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“United Nations in the New World Order”

I would like to thank the Diner’s Club of the Armed Forces Staff College for inviting me to speak on a very important subject namely the United Nations and the New World Order.

2. The United Nations was set up to serve its member states, the nations of the world. That is its real mandate, to serve all member states. Its charter is written in the name of “we the peoples”. But sadly the world body has disappointed the people and not lived up to the expectations of the members. It has been hijacked by a few to serve their cause, or if this few cannot hijack it, it is bypassed and ignored. History they say repeats itself. What has happened to the United Nations had happened to the League of Nations. The most powerful member killed the League by withdrawing support. That is what is happening to the United Nations.

3. Democracy was invented in order to serve if not everyone at least the majority and to curb the abuses of the rights by the minority. To succeed the United Nations must be democratic. We were heartened because it was the great democracies which founded and supported the United Nations. But when the democratic process in the United Nations failed to serve the powerful, the commitment to democracy by the great democracies went out the window and the ugly head of autocracy took its place.

4. It is very easy to talk about justice and fair play when the United Nations was founded. The most powerful countries which congregated to create the United Nations believed that the post World War II world would be a restoration of their dominant positions prior to the war, with the added advantage of total submission by the countries which had challenged them. They, the victors would get back their colonies and mandated territories together with those belonging to

the Axis. In this glorious scenario it was safe to advocate the freedoms and the rights which everyone should enjoy. It was going to be just lip service.

5. Whenever a principle, an ideology or even a religion is enunciated, invariably these are elaborated and reinterpreted until the original idea is lost and it becomes a different thing altogether. Thus the equality, fraternity and liberty of the French Revolution evolved into the Communist dictatorship, in which those opposed were simply liquidated. Even then there was no equality or fraternity between the Comrade Rulers and the Comrades who were ruled.

6. When freedom was espoused by the United Nations, the unforeseen result was a dismantling of the empires of the ethnic European founders of the United Nations. This resulted in the formation of a large number of poor but independent countries. Being nations these ex-colonies had to be admitted as members of the United Nations.

7. These new nations, tended to be critical of the powerful founders and to oppose them. Obviously the great democratic ideas about according freedom of speech and action to each member would work against the interest of the great powers. They had already ensured their pre-eminent position in the Security Council by giving themselves permanent membership with veto powers. But it was galling that the new poverty-stricken nations should refuse to support them all the way.

8. As the members of the United Nations Organisation increased, democracy within the United Nations System became even more repugnant to the great advocates of democracy. Instead they veered towards oligarchy and then on to a dictatorship of the strongest nation over the world. We are now back to the days of European imperialism where might was right.

9. The most blatant disregard for the principle of a united world working for the common good is the decision of two of the founding fathers, the United States and United Kingdom, to completely ignore the United Nations and attack Iraq under the pretext of Iraqi threat to use weapons of mass destruction against Britain within 45 minutes of the order being given by Saddam Hussein.

10. We should not, of course, support the kind of brutalities perpetrated by the Iraqis under Saddam and even now as they kill their own people while fighting the United States and coalition forces. But what is the difference between being killed by Saddam Hussein and being killed by the Anglo-American soldiers and other Iraqis during the war and the occupation of Iraq. Or for that matter what is the difference between being killed by U.S. soldiers as they retaliate against Iraqi resistance and being killed by Saddam Hussein? And recent reports show that American and British soldiers are no less brutal than what they allege Saddam's henchmen were. It is doubtful that the invasion, the destruction and killings, the

ill-treatment etc would achieve a change of regime that would effectively rule a democratic and peaceful Iraq.

11. Democracy is not the easiest system of Government. In a country bitterly divided by religion and ethnicity, democracy is most unlikely to work. It is foolish to think that by a switch to democracy all the problems of a country would be resolved. It is even more foolish to destroy and kill in order to impose democracy from outside.

