

ADDRESS BY H.E. DR. CHEDDI JAGAN
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA AT
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY OCTOBER 24, 1995

"THE UN AT 50 -

In Search of a New Global Human Order

Dean Goldschid

Professor Doyle, Members of the Faculty &
Student Body of Princeton University
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is refreshing after a busy day at the United Nations to come to the academic refuge of Princeton. Here, relieved temporarily from the cares of the office, one may indulge in some reflection on the problems of the world and hopefully attempt to find possible solutions. I am therefore grateful for this opportunity which the University authorities and more particularly Professor Doyle have provided me to share some thoughts with you on the future of the United Nations and more specifically, on my proposal for the construction of a New Global Human Order in the post Cold War era.

I should note that Princeton and New Jersey are no strangers to me since I visited the Garden State on a number of occasions in the past. Looking around the audience tonight I am pleased to see the faces of many friends and acquaintances from those times.

Earlier today, in a tribute paid to the United Nations on the occasion of its Fiftieth Anniversary, I expressed my country's continuing faith in the provisions of its Charter. It is a faith, I said, born of the positive influence which the

Organisation' has had on our national life. Like most of its members, we owe our freedom and independence largely to the decolonisation efforts which it undertook in the decades of the fifties and sixties. Today, we continue to look to it for the preservation of our hard won sovereignty and territorial integrity. Its lofty principles and provisions provide a shield upon which we rely for our security.

Under its auspices we have sought to develop full political, economic and social relations with sister states in the world community. On the basis of mutual understanding and respect, we have joined in the international effort to reduce conflict and maximise cooperation. Without its ready assistance our achievements and progress would clearly have been more difficult. There can be no doubt that the United Nations has made a significant contribution to the promotion of peace and development throughout the world. Following the mandate given to it at its creation, it has thus far effectively prevented the scourge of a Third World War and allowed our peoples to live, at least in some measure, in larger freedom.

This is not to say, however, that the goals outlined in the Charter have been fully realised. Despite the ending of the Cold War, a multiplicity of local and regional conflicts continue to inflict suffering and to sap our collective strength. World security is also seriously undermined by new threats such as the aids pandemic, drug-trafficking, rampant poverty and environmental degradation. Our individual attempts to curb the

spread of these dangers have done little to obviate their tragic consequences. These efforts must be complemented by collective action. Our experience of half a century must surely teach us that there is no alternative to making a firmer commitment to the United Nations and to the achievement of its goals. We cannot expect to reap the full benefits of global endeavour if our participation in its activities is less than full. Interdependence - a concept which the Organisation advocates - cannot be meaningful if states insist on clinging to selfish national interest.

For the United Nations to reach its full potential, its members must be ready and willing to perform the collective agreement which its Charter represents. As with every contractual arrangement, there are both rights to be honoured and obligations to be discharged. The negotiations which we have launched to elaborate an Agenda for Peace as well as an Agenda for Development should have as their aim the identification of the commitments which both developed and developing countries are prepared to make for their common good. Only then will international cooperation have been placed on a sound and reliable footing and only then will we have a strong and vibrant United Nations.

Fortunately, there has never been a more propitious time for joint action than the present. The abatement of East/West rivalry has given a welcome thrust to multilateralism. This is evident in the new mood which prevails at the United Nations. We should

capture this mood and with determination, seek to strengthen the Organisation to enable it to meet the challenges which face it today. Wherever necessary, we must reform and restructure its machinery so that it might better discharge the functions for which it was designed and serve as a strong underpinning for a New World Order which we hope will arise from the prevailing disorder.

As a small state which attaches paramount importance to the collective security system provided by the United Nations, Guyana will continue to press for a reform of the Security Council so that it may effectively play the role which it has been assigned under the Charter. Persuaded of the need for more equitable representation on the Council, we would wish to see its membership suitably expanded to reflect the vast expansion which has taken place in the Assembly since 1945. Our concern therefore is to see that the Council is sufficiently democratised to allow developing countries such as ourselves a greater voice on the vital issues of peace and security.

We hope that the open-ended Working Group which has been created to pursue the question of the Council's reform will proceed in this direction. The discussions which have taken place thus far have revealed a plethora of proposals for the council's expansion and for increasing both its efficiency and effectiveness. It should be possible, given goodwill on all sides, to reconcile these many variables in the not too distant future. Ultimately, we believe that a new Security Council will

emerge - one that will be not only more representative but effective. A Council that enjoys the confidence of all states is more likely to be relied upon to maintain international peace and security.

