

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Speech by the Prime Minister of Sweden, Mr. Olof  
Palme, in New Delhi on January 16, 1986:

THE INDIRA GANDHI MEMORIAL LECTURE

Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, Ladies and Gentle-  
men,

I deem it a privilege and an honour to have been asked  
to deliver this first Indira Gandhi Memorial Lecture.

The sudden and tragic death of Indira Gandhi a little  
over a year ago came as a terrible shock for the en-  
tire world community. The rich tributes paid to her  
by all the world's leaders demonstrated the high  
esteem of the international community for her, and  
also the deep sense of loss that it shared with the  
people of India.

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I had the privilege of meeting Mrs. Gandhi several times. I found her a political leader of outstanding quality, sophistication and sensitivity. She combined high political acumen with a clear, intellectual mind, and with an acute perception of the dynamics of international relations. And she had a great warmth and personal charm.

It is not for me, as an outsider, to judge her leadership in Indian internal affairs. I had, however, the opportunity of seeing her in action, and of cooperating with her, in various international fora. She spoke enormously effectively for the Third World and the Non-Aligned Movement. Forthright, forceful and constructive in her statements, she was invariably heard with great attention and respect.

India's and its Prime Minister's importance to the Non-Aligned Movement was amply demonstrated when the country was asked, on short notice, to organize the Seventh Summit of the Movement in 1983 and, consequently, to take on the responsibility of chairmanship of the Movement for the following three years. This was indeed a proper recognition of the importance of the lasting principles of Indian foreign policy, based on the ideas of peaceful co-existence, constructive co-operation, and active non-alignment.

Mrs. Gandhi's personal engagement in formulating the policy of the Non-Aligned Movement became particularly evident during that historical Summit Meeting here in New Delhi in March 1983. She strove, during her tenure as Chairman of the Movement, with unflagging enthusiasm, to achieve political settlements of existing international problems. She sought particularly to foster a sense of common purpose, linking the many members of the Movement to meet their common challenges. She maximized the scope of cooperation, and the spirit of conciliation for the benefit of the Movement as a whole. Not being a member of the Movement, Sweden has nonetheless had the privilege to follow its work closely, as invited guest to many of its important meetings.

Right from the inception of India as an independent nation nearly forty years ago, we in Sweden have followed with deep interest and admiration the continued development of this country. But, of course, this admiration goes back much further in time, based on the knowledge of India as a civilization much older than our own.

Already in the 18th century, Swedish ships were sailing to Indian harbours, and in the 19th century Swedish missionaries, working in India, were spreading

knowledge of Indian culture in Sweden. They generally sympathized with the increasingly stronger movement for independence. Their views were spread and shared, particularly amongst liberal and socialist groups in Sweden.

Let me insert a very personal note. My great-grandparents lived in the provincial town of Kalmar in the South-East of Sweden. A little more than one hundred years ago they sent one of their daughters to London for language-studies. She wanted to become a teacher. There she met an Indian doctor, Upandra Dutt, and he came as her fiancé to Sweden.

Sweden is a cold and shy country. In earlier days ladies used to attach specially made mirrors to their windows. By this device they could observe from inside everything happening on the street without being seen themselves. These were called "gossip-mirrors". I have heard that the fair ladies of Kalmar paid handsome sums to be allowed to sit at the "gossip-mirrors" along the street from the railway station to the house of my great-grandparents where this very beautiful young Indian doctor was expected to proceed.

They duly married. One of their sons was R. Palme

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Dutt, who later played an active and somewhat doctrinaire role in British and Indian politics.

My personal affinity to India is great also for another reason. In 1953 I took part as a student representative in a seminar in Mysore, lead by Dr. Zakir Hussein. Subsequently I travelled widely to Indian universities and cities. What I remember most is a visit to an isolated village. I followed a sociologist who was writing about the influence of modern civilization on different types of villages. We went a whole day by bus from Bangalore, slept in a school-house and walked another day up a mountain to the village. I stayed there for ten days, living in a section of the temple, following the daily life of the village. I became deeply impressed by the quiet dignity of the people. Whenever I hear talk about economic and political development, I return to this village near Bangalore as a reference point. That is where so much of the future is decided. As this happened in my most formative years, I will always carry a bit of India with me.

