



ADDRESS OF WELCOME

to

His Excellency J. R. JAYEWARDENE

President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

and

Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement

by

Hon. Mr. A. C. SHAHUL HAMEED

Minister of Foreign Affairs

of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

and

Chairman of the Conference of Foreign Ministers of
Non-Aligned Countries

June 6, 1979

Catania, Lanka

227.5483

HAM

327,5493
HAM



YOUR EXCELLENCY,
THE HON. PRIME MINISTER,
EXCELLENCIES,
DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Presiding over the deliberations of the Non-Aligned Movement is a privilege under any circumstances. It is a privilege I have enjoyed in other countries and continents ; and today, the sense of privilege I feel is enhanced—for we are in Asia, my own continent, in Sri Lanka, my own country, and in the inspiring presence of a committed internationalist, my President and the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, His Excellency Mr. J. R. Jayewardene.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

Two years ago, when we formed the Government following an electoral victory unprecedented in parliamentary history, you appointed me the first Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka, an office which carried with it

the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Foreign Ministers Conference. In fulfilling the functions of this office, I have been guided by your enlightened perception of national and international affairs. That perception was based on a political philosophy from which you have not deviated throughout your career. That philosophy has always taken into account the fact that public policy is a means to an end, the end of assuring the welfare of people. The Non-Aligned Movement, too, should never lose sight of this fundamental fact, because whether we are dealing with the issue of equity in the international marketplace or striving for disarmament, we are ultimately seeking to improve the lives of our peoples. To lose sight of the human element in politics, whether national or international, is to substitute arid theory for compassion—a danger which you have steadfastly avoided, and we too must shun.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

It is well known among your friends and admirers that you have always been deeply influenced by a sense of history. Your sense of history, it is also known, has extended

beyond the shores of Sri Lanka, and has helped to shape your attitude to a variety of international situations. It is fitting, therefore, that you have also participated in the making of history. The record clearly shows that your interventions in national and international affairs have been both gentle and decisive. They have also established a remarkable pattern of continuity.

From the time of your entry into national politics, you were associated with our country's struggle for freedom and were, in fact, a secretary of the National Congress which gave that struggle form and substance. Then, as now, you viewed freedom not as an abstract concept or an emotive slogan, but as the foundation on which our people could build a fair and just society. Forty years into your political career you were entrusted with the responsibility of leading our nation in creating such a society.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

You have had a long association with international affairs. In 1950, together with Sir Percy Spender of Australia, you conceived

of and helped to set up what was at that time a bold innovation in the field of international economic co-operation, the Colombo Plan. That was perhaps the first bridge built in the post-war period between North and South, a bridge of hope which, happily, continues to carry substantial traffic even today. With the same vision, you worked vigorously in the 'sixties' within the forum of UNCTAD to bring about a restructuring of the international economy, and contributed significantly to formulating the Charter of Algiers adopted by the Group of 77. At UNCTAD II in New Delhi, you dealt with the question of commodities, approaching the problem with a vision that could be described as prophetic in the light of a framework-agreement for a Common Fund being reached between North and South, in Geneva earlier this year.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

One year after the Colombo Plan was established, and that was in 1951, you led the delegation of Sri Lanka to the Japanese Peace

Treaty Conference in San Francisco. There, in the midst of rancour and feelings of revenge, you took a profoundly Buddhist view, pointing out that "hatred does not cease by hatred but by love". In spite of the damage Sri Lanka had suffered during air raids, despite the social and economic distortions caused by the stationing of the Allied South East Asia Command in our country, and by the slaughter tapping of one of our main commodities, rubber, you declared that we would not be seeking reparation or revenge, because our philosophy was based on love and not hate. Those same inward stirrings, derived from the teachings of the Compassionate One, received practical manifestation yet again when you argued the case for a World Disarmament Authority as part of a strategy aimed at bringing about total disarmament.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

Your presence this evening at our Meeting has a historical aptness. In 1954 you were Deputy Leader to the Sri Lanka delegation at the conference that led to the Bandung Conference of 1955 which we today look upon as one of the main springs

of the Non-Aligned Movement. Today, over two decades later, history has bestowed on you the responsibility of guiding our people in their search for a better life, and of being Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement which is committed to ensuring security, justice and dignity to all our peoples.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

Few political leaders are able to keep even a single tryst with destiny. In your case you have kept not one, but several. Such a remarkable series of interlinked events cannot come about by accident. In a very real sense they are the result of events and trends that you helped to shape and determine. Thus, it is as a statesman who has learned from the lessons of history as much as one who has helped to make history that you assumed the leadership of our Movement.

YOUR EXCELLENCY, HON. PRIME MINISTER,
EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Philosophers of the 19th Century tried to distinguish between "what is" and "what should be". To that debate, our century and, more specifically, our movement must necessarily add a third component and that is concern with what "*would be*". For our

quest is not a search for the niceties of dogma or philosophy but a quest, an exacting quest, for the best that can be achieved in terms of practical reality. Non-Alignment is not a synonym for sitting on the fence.

Non-Alignment does not involve hostility towards one group of countries or another. Nor does Non-Alignment prevent us from pursuing our own relationships, in terms of our own national interests, with any country outside the Movement. For above all, Non-Alignment is not a form of dull uniformity. It is, indeed, a measure of the dynamism of our Movement that consensus is preceded by considerable ferment. The Non-Aligned Movement is a deliberate effort to be friendly with all power blocs so that the young and poor nations do not become parties to the power struggle.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

Throughout my stewardship, I have benefited very greatly not only from the knowledge and experience of my colleagues but also from their co-operation which at all times has been given freely to me. As you are fully aware, the last two years in the history of the Non-Aligned Movement have witnessed many a challenge threatening our very foundations. We have been faced with problems arising from bilateral disputes

between members of the Movement. We had to grapple with these problems without a formal mechanism for resolving disputes and contentious issues. If, during these two difficult years, it has been possible for us to preserve our unity this has been in very large measure due to the co-operation I received from all my colleagues in the Movement. Not only did they co-operate with me, there were times at which some of them who held very strong positions on particular issues modified those stands in order to bring about honourable compromise in the interests of the Movement. Thus, as a result of united efforts and mutual feelings of goodwill, we have been able not only to preserve our unity but also to see our Movement grow.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

It is likely that we will be recommending to the Sixth Summit Meeting that the Movement be even further expanded by the admission of some new members to our fold. And it is fitting that as we grow we also pause from time to time to look back at the past and plan for the future. You are particularly well equipped to guide us in that process, and I have great pleasure in inviting Your Excellency to make the Inaugural Address.

**DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT PRINTING,
SRI LANKA**