and make it into a powerful and effective social force on a large scale".* He affirmed *"If humanity is to progress, Gandhi is inescapable. We may ignore him at our own peril".*

The 1980s witnessed successful non-violent struggles in various parts of the world. In 1980, 'Solidarity' was set up in Poland by Lech Walesa and fellow dock workers in Gdansk. Their seven year struggle brought about the collapse of Communism in Poland and the election of Lech Walesa as President. Subsequently, Communist dictatorships collapsed all over Eastern Europe including in the Soviet Union which itself disbanded.

The Marcos and Pinochet dictatorships were brought down in 1986 and 1989 by a well organized, nonviolent *"peoples power"* movement. Its leaders publicly acknowledged they had been influenced by Gandhi and Martin Luther King. In both cases these non violent revolutions produced women heads of state. Corazon Aquino and Michelle Bachelet, The latter had been imprisoned, tortured and exiled by the Pinochet regime. When she was elected President of Chile, the first woman to hold that high office in her country she echoed Gandhi in her first post election statement and stated *"Violence came into my life, destroying what I loved, because I was a victim of hate. I have dedicated my life to reversing that hate and converting it into understanding, tolerance and love".*

Evo Morales, an Aymara (indigenous Bolivian) coca farmer and leader of the Movement toward Socialism (MAS) led a few hundred coca farmers and other peasants, on a 120-mile march from Cochabamba to La Paz in 2003 to demand that foreign companies be made to pay a 50-percent royalty for the natural gas they extract and export from Bolivia. This uprising forced President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada out of office. Carlos Mesa, who succeeded him was harried with the same demand by many more sections of the population including teachers and street vendors. In March 2005, the Bolivian Congress finally enacted a law imposing a 32-percent tax in addition to the 18 % royalties that foreign companies had been paying. Bolivia's natural gas reserves are second only to those of Venezuela but it had been

benefiting very little from them. In early January 2006, Evo Morales was elected President of Bolivia and became the first Aymara to lead his country, thus ending almost 500 years of his people's subjugation by the Spanish Conquistadores and their descendants. Bolivian style *Satyagraha* achieved this unprecedented miracle!

Truth and non-violent political and social change are even more imperative today than they were during Gandhi's, Martin Luther King, Lech Walesa's or Pinochet's times. The spate of corporate scandals in Enron, Worldcom, Marconi, Tyco, Parmalat, Bear Stearns, Lehmann Brothers, Arthur Andersen and other mega firms, resulting in bankruptcies, and impoverishment of their many stake holders, are the calamitous consequences of their CEOs deviating from the path of truth in pursuit of personal gain, profit maximization or allaying of share holder anxieties. The same is true for political leaders who invade and occupy countries on false pretences, seek to impose their will on the weak countries, condone religious fundamentalisms and terrorism when it suits them and permit destruction of places of religious worship through inaction as happened with the Babri Masjid in India. The terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, Nairobi, Dar e Salaam, Bali, Mumbai, New Delhi, Tel Aviv, Madrid, Morocco, Moscow, Istanbul, Djakarta, London, Sharm al Shaik, Amman, Karachi and Islamabad in just the first ten years of this millenium are the tragic outcome of these untruthful, iniquitous and short sighted policies.

The spectacular "9/11" terrorist attack on New York's World Trade Centre has dramatically changed the nature of armed conflict. It has ushered in "*asymmetric warfare*" wherein the enemy is not a foreign state but a few suicidal terrorists, who strike from within rather than from outside the country, using the host country's own assets such as its airplanes and airports, and causing mind boggling devastation thereby. Some security analysts now consider a terrorist attack with a "*dirty*" radio active bomb a distinct possibility. They have already written about highly destructive ultrasonic weapons and micro unmanned aerial vehicles, "*the size of a humming bird*" networked to ground controls which could destroy shopping malls, bridges and even planes by "*acting as aerial mines*". Nightmare scenarios are a "*digital Pearl Harbour*", an attack on a nuclear power station(s) by a psychopathic, Oklahoma bomber type drone "*pilot*" and a "*brief case nuclear bomb*" in the hands of a terrorist. The book '*Grave New World : Security Challenges in the 21st Century*', edited by Michael Brown, presents various such serious threats. At the Nuclear Security Summit at Washington on April 13, 2010 President Obama stated that the possibility of a terrorist obtaining a nuclear weapon represented "*the single biggest threat to US security, both short-term, medium-term and long-term.*"

In this dreadful and ominous scenario, Jonathan Schell sees a ray of hope. He has written "*As the new century begins, no question is more important than whether the world has now embarked on a new cycle of violence, condemning the 21st century*