When I came back to Sweden, the then Prime Minister, Mr. Tage Erlander, called me up and asked me to come to his office to tell him about India. I did so, and stayed - first as his collaborator, and subsequently

as his successor.

The first visit of a Prime Minister of India to Sweden was in 1957, when Jawaharlal Nehru paid an official visit to our country. He made a tremendous impression on the Swedish people. Two years later Tage Erlander came to India on a similar visit.

The contacts on a personal level which were established between Jawaharlal Nehru and Tage Erlander were continued by Indira Gandhi and myself. We found that in spite of the many differences between our two countries, and the geographical distances that separate us, there is a common base of shared values which unites us. Both our countries subscribe to a democratic parliamentary system of government based on free association, a free press and a multitude of political parties. We believe in peace and in the promotion of peace through international cooperation. And I am very pleased and privileged to be able to continue this dialogue now with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

India and Sweden have been able, through the years, to work together in many fields, and we are glad that we in our country have been able to become an active partner in India's economic development. Our views on the questions of international security have often

coincided, in spite of the differences in size, geography and history of our two nations. Sweden pursues a policy of neutrality: non-participation in alliances in peacetime, aiming at neutrality in the event of war. This policy is supported by a relatively strong defense. The object of Swedish security policy, like that of all other states, is to safeguard our country's national independence. But this policy also includes an endeavour to contribute to the prevention of conflicts. To participate in the work for peace and reconciliation in the world, to pursue a policy of international solidarity, is part of our own security policy as well.

It is natural that each country's security debate perhaps first deals with the situation in the immediate neighbourhood. In India, the relations between the South Asian nations is accordingly a matter of primary importance. In Sweden, we strongly emphasize the value of the long-term stability of the security arrangements of the Nordic countries.

But in this age, as Indira Gandhi pointed out many times, national security must also be seen in a wider context. And I would like here to deal with four specific areas which all are important to world security, directly or indirectly. All four cases apply to

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us in Sweden as well as to you here in India. They concern the economic relations between states, the environmental crisis, human rights in a wider context, and the threat of nuclear war.

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Indira Gandhi had a deep concern for the inherent inequalities in development between the so-called first and second worlds on the one hand, and the third world on the other. She always expressed a firm commitment to international cooperation in order to pave the way for the economic achievement of the developing nations. Her premise, which I share, was that without strengthening and broadening the economic base of the developing countries, their general progress would be slow - to the detriment also of the developed world. She said that "no sustained revival of the North is possible without the development of the South". And she urged that cooperation between the two sides should be intensified, particularly to support the indigenous potentialities of the developing countries.

Another person in the forefront of international politics, Willy Brandt, formed his own Commission eight years ago to study this, as he said, "the

biggest social challenge of our time". I had the privilege to belong to that Commission, and in our report we put much work into describing the links and interdependence between countries in different parts of the world. We showed that a successful economic development in developing countries is also useful to us in the rich, industrialized countries. We described how an opposite development constitutes a serious threat to stability in the world, and in the long term to international peace and security. And we proposed massive transfers of resources to the poor states in forms which in the long term would benefit all of us.

The North-South dialogue is now more or less at a standstill, and the Brandt proposals are far from being realized. But the curse of the growing burden of indebtedness of so many of the developing nations, and its great threat to the future, is again high on the agenda of international politics. I noticed this particularly at the United Nations 40th Anniversary last autumn.

In less than a decade the developing countries' debt burden has increased almost fivefold. Today, it amounts to close to 1 000 billion dollars. It is by the way almost exactly the equivalent of the world's

military expenditure during just one year. The indebted countries have to use, as an average, almost a quarter of their total export earnings for debt service. For a number of states the figure is much higher.

The effects of the growing debt burden are now becoming ever more perceptible. It is true that up to now it has been possible to handle the problems without causing a collapse of the international financial system. But the actions taken so far have meant great sacrifices in many poor countries. They have had social consequences in the form of increased unemployment and a further lowering of the standard of living. Now that growth in the world economy might be slowing down, the problems would become still more aggravated.

For a number of the very poorest countries, these problems obviously cannot be solved only through continued renegotiations of foreign loans. There is an urgent need for political initiatives aiming at a comprehensive and long-term strategy in the area of debts.

