



PRIME MINISTER IMRAN KHAN'S ADDRESS TO THE UNGA 2020: SOME REFLECTIONS

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(Views expressed in the brief are those of the author, and do not represent those of ISSI)



The United Nations has entered the 75th year of its existence in 2020 and just as the UNGA 2020 starts with a theme emphasizing inclusiveness and multilateralism, it is a reminder of the building blocks on whose foundation the UN now stands in all its grandeur. This year, the 75th Session of the UNGA is taking place virtually due to the COVID 19 pandemic, unprecedented in the history of the UN. The theme for UNGA 2020 is *“The future we want, the United Nations we need; reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism.”*

Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mr. Imran Khan addressed the UNGA 2020 shedding light on the issues and challenges that confront the world today, and emphasized on the solutions to the current problems. The Prime Minister focused on several pertinent issues in his address. He reminded the General Assembly of the true purpose of this forum and identified how the departure from the actual and true purpose has been detrimental in leading the global body away from its goals. Laying bare the current challenges that confront the world, PM Khan stated that the world has seen an uptake in new trends like nationalism, Islamophobia, unilateralist tendencies, violation of sovereign equalities, undermining of international cooperation, the flouting of international agreements and illegal annexations.

Moreover, he stated that the new trends also include violation of international agreements and also the interference in the affairs of other states; with conflicts proliferating and military occupations and illegal annexations suppressing the right of peoples. All these tendencies have created an unjust

order which continues to threaten peace and undermine multilateralism. PM Khan said that cooperation must be the driving force in international relations, but it remains to the contrary and this has unfortunately created instability in the system. Furthermore, he shed light on the challenges that have emerged due to the COVID 19 pandemic and have economically crippled the poor and the developing countries, which are in need for debt relief. While analyzing the effects of recession on poorer countries and the need for debt financing, the PM reminded the world that while the pandemic should have brought the world together, but instead, it has created further polarization and discrimination. The discrimination against certain minorities has given rise to racial hatred, with certain communities being accused of spreading COVID 19.

The Prime Minister appealed to the UNGA to develop a framework to combat illicit financial flows which cause much damage to the developing countries from where the money is illegally laundered to rich countries, with cumbersome and challenging processes for the repatriation of stolen wealth. He raised the issue of Climate Change and how it is affecting the planet in the shape of bush fires, unprecedented flooding, record temperatures and how this can be detrimental for future generations if not addressed now. Regarding the Paris Climate agreement, he called upon the need for honoring the agreement and reemphasized on the need for generating climate financing. He highlighted that Pakistan has minimal carbon emissions and is also undertaking steps for addressing climate change by launching programs to plant 10 billion trees in the next three years as a universal responsibility.

Pointing out the recent rise in Islamophobia, the Prime Minister urged the UNGA that this is a dangerous trend. Unfortunately however, it is also being given state patronage by the government in India, which continues to subjugate its Muslim population with state sponsored victimization in the shape of targeted killings and the marginalization of Muslims and other minorities in India. Such discrimination leads to radicalization. He also pointed out the hate campaigns in the West, which include the re-publication of blasphemous caricatures and the burning of the copies of the Holy Quran, aimed at hurting the sentiments of Muslims globally.

The Prime Minister raised his voice over the illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir by India and called upon the international community to pay attention to the repression of the Kashmiris. This he said, has been further exacerbated since India's actions of August 5, 2019, in an attempt to change the status of the occupied territories. The Prime Minister pleaded to the international community to take notice of the atrocities in Indian occupied Kashmir and also that Kashmir remains a nuclear flashpoint for archrivals India and Pakistan. Raising the voice for repressed communities, the Prime Minister also reiterated support for a two-state solution for Palestine, in accordance with the UN

resolutions. The Prime Minister emphasized that Pakistan desires a peaceful and stable neighborhood and has been a facilitator of the US-Taliban peace agreement, which remains a testament to Pakistan's commitment to a peaceful region.

Prime Minister Imran Khan's address to the UNGA reflects Pakistan's commitment to the strengthening of multilateralist values, global unity and respect for global rules. Pakistan has shown unwavering support to just causes and has taken steps for regional peace while abiding by global norms, which is obvious by its facilitation of the peace process in Afghanistan as well as its efforts for peace with India. As an important country in the region and the Muslim Ummah, Pakistan continues to set an example by promoting values of global unity. Prime Minister Imran Khan's address is a reflection of those values.

For a full text of the PM's Speech, please visit the following link:

https://estatemnts.unmeetings.org/estatemnts/10.0010/20200925/3Yf6QppA2Nri/Vc8y3hVvL1Jl_en.pdf

Key Takeaways of the PM's Speech

- We need a peaceful neighborhood with the settlement of disputes through dialogue.
- Need to reflect whether we have realized the promise we had made to our people when the UN was founded.
- World order is being systematically eroded by the threat of unilateral use of force and the violation of sovereign equality, the undermining of international cooperation and interference in the affairs of other states.
- International agreements are being flouted, renewed great power rivalries are leading to new arms races, with conflicts proliferating and military occupations and illegal annexations suppressing the right of peoples.
- Cooperation must be the driving force in international relations.
- Pakistan has spent eight billion dollars on health services during COVID 19 and also initiated programs to help the poor segments of the society.
- Developing nations must be helped to recover from the economic effects of COVID 19 by debt suspension initiatives as well as the need for adequate financial flows.

- In order to check corruption and money laundering, there is a need for a global framework to stop illegal financial flows from developing countries to the rich countries and also ensure the repatriation of stolen wealth.
- Need for measures to combat climate change and to honor the commitments made under the Paris Climate agreement, especially that of climate finance in the shape of 100 billion dollars annually.
- UNGA must declare an International Day to Combat Islamophobia.
- India must be held accountable for its patronization of Islamophobia through a fascist ideology of Hindutva aimed at cleansing India's 200 million Muslims.
- India has put in place measures blatantly violating the UNSC resolutions and is attempting to change the status and demographic structure of the occupied territories in violation of the Geneva Conventions.
- Pakistan desires a peaceful neighborhood with an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace process.
- There needs to be a just solution to the Palestine conflict honoring the pre 1967 borders.
- United Nations remains the best legitimate avenue for collective action in managing international conflicts, fostering peace and security, promoting equitable development and addressing global problems.