The establishment of a new global order also requires reform in the economic and social activities for which the United Nations is responsible. Admittedly, many of the Specialised Agencies such as the UNDP, UNICEF and WHO - to name just a few - do excellent work often with limited resources and in most difficult circumstances. Overall however, the Organisation's thrust for development upon which the new order must be founded is disperse and uncoordinated Worse yet, it suffers from a lack of direction and dynamism which are essential to progress. Clearly, the Economic and Social Council which is the organ charged with the promotion of the economic and social welfare of member states is not functioning as it should.

Disenchantment with its performance has led to calls for its replacement by a stronger and more effective body. Suggestions have been made for the creation of an Economic and Social Security Council, which like its political counterpart would have the authority and capability to spearhead the campaign for development. There have been many variations of this proposal but they all have the same aim. However, since the Council's problems do not derive from its nomenclature but rather from marginalisation by the Bretton Woods institutions, there is no reason why it could not be reinforced and given the scope to

execute its full mandate. Member states, particularly the developing countries should not continue to be held to ransom by a confusion of authority resulting from inter-Agency rivalries.

It is necessary for the UN system to play a more central and controlling role in global economic management. The organisation has a legitimate responsibility for dealing with such major issues as debt, monetary stability and international resource transfers. The Bretton Woods Institutions must accordingly return to their original mandates and concentrate on human development as distinct from the means of development. The IMF should be reoriented to serve as a Global Central Bank - its original raison d'etre. Similarly the World Bank should fulfill its primary task of mediating between capital markets and developing countries and provide them with special assistance facilities.

Together with peace, which is a prerequisite, development must become the United Nations' first order of business. The vast majority of its member states are still entrapped by poverty and unable to satisfy the most basic needs of their populations. Deprived of adequate housing, clothing, food and medical care, millions of people find it increasingly difficult to survive. Even in those countries which have experienced some economic growth, unemployment and attendant social pressures have combined to destroy entire societies. As we now know only too well, it is not only the small and weak states that suffer from this state of degradation. Poverty and unemployment now exist in the mansions of industrialised nations. The situation has now become

so critical that unless urgent action is taken to remedy it, our world will be plunged into further chaos and our civilization, such as we know it, threatened with collapse.

As a victim of this widening crisis, my own country has made a valiant effort to combat the worst effects. The Government which I head has sought to implement political, economic and social policies designed to relieve the burden which our people now bear and to give them the opportunity to improve their circumstances. By providing for the growth of democracy and free enterprise, we have encouraged the full development of the human potential. Yet such is the oppressive weight of our debt obligations that we are hard put to overcome our difficulties. Despite a sustained growth rate of 8% over the past few years, we are simply unable to satisfy the wide array of social needs which cry out for satisfaction. Without external assistance, our progress will be painfully slow.

It must be clear to all that until and unless there is full international cooperation to restore buoyancy to the global economy, we will continue to witness the spread of poverty and social disintegration. Beggar-thy-neighbour policies which cater only to selfish concerns will retard the establishment of just and equitable arrangements that would allow all nations to develop themselves. Less than generous provisions of development assistance will seriously curtail the ability of developing countries to address their many problems. We must therefore find the necessary political will to support global economic recovery

and growth.

The several Summit Conferences that have been held during the past five years have given rise to hope that such commitment is forthcoming. At the World Summit for Children which was held here in New York in September 1990, we agreed to take joint action to protect our young generation from the ravages of poverty and despair. Three years ago in Rio de Janeiro and later in 1994 in Barbados, we expressed our determination to preserve our fragile ecosystem in the interest of sustainable development. Similarly, at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo at which we considered the rational management of the earth's finite resources. At the World Social Summit in Copenhagen, Denmark in March of this year, we analyzed the problems of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration. Finally, only a little more than a month ago at Beijing we focused our attention on the role of women in order to assure them of their rightful place in our societies.

We should now hasten to synthesize these far reaching commitments into a coherent and a comprehensive Agenda for Development. This document can be transformed into a global compact that would reflect the concerns and undertakings of all the parties. Like the Lome Convention on which development cooperation between many African, Caribbean and Pacific countries and the European Union has been based for many years, this compact can provide a measure of stability and predictability which is needed to build a firm and successful partnership for

development. I emphasise the concept of partnership since in this new and mutually accepted relationship, both sides will have a say on what form and conditions their cooperation will assume.