*to repeat or even outdo, the bloodshed of the 20th". He has pointed out that the present dangers are not, as before, "the massed conventional armies and systematized hatreds of rival great powers" but "the persistent and steady spread of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and the unappeased demons of national, ethnic, religious and class fury". He has averred that, notwithstanding the shock of September 11th and the need to take forceful measures to meet the threat of global terrorism, "a new and promising path has opened up. For in 20th century history, another complimentary lesson, less conspicuous than the first but just as important, has been emerging. It is that forms of non-violent action can serve effectively in the place of violence at every level of political affairs. This is the promise of Mohandas K. Gandhi's resistance to the British Empire in India, of Martin Luther King's civil rights movement in the United States, of the non-violent movements in Eastern Europe and Russia that brought down Communism and the Soviet Union"*

Endowed with prophetic vision, Gandhi had foreseen the looming humanitarian, environmental and terrorist crises over a hundred years ago. He had urged simple living and village based political, economic and social structures and decried the mass production, industrial and militarized civilization of the West as also the militant nationalism of some radical Indian patriots.

Though many consumerist society addicts and neo-liberal economists consider Gandhi's idea's of simple living and village based economies as crazy and ante-deluvian, the eminent German economist Ernst Schumacher has written "Gandhi had always known, and rich countries are now reluctantly beginning to realize, that their affluence was stripping the world. The USA with 5.6% of world population is consuming upto 40% of the world's resources, most of them non renewable....Enough is now known about the basic facts of space ship earth to realize that its first class passengers are making demands which cannot be sustained very much longer without destroying the space ship". The United Nations' Environmental programme has been using his maxim "The world provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not for every man's greed." as a prime slogan of its publicity campaign. The US Public Broadcasting service, in its RACE TO SAVE THE PLANET TV Series has done likewise.

About the mass production, militarized civilization of the West Gandhi had written *"Formerly, when people wanted to fight with one another they measured between them their bodily strength; now it is possible to take away thousands of lives by one man working behind a gun from a hill. ....Formerly men were made slaves under physical compulsion. Now they are enslaved by temptation of money and of the luxuries that money can buy....According to the teaching of Mohammed this would be considered a Satanic civilization. Hinduism calls it the Black Age ('Kali Yuga')."*

Startled by the youthful and militant Indian revolutionaries he met in London in 1908 he had written *'Hind Swaraj'*. He revealed it was, "written in answer to the Indian school of violence". In it, he offered *"the gospel of love in place of that of hate"*. He stated that it was *"an attempt to offer the revolutionary something infinitely superior, retaining the whole of the spirit of self sacrifice and bravery that was to be found in the revolutionary"*. That this "offer" was made over a hundred years ago, is a measure of Gandhi's extraordinary foresight.

A Gandhian approach to contemporary terrorists and suicide bombers requires *"putting ourselves in their shoes"* and trying to understand why they do the things they do. This is not difficult since many suicide bombers leave behind *"farewell statements"* indicating the motivation for their acts. Most of them reveal outrage over foreign troops in their countries, total US support for Israeli occupation of Palestinian land/oppression of its people, and denigration of Islam in the West. Solutions need to be found for all these grievances, particularly for the continuing and excruciatingly painful Israel - Palestine imbroglio.

Karen Armstrong has written *"The world changed on September 11th. We now realize that we in the privileged Western countries can no longer assume that events in the rest of the world do not concern us. What happens in Gaza, Iraq or Afghanistan today, is likely to have repercussions in New York, Washington or London tomorrow and small groups will soon have the capacity to commit acts of mass destruction previously only possible for powerful nations"*.

Deepak Chopra, has averred *"Mahatma Gandhi expressed a profound truth when he said "There is no way to peace. Peace is the way"*. He elucidates that what Gandhi meant was that peace is not achieved through war and violence. He goes on to affirm *"Just as Newton's formulation of the law of gravity meant human beings were finally and forever on the road to a new science, a road that led to a completely transformed world, you and I can create a new turning point."*

The extent to which the world has been transformed in the last seven decades through non violent revolutions is revealed by the following facts. Between 1947, when Indian independence was achieved and 1980 over 100 British, French, Dutch, Belgian, Spanish and Portuguese colonies had become free. Between 1980 and 2010, non violent revolutions had politically empowered US Blacks and put a Black President in the White House, ended Apartheid in South Africa and transformed it into a "Rainbow Polity" based on universal adult franchise, overthrown the Marcos Dictatorship and given the Phillipines its and Asia's first woman head of state, brought down all East European Communist dictatorships and established democratic governments in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine; the Berlin Wall had been dismantled, Germany reunified, the Warsaw Pact scrapped and