12. But if the US and coalition countries succeed in carrying out a regime change in Iraq using military force, what would be the logical sequence? The United States would declare countries that it does not like, and there are any number of them who can be so labelled together with failed nations, rogue nations and members of the Axis of evil, as being in need of regime change. The United States and the coalition countries, particularly old imperialists like Britain would be busy invading one country after another to carry out regime change. The United Nations would be simply irrelevant.

13. The need for regime change is said to be because these regimes are not democratic. But will a Government imposed and approved by the powerful countries be regarded as democratic? If democratic elections are held and only pro-United States candidates win, it is unlikely that the anti-United States faction will allow it to rule. They would be labelled as puppets and attacked. So what has the regime change achieved except chaos.

14. If on the other hand truly popular people are elected, it is likely they would be anti-United States. The United States would then feel a need for another regime change, perhaps through a second invasion and the killing of more people, the destruction of more towns and cities. In Iraq an election will most likely bring the Shiites to power. The Shiites hate the Americans and would be active in attacking the Americans, one way or another, including terror attacks. A regime change has been effected in a democratic way but the elected Government may out of hatred for the U.S. attempt to develop weapons of mass destruction in order to fight the hated Americans and their coalition partners. They may support terrorists and provide them with refuge. Would they be permitted to do so on the basis of being democratically elected by the people?

15. The people who believe they can effect regime change by force and put in place a democratic Government are really naïve or just plain stupid. They have learnt nothing from the history of European imperialism, from the terrible destruction wrought by World War II and its atomic bombs and from the bitter independence struggles of the colonised people. They still believe they can use brute force to subjugate people, and rule them as they did in the heyday of European Imperialism.

16. Firstly they must know that the winners in a war can no longer gain territory which they can rule as they please. The Government may surrender, sign a peace treaty and accept the stationing of the victors' troops in its territory. But the people may have other ideas. They may want to continue to fight, to attack the occupying forces and to accept having to pay a high price for doing so. Apart from the high cost of stationing troops in the land of the former enemies, the victors will also have to bear the cost of fighting the insurgents for years and years. The victors will really have nothing to show for their victories – except a constant stream of flag-draped coffins. It is a mistake to think that insurgency can be ended by the use of force. These are not regular troops which accept the command of superior officers, or of the Government. They will not be bound by peace treaties etc. These are people who probably mistakenly believe in their causes, who are motivated by extreme hatred of the foreign oppressors. Capturing Saddam has not stopped the fight or even lessened it. If at all the fight has escalated. With the killing of Yassin and Rantisi, the hatred mounts among the Iraqis also. And they will be joined by Palestinians and many others from other countries who believe that if the US and Britain is allowed to get away with the regime change agenda, their countries might be next. They may not like their own Governments, but as in the case of Iraq, they do not like the Americans and the British either.

17. Terror attacks by irregulars are not like a conventional war. There is no code of honour, no Geneva Convention. There is no battlefield where the armies fight and determine who the victor is. Neither can the superiority of fire-power, the sophistication of military technology and the skill of the commanders determine the successful outcome of the war. Terror can be perpetrated by anyone, anywhere with whatever weapons that come to hand. A man may be shot anywhere in the world thousands of miles from his country or the scene of war. Or as in the case of Spain, a train may be bombed. Then billions will have to be spent to guard railway stations, and the high-rise building, and the night-clubs etc. But there is no way that all the millions of possible targets in the world can be protected. And the targets, all the targets, cannot be protected forever. The moment security is relaxed, attacks may take place again. Hatred tends to mount with time. It is well to remember that feuds last through generations, long after the actual causes have been forgotten. And feuds caused by on-going oppressions, or slights, or injustices will simply amplify hatred, the desire for revenge, the acts of terror.