Such a strategy should bear in mind that high interest rates make today's debt burden particularly heavy to bear. It should take into account that the developing

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countries must be able to produce in order to be able to export. And it should be based on the recognition that all parties - developing countries and industrial countries, as well as banks and international financial institutions - through their own actions have contributed to the situation in which we find ourselves.

The debt crisis is a common crisis. We therefore all have a joint responsibility to try to find the way out of it. We must all make sacrifices. The burden cannot be placed only on the indebted countries. For example, the international commercial banks must also accept some of the costs, as must the taxpayers of industrialized countries.

What is needed in this situation are political initiatives to reach long-term solutions to the debt problem. More coordinated actions are necessary as a complement to the pure case-by-case strategy employed so far. From this point of view the initiative by the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, Mr Baker, is welcome inasmuch as it endeavours to take a comprehensive view on the debt problem.

A number of measures in the economic, financial and trade policy fields are necessary. I would like to

emphasize the following elements in a possible strategy:

1 - Growth in the world economy must be kept on a sufficiently high level. This is the only way by which developing countries can be ensured to receive the export earnings that, at the final end, must be brought about in order to settle debts. This calls for a policy for higher economic growth in major industrialized countries.

2 - Markets in the industrialized world must remain open for goods from the developing countries. Governments must refrain from protectionist measures and continue to liberalize trade.

3 - Adjustment in the developing countries themselves should to a lesser extent than hitherto consist of one-sided tightening and restraint but to a larger degree build upon efforts to support growth and the long-term repayment capacity.

4 - The industrialized countries must be prepared to supply developing countries with new credit on reasonable terms and pursue an economic policy which would lead to a lowering of interest levels.

5 - Debt relief measures will, undoubtedly, prove necessary also in the future when other action is insufficient. Such measures ought, primarily, to take the form of consolidation of the debt of individual countries.

Action of this kind could significantly improve the situation, especially in middle income countries which constitute the major problem of the debt issue. I do, however, feel that a special plan is called for to improve the situation of the poorest debtor countries. Their assembled debt burden is perhaps not so big as to constitute a threat to the international financial system, but their overall difficult situation points to the urgent need for special action to alleviate an often overwhelming debt burden.

My Government is prepared to participate in internationally coordinated actions, and we have earmarked special funds to be used as part of the contribution to such actions.

The dialogue between industrial and developing countries during the 1970's aimed at a new economic world order, a long-term development in the broadest sense. Until recently, the dialogue has largely dealt with how to collect monthly interest payments. Stiff

requirements of rapid domestic adaptation have been imposed by banks and the IMF and the rich countries' governments. This has been met by a growing opposition on the part of the indebted countries, which see it as yet another expression of the injustice of the international economic system. Today, the debate fortunately focuses to a greater extent on how to reverse the present flow of resources from developing to industrialized countries.

I believe that there is a danger, that this may lead us very close to a direct confrontation between industrial and developing countries. Such a confrontation would not be in anyone's interest. The political costs would be immeasurable. And the threat to international stability and security would be even more direct.

Therefore, we must bear in mind that we all - governments of rich countries as well as governments of developing countries, banks and financial institutions - share a great responsibility to prevent such a confrontation and to break the vicious circle. For, in the end, the same applies here as in any other community: If we are to be able to go on living at all, we must be capable of living together. Or, as Indira Gandhi said at the UNCTAD Conference in

Belgrade in 1983:

"International relations must be reorganized gradually but surely on the basis of living and evolving together, starting by finding areas of commonality and enlarging them, identifying the links and strengthening them."

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Indira Gandhi came to Stockholm in 1972 to be the main speaker at the first United Nations Conference on the Environment. It was at a time when the world had started to realize how that common heritage of ours - our land, our waters and the air around us - was being increasingly threatened. Mrs. Gandhi's statement to the Conference was both stimulating and realistic. It was a source of inspiration when it came to the drafting of the now historical Declaration of the Conference on the Human Environment. She said:

"It is clear that the environmental crisis which is confronting the world will profoundly alter the future destiny of our planet. No one among us, whatever our status, strength or circumstance, can remain unaffected. The process of change challenges present international policies. Will

the growing awareness of 'one earth' and 'one environment' guide us to the concept of 'one humanity'? Will there be more equitable sharing of environmental costs and greater international interest in the accelerated progress of the less developed world? Or will it remain confined to a narrow concern, based on exclusive self-sufficiency?"

