

**Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif Speech at the 71st Session of
the UN General Assembly on 21 September 2016**

**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

We congratulate Mr. Peter Thomson on his election as President of the 71st Session of the General Assembly. We agree that implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda should be the focus of this Session.

We also pay tribute to Mr. Mogens Lykketoft for his capable stewardship of the 70th Session.

Mr. President,

Today, three decades after the end of the Cold War, our multi-polar world is more free and vibrant, yet still chaotic and turbulent; more interdependent, but more unequal; more prosperous, yet still afflicted with poverty.

We see spectacular progress, but also unprecedented human suffering.

The world is at a historic inflection point.

The international order established after the Second World War is passing away, but a new order has yet to emerge.

Competition between the major powers is becoming more confrontational. This can pose serious threats to peace across Asia.

A new Cold War threatens to engulf Europe. The momentum there towards "greater union" has already reversed. Barricades and walls are going up, especially against the tide of misery flowing out of a turbulent Middle East. In many countries, intolerance has revived the ghosts of xenophobia and Islamophobia.

Turmoil is intensifying in the Middle East. International efforts to defeat Daesh are therefore urgent. For this, it is essential to reconcile the divergent objectives and priorities of regional and external powers.

Peace cannot be built when injustice prevails. The long festering tragedy of Palestine demands determined action by the international community.

Mr. President,

After decades of strong growth, the world economy has reached a plateau.

Despite this adverse international economic environment, my government has, in three short years, moved the country towards robust growth.

We have fully integrated the 2030 Development Agenda into our own economic and social strategy.

This rests on our conviction that people are the true wealth of our nation and that it is human development, which will determine our future destiny.

Mr. President,

Our priority goal of economic development requires internal peace and stability. My country has been the principal victim of terrorism including that supported, sponsored and financed from abroad.

We will not allow externally sponsored terrorism and threats of destabilization to cause turbulence in Pakistan.

Tens of thousands of our citizens and thousands of our security personnel have been killed or injured in terrorist attacks.

This has only reinforced our resolve to eliminate the scourge of terrorism. Our comprehensive strategy of law enforcement and targeted military operations has produced remarkable results and enabled Pakistan to turn the tide against terrorism.

Pakistan's Zarb-e-Azb Operation is the largest, most robust and most successful anti-terrorism campaign anywhere in the world, deploying 200,000 of our security forces.

Our comprehensive National Action Plan has the complete endorsement of our people and our Parliament as well as our security forces, all of whom have made heroic sacrifices to defeat terrorism.

Mr. President,

Terrorism, however, is now a global phenomenon, which must be addressed comprehensively and in all its forms, including State terrorism.

The international community must coordinate its efforts to accomplish this. These efforts should be taken collectively and not unilaterally by the passage of any laws with extra-territorial application targeted against certain countries.

We will not win the fight against terrorism and violent extremism so long as we do not address their root causes. These lie in poverty and ignorance, political and social injustice and oppression, foreign intervention and occupation and denial of the legitimate rights of peoples and nations, especially the right to self-determination.

Until these underlying causes are addressed, it will be difficult to counter the twisted narrative of violent extremists and terrorists.

Mr. President,

After 15 years of the current war in Afghanistan, the international community agrees that the only road to a lasting peace in that country is through a dialogue between the Government in Kabul and the Afghan Taliban.

Pakistan has long proposed this as the most viable course to end decades of conflict and suffering in Afghanistan.

Based on this belief in a negotiated peace, and in response to requests from President Ashraf Ghani, we have been facilitating the process of reconciliation in Afghanistan.

There have been setbacks. That, however, is not a sufficient reason to abandon the path of peace and rely on the military option, which has failed, for the past decade and a half, to stabilize Afghanistan.

Progress will be assured only when the Afghan parties themselves conclude that there is no military solution to the Afghan war, and work assiduously, through a meaningful dialogue process, for achieving reconciliation and peace at home.

Mr. President,

Over three and a half decades of conflict and chaos in Afghanistan has had grave security and economic consequences for Pakistan. Almost three million Afghan refugees, to whom we opened our homes and hearts, remain in Pakistan.

We hope to see them return to Afghanistan, voluntarily and with dignity.

Until they do, the international community must shoulder its responsibilities to sustain them.

Mr. President,

Confrontation should not be our destiny in South Asia. Pakistan wants peace with India. I have gone the extra mile to achieve this, repeatedly offering a dialogue to address all outstanding issues.

But India has posed unacceptable preconditions to engage in a dialogue. Let us be clear: talks are no favor to Pakistan. Talks are in the interest of both countries. They are essential to resolve our differences, especially the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, and to avert the danger of any escalation.

Mr. President,

Peace and normalization between Pakistan and India cannot be achieved without a resolution of the Kashmir dispute. This is an objective evaluation, not a partisan position.

Our predictions have now been confirmed by events. A new generation of Kashmiris has risen spontaneously against India's illegal occupation – demanding freedom from occupation. Burhan Wani, the young leader murdered by Indian forces, has emerged as the symbol of the latest Kashmiri Intifada, a popular and peaceful freedom movement, led by Kashmiris, young and old, men and women, armed only with an undying faith in the legitimacy of their cause, and a hunger for freedom in their hearts.