18. The terror attacks need not even be mounted. It is sufficient merely to create a rumour or a suggestion that an attack is imminent and there will be a climate of fear everywhere. Billions will have to be allocated for more security. The rumours cost the terrorists nothing, but it can disrupt businesses, increase its cost, create losses and depress whole economies. But the rumours cannot be ignored. An attack on one of the millions of targets may take place. Those responsible for security will be blamed and more costly effort have to be made to secure the millions of targets from future attacks. There may be no attacks for

months or years and the money and the security measures would be wasted. But the effort to secure must go on. Marshals on aircrafts, security personnel in every port, ships boarded at sea, flights cancelled, railway stations guarded, all these and more will have to go on forever as long as the frustrated and the oppressed feel sufficient hatred and bitterness to be willing to risk their lives to take revenge on those who have taken from them their dearest possessions, their land, their dignity and their honour. Apart from eternal fear, there is no glory either for the anti-terrorist fighters. Of what use is it to be President of the most powerful nation in the world if you need 10,000 policemen to protect you when you go out of your home. It is shameful that a popularly elected leader needs protection all the time. But if you approve assassination then you must accept the risk of assassination. Those who live by the sword shall die by the sword.

19. The war in Palestine has been going on since 1948. If we care to examine this conflict we cannot help but note that it has been escalating during all these years.

20. First the Palestinians tried to regain their land by appealing to world opinion, to the United Nations. The appeals went unheeded. Then they tried to find friends to fight a conventional war. Egypt, Syria and Jordan tried to reconquer the land of the Palestinians from the Israelis.

21. The ethnic Europeans, who created Israel in their attempt to solve their Jewish problem, backed Israel and the Palestinians with their Arab friends were defeated. Repeated attempts to recover Palestinian land through conventional wars failed.

22. The Israelis were emboldened by their successes and the backing of the ethnic Europeans and decided to annex the Palestinian land which they had conquered.

23. The Arab countries no longer wanted to fight wars they could not win. This merely increased the bitterness of the Palestinians. If they had to fight alone, then so be it.

24. They started the Intifada on their own. To attract the attention of the world their children threw stones at Israeli tanks. It was not an act of terror. The tanks were not even dented and the Israeli soldiers were not hurt. The Palestinians thought the world, the United Nations, would seriously take note and act.

25. But the Israeli soldiers fired back with rubber bullets which hurt the children. The children continued to throw stones. Then the soldiers fired live bullets, wounding and killing the children. Still the children threw stones and the Israeli soldiers dressed in bullet-proof vests shot and killed more children.

26. What did the world do? Nothing. The United Nations made some meaningless noises but did nothing. The supporters of Israel condemned the Intifada and the stone-throwing children but did not disapprove of the shooting to death of Palestinian children by Israelis. There was as yet no suicide bombings by the Palestinians, no Osama bin Laden, no attacks against America.

27. The Arab world and the Muslim world sympathised with the Palestinians, condemned the Israelis and appealed to the principal supporter of Israel, the United States to do something. Nothing was done. Instead Israel became even more emboldened and actually invaded and occupied Lebanon and parts of Syria. And the world simply watched. More speeches were made at the United Nations.

28. The Palestinian Arabs, both Muslims and Christians had not only lost their land but they had been expelled from their homes and farms and forced to leave their birthright to become refugees living in makeshift tents, without water, electricity and basic sanitation. The Jews must know the pain of the diaspora. They had yearned to return to the land from which they had been expelled. But while they believed in their right of return, they don't think the Palestinians have the same rights. They do not even allow the Palestinians to name the part that is legitimately Palestinian as Palestine. The Palestinians must have no country of their own.

29. Abandoned by their Arab brothers, their co-religionists and the whole world, the Palestinians should perhaps accept their fate. But like the Jews they want to return. If no one would help them, then they would fight their own battle.

30. No one can approve the killing of innocent people, the acts of terror that the desperate Palestinians resorted to. But is not shooting and killing of Palestinian children, the assassination of their debilitated leader also acts of terror? Stones thrown by children at armed tanks would not defeat Israel. But the response of Israel is vicious. And so the acts of terror escalate.

31. Israel believes it can defeat the Palestinians by out-terrorising the Palestinians. Today Israel has gone far beyond shooting small children. With the silent consent of the United States Government of George Bush, Israel now includes assassination as its instrument of policy. A sick, debilitated old man is not unworthy of being pulverised by Israeli rockets mounted on helicopters provided by its friends. For every Israeli killed dozens of Palestinians have been liquidated, their homes and villages completely destroyed.