Indira Gandhi's questions are equally valid today, almost fourteen years later. Our countryside and our environment are being exposed to strains and changes which directly or indirectly may also threaten peace. The scientists are telling us about the role of environmental degradation in the emergence of international conflicts.

One example is the refugee problem, which in several cases is related to deforestation, soil erosion and other environmental damage. Another example is the recurring disputes concerning the best fishing waters which many countries want to use, perhaps instead of waters which, as a result of environmental degradation, no longer give the same hauls as they once did. There are also several examples of conflicts between countries about the use of water from boundary rivers and boundary lakes, especially in areas where access

to fresh water is otherwise very limited.

These examples all illustrate that we are facing a number of problems that none of us can solve alone. Nor is it just a question of finding the technical solutions - they are often already available. As Indira Gandhi said, also in Stockholm in 1972:

"The fault lies not in science and technology as such but in the sense of values of the contemporary world which ignores the rights of others and is oblivious of the longer perspective."

These values must be changed. We must realize that international cooperation and a joint responsibility is required to handle the threats to the environment before it is too late. If we cannot agree on this, the forests will be ravaged and die, the waters will be contaminated and the soil destroyed. Tensions between the countries involved will grow, and the risk of desperate measures will continually increase.

There is no time to lose. The acidification and deforestation will not cease while we try to find the proper forms for international environmental cooperation. We must act at once, since environmental degradation goes on every day.

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Flagrant violations of fundamental human rights are perpetrated in many countries. They are manifested as torture, disappearances and summary executions. They constitute a hot-bed for tension and insecurity within the countries, but also a strain on relations between states.

Respect for human rights is therefore a question of international concern. It is related to the question of peace and security, and it is a question which in my opinion we in the international community also have a right to involve ourselves in.

It is risky to compare conditions in one country with those in other countries. I do not want to make any gradations, but I am convinced that most people agree that the apartheid system in South Africa is a particularly flagrant example of how crimes against human rights can constitute a threat to international peace and security.

Mahatma Gandhi and his philosophy of non-violence became an important source of inspiration for the opponents of racial segregation policy in South

Africa. From 1912, when the African National Congress was founded, up to 1961, the opponents of apartheid struggled by peaceful means only.

When in that year ANC resorted to armed struggle, it was in response to the murder by the white minority regime of more than 60 blacks gracefully demonstrating in Sharpeville. After Sharpeville ANC was banned and its leaders were imprisoned or forced into exile.

Since then, the oppression of the non-white majority by the white minority regime has continued. During the last two years, actions by the regime have led to increasing unrest, repression and bloodshed. The violence of the regime breeds protest, which in turn is put down by even more oppression. This leads to an apparently unending spiral of increasing violence.

In defense of apartheid, the regime also hits out at neighbouring countries. The regime in Pretoria has now openly confessed to both violations of the security treaty with Mozambique and to military attacks on Angola. It has launched military attacks also in Lesotho and Botswana and threatened Zimbabwe.

In my country, the condemnation of the apartheid system in South Africa is virtually unanimous. We

regard it as a morally repulsive system for discrimination and exploitation of the majority of the population by a small minority. We have therefore, on our own and together with other countries, taken a large number of measures in support of change in South Africa, the latest being a ban on the imports of agricultural products from South Africa.

But this is not just action in solidarity with the oppressed in South Africa. Recent developments have made it increasingly apparent that the conflict in the area also in the short term threatens international peace and security.

According to the U.N. Charter, for the Security Council to decide on binding sanctions against a country, it is required that there is such a threat. My Government advocates sanctions against South Africa, and I know that the Government of India does so too. It is gratifying that even more countries are following the same line. Let us therefore hope that it will be possible to gradually break down the last resistance to sanctions so that the international community can finally make a joint vigorous effort to bring an end to the oppression in South Africa.

One thing is clear: If the rest of the world decides

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to abolish apartheid, then the apartheid system will disappear. Let us jointly realize this goal.

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I have come to India this time to take part in a meeting of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues. We have been generously invited by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to hold our fourth follow-up meeting in New Delhi.