many of its former members admitted to the European Union; Terrorism had ended in Ireland, the Pinochet Dictatorship had collapsed and Chile had its and Latin America's first woman head of State, Bolivia had its first Aymara head of state and General Musharraf had resigned and gone into exile of and democracy had been restored in Pakistan, In early 2011 non violent revolutions brought down oppressive and seemingly unassailable dictatorships in Tunisia and Egypt. About the latter revolution Niranjana Ramakrishnan wrote in an article titled '*Gandhi on the Nile*' : *"The people of Egypt have just raised a political monument that will rank alongside their mightiest wonders of antiquity. They have shown the world a model exercise of peaceful, determined, and dignified people-power. Three hundred or more are said to have died in the struggle of the last eighteen days. All of them were protesters, not one a representative of the hated regime. Instead of the suicide bombers for which the region has become renowned, this movement began with a single suicide. Instead of firebombing a building full of people, it began with a man (in Tunisia) setting fire to himself. Instead of clamouring for loaves and fishes, they stood firm on freedom, demanding nothing short of the dictator's exit. The people of Egypt have exploded something far bigger than an atom bomb – the myth that the Arab and Islamic worlds are unsuited for Satyagraha. The Egyptian people have enacted a revolution that would have made Gandhi proud. But their victory is all their own."*

Prof. Gene Sharp has written *"Gandhi was an experimenter in the development of 'war without violence'. His work was pioneering and not always adequate, but it represents a major development of historic significance both in ethics and in politics.... Many problems in its further development and application remain. But in words and action Gandhi pointed toward what may be the key to the resolution of the dilemma of how one can behave peacefully and at the same time actively, and effectively oppose oppression and injustice."*

Johan Galtung has lauded Gandhi even more handsomely by declaring *"Gandhi was certainly a revolutionary, much more revolutionary than the piecemeal revolutionaries of Western civilization. Gandhi revolutionized revolution itself"*.

Since I am delivering this lecture in the august forum of the United Nations the question that naturally arises is *"What is Gandhi's message to the United Nations ?"*. On the eve of its setting up in 1945 he issued a statement which reads as follows : *"I reiterate my conviction that there will be no peace for the allies or the world unless they shed their belief in the efficacy of war and its accompanying terrible deception and fraud. Peace must be just. In order to be that it must neither be punitive nor vindictive. Germany and Japan should not be humiliated. The fruits of peace must be equally shared. Exploitation and domination of one nation over another can have no place in a world striving to put an end to all wars. Strong nations should be the servants of the weak not their masters or exploiters; Future peace, security*

*and ordered progress of the world should be the responsibility of a world federation that would ensure the freedom of its constituent parts."*

Based on this message, I would venture to ask all members of the United Nations, particularly the P5 its Security Council, whether they have yet shed "their belief in *the efficacy of war and its accompanying terrible deception and fraud*". The United Nations was instituted, as its Charter states "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Yet the P5, who are primarily responsible "to maintain international peace and security" are still the world's largest producers and salesmen of the most lethal arms. On many thorny international problems some of them often appear to prefer military action to diplomacy and dialogue. The Iraq war, now in its eleventh year, was embarked upon by a "Coalition of the Willing" assembled and led by two P5 members, in open defiance of the Security Council. Almost a million Iraqis have been killed and four million displaced by this illegal war. Wikileaks has clearly revealed the gross deception, fraud, injustices and brutalities that have been perpetrated in this war and also in many other recent actions of the "strong nations". One of them has vetoed 32 UNSC resolutions in order to shield a close ally from international censure and sanctions, for its frequent attacks on and illegal occupation of neighbouring peoples and lands.

At the UN General Assembly's Third Special Session on Disarmament in February 1988 India's then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had enunciated, and urged, the adoption of a three stage Action plan for the elimination of all nuclear weapons by the year 2010. He had rightly declared "*Nuclear weapons threaten to annihilate human civilization and all that mankind has built through millenia of labour and toil. Nuclear weapon states and non nuclear weapon states alike are threatened by such a holocaust. It is imperative that nuclear weapons be eliminated..... Peace must be predicated on a basis other than the assurance of global destruction. We need a world order based on non-violence and peaceful coexistence.*" Sadly, his assassination three years thereafter and the lack of any positive action on his Action Plan led India herself to go nuclear because of the sombre strategic scenario in its neighbourhood.

The imperative need for global nuclear disarmament is stronger today than ever before. I therefore urge India, to take the lead in reviving the Rajiv Gandhi action plan, particularly since President Obama has publicly voiced his aspiration for a nuclear weapon free world and taken the initial step in reducing the US nuclear stockpile. As Mahatma Gandhi had declared soon after the atom bomb drops on Hiroshima and Nagasaki "*The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that it will not be destroyed by counter bombs. Non-Violence is the only thing the atom bomb cannot destroy..... Unless the world now adopts nonviolence, it will spell certain suicide for mankind.*". Albert Einstein had made a similar assertion. "*The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything but our*

*thinking; thus we are drifting toward a catastrophe beyond comparison. We shall require a new manner of thinking if mankind is to survive".* This "new manner of thinking" will have to emanate as much from the United Nations as from peace activists all over the world..