32. Out-terrorising the Palestinians has not worked and will not work. Their spirit is too strong. I believe even if there is one Palestinian left, he will still fight for his home and country in whatever way he can. If Muslim Governments fear to fight for the Palestinians, then their people will carry on the fight.

33. People do not blow themselves up for nothing, or even for some minor disappointment or frustration. It needs a towering rage for an individual to crash his aircraft into a building or blow himself up with explosives tied to his body. They are not high on drugs or drinks. They must be burning with the outrage, the insult and humiliation of their religion, race and the occupation of their land. Their enemies say it is their poverty which caused them to blow themselves to eternity. This is one manifestation of the state of denial that their American enemies are in. The people who crashed their aircrafts into the World Trade Centre were not poor. They were rich and educated Saudis who had families and friends in their rich community. And Osama bin Laden is not a poverty stricken socialist radical. He is rich, very rich. He can lead the life of prosperous indolence if he chooses to do so. But he has chosen a path that makes him a target for assassination by the enemies he has created. He may suffer the fate of Saddam Hussein, or Yassin or Rantisi, but it will not stop those who have nothing to live for from blowing themselves up and terrorising the world.

34. Why are these things happening? They are happening because the only organisation which can help right the wrongs perpetrated on innocent people, the United Nations, has failed. It has failed because it has been hijacked by the powerful. It has failed because the powerful can ignore it at will. And it will fail again if the powerful is allowed to manipulate it and to make use of it and its name in furtherance of their policies and objectives.

35. The terror that the world is now facing will go on. It will go on until the powerful is defeated. Or if the powerful come to their senses. We must acknowledge that it was the bombing of the train in Madrid which turned the minds of the Spanish people. It is unfortunate that in this instance terrorism appears to have paid off. But if in our determination to prove terror will not succeed, we refuse to do the right thing, i.e. we refuse to remove the causes of the terror attacks, then we can go on enduring terrorism indefinitely.

36. Here I am reminded of the Domino Theory which persuaded us that North Vietnam must be defeated at all cost. But North Vietnam was not defeated. Are we now falling like dominoes to the Communists?

37. We do not want the terrorists to think that terrorism pays by giving up the fight or choosing other ways to put an end to terrorism. Now look at it from their side – they do not want their terrorism to fail or they will always be subjected to oppression and humiliation.

38. I repeat, terrorism is not the same as conventional war. Sophisticated weapons and even nuclear warheads cannot defeat terrorism. Terror attacks are a new form of war. It is the war of the weak against the strong. For so long as there is this great disparity in the capacity to kill between the powerful and the weak, there will be terror attacks in response to oppressions of all kinds by the strong.

39. At this stage it may be useful to point out that conventional war is no more than legalised terrorism. The people killed are mostly the defenceless non-combatants. They are as terrified of the bombs and rockets as are those facing death and injury from terror attacks. And because modern conventional war terrifies people it must be classified as acts of terror together with the terror attacks of the irregular terrorists. No one has a right to take the high moral ground.

40. Truly we are still living in a primitive world. We still subscribe to killing people as an instrument of policy. We have descended so low that even blatant assassination is acceptable. The great powers are spending huge sums of money on perfecting and perfecting again their instruments of murder even as they decry the innovation of the irregulars in their attacks against those who terrify them.

41. Until the world recognises that there is really no difference between conventional and unconventional terrorism, there is not going to be peace in the world. All forms of terrorism must be stopped. And they can only be stopped if we return to the conference table to identify the causes of all acts of terror and to remove them. In this process only a democratic United Nations can resolve the problem with justice and fairness and end all forms of terror.

42. Since it is the big powers that have rendered the United Nations impotent through their undemocratic ways, it is they who must be blamed, and it is they who must reform themselves and subscribe to a United Nations sponsored, democratic resolution of conflicts via the conference table.

43. I have been asked to talk on "The United Nations and the New World Order". There is presently no New World Order, only the Old World Order where might is Right and the Devil takes the hindmost.