This Commission was formed in 1980, at a time when disarmament was not much of an international issue. The dialogue between East and West had almost come to a standstill, while the world military expenditure continued to increase, absorbing resources that were desperately needed for basic human needs.

But we who formed the Commission also got some encouragement. One person who supported us was Indira Gandhi, and she let one of her distinguished Foreign Service collaborators, Ambassador C.B. Muthamma, join the Commission.

At this meeting, the Commission will deal mainly with two items: the United Nations' peacekeeping role, and questions of regional security. Both are subjects

which also engaged Mrs. Gandhi. She and I met several times in the U.N., and I particularly remember her initiative in 1983 when she asked leaders from all kinds of nations, North and South, East and West, to join her in New York for an informal discussion on main obstacles in international relations. We had no agenda, there were no communiqués, there were no spectators or microphones around - but we had a very good and open and frank discussion. And I think that that discussion inspired many of us to think again about how we could achieve common goals by working together for our common security, not least in the United Nations itself.

At about the same time, in 1983, what we now call the Five Continent Peace Initiative was taking form. It was the last project on which I had the privilege to work with Indira Gandhi. I would therefore like to say a little about how I look upon the philosophy behind this initiative.

Last year, we honoured the memory of the many innocent victims of the dropping of the first atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki 40 years ago. These two names symbolize the incomprehensible, the unprecedented which must never be repeated. Nuclear weapons have once and for all changed the face of war.

From the catastrophe in Japan in 1945 we have learned what the heat and the shock waves and the radioactive fallout can do. People are still dying there today from damage and illness that afflicted them over four decades ago.

In recent years our knowledge of the effects of nuclear weapons has been dramatically widened. A nuclear war has not just terrifying immediate effects. It also contains long-term consequences that can destroy our earth and irrevocably affect the conditions for all human life on our planet.

The studies about the nuclear winter have marked a new era. It has been reported how enormous amounts of smoke and particles of soot would rise into the atmosphere from all the fires which would follow upon a nuclear war. It would be dark, and it would be cold, for weeks or months.

Scientists claim that a reduction in temperature of four to five degrees would be sufficient to cut down drastically the possibilities of producing crops and pasture. In countries which do not have large stores of food, a starvation disaster would ensue very quickly. More people would presumably die of starvation in India, following a nuclear war between the

United States and the Soviet Union, than in these two states themselves, according to the most recent of these scientific studies. They say that the face of a future nuclear war would be more like Ethiopia than like Hirohima and Nagasaki - famine will claim most victims.

It has thus become possible for us humans not only to annihilate an enemy, but also all others living on this planet. We can kill animals and plants, we can destroy towns and villages, we can devastate all that has been built up over generations, all around the whole of our earth. And above all: We can destroy the future of our entire civilization, devastate the existence for our children and grandchildren, eradicate all that would have come after us. That, simply, is the role of nuclear weapons if they are used. A nuclear war can hit all peoples and all states, even those who are furthest away from the theatre of war.

But this also means that all peoples and all nations have a right to have a say about these weapons of mass destruction. This was the message that went out from the capital of India almost one year ago, when we had the Six-Nation Summit and issued the Delhi Declaration. We said that we who live in the nuclear-

weapon-free states are a clear majority of the world's population. But also our future is obviously threatened by the nuclear arms race. It is therefore our right, as well as our duty, to make firm demands - demands that nuclear weapons will never come to be used, and demands that a process of real disarmament in the nuclear field is finally commenced.

In the Delhi Declaration, we particularly stressed the importance of preventing an arms race in outer space, and of bringing about a comprehensive test ban treaty.

In my opinion, it is fruitless to invest large resources in a defense system in space, which in all probability would never function, which instead would lead to continued and perhaps increased armaments on both sides, which would undermine valid international treaties, and which would mean a gigantic waste of resources that should be used to combat poverty in the world.

Equally important is the task to stop all nuclear tests. It was more than thirty years ago that Prime Minister Nehru of India for the first time brought attention to this issue, by advocating what he called "a standstill agreement" on nuclear explosions. That was in 1954.

Since then, some progress has been made. In 1963, the Partial Test Ban Treaty was signed, and both super-powers seem to adhere also to the 1974 Threshold Test Ban Treaty, even though neither of them have ratified it.