Mr. President,

This indigenous uprising of the Kashmiris has been met, as usual, with brutal repression by India's occupation force of over half a million soldiers. Hundreds of Kashmiris have been killed, more than eight hundred, including children and infants, blinded by shotgun pellets and over ten thousand unarmed civilians injured over the past two months.

These Indian brutalities are well documented. I would like to inform the General Assembly that Pakistan will share with the Secretary General a dossier containing detailed information and evidence of the gross and systematic violations of human rights committed by Indian forces in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

These brutalities will not suppress the spirit of the Kashmiris; it will only intensify their anger and fortify their determination to see India end its occupation of Kashmir. From Srinagar to Sopore, the men, women and children come out each day, defying curfew, to demand freedom.

Mr. President,

Pakistan fully supports the demand of the Kashmiri people for self-determination, as promised to them by several Security Council resolutions. Their struggle is a legitimate one for liberation from alien occupation.

International law and the declarations of the United Nations on Self Determination, give the Kashmiri people the right to struggle for their freedom. Every year, the General Assembly unanimously adopts the resolution, which reaffirms “the right of all people’s to self-determination” and calls on the states concerned to immediately end their occupation and “all acts of repression.”

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Kashmiri people; on behalf of the mothers, wives, sisters, and fathers of the innocent Kashmiri children, women and men who have been killed, blinded and injured; on behalf of the Pakistani nation, I demand an independent inquiry into the extra-judicial killings, and a UN fact finding mission to investigate brutalities perpetrated by the Indian occupying forces, so that those guilty of these atrocities are punished.

We demand the immediate release of all Kashmiri political prisoners; an end to the curfew; freedom for the Kashmiris to demonstrate peacefully; urgent medical help for the injured and abrogation of India’s draconian ‘laws’.

Mr. President,

The Security Council has called for the exercise of the right to self-determination by the people of Jammu and Kashmir through a free and fair plebiscite held under UN auspices. The people of Kashmir have waited 70 years for implementation of this promise. The Security Council must honour its commitments by implementing its own decisions. This General Assembly must demand that India deliver on the commitments its leaders solemnly made on many occasions.

To this end, steps should be taken by the United Nations to de-militarize Jammu and Kashmir and undertake consultations with India, Pakistan and the true representatives of the Kashmiri people to implement the resolutions of the Security Council. In this context, we welcome the offer of good offices by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. We will also open consultations with members of the Security Council to explore the modalities for implementation of the Security Council resolutions on Kashmir.

Mr. President,

The international community ignores the danger of rising tensions in South Asia, at its own peril.

For its part, Pakistan is committed to the establishment of strategic stability in the region. It neither wants, nor is it engaged in an arms race with India.

But we cannot ignore our neighbor's unprecedented arms build-up and will take whatever measures are necessary to maintain credible deterrence.

We have consistently urged the conclusion of bilateral arms control and disarmament measures between Pakistan and India to prevent conflict and avoid wasteful military expenditures.

We are open to discussing all measures of restraint and responsibility with India, in any forum or format and without any conditions.

We are ready for talks to agree on a bilateral nuclear test ban treaty.

Today, from this rostrum, I would also like to reiterate our offer to India to enter into a serious and sustained dialogue for the peaceful resolution of all outstanding disputes, especially Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr. President,

As a responsible nuclear weapon state, Pakistan will continue to cooperate with all international efforts that seek to promote fair and equitable solutions to disarmament and non-proliferation challenges.

We have introduced 'state of the art' measures to strengthen the safety and security of our nuclear materials and facilities. We have adopted a comprehensive export control regime that is fully consistent with international standards.

Judged on the basis of objective criteria, and without discrimination, Pakistan is fully eligible for membership of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group.

Mr. President,

In our turbulent and interdependent world, the United Nations remains an indispensable Organization to restore order and ensure global peace, stability and prosperity. Its principles remain the crucial pillars of international legality, the guide for the conduct of Member States and the guarantor of the legitimate rights of all nations and peoples.

The UN must regain its credibility as the central instrument for the promotion of peace, prosperity and liberty.

To that end, it should become more representative, transparent and accountable. A comprehensive and democratic reform of the Security Council, which Pakistan supports, should enhance its relevance and representation. Creating new centers of privilege will do the opposite.

Mr. President,

Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the UN is well established. We have played a pioneering and consistent role in UN Peacekeeping.

Despite our own security requirements, we will remain one of world's largest troop contributing countries and maintain our record of success in multiple UN peacekeeping operations.

Mr. President,

Pakistan has a vital stake in ending conflicts, fostering peace, fighting terrorism, strengthening democracy, promoting human rights, generating global growth and overcoming the challenges of environmental degradation. We can achieve these goals, and create a new and peaceful world order, only through the United Nations and by strict adherence to the principles of its Charter.

I thank you, Mr. President.