An enlightened effort to initiate this "*new manner of thinking*" at the United Nations was made by the farsighted and deeply spiritual former UN Secretary General U Thant in 1970 by inviting Sri Chinmoy, the Indian spiritual master, to conduct regular meditation sessions at the UN, for diplomats, delegates and staff members representing their countries/working at it. Said meditation sessions and related activities such as lectures, seminars, plays, art exhibitions and sports have continued unbroken since then even though Sri Chinmoy passed away in October 2007. From this prime global forum meditations techniques for "self-discovery" have travelled worldwide. Sri Chinmoy meditation centres, book/music shops and vegetarian restaurants have sprung up in numerous cities and towns internationally. A biennial World Harmony Run instituted by him in 1987, now traverses 70,000 kilometers in 100 countries in all continents and has internationally renowned athletes and Olympic Gold medalists like Olivier Bernhard, Carl Lewis, Katrina Webb, Paul Tergat, Tatyana Lebedeva and Tegla Loroupe participating in them. After one such run Carl Lewis declared "When I carried the flaming torch, I felt so much oneness with all the people of the world."

The tragedy of the contemporary world is that there is too much religion, particularly of the fundamentalist kind, and too little of the spirituality it so greatly needs. Spirituality that is deeply rooted in Truth, Justice, Love and Universal Brotherhood could contribute substantially in changing the untruth, injustice, religious and racial hatred plagued international scenario and in due course bring about the global spiritual renaissance which the revered U Thant firmly believed was an essential requisite for a real and enduring world peace. Sri Chinmoy's memorable quote about this is " World Peace can be achieved when, in each person, the power of love replaces the love of power" Those who doubt this and prefer to rely on bombs, missiles, drones and such other lethal weapons to achieve peace would do well to recall the prophetic words of Jesus Christ "He who raises the sword will perish by the sword."

I thank you, my distinguished and esteemed audience, for your gracious attention.

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### **Bio of Amabssador (Retd) Pascal Alan Nazareth**

Holding a Masters Degree in Economics from Madras University, Pascal Alan Nazareth was selected for the Indian Foreign Service in May 1959. He has served in India's diplomatic and consular missions in Tokyo, Rangoon, Lima, London, Chicago and New York and as India's High Commissioner to Ghana and Ambassador to Liberia, Upper Volta, Togo, Egypt, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador & Belize.

During the 1982-85 period, when Mr. Nazareth was ICCR Director General, multifaceted Indian cultural festivals were held in Britain, USA and France, and international conferences on 'Buddhism and National Cultures' and 'India and World Literature', and a World Poetry Festival at New Delhi. An India-Greece Symposium organized during this period at Delphi resulted in the scholarly publication 'India and Greece'. Subsequently when Mr. Nazareth was Ambassador to Egypt and Mexico 'India and Egypt' and 'India and Mexico' were published, following similar symposia held in Cairo and Mexico City.

Ambassador Nazareth retired in May 1994 and since then has been guest lecturer at National Institute of Advanced Studies & Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore and National Defence College, New Delhi. Among the foreign institutions he has lectured at or participated in seminars are Gandhi Memorial Centre at Washington DC, American, Yale, Columbia, Stonybrook, UC Berkeley & Stanford Universities, MIT, San Francisco World Affairs Council, East West Centre and University of Hawaii, and

Aspen Institute in the USA, Uppsala University in Sweden, Asian Institute of Management & Ateneo and Phillipine Universities in the Phillipines, Udayana and Shiyarif Hidayatullah Islamic Universities in Indonesia, Universities of Trinidad & Tobago and the West Indies in Port of Spain and Mahatma Gandhi Institute at Moka, Mauritius. His lectures have been published in electronic form as two CDRs titled 'Historical Perspectives - Asia' and 'Historical Perspectives - Europe'.

Ambassador Nazareth is a founder and Managing Trustee of Sarvodaya International Trust which is dedicated to promoting the Gandhian ideals of Truth, nonviolence, communal harmony, humanitarian service and peace. It was established in March 1995. The URL of its website is [www.sarvodayatrust.org](http://www.sarvodayatrust.org).

Ambassador Nazareth's widely acclaimed book 'Gandhi's Outstanding Leadership' was released in New Delhi by the former Prime Minister of India Dr. I.K.Gujral and at the UN in New York by Under Secretary General Shashi Taroor. On October 9, 2007 he was presented the U Thant Peace Award by the Sri Chinmoy Peace Meditation Group at the United Nations, for his 'Life Time of Dedication and World Service by promoting of the Gandhian Values of Truth, Non Violence, Communal Harmony and Humanitarian Service'. Among previous recipients of this Award were Pope John Paul II, The Dalai Lama, Mother Theresa, Mikhail Gorbachev, Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu.

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