But this is not good enough. Nuclear tests do continue. Since 1945, there have been over 1 500 such tests which we know about. During the 1980's, there has been one nuclear test each week, on average.

As we said when we met here in New Delhi for the Six-Nation Summit, these tests are simply not acceptable to the rest of the world. They are one of the means whereby the nuclear arms race is fostered. If we are to stop this race, we must also stop the testing. And in my opinion, a total test ban would be an important step forward in the work of preventing both horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear arms.

Sweden has put forward many proposals for such a stop, from the late 1950's and onwards. In 1983, we submitted a complete draft treaty. It would forbid all nuclear weapons tests in all environments and in all countries. This would include peaceful nuclear explosions as well, until internationally acceptable rules for their management can be agreed upon. Several

linked data centers in different countries would monitor and verify the compliance with the treaty.

Therefore I am very pleased that this issue is so central also to the Five Continent Peace Initiative. When Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and I met in New York in October last year, together with representatives of the other four participants in the Initiative, we also singled out this question. We turned directly to President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev, and urged them to agree to a suspension of all nuclear tests for a period of twelve months, to begin with.

Opponents of a total test ban on one side have often pointed out that such a ban must be possible to verify, and on the other side there has been reluctance to agree to various verification proposals. We also took up this question, when we met in New York in October. And we said that we will take our responsibility here as well. We offer our assistance to facilitate the establishment of effective verification arrangements. And we propose to establish verification mechanisms on our own territories.

With the advanced technological know-how, in for example both India and Sweden, and with the geographical spread of the six nations in the Initiative, we

should be in a good position to make a substantial contribution. We in Sweden operated a verification data center in the autumn of 1984 as an experiment, and this center can be reactivated within a week or so.

The final statement from last year's Geneva summit did not say anything about a test ban. That was unfortunate. But other developments have perhaps been more promising. The United States has invited Soviet officials with instruments to on-site inspections of its Nevada test-site, and General-Secretary Gorbachev has gone very far in proposing on-site inspection on Soviet territory. It must also be welcomed that the Sovietunion now has decided to prolong its moratorium on nuclear tests.

The advantages of a test ban are, as someone said, obvious: it would be a first concrete step in the arms control process that could lead to other moratoriums and then to firm treaties complete with inspection and other safeguards.

A total test ban by all the nuclear powers would help to stop the development of new weapons. It would give time for reflection and dialogue on how to start also a process of real disarmament.

Not least, it would be a signal to the rest of the world that - at last there is hope for tangible results in the field of disarmament. People could begin to have confidence in the assurances from Geneva last year that a nuclear war must never be fought.

It is clear that there is no need for long, elaborate negotiations. There is more and more evidence that the verification issue could be solved in a satisfactory way, and there should be continued efforts of assistance from our side.

So what is needed is above all a political will by the powers concerned. A test ban would be in the interest of all nations. People would be better off, now and in the future, if all the nuclear tests were stopped. It is therefore in the interest of mankind if we try to rouse public opinion to exert pressure on the nuclear powers, during the coming months.

In about six months, the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union will meet again for another summit. That is the time and the place when these two men could, and should, enter into an agreement to halt all nuclear tests.

So let the call go out, again and again - as it did

from Delhi a year ago, as it did at the U.N. anniversary, and as it should as the next summit comes closer: The nuclear tests must come to a halt, for our sake, and for the sake of the future of civilization.

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When Indira Gandhi came to power as Prime Minister in 1966, she took over a formidable task: keeping this vast country together, safe-guarding its democratic institutions, and developing its faltering economy. Her political stature reached its height when she took the chair of the 101-member Non-Aligned Movement in 1983. The world acclaimed her as a great leader.

I would like to conclude my homage to the memory of Indira Gandhi by quoting what she said in yet another of her speeches:

"The time has come to rise above petty quarrels and to tear down meaningless barriers, to unite, not only to bring about a better life but also to lift ourselves up to those values which make us better human beings.

Each of us can make his contribution, however small.

Each of us can help to give the world new dignity  
and new courage.

Each of us can contribute to its happiness and  
goodness, its beauty and wisdom."

Let us honour her by working incessantly for those  
fine goals of hers.