At the World Summit for Social Development held earlier this year in Copenhagen, Denmark, I advocated the adoption of such a contract because I fully realise, as I stated on that occasion that "crucial to sustainable human development are the attainment of peace and political stability, economic growth with equity, healthy social conditions, environmental protection and democracy in all its aspects - political, consultative and participatory." These things can only come from concerted action at both the national and international levels to build a new World Order in which nations are prepared to work together for their common good. I was gratified then and later in other fora to note that there is much support for my proposal. I would therefore hope that its feasibility can be explored at this Fiftieth Session of the General Assembly with a view to its implementation by the end of this decade.

At the international level, my proposal for a New Global Human Order will require Governments to commit themselves to making the institutional structures of the UN system more effective in eliminating hunger and suffering from the world, particularly as these affect the poor and the dispossessed. This may require - as I have said - a rearrangement of existing institutional structures in some cases and the refocusing of priorities in others. It would call for the urgent establishment

of measures for fulfilling the needs of peoples everywhere for food, clothing, shelter, education and gainful employment. It would seek to create a common mechanism for overseeing the implementation of the major agreements and declarations promulgated by the international community in the area of environment, human rights, population and social development especially as they impact on the world's poor majority.

Equally important, the New Global Human Order would promote agreement on and adoption of effective measures for removing the obstacles to development, in the areas of trade, finance and transfer of appropriate technology for development. It would address the continuing problem of Third World indebtedness through concrete and equitable measures. It would seek to provide on a sustained basis, development assistance with the aim of reducing poverty and suffering and promoting economic and social development. Under the Order's umbrella, nations both developed and developing would come together to combat the scourge of illicit drug trafficking and to formulate actions for protection of the environment.

At the national level Governments will be called upon to undertake, inter alia, to provide full access to basic and tertiary education, vocational training and development opportunities for their peoples. We will commit ourselves to the creation of an environment for cultural development and to the participation by all groups in society in the formulation and determination of policies that affect their lives. Similarly,

we will work to promote individual self-reliance particularly through the creation of employment, including self-employment. Of particular importance will be the participation of women in our societies, as full and equal partners in the effort to achieve economic and social progress.

At the same time, our Governments will be responsible for encouraging good governance and respect for the human rights of all peoples irrespective of their racial, ethnic, religious, political or social backgrounds. In all of this an urgent requirement will be the allocation of budgetary resources wherever possible, so that a greater emphasis can be placed on meeting the social and economic needs of our peoples in particular, the eradication of poverty, by increasing spending on education, health and other areas of social provisioning, as envisaged in the 20/20 initiative advocated by UNDP and others.

Understandably, such a vast agenda will require considerable new funding. Developed countries who themselves are now faced with economic and social difficulties, are reluctant to consider new approaches for assistance by developing countries. Indeed, donor fatigue appears to have become chronic, leading to a serious reduction in the levels of both bilateral and multilateral aid. Yet, with imagination and initiative, I believe that we can readily find significant additional resources. We need only to realise both in the North and the South that an investment has to be made in the creation of a New Global Human Order from which both can benefit. Without such investment, neither side is likely

to prosper.

One popular suggestion for new and additional funding is the setting aside of a small percentage of the world's expenditure on arms for development purposes. UNDP has estimated that if military budgets were to be reduced by only 3% during this decade, roughly 1.5 trillion would be obtained by way of a "peace dividend." There is no reason why now that the Cold War has ended, such a redirection of resources could not take place. Another proposal that merits consideration is a tax on producers of pollution and on speculative currency movements. In terms of the latter it has been calculated that on the basis of a 0.5% tax some US\$1,500 billion can be found. These are no piffling sums. Along with an appropriate measure of debt relief, they can help to redress the serious imbalance which now exists between developed and developing countries.

Admittedly, it will be no easy task to achieve this bold reform of international economic relations. Established interests will be fearful of change and will therefore not yield easily on the proposals I have outlined. Yet without some accommodation of the needs of the developing countries, the developed nations cannot hope to preserve their privileged positions indefinitely. There is an urgent need in my view of a profound intellectual enquiry into ways and means by which we can remedy the dangerous disparity which exists. As a renowned institution in the field of international studies Princeton University is ideally placed to play an important and useful role

in this regard. In closing, let me therefore invite you to help us in this compelling search for a New Global Human Order in which mankind may be able to live in peace and develop its full potential.

I thank you.

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