

Mr. President
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

My delegation celebrates the wisdom of the United Nations in choosing one of our distinguished Caribbean statesmen, His Excellency Mr. Julian Hunte, to preside over this 58 General Assembly. I assure you that the energy and industry that he will bring to our work will produce meaningful results in this very important session.

We continue to be fortunate to have the guidance and strength of our Secretary General, whose skill and compassion are especially needed today. His words last Monday echoed strong and true, and we should all take heed.

And speaking of all, we need to respect the principle of universality of our Organisation. The time is now to admit Taiwan to membership of the United Nations. Taiwan has proven itself to be an exemplary member of the international community with a deep sense of solidarity toward small and poor nations.

Mr. President:

Belize's Prime Minister has said, (and I quote):

“When we turn our attention to the international stage there is greater cause for anxiety. Let us ask ourselves: after all the developments in building the international system and crystallizing international law from 1945 to the present, which of the following fundamental principles are respected in practice or indeed safe in theory:

- the peaceful settlement of disputes;
- the right to self-determination, sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- non-interference in the internal affairs of States;
- the right of peoples to have the social and political system of their choice;
- respect for social, economic and political human rights;

- not to use force or the threat of force to settle disputes;
- respect for the international rule of law;
- abiding by the Charter of the United Nations and working toward a world governance based on multilateralism and the rule of reason rather than of force.

Which of those is **safe**? Indeed, in the international arena... we do seem to be in free fall toward barbarism". (End of quote.)

Not that barbarism is new, but there does seem to be a greater tolerance for it, we do seem to be more powerless to contain it.

In a world riddled with fear and dominated by terrorism, including State terrorism, we need to concentrate on what needs to be done to save our humanity.

As we contemplate the international arena, with multilateralism under threat and the development of peoples blocked by the practices of the rich and powerful, we can take comfort in one thing: that, yes, in the end ideas are more powerful than arms.

And **our** ideas, we the United Nations of the world, are clearly and powerfully set out in our Charter. Yes, the Charter needs reform; we need urgently to democratize our practice. Small states make up the majority of our membership, and elementary democracy demands that we have a greater say than the Charter presently allows us.

But the basic principles of the Charter remain valid. The fundamentals are in place.

Article 1 of our Charter states the fundamental purpose of the UN: To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective **collective** measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace...

Article 24 of the Charter confers on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. And under Article 42, should the Security Council consider that measures short of the use of force would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action must, of course, be agreed **collective** action, not unilateral action.

I ask you: is there any part of that we don't understand? It seems perfectly simple and clear to us small States, who depend on the UN Charter and on respect for international principles and international law for our very existence.

We are confronted with the question: are we as an Organization irrelevant?

And I say: only if we **make** ourselves irrelevant. And we do that only if we are determined to self-destruct.

We can call here for many lofty objectives, as contained in our Millennium Development Goals. We can pronounce on the many injustices facing so many peoples and countries in the present world dispensation. But all of that would be futile if our very United Nations would cease to be effective or become irrelevant.

And that is why I have restricted my statement to one plea, to nations large and small, powerful or weak: keep the UN alive, respect its Charter, abide by agreed international principles and international law. That is all we ask, nothing more. Above all, let us not give up what it has cost us so much time and effort, so much blood, to bring to a modest but important stage, our multilateral system.

All civilized nations would surely agree to this plea rather than plunge the world into barbarism.

Multilateralism or Chaos!

Long Live the United Nations!