

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

H.E. The Right Honourable Tony BLAIR, Prime Minister

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Speech to the General Assembly at the 2005 UN World Summit

The UN must come of age. It must become the visible and credible expression of the globalisation of politics. The modern world insists we are dependent on each other. We work with each other or we suffer in isolation.

The principles of the UN have always had a moral force. Today they receive the sharper impulse of self-interest.

The terrorist attacks in Britain on 7 July have their origins in an ideology born thousands of miles from our shores.

The proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons will never be halted outside of an international consensus to do so.

Failed states, as we know to our cost, fail us all. The protection of the environment, the promotion of international trade: we can do nothing without effective action together.

And when we look with revulsion, as we should, at the misery of the millions who die in Africa and elsewhere through preventable famine, disease and conflict, the urgency to act is driven not just by conscience but by an inner sense that one day, if we refuse to act, we will reap a dire reward from our refusal.

What's more, humanity today is confident of its common values. Give people the chance and they always vote for freedom; always prefer tolerance to prejudice,

will never willingly accept the suppression of human rights and governance by extremism.

So the challenge is clear; the values clear; the self-interest in upholding them together also clear.

What must now be clear is that the UN can be the instrument of achieving the global will of the people.

It must give leadership on terrorism. There is not and never can be any justification, any excuse, any cause that accepts the random slaughter of innocent. Wherever it happens, whoever is responsible, we stand united in condemnation.

The United Nations must strengthen its policy against non-proliferation; in particular, how to allow nations to develop civil nuclear power but not nuclear weapons.

The new Human Rights Council must earn the world's respect not its contempt.

The United Nations Peace-building Commission must become the means of renewing nations, where war and the collapse of proper systems of government have left them ravaged and their people desolate.

For the first time at this Summit we are agreed that states do not have the right to do what they will within their own borders, but that we, in the name of humanity, have a common duty to protect people where their own governments will not.

Stalking this summit, like a spectre, are the Millennium Development goals.

The struggle against global poverty will define our moral standing in the eyes of the future.

The G8 in Scotland shows how we redeem it. I have heard people describe the outcomes of this Summit as modest, No summit requiring unanimity from 190 nations can be more than modest.

But if we did what we have agreed on doubling aid, on opening up trade, on debt relief, on HI V/AIDS and malaria, on conflict prevention so that never again would the world stand by, helpless when genocide struck, our modesty would surprise.

There would be more democracy, less oppression. More freedom, less terrorism. More growth, less poverty. The effect would be measured in the lives of millions of people who will never hear these speeches or read our statements.

But it would be the proper vocation of political leadership; and the United Nations would live up to its name. So let